



Coastal Conservancy

STATE of CALIFORNIA

Annual Report

2022

Mission of the State Coastal Conservancy:

Our vision is of a beautiful, restored, and accessible coast for current and future Californians. We act with others to protect and restore, and increase public access to, California's coast, ocean, coastal watersheds and the San Francisco Bay Area.

Welcome to the State Coastal Conservancy's Annual Report for the calendar year 2022.

This has been a productive and fulfilling year in which we were able to undertake impactful projects, expand the capacity of our agency, and chart a course for the next five years of coastal resilience and equitable public access.

The Governing Board authorized a total of \$151.7 million of Conservancy funding for over 200 projects, with projects meeting multiple objectives, including the protection and restoration of coastal habitats and resources; trails and recreation, particularly for communities that face barriers to coastal access; and climate resilience, especially sea level rise and wildfire resilience.



Amy Hutzel, Executive Officer

In 2022, the State of California made an unprecedented investment in coastal resilience, as part of committing billions of dollars to prepare for challenges of a changing climate. The catastrophic storms and flooding in the first weeks of 2023 were a powerful reminder of grave risks climate change poses to the coast.

With the funding appropriated to us, the Conservancy authorized 44 projects through our Climate Ready grant program last year, totaling over \$32.6 million, to plan and implement projects that will help protect communities, infrastructure, and habitat from the impacts of

climate change. Using nature-based adaptation to mitigate the impacts of sea level rise, our aim is to increase the coast's resilience to climate change while protecting habitat and communities now and into the future.

The Conservancy also expanded our Wildfire Resilience and Explore the Coast grant programs. In 2022, we funded 32 Wildfire Resilience projects with over \$15 million, ranging from fuel breaks to community wildfire training to grazing projects. And our ever popular Explore the Coast program was able to support 73 new or ongoing projects that are bringing nearly ten thousand Californians to the coast, many for the first time.

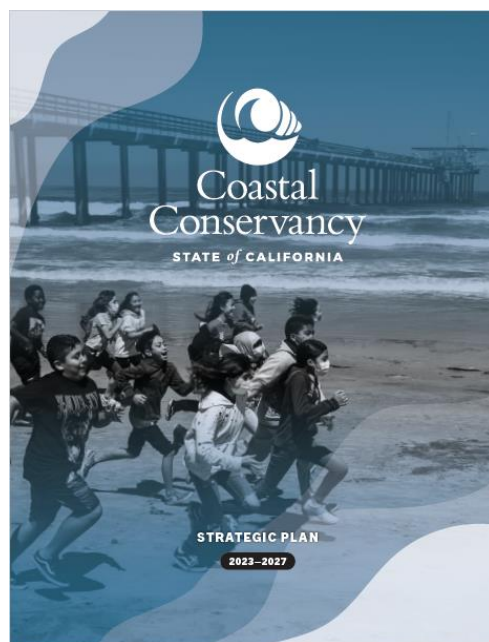
Our agency has expanded to keep pace with our growing programs. In FY 22/23, the Legislature approved 11 new positions for the Conservancy, bringing our total staff number up to 81. New positions included two staff dedicated to our Wildfire Resilience program, two dedicated to the Great Redwood Trail Agency, an Environmental Justice and Tribal Liaison Specialist, and a Diversity and Inclusion Analyst in our Human Resources Department.

2023 – 2027 Strategic Plan

Last year, we updated our 5-year strategic plan for the period 2023-2027. [The Strategic Plan](#) articulates our view of the future of the California coast and its watersheds over the next five years, including the goals and measurable objectives to prioritize our work.

The process of updating it created an opportunity for the Conservancy to hear from our partners – nonprofit organizations, tribes, local governments, community groups, state and federal agencies, private landowners, conservation organizations, other conservation funders, and the public about their vision and priorities for our work. During 2022, the Conservancy conducted focus groups, listening sessions, webinars, and online surveys to solicit input on the plan. In total, over 1,000 individuals contributed to its development.

