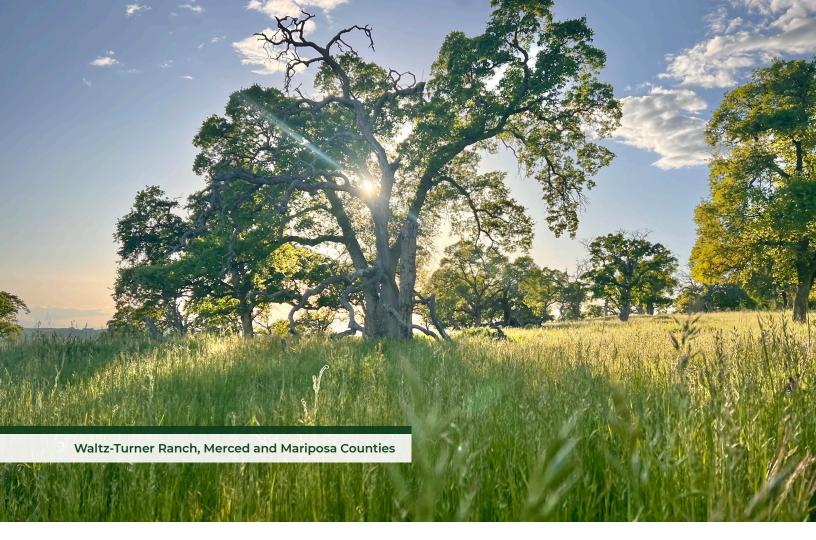
California Annual Progress Report

PATHWAYS TO

JULY 2025





Administration of Governor Gavin Newsom

July 2025

The creation of the Pathways to 30x30 strategy and the progress made so far would not have been possible without the many dedicated individuals and groups who are a part of the <u>30x30 Partnership</u>. California's 30x30 initiative is designed to be inclusive and transparent. All who are committed to its principles and objectives are invited to work together to achieve its goal.

Cover Photo:

Nicholas Paoni, California Ocean & Coastal Amateur Photography Contest



Executive Summary

Now more than ever, California's conservation leadership matters. Our commitment to conserve 30% of the state's lands and coastal waters by 2030 (known as 30x30), will help restore our natural systems and combat biodiversity loss, both of which are critical for the survival of plants and wildlife as well as our own health and well-being. The foundation of the state's strong economy as well as the scenic beauty and recreational opportunities we cherish, healthy lands and waters also buffer us from climate-change-driven extreme drought, wildfire, and floods. Nearly every country in the world has united around this effort to conserve <u>30% of our planet by 2030</u>.

California committed to 30x30 in 2020, and we are now at the halfway point. We are excited to report that as of **June 2025, 26.1% of California's lands and 21.9% of its coastal waters are under long-term conservation and care.** This includes an additional 853,000 acres of conserved lands and 191,000 acres of conserved coastal waters an area similar to Glacier National Park—counted just this year. This milestone was reached through the addition of newly conserved areas, areas with improved protections, ancestral land return, and existing conserved lands brought into the centralized public database so they can be incorporated.

This year, the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) adopted <u>a roadmap to achieve 30x30 in coastal</u> <u>waters</u> that builds on <u>Pathways to 30x30</u>. This roadmap was shaped through an extensive

39X30 CALIFORNIA

This year's progress is a big step forward in a five-year journey. In October 2020, California committed to conserving 30% of its lands and coastal waters by 2030 through Governor Newsom's Nature-Based Solutions Executive Order N-82-20. Created by leaders and groups across California, Pathways to 30x30 was released in April 2022, and its 10 complementary strategies have continued to serve as the roadmap to meet this ambitious goal. The CA Nature platform was also launched at that time to identify conservation opportunities and transparently track and report progress. In 2023, the state's commitment was signed into law via <u>Senate Bill 337</u>. This annual report is the third update on progress toward achieving 30x30, following the first <u>update</u> in May 2023, and the <u>second</u> in September 2024.

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process involving consultation with California Native American tribes, input from diverse ocean-based communities, and expert scientific guidance. It recognizes specific coastal and marine designations as 30x30 Conservation Areas, including the new Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary and the coastal portions of the University of California Natural Reserve system. These conserved areas, in addition to the state's world-class marine protected area (MPA) network, brings the total area of coastal waters conserved under 30x30 to 21.9%. Importantly, the roadmap charts needed actions in coming years, which include ensuring that management of the Chumash Sanctuary upholds commitments to tribes that provide meaningful outcomes for biodiversity, assessing whether other types of conservation designations align with California's definition of 30x30 Conservation Areas, and expanding durable conservation across our coastal waters to meet the 30% target. This roadmap sets an ambitious standard for marine conservation while working to build coastal access wherever appropriate, recognizing that protecting biodiversity and expanding equitable access to nature can go hand in hand.

As we have increased conserved and protected areas, we also have made meaningful headway on 104 of the 112 actions identified in Pathways to 30x30, building programs and processes to accelerate these successes.

Since the 2022 release of the <u>Pathways to</u> <u>30x30 strategy</u>, California has counted more than 2.5 million acres of 30x30 Conservation Areas—or over 3,500 square miles of conserved lands and nearly 300 square miles of conserved coastal waters.

This progress has only been possible by working in partnership with communities and governments of all levels. It would not have happened without the almost \$1.3 billion in funding allocated by Governor Newsom and the State Legislature over the last three years, combined with critical support from federal and tribal governments as well as philanthropic, private, and nonprofit entities. The passage of the \$10 billion Proposition 4 (Climate Bond) by voters in November 2024 will fund 30x30 and other state priorities in the coming years.

Being at the halfway point provides a moment to reflect on the solid foundation we have built





in the last five years, share lessons learned, and look ahead to how we can accelerate our efforts over the next five years. With **less than 4 million acres of land and 283,000 acres of coastal waters left to conserve**, we are well on our way to reaching 30x30! But the work doesn't end then. These places will be conserved in perpetuity and managed to sustain functional ecosystems and the diversity of life that depends upon

them. It will take persistent commitment, strong science, innovative technologies, new funding, and ongoing care and stewardship.

Despite the federal government's rollback of America the Beautiful, the nationwide 30x30 goal, California's commitment is unwavering. Learning, connection, adaptation, creativity, and collaboration are critical to our success. Along with other U.S. states and international governments committed to achieving this goal to save our planet, and ourselves, California can lead the way.

Join us in accepting the challenge to think big, be resilient and creative, and push forward in this critical conservation movement, together.

Forging the Future Through Global Collaboration

The High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, a leadership group of 118 countries, created a task force to mobilize states and provinces to achieve 30x30. Collaboratively led by California and Quebec, the group currently includes Amapá, Campeche, Catalonia, Îlede-France, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Scotland, and Wales, with Vermont and Occitanie as observers. The task force is building partnerships across borders and acting as a knowledge-sharing platform to improve the ways subnational governments are implementing 30x30. Over the past year, members hosted technical webinars on key 30x30 strategies and opportunities, as well as on lessons learned on diverse topics such as protected area management and Indigenousled conserved areas. They also hosted events to highlight global leadership at the United Nations Biodiversity Conference of Parties (COP 16) in Cali, Colombia, in October 2024.

Key Objectives

The <u>Pathways to 30x30</u> strategy expands enduring conservation of California's lands and coastal waters to achieve three key objectives.



