

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

March 24, 2022

**REDWOOD NATIONAL AND STATE PARK VISITOR CENTER AND RESTORATION PROJECT –
PHASE 3 RESTORATION IMPLEMENTATION AND INITIAL TRAILS GATEWAY CONSTRUCTION**

Project No. 14-055-04
Project Manager: Su Corbaley

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Authorization to disburse funds received by the Conservancy from the Ocean Protection Council, the Wildlife Conservation Board California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program, and Save the Redwoods League to restore approximately 11.5 acres of riparian habitat on lower Prairie Creek as part of the Redwood National and State Park Visitor Center and Restoration Project at the former Orick Mill A site in Humboldt County, as follows: up to \$5,281,709 to the Yurok Tribe and up to \$1,320,427 to Caltrout, Inc.; and authorization to disburse up to \$794,000 in funds received by the Conservancy from the Wildlife Conservation Board Public Access Program to Save the Redwoods League to construct initial public access improvements and visitor amenities for the Redwood National and State Park Visitor Center and Restoration Project.

LOCATION: 1.5 miles north of Orick, Humboldt County

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: [Project Location Map](#)
- Exhibit 2: [Redwood National and State Park Visitor Center and Restoration Project Components](#)
- Exhibit 3: [Proposed Project Components](#)
- Exhibit 4: [Completed Early Implementation Project](#)
- Exhibit 5: [Prairie Creek Floodplain Restoration Project Phases](#)
- Exhibit 6: [Trails Gateway Project Components](#)
- Exhibit 7: [Project Letters](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS

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

*REDWOOD NATIONAL AND STATE PARK VISITOR CENTER AND RESTORATION PROJECT – PHASE
3 RESTORATION IMPLEMENTATION AND INITIAL TRAILS GATEWAY CONSTRUCTION*

Resolution:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes three grants, totaling an amount not to exceed \$7,396,136 (seven million three hundred ninety-six thousand, one hundred thirty-six dollars) collectively, to the Yurok Tribe, Caltrout, Inc., and Save the Redwoods League (“the grantees”) to construct elements of the Redwood National and State Park Visitor Center and Restoration Project at the former Orick Mill A site in Humboldt County as follows, subject to adjustment between the grantees by the Executive Officer: up to \$5,281,709 (five million two hundred eighty-one thousand, seven hundred nine dollars) to the Yurok Tribe and up to \$1,320,427 (one million three hundred twenty thousand, four hundred twenty-seven dollars) to Caltrout, Inc. for the implementation of riparian and fish habitat restoration projects on lower Prairie Creek, and up to \$794,000 (seven hundred ninety four thousand dollars) to Save the Redwoods League for the construction of public access improvements and visitor amenities.

Prior to commencement of the project components each grantee is responsible for, each shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy (Executive Officer) the following:

1. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget for their grant.
2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be retained in carrying out the project.
3. A plan for acknowledgement of Conservancy funding.
4. Evidence that all permits and approvals required to implement the project have been obtained.
5. Where applicable, evidence that the grantee has entered into agreements sufficient to enable the grantee to implement, operate, and maintain the project.
6. Prior to commencing project construction, and as appropriate, the nonprofit grantees shall enter into and record an agreement pursuant to Public Resources Code 31116(d) sufficient to protect the public interest in the improvements.

To the extent appropriate, the grantee Save the Redwoods League shall incorporate the guidelines of the Conservancy’s ‘Coastal Access Project Standards’ when implementing access improvements.

In carrying out the project, the grantees shall comply with all applicable mitigation and monitoring measures identified in the Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Redwood National and State Park Visitor Center and Restoration Project and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program adopted by the Conservancy on September 3, 2020 and comply with all measures and conditions that are required by any permit or approval. The grantees shall comply with all applicable terms and conditions imposed by the grants to the Conservancy.