The plan, which was adopted by our Board in December 2022, identifies three critical issues that set the context for our work over the next five years: addressing inequity, the climate crisis, and funding. It also lays out three key strategies for achieving our goals: accelerate action, build capacity and invest in meaningful engagement, and implement existing plans. The full plan, including the quantifiable goals and objectives we have set to measure the effectiveness of our work over the next five years can be found at <https://scc.ca.gov/about/plan/>.



Addressing Inequity

The Coastal Conservancy is committed to addressing injustices and inequities along the California coast. In 2020, the Coastal Conservancy Board adopted Justice, Equity, Diversity,

and Inclusion Guidelines (JEDI Guidelines) that set out principles about our agency's role in promoting equity, inclusion, and diversity and addressing environmental justice. They are accompanied by a Guidelines in Action document that identifies specific actions to embed those principles in our work.

In 2022, the Conservancy made progress in implementing the JEDI Guidelines by changing our funding programs to reduce complexity, redundancy, and workload for applicants with the intention of making our funding accessible to a broader range of grantees. We also created new resources including informational videos and infographics to help applicants navigate the application and grant management processes. We continue to listen to feedback from grantees and stakeholders to improve our grantmaking and grant management to help every project succeed.

We also introduced a new grant program, Coastal Stories, that aims to make the outdoors more inclusive and welcoming for all Californians by fostering representation of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and other historically excluded groups in outdoor spaces through storytelling. In 2022, the program ran its first grant round and funded six projects that will plan, develop, and implement storytelling installations or materials that represent communities and voices that have been historically excluded in the storytelling of California's coast and publicly accessible lands.

Looking at the challenging economic times ahead, we are confident in California's commitment to a resilient, restored, and accessible coast. The Conservancy is well positioned to advance the goals of our strategic plan in 2023 through continued support for coastal resources, climate resilience, and projects that help more Californians access and enjoy the coast.

- Amy Hutzel
February 2023

In 2022, the Board of the Coastal Conservancy authorized **\$151.7 million** in grants. These included:

Wildfire Resilience

- Authorized over **\$15 million to 32 separate Wildfire Resilience projects** throughout our jurisdiction.
- Awarded a \$1,992,200 grant to the Alameda County Fire Department to develop and equip a fuels reduction crew of approximately 12 individuals who would work with homeowners and with **on-the-ground vegetation fuel reduction projects** across Alameda County.
- The Urban Corps of San Diego County's Northern San Diego County Fire Prevention Project completed needed **fuel breaks along specific evacuation routes** in San Diego County.
- Supported \$2.2 million in grants in San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Monterey counties for projects that **reduce wildland vegetation fuels**, including at Midpeninsula Regional

Open Space District preserves, Pie Ranch, City of Santa Cruz open spaces, and Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District's Garland Ranch Regional Park.

- Funded efforts to **increase the regional capacity** in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties to plan and permit wildfire resilience projects.
- Helped fund **biochar demonstration and research projects** in Sonoma County, Alameda County and Santa Cruz County.



Prescribed burn at the Santa Lucia Preserve. Photo: Alix Solomen

Coastal Stories

- Canal Arts will collect **tribal and immigrant stories** and develop and install signage along a two-mile stretch of Bay Trail to share a chronological story about the past, present, and future communities and coastal landscape of San Rafael's Canal area.
- The City of Crescent City will tell **ten unique Tolowa stories** with videos linked to QR codes displayed on kiosks throughout Beachfront Park in Crescent City.
- Color the Water will plan and develop up to three interactive and immersive **surf art murals** that will serve as public landmarks on the Venice coast, in the community of Watts, and potentially at Dockweiler State Beach in Los Angeles.
- East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice will plan and co-create two large murals that will document the **historical use and relevance of Sleepy Lagoon for the Latinx community** in Maywood.
- The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center will plan and develop **stories past and present of the diverse people of Guadalupe** and their relationship to the natural wonders of the nearby Guadalupe Dunes Complex.
- The Wiyot Tribe will develop tribal interpretive content about **Wiyot land stewardship** in Humboldt Bay, and to install interpretive signage at three coastal tribal village sites (Tuluwat, Digawuttkih, Mouralherwaqh), at the Wiyot Cultural Center, and at the Humboldt Coastal Nature Center.

