

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
March 22, 2018

INTEGRATED WATERSHED RESTORATION PROGRAM PHASE 5

Project No. 03-063-04
Project Manager: Tom Gandesbery

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$1,087,000 to the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County for the Integrated Watershed Restoration Program in San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Monterey Counties.

LOCATION: Coastal watersheds in San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Monterey Counties (Exhibit 1)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Integrated Coastal and Marine Resources Protection

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location](#)

Exhibit 2: [Summary of Accomplishments](#)

Exhibit 3: [Project Letters](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 31220:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of up to one million, eighty seven thousand dollars (\$1,087,000) to the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County (RCD-SC) to, as part of the Integrated Watershed Restoration Program (IWRP): design and prepare permit applications for 7 to 10 critical watershed restoration projects. This authorization is subject to the condition that prior to the disbursement of funds, the RCD-SC shall submit for the review and approval of the Conservancy’s Executive Officer a work plan, schedule and budget, and the names and qualifications of any contractors.”

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of Chapter 5.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding integrated coastal and marine resources protection.

2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.”
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PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends granting up to \$1,087,000 to the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County (RCD-SC) to implement Phase 5 (IWRP 5) of the Integrated Watershed Restoration Program (IWRP) (See Exhibit 2). The project will be undertaken in part by the San Mateo County RCD and the Monterey County RCD, pursuant to sub grants by the RCD-SC. IWRP 5 builds on the success of the four previous phases of IWRP (of which the Conservancy funded phases 1, 3 and 4). The project consists of implementing the following IWRP 5 tasks: prepare designs and permit applications for approximately 7-10 critical watershed restoration projects that support the recovery of listed species and improvement of water quality in San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Monterey Counties.

IWRP is a process founded on the principle that watershed restoration would be more effective if the entities involved in undertaking, funding and permitting restoration projects coordinated with each other. The IWRP process brings staff of federal, state, and local resource agencies and conservation partners together to identify high-priority watershed restoration projects, and to provide technical input on the preparation of designs and environmental compliance documents. The goals of IWRP are to:

- Advance the pace and scale of habitat restoration for federally- and state-listed species in San Mateo, Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties;
- Identify and prioritize restoration projects that will have the greatest impact;
- Develop high-quality restoration designs; and,
- Disseminate lessons learned and enthusiasm to increase restoration efforts through collaboration.

The use of the IWRP process has effectively ensured that the highest priority watershed restoration projects get funded; funding agencies anticipate upcoming projects; lessons learned across watersheds are shared; momentum and enthusiasm is maintained by working together; permits for environmentally beneficial projects are facilitated; and a holistic approach is taken, both in terms of overall watershed health (*i.e.*, not restricted to single-species or issues) and in addressing areas such as outreach, education, and monitoring, which are often overlooked and/or under-funded.

Now in its 15th year, IWRP is proven to be a highly effective process for restoration projects on California’s Central Coast. As a result of the IWRP process, RCD-SC has successfully leveraged the Conservancy’s investment at the design stage to develop ‘shovel-ready” projects that are a high priority for state and federal resource agencies. The Conservancy’s \$7.1 million investment in designing projects coming out of IWRP since the program’s inception has leveraged well over \$21 million dollars in implementation funding to construct over 110 restoration projects to-date.

The IWRP process has also evolved to include a respected approach to resolve long-standing resource conflicts through the development of projects that are agreeable to both conservation

entities and landowners. This approach encourages higher landowner participation in restoration by providing design and permitting assistance and other incentives. For instance, agencies participating in IWRP, including RCD-SC, work with landowners and forestry agencies to find and implement projects that address agricultural needs while improving fishery habitat. In addition, the Conservancy's funding for IWRP has enabled the coordination of recovery actions for the Central and South-Central California Coast steelhead, Central California Coast Coho salmon, Santa Cruz long-toed salamander, California red-legged frog, and other listed species in the three counties. The high volume of restoration projects constructed pursuant to the IWRP process has benefitted the local economies by providing jobs and focusing attention on the community benefits of preserving natural resources. See Exhibit 2 for an overview map.

