



Memo

Date: September 22, 2022

To: Members of the State Coastal Conservancy

From: Amy Hutzler, Executive Officer
Mary Small, Deputy Executive Officer

CC: Oversight Members

RE: Draft Strategic Plan 2023-2027

The Coastal Conservancy's Draft Strategic Plan for 2023 through 2027 was released for public comment on August 15th. The draft Plan is posted on the Conservancy's website: <https://scc.ca.gov/about/plan/> The public comment period will extend until October 1st. Public comments can be submitted using an online form or emailed to StrategicPlan@scc.ca.gov.

The draft 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 draft Plan provides a roadmap for the years ahead and describes our role in implementing state and regional environmental plans, identifies, and describes the context for the Conservancy's work and key strategies to achieve its goals.

During the Spring of 2022, over 1,000 individuals were engaged to provide input to help us draft this Plan. Outreach included online and in-person focus groups and listening sessions, and an online survey and interactive project mapping tool. While the Conservancy reached out to existing partners, a significant component of the outreach focused on reaching communities and inviting organizations who were new to the Conservancy, including community based organizations, tribal nonprofits, organizations focused on equitable coastal access, and many others. We appreciate the time and thoughtfulness of everyone who provided input into the draft Strategic Plan. Their ideas and insights helped the Conservancy to understand Coastal Resilience needs and how to better meet the needs of its partners.

In describing the context of the draft Plan, we identify three key issues:

Addressing Inequity

In 2020, the Coastal Conservancy Board adopted Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Guidelines (JEDI Guidelines). This Strategic Plan takes another step to integrate the JEDI Guidelines into the foundation of the Conservancy's work by identifying specific objectives related to the goal of addressing inequity. Goal 1 in this Strategic Plan is Prioritize Equity. Under that Goal we have identified specific objectives and metrics to track our work over the next five years.

Climate Crisis

California is already experiencing the impacts of a changing climate, including rising sea level, severe heat waves, variable precipitation, a succession of droughts, and intense wildfires. The Conservancy has worked for nearly 50 years to conserve California's incredible coastal resources; those resources face an unprecedented threat from impacts of a changing climate and there is an urgent need to take action to adapt to these impacts. Many reports identify the need to implement nature-based adaptation measures.

Funding

The climate crisis in California is being met with unprecedented investment by the state in nature-based climate adaptation projects. In the Fiscal Year (FY) 22-23 Budget, the Coastal Conservancy received \$350 million for climate resilience, \$120 million for nature-based sea level rise resilience, and \$10 million for wildfire resilience. The FY 22-23 California budget is a once in a generation public investment in resilience, outdoor access, and natural resources. In addition to the funding for the Coastal Conservancy, the budget includes additional funding available to other partner agencies for related work.

The draft Strategic Plan identifies three key strategies for achieving the Conservancy's goals.

Implement Existing Plans

The Conservancy's Strategic Plan implements California's broader strategies for conservation and climate change adaptation as articulated in several recent state plans, including: Pathways to 30x30; Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy; the State Agency Sea-Level Rise Action Plan; the Ocean Protection Council's Strategic Plan; the California Climate Adaptation Strategy; and the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan. The draft Strategic Plan builds off these plans to articulate the Conservancy's role advancing the goals and strategies in those documents. The Conservancy will also continue to support regional planning, prioritizing inclusive partnerships that increase capacity in local and systemically excluded communities and tribes to ensure the costs and benefits of conservation are equitably distributed and shared.

Accelerate Action

The urgency of the climate crisis combined with the exceptional investment of state funding create an opportunity for the Conservancy to take bold action over the next five years.

Throughout the engagement process, we heard the need for the Conservancy to help meet this moment and make real progress advancing climate resilience. Project partners want to see us “do big things”.

Build Capacity and Invest in Meaningful Engagement

Accelerating action must be balanced with the need to improve engagement and build capacity with systemically excluded communities. Our engagement process and other state plans highlight the need for the Conservancy to invest funds and time to build capacity in communities so that those communities can develop their own plans for their future. Intertribal focus group participants encouraged the Conservancy to develop engagement practices that go beyond our existing Tribal Consultation Policy.