Biodiversity





Mitigate and Build Resilience to Climate Change



Chinook Salmon in Klamath River Tributary, Siskiyou County



The Klamath Reborn: A Blueprint for Living Rivers

The Klamath River restoration project— the largest dam removal in U.S. history— was completed in August 2024, after decades of tribally led collaborative efforts. Four defunct dams had blocked the river's natural flow for more than a century; their removal restores and connects nearly 400 miles of vital habitat for salmon and other species essential to the river's ecosystem and to the tribes and communities that depend upon them. In October, CDFW reported the first returns of threatened coho salmon to the upper Klamath River Basin in more than 60 years. In addition, in excess of 2,800 acres of previously submerged lands were returned to the Shasta Indian Nation, which can now restore native vegetation traditionally grown for food, basketry, medicine, and ceremonies.

Protect and Restore Biodiversity

California is world renowned for its unique and varied landscapes, plants, and animals. From its majestic redwood forests and dramatic coastline to its vast, sun-soaked deserts and beyond, many of the state's more than 6,500 native plants, 1,000 native vertebrate species, and 30,000 insect species are found nowhere else on Earth. This biodiversity supports healthy human communities, sequesters carbon, and strengthens our ability to respond to climate change.

Habitat connectivity is crucial for wildlife; it not only facilitates animals' ability to find food, mates, and shelter but also helps both plants and animals adapt to changes in climate or escape extreme weather events. It's not enough to protect individual parcels. We also need to make sure these conserved areas are connected: 30x30 must be more than the sum of its parts. One inspirational milestone among many from this past year, the Klamath River Restoration the largest of its kind in American history made it possible for salmon to return to historic spawning grounds weeks after the removal of four defunct dams. Additionally, a new public-private partnership, <u>California Wildlife</u> <u>Reconnected</u>, is building collaboration and momentum for new wildlife crossings. The group's first workshop was held in March 2025, and a <u>new online platform</u> has been launched to expand collaboration.

In the coming year, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) will complete a 10-year update of the



<u>State Wildlife Action Plan</u> (SWAP). This detailed analysis of actions that promote and maintain biodiversity and associated habitats will help inform future 30x30 efforts.

Expand Access to Nature

Being outdoors strengthens our connection to and appreciation for the natural world and each other. It increases physical activity, improves health, and lowers stress levels. Unfortunately, natural spaces are inaccessible to many due to a lack of transportation, limited nearby public outdoor areas, and systematic exclusion. Expanding nature access is a crucial step in righting historical wrongs and improving people's lives while creating stewards.

Not all areas conserved for biodiversity will be open to the public, especially those with sensitive species or undergoing restoration. Nevertheless, we know that ecosystem

protection paired with well-managed public access bridges the gap between people and nature, improving lives and communities. State efforts to increase outdoor recreation



opportunities are guided by the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) <u>Outdoors for</u> <u>All</u> strategy. <u>The Trailblazer</u> newsletter, launched in April 2025, provides regular updates.

The past year brought exciting opportunities at the intersection of access and conservation. <u>Dos</u> <u>Rios State Park</u>, the first new state park in more than a decade, opened in June 2024, offering respite and recreation in an area with few accessible parks. In August 2024, an agreement renegotiated by California State Parks (State Parks) with the U.S. Navy allows the public to continue to enjoy <u>San Onofre State Beach</u>. State Parks also partnered with other state and local agencies to make park passes affordable and accessible, programs like the <u>Library Parks Pass</u>, the fourth-grade <u>Adventure Pass</u> program, and the <u>Golden Bear Pass</u>.

The Mission Trails Expansion: Rooted in Nature, Open to All

With funding from the San Diego Rivers Conservancy, the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation conserved 53 acres within and adjacent to the park. Already one of the largest regional city parks in the U.S., this expansion provides additional public access to nature and connects conserved open spaces in perpetuity. Approximately 2.2 million visitors enjoy the park each year, exploring its more than 65 miles of trails, boating on Lake Murray, camping at Kumeyaay Lake, or joining educational and interpretive programs.

Mission Trails Regional Park, San Diego County Webb Tract Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, San Joaquin County



Mitigate and Build Resilience to Climate Change

A healthy climate depends on healthy landscapes. Conservation, restoration, and management of California's lands and waters will remove and store more greenhouse gases and increase the state's capacity to respond to and recover from extreme climate-driven events such as wildfire, drought, and sea level rise.

30x30 plays a vital role in preserving natural ecosystems (for example, forests and wetlands) that act as carbon sinks. It also protects biodiversity, which in turn supports the clean water and soil fertility essential for human survival and environmental stability. Additionally, conserved habitats provide refuge for species as the climate continues to change, enhancing overall ecosystem resilience.

Webb Tract Renewal: Integrating Agriculture and Wetland Restoration

Through funding from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is creating a sustainable habitat mosaic of 1.300 acres of rice fields and 2.500 acres of wetlands on Webb Tract, one of the delta's islands. The project's goals are to stop or reverse subsidence, reduce associated greenhouse gas emissions, provide fish and wildlife habitat, support the aquatic food web, improve water quality, bolster levee stability, and help fund the island's maintenance and management costs. It will prevent an estimated 38,000 tons of CO2 per year from entering the atmosphere—an amount roughly equal to annual emissions from 8,000 cars. Restoration design is underway and expected to be complete in 2027.

In 2024, California released 81 <u>Nature-Based</u> <u>Solutions Climate Targets</u> for how the state's millions of acres can help absorb more carbon. CNRA is updating the <u>Climate Smart Strategy</u> to drive land management that delivers on California's goals to achieve carbon neutrality and build resilience to climate impacts. 30x30 works hand-in-hand with these strategies.



Core Commitments

The 30x30 initiative's three key objectives build on foundational commitments to equity, collaboration with California Native American Tribes, and economic prosperity. The progress we've collectively made over the past year has enabled us to more deeply embed these guiding principles in our work.



Advance Benefits and Belonging for All



Partnerships



Sustain Our Economic Prosperity, Clean Energy Resources, and Food Supply



Demonstration Garden at Carr Lake built with Volunteer Community Support, Monterey County

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Advance Benefits and Belonging for All

The core commitment to advance justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion as part of California's 30x30 initiative is unchanging. We remain committed to ensuring that the initiative's benefits re<u>ach</u> everyone, especially

those who have not been able to access nature, live with unhealthy air or water quality,



or are hardest hit by the impacts of climate change. This includes expanding access to nature for urban areas lacking green spaces and targeting conservation efforts that provide multiple benefits, such as improving water quality, flood protection, and fire preparedness.

Reviving Carr Lake: A Vision for Nature and Community

Scontine de trail

The Carr Lake Restoration and Park Development Project in the city of Salinas is expanding equitable access to green spaces. Supported by grants from CNRA, California Department of Water Resources (DWR), California State Coastal Conservancy, and California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), the community helped design this project, which will restore 67 acres of wetland, riparian, and upland habitats. By establishing roughly 1.7 miles of nature trails, this project expands public access and recreational opportunities to communities that have lacked them. Through projects like this, the state is fostering more inclusive, accessible, and sustainable natural spaces on the way to achieving 30x30.

