

News Release



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Contact:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Announces Grants to Protect Coastal Wetlands in California

Dan Ashe, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announced today that twenty-eight coastal wetland habitat restorations projects benefiting fish and wildlife in twelve States will be funded with \$20.3 million from 2016 National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program. The competitive grant program provides matching-grants to coastal and Great Lakes States in order to acquire, restore or enhance coastal wetlands and adjacent uplands to provide long-term conservation benefits to fish, wildlife and their habitat. The \$20.3 million investment will be leveraged by \$20.5 million in non-federal matching funds.

The National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant program is funded through the Sport Fish and Boating Safety Trust Fund. Financial resources for that trust fund come from federal excise taxes on fuel for boats and recreational fishing equipment, through the Sport Fish Restoration program.

The California State Coastal Conservancy, and their partners, submitted nine applications to the competition, and all were selected for funding. More than \$5.5 million in National Coastal Wetlands Grants was awarded to California projects. Projects funded by the 2016 grant program include:

Project Title	Grant Amount	Non-federal Share	Cong. Dist	Total Project Cost
South Bay Salt Pond Wetland Restoration	\$1,000,000	\$500,000	18	\$1,500,000
Eel River Estuary Preserve Enhancement	\$1,000,000	\$457,501	2	\$1,457,501
Klamath River Estuary Wetlands Conservation	\$318,800	\$160,452	2	\$479,252
South Jacoby Creek Restoration	\$475,409	\$223,722	2	\$699,131
Corte Madera Ecological Reserve Expansion	\$622,000	\$1,082,253	2	\$1,704,253
San Luis Rey River Wetlands Conservation	\$394,300	\$228,700	49	\$623,000

UCSB Campus Open Space Vernal Pool Complex	\$1,000,000	\$500,000	24	\$1,500,000
Integrated Restoration in San Francisco Bay	\$500,000	\$307,000	11	\$807,000
Ormond Beach Wetlands Acquisition (partially funded)	\$225,950	\$205,000	26	\$630,000

Coastal wetlands provide valuable habitat for many fish and wildlife species, help keep our oceans cleaner, and serve as buffers to protect coastal communities from storms and flooding. These grants are a part of the Service’s larger Coastal Program, which uses a voluntary and collaborative approach to habitat conservation. By providing financial and technical assistance to our State partners, the Coastal Program enlists their help in conserving coastal areas threatened by development and predicted sea-level rise resulting from climate change.

For more information about the program, contact the Samantha Marcum, Regional Coastal Program Coordinator (Samantha_marcum@fws.gov), or Larry Riley, Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (Lawrence_riley@fws.gov), or visit the program's web page at <http://www.fws.gov/coastal/CoastalGrants/>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

Synopsis of 2016 National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grants in California

Corte Madera Ecological Reserve Expansion Project

The California State Coastal Conservancy proposes to protect and restore 20.2 acres valuable coastal wetlands and associated uplands adjacent to Corte Madera Bay in the San Francisco Estuary in Marin County, California. It will protect 5.2 acres of filled historic tidelands through fee simple acquisition, and restore tidal marsh and transitional ecotone to the property. In addition, the project will enhance 15 acres of adjacent existing marsh by improving tidal circulation, creating adjacent high tide refuge, and managing access to reduce disturbance. The restored habitat will be permanently protected and managed as part of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (CDFW) Corte Madera Ecological Reserve. The Marin Audubon Society is in the process of purchasing the property and will maintain ownership until CDFW can accept ownership. The project’s primary beneficiary is the endangered Ridgway’s rail. Other special status species, wetland dependent birds, and fish will also benefit.