Explore the Coast

- Our Explore the Coast program funds coastal experiences for groups that face barriers to coastal access. Over its ten years, it has brought thousands of Californians to the coast. This year, thanks to a substantial boost to the program's funding, we were able to authorize:
 - **\$3,301,005** to 29 nonprofit organizations, 1 tribe, and 1 public entity for **31 new projects** that facilitate and enhance the public's opportunities to explore the California coast.
 - **\$6,061,729** to augment **42 grants** to nonprofit organizations and public agencies to extend previously authorized projects.
- Staff estimates that the 2022-2023 Explore the Coast grant program will engage over **9,900 people**. Of these people, the program will serve over 7,400 low-income Californians, 8,200 people of color, 283 homeless or foster youth, approximately 2,000 people for whom English is not their first language, and at least 900 people with physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities.



Groundworks San Diego Kids to the Coast Explore the Coast field trip

Regional Milestones

North Coast

- Approved funding to purchase conservation easements on the 3,862-acre **Weger Ranch** in the Big River watershed to protect redwood forest, wildlife corridors and maintain sustainable timber management; and completed the acquisition of the 26-acre **Dehaven property** in Westport for habitat protection and new coastal trail, and 28 parcels with the **Pacific Shores Subdivision** adjacent to Lake Earl, Del Norte County.
- Completed the 114-acre **Elk River Estuary Restoration** and the **Mad River Floodplain Restoration** projects, two multi-benefit projects that restore wetland habitat and provide new public access trails, including a 1-mile segment of the Humboldt Bay Trail/Great Redwood Trail, and breached the levee at the 850-acre Ocean Ranch Restoration Project in the Eel River Estuary.
- Completed the second year of construction on the **Redwood National and State Park Trails Gateway and Restoration Project** (aka Prairie Creek Restoration), a multi-year collaborative project with Save the Redwoods League, the Yurok Tribe, CalTrout, and Redwood National and State Parks to restore floodplain salmonid habitat, improve coastal trail and public access, and develop a Yurok Demonstration Site for cultural activities.
- Approved funding to construct cabins and improve an existing campground, thereby expanding low coast overnight accommodations at **Jughandle Creek Farm and Nature Center** in Mendocino County.

Great Redwood Trail

- In May 2022, the Conservancy entered into a Joint Powers Agreement with the **Great Redwood Trail Authority** (GRTA) in order to develop the Great Redwood Trail Master Plan and community engagement process, and to providing interim staffing and technical support to the GRTA. The trail is a proposed 316-mile rail trail project stretching from San Francisco Bay to Humboldt Bay for hikers, bikers, and equestrians.
- Two new members of **staff** were hired at the Conservancy to support the GRTA.
- The **Great Redwood Trail Master Plan** will be a roadmap for planning, constructing, and managing the future Great Redwood Trail. The Coastal Conservancy selected a consulting team to prepare the master plan in August, 2022, and staff are working closely with the consultants to develop and implement the community engagement strategy.
- A new **website** has been developed for the GRTA, www.greatredwoodtrail.org, which replaces the previous, antiquated North Coast Railroad Authority website.