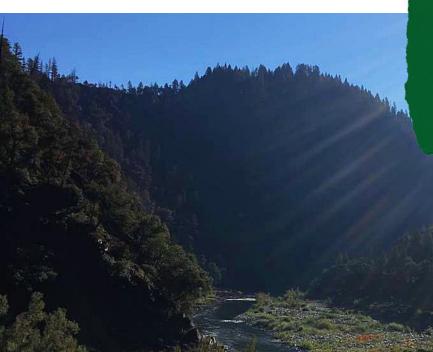
In November 2024, the people of California passed the Climate Bond, which allocated \$10 billion to climate, water, and fire resilience projects. CNRA is charged with implementing the bond, which allocates at least 40% of funds to benefit disadvantaged, severely disadvantaged, and vulnerable communities.

Strengthen Tribal Partnerships

Pathways to 30x30 was created with significant input and direction from California Native American Tribes and Indigenous communities, who have been stewards of the land since time immemorial. Governor Newsom's formal apology to California Native American Tribes (Executive Order N-15-19) acknowledges the state's historic wrongs and sets it on the path to healing. The Governor also released a <u>Statement</u> of Administration Policy on Native American Ancestral Lands to further advance tribal access,

co-management, and ancestral land return. 30x30 is one of the frameworks through which these policies are achieved.





Karuk Lands North of Happy Camp, Siskiyou County State Parks and other CNRA departments are leading the way in advancing tribal access, co-management, and ancestral land return on state lands. CNRA is currently developing a <u>Tribal</u> <u>Stewardship Policy and Toolkit</u>, which will help improve tribal access and co-management of public lands and natural resources as well as return ancestral lands to tribal ownership.

Return of Cultural Fire for Stewardship

More than 150 years after California banned the practice of cultural burning, the passage of <u>Senate Bill 310</u> now allows CNRA and local air districts to enter into cultural fire agreements with federally recognized tribes—honoring tribal sovereignty, healing historical wrongs, and expanding the use of beneficial fire. The Karuk Tribe established the first agreement in February 2025, which empowered tribal cultural fire practitioners to conduct burns using Traditional Ecological Knowledge. The agreement supports the traditional use of fire to enhance food, fiber, and medicinal resources while preserving traditional knowledge and increasing climate and wildfire resilience.

Sustain Economic Prosperity, Clean Energy Resources, and Food Supply

California's future relies on the well-being of the natural environments that support the people and industries that have made it the fourth-largest economy in the world. For lasting conservation to be successful, the state must be a place where both businesses and communities continue to thrive. This is why 30x30's third core commitment is to ensure that the initiative unfolds alongside economic growth, clean and reliable energy for all, and a healthy food supply. This includes creating jobs; enhancing public health; and promoting practices that conserve water, mitigate urban heat, improve soil health, protect pollinators, strengthen wildfire resilience, and prioritize sustainable land management. As part of these efforts, the California Department of Agriculture (CDFA) is drafting its first <u>Climate Resilience Strategy for California</u> <u>Agriculture</u>, consolidating the state's current and future agricultural climate work into a single document. The strategy will catalog climate-related challenges, policies, and actions across state government, capturing needs and opportunities. It is intended as a guide for CDFA as well as a resource for other agencies, the legislature, agricultural stakeholders, producers, and the public.

CALIFORNIA JOBS FIRST

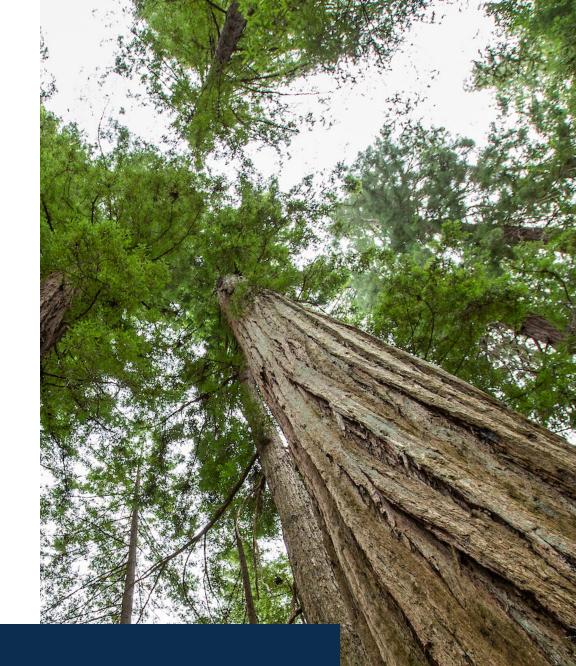
State Economic Blueprint

February 2025



In February 2025, the Newsom Administration released the California Jobs First State Economic Blueprint, a plan to drive sustainable economic growth, innovation, and access to goodpaying jobs over the next decade. It outlines opportunities in 10 industry sectors, including those that directly contribute to the 30x30 goal (for example, tourism and outdoor recreation) as well as to working lands and waters. Some regions, like the Sierra San Joaquin Region that created the S2J2 initiative, are already funding projects aimed at boosting the local economy through ecological restoration and greenhousegas reduction. The statewide plan and accompanying 13 regional plans show that economic prosperity and environmental protections can go hand in hand.





Progress to Date

California has added 2.3 million acres of land toward the 30x30 goal since tracking began in April 2022. To last year's significant contribution of 861,000 acres, we have counted approximately 853,000 more acres this year, including grasslands, deserts, freshwater areas, and other habitats. For the first time ever, 191,000 acres of coastal waters have also been added.

Photo: Redwood trees in the Avenue of the Giants. Humboldt County



Conserved Lands and Coastal Waters



Newly Added 30x30 Conservation Areas

30x30 Land Conservation Areas

30x30 Coastal Water Conservation Areas

30x30 Conservation Areas are added through strategies identified in the 10 Pathways, which can lead to acquisitions and easements, permanent protections, management improvements, and/or data enhancements.

These successes are a result of the hard work of tribal governments and communities, federal agencies, local governments, land trusts, resource conservation districts, nonprofits, communitybased organizations, and many others. They have been supported by the \$1.3 billion in state funding allocated by Governor Newsom and the legislature over the last three years, combined with other public and private funding.

Major accomplishments this year include the tribally led designation of <u>Chuckwalla National</u> <u>Monument</u> and <u>Sáttítla Highlands National</u> <u>Monument</u>, which enhanced protection for approximately 685,000 acres. These designations ensure long-term conservation of public lands and sacred ancestral homelands, including more than 455,000 acres south of Joshua Tree National Park

26.1% Lands

> 21.9% Coastal Waters



Power In Nature at 30x30 Partnership 2023 Gathering, Riverside County

(Chuckwalla), and over 230,000 acres in Shasta-Trinity, Klamath, and Modoc National Forests in northern California (Sáttítla Highlands). A broad swath of Californians showed their support for these designations during the Biden-Harris Administration. Advocacy for their ongoing protection despite changes in federal administration policies will be critical.

This year, OPC adopted <u>a new, science-based</u> roadmap for achieving 30x30 in California's coastal waters. Building on Pathways to 30x30, the roadmap was developed through extensive tribal consultation, broad public input, and guidance from independent scientific experts. Recognizing that protecting biodiversity and expanding equitable access to nature can go hand in hand, it sets an ambitious standard for marine conservation while working to build coastal access wherever appropriate. 30x30 Conservation Areas in coastal waters can include tribal stewardship areas that are managed for biodiversity, MPAs, and areas that are not MPAs but are managed in ways that achieve significant biodiversity benefits.

