



THRIVING TOGETHER

EQUITY YEAR IN REVIEW

**On a Mission to Help
All Californians and Nature
Thrive Together**



**CALIFORNIA
NATURAL
RESOURCES
AGENCY**



Photo by Nicholas Paoni from the California Coastal Commission's
Ocean and Coastal Amateur Photography Contest

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SPECIAL THANKS TO



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MESSAGE FROM WADE

All Californians deserve the opportunity to live healthy, safe, and meaningful lives. This is a bedrock value in California and drives us to help all our state residents thrive, regardless of a person’s background or circumstances. We call this building a California for All.

At our Natural Resources Agency, building a California for All means helping all Californians and nature thrive together: Enabling all residents to enjoy the outdoors. Protecting those most vulnerable to climate change impacts like wildfire and drought. Listening and learning from tribal communities. Involving communities in decisions that impact them. And so much more.

I’m really proud to share this Year in Review, which highlights actions across our 26 departments, conservancies and commissions to better serve all Californians. Over the last year, our leaders have made state funding more accessible to underserved communities, ensured transparency and fairness in decisions we make, built the most talented workforce possible by recruiting from our state’s broad talent pool, and celebrated our diverse heritage that make us uniquely American. To me, these actions represent the best of government.

Now more than ever, standing up for these values is essential. And making progress to embody them in our work makes California stronger. I’m proud of our progress, with much more work ahead.

Onward together,

Wade Crowfoot

Wade Crowfoot

California Natural Resources Secretary



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR AGENCY LEADS

- Noaki Schwartz**
Deputy Secretary for Equity and Environmental Justice,
California Natural Resources Agency

Angela Avery
Executive Officer, Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Ebenezer Ampah
Racial Equity Officer, Department of Water Resources

Erin Aquino-Carhart
Senior Environmental Scientist, Wildlife Conservation Board

Phoenix Armenta
Senior Manager for Climate Equity and Community
Engagement, San Francisco Bay Conservation and
Development Commission

Mona Badie
Public Advisor, California Energy Commission

Kathryn Baines
Chief of Administration,
Central Valley Flood Protection Board

Rachel Ballanti
Deputy Executive Director,
California Fish and Game Commission

Karen Buhr
Deputy Executive Officer, Delta Conservancy

Morgan Chow
Environmental Program Manager for Climate Change and
Environmental Justice Unit, Delta Stewardship Council

Sandy Cooney
Chief, Communications and External Affairs,
Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (Energy Safety)

Kari Daniska,
Chief Executive Officer, San Joaquin River Conservancy

Randella Foster
DEI/EEO Specialist,
California Department of Conservation

Miguel Hernández
Public Affairs Officer, California Natural Resources
Agency, Salton Sea Management Program

Jaimie Huynh,
Deputy Director for Strategic Engagement, Equity, and
Partnerships, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Alfred Konuwa
HR Programs and Policy Compliance Manager,
California Science Center

Sara Lopez
Staff Attorney, Tahoe Conservancy

Liz McGuirk
Chief Deputy Director,
California Department of Parks and Recreation
- David McNeill**
Executive Officer,
Baldwin Hills and Urban Watersheds Conservancy

Chad Oberly
Natural Resources and Tribal Affairs Manager,
San Gabriel Lower Los Angeles Rivers and
Mountains Conservancy

Maximiliano Ochoa
Project Manager,
Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy

Kristina Ordanza
Environmental Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
Coordinator, California Conservation Corps

Serena Ortega
Deputy Director, Equal Employment/Diversity, Equity,
Inclusion, California Department of Forestry and Fire
Protection (CAL FIRE)

Steven Quinn
Acting Executive Secretary,
Native American Heritage Commission

Javier Padilla Reyes
Environmental Justice Manager,
California Coastal Commission

Yessica Ramirez
Environmental Justice and Tribal Liaison,
California State Lands Commission

Shana Rapoport
Environmental Program Manager,
Colorado River Board of California

Maria Rodriguez
Climate and Environmental Justice Program Manager,
Ocean Protection Council

Sarah Rubin
Outreach and Engagement Advisor,
California Department of Conservation

Brianna Shoemaker
Administrative Supervisor, California Water Commission

Rorie Skei
Chief Deputy Director,
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

Evyan Borgnis Sloane
Deputy Executive Officer, State Coastal Conservancy

Wendell Thompson
Associate Governmental Program Analyst,
San Diego River Conservancy

Debra Waltman
Administrative Services Manager,
Delta Protection Commission

CELEBRATING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Staff from departments across CNRA worked together to organize public panel discussions, hikes, movie screenings, social events and other activities that celebrated the strength of our differences in the most diverse state in the country. A new addition in 2024 was Disability Pride Month in July, which featured a new logo and a month of activities organized in partnership with the Department of Rehabilitation. The committee selected the theme “Awareness Empowers, Inclusion Strengthens: Know Us, Know California,” which underscores how understanding the experiences of individuals with disabilities empowers and how inclusive practices strengthens and unifies California. The year was capped off with a final winter cultural event called *Celebrating Diversity: A Tapestry of Cultures*, featuring displays, food and music from various cultures represented by staff from across CNRA.



FILM SCREENING

FAR EAST DEEP SOUTH
DISCOVER THE PAST YOU NEVER KNEW

TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2024
4 P.M.-6 P.M.

CNRA HEADQUARTERS
715 P ST., SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
AUDITORIUM

Celebrate AAPI Month with a special screening of “Far East Deep South,” an award-winning documentary following a Chinese American family’s journey from California to Mississippi to uncover their family’s history. Along the way, they meet a diverse group of local residents and historians who help them discover how deep their roots run in America. Filmmaker Baldwin Chiu will be present to discuss his vision for the film and participate in a Q&A with audience members. Details on the documentary: fareastdeepsouth.com.

May is AAPI Heritage Month, honoring the contributions of Asian American and Pacific Islanders to our history, society and culture. This year’s theme is “AAPI Past, Present and Future in Conservation,” which highlights the AAPI community’s advancements and achievements in conservation.

Resources.ca.gov/AAPIHeritageMonth

CALIFORNIA LATINO HERITAGE MONTH

LONCHE Y LOTERIA

TUESDAY
OCTOBER 8, 2024
11:30 A.M. – 1 P.M.

CNRA HEADQUARTERS
Jesse’s Gateway Café
715 P Street, Sacramento, CA

Jesse’s Gateway Café will be offering their delicious tacos as part of their Tuesday menu. We will be hosting Loteria tournament with prizes!

Loteria (Spanish word meaning “lottery”) is a traditional Mexican board game of chance, similar to bingo, and is played on a deck of cards instead of numbered ping pong balls. Every image has a name and an assigned number, but the number is usually ignored. Each player has at least one tabla, a board with a randomly created 4 x 4 grid of pictures with their corresponding name and number. Players choose a tabla (“board”) to play with, from a variety of previously created tablas, each with a different selection of images.

California Natural Resources Agency’s theme for this year, “Latino Leaders: Shaping California and Our Future Together,” highlights the countless contributions of Latinos protecting natural and cultural resources and providing safe and responsible recreational opportunities.