Findings:

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

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapters 6 and 9 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding enhancement of coastal resources and public access, respectively.
 2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
 3. Save the Redwoods League and Caltrout, Inc. are nonprofit organizations organized under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.
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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize disbursement of funds awarded to the Conservancy by the Ocean Protection Council, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program, and Save the Redwood League, as follows: up to \$5,281,709 to the Yurok Tribe and up to \$1,320,427 to Caltrout, Inc. (“Caltrout”) to restore approximately 11.5 acres of riparian habitat on lower Prairie Creek. Staff further recommends the Conservancy authorize disbursement of \$794,000 received from the WCB Public Access Program to Save the Redwoods League (“the League”) to construct public access amenities at the site of a future visitor center for Redwood National and State Parks (RNSP) on the 125-acre former Orick Mill A site (the property), north of Orick in Humboldt County. The division of grant amounts between the Yurok Tribe and Caltrout is subject to adjustment by the Executive Officer as plans are refined. The property is located at the confluence of Prairie Creek and Redwood Creek and is nearly surrounded by Redwood National and State Park (“RNSP”) which comprises Redwood National Park (“RNP”) and Prairie Creek State Park (Exhibit 1). The authorization would fund a subset of restoration activities of the Prairie Creek Floodplain Restoration Project, and initial access improvements for the Visitor Center, two of six components of the RNSP Visitor Center and Restoration Project (Exhibit 2). In this staff report, this subset of habitat restoration and access development activities are referred to as “the project” or “the proposed project”, while the larger RNSP Visitor Center and Restoration Project is referred to as the “RNSPVCR Project”.

In 2021, Conservancy staff applied to the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) Riparian Habitat Restoration Program for final designs and implementation of restoration actions on 11.5 acres of the RNSPVCR Project site. Concurrently, the League applied to the WCB Public Access Program for initial public access improvements. WCB staff selected both applications for funding recommendations. However, to streamline administrative effort by WCB staff for work occurring at the same location, WCB staff has asked the Conservancy to receive both the restoration and public access funds in a single grant from WCB. Along the same timeline, the Conservancy was notified its application to the Ocean Protection Council’s Proposition 1 Environmental Justice Program would be awarded. To streamline Conservancy staff administrative efforts, Conservancy staff is seeking approval to disburse these funds through a single Conservancy authorization to three grantees.

Authorizing funds to three separate grantees facilitates several efficiencies: 1) the Yurok Tribe will continue to supply its all-Yurok construction crew, focusing its efforts on implementation of the restoration work; 2) Caltrout will continue to support the project by preparing final restoration construction documents, coordinating construction management, providing scheduling and regulatory compliance oversight and revegetation management, convening technical advisory and restoration team meetings, and serving as the outreach and public information liaison for the project; 3) the League will move forward as it originally intended to complete its proposed access project while utilizing separate contractors to work concurrently during the restoration construction seasons; and 4) granting directly to the Yurok Tribe rather than through Caltrout avoids redundant management and administration for invoicing and streamlines payments to reduce the timeline for reimbursements to the Tribe.

The property contains the lowest one mile of Prairie Creek, a tributary to Redwood Creek. Together, Prairie Creek and Redwood Creek form the Redwood Creek watershed, once a highly functional coastal redwood ecosystem, with cool, shaded stream channels and unimpaired stream flow to the ocean. Industrial scale timber harvesting, the construction of flood control levees, roads, and municipal infrastructure, and the conversion of wetlands and bottom lands to agricultural production have had a significant impact on Redwood Creek habitat and water quality. This has resulted in a severe decline in the salmonid populations system wide and perilous conditions for threatened and endangered salmonids on the north coast. Coho salmon are critically vulnerable to extinction within the next 50 to 100 years. Populations are at less than 5 percent of their historical abundance, and the number of streams capable of supporting coho salmon runs have declined by 40 to 50 percent. Redwood Creek and many of its tributaries are designated critical habitat for California coastal chinook salmon and northern California steelhead, both listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Lower Prairie Creek has also been altered by upstream logging, the former onsite mill operation and agricultural uses, and construction of Highway 101. The creek is incised and disconnected from its floodplain and off-channel habitat, and has reduced flow-capacity, deeply incised creek banks, an increased risk of flooding during high flows, and limited healthy riparian cover and instream habitat for coho, Chinook salmon, and steelhead trout.