Power in Nature: A Coalition on the Move

Power In Nature is a statewide coalition of more than 300 community groups, environmental organizations, land trusts, Indigenous organizations, and tribal members dedicated to advancing California's 30x30 initiative. Regional working groups empower local partners to advocate for durable conservation, ongoing funding, and equitable access to nature's benefits. The coalition was instrumental in working with communities to assemble broad support for California's newest national monuments.

This approach—coupled with recognition of the Chumash Heritage National Marine <u>Sanctuary</u> and coastal portions of the University of California Natural Reserve system as 30x30 Conservation Areas—brings California to 21.9% of its coastal waters conserved. OPC and its partners are looking to conserve an additional 8.1% by 2030. Top priorities include working with tribes and federal partners to ensure that the Chumash Sanctuary effectively protects biodiversity, developing a process for state recognition and co-stewardship of Indigenous Marine Stewardship Areas, and increasing protections where the land and sea meet. OPC is committed to assessing newly designated 30x30 coastal waters to ensure they achieve intended biodiversity benefits.





CNRA relies on public datasets (the <u>California</u> <u>Protected Areas Database</u> [CPAD] and the <u>California Conservation Easement Database</u> [CCED]) to track 30x30 progress. The first phase of the 30x30 initiative produced significant data improvements, with major leaps in tracking and understanding the conservation status of lands throughout the state. CNRA also worked closely with the <u>GreenInfo</u> <u>Network</u> to refine and implement robust methodologies for quantifying conservation areas. A <u>comprehensive toolkit</u> guides resource managers through the process of assessing their lands, determining conservation classifications, and submitting data. Nevertheless, conservation status tracking and updating remains an ongoing need, especially in areas that lack detailed data. While these improvements alone will not get us to 30%, they are important for understanding current biodiversity protection and driving future strategies and investments.

The CPAD/CCED datasets that 30x30 relies on are based on open-source data and voluntary reporting. As such, the status of some designated conservation areas may shift over time as a result of changes in the strength of protections, biodiversity management practices, leadership of reporting entities, or other evolving circumstances. The initiative is committed to providing accurate and up-to-date information, with updates released annually.



Pathways to 30x30

The 30x30 strategy identified 10 Pathways to achieve its goal. The following summary includes examples of advancements made toward each strategy in the last year. For a list of the progress on all the strategic actions under each Pathway, see Appendix A to this report.

Photo: Rockclimbing at Mount San Jacinto State Park, Riverside County



Pathway 1: Accelerate Regionally Led Conservation

Regionally led conservation is vital for ensuring that local priorities and needs are effectively addressed. While California has an impressive record of regional conservation planning, for 30x30 to be effective, there is an ongoing need to ensure inclusive participation from underrepresented communities and California Native American Tribes.

Notable accomplishments that advanced this Pathway in the past year:

- The first land acquisition through the <u>Natural</u> <u>Community Conservation Plan 30x30 Grant</u> <u>Program</u> was completed in March 2025, with \$13.7 million going to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority to protect one of the county's last remaining vernal pool complexes.
- The California Coastal Commission awarded more than \$7 million in funding through their Local Assistance Grant Program to

Monterey County and the cites of Monterey, Morro Bay, Oceanside, San Clemente, and Ventura to help develop regional coastal adaptation plans and beach restoration programs.

- The California Tahoe Conservancy partnered with the Wildlife Crossing Fund, California Department of Transportation, U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, El Dorado County, CDFW, and others on a \$5 million planning grant from WCB to address priority barriers to wildlife movement in and around the Upper Truckee Watershed.
- Local coalitions and organizations published regional roadmaps to reach 30x30, including the Trust for Public Lands' <u>Pathways to</u> <u>Resilience in California's Central Coast</u>, which focused on San Benito, Santa Cruz, and Monterey Counties, and TOGETHER Bay Area's <u>Conservation Lands Network</u> <u>2.0 Progress Report</u>, which charts a path to conserve 50% of land in the San Francisco Bay Area by 2050.



Dos Rios State Park in the San Joaquin Valley RCIS, Stanislaus County

Pathway 1 in Action: Investing in an Integrated Landscape

Reclamation District 2092 and its partners are using the <u>Regional Conservation</u> <u>Investment Strategy (RCIS) Program</u> to create a vision for agriculture and wildlife conservation that covers 1.8 million acres across six San Joaquin Valley counties. The RCIS helps create an integrated landscape that supports flood control, wildlife babitat biob quality agricultural land and

habitat, high-quality agricultural land, and sustainable water resource management. Moreover, it will strengthen and coordinate these efforts for a region that is a critical source of all these things. This RCIS will be one of 11 covering in excess of 12 million acres around the state.



Pathway 2: Execute Strategic Land Acquisitions

Strategic voluntary land acquisitions are an essential part of 30x30. Focusing these efforts on areas that increase habitat connectivity, climate resilience, or public access or that have high ecological value ensures that limited funds are used where they can make the greatest difference.

Notable accomplishments that advanced this Pathway in the past year:

Approximately 722,000 acres of lands owned in fee title and protected for open space purposes were added to <u>CA Nature</u> as 30x30 Conservation Areas.

- WCB grants supported the acquisition of almost 50,000 acres, with approximately \$180 million state dollars leveraging around \$120 million of funding from other sources.
 The projects will add new 30x30 Conservation Areas as they're completed in the coming years.
- The <u>California Council of Land Trusts</u> and CNRA partnered to host a workshop with California Native American Tribes to build capacity for collaboration, strategic conservation acquisitions, and new tribally led land trusts.

Pathway 2 in Action: Trinity Watershed Conserved

Pacific Forest Trust, with funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, WCB, and others, acquired 10,700 acres of land in Trinity County to protect ecosystem services and water resources as well as to provide long-term carbon sequestration. This new acquisition covers nearly 10% of the Upper Trinity River watershed, including the headwaters of the Central Valley Project, lush forestlands, and a biodiversity hotspot that supports an estimated 232 species, including 41 that are rare or threatened. It is also adjacent to other public lands and protected areas, improving wildlife habitat connectivity.

Deadfall Lake in Trinity Watershed, Trinity County

Pathway 3: Increase Voluntary Conservation Easements

Conservation easements, an effective way to achieve environmental goals, provide financial incentives for private landowners to conserve and manage ecosystems on their properties. Easements allow them to retain ownership while ensuring that the lands are protected from development in perpetuity. State agencies (including WCB, Department of Conservation [DOC], and the California Strategic Growth Council) and state conservancies partner with land trusts, nonprofits, and others to identify landowners interested in and willing to enter into these agreements.

Notable accomplishments that advanced this Pathway in the past year:

Approximately 131,000 acres of conservation easement lands were added to <u>CA Nature</u> as 30x30 Conservation Areas.

- CNRA worked in partnership with <u>California</u> <u>Rangeland Trust</u> to identify conservation easements on private working lands managed for ecosystem health that contribute to the 30x30 target.
- A \$1.3 million CAL FIRE award secured a 308acre property along Owl Creek in Foresthill. This property will be owned by the Colfax-Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe of the Colfax Rancheria through its affiliated nonprofit, Koy'o Land Conservancy, with the Placer Land Trust holding the conservation easement. This innovative approach relied on the regional land trust securing public funding and the associated conservation easement to support ancestral land return.