State/Territory	Request	Non-federal match	Other federal funds	Total project cost
California	\$622,000	\$704,253		\$1,704,253

Eel River Estuary Preserve Enhancement Project

The California State Coastal Conservancy proposes to restore historical hydrological linkage, estuarine function, and aquatic and terrestrial habitat conditions to 227.3 acres of wetlands and associated uplands in the Eel River estuary at the Eel River Estuary Preserve. Only a fraction of the original Eel River Estuary complex is currently subject to tidal influence, and most of that lies within the Riverside Ranch, across the Salt River from the Preserve. The loss of aquatic habitat within the Eel River Estuary has contributed to the decline of salmon and steelhead, tidewater goby, coastal cutthroat trout, longfin smelt, and green sturgeon. The estuary is critical habitat for juvenile salmonid species. Restoration of the tidal prism and marsh will restore critical fish passage and nursery habitat. Salmonids migrate through or reside in the estuary as juveniles and then again as spawning adults. Juvenile salmonids utilize the estuary as nursery areas for extended periods before entering the ocean.

State/Territory	Request	Non-federal match	Other federal funds	Total project cost
California	\$1,000,000	\$457,501		\$1,457,501

Integrated Restoration in San Francisco Bay

The California State Coastal Conservancy proposes to enhance 100 acres of native habitat stretching from the tidal marsh zone to the intertidal and shallow subtidal zones, as part of a sustainable estuarine system that restores ecological function and is resilient to the effects of climate change. The project will use a combination of bank stabilization and habitat restoration techniques to achieve multiple benefits at Giant Marsh in Richmond. The project will protect the shoreline, minimize erosion and maintain coastal processes while protecting and enhancing habitat for fish, birds, and other estuarine species, including the federally endangered California Ridgway's Rail, California least tern, Pacific herring as well as eight additional special status species, three additional fish species, and nine additional coastal-dependent migratory bird species. The project will accomplish this by using innovative techniques to restore the gumplant-cordgrass-oyster-eelgrass habitat, including planting 15,000 marsh plants, constructing oyster reefs, and reestablishing eelgrass beds.

State/Territory	Request	Non-federal match	Other federal funds	Total project cost
California	\$500,000	\$307,000		\$807,000

Klamath River Estuary Wetlands Conservation Project

The California Coastal Conservancy, partnering with the Northcoast Regional Land Trust, proposes to acquire a conservation easement to permanently protect 80 acres of restored habitat on the Bessette Ranch located at the mouth of the Klamath River in Del Norte County, California. The project would protect 41 acres of riparian and floodplain wetlands, 6 acres of floodplain uplands, and 33 acres of adjacent upland forests and grasslands. Together, these wetlands and adjacent uplands provide a large block of

complementary coastal habitats and protect the water quality of the Klamath River Estuary. These restored habitats support migratory waterfowl, anadromous fish species, and other wetland-dependent wildlife. The Klamath River is one of the most important salmon streams in the state of California and the three tributaries running through the Besette Ranch wetlands function as rearing grounds and refugia for coho salmon, supporting coho recovery throughout the entire Klamath River basin.

State/Territory	Request	Non-federal match	Other federal funds	Total project cost
California	\$318,800	\$160,452		\$479,252

Ormond Beach Wetlands Acquisition Project

The California Coastal Conservancy proposes to acquire and protect in perpetuity the 13.06-acre Ormond Beach Wetlands Property as part of the over 1,000 acre historic Ormond Beach wetlands complex in Ventura County, California. Historically, Ormond Beach contained a diversity of habitats, including sandy beaches, coastal lagoons and estuaries, fore and back dune areas, brackish and seasonal freshwater marshes, freshwater drainages, grasslands, transitional uplands, and over two miles of beach. This property is one of five priority acquisitions remaining to be secured before restoration efforts can reestablish the historic hydrologic linkage with the adjoining 1,200-acre Mugu Lagoon wetlands. The combined 2,200-acre wetland complex would constitute the largest coastal wetland in southern California. Once the restoration is complete, Ormond Beach will provide habitat for five federally listed and eight state-listed species, over 200 species of birds.

State/Territory	Request	Non-federal match	Other federal funds	Total project cost
California	\$425,000*	\$205,000		\$630,000

*Recommended for funding at \$225,950.