The public entities with staff currently coordinating as IWRP 5 are the RCDs, the Conservancy, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). As with previous phases of this successful program, the interagency coordination of IWRP 5 has resulted in a current list of priority watershed restoration projects in Santa Cruz, San Mateo and Monterey counties, as well as continued work on identifying additional priority projects. The proposed authorization is anticipated to enable the RCDs to prepare designs and permit applications for 7 to 10 priority projects.

The following are examples of potential projects in each County that could be further developed:

- **Butano Creek Floodplain Restoration – Second Phase (San Mateo County):** The Butano-Pescadero Watershed, which is important habitat for steelhead and coho, is impaired by sediment. The excess sediment also contributes to flooding in the community of Pescadero and massive fish kills in the Pescadero-Butano Marsh. This project will restore natural function to the creek, reduce incision of the creek bed and erosion of its banks, restore wetland habitat, restore the ability of the floodplain to store sediment, help address water quality impairment from sediment, and reduce sediment supply to a downstream road crossing where sediment accumulates and leads to frequent flooding.
- **Mill Creek Dams (Santa Cruz County):** Two dams are located in the lowermost section of Mill Creek, the largest tributary to San Vicente Creek. The downstream dam is a defunct diversion dam with structural integrity issues, but the upper dam still functions as a secondary water supply for the town of Davenport. One key aim of dam removal would be to increase the supply of appropriate spawning gravel (identified as a limiting factor) that could be captured in San Vicente Creek, including in the treatment reach. The project would be implemented in conjunction with the County, who is examining the feasibility of relocating the drinking water intake.
- **Elkhorn Slough runoff water control and infiltration pond at Sand Hills Farm (Monterey County):** This strawberry-farm has had a history of runoff and erosion problems as it drains to the riparian and wetland habitats of the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve. The Monterey County RCD would develop designs for runoff management ponds that would increase groundwater infiltration and balance water control with wildlife habitat needs for the benefit of the slough's wildlife, most particularly California red-legged frog.

RCD-SC has successfully managed a number of Conservancy grants, including the grants for the

earlier IWRP phases, which entailed dozens of contracts and hundreds of invoices for multiple projects. In addition, the RCDs of San Mateo County and Monterey (sub-grantees) have successfully managed several large Department of Water Resources grants to restore watershed function (water quality and water supply in San Mateo County and *Arundo* eradication in Monterey County). The RCD-SC has demonstrated sound fiscal responsibility, as well as expertise in project management, road assessments, landowner outreach, and partner collaboration, and is well-suited to continue to carry out another phase of this successful program.

Site Description: The project area for IWRP stretches from the northernmost coastal steelhead watershed in San Mateo County - the San Pedro Creek watershed - to the rugged coastal drainages of the Santa Lucia Mountains along the Big Sur coast of Monterey County. The three-county project area is home to a wealth of aquatic and riparian special status species, including federally- and state-listed frogs (California red-legged and foothill yellow-legged), salamanders (Santa Cruz long-toed and California tiger), snakes (San Francisco garter), and birds (marbled murrelet, among others), plus a wide variety of other flora and fauna. The project area supports the state- and federally-endangered Central California Coast Coho Salmon Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU), and both the federally threatened Central California Coast (CCC) and South-Central California Coast (SCCC) Steelhead Distinct Population Segments (DPS).

Within San Mateo County, coastal streams descend from the steep, highly erodible Montara and Santa Cruz Mountain ranges, and drain into small coastal lagoons and/or directly into the Pacific Ocean. Land use along the San Mateo County coast includes urban development in the incorporated towns of Pacifica and Half Moon Bay, irrigated agriculture along the coastal terraces and bluffs, and grazing and forestry in the grasslands and woodlands. San Mateo County Department of Public Works, the San Mateo County RCD, and various other nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies have identified stream crossings, erosion from aging road networks and historic land use, loss of riparian habitat, and woody debris from stream channels as key limiting factors to salmonids and other aquatic and riparian species. In addition, Pescadero, Butano, and San Gregorio Creeks are all listed by the Regional Water Quality Control Board as impaired for sediment and have Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) planning processes underway.