Even with the degraded condition of the larger Redwood Creek watershed, and the limited instream habitat on the property, Prairie Creek provides some of the highest quality salmonid habitat on the north coast with its cool waters bestowing aquatic refuge in times of an uncertain climate future. Old-growth redwood forests comprise roughly half of its drainage area, with 98 percent of the watershed in public ownership. It is a stronghold for coastal cutthroat trout, a California Department of Fish and Wildlife species of special concern, whose recovery is not likely to occur without recovering the Redwood Creek populations. Approximately 80 percent of the listed coho salmon within the Redwood Creek population reside in the Prairie Creek subwatershed. The National Marine Fisheries Service has designated the Redwood Creek population of coho salmon as “core” to species recovery, and the Redwood Creek populations of chinook salmon and steelhead as “essential” to recovery of those species.

*REDWOOD NATIONAL AND STATE PARK VISITOR CENTER AND RESTORATION PROJECT – PHASE
3 RESTORATION IMPLEMENTATION AND INITIAL TRAILS GATEWAY CONSTRUCTION*

The Prairie Creek corridor has been a priority for protection since 1968 when the League began working with willing sellers and the National Park Service (NPS) to acquire properties in this area. Over the years, the League has added over 1,400 acres to NPS ownership. The League purchased the Orick Mill A site in 2013 to restore fish habitat, develop a segment of the California Coastal Trail (CCT), and create a world class visitor center to serve as a gateway to the RNSP. The League intends to transfer the property to NPS in 2026.

In 2015 and 2017, the Conservancy granted funds to the League to conduct community outreach, design and permit the restoration project, develop a conceptual trail plan, and complete the necessary environmental documents for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Protection Act.

Concurrently, the League funded designs for the future visitor center and for the initial public access improvements that would make the site available for public use pending transfer to NPS for construction of the future visitor center. In 2018, the restoration, trails, and visitor center projects were integrated into the single RNSPVCR Project with the Conservancy taking the lead agency role for CEQA compliance.

The RNSPVCR Project is the result of more than six years of planning to develop designs to rehabilitate the former mill site into a visitor center and to restore critical salmonid habitat on Prairie Creek. The RNSPVCR Project includes infrastructure, recreation enhancements, and habitat restoration elements to increase recreation and public educational opportunities, provide regional trail connections, restore hydrological connections and floodplain habitat, and improve habitat for native plants, fish, and wildlife. As shown in Exhibit 2, the RNSPVCR Project comprises six major components: 1) Visitor Center; 2) California Coastal Trail; 3) Canopy Walkway; 4) Yurok Demonstration Site; 5) Prairie Creek Floodplain Restoration; and 6) Libby Creek Enhancement. The proposed project for this authorization focuses on Phase 3 of the Prairie Creek Floodplain Restoration Project (PCFRP) and a subset of the Trails Gateway: Initial Access Improvements Project at the Visitor Center site. Exhibit 3 shows the location of the project elements.