San Luis Rey River Wetlands Conservation Project

The California State Coastal Conservancy, partnering with the Trust for Public Land, proposes to protect through fee title acquisition 9.66 acres of valuable wetlands, riparian, and upland habitat located in the San Luis Rey River watershed one mile upstream from the Pacific Ocean in San Diego County, California. The San Luis Rey River Wetlands Conservation Project (the project) will permanently protect and enable the future restoration of 4.83 acres of southern willow scrub and southern cottonwood willow riparian forest, two nationally and regionally declining coastal wetland types. This project is part of a larger acquisition which will protect a total of 35.52 acres of coastal sage scrub habitat. The project will provide flood protection, improve water quality, allow for climate adaptation, enhance wildlife values, and protect and enhance native habitat connectivity. In addition, uplands associated with the wetlands provide forage and refuge to wildlife and buffer wetlands from soil erosion and contaminants.

State/Territory	Request	Non-federal match	Other federal funds	Total project cost
California	\$394,300	\$228,700		\$623,000

South Jacoby Creek Restoration Project

The California State Coastal Conservancy proposes to restore a 29.4 acre complex of tidal wetlands associated with Jacoby Creek adjacent to Humboldt Bay in Humboldt County, California. The project area is located in the lower reaches of the Jacoby Creek watershed, a subwatershed and tributary of Humboldt Bay. Humboldt Bay is one of the

most notable coastal wetlands along Pacific Coast and provides resting, refuge, and nesting habitat for over 100,000 shorebirds and thousands of migrating birds along the Pacific Flyway. The project is located within the 217-acre Arcata Baylands, managed by the City of Arcata for conservation. Protection and restoration of the project area will benefit multiple listed species. The Jacoby Creek watershed supports important habitat for resident and migrating songbirds, waterfowl, and shorebirds; and critical spawning, rearing, and migration habitat for anadromous fish, including federally threatened coho salmon and steelhead trout.

State/Territory	Request	Non-federal match	Other federal funds	Total project cost
California	\$475,409	\$223,722		\$699,131

South Bay Salt Ponds Restoration Project - Phase 2

The California Coastal Conservancy proposes to restore a 275-acre mosaic of tidal wetlands and upland transition zone as part of Phase 2 implementation of the South Bay Salt Pond (SBSP) Restoration Project in the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. The project includes restoration of 220 acres of estuarine intertidal emergent, 25 acres estuarine intertidal unconsolidated bottom, 20 acres estuarine subtidal unconsolidated bottom. Ten acres of upland transition zone will be created for high tide refugia. Working with multiple federal, state, and local partners, the SBSP Restoration Project is using innovative and cost-effective restoration methods to improve coastal wetland habitats on a landscape scale. The primary species to benefit from the project include two federally endangered species, the California Ridgway's rail and the salt marsh harvest mouse, as well as federally threatened steelhead trout.

State/Territory	Request	Non-federal match	Other federal funds	Total project cost
California	\$1,000,000	\$500,000		\$1,500,000

UCSB Campus Open Space Vernal Pool Complex

The California Coastal Conservancy proposes to restore 12 acres of rare wetland and upland habitat on the University of California, Santa Barbara's (UCSB's) South Parcel, including a 6-acre vernal pool complex, back dune swale, vernal marsh and salt marsh wetland habitats. Located within the 652-acre Ellwood Devereux coastal open space area, this project is a component of a larger effort to restore nearly 50 acres of estuarine and palustrine wetlands and 50 acres of transitional and upland habitats on adjacent lands. Vernal pools are part of the palustrine emergent-non-persistent group of declining wetland types nationally and are recognized locally for their rarity and the unique suite of plants, invertebrates and wildlife that are adapted to them. It implements important recovery actions for five federally listed species: the federally endangered tidewater goby, California least tern, and Ventura marsh milkvetch; and the federally threatened western snowy plover and California red-legged frog.

State/Territory	Request	Non-federal match	Other federal funds	Total project cost
California	\$1,000,000	\$500,000		\$1,500,000