Santa Cruz County consists of seven primary watersheds and a number of smaller, but high priority, watersheds. The seven large watersheds include: Waddell Creek, Scotts Creek, San Lorenzo River, Soquel Creek, Aptos Creek, and Lower Pajaro River tributaries (including Corralitos Creek). The largest of these is the San Lorenzo River watershed, which encompasses 138 square miles. Smaller coastal watersheds, especially in the northern portion of the county, are considered high priorities for restoration due to their value in maintaining Coho populations and the lack of urban impacts. All of these coastal streams descend from the steep Santa Cruz Mountains to drain into the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The urban centers of the cities of Santa Cruz, Capitola, and Watsonville are located on the San Lorenzo River, Soquel Creek, and Lower Pajaro River tributaries and Watsonville Sloughs respectively, and have channelized the streams to varying degrees. Other land uses in the watersheds include orchards and row crops, timber harvest, rural residential, extensive road infrastructure, cattle grazing, and parks and recreation. The San Lorenzo River and Pajaro River have approved TDMLs for sediment. Projects developed under IWRP will address sediment issues in TDML watersheds as they relate to fisheries restoration.

Unlike San Mateo and Santa Cruz County, the majority of Monterey County drains through one watershed, the 4,600 square mile Salinas River watershed. Although this watershed drains both San Luis Obispo and Monterey Counties, the Monterey County RCD will focus on the lower and more coastal portion of the watershed. The Salinas River flows northwesterly along the 10-mile wide and 155-mile long Salinas valley into the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The valley lies in the Coast Range and is defined to the west by the Sierra de Salinas and east by the Gabilan Range. The Salinas River watershed (along with the Pajaro River watershed) support sub-populations of SCCC Steelhead, a major recovery priority for NMFS and CDFW. In addition to the Salinas River, Monterey County contains the Carmel River watershed, which also drains into the Marine Sanctuary, and is the current site of extensive fisheries restoration efforts with the removal of San Clemente dam and other projects. Monterey County also contains a number of coastal watersheds along the Big Sur coast. These include the Big Sur River, and numerous other coastal drainages. The Big Sur coastal watersheds drain the steep rocky Santa Lucia Mountains. While the Salinas River watershed, and the Carmel River watershed to a lesser extent, is dominated by agricultural land-uses and private lands, the large portions of the Big Sur coastal watersheds are undeveloped natural lands owned by the California Department of Parks and Recreation and the U.S. Forest Service.

In terms of socio-economic conditions, the three counties contain some of the wealthiest communities in the state, as well as a few of the poorest. While the Monterey Peninsula and Carmel Valley have always featured wealthy enclaves, in more recent years, economic growth in the Silicon Valley has increased land values in rural San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties. In response, the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and other land trusts have acquired large ranches (which allows for further collaboration on land conservation projects). And at other end of the economic spectrum, agricultural communities in and around Watsonville, Castroville, Salinas, as well as smaller communities found in the Salinas River Valley meet the state's definition of "disadvantaged".

Project History: Between 1998 and 2003, the Conservancy, CDFW, and RWQCB funded over 15 fish passage and erosion risk assessments and watershed restoration plans for seven watersheds in Santa Cruz County. Staff from the Conservancy, CDFW, RCD-SCC, the County and City of Santa Cruz, and the Coastal Watershed Council recognized that implementing the recommendations of these assessments and plans would be best accomplished by bringing together federal, state, and local resource and permitting agencies to identify the highest priority projects and assist with locating funding sources, providing technical assistance, and facilitating permitting. This led to the creation of the Integrated Watershed Restoration Program for Santa Cruz County. The mission of IWRP is to facilitate and coordinate projects among agencies to improve fish and wildlife habitat and water quality in Santa Cruz County watersheds using a voluntary, non-regulatory approach. Typical restoration projects coming out of the IWRP process include sediment reduction, fish passage improvement, and wetland and lagoon restoration.