Engage with us. Be inspired. Spend time outdoors. Commemorate Latino Heritage Month.

resources.ca.gov/LatinoHeritageMonth



CELEBRATE NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

LUNCH SOCIAL WITH BIGFOOT FRYBREAD INDIAN TACOS
Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2024, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
On P Street, across the street from CNRA Headquarters located at 715 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

Join us for a lunch social with Bigfoot Frybread – the first Native American mobile concession in the Sacramento area – who will serve up traditional Native American frybread and Indian tacos. Frybread and Indian tacos are a delicious reminder of the survival, resiliency, and creativity of Native American tribes and people in the face of adversity.

SECRETARY SPEAKER SERIES: CELEBRATING TRADITIONAL FOOD AND ITS ROLE IN NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE: REVITALIZING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TRIBAL LANDS, FOOD, AND CULTURE
Wednesday, Nov. 6, 2024, Noon – 1 p.m.
Virtual, Register Online

Join us as we explore the deep connection between Native people, traditional foods, and land stewardship. We’ll celebrate traditional foods with renowned Native American culinary leaders and explore how tribal access and co-management of ancestral lands are critical to sustain Indigenous food systems.

INAUGURAL NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH PARADE AND NATIVE AMERICAN MONUMENT COMMEMORATION
Saturday, Nov. 9, 2024, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Central Hall

This is California’s inaugural Native American Heritage Month parade, hosted by the California Legislative Native American Caucus. Join us in celebrating the traditions, achievements, cultural diversity and impact of California’s First People. Learn how to participate on our website.

NAVIGATING PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN CALIFORNIA: INSIGHTS, TIPS, AND STRATEGIES
Tuesday, Nov. 12, 2024, from 11 p.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Virtual, Register Online

Join us for a webinar where we’ll guide you through the process of applying for and securing a position with the State of California. This event will offer an overview of the benefits of working for the state, a step-by-step guide to the application process, opportunities to connect with HR hiring managers from various California state departments and a list of current job openings and valuable resources. Don’t miss this chance to learn how to navigate your career with the State of California!

MAIDU MUSEUM AND INTERPRETIVE TOUR
Friday, Nov. 22, 2024, 10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
1970 Johnson Ranch Road, Roseville, CA 95667

The Maidu Museum & Historic Site offers a unique cultural haven for families and individuals who want to experience the life and culture of the Nisenan Maidu who called this location home for thousands of years. There is a trail that wanders through the historic site featuring cultural landmarks and the museum houses interactive exhibits and loan art galleries. Meet at the Maidu Museum and Historic Site for a free tour. Interpretive tour beginning at 10 a.m. Bring a bagged lunch to enjoy on site. Stay and participate in a ranger program to expand the Museum’s Native Garden. Learn how to participate at our website.

For more information and to register for events, visit resources.ca.gov/NativeAmericanHeritageMonth

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH
Celebrate March 2024!

TOUR OF THE STATE ARCHIVES
THURSDAY, MARCH 14 AND THURSDAY, MARCH 28 | 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. | 1020 O STREET, 4TH FLOOR

For State employees only; registration required. This free, behind-the-scenes tour of the State Archives will feature a look at historical records celebrating Women’s History Month! The California State Archives, a division of the Office of the Secretary of State, provides a permanent repository for the State’s governmental records as well as other materials documenting California history. Please arrive 10 minutes early to get through ground floor security and to secure backpacks and purses in the free lockers.

CHINA CAMP STATE PARK VOLUNTEER WORKDAY AND HIKE
SATURDAY, MARCH 16 | 9 A.M. – 1:30 P.M. | CHINA CAMP STATE PARK

For State employees and their families only; ages 14 and up; registration required. Get outside and celebrate Women’s History Month with a volunteer work opportunity and a hike at China Camp State Park, California State Park! Bay Area District and Friends of China Camp invite you to explore, hike, and learn about this majestic and historic landmark nestled off San Pablo Bay in San Rafael. Bring work gloves, a hat, sunscreen, water, and your lunch. Tools provided by Friends of China Camp.

CAREER PANEL
THURSDAY, MARCH 21 | 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. | VIRTUAL ON ZOOM

Join this month’s Career Panel where we celebrate women who work to increase diversity, equity and inclusion. Hear from women working in departments, conservancies, and boards from the California Natural Resources Agency and learn how some thrive in traditionally male-dominated work environments as well as further the Agency’s vision of equity, excellence, and more.

SECRETARY SPEAKER SERIES: WOMEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE: IMPROVING ACCESS, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN CALIFORNIA
THURSDAY, MARCH 28 | 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. | VIRTUAL ON ZOOM

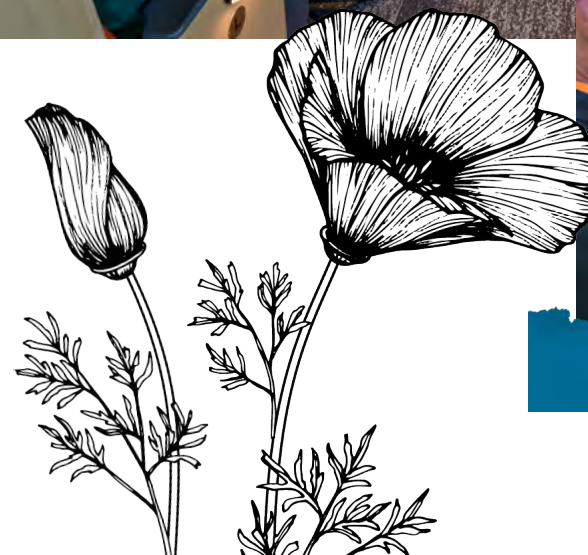
Join us to explore the vital roles women play as advocates for equity, diversity, and inclusion in California. Our distinguished panel of women leaders from the California Natural Resources Agency and the Newsom Administration will share their insights, experiences, and strategies for advancing access, equity, and inclusion across various sectors. From environmental conservation to community development, these women are driving meaningful change and paving the way for a more inclusive future. Whether you’re an aspiring leader, an advocate for social justice, or simply curious about the impact of women in leadership, this webinar promises to inspire and empower.

RESOURCES.CA.GOV/WOMENSHISTORYMONTH



JUSTICE RISING SUMMIT

In March 2024, CNRA hosted the agency's first ever conference bringing together community members, advocates, tribal members and state leadership from across CNRA. The in-person Justice Rising event in Sacramento included featured speakers, including a keynote address by Natural Resources Committee Chair Assemblymember Isaac G. Bryan and closing comments by José González, the founder of Latino Outdoors and Equity Officer for the East Bay Regional Park District. There were listening sessions and panel discussions on the state of natural resource management across California. This informed an update to the Helping All Californians Thrive policy which aims to help ensure all Californians have access to a clean and healthy environment.





The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) oversees and supports more than 26 distinct departments, conservancies, and commissions. Our Agency executive team leads efforts to steward California’s natural environment and to advance Governor Newsom’s key priorities. More than 21,000 Californians work within our Agency all across the state to meet our mission “to restore, protect and manage the state’s natural, historical and cultural resources for current and future generations using creative approaches and solutions based on science, collaboration, and respect for all the communities and interests involved.”

RECENT PROGRESS

The Tribal Affairs team developed and released a draft updated Tribal Consultation Policy in September 2024. The new policy will incorporate new laws and executive orders that have been established since 2012, to establish consistent tribal consultation policies across CNRA departments and to institutionalize the policy of early, often and meaningful consultations with California Native American tribes.

In March 2024, CNRA hosted the Justice Rising Summit, the agency’s first conference in Sacramento bringing together environmental justice advocates, tribal members and state leadership from across CNRA. The day included featured speakers, panel discussion and listening sessions, which informed agency’s priority areas.

CNRA has established a Native American Affinity group to provide state employees with opportunities for mentorship, collaboration and networking across our departments. Native Americans often face unique challenges in balancing their roles in state service while honoring their tribes, cultures and ancestors. The group aims to foster a community that offers resources, education, inclusive practices and a sense of pride in the workplace.

CNRA is developing a Tribal Stewardship Strategy and Toolkit to support tribal priorities to advance tribal access, co-management and an ancestral land return across California. The Agency hosted a kickoff webinar discussing how tribal access, comanagement and ancestral land return can work to address historical wrongs in the spirit of truth and healing as well as hosted an in-person

training with tribal governments and non-tribal land trusts to discuss ancestral land return and to encourage regional partnerships. The final Strategy will be adopted soon.

Departments across CNRA added Disability Pride Month as part of our cultural heritage month celebrations. Disability Pride Month is a time to honor and uplift the identities, resilience and contributions of disabled people across our country. The month included launching a new logo and a series of events shaped around the theme “Awareness Empowers, Inclusion Strengthens: Know Us, Know California.”

The new Tribal Nature-Based Solutions grant program evaluated over 60 applications and announced in partnerships with the Ocean Protection Council, CAL FIRE, and the State Coastal Conservancy over \$100 million in grant awards benefiting California Native American tribes and supporting the return of approximately 39,000 acres of ancestral land. The grant team is shifting to seeing these amazing projects through the property acquisition process and looking forward to watching our program grow for years to come.

The California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names (CACGN) has officially approved the renaming of over 30 locations in 15 counties that previously contained the derogatory term “sq_”, which is recognized as a racial, ethnic, and gender-based slur, aimed at Native American women. Its removal is a crucial step in recognizing the ongoing trauma and oppression that Native communities have faced.

CNRA released a report on opportunities for its Salton Sea Management Program to address community needs, as well as a commissioned report from Better World Groups Advisors that outlines a broad assessment of key community needs across the Salton Sea region ranging from more tribal engagement to increased public access. Over the past decade, community members near the Salton Sea have asked for multi-benefit restoration projects that provide community amenities and benefits. These benefits are critical in a region with historic underinvestment in infrastructure and service and where residents experience some of the highest rates of public health community issues in California.

CNRA was part of a team that also included leadership from CalEPA, GovOps and the Governor’s Office that created a framework to help ensure publicly funded infrastructure projects flow to all Californians. The tool called the Equity Bridge is the first time California has shared in simple language how those involved in development projects can meet five key pillars such as tribal partnerships, community engagement, community benefits, jobs and contracts.

In 2024, President Biden expanded Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument and San Gabriel Mountains National Monument and, in early 2025, he also designated two new national monuments—Chuckwalla National Monument and S  t  tla National Monument. These designations were the result of decades-long, tribally led efforts to protect lands of deep cultural, ecological and historical significance. This designation not only advanced California’s 30x30 goal to protect 30% of the state’s lands and coastal waters by 2030 but also promoted greater access to public lands for all Californians.

MOVING FORWARD

CNRA is expecting to release a draft updated environmental justice and equity policy called “Helping All Californians Thrive” in 2025 for public review. Agency staff pulled together feedback from the Justice Rising Summit and met individually with key community leaders, combed through existing department policies and received input from leads across our departments.





Since it was founded in 1976, the California Conservation Corps (CCC) has transformed the lives of thousands of young adults. Its mission is protecting and enhancing California’s natural resources and communities while empowering and developing young adults through hard work and education.

RECENT PROGRESS

The second learning cohort of California Conservation Corps’s (CCC) executive leaders and field staff completed their program with the Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity, as well as an additional implementation year to expand upon the CCC’s existing work. The participants focused on addressing gaps in community engagement, improving data reporting processes, incorporating an anonymous feedback survey for program improvement, establishing a data governance committee and expanding leadership training among Corpsmembers.

The CCC’s Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Coordinator helped with the development of an Employee Resources Group (ERG). The Lavender Coalition is the CCC’s first approved ERG, which aims to be a resource for employees and allies.

The CCC is committed to administering Tribal Corps grant program. Recipients of the Tribal Nature-Based Solutions Conservation Corps Grant Program or Tribal Corps, are successfully implementing youth programs. The Bishop Paiute Tribe, Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians, Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation, and Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California are in various stages of Conservation Corps development. The CCC also facilitated federal funding of \$550,000 from the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Indian Youth Service Corps (IYSC) in support of two Tribal Corps grantees with additional projects.

The CCC’s Deputy Director of Career Pathways works closely with the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and its departments, commissions, and conservancies to develop collaborative internship opportunities, identifying and enhancing existing career pathways for

Corpsmembers, and developing new points of entry into civil service careers. These opportunities facilitate career development for Corpsmembers in state service, while enhancing representation and elevating visibility for a skilled workforce that reflects the diversity of California’s communities.

CCC leadership served on CNRA planning committees and speaker panels for Black History Month, Women’s History Month, Disability Pride Month, and Latino Heritage Month. Corpsmembers also volunteered in outdoor events throughout the year including Native American Day at the Capitol.

MOVING FORWARD

The CCC’s forthcoming Strategic Plan seeks to ensure the Corps is inclusive for Corpsmembers and staff, that the benefits of the CCC are equitably distributed across the state and reinforces an organizational culture centered on compassion as well as personal and professional growth.



The CCC’s Deputy Director of Career Pathways works closely with the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and its departments, commissions, and conservancies to develop collaborative internship opportunities, identifying and enhancing existing career pathways for Corpsmembers, and developing new points of entry into civil service careers.



California
Department of
Conservation

The Department of Conservation (DOC) administers a variety of programs to create a safe and equitable environment for all Californians by balancing today’s needs with tomorrow’s challenges with the intelligent, sustainable, and efficient use of the state’s energy, land, and mineral resources.

RECENT PROGRESS

In April and July of 2024, the California Geological Survey (CGS) Division worked collaboratively to set up two interviews with the Mixteco/Indígena Community Organizing Project’s Radio Indígena 94.1 FM. This effort was integral to increasing language access by partnering with community-based ethnic media outlets to engage and inform audiences in their native language(s). Indigenous migrant communities who speak Spanish and Mixteco were priority groups for this effort as California is home to about 170,000 Indigenous migrants from Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Michoacán, with an estimated 25,000 living in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties (The Mixteco/Indígena Community Organizing Project mixteco.org). The interviews included information on the region’s seismic hazards of tsunamis and earthquakes, as well as the relative hazards in different areas that can impact community health and safety. The second included discussion of wildfire, post-wildfire debris flows, wildfire preparedness and where to access services in an emergency. Both interviews were broadcasted live in Spanish while consecutive Mixteco interpretation

was provided. The delivery of information was deliberate in ensuring that all scientific terms, definitions, and processes were communicated in plain language to be more easily understood by audiences.

The Division of Land Resource Protection’s Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program is intended to accelerate the State’s wildfire and forest resilience, management and restoration efforts. Strengthening regional leadership coordination with key tribal, local, state and federal partners is also paramount. Program staff are keenly aware of the unequal vulnerabilities that communities face and in 2024, began developing a programmatic Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Vision Statement Memorandum. The document includes objectives, delineates themes and codifies practices in planning, workforce development and capacity building initiatives throughout the state.

The Department’s Geologic Energy Management Division implemented an extensive public engagement effort to inform local communities in Kern, Ventura and Los Angeles Counties on the permanent closure and sealing of abandoned, non-operational oil and gas wells. This effort addressed the need for increasing participation from communities who are linguistically isolated and disproportionately impacted by the health and safety hazards of abandoned oil and gas wells. From May to October five public meetings were held with Spanish interpretation, two of them leading in Spanish.

CalGEM led a meeting in Spanish with interpretation in both English and Mixteco for the first time in Oxnard and Arvin, with about 245 members of the public in attendance. In Arvin, about 60% of attendees were Spanish

CalGEM led a meeting in Spanish with interpretation in both English and Mixteco for the first time in Oxnard and Arvin, with about 245 members of the public in attendance. In Arvin, about 60% of attendees were Spanish monolingual and in Oxnard about 40% were Spanish monolingual and 10% of the community members were Mixteco speaking.

monolingual and in Oxnard about 40% were Spanish monolingual and 10% of the community members were Mixteco speaking. The Department has been working to cultivate a relationship with the Mixteco Indígena Community Organizing Project (MICOP) since 2000, including an in-person meeting to their offices. The Oxnard meeting was an exciting milestone for the Department.

The Department hosted its first training for staff across the California Natural Resource Agency on how to build supportive relationships with underrepresented groups or individuals with the goal of increasing inclusion and creating community across our departments.

The Department’s RUBIN Race and Equity-Focused Public Engagement Model received input and will be improved based on information from environmental justice advocates and community leaders. The participating organizations included the Central California Environmental Justice Network (CEJA), Climate-First: Replacing Oil and Gas, the Sierra Club, Building Healthy Communities Kern, Central California Asthma Collaborative (CCAC), Los Padres Forest Watch, the Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE), the Environmental Defense Center, the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment and Dolores Huerta Foundation and many others including 170 state government staff and more than 50 experts in the field of public engagement. Improvements to the model will be shared with staff across CNRA during the next RUBIN Race and Equity-Focused Public Engagement Model training.



MOVING FORWARD

The Department will begin creating clear, written commitments about how each of its four divisions will work with communities in ways that support equity. These commitments will be customized for each division — including the California Geological Survey, Division of Mine Reclamation, Division of Land Resource Protection and CalGEM — because each one does different work and interacts with the public in different ways. To guide the process, the Department has developed a tool to help staff think about and improve how they engage with the public. The final statements will include each division’s values and examples of best practices.





The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is charged with managing the state’s diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public.

RECENT PROGRESS

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife conducted our first two beaver conservation releases in nearly 75 years last December and this past June. Working with the Maidu Summit Consortium and the Tule River Tribe, CDFW released beavers into locations that are known to the tribal communities as previously having these animals there to maintain the mountain meadow ecosystem, its processes and the habitat it provides for numerous other species.

The Vamos A Pescar community grant program for fishing programs, classes and activities committed to educating and engaging diverse, multi-generational, bi/multi-lingual participants new to fishing, boating and aquatic stewardship in California. During a recent grant cycle, the program distributed five grants totaling \$98,000. Of the 957 participants, 69% were youth under 16 years, 31% were adults, 28% of participants were from multi-generational families and 8% were monolingual speakers of either Spanish or Hmong.

CDFW’s Cannabis Program (Program) updated its grant administration policies and processes by eliminating application deadlines, translating information into Hmong and Spanish, prioritizing projects and outreach to support tribes and proactively engaging with historically unfunded or underfunded non-profits and public institutions. The Program also updated its recruitment and hiring practices by adding desirable qualifications to job announcements, such as demonstrated experience integrating, supporting, and amplifying inclusive organizational practices and allocating essential job duties for tasks relating to CDFW’s Justice Equity Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Action Plan and Tribal Communication and Consultation policy.

CDFW’s Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) tribal liaison program has been very active this year, providing preparedness grants (including safety training, drills participation and USCG Area Committee participation), spill response equipment grants, refresher training on equipment deployment and attendance at OSPR’s Sensitive Site Strategy Evaluation deployments at a number of tribal nations across the state.

In addition, the OSPR JEDI group meets monthly, alternating between educational discussions and practical working sessions to explore how they can improve the working culture at OSPR for all. Some of their completed and ongoing projects include developing messaging and questions for interviews that addresses or promote inclusive principles, developing guidance for supervisors to expand job candidate pools, supporting the development of incident safety plans that include bullying/harassment prevention and response guidance, developing ways to incorporate equity assessment tools into spill response and more. In addition to these efforts, the group authors section of OSPR’s monthly internal newsletter, presents during a regular agenda item at a monthly managers and supervisors meetings and hosted a virtual OSPR meeting for the whole staff. This outreach not only serves to raise awareness for OSPR staff at large, but also promotes positive morale and a culture of inclusivity and safety.

MOVING FORWARD

CDFW continues efforts to increase awareness and conservation to all Californians of our state’s amazing biodiversity. The department has been interviewing for a new Deputy Director of Strategic Engagement, Equity, and Partnerships as well

as bolstering our R3 program (recruit, retain and reactivate), to get more people in the outdoors. CDFW will look to increase efforts to decrease barriers to participation in these efforts as well as increase awareness and support for conservation activities across the state.

CDFW’s first expenditure of the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act funds was facilitated by the Native American Land Conservancy (NALC). This acquisition resulted in permanent conservation of 283 acres in Kern County’s Kelso Valley. The conserved parcels are in a Sierra Nevada foothill transition zone, with robust Western Joshua tree populations coexisting with grey pines, juniper, and blue oak and a scattering of cholla and beavertail cactus. This general area has been identified as important climate refugia for Western Joshua tree. The properties were historically owned by a tribal elder and the properties will again be managed by tribal interests.

CDFW’s Marine Region has partnered with Fish for Life, a Southern California based nonprofit organization, to provide complimentary fishing trips to children with special needs and their families. Fish for Life manages the boat charters and scheduling of volunteers to help the kids fish. CDFW provides free fishing licenses for those on the water and staff support to help identify fish and answer questions. When possible, CDFW Marine Enforcement District officers also join on trips, deputizing the kids and providing information on how to be a responsible angler. These trips provide an opportunity for children with special needs and their families to access California ocean fishing. For many, this is their first trip on the ocean and an opportunity to catch their first fish.

CDFW’s Marine Region’s Field Lab at AltaSea in the Port of Los Angeles is uniquely situated to incorporate public engagement and student mentorships for historically marginalized communities into the lab’s day-to-day scientific work supporting sustainable California fisheries. CDFW scientists in the lab engage with young people from Los Angeles area schools and mentor student interns from the harbor area, providing students with direct exposure to scientific work and information about career opportunities within CDFW.





The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection or CAL FIRE is dedicated to fire prevention and protection, and the stewardship of over 31 million acres of California’s privately-owned wildlands. CAL FIRE provides emergency services in 36 of the state’s 58 counties via contracts with local governments. CAL FIRE has adapted to the evolving destructive wildfires and succeeded in significantly increasing its efforts in fire prevention through wildland pre-fire engineering, vegetation management, fire planning, education and law enforcement.

RECENT PROGRESS

CAL FIRE’s new EQUIMAP dashboard is an interactive tool that offers detailed insights into our workforce to assess representation, demographic indicators by unit and region, data on bilingual employees to maximize language skills for improved public engagement and transcription. By facilitating data-driven decision-making, EQUIMAP enables CAL FIRE to identify representation gaps, promote inclusivity and ensure that its workforce understands the state’s diversity, ultimately preparing for effective communication with the communities serves.

In partnership with other state departments, CAL FIRE is developing an Inclusive Language Guide to equip employees with practical and respectful strategies that foster a more inclusive and accessible workplace. This guide serves as a valuable resource, offering alternatives to outdated terms and promoting mindful, intentional communication. It also recognizes the fluid nature of language, acknowledging that maintaining inclusive communication requires continuous reflection, learning and adaptation.

CAL FIRE is in the final stages of developing an inclusive maternity uniform, alongside additional options for expectant personnel. This initiative will be supported by comprehensive policies, procedures and purchasing guides. Significant progress has been made in both the creation and design phases, with the issue paper already completed and presented to leadership. Our current priority is obtaining approval for the policies and procedures to ensure a smooth and effective rollout.

CAL FIRE was nominated by the Employment Development Department (EDD) and received the 2024 California Employer Advisory Council award for the 2024 Veterans Employer of the Year in Government/Public Sector. This award recognizes employers who consistently demonstrate positive policies toward U.S. Veterans in hiring and promotion, as well as through employee retention efforts, ongoing training and benefits. CAL FIRE was also nominated by EDD and received this award in 2017 and 2022. CAL FIRE continues to partner and support EDD’s Veterans Program (VetNET) that assists those who have served in the U.S. military obtain meaningful employment.

In March 2024, CAL FIRE established a Tribal Affairs Program, which prioritizes increasing cultural awareness and sensitivity within CALFIRE to foster a deeper understanding of tribal heritage by providing training and informational resources throughout the department. This significant milestone underscored the department’s dedication to cultivating robust partnerships, fostering trust and improving communication with tribal nations. The program aims to build and ensure the meaningful participation of tribal governments and communities within the work of CAL FIRE, including supporting the effective integration of these governments and community interests in fire protection, public safety and resource management.

CALFIRE has added a comprehensive demographic profile on its website for wildfires exceeding 100 acres, providing essential data on languages spoken, age demographics and households with disabilities. This helps to ensure

that both agencies and the public have better insight into the unique needs and characteristics of these vulnerable populations. By fostering a deeper understanding of our diverse communities, CAL FIRE aims to enhance our preparedness, response and recovery strategies, ultimately promoting resilience and safety for all.

CAL FIRE is dedicated to fostering inclusive communication and ensuring that all community members have access to vital information about wildfire safety and resources. We are excited to introduce a chatbot on our website that will provide real-time responses in 72 languages. This innovative tool is designed to break down language barriers and create meaningful engagement with diverse communities that the department may not have effectively reached in the past. By making information accessible in multiple languages, we aim to empower individuals to participate fully in discussions about wildfire preparedness, response and recovery. Equitable access to information is essential for building resilience and safety in our communities, helping to ensure that every community member feels informed and supported.

MOVING FORWARD

With the addition of a new Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Training Specialist, CAL FIRE is working to assess needs across the department. This initiative will provide valuable insights into roles, operations and opportunities. The information gathered will be instrumental in creating engaging, interactive training sessions tailored to CAL FIRE employees, designed to help everyone feel welcome at the department.

Collaborate with the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) to share our mission and discuss employment opportunities, with the goal of assisting DOR counselors in identifying qualified candidates for positions at CAL FIRE. This collaboration will include a comprehensive presentation that outlines the hiring process, an overview of job classifications by subject matter experts and the essential skills that ideal candidates should possess. Following the presentation, DOR counselors will review their case files and recommend the most suitable candidates for these roles, encouraging them to apply if interested. CAL FIRE will continue to look



at strengthening its partnership with the California Military Department (CMD) in assisting service members serving on hand crews for emergency incident response and fuel reduction and fire prevention project work as well as utilizing the California National Guard Work for Warriors (WFW) program, a free job placement program for service members, veterans, their families and youth academy graduates. Since its creation, the CMD hand crew program has led to the hiring of more than 100 service members to the Department.

CAL FIRE Units continue their partnerships with Tribes by entering into cooperative agreements on emergency response, including dispatch services, fire engines and crews and funding for staffing. One unit is working with several tribes on letters of understanding to acknowledge the tribes have the right to gather resources for cultural and educational purposes and vehicular access to CAL FIRE state owned forest. CAL FIRE has also partnered with tribes and tribal organizations to conduct cultural burning awareness events where many tribes, local, state and federal partners participated to share and pass on Traditional Ecological Knowledge strengthening relationships and building trust.



The California Department of Parks and Recreation (Department) provides access to parks and open spaces and contributes to a healthier and richer quality of life for Californians through its programs, including grant programs administered by the Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS), the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division and the Division of Boating and Waterways. The Department’s equitable access initiatives provide Californians benefits for their hearts, minds and bodies for generations to come. The Department contains the largest and most diverse recreational, natural and cultural heritage holdings of any state agency in the nation.

RECENT PROGRESS

The Department has been strengthening its equity initiatives by partnering with underrepresented groups such as the Native Yurok Tribe, La Familia, Wounded Warrior and SETA Hillside, to provide tailored career assistance through seminars, individual consultations and enhanced access to advancement opportunities. State Parks continues to expand its diversity initiatives by breaking language barriers, including updating several exams and career seminars which are now available in Spanish. Additionally, the Department’s DEI Committee actively participates in monthly meetings with representatives from other state departments to enhance collaborations and support and advance equality across state service.

The Department’s Office of Grants and Local Services administers the Outdoor Equity Grant Program, providing grant funding to organizations who work with underserved communities throughout California. Data for



2024 indicates 131,923 youths were participated from underserved communities throughout the state, providing 6,834 activity days in communities and 2,131 nature area visits. The Department also received \$95M through its 15 successful applications to the National Park Service Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program, a competitive grant program which helps economically disadvantaged urban communities with no access or very limited access, to public outdoor recreation.

The Tribal Affairs Program promotes government to-government relationships and opportunities for coordination and cooperation on the management of cultural and natural resources and interpretation at state parks with California Native American tribes through its Agreements program. Three Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) were signed in calendar year 2024, bringing the total number of MOUs with California Native American tribes to 13. With these tribal MOUs signed to date, over half of State Parks lands are now accessible to California Native American tribal members.

The Departments has been working to engage and build relationships with California Native American tribes, with the goal of fostering co-creation of land acknowledgment signage and exhibits within State Parks. Twenty-five projects were selected for funding, which focus on a variety of improvements to State Parks interpretation and exhibits, ranging from hosting listening sessions with Tribes to co-creating museum exhibits and outdoor interpretation panels. The Tribal Affairs team is also initiating consultations with tribes on State Park land

acknowledgment entrance signage, with 60 tribes accepting consultation to date.

The African American History and Engagement Project is addressing gaps in the representation, preservation and interpretation of this significant part of California’s history through a partnership with the California African American Museum (CAAM). State Parks and the CAAM identified and engaged researchers and support staff from various institutions to lead research on six initial State Parks to expanded African American interpretation programs and exhibits.

Arts in California Parks is fostering connections between arts and parks, offering grants through the Local Parks Grant Program and building foundations to support art within units of the State Park System. Efforts to support Arts in California Parks started with implementing 15 pilot projects, which together offered 31 events/programs. The Local Parks Grant Program launched in April 2024, received 223 applicants, awarding \$2.8 million to 31 recipients. To bring transparency, diversity of thought and experience to the review process, a Proposal Review Committee comprised of 27 members representing the Department, Parks California, the California Arts Council and arts and cultural resources community leaders and stakeholders, reviewed proposals and made recommendations to the core program team.

The State Park System provides free day-use access through three innovative pass programs: the Golden Bear pass, the California State Park Adventure Pass and State Library Parks Pass, providing more equitable access. Since the three pilot programs began in 2021, more than 180,000 passes have been provided to Californians in an effort to remove income barriers which may prevent access to the state park system’s rich natural and cultural resources, and high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities.

MOVING FORWARD

State Parks has been working to make its parks more inclusive through several efforts. This includes taking stock of and critically reexamining its past, looking specifically at contested place names, monuments and interpretation across California’s State Park System.

The Department’s partner, Parks California, is expanding access to the State Park System for underserved populations through its Route to Parks Grants Program. Notable grantees include the Angeles Chapter Sierra Club’s Inspiring Connections Outdoors, Hearts for Sight Foundation and the collaborative efforts of the Oceano Community Services District’s Field Trips to State Parks and Beaches.



Klamath Director and Resighini Tribal Chairperson Fawn C. Murphy sign MOU with California State Parks Director Armando Quintero



The Department of Water Resources (DWR) manages the water resources of California, in cooperation with other agencies, to benefit the state’s people and environment. In so doing, DWR operates the State Water Project, serving 27 million people and 750,000 acres of irrigated agriculture; maintains 300 miles of levees that protects millions of people and property; ensures the safety of more than 1,200 dams; provides policy direction, regulatory guidelines, and financial support for local water supply investments, sustainable groundwater management, and water use efficiency; and restores ecosystems in the state’s rivers and streams. Given the growing complexities of water management, DWR also strives to inform and educate the public about the importance of water, California’s unique challenges and opportunities, and DWR’s role in managing and protecting this valuable resource.

RECENT PROGRESS

In May 2024, the Racial Equity Office (REO) launched Culture Corner, a digital employee engagement hub that is a collaborative space for highlighting and contributing to the development of cultural heritage content, dialogue, and events. In 2024, the Office hosted five in-person cultural heritage events, attended by more than 250 employees and added over 200 new Culture Corner members.

Department of Water Resource’s Office of Tribal Affairs and the Underrepresented Communities, Tribes and Small Farmer Technical Assistance (URCTA) Program collaborated to develop and release three graphic novels: *The Fish Story*;

The Making of the World; and *How the Earth Was Made*. The URCTA Program was awarded the 2024 Public Outreach Award of Merit for outreach and engagement from the American Planning Association California Chapter-Northern Section, recognizing the unique educational materials created for K-12 students. These materials aim to educate youth about the importance of water from a historical, tribal cultural perspective integrating indigenous knowledge and indigenous science.

DWR launched a pilot Watershed Resilience Program in 2024, totaling \$10 million, to incentivize greater inclusion in the strategic development of climate-informed water management plans. DWR staff developed resources for the five pilot watersheds to ensure equitable outcomes. This includes networking mapping, planning and governance approaches, and metrics to measure opportunities for increased engagement and decision-making.

In 2024, DWR completed emergency levee repairs for five sites in frontline communities, amounting to a total cost of \$5.3M. These levees were damaged during the 2023 winter storms and are located in Colusa, Butte, Yolo and Stanislaus counties.

In addition, DWR co-hosted community engagement meetings in Alpaugh and Planada, both frontline communities that have been heavily impacted by floods. DWR staff partnered with the National Weather Service, as well as representatives from County Offices of Emergency Services in counties where the meetings were



A day of outdoor recreation during the annual Catch A Special Thrill (C.A.S.T.) for Kids Foundation event held at O’Neill Forebay in Merced County, California.



Photo from 2024 Native American Heritage Day at the California State Capitol, including staff from DWR’s Office of Tribal Affairs, Headquarters, and Region Offices.

held. The goal of these meetings is to improve community awareness of flood risk, the winter weather outlook for 2024 and knowledge about flood emergency resources available to the community.

The Pajaro region was also greatly impacted by the 2023 winter storms and experienced severe flooding. DWR’s Flood Financial Assistance Branch provided an advanced payment of \$47 million to the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency (PRFMA) to ensure critical project milestones were met and to reduce cash-flow challenges.

DWR collaborates with the C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation, as well as local, state, and federal agencies, community groups and schools to provide children who have disabilities a unique outdoor fishing experience. DWR has hosted three C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation events this year with more than 50 children and 184 community volunteer partners participating. This community-driven initiative reflects the high level of interest in DWR’s efforts to connect children with disabilities to outdoor recreation.

MOVING FORWARD

DWR will assess our Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) and Strategic Plan, which lays out the department’s goals for the next five years, to make sure our work benefits all Californians. We are committed to better understanding the communities we serve and working closely with them to ensure their voices are heard in decisions about flood, drought, and climate change — especially those most affected.





The Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety or Energy Safety oversees California’s electrical corporations’ compliance with wildfire safety rules and regulations and develops and enforces safe excavation standards for all underground facilities.

RECENT PROGRESS

Energy Safety continued its government-to-government consultation with California’s Native American tribes. This includes consultations for tribal input into the development of the 2026-2028 Wildfire Mitigation Plan Guidelines. Energy Safety’s 2026-2028 Guidelines will also ensure that underserved communities disproportionately impacted by wildfires, will be represented in the electrical corporations’ wildfire mitigation planning.

In 2024, Energy Safety continued to promote job opportunities enhancing the diversity of qualified candidates who may apply for its positions. Energy Safety’s diverse college populations recruitment program, which began in 2021, has established an affiliation with 23 college campuses statewide. In 2024, Energy Safety was able to visit 13 new college campuses in pursuit of increasing the candidate pool.

Energy Safety’s Underground Safety Board requires those who violate the Dig Safe Law to complete an education course in excavation safety. In 2024, Energy Safety’s Underground Directorate staff continued outreach to underserved communities by developing an education course and accompanying materials for Spanish-speaking audiences.

Energy Safety staff stepped up to lead several committees associated with the planning of cultural months events for departments across CNRA. In May, Energy Safety staff led the Asian Pacific Islander Month Committee and the Pride Month Committee. Staff also participated for key positions for Disability Pride Month in July and Latino Heritage Month in September.

MOVING FORWARD

In 2025, Energy Safety will begin implementing its 2024-2029 Strategic Plan. Ensuring the department serves all Californians is a critical component of the strategic plan and shapes every facet of Energy Safety’s operations, from the internal workings of the department to its public facing work. Energy Safety’s strategic plan implementation process for 2025 will focus on embedding equity and environmental justice into the department’s culture as it introduces new organizational operations, processes and structures.

In 2025, Energy Safety will expand its government-to-government consultation with California’s Native American tribes. This includes their participation in the development of the 2026-2028 Wildfire Mitigation Plan Guidelines and in all Energy Safety workstreams where sovereign lands may be impacted.

Energy Safety’s promotion of job opportunities across California will grow in 2025 in an effort to increase the diversity of qualified candidates who may apply for its positions.



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
BALDWIN HILLS &
URBAN WATERSHEDS
CONSERVANCY

The Baldwin Hills and Urban Watersheds Conservancy (BHUWC) in Los Angeles County is the portal for communities of color with the highest population and pollution burdens in the state to access and experience the California’s conservation and climate initiatives first-hand. The Conservancy’s 70-square mile territory is characterized by lack of green and open space infrastructure unique to the urban watershed. With less than the County average of 3.3-acres per thousand people, investment in the territory will advance a more equitable distribution of resources and improve the quality of life in the most vulnerable neighborhoods in the state.

RECENT PROGRESS

In 2024, the Baldwin Hills and Urban Watersheds Conservancy advanced its efforts to provide access for all through internal work, new local community-based organization partnerships, as well as co-hosted programs for underserved communities in the urban watersheds territory. Conservancy staff continues implementing our adopted Environmental Justice Policy objectives through updates to grant agreement terms, broader meeting notifications and identifying solutions to program gaps experienced by the broader community, including residents with disabilities. Staff has also completed the mandatory tribal consultations online training to satisfy the government code’s annual requirements.

The program “Rooted: Creating Equitable Access to Green Space for Black Angelenos Through Conversation, Art and Poetry” was delivered to constituents across South Los Angeles County over the past. This program was hosted in the Baldwin Hills Parklands during the summer and fall of 2024. The series explored environmental justice by inviting local Black residents to reflect on their relationship to nature, environmental racism and how they might increase their engagement with the natural world. We are planning for an encore performance of last year’s Sol at the Parklands in 2025, a multidisciplinary storytelling initiative that invites the public to reimagine their relationship with nature by featuring Indigenous, Latino and environmental artists whose work responds to current environmental issues, public land stewardship and the symbiotic relationship between the human body, the earth and our shifting climate.

MOVING FORWARD

The Conservancy’s efforts to address climate change in vulnerable communities is evolving into an innovative exercise in co-design with local residents through the deployment of a data driven GIS-based urban resilience tool. During 2024, our team collected nearly 350 environmental oriented studies, plans and initiatives developed by local municipalities, conservation groups, departments and commissions. The repository, which also includes parcel data, census tracts and socioeconomic profiles, is being mapped and analyzed for use in a 2025-2026 community engagement and capacity building process to help prioritize projects via an online database that will recommend interventions to address climate resilience in high need communities throughout the territory.





The California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) is a state agency, established in 1985, with a mission to lead California’s efforts to restore and enhance the extraordinary natural and recreational resources of the Lake Tahoe Basin. The Conservancy’s jurisdiction spans the 236 square miles of the California side of the Basin. The Conservancy manages 6,500 acres of state lands for wildlife habitat, open space, and to protect water quality, in addition to its programs to restore watersheds, enhance public access and recreational opportunities, increase forest health and reduce wildfire risk, and make Tahoe communities and natural resources more resilient to climate change.

RECENT PROGRESS

The Tahoe Conservancy finalized its Racial Equity Action Plan in September. Informed by two years of community outreach and collaboration with the Equity and Wellness Institute, the new plan complements the Conservancy’s 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, to ensure the Conservancy meets its commitments to the Washoe Tribe and is serving all Californians.

In June, the Tahoe Conservancy Board awarded a \$220,000 grant to help fund the creation of a new Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin) liaison position for the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California to ensure meaningful tribal participation in Basin land management decisions and actions. The Washoe Liaison provides a centralized point of contact with the Washoe Tribe and facilitates streamlined collaboration with boards, committees and other organizations in the Basin. In August, Lydell Wyatt began serving as the Washoe Tribe’s first Washoe Liaison.

The Tahoe Conservancy continues to support efforts to expand tribal presence and active management of the Basin. In October, the Tahoe Conservancy executed a fuels hazard reduction contract with Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS). A nonprofit, CHIPS trains and employs Native American tribal members to do meaningful work on ancestral homelands in the field of forestry and other natural resources related activities.

MOVING FORWARD

The Tahoe Conservancy is planning its public outreach for restoration for the former Knox Johnson and Motel 6 property. The Conservancy will be engaging the community about future environmental and public access improvements at this site, which will include equitable outreach principles and elements of the Conservancy’s racial equity action plan. New informational signs at the Knox Johnson and Motel Property, written in English, Spanish and the Washoe language, share the news that the Tahoe Conservancy, supported by partners, has acquired this environmentally sensitive land and is removing the development.





The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy’s (CVMC) mission is to protect the natural and cultural resources of the Coachella Valley, to steward land in perpetuity, and to provide for the public’s enjoyment and access to those lands, which include mountainous lands surrounding the Coachella Valley. The Conservancy develops partnerships with local government, state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, Tribes, the private sector, and the community to protect magnificent biological, scenic, cultural and recreational resources. The Conservancy is directed by a 20-member board representing nine incorporated cities in the Coachella Valley, the County of Riverside, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, state agencies with land management responsibilities, and citizens appointed by the Assembly, Governor and Senate. The Conservancy’s boundary includes disadvantaged communities and severely disadvantaged communities where the CalEnviroScreen percentile average is above the 80th percentile.

RECENT PROGRESS

In 2024, the Conservancy’s Board approved the ancestral land return of 320 acres in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, establishing a total of 600 acres of land returned from the Conservancy and State of California. This is the largest direct and full land return from the state to a tribe, helping to fulfill California’s goal of returning land to tribes. The parcel was originally purchased by the Conservancy to protect palm oases and fragile cultural resources near Palm Canyon in 1997. In 2023, the Conservancy Board approved transferring an adjacent 280-acre parcel to Agua Caliente.

Through the Climate Resilience and Community Access Grants, the Conservancy awarded projects that incorporated nature-based solutions and increased the capacity of organizations to carry out projects and programs that respond to our climate crisis and help provide equitable access to outdoors recreation. In 2024, the Conservancy remained committed to supporting partners’ organizational capacity that are critical to conservation work and whose organizational mission and services have a significant impact on addressing needs in severely disadvantaged communities in the Coachella Valley. This included a \$109,277 to the Southern California Mountains Foundation (SCMF), which increased restoration projects and removed invasive species with a

workforce from disadvantaged communities; a \$140,000 grant to the Council of Mexican Federation in North American, whose program integrates conservation and capacity building geared towards youth, adults and senior members in underinvested communities; another \$118,000 to the Friends of the Desert Mountains for their East Valley Programs, which provides recreational and educational programing that showcases the wildlife, scenic and cultural resources of the Coachella Valley to underserved students; and \$90,000 to the Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for land management, building and maintenance of new trails in underserved communities, removal of illegal dumping on conservation lands and more.

The Conservancy also awarded \$372,712 to the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission for a project to develop a cooperative law enforcement program for conservation lands, of which approximately 55% are in disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged areas. The program would consist of developing an enforcement program, ordinance and ranger cadet program that would work directly with CVDMRCA and Urban Conservation Corps to train both interpretive and public contact ranger cadets for patrol of conservation lands. The project’s goal is to steward a more equitable approach and access to the outdoors and conservation education.

The Conservancy Board approved a \$847,285 grant to the Desert Recreational District for its Water-Efficient Infrastructure project in Thermal. The infrastructure will be essential for the Thermal Park Project, a much needed 10-acre park that will provide green space and access for the unincorporated community of Thermal, a severely disadvantaged area in the Eastern Coachella Valley. This project will provide greenspace for a community, whose nearest park is currently a 20-30 minute drive.

The Conservancy Board approved a \$133,981 grant to The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens for its Desert Hot Springs Pollinator Pathway project. The Living Desert aims to create green spaces by planting native gardens and pollinator gardens in the underserved community of Desert Hot Springs. The project will educate students and community members on the significance of pollinator plants, drought resistant native plants and conservation.

The Conservancy Board approved a \$17,997 grant to the Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for its West Deception Canyon Trail implementation that will include signage, trail markings and switchback and formation of the trail in a severely disadvantaged community. The new trail promotes equitable access, improves public health and supports the mission of the Conservancy to preserve natural landscapes, connect habitats and protect plant and animal species.

Shumway Ranch, a historic ranch in the mountains 4,000 feet above the Coachella Valley, opened its doors to the first cohort of students from the Coachella Valley this summer. The program allows for an immersive hike through the ranch identifying rocks and plants as well as enjoying art sessions.

MOVING FORWARD

The management, renovation and restoration at Shumway Ranch is underway so that wildlife preservation continues while allowing the ranch to be appropriately accessible to the public for small group educational opportunities.

The Conservancy will continue to develop relationships with tribes and the community to grow the meaningful impact of the Conservancy. As the Conservancy prepares to update the Strategic Plan for 2026-2030, the continued relationship with tribes, communities and local governments will be crucial as ensuring that all communities are considered in the Strategic Plan. The Conservancy will continue to acquire and steward conservation lands with local partners to protect flora and fauna and provide vital greenspace and recreation opportunities for underserved communities in the Coachella Valley through grants, stewardship, acquisitions, and additional land transfers.



“Preservation of our homelands is essential to maintaining our cultural heritage. Integral to the identity of our Tribe is the thousands of years of knowledge and ancient wisdom held within these lands, our homelands.”

—Tribal Chairman Reid D. Milanovich, regarding the most recent 320-acre land return to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.



The Coastal Conservancy plans and implements projects to protect, restore, and provide access to the California coast. The agency works along California’s coast and in coastal watersheds, the San Francisco Bay Area, and the Santa Ana River watershed to protect coastal resources, support climate adaptation projects such as wetland restoration, sea level rise adaptation, and wildfire resilience, and increase opportunities for the public to access and enjoy the coast. The Conservancy partners with California Native American tribes, local communities, nonprofit organizations, and other government agencies to implement multi-benefit projects that serve the diverse populations of California.

RECENT PROGRESS

The Coastal Conservancy adjusted all duty statements at our agency to allocate a minimum of 5% to professional development training as well as tasks, training and activities that support improving programs and creating a workplace where everyone feels welcome.

The Conservancy amended several provisions in our grant management procedures to reduce burdens on grantees including updating the insurance provisions of our grant agreement templates to reduce the complexity of the insurance requirements and to make compliance, and verification of compliance, easier for grantees and project managers. We also improved travel reimbursement and rolled out a simpler way to demonstrate permit compliance.

The Coastal Conservancy awarded \$994,197 to 13 nonprofit organizations and 1 tribe for 14 projects that facilitate and enhance the public’s opportunities to explore the California coast through our Explore the Coast program. Staff estimates that the projects will engage over 6,100 people. Of these people, project partners estimate that the program will serve over 5,500 low-income Californians, 5,700 people of color, 1,000 youth who are homeless or in foster care, approximately 650 people for whom English is not their first language, and at least 1,900 people with physical, cognitive, and/or emotional disabilities.

The department awarded \$150,000 to two nonprofit organizations – TreePeople and Inland Empire Waterkeeper – for two projects that facilitate and enhance the public’s opportunities to explore the Santa Ana River under the

Santa Ana River Conservancy’s Explore the River grant program. TreePeople will provide up to 14 no-cost field trips for youth and their families. Approximately 490 participants in the cities of San Bernardino, Rialto, and Colton will explore natural areas in the Santa Ana River Watershed through this program. Inland Empire Waterkeeper will host field trips to various parts of the Santa Ana River at no cost for approximately 700 youth from Title 1 schools and community youth groups throughout San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

The Conservancy also awarded more than \$1.3 million to nine non-profit organizations for Coastal Stories projects that will create storytelling installations, murals and/or other interpretive materials that represent diverse communities’ perspectives, which have historically been excluded from narratives of California’s coast and publicly accessible lands.

The Conservancy hosted a series of webinars to make our funding easier to access and our grants easier to manage including onboarding webinars for new grantees and a technical assistance webinar on incorporating workforce development into projects. We also hosted hiring webinars for vacancies at the Conservancy to help applicants develop successful job applications.

Conservancy funding supported the acquisition of 357 acres of wetlands and dunes at Samoa Dunes in Humboldt County that will be returned to the Wiyot Tribe through a landback transfer.



MOVING FORWARD

In 2025, the Conservancy plans to continue our technical assistance webinar program with sessions on Working Waterfronts projects and Parks Related Anti-Displacement Strategies (PRADS).

The Conservancy is also initiating a gap analysis to identify communities that have not received support from our funding and better focus our outreach to these areas.



SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN
DELTA CONSERVANCY
A California State Agency

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (Conservancy) is a primary state agency in the implementation of ecosystem restoration in the Delta. We support efforts that advance environmental protection and the economic well-being of Delta residents. The Conservancy collaborates and cooperates with local communities and other parties to preserve, protect, and restore the natural resources, economy, and agriculture of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh.

RECENT PROGRESS

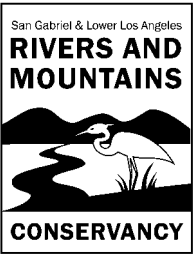
The Conservancy awarded nearly \$2 million in community enhancement grants to support community-based projects including a planning grant for the Suisun City Public Fishing Dock to create an accessible, sustainable and inclusive space for fishing, kayaking and learning about the Delta ecosystem; an implementation