

Message from the Executive Officer

The Coastal Conservancy has always been proud of the wide range of our projects, and the many ways we serve the people of California. 2018 has afforded us a multitude of opportunities to expand our reach and vary our work through new projects, programs and funding sources to protect and restore the California Coast, and increase public access to it.

In this first year of our 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the Conservancy had a strong focus on our new operational driver of Environmental Justice. Throughout the year, a cohort of twelve Conservancy staff, including myself and most senior managers, participated in the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) training, which provided an intensive education on the historic role of government in creating and perpetuating racial inequities, as well as strategies to help achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. We are now developing a set of community-lead Environmental Justice Guidelines to shape the Conservancy's work, and a work plan to put these tenets into action.

Central to our Environmental Justice work is our Explore the Coast program, which funds coastal experiences for people who face barriers to access. The program began in 2013 with an understanding that our duty to increase coastal access meant more than physical access, but a responsibility to expand the number of Californians who feel that they belong on the coast. Over 5 grant rounds, we have awarded over \$5 million in 193 separate grants, bringing thousands of Californians to the coast to swim, surf, stroll, and relax.

This year, Explore the Coast has grown to encompass the new Explore the Coast Overnight program. Recognizing that the cost of an overnight stay is keeping Californians from their coast, the State Legislature instructed the Conservancy to create a lower-cost coastal accommodations program and to assess the current status of lower-cost overnight accommodations. The assessment, which was developed through a series of workshops, surveys, research, and partner input, will be the foundation for developing projects to increase the supply of overnight accommodations near the coast that are accessible to low and middle income Californians. Explore the Coast Overnight will be buoyed by \$30 million in funding from Proposition 68, the Parks, Environment and Water Bond that was passed by 57% of voters in June of 2018.

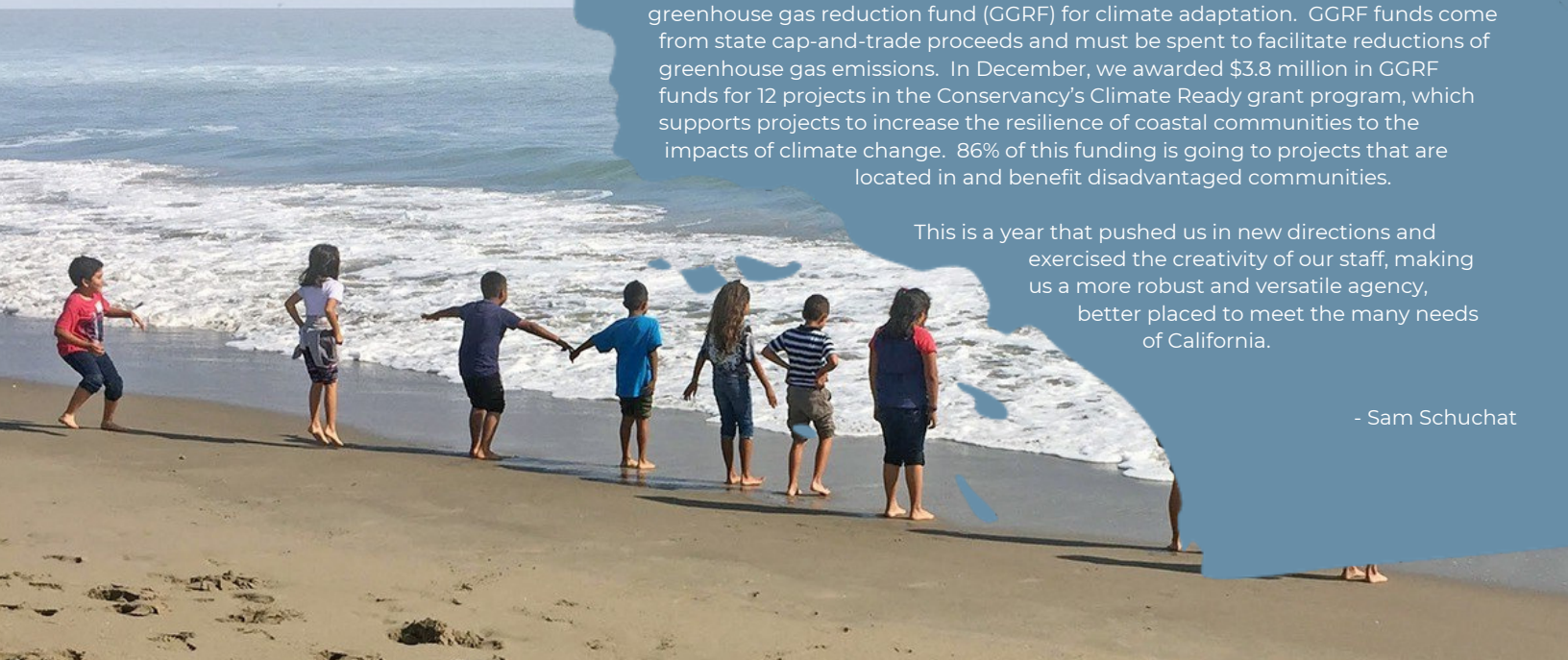
Proposition 68 has refilled the Conservancy's coffers and will enable us to continue having a tremendous impact throughout the state. The funding for overnight accommodation projects is part of a \$205 million allocation from Proposition 68 to the Conservancy for coastal restoration and parks throughout the state. Included in that figure is more than \$55 million for projects in the San Francisco Bay Area and \$16 million for the restoration of the Santa Ana River.