In 2003, the Conservancy provided a \$4.5 million grant for Phase 1 of IWRP. This was leveraged in Phase 2 into \$11 million in implementation funding from other organizations, with over 65 projects being funded. With the Conservancy's funding support 2008 through 2013, IWRP Phase 3 resulted in the expansion of IWRP from its origins in Santa Cruz County to include work carried out by the RCDs of San Mateo and Monterey Counties.

In June of 2015, the Conservancy funded Phase 4 of this program. In addition to specific projects, as in in Phase 3, IWRP also supported implementation of rural roads programs at each RCD, which improves water quality and fish habitat by working with private road associations to control sediment in runoff. Phase 3 and 4 also included the Partners-in-Restoration (PIR) permit coordination program in Santa Cruz County, which works with project proponents and property owners to develop grant and permit applications. PIR often results in projects that are funded entirely by property owners and private entities, such as private road associations.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy (this authorization)	\$1,087,000
Total Project Cost	\$1,087,000

The anticipated source of funding for this project is an appropriation from the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1, Water Code §§ 79700 et seq.). Funds appropriated to the Conservancy derive from Chapter 6 (commencing with § 79730) and may be used “for multi-benefit water quality, water supply, and watershed protection and restoration projects for the watersheds of the state” (Section 79731). Section 79732 identifies specific purposes of Chapter 6, several of which will be furthered by the proposed project:

- Implement watershed adaptation projects in order to reduce the impacts of climate change on California’s communities and ecosystems (Section 79732(a) (2));
- Protect and restore aquatic, wetland, and migratory bird ecosystems, including fish and wildlife corridors and the acquisition of water rights for instream flow (Section 79732(a) (4));
- Remove barriers to fish passage (Section 79732(a) (6));
- Protect and restore coastal watersheds, including, but not limited to, bays, marine estuaries, and nearshore ecosystems (Section 79732(a) (10));
- Reduce pollution or contamination of streams and coastal waters, and protect or restore natural system functions that contribute to water supply, water quality, or flood management (Section 79732(a) (11)); and
- Assist in water-related agricultural sustainability projects (Section 79732(a) (13)).

Consistent with these provisions, the proposed project consists of preparation of designs and permit applications for, and/or technical assistance in the development of, projects that will assist in water-related agricultural sustainability, restore wetland and stream corridor habitat, remove fish passage barriers, reduce sediment delivery to coastal streams, improve fish spawning and rearing habitat, and implement watershed adaptation measures that address the critical need for water along the central coast.

Section 79707(b), which requires agencies to prioritize “projects that leverage private, federal, or local funding or produce the greatest public benefit”. As described below, it is anticipated that this project will leverage private, federal and local funding in the implementation phase of the designed projects.

The project was reviewed and subsequently recommended for funding through a competitive grant process under the Conservancy’s *Proposition 1 Grant Program Guidelines* adopted in June

2015 (“Prop 1 Guidelines”) (See Water Code § 79706(a)). The proposed project meets each of the evaluation criteria in the Prop 1 Guidelines as described in further detail in this “Project Financing” section, the “Project Summary” section and in the “Consistency with Conservancy’s Project Selection Criteria & Guidelines” section of this report.

While there is no matching contribution shown for the proposed project, the intent is for the project proponents to use the design funding provided through the Conservancy’s grant to leverage implementation monies. To date in the IWRP program, every design dollar contributed by the Conservancy has resulted in approximately three dollars of implementation funding contributed by federal, state and local agencies and private parties.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

This project would be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 5.5 (Section 31220) of the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding Integrated Coastal and Marine Resources Protection. Section 31220(a) authorizes the Conservancy to undertake projects that improve and protect coastal marine water quality and habitats, and Section 31220(b) authorizes the Conservancy to award grants to projects that meet one or more of the criteria with that section. Consistent with §31220(b)(2),(3), (4), and (6), the project will facilitate restoration of fish habitat within coastal watersheds, reduction of the threats to coastal anadromous fish, reduction of unnatural erosion, and restoration of riparian areas and other sensitive watershed lands by identifying and designing projects that will modify fish passage barriers, reduce excessive sedimentation from poorly maintained rural roads, and restore riparian, wetland, and aquatic habitats.

