

# **State Coastal Conservancy Addendum to California Natural Resources Agency Tribal Consultation Policy**

**January 20, 2026**

The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) released an updated Tribal Consultation Policy on September 26, 2025. As a department within CNRA, the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) is governed by this policy. CNRA's policy incorporates some flexibility, allowing departments to implement it in a way that conforms to their mission and structure while still honoring and furthering the goals and consulting early, often, and meaningfully regarding agency actions. This addendum to the CNRA policy explains how SCC's mission and structure affects its implementation of the policy.

## **Conservancy Mission and Structure**

As described in our mission statement, the Conservancy acts with others to protect and restore, and increase public access to, California's coast, ocean, coastal watersheds and the San Francisco Bay Area. We do so primarily by providing funding to a large number of partners and projects across California. The Conservancy Board makes funding decisions 4-5 times a year at its public meetings and authorizes an average of 20 projects at each of its meetings.

As of 2025, the Conservancy has over 680 active projects and 38 staff that manage them. The level of staff involvement in a given project can vary from simply providing funding to supporting project development and implementation to being the lead agency carrying out a project, with principal responsibility for planning, permitting, and implementation.

## **Consultation Timing**

The CNRA consultation policy recommends providing 90 days for tribes to respond to a consultation request, while deeming 60-day consultation periods acceptable for time-sensitive matters or projects, and 30-days only allowable in an emergency. In keeping with this policy, SCC will strive to notify tribes about potential actions 90 days before Board meetings, with 60 days as the minimum consultation periods except in emergency situations.

## **Consultation Method**

The Conservancy's consultation method is based on both 1) a desire to minimize burden to tribes, who receive a large number of consultation notices, and 2) be achievable within the work load capacity of Conservancy staff. While there are exceptions based on project timing, the Conservancy sends a notice for projects expected to be considered for authorization at upcoming Board meetings. The Conservancy's notice includes descriptions of each of the

projects that will be considered. If a contact email is provided in the NAHC list and the tribe has not notified the Conservancy that they prefer to be contacted by other means, the Conservancy will send an email notice. If no contact email is provided, the Conservancy will send a letter.

### Staff Presence at Consultations

If a Tribe requests consultation, Conservancy staff will work with the Tribe to arrange a meeting. If the Tribal Chair will be attending the consultation meeting, the Conservancy Executive Officer will attend as well. If tribal staff will be attending but not the Tribal Chair, Conservancy staff will ask the tribe whether it is acceptable to have the Conservancy's regional manager, statewide tribal liaison, regional tribal liaison, and project manager attend the consultation without the Conservancy's Executive Officer. If the Tribe requests attendance by the Executive Officer, Conservancy staff will endeavor to comply with that request.

### Consultation Frequency

The CNRA consultation policy recommends consulting with tribes early in project development and as often as feasible. Due to SCC's large number of projects and limited staff, it is infeasible for SCC to consult with tribes frequently for each project. For projects where SCC plays a leadership role, such as the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project or the Santa Ana River Trail Program, SCC will consult with tribes frequently, at each important project milestone. However, for the large number of projects where SCC's primary role is to provide funding, SCC will endeavor to consult with tribes 90 days before the Board action (see Consultation Timing section above). If tribes do not indicate an interest in consulting on the project, SCC will not continue to reach out to offer consultation on these projects.

Conservancy staff may ask the Board to consider additional actions related to a project after initial Board authorization. For example, staff may recommend that the Board augment the initial grant, authorize a change in the project scope, or adopt a finding under the California Environmental Quality Act. If the Conservancy has already consulted with tribes about a project, and staff is asking the Board to consider an additional action related to that same phase of the project within a year of the initial authorization, the Conservancy will not consult a second time. However, if more than a year has passed, the Conservancy will consult again if a significant change to the project is being considered.