Pathway 3 in Action: Waltz-Turner Ranch Easement Secured

The Sierra Foothill Conservancy secured a 10,361-acre agricultural conservation easement on the Waltz-Turner Ranch, a working rangeland in Merced and Mariposa Counties. This project has permanently protected grazing lands that also provide critical habitat for numerous pollinators and special-status species such as the California tiger salamander, vernal pool fairy shrimp, San Joaquin Orcutt grass, and more. Funding came from a creative public-private partnership that included The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Foothill Conservancy, The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo, and the Morrison Family. These partners raised more than \$1 million in private philanthropy and \$17 million in state funds from the DOC's Sustainable

Agricultural Lands Conservation Program, WCB, and California State Coastal Conservancy to protect this property and the Camatta Ranch in San Luis Obispo County—a total of nearly 38,000 acres.

Waltz-Turner Ranch, Merced and Mariposa Counties

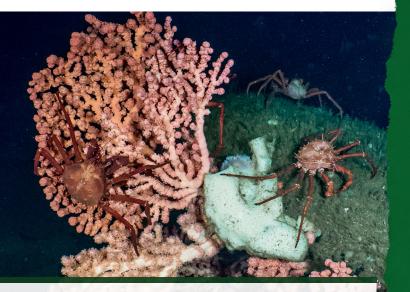


Pathway 4: Enhance Conservation of Existing Public Lands and Coastal Waters

Enhancing environmental stewardship or protection of public lands expands the number of areas that qualify as 30x30 Conservation Areas. By adopting better long-term management practices or increasing the level of protection, these areas can make significant and more durable contributions to the initiative's biodiversity, climate resilience, and public access objectives.

Notable accomplishments that advanced this Pathway in the past year:

On November 30, 2024, President Biden designated Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, covering 4,543 square miles of Central California's coastal and ocean waters. The Chumash Sanctuary is the state's first new marine sanctuary in decades, and the first to be nominated and formally co-stewarded by tribes. Its designation conserves an additional 191,000 acres of coastal waters.



Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties

- On January 14, 2025, President Biden
 designated <u>Sáttítla Highlands National</u>
 <u>Monument</u> and <u>Chuckwalla National</u>
 <u>Monument</u>, adding roughly 685,000 new
 acres to 30x30.
- CNRA's 30x30 summer interns contacted each county in the state about opportunities to add locally or regionally managed lands to the 30x30 goal, leading many to consider ways to increase management or durable protections on their lands.

Pathway 4 in Action: California's Newest National Monuments and Marine Sanctuary

This past year saw incredible gains in the level of protection for California's lands and waters through the designation of two new national monuments and a new national marine sanctuary. Supporters including tribes, outdoor recreationists, hunters and anglers, local businesses, and many others are now working to ensure these protections remain in place.

Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary

conserves an additional 191,000 acres of California's coastal waters, honors the deep biocultural significance of the ocean off California's Central Coast. The Sanctuary will safeguard areas of extraordinary biodiversity and ecological importance. It will also protect sacred tribal cultural sites and set a precedent for elevating tribal knowledges, perspectives, and cultural values in ocean conservation. The Sanctuary's management plan centers around biodiversity and includes a formal structure for collaborative co-stewardship between the federal government, state government, and tribes, ensuring that tribes are key decision-making partners. California state agencies play a key role in the management of this Sanctuary and will closely track biodiversity benefits, helping to ensure that tribal priorities for conservation are upheld and adapting 30x30 designation if needed.

30×30 CALIFORNIA

Chuckwalla National Monument Box Canyon, Riverside County

<image>

Chuckwalla National Monument

preserves a diverse array of cultural and ecological treasures for the benefit of all Americans. Situated where the Sonoran and Mojave Deserts meet, the monument includes stunning landscapes, rich biodiversity, and unique geological features. They include sacred trails, sites, and objects; geoglyphs, petroglyphs, and pictographs; and culturally important plants and wildlife. Its interconnected habitats protect several threatened and endangered species, such as the Agassiz's desert tortoise and the desert pupfish. Lands within the monument have, and continue to be, home to the lviatim (Cahuilla), Nüwü (Chemehuevi), Pipa Aha Macav (Mojave), Kwatsáan (Quechan), Maara'yam and Marringayam (Serrano), and other Indigenous peoples.

Sáttítla Highlands National Monument

protects tribal ancestral homelands, historic and scientific treasures, rare flora and fauna, and vital headwaters in the Modoc, Shasta-Trinity, and Klamath National Forests. For millennia, the highlands stood sentinel over the ancestral homelands of Indigenous communities and cultures, including the Pit River Tribe and Modoc Peoples. Many other regional tribes and Indigenous peoples—among them, Karuk, Klamath, Shasta, Siletz, Wintu, and Yana hold deep connections to this place as well. It also provides important habitat and wildlife connectivity for species such as elk, bears, and wolves.

> Sáttítla Highlands National Monument, Siskiyou County

Pathway 5: Institutionalize Advance Mitigation

Advance mitigation requires durable, longterm habitat management and protection measures to be in place prior to project implementation. As California continues to address important housing and infrastructure needs, advance mitigation helps ensure that sensitive species and habitats are conserved and well managed into perpetuity. This approach can also conserve larger contiguous areas while streamlining administrative processes for much-needed infrastructure. Conservation or mitigation banks are examples of advanced mitigation that preserves or restores habitats and includes robust funding for ongoing management and monitoring.

Notable accomplishments that advanced this Pathway in the past year:

Six new conservation mitigation banks were established and approved by CDFW, and two additional banks were established by federal agencies, protecting and restoring more than 2,900 acres.

- The federal-state interagency group overseeing mitigation bank approval in California released updated and improved <u>templates</u> to improve interagency coordination and service to bank sponsors.
- CDFW created a new <u>Conservation and</u> <u>Mitigation Banks Dashboard</u> to allow users to search for banks and service areas, and to identify credits available at each.
- CDFW released process guidelines for the <u>Connectivity Advance Mitigation</u> subprogram, which is working on pilot projects to refine how ecological benefits are evaluated.
- Westervelt Ecological Services' Johnson Consumnes Mitigation Bank became the first mitigation bank to use Cutting Green Tape permit streamlining tools through the Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects ("SERP"). This 210-acre floodplain restoration completes a critical corridor for the broader 50,000 acre Cosumnes River Preserve, and will provide advance mitigation solutions to regional projects.



Desert tortoise in Smoketree Valley Conservation Bank, Imperial County

Pathway 5 in Action: Newly Established Conservation Bank for Desert Tortoises

In March 2025, the Smoketree Valley Conservation Bank was established in Imperial County, protecting 640 acres of desert tortoise habitat as well as 307 acres of stream and 254 acres of desert dry-wash woodland habitats. The site lies within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Chuckwalla Desert Tortoise Critical Habitat Unit and the Bureau of Land Management's Chuckwalla Area of Critical Environmental Concern. The bank includes four unique vegetation alliances as well as sensitive species such as the burrowing owl, desert kit fox, Munz's cholla, desert unicorn plant, and spiny abrojo.

Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship

Climate change demands urgent action. Expanding and accelerating restoration and stewardship across habitat types is critical to their long-term resilience. Streamlining regulatory frameworks, policies, and processes through the <u>Cutting the Green Tape</u> initiative has greatly accelerated the pace and scale of this work.