We were, we believe, the first state agency to allocate funding from Proposition 68 when, in September, our Board authorized \$9.75 million for the Wildlands Conservancy to acquire 1,390 acres along the Santa Margarita River to establish the Santa Margarita River Trail Preserve in San Diego County.

We were also among the first state agencies to allocate funding from the state's greenhouse gas reduction fund (GGRF) for climate adaptation. GGRF funds come from state cap-and-trade proceeds and must be spent to facilitate reductions of greenhouse gas emissions. In December, we awarded \$3.8 million in GGRF funds for 12 projects in the Conservancy's Climate Ready grant program, which supports projects to increase the resilience of coastal communities to the impacts of climate change. 86% of this funding is going to projects that are located in and benefit disadvantaged communities.

This is a year that pushed us in new directions and exercised the creativity of our staff, making us a more robust and versatile agency, better placed to meet the many needs of California.

- Sam Schuchat



Regional Highlights

North Coast

- Opening of the Jenner Headlands Preserve and Pole Mountain, a 6,300-acre open space offering nearly 14 miles of trails across varied terrain that includes mixed conifer forest, coastal prairie and oak woodland.
- Completion of the six-mile Eureka Waterfront Trail, a segment of the California Coastal Trail and the only route that connects walkers and cyclists from the town of Eureka to the waterfront without crossing Highway 101.
- Acquisition of a conservation and public trail easements over the approximately 1,620-acre Rips Redwoods Property in the Gualala River watershed located in coastal Sonoma County.

San Francisco Bay Area

- \$177 million in Federal funding secured for the South Bay Shoreline project, a flood protection project to safeguard hundreds of homes, schools, businesses, and infrastructure in Alviso.
- Opening of six new campsites at the Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, offering meaningful camping experiences to San Franciscans in the first California State Park urban recreation area.
- Installation of 4 acres of living shoreline in Richmond on the site of a creosote-piling removal project, replacing derelict, toxic infrastructure, with 200 reef structures for native oyster habitat and shoreline protection.
- Designation of six Water Trail launch sites, including Doolittle Boat Launch in Oakland, the Pittsburg Marina and City of Pittsburg's Riverview Park, and Westpoint Harbor in Redwood City.

2018 in Numbers

- 76 projects authorized
- \$49.7 million authorized
- \$118,000 allocated for sea otter recovery projects funded from California Sea Otter Recovery Tax Fund
- 37% of our funding was located in or directly benefited disadvantaged communities
- \$825,000 for 27 Explore the Coast Grants
 - 18,260 people will participate in a program funded by an Explore the Coast grant in this round.
 - 9,000 of participants will be taking their first trip to the California Coast through the program.
 - 15,000 of participants will be low income Californians.
 - 8,800 of participants will be people for whom English is not their first language.

Central Coast

- Opening of 170 acres in Palo Corona Regional Park to the public on the site of the former Ranch Cañada Golf Club in Monterey County, making it possible for more people to enjoy the park, its trail systems and views of the Monterey Bay.
- Funding for the fifth phase of the innovative Integrated Watershed Restoration Program, which enables San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Monterey Counties to cooperate on watershed projects that support the recovery of listed species and improve water quality to advance the pace and scale of restoration work.
- Funding to complete the community planning to transform a portion of Carr Lake in Salinas into an urban park that will the low-income neighborhoods that surround the lake.

South Coast

- Adoption of the Southern California Wetland Recovery Project's Regional Strategy Update, which lays the roadmap for the long term survival of southern California's wetlands in the face of sea level rise.
- Publication of the Santa Ana River Parkway & Open Space Plan, which defines a shared vision for the parkway and presents a comprehensive list of completed, planned and potential parkway projects as well as tools for prioritizing, developing, and implementing projects.
- Opening of the Ocean Discovery Institute's Living Laboratory in City Heights in San Diego was, giving over 10,000 students a chance to explore ocean science and conservation.

California Coastal Trail

- Approved funding for construction of new trail segments on the Elk River Estuary on Humboldt Bay and Old Smith Ranch in Mendocino, and provided funding to acquire Toro Creek ranch between Morro Bay and Cayucos in San Luis Obispo, which will aid in development of future Coastal Trail.
- Incorporated National Trails Day programming into an outreach campaign for the CCT.
- Gathered mapping data for the entirety of the trail.