Future site of the Great Redwood Trail. photo: Alicia Harman

Bay Area

- Completed the **Markham Elementary Living Schoolyard Demonstration Project** in Oakland, Alameda County, which removed asphalt, planted native trees and plants, and constructed a shaded outdoor classroom.
- **Breached the levee at Lower Walnut Creek** to kick off restoration and enhancement of over 200 acres of tidal wetlands complex, and to begin restoring estuary-watershed connections.
- Completed a long-awaited and highly-used **Bay Trail section in Albany**, Alameda County.
- Celebrated completion of **new park improvements at Yosemite Slough**, in San Francisco's Candlestick Point State Recreation Area.
- Completed the **Iron Triangle Urban Greening Project** in Richmond, Contra Costa County, which planted trees and installed green infrastructure such as bioswales and rain gardens.
- Completed and continued projects under the **Marin nature-based grant program**, a multi-year partnership with Marin Community Foundation to conduct innovative nature-based adaptation projects.
- Completed a **Water Trail Launch Site at Point Pinole** in Contra Costa County.
- Completed **creek restorations and greenway sections along Wildcat Creek** in the City of San Pablo, and Three Creeks Parkway at Marsh Creek in Brentwood, Contra Costa County.
- Celebrated progress on the **Invasive Spartina Project**, including construction of 15 high tide refuge islands and planting of 25,000 native seedlings (for a total of 500,000 outplanted in the last 10 years).
- Approved over \$4 million to support the **removal of the Terminal 4 Wharf** in Richmond, Contra Costa County, which will remove derelict pilings and debris, improve success of Pacific herring, pilot innovative shoreline protection techniques, and protect and enhance eelgrass beds and other biological resources.



Juan Toscano-Anderson of the Golden State Warriors at the opening of the Living Schoolyard at Markham Elementary in Oakland. Photo: Tony Daquipa, Oakland Voices

Central Coast

- Supported acquisition of over 2,600 acres of rangeland and wildlife habitat at **Rocks Ranch** which is located along a critical wildlife corridor linking the Gabilan Range to the Santa Cruz Mountains. The acquisition will permanently protect that land and provide opportunities for future public access.
- Helped permanently protect 950 acres of intact forest habitat, including old growth redwood habitat, with a conservation easement over the **YMCA Camp Jones Gulch** property. The acquisition has the dual benefit of providing the capital to the YMCA to upgrade its camp facilities so that it can continue to provide memorable camping experiences for Bay Area youth for decades to come.
- Funded two projects to expand the availability of **lower-cost overnight accommodations** along the California Coast. One will add capacity to the Santa Cruz Hostel and the other will create a new group campground at Andrew Molera State Park which will focus on serving groups from low-income and systemically excluded communities.
- Contributed \$4.25 million to the **Carmel River FREE project** which will restore the Carmel River south bank floodplain just east of Highway 1 to restore riverine processes, reduce flooding, and improve habitat and water quality in the lower river and lagoon area.

- Provided \$1 million to State Parks to improve segments of the **Coastal Trail in Garrapata State Park** to better serve the millions of annual visitors to the Big Sur coast.



Carmel River

South Coast

- Completed the once-in-lifetime acquisition of the **Randall Preserve/Genga** (formerly known as Banning Ranch) to permanently protect 350 acres of habitat and open space in coastal Orange County. This acquisition will protect threatened and endangered species, provide tribes with access to their ancestral homelands, and provide the public with opportunities to enjoy nature.
- Completed construction of **Wishing Tree Park** in Del Amo, Los Angeles. This project redeveloped an 8.5 acre brownfield site into a community-designed multi-benefit park, providing much needed outdoor recreation space for the nearly 80,000 people living within 2 miles of the Park.
- Completed installation of over 300 reef balls in San Diego Bay in partnership with the Port of San Diego to advance the **South Bay Native Oyster Living Shoreline Project** by creating habitat, stabilizing the shoreline, and reducing storm surge impacts.
- Tree People planted over 600 trees in the San Fernando Valley through the **San Fernando Green Streets Project**. The tree planting was part of an urban greening and climate heat island adaptation project.
- Scientists observed the endangered El Segundo Blue Butterfly on recently restored dune habitat as part of the **Los Angeles Living Shoreline Project**.



Randall Preserve/Genga in Newport Beach