Consistent with §31220(a), staff has consulted with State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) in the development of the project to ensure consistency with the Clean Beaches Program, Chapter 3 (commencing with §30915) of Division 20.4 of the Public Resources Code.

Consistent with §31220(c), the project is consistent with local watershed management plans. (See “Consistency With Local Watershed Management Plan/State Water Quality Control Plan,” section below). The project does not include a monitoring component as defined in §31220(c) because the project does not include funds for construction.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S 2018 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with Goal 6, Objective A of the Conservancy’s 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the proposed project develop 7-10 plans for the restoration of coastal habitats, including coastal wetlands and intertidal areas, stream corridors, dunes, coastal terraces, coastal sage scrub, forests and coastal prairie.

Consistent with Goal 6, Objective F of the Conservancy’s 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will complete 7-10 plans to improve water quality to benefit coastal and ocean resources.

Consistent with Goal 7, Objective A of the Conservancy’s 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will develop 2-4 plans for projects that foster the long-term viability of coastal

working lands, including projects to assist farmers, ranchers, and timber producers to reduce impacts of their operations on wildlife habitat and water quality,

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on October 4, 2014 in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies:** The project serves to promote and implement several state plans, including:
 - a. *California Water Action Plan* (California Natural Resources Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency, and California Department of Food and Agriculture, 2014). Goal #2, "Increase Regional Self-Reliance and Integrated Water Management Across All Levels Of Government" identifies encouraging funding for multi-benefit projects and streamlining permitting for local enhancement projects as priority actions. Goal #4, "Protect and Restore Important Ecosystems," identifies restoration of coastal watersheds and the elimination of barriers to fish migration as a priority actions. The IWRP program will implement all of these priority actions.
 - b. *California Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program* (State Water Resources Control Board, 2000) includes numerous goals relevant to IWRP: (1A) Erosion and Sediment Control -Agriculture-Education and Outreach; 5.1B Instream and Riparian Habitat Restoration; 5.3A Eroding Streambanks and 6A Vegetated Treatment Systems in Riparian Areas; 6B Restoration of Wetlands and Riparian Areas including; 6D Education and Outreach related to those areas.
 - c. *California Wildlife Action Plan* (California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2007) goals for the Central Coast region including protecting sensitive species and important wildlife habitat and restoring anadromous fish populations.
 - d. Fishery Recovery Plans including the *Recovery Strategy for California Coho Salmon* (California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2004); the *Recovery Plan for Central California Coast Coho Salmon Evolutionarily Significant Unit* (National Marine Fisheries Service, 2012); the *South-Central California Coast Steelhead Recovery Plan* (National Marine Fisheries Service, 2013); and the *Steelhead Restoration and Management Plan* (California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 1996). The IWRP process results in projects that implement many of the recommendations contained within these plans, which include restoration of

in-stream habitat.

4. **Support of the public:** The IWRP is supported by State Senator Jerry Hill, Senator Bill Monning, Assemblymember Mark Stone, Assemblymember Marc Berman, Assemblymember Kevin Mullin, Assemblymember Anna Caballero, and San Mateo County Supervisor Don Horsley. IWRP is also supported by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Parks and Recreation, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA Restoration Center, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, Swanton Ranch of the California Polytechnic University Ranch, the City of Watsonville, the City of Santa Cruz, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, the Central Coast Wetlands Group and Watsonville Wetlands Watch (Exhibit: 3).
5. **Location:** This project is located across multiple coastal-draining watersheds in San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Monterey Counties. The watersheds in each of these counties are partly in and partly out of the coastal zone. Through coordinated planning and preparation of project designs, IWRP will lay the groundwork for removing fish migration barriers and improving water quality, which will in turn benefit anadromous fish species and a suite of aquatic, riparian, wetland, and marine species currently affected by poor water quality and habitat degradation.
6. **Need:** The precipitous declines in the coho and steelhead fisheries in San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Monterey Counties require an interagency approach to remove barriers and restore habitat quality. IWRP has proven to be an efficient and cost-effective approach. Without Conservancy funding, the three partner RCDs would have to significantly cut the number of watershed restoration projects in their regions.
7. **Greater-than-local interest:** By improving fish passage and controlling erosion, the project will serve to protect and enhance aquatic species throughout the three counties, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and numerous coastal lagoons, as well as contributing to state and federal goals of restoring listed salmonids. When IWRP Phase 1 began, the promise was to build a process or model that could be replicated elsewhere in the state. Phases 3 and 4 expanded the model to three coastal counties. Phase 5 of IWRP will build on the success of past work in restoration of riparian restoration and water quality improvement, with attention paid to projects that integrate water supply and water quality aspects. IWRP has the potential to catalyze projects that are well-positioned for funding under Proposition 1, for example those that include treatment of agricultural run-off and aquifer recharge.
8. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** Many IWRP projects are situated well above sea-level in the watersheds of coastal creeks and therefore not likely to be directly impacted by sea level rise. However, the program may support a few projects located in coastal lagoons and sloughs; in that case, the designs will take sea level rise into account.

