

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
April 23, 2026

PEDRO POINT HEADLANDS WILDFIRE RESILIENCE PROGRAM - AUGMENTATION

Project No. 24-062-01
Project Manager: Erin Gravley

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$500,000 to the San Mateo Resource Conservation District to augment the previously authorized Pedro Point Headlands Wildfire Resilience Program to expand: 1) the project scope to include implementation of additional wildfire fuels reduction activities, and 2) the project area to include the adjacent Highway 1 evacuation corridor in Pacifica, San Mateo County.

LOCATION: Pedro Point Headlands, Pacifica, San Mateo County

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location Maps](#)

Exhibit 2: [February 13, 2025 Staff Recommendation](#)

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 an amount not to exceed five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) to the San Mateo Resource Conservation District (“the grantee”) to augment the previously authorized Pedro Point Headlands Wildfire Resilience Program to expand: 1) the project scope to include implementation of additional wildfire fuels reduction activities, and 2) the project area to include the adjacent Highway 1 evacuation corridor in Pacifica, San Mateo County for a total authorized amount of four million six hundred fourteen thousand five hundred thirty-two dollars (\$4,614,532).

Prior to commencement of the expanded project scope, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy (Executive Officer) the following:

1. A revised, detailed work program, schedule, and budget.
2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be retained in carrying out the project.
3. A plan for acknowledgment of Conservancy funding.
4. Evidence that all permits and approvals required to implement the project have been obtained.
5. Any other agreements that the Conservancy's Executive Officer determines are necessary for the project.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, this Conservancy resolution is effective only if an emergency suspension is approved by the California Environmental Protection Agency and California Natural Resources Agency under the Governor's Proclamation of a State of Emergency issued March 1, 2025, exempting the project from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.

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.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize disbursement of \$500,000 to the San Mateo Resource Conservation District ("the RCD") to augment the \$4,114,532 Pedro Point Headlands Wildfire Resilience Program grant previously authorized on February 13, 2025, to expand: 1) the project scope to include implementation of additional wildfire fuels reduction activities, and 2) the project area to include the adjacent Highway 1 evacuation corridor in Pacifica, San Mateo County (Exhibit 1). The Pedro Point Headlands is a popular public resource located adjacent to neighborhoods, Highway 1, and other infrastructure.

Background:

Pedro Point Headlands Wildfire Resilience Program: On February 13, 2025, the Conservancy authorized a grant to the RCD to undertake the Pedro Point Headlands Wildfire Resilience Program, consisting of 1) planning and preparing permit applications and environmental review documents for wildfire fuel reduction on 10-20 acres of the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) abutting private residences, including removal of mature trees, and 2) planning and implementing discrete vegetation management tasks at the Pedro Point Headlands. The work

on the Pedro Point Headlands Wildfire Resilience Program completed to date includes planning, environmental compliance, and community and tribal engagement.

Planning for Highway 1 fuels reduction project: Separately, the RCD completed planning and permitting work for another wildfire fuels reduction project along an approximately 0.8-mile stretch of Highway 1 that is also located in the Pedro Point Headlands WUI. Reducing the fuel load along this stretch of Highway 1 is a high priority for San Mateo County, as it serves as a vital community evacuation corridor in the event of wildfire. This planning and permitting work was funded through a June 1, 2023 Conservancy authorization for a Regional Forest and Fire Capacity grant, the Santa Cruz and San Mateo Wildfire Resilience Capacity Building Program. This grant to the Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District was to plan and permit Regional Priority Projects in San Mateo and Santa Cruz Counties in partnership with the RCD.

Based on the recommendations of CALFIRE foresters, the Highway 1 fuels reduction project comprises strategic clearing of vegetation both within and beyond the Caltrans right-of-way (ROW) along Highway 1, to a total distance of approximately 175 feet on each side of the highway (a total buffer of approximately 350 feet). The Highway 1 fuels reduction project includes lands within the Caltrans ROW and outside of the Caltrans ROW, where the land is owned by the Conservancy, the City of Pacifica, and a private landowner.