Notable accomplishments that advanced this Pathway in the past year:

- AB 1581 (2024, Kalra and Mathis), consolidated five of the most common CDFW restoration-project authorizations into a single <u>Restoration Management</u> <u>Permit</u> (RMP). The first project using the new RMP was announced in April 2025.
- CNRA's <u>Salton Sea Management Program</u> expanded its Species Conservation Habitat project, creating ponds on the exposed southern lakebed. The ponds provide habitat for native birds and fish

and suppress dust, benefiting community health. \$245 million in federal funding doubled the project size to 9,000-plus acres.

- CAL FIRE and CDFW determined that the Skey-wok kee' we Mech (It Needs Fire)
 Phase 1 qualified for Cutting the Green Tape SERP, saving the Yurok Tribe nine months and \$100,000. It will restore beneficial fire in overgrown forests and remove invasive species on 1,173 acres.
- OPC partnered with The Nature Conservancy and local commercial fishermen to remove more than 27 tons of sea urchins at two sites in Mendocino County. This resulted in an unprecedented 172% increase in kelp canopy cover.
- The California Conservation Corps received a national award for the <u>Backcountry Trails</u> <u>Program</u> which made public lands safer and more accessible along 368 miles of trails in 2024 in national and state parks and forests.



Lookout Slough Tidal Restoration and Flood Improvement Project, Solano County

Pathway 6 in Action: Lookout Slough Tidal Restoration

For the first time in a century, daily tides are flowing to over 3,100 acres of restored wetland habitat in the Yolo Bypass. In October 2024, DWR completed construction of the Lookout Slough Tidal Habitat Restoration and Flood Improvement Project, the largest tidal wetland restoration project in the state's history. Completed through a public-private partnership with Ecosystem Investment Partners, the project restores habitat for Delta smelt, salmon, and other native fish species while reducing flooding risks in the Sacramento area. Twenty-six new miles of open tidal channels are now accessible to the public for wildlife viewing, fishing, and hunting. Owned by DWR, Lookout Slough is protected in perpetuity through a conservation easement.

Pathway 7: Strengthen Coordination Among Governments

Successfully conserving 30% of California's lands and waters requires strategic coordination among local, regional, state, federal, and international governments as well as California Native American Tribes. Alignment with the Biden administration led to significant achievements over the past four years, and leveraged considerable state resources. California will continue to coordinate across governments at all levels, with a focus on partnerships that bring strong community knowledge and connections, including those historically excluded from conservation efforts.

Notable accomplishments that advanced this Pathway in the past year:

State Parks entered into four Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) that establish collaborative natural and cultural resource protection with the Esselen Tribe of Monterey County, Pulikla Tribe of Yurok People, Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians of the Big Valley Rancheria, Pit River Tribe. There is now a total of 12 MOUs with tribes, covering 897,085 acres of State Parks.

- Governor Gavin Newsom signed <u>AB 1284</u> (Ramos) to encourage CNRA to enter into co-governance and co-management agreements on state lands and waters with federally recognized tribes.
- Parties to the <u>United Nations Convention on</u> <u>Biological Diversity</u> convened in Colombia in October 2024 for the 16th Conference of Parties (COP 16), with California joining the Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments and Biodiversity to the Convention of Biological Diversity Secretariat. The group also acted as a part of an extended state delegation of more than 100 people representing tribal governments, academia, nonprofits, community-based organizations, local government, and more.

Pathway 7 in Action: Ancestral Lands Returned

In Fall 2024, the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy returned 320 acres of ancestral land within the San Jacinto Mountain range to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. Historically, the Cahuilla thrived throughout more than 6,250 square miles in what is now Southern California. The State originally purchased the property in 1997 to protect oases and fragile cultural resources near Palm Canyon. Combined with a previous effort, this makes a total of 600 acres of ancestral land returned to the tribe in 2024.



Pathway 8: Align Investments to Maximize Conservation Benefits

It is important to both ensure that public funds are efficiently invested in priorities like 30x30 and continue to look for new ways to get work done. For example, more public-private partnerships and private conservation financing will be needed if we are to reach 30x30. These funds can also support work for which it might be challenging to find public funding, such as project development, monitoring, and ongoing stewardship. Philanthropy has and continues to be an essential partner to California's 30x30 initiative-from foundational support at the outset for the public engagement process to create the Pathways to 30x30 strategy to ongoing support for many of the coalitions and nonprofits that work to advance its goals.

Notable accomplishments that advanced this Pathway in the past year:

- California voters approved <u>the Climate</u> <u>Bond</u>, which allocates \$10 billion in state investments for safe drinking water, wildfire prevention, and protecting communities and natural lands from climate risks.
- The public-private partnership <u>California</u> <u>Wildlife Reconnected</u> launched to help build a community of practice around science, implementation, policy, and funding for habitat connectivity and wildlife crossing projects.
- Fourteen local organizations were awarded more than \$1.1 million through the partnership between Parks California and State Parks <u>Career Pathways Grants Program</u> to support public lands job training and workforce development.

Pathway 8 in Action: Redwoods Rising Turns Six

This public-private partnership among the Save the Redwoods League, the National Park Service, and State Parks is driving landscapescale restoration of California's iconic North Coast redwood forests. Now in its sixth year. the partnership has restored in excess of 4,200 acres of forests, removed more than 35 miles of degraded logging roads, and restored roughly five miles of salmon-bearing streams. It has raised \$10 million in philanthropic and private investments to leverage over \$50 million in federal and state grants. Contributing an estimated \$31 million to the local economy in 2024 alone, Redwoods Rising provides reliable jobs, supports the local tax base, and fosters deep collaborations with local tribes and educational institutions.



Redwoods Rising Tour, Humboldt County

Pathway 9: Advance and Promote Complementary Conservation Measures

Many places that are not durably conserved or are not being managed with biodiversity as a primary goal are still essential to achieving a healthy and resilient network of conservation areas. These include urban tree canopies, hedgerows, well-managed row crops or orchards, or lawns replaced by native plants. These places often directly contribute to other state priorities such as the **<u>Climate Smart</u>** Strategy, Nature-Based Solutions Climate Targets, Outdoors for All, and California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan. Likewise, 30x30's success relies on these complementary conservation measures to expand wildlife habitat, create corridors, buffer conserved areas, and much more.

Notable accomplishments that advanced this Pathway in the past year:

 Nine CDFA-funded projects totaling \$11.25 million created roughly 1,400 acres of cover crops and other beneficial plantings for wildlife, 16 miles of native plant hedgerows, and numerous native plantings to create wildlife habitat on farms.

- CAL FIRE's Urban and Community Forestry Program and the U. S. Forest Service awarded nearly \$31 million to 22 projects through the 2024 Inflation Reduction Act. Funds were used to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase urban forest health, address the ability of communities to respond to extreme weather events, improve urban environmental quality, and expand access to environmental careers.
- In October 2024, nine federal and California agencies overseeing fish and wildlife, public lands, water, agriculture, and flood control signed a MOU to enhance collaboration on large-scale, multi-benefit floodplain projects in the Sacramento River Basin. In partnership with the <u>Floodplain Forward Coalition</u>, this effort will help increase the pace and scale of habitat restoration and creation for fish, birds and other wildlife; improve habitat connectivity; advance flood control objectives and support rural economies.



Pollinator Habitat Program Site in Salinas Valley, Monterey County

Pathway 9 in Action: Enhancing Pollinator Habitat in 30x30 Conservation Areas and Beyond

CDFA provided two grants to the California Native Plant Society to create propagation protocols and a tool that integrates detailed pollinator and plant interaction information into the <u>Calscape</u> native plant database. These tools can be used to create wildlife habitat in areas that are currently used for other purposes (for example, crops and pasture), even if they are degraded. Landowners can use this information to learn which native grasses and flowers bloom throughout the year to support important crop pollinators or connect adjacent natural lands.

