

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation  
February 13, 2025

**NORTH AND CENTRAL COAST WILDFIRE RESILIENCE MAPPING DATASETS AUGMENTATION**

Project Nos. 24-011-01 and 24-012-01

Project Managers: Kostoula Vallianos and Lilly Allen

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to disburse up to \$1,647,600 to the County of Humboldt and the Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District to augment the Conservancy grants first authorized on April 18, 2024 for two mapping projects that develop critical data layers for north and central coast wildfire resilience planning.

**LOCATION:** Del Norte, Siskiyou, Modoc, Humboldt, Trinity, Mendocino, Lake, Napa, Sonoma, San Benito, Monterey, and San Luis Obispo Counties

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EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location Maps](#)

Exhibit 2: [April 18, 2024 Conservancy Staff Recommendation](#)

Exhibit 3: [September 5, 2024 Conservancy Staff Recommendation](#)

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**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS**

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution and findings.

Resolution:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of: 1) an additional six hundred seventy-five thousand dollars (\$675,000) to the County of Humboldt to augment the grants previously authorized by the Conservancy on April 18, 2024 and September 5, 2024 for a total authorized amount of one million fifty seven thousand forty nine dollars (\$1,057,049) which developed lidar derivative datasets critical for wildfire resilience planning for the north coast, and which additional funds would be used to further refine said data into more usable data layers and products; and 2) an additional nine hundred seventy-two thousand six hundred dollars (\$972,600) to the Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District to augment the grant previously authorized by the Conservancy on April 18, 2024 and augmented by the Executive Officer on October 10, 2024, for a total authorized amount of one million eight hundred nine

thousand four hundred fifty-five dollars (\$1,809,455) which developed lidar derivative datasets and wildfire mapping layers in the central coast, and which additional funds would be used to refine and finalize fine scale vegetation mapping. This authorization is subject to the conditions of the April 18, 2024 authorization.

Findings:

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

1. The proposed authorization remains consistent with Chapter 3 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the Climate Ready Program.
2. The proposed project remains consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria.

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## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize a \$1,647,600 augmentation to its April 18, 2024 (Exhibit 2) and September 5, 2024 (Exhibit 3) authorizations and October 10, 2024 Executive Officer augmentation, for a new total authorized amount of up to \$2,866,504, for grants to the County of Humboldt and the Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District (RCD) for two mapping projects to develop lidar derivative data sets that are critical for north and central coast wildfire resilience planning. The recommended augmentation will enable the County and RCD to expand the data sets gathered by the previous authorization, and to utilize the previously gathered data to develop new map products, including new data layers and a methodology report. As described in Exhibit 2, high quality data is a critical foundation for enabling collaboration on planning and strategic prioritization of wildfire resilience projects and initiatives among tribal, federal, state and local governments, as well as community organizations such as resource conservation districts and nonprofits.

The data created by these two projects supports:

- Wildfire and climate adaptation: planning for vegetation management and fuel load reduction, home and infrastructure hardening, and biomass utilization; identification of communities at risk and toxic runoff potential; and community education and outreach.
- Wildfire response: evacuation planning; fire behavior modeling of rate of spread based on canopy surface, structure type and topography; and improved communications due to better understanding of the landscape.
- Wildfire recovery: Post-fire toxics and hazard abatement, Watershed Emergence Response Team reports, habitat and water supply protection, communications, habitat restoration, and fire response mitigation and clean-up.

**County of Humboldt (Fiscal Sponsor for North Coast Resource Partnership) \$675,000**

The North Coast Lidar Dataset Project augmentation will enable the North Coast Resource Partnership to use region-wide lidar derivatives prepared under the previous Conservancy authorization to develop a suite of data layers that includes wildland fuels, wildfire risk, and wildfire hazard maps for Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Sonoma, Lake, Shasta and Trinity Counties. This authorization will provide funds to produce new data layers and tools to support wildfire prevention including:

<b>Wildfire Product</b>	<b>Description</b>
Roads Data Improvements	Improved vector roads, mapped as 'Dirt and Gravel', or 'Paved.' Mapping team will improve existing roads datasets using new lidar as reference.
Impervious Surfaces	Vector data of all visible impervious surfaces, classified as 'Paved Roads', 'Dirt and Gravel Roads', 'Buildings', 'Other Paved', 'Other Dirt/Gravel'.
Wildland Fuel Models	Scott and Burgan Fire Behavior Models (Scott and Burgan, 2005).
Wildfire Hazard	Classes from Very Low to Highest hazard.
Wildfire Risk to Structures	Classes from Very Low to Highest Hazard + Structure Density, representing risk to structures and focused on the WUI.
On-Call GIS Support	\$20,000 to support on call requests for technical assistance from NCRP community members that need GIS assistance to support wildfire-related work.
Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Hub	\$25,000 to fund the development of a CWPP hub that will provide datasets, best practices, and resources to those developing CWPPs in the North Coast Region.
Mendocino County Wildfire Fuel Mapper (Note that this deliverable is for Mendocino County Only)	Expand the Wildfire Fuel Mapper to the north coast ( <a href="https://wildfirefuelmapper.org">https://wildfirefuelmapper.org</a> ) to include Mendocino County. The fuel mapper provides public access to parcel-based maps of vegetation, fuels, topography, hazard and risk.

The hazard data layers will be combined with human vulnerability and ignition probability datasets to develop datasets for Wildfire Hazard and Wildfire Risk to Structures. The wildfire data products will build on the fine scale vegetation maps that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife is currently producing.

The North Coast Resource Partnership will also use the augmentation to develop hydrologic data products for two watersheds, the Noyo and the Big River. These will include elevation derived hydrography and a watershed-wide stream network and functional riparian map. This

work will serve as a pilot for producing region-wide lidar derived hydrographic products that will allow land managers and planners to understand the pathways of toxics and sediment flows through watershed networks – both for prevention of damage to aquatic ecosystems, habitats and species, and municipal water supplies and other infrastructure, and post-fire remediation of impacts.

**Grant Applicant Qualifications:** See Exhibit 2.

**Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District**

**\$972,600**

The Central Coast Lidar and Wildfire Mapping Project augmentation will fund additional data layers and finalization of a fine scale vegetation map and related methodology report. Fine scale vegetation maps are critical for identifying and prioritizing wildfire treatment as well as for planning a variety of conservation, restoration, and stewardship projects. The work funded under this augmentation will build off the work done under the previous authorization, and will fill the funding gap for finalization of the fine scale vegetation mapping. Augmentation funding will enable the mapping team to further improve map accuracy by adding additional detail to the map attributes such as: shrub cover, herbaceous cover, roads, and clearing. The RCD will also prepare a quantitative accuracy assessment on the final map. The result of this work will be a final, fully attributed 3-county fine scale vegetation map that covers San Benito, San Luis Obispo, and Monterey Counties and complies with the State vegetation mapping standards.

**Grant Applicant Qualifications:** See Exhibit 2.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA:**

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s Project Selection Criteria, last updated on September 23, 2021, as described in the April 18, 2024 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2):

**PROJECT FINANCING**

<b>Coastal Conservancy (proposed augmentation)</b>	<b>\$1,627,600</b>
Coastal Conservancy (previous authorization)	\$1,109,749
Coastal Conservancy Executive Officer Augmentation	\$109,155
Other Funding (detailed in previous authorization)	<u>\$10,362,974</u>
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$13,209,478</b>

The anticipated source of funding is the Fiscal Year 2023-24 appropriation from the General Fund to the Conservancy for the purpose of wildfire risk reduction (The Budget Act of 2023, as amended by AB 102 (2023)). The proposed project remains consistent with this funding source as described in the April 18, 2024 staff recommendation.

Unless specifically identified as “Required Match,” the other sources of funding and in-kind contributions described above are estimates. The Conservancy does not typically require matching funds or in-kind services, nor does it require documentation of expenditures from other funders or of in-kind services. Typical grant conditions require grantees to provide any funds needed to complete a project.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:**

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy Enabling Legislation as described in the April 18, 2024 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S [2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN](#):**

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s 2023-2027 Strategic Plan as described in the April 18, 2024 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

**CEQA COMPLIANCE:**

The proposed project is categorically exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15306 (Information Collection), which exempts data collection and research activities that will not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. The project consists only of mapping and data collection activities and will not result in any major disturbances to the environment. The project is also statutorily exempt under 14 CCR Section 15262 (Feasibility and Planning Studies), which exempts planning for possible future actions that have not been approved or funded. This project consists of planning activities for possible future work that has not been approved or funded.