The PCFRP is designed to support life history diversity for salmonids and improve resilience to environmental stressors for these and other aquatic species, and terrestrial species. The design allows for phased construction to coincide with available funding and is being implemented in four phases. In 2020, the Conservancy granted funds to the League and Yurok Tribe for Phase 1, the “Early Implementation Project” (EIP). Completed in 2021, the EIP included installation of a two-acre backwater pond in the floodplain, removal of two acres of asphalt, and invasive plant removal and revegetation on approximately 5 acres (Exhibit 4, Photos). Phase 2 is integrated with phases 1, 3, and 4 and entails removing the 21 acres of asphalt from the former mill to create the needed fill placement location for excavated soils generated with each restoration phase. **Phase 3 of the PCFRP, the subject of this authorization**, includes restoration of 11.55 acres of riparian habitat on land that is currently elevated pasture by restoring floodplain along 1000 feet of incised channel, creating 800 feet of new stream channel, dewatering and backfilling 500 feet of existing channel, creating a 1.1-acre pond of slow water refugia, and revegetating the treated areas. Phase 3 moves the channel out of its current constrained

location against Highway 101 to a meander for increased instream habitat potential. Excavated soils will be used as fill to begin to build up the future Yurok Village Site and at the site of the Trails Gateway location. Phase 4 (not yet funded) includes additional channel creation, grading and recontouring of the floodplain, removal of invasive plants, and revegetation with natives. All phases include monitoring. Exhibit 5 shows the approximate aerial extent of the four phases.

The first phase of the League’s Trails Gateway: Initial Access Improvements Project, also the subject of this authorization, includes construction of an entry road off Bald Hills Road, parking for 30 standard size vehicles, and a pedestrian plaza with benches and way finding kiosks (Exhibit 6). This is the first step toward addressing public access needs in the immediate area and to eventually provide north-south passage for bicyclists and pedestrians in an area where currently they must travel along a narrow section of Highway 101 with inadequate safety margins or line of sight. Prairie Camp Road, a former haul road on the property, traverses the property north to south along the eastern boundary of the restoration area and will ultimately be converted into the Prairie Creek Trail Corridor as a segment of the CCT and an off-highway alternative to the Pacific Coast Bike Route to bypass the hazardous highway conditions. The current proposed improvements will provide parking needed to accommodate increased visitation to RNP, provide onsite wildlife viewing opportunities and connect hikers to the future “Centennial Grove Trail and Berry Glen Connector Trail” which will be constructed on the adjacent RNP and connect with the property and the CCT.

Natural resources and permitting agencies, the local Orick community, and the Yurok Tribe have been integral participants throughout the planning of the project. The Yurok Tribe is the grantee for restoration construction activities and regional businesses provide services and supplies to the project. Permitting for the RNSPVCR Project is complete. Final construction designs for the proposed project will be completed with the proposed authorization and will fully incorporate any applicable mitigation measures from the CEQA document, and any permit conditions.

Construction is expected to occur over two seasons and be completed in late 2023, with monitoring continuing for three to five years.

Site Description: The 125-acre RNSPVCR Project site was formerly the location of a sawmill (Orick Mill A). Along with remnants of the mill development, which has been investigated for toxics and determined to be clean by the North Coast Regional Quality Control Board, the site contains pastureland, and wetland and forest habitats. The site is owned by the League and located near the unincorporated town of Orick in Humboldt County in Yurok Ancestral Territory. It is at the most downstream mile of Prairie Creek before it merges with Redwood Creek. Together these drainages form the Redwood Creek watershed. Much of the Prairie Creek subwatershed and the lower third of Redwood Creek watershed before the confluence with Prairie Creek are located within RNSP, which contains two of the world’s largest remaining redwood old-growth forests. Thousands of acres of RNSP-managed property lie immediately east of the project, while Bald Hills Road borders on the south and Highway 101 on the west.

RNSP is designated a World Heritage Site and part of the California Coast Range Biosphere Reserve, designations that reflect worldwide recognition of the park’s natural resources as

irreplaceable. The flyway for the largest intact population of the federally threatened Marbled Murrelet occurs over the property and Roosevelt Elk forage on site. Otters, beaver, black bears, great blue herons, deer, and coyotes are known to frequent the site, and coho salmon, chinook, steelhead trout, and cutthroat utilize Prairie Creek, as do amphibians including the California red-legged frog.