Pathway 10: Evaluate Conservation Outcomes and Adaptively Manage

Effective land and water conservation relies on consistent, long-term monitoring to track progress and know when and how to respond to changing conditions. This kind of adaptive management also integrates the best available science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Nevertheless, in the face of climate change, core assumptions, planning principles, and strategies must be regularly evaluated and updated.

Notable accomplishments that advanced this Pathway in the past year:

- CDFW updated its <u>Terrestrial Habitat</u>.
 <u>Connectivity dataset</u>, which allows users to evaluate their parcel's contribution to this critically important function through the presence of corridors, overlap with contiguous
 natural areas, and relative intactness.
- CDFW's progress report on the status of 71 action items outlined in the 2024 <u>California</u> <u>Salmon Strategy for a Hotter, Drier, Future</u> revealed that roughly 67% are under

development and 26% have been completed. This incredible progress is thanks to a partnership of California's departments and boards, tribal partners, and non-governmental groups.

- More than 200 events hosted by 70 different partners were held across the state to celebrate <u>California Biodiversity Day</u>, part of CNRA, CDFW, and State Parks efforts to leverage the power of community science to address statewide knowledge gaps while fostering a sense of discovery and appreciation for California's unique natural heritage.
- CDFW is working with OPC and the California Fish and Game Commission to evaluate 20 petitions received following the first Decadal Management Review of the MPA network. Long-term MPA monitoring data will be used to evaluate these requests, which include boundary expansions, new MPAs, and regulatory changes.
- California's Marine Protected Area Network was designated as part of the <u>International Union</u> for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Green List of <u>Protected and Conserved Areas</u>, making it the first nature network of protected areas in the world included on the Green List.



CDFW Sentinel Site at Pickel Meadow Wildlife Area, Mono County

Pathway 10 in Action: Sentinel Sites for Nature – California Expanded

In order to understand and respond effectively to ecosystem changes at local, regional, and statewide levels, long-term monitoring is crucial. The <u>Sentinel</u> <u>Sites for Nature - California</u> (formerly the California Climate and Biodiversity Sentinel Site Network) uses research-grade sensors to determine overall ecosystem health, identify emerging biodiversity threats, and see how species and ecosystems are adapting to climate change. The network has expanded to include additional Sentinel Sites established by CDFW, the UC Natural Reserve System, Pepperwood Preserve, The Nature Conservancy, CalPoly, and more. The 39 Sentinel Sites will be joined by at least 40 more scheduled to come online within the next two years.







Collaboration

CNRA promotes and coordinates Pathways to 30x30 implementation, but success fundamentally relies on collaboration with a broad suite of partners.

Photo: Sproul Creek Restoration, Humboldt County



Public Funding

CNRA collaborates with other agencies to leverage public funding to further biodiversity, access, and climate resilience goals. Over the past three years, the California State Budget Act committed almost \$1.3 billion to the Nature-Based Solutions Package, including specific programs to support 30x30. So far, approximately \$1.24 billion has been invested in 552 different projects (Appendix B).

The Climate Bond will also help us meet California's climate, biodiversity, safe drinking water, wildfire prevention, drought preparedness, and clean air goals. While most of the sections of the bond will help achieve 30x30, some are more specifically focused on this initiative, including:

- > \$1.2 billion to protect California's biodiversity and restore landscape health to achieve the state's climate-change goals.
- > \$700 million to create and protect parks, outdoor access, and educational institutions.
- > \$1.2 billion to increase ocean resiliency and to protect coastal lands, waters, communities, and urban waterfronts from sea level rise and other climate impacts.

These funds will be allocated through the annual state budget cycle beginning in the 2025–2026 fiscal year.

30x30 Partnership

The <u>30x30 Partnership</u> engages and empowers all a collaborative forum for the state's diverse of those working toward this initiative's ambitious goals. It is open to anyone interested in being part of an organizational hub for dialogue, shared learning, coordination, strategic planning, and action. In October 2024, CNRA hosted the annual 30x30 Partnership event in Sacramento, California, systematic conservation planning, biodiversity which brought together more than 300 people from all over the state to "inspire, innovate, and integrate" toward achieving 30x30.

Over the past year, the 30x30 Partnership benefited greatly from the support of the following groups:

30x30 Partnership Coordinating Committee



The 30x30 Partnership Coordinating Committee (PCC) includes key community organizers who act as conduits for information and ideas between local and state levels and elevate community needs. The inaugural PCC's 19 members defined the roles and responsibilities of this group by supporting CNRA's implementation of Pathways to 30x30. The 2024-2025 cohort of seven new and 13 returning members will work to sustain this momentum and empower partners to achieve the 30x30 goal.

California Biodiversity Council

The California Biodiversity Council provides a venue for collaboration among local, state, and federal resource management and environmental protection agencies. It has proven to be an effective way for the state to collaborate with the federal government on shared priorities.

California Biodiversity Network

The California Biodiversity Network (CBN) provides conservation organizations, land managers, stewardship practitioners, and scientific institutions. It implements funded research priorities identified in the Pathways to 30x30 Appendix D, including convenings centered around the themes of informatics and community science, the Sentinel Site Network, and stewardship. This past year, CBN hosted two workshops at the annual 30x30 Partnership event and conducted a rapid biodiversity assessment (see callout box).

Connectivity linkages for climate adaptation over 30x30 conservation areas



Rapid Biodiversity Assessment Shows Growing Conserved Areas Network

CBN conducted a rapid biodiversity assessment of California's natural lands and freshwaters, both within and beyond 30x30 Conservation Areas. This assessment offers a first glimpse of how the 30x30 initiative has been supporting statewide biodiversity and landscape connectivity. It found that 95% of newly conserved acres are adjacent to previously conserved land, enhancing habitat connectivity, and 63% are within priority populations that include disadvantaged and low-income communities. OPC is a cabinet-level state policy agency that works to safeguard coastal and ocean ecosystems for the benefit of all Californians. Its work focuses on four strategic goals: climate change, equity, biodiversity, and the sustainable blue economy. OPC is spearheading the effort to conserve 30% of California's coastal waters by 2030, working in close collaboration with California Native American Tribes, state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, fishing communities, and other key partners.

Tribal Partnerships

CNRA was allocated \$100 million to establish the new Tribal Nature-Based Solutions Program. On April 26, 2024, CNRA—in partnership with CAL FIRE and the OPC—announced awards of \$107.7 million to fund 34 projects and support the return of over 49,000 acres of ancestral land to California Native American tribes, supporting the advancement of tribal nature-based solutions. We continue to consult and collaborate with California Native American tribes to advance meaningful access, co-management, and ancestral land return across the state, and are exploring policy options and technical assistance opportunities to continue this work.

CNRA is currently developing a Tribal Stewardship Policy and Toolkit with policies and resources to improve tribal access and co-management of public places and natural resources, as well as to return ancestral lands to tribal ownership. It will also highlight the ways that many of CNRA's departments are leading the state in putting these policies into action. The Climate Bond will make an additional \$10 million available for grants through the Tribal Nature-Based Solutions Program.



Communications and Engagement

Public input was critical to developing the Pathways to 30x30 strategy and remains a priority for its implementation. Over the past year, in addition to the annual 30x30 Partnership event, CNRA employed a range of ways to inform and be informed, including:

- Hosting eight <u>webinars</u> to share information and hear partners' feedback on topics such as multi-benefit conservation, tribal stewardship, regulatory strategies for restoration, data improvements, and the importance of protecting and restoring California's biodiversity at local and global scales.
- Attending more than 50 local meetings and field visits to discuss community priorities and conservation successes.
- Keeping up the <u>30x30 Biodiversity Beat</u> monthly newsletter to share program updates, examples of 30x30 in action, and funding opportunities.



- Sharing the <u>Community Conversations blog</u> to elevate 30x30 partners' experiences and perspectives.
- Posting dedicated 30x30 social media (including a new LinkedIn account) to engage partners, increase access to resources, share real-time updates, and amplify success stories.

CA Nature

In partnership with the GIS technology company Esri, CNRA maintains and updates <u>CA Nature</u>, the online mapping platform and explorer applications for accounting acres toward the 30x30 goal and visualizing biodiversity, access, and climate opportunities. These widely used GIS applications and their underlying data provide transparency and effectively track progress. Updates include improvements to CPAD and CCED to increase tracking of acres conserved, as well as a <u>toolkit</u> to help managers assess conservation status and record their data.

Central Valley 30x30 Roundtable Highlights Local Opportunities

In September 2024, CNRA co-hosted a roundtable discussion with the San Joaquin River Conservancy, the San Joaquin River Parkway Trust, and the Sequoia Riverlands Trust to discuss unique opportunities and challenges to conservation in the Central Valley, which has the fewest 30x30 Conservation Areas in the state. Presentations and panel discussions covered the importance of working lands to conservation, growing development pressure and mitigation opportunities, water infrastructure complexities, and equity and environmental justice considerations. The region is engaged with the California's Jobs First initiative, which is helping ensure that the state is a place with equitable access to high-quality jobs, protected natural resources, competitive local industries, and more prosperous vulnerable and historically disinvested communities.





Focus Forward

California is now five years away from its 30x30 goal. This halfway point marks a time to reflect on what has gone well and what California can do better.

Photo: Donner Memorial State Park, Nevada County





Public feedback gathered through the 30x30 Partnership 2024 Summit, a virtual webinar, a public input survey, and stakeholder meetings inspired these key lessons learned:

- Expand community engagement and collaboration, especially tribal involvement and applying Traditional Ecological Knowledge.
- 2. Ensure that conservation and biodiversity are relevant to urban communities and historically excluded groups, and develop more connections and projects in these communities.
- 3. Foster a sense of shared responsibility for conservation, including working more closely with local municipalities, city and county parks and open spaces, local water districts, and private landowners on ways to improve biodiversity management and protection.
- Recognize land and water conservation as interconnected and strengthen coastal protections.
- 5. Create a mosaic of 30x30 Conservation Areas that are both protected and connected by maintaining and establishing links between conserved areas.
- 6. Advance conservation approaches to be resilient to future climate-change impacts.

From our partners, we heard loud and clear that the future of conservation depends on the ability to foster inclusivity, collaboration, and community engagement while also addressing challenges posed by climate change and biodiversity loss. By ensuring that conservation is welcoming to all, economically viable, and built on a foundation of local knowledge and leadership, we can create a more sustainable and resilient future for people and the planet.

In coming years, we will also focus on addressing key challenges and opportunities that have emerged as critical:

Modernizing Measurements for Better Management

While new conservation areas have been added through 30x30, success also comes from improved data collection, mapping, and management, all of which are needed to fully understand where areas are protected, at what level, and where important gaps remain. If you are a caretaker of lands and waters that are durably protected and managed for biodiversity, please <u>add your data</u> to this list and establish a regular process to record newly protected areas to this centralized database.



Coordinating Conservation with Needed Development

Recognizing that climate and biodiversity crises go hand in hand, California must set an example for how to accelerate development of clean energy while conserving important land and water, limiting carbon emissions, and expanding carbon sequestration. In addition, balancing conservation with housing and transportation requires integrated planning that protects natural resources while promoting sustainable, affordable development and efficient transit systems. The 30x30 Partnership will continue to creatively meet ongoing challenges such as competing land use, limited resources, and information and data needs.

Protecting AND Stewarding

Another ongoing challenge is securing funding for the long-term care of 30x30 Conservation Areas to ensure they continue to robustly support the three key objectives: to protect and restore biodiversity, expand access to nature, and mitigate and build resilience to climate change.

Avoid Backsliding

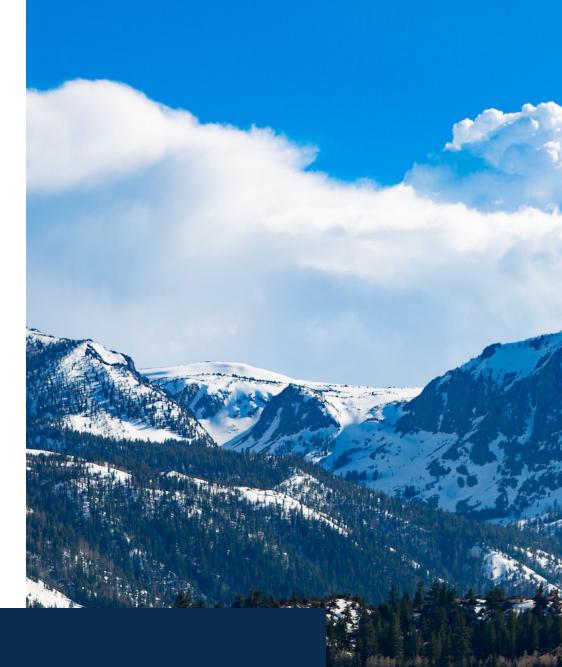
The coming years will bring new challenges that California's 30x30 movement has not yet had to face. Priorities have shifted with the change in the federal administration. The America the Beautiful Executive Order was rescinded, which means that the country is no longer committed to the 30x30 goal at the federal level. Consequently, workforce reductions in federal land management agencies as well as directives to significantly increase extractive uses such as oil, gas, and mining operations are among these challenges. Nevertheless, California is staying the course with 30x30 and is committed to working with partners at all levels of government and local communities.

Optimizing the Climate Bond

CNRA and the 30x30 Partnership will begin implementing the Climate Bond in the upcoming state fiscal year, providing muchneeded resources that will keep the state's ecosystems and communities healthy. California is working with other sub-national governments, especially other states, that continue to prioritize biodiversity, access, and climate goals for the well-being of the planet.







Onward Together

In the three years since California released the Pathways to 30x30 strategy, we have increased our 30x30 Conservation Areas by 2.6 million acres!

This is no small feat, and we applaud the herculean efforts, flexibility, and collaborative spirit of the many partners it has taken to get us where we are today.

Photo: June Lake, Mono County



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Our 30x30 target should not be seen as a policy goal but rather, as a collective commitment. From businesses integrating sustainability into their practices to youth becoming advocates for their communities, every organization and individual can be a part of this movement.

Success requires alignment because no agency, tribe, organization, or individual will succeed alone. Rather, creative, locally led collaborations backed by supportive programs, policies, and funding at all levels of government will carry and accelerate this effort.

This work is vital. Conservation today will affect California's communities and natural ecosystems for generations to come. Let us celebrate how far we have come, rise to meet our challenges, and push forward together!

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