Additional Criteria

9. **Urgency:** The precipitous decline in salmonid populations in this region (see “Site Description” section above) make restoration actions all the more urgent. Related to this, wildfires in Big Sur area resulted in massive sediment releases to fragile fishery habitats

and three years of drought have pushed species already in a precarious state, to the edge of extinction. Many endangered species, coho salmon for example, are nearly extinct because of a lack of habitat, including stream flows. IWRP projects not only re-create habitat but also can help restore dry weather flows to many coastal streams.

10. **Resolution of more than one issue:** The project will resolve fish passage, erosion control, and water quality issues by providing designs for restoration projects. IWRP projects are often on private land and help resolve conflicts between the mandates of regulatory and resource agencies to restore natural conditions, and the property owner's resistance to resolve the problem.
11. **Leverage:** Since 2003, the IWRP process has successfully leveraged the Conservancy's investment by raising at least 3 times more in implementation funding for project-implementing agencies, a result of the successful award of state and federal grants as well as private funders such as property owners.
12. **Conflict resolution:** The project's approach of working voluntarily with landowners, local agencies, and state and federal resources agencies to resolve watershed resource issues provides an alternative to regulatory action. IWRP has a proven track record for establishing a process for resolving protracted resource conflicts and developing comprehensive and innovative solutions.
13. **Innovation:** IWRP and its components are a unique approach to providing comprehensive, coordinated watershed restoration and can be used as a model throughout the state.
14. **Readiness:** The RCD-SC and project partners have a number of potential projects and are ready to proceed immediately to take advantage of upcoming implementation grant program solicitations (Exhibit 2).
15. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See "Project History" section, above.
16. **Cooperation:** The fundamental principle behind IWRP is the cooperation of local, state, and federal partners. In Santa Cruz County, IWRP has provided a central communication process to coordinate this cooperative effort which has been successful in developing and implementing high priority projects in three counties: Santa Cruz, San Mateo and Monterey Counties. IWRP fosters cooperation due to a number of factors including: overlapping resource agencies staff and jurisdictions; similar resource issues across county boundaries; cooperative/collaborative restoration efforts; and an increase in awareness and capacity within local and resource agencies.
17. **Vulnerability from climate change impacts other than sea level rise:** A majority of IWRP projects will involve restoration of critical habitat for threatened and endangered species. Anticipated changes in climate are expected to create further stress for these species so IWRP projects will likely improve prospects for such species in the face of climate change.
18. **Minimization of greenhouse gas emissions:** IWRP funding is used for planning, design and permitting and therefore, does not directly result in any physical changes to the environment, including any significant GHG emissions. However, the project proponents may elect to implement a given project by specifying equipment, materials

and techniques that minimize GHG emissions as compared to standard practices (for example by using on-site and local materials rather than imported from distant sources).

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed project, which consists of preparation of design and permit applications for 7-10 projects, as well as technical assistance to landowners, is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15262, as it involves only planning for future actions which have not yet been approved, and the planning will consider environmental factors. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval of the project.