Legacy conditions from the mill operations at the RNSPVCR Project site include 21 acres of asphalt, an old housing site on compacted fill, grazing pastures, an incised channel with failing stream banks, disconnected floodplains, and two former logging haul roads. The stream channel is deeply incised, with 10-foot high nearly vertical or failing banks. Natural streamflow and typical annual flood events are confined to the channel and bound by an elevated floodplain, which results in a greater distance between groundwater and the floodplain and its tributaries. The deep and confined channel, with steep streambanks, limits the ability of fish to access the highly productive feeding grounds and refugia of the floodplain and existing wetland habitat, and cold-water tributaries.

With completion of the previously funded EIP, the site now includes a two-acre backwater pond and approximately five acres of newly planted riparian vegetation that provides critical slow-water rearing habitat needed in the Redwood Creek system. Initial post-construction fish sampling identified coho salmon in the new pond (see Exhibit 4).

Grant Applicant Qualifications: Each grantee brings extensive experience at Prairie Creek to complete their respective actions for this authorization. Save the Redwoods League has been the recipient of Conservancy funds for three prior grants since 2015 for planning and implementation at the site and has completed conceptual, interim, and final designs, obtained permits, and implemented construction of the EIP. Caltrout, Inc. has been the key contractor to the League for restoration planning, community outreach, environmental and permitting review, and construction scheduling and management oversight of the EIP construction. The Yurok Tribe (a federally recognized tribe) was the construction grantee for the EIP in fall 2021, successfully completing the project on budget and on time in a single season. Each organization has received Conservancy funding for several salmonid restoration planning and implementation projects in Humboldt County. Additionally, the League has completed several public access planning and implementation projects along the north coast of Mendocino and Humboldt counties. Save the Redwoods League and the Conservancy have executed a 31116(d) agreement for long-term management and maintenance of the recently completed EIP; a similar agreement will be executed for the proposed project.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy’s Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on September 23, 2021, in the following respects:

Selection Criteria

- 1. Extent to which the project helps the Conservancy accomplish the objectives in the Strategic Plan.**

See the “Consistency with Conservancy’s Strategic Plan” section below.

2. Project is a good investment of state resources.

This project is a good investment of state resources because restoration of stream-floodplain connectivity and enhancement of critical salmon habitat on Prairie Creek will benefit the populations of coho salmon, chinook, and steelhead trout in the Redwood Creek watershed in northern California. Restoration of these salmonid populations is a statewide priority.

3. Project includes a serious effort to engage tribes. Examples of tribal engagement include good faith, documented efforts to work with tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated to the project area.

The Yurok Tribe has been a core partner since project inception, with representatives participating in the planning and design for all project elements. The League has presented the project objectives to the Yurok Tribal Council and Culture Committee numerous times, seeking input and inviting collaboration; this resulted in the Yurok taking a key role in the restoration and visitor center planning, the development of interpretive designs and a Yurok Village Site component of the project, and ultimately in participating in project implementation as the restoration construction team.

4. Project benefits will be sustainable or resilient over the project lifespan.

The project is designed to restore natural processes in lower Prairie Creek. Once the restoration work is complete the streams will be self-sustaining. The project is not in an area threatened by sea level rise but by restoring the creek channel and floodplain and enhancing the riparian cover, the project will provide fish and terrestrial species refuge from downstream and downslope habitat that may be negatively affected by climate change.

5. Project delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impact.

The project will provide multiple benefits. The project will provide direct economic benefits to the town of Orick and the Yurok Tribe, both designated as Severely Disadvantaged Communities. These benefits will be yielded during construction of the project, as local contractors and materials suppliers have job and workforce development opportunities, and particularly to the Yurok Tribe as the key construction crew for restoration. Additionally, the project directly supports the federal and state goals of helping restore endangered salmonids.

6. Project planned with meaningful community engagement and broad community support.

There has been extensive community engagement with key stakeholders including the residents of the small community of Orick, the Yurok Tribe, and local, state, and federal agencies. During the conceptual planning phase, seven stakeholder meetings were held, and the results carefully documented and incorporated. The purpose of these stakeholder meetings was to introduce the project and seek meaningful input to develop a project scope that would restore salmonid and terrestrial wildlife habitat, develop a trails system for public access to the property and the larger RNSP network and improve safe active transportation for the local community by developing an off-highway bike path. Concurrently, the League held public meetings and visioning sessions with the Orick community, inviting community members to

*REDWOOD NATIONAL AND STATE PARK VISITOR CENTER AND RESTORATION PROJECT – PHASE
3 RESTORATION IMPLEMENTATION AND INITIAL TRAILS GATEWAY CONSTRUCTION*

provide input on what it would take to reshape the former mill site into a world class visitor center that would maximize local community benefits. Through these meetings, stakeholders were able to shape the Project for improved habitat values and future public uses that will benefit the community by bolstering health and providing local jobs and business opportunities related to expanded tourism.

The proposed project has wide community support. Project letters are included in Exhibit 7.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$0
Ocean Protection Council (<i>via</i> a grant to the Conservancy)	\$975,000
Wildlife Conservation Board (<i>via</i> a grant to the Conservancy)	\$5,921,136
Save the Redwoods League	\$1,084,000
Caltrout (<i>via</i> US Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program Grant)	\$24,997
Project Total	\$8,005,133

The proposed funds for Phase 3 restoration include an award of \$6,157,136 in grants to the Conservancy as follows: \$1,000,000 from the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) Coastal Environmental Justice Solicitation and \$5,951,136 from the Wildlife Conservation Board (comprising \$5,157,136 from the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program and \$794,000 from the Public Access Program), and a cash contribution of \$500,000 from the League for habitat restoration activities. SCC will retain \$55,000 of the WCB and OPC restoration grant funds for staff to administer the grants to the Yurok Tribe and Caltrout. Caltrout is providing \$24,997 awarded from the US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) Coastal Program toward restoration. The League is contributing \$584,000 for access improvements. The Coastal Conservancy does not typically require matching funds, nor does it require documentation of expenditures from other funders. Typical grant conditions require Grantees to provide any funds needed to complete the project. The League’s contribution for habitat restoration activities will be administered through the Conservancy and granted to the Yurok Tribe and Caltrout for improved administrative efficiency.

The OPC governing board authorized its \$1,000,000 grant to the Conservancy, on December 3, 2021. The \$5,951,136 WCB grant will be considered at its May 22, 2022 meeting. The Conservancy staff recommendation to authorize disbursement of these funds would typically occur after the granting agency’s board action. However, the next Conservancy meeting following the WCB meeting is not until September 2022 and waiting until then for Conservancy authorization to disburse WCB funds would result in missing the 2022 construction season, causing a one-year construction delay. The League intends to transfer ownership and management responsibility of the property to RNP by 2026. Any delays in construction could delay the transfer and opening the site to the public. Conservancy authorization of the recommended funding will position the Conservancy and the grantees to begin construction

activities as soon as the OPC and WCB funds are in place at the Conservancy (and pending WCB board action).

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed funding authorization is consistent with Chapter 6 (Sections 31251-31270) and Chapter 9 (Section 31400-31410) of the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code regarding, respectively, the enhancement of coastal resources and the implementation of a system of public accessways to and along the state’s coastline.

Pursuant to § 31251, the Conservancy may award grants to nonprofit organizations and public agencies for the purpose of enhancement of coastal resources, which, because of human-induced events, or incompatible land uses, have suffered loss of natural and scenic values. This project will restore the function of a portion of the Prairie Creek floodplain, which has been altered by past timber activities and operations at the mill site, thereby improving water quality and enhancing habitat for salmonids and other coastal and marine resources.

Pursuant to Section 31252, the proposed project is located within an area identified in the Humboldt County Local Coastal Plan (“LCP”) (1982) as requiring public action to resolve existing or potential resource protection problems. The LCP identifies the need for restoration of sensitive habitats affecting coastal resources, including Redwood Creek and its habitat.

Chapter 3.41, Sections A.1.d. and A.1.g. of the LCP defines environmentally sensitive habitats as “[R]ivers, creeks, and associated riparian habitats including Redwood Creek,...” and “[O]ther critical habitats for rare and endangered species listed on State or Federal lists”, respectively. Chapter 3.41, Section G requires that “the biological productivity and quality of coastal streams...appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms shall be maintained and restored” and identifies Redwood Creek among these streams. Prairie Creek is a critical tributary to Redwood Creek and supports most of the state and federally listed endangered coho, Chinook and steelhead trout in the Redwood Creek system. The project site is located on Prairie Creek, approximately one and a half miles feet upstream of the confluence of Prairie and Redwood Creeks. Enhancing habitat in Prairie Creek benefits salmonids of Redwood Creek and is thus consistent with the LCP.

Pursuant to § 31251.2(a), the Conservancy may fund projects outside the coastal zone when the project will enhance a watershed resource that is partially outside the coastal zone for purposes of enhancing coastal resources within the coastal zone. The project site is located outside the coastal zone. However, Prairie Creek drains to Redwood Creek, which is located partially in the coastal zone. Prairie Creek supports 80% of the coho salmon population in the Redwood Creek watershed. Thus, enhancing habitat in a watershed located outside of the coastal zone will directly benefit salmonid resources both within and outside the coastal zone.

Pursuant to § 31253, the Conservancy may provide up to the total of the cost of any coastal resource enhancement project taking into consideration the total cost of the project, the fiscal resources of the grantee, the urgency of the project and other factors as determined by the Conservancy. Consistent with this section, the proposed contribution, intended for phase 3 of a

significant coastal habitat enhancement project, is a reasonable component of the overall project cost to date. The League has invested not only in the acquisition of the property but has contributed significant cash and in-kind staff time for critical surveys, planning and design efforts, and community outreach. Further, the League has secured several grants from federal and state agencies for planning and designs. Together, the League cash, in-kind staff time and outside grant contributions for project development since 2015 (exclusive of property acquisition) have exceeded \$1,877,286 and the League is providing \$584,000 to complete the initial Trails Gateway improvements of the proposed project. Caltrout has provided in kind staff time to planning and implementation phases and will contribute grant funds received from the USFWS Coastal Grant Program toward phase 3 enhancement activities of the proposed project.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S [2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN](#) GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 2, Objective D** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will construct new public access amenities including a parking lot, benches, and an ADA-compliant visitor plaza to serve as a gateway to the RNSP system of trails.

Consistent with **Goal 5, Objective C** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will preserve and restore a fish and wildlife corridor between core habitat areas along the coast and from coastal to inland habitats.

Consistent with **Goal 6, Objective B** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will restore and enhance 11.5 acres of coastal habitats, including coastal wetlands and stream corridors.

Consistent with **Goal 6, Objective D** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will preserve and enhance a coastal watershed and floodplain.

Consistent with **Goal 6, Objective E** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will improve fish habitat including projects to improve fish passage, ensure sufficient instream flow, and provide in stream habitat and favorable water temperatures.

Consistent with **Goal 16, Objective A** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the proposed project is in a severely disadvantaged community.

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

On September 3, 2020, the Conservancy adopted the "Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Redwood National and State Park Visitor Center and Restoration Project" (IS/MND) and authorized funding for the project. The Conservancy filed a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse on September 8, 2020. The project remains substantially unchanged from its description in the IS/MND, and no new environmental information or change in circumstances require a re-evaluation of the potential environmental effects of the project. (14 Cal Code. Regs. Section 15162(b)). Accordingly, the proposed authorization remains consistent with the CEQA findings adopted by the Conservancy in connection with the September 3, 2020 authorization.