The draft Strategic Plan is organized around five goals. Under each goal there are more specific objectives and under each objective, quantified metrics that will be used to measure success. The metrics were determined through consultation with project staff, key stakeholders, project partners, and statewide and regional plans.

Goal 1: Prioritize Equity

Commit Funding to Benefit Systemically Excluded Communities

Metric: 40% of funding allocated to projects that benefit systemically excluded communities

Return Power to Tribes

Metric: 35 projects that return power to tribes

Support Systemically Excluded Communities

Metric: 60 projects that support systemically excluded communities

Incorporate Workforce Development in Our Projects

Metric: 40 projects that incorporate workforce development

Goal 2: Enjoy the Coast

Explore the Coast Program Grants

Metric: 100 Explore the Coast Grants

Metric: 35,000 Explore the Coast Priority Community Members served

Coastal Stories Program

Metric: 16 Coastal Stories Program projects

Expand Accessibility

Metric: 35 projects that expand accessibility for people with disabilities

Build Trails

Metric: 125 miles trail planned

Metric: 80 miles trail built

Metric: 252 miles Great Redwood Trail Rail-banked

Recreation Facilities & Amenities

Metric: 40 recreational facilities & amenities projects planned

Metric: 30 recreational facilities & amenities projects built

Piers and Waterfronts

Metric: 8 pier and waterfront projects planned

Metric: 4 pier and waterfront projects built

Explore the Coast Overnight

Metric: 8 Explore the Coast Overnight projects planned

Metric: 4 Explore the Coast Overnight projects built

Metric: 2 pilot projects that expand Explore the Coast Overnight partnerships

Goal 3: Protect & Restore the Coast

Conserve Land

Metric: 50,000 acres of land conserved

Restore or Enhance Habitats

Metric: 85 habitat restoration or enhancement projects planned

Metric: 11,000 acres of habitat restored or enhanced

Metric: 15 wildlife corridor protection or enhancement projects

Metric: 30 anadromous fish habitat or watershed enhancement projects

Working Lands

Metric: 30 projects to support working lands

Cut Green Tape

Metric: 8 projects to cut green tape

Goal 4: Climate Ready

Sea Level Rise Adaptation Projects

Metric: 50 sea level rise adaptation projects planned

Metric: 30 sea level rise adaptation projects implemented

Metric: 8 sea level rise adaptation interpretive or educational projects

Wildfire Resilience Projects

Metric: 20 wildfire resilience projects planned

Metric: 5,000 acres of wildfire resilience projects implemented

Multi-benefit Nature-Based Climate Adaptation

Metric: 20 multi-benefit, nature-based climate adaptation projects planned

Metric: 15 multi-benefit, nature-based climate adaptation projects implemented

Goal 5: Organizational Goals

Support our Staff

Metric: Provide training for staff to expand skills and knowledge related to tribal engagement, access for people with disabilities, and equity.

Metric: Support retention efforts including opportunities to increase salaries, professional growth opportunities, and continued growth of an inclusive workplace.

Metric: Support recruitment and hiring efforts that ensure the candidate pools for Conservancy jobs reflect California's diversity, and implicit bias in hiring processes is addressed.

Transparency

Metric: Provide annual JEDI Report that includes an audit and review of lessons learned from our tribal engagement and other JEDI initiatives.

Metric: Provide annual Financial Report to the Conservancy Board and the public.

Metric: Provide annual report on Strategic Plan progress, with qualitative metrics and highlights of major accomplishments.

Public comments on the draft Strategic Plan will be accepted until October 1st. Conservancy staff have also reached out to tribal governments offering tribal consultation on the draft Plan. Staff will review public comments and revise the draft Plan during the month of October. We plan to bring a final Plan to the Conservancy Board for its consideration at its December meeting.