Proposed Authorization:

The augmented funds will enable the expansion of implementation activities under the Pedro Point Headlands Wildfire Resilience Program, including extending fuel reduction activities to the portions contemplated in the Highway 1 fuels reduction project that lie outside of the Caltrans ROW.

Expanded implementation activities will include fuels reduction work on select private property within the 10-20 acres of WUI, when necessary to protect resources on City- and/or Conservancy-owned land, with permission from the willing landowners. Because problematic vegetation within the project area crosses both public and private lands, wildfire could easily cross the private/public boundary and imperil the public portion of Pedro Point Headlands. Addressing the risk regardless of property ownership could be essential to increasing the wildfire resilience of public resources. As part of the Pedro Point Headlands Wildfire Resilience Program work thus far, the RCD has invited landowners of the private properties in the WUI adjacent to the project area to include their land in this project's planning scope.

The expanded implementation area will consolidate multiple Conservancy-funded wildfire fuels reduction projects at Pedro Point Headlands, allowing for time and cost efficiencies around stakeholder coordination, community and tribal engagement, mobilization, and transport of equipment. Caltrans is anticipated to pay for Highway 1 wildfire resilience work within their ROW.

All of the proposed Pedro Point Headlands Wildfire Resilience Program work has been submitted for emergency suspension from all state statutes and regulations (see CEQA Compliance section).

Site Description: The additional project area to be included is along an approximately 0.8-mile stretch of Highway 1 in Pacifica (Exhibit 1). This stretch of Highway 1 is an evacuation corridor for the community of Montara to the south. The project area is largely comprised of steep hillsides and dense vegetation. Property within the project area is owned by the Conservancy, the City of Pacifica, Caltrans, and private landowners. The corridor is heavily populated with Eucalyptus trees and other hazardous vegetation, making it vulnerable to wildfires that could potentially block the evacuation corridor. See also Exhibit 2.

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 February 13, 2025 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy (proposed authorization)	\$500,000
Coastal Conservancy (previous authorizations)	\$4,134,532
Caltrans (estimated)	\$170,000
Project Total	\$4,804,532

The anticipated source of funding for the augmentation is an appropriation to the Conservancy from Chapter 3 of the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 codified at Public Resources Code section 90000, et seq. and referred to as the 2024 Climate Bond or Proposition 4. Chapter 3 of the 2024 Climate Bond authorizes the Conservancy to use the funds for “watershed improvement, wildfire resilience, chaparral and forest restoration, and workforce development that addresses needs related to this subdivision and is designed to create career pathways for individuals from disadvantaged communities, severely disadvantaged communities, or vulnerable populations.” (Public Resources Code section 91520(k)). The project is consistent with the funding source because it will increase the wildfire resilience of lands and communities.

Caltrans will contribute funding to complete the implementation of the Highway 1 fuel reduction work within their ROW. The exact amount Caltrans will contribute will be determined once they go out to bid for the project. They will additionally contribute in-kind services such as surveying and traffic control.

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's Enabling Legislation as described in the February 13, 2025, 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.

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

All of the proposed wildfire resilience work on the Pedro Point Headlands has been submitted for approval from the California Environmental Protection Agency and California Natural Resources Agency to proceed without CEQA compliance under the Governor's Proclamation of a State of Emergency (Proclamation).

Governor Newsom issued the Proclamation on March 1, 2025. The Proclamation declares that California is in a state of emergency due to forest conditions, and it identifies several actions to address wildfire risk across California. To expedite critical fuels reduction projects, the Proclamation suspends, subject to approval of the Secretaries of the California Environmental Protection Agency and California Natural Resources Agency, certain California statutory and regulatory requirements, including CEQA. In December 2025, the Pedro Point Headlands Wildfire Resilience Program and the Highway 1 fuels reduction projects were submitted to receive emergency suspensions from all state statutes and regulations. Per the requirements of the suspensions, projects will need to commence implementation by October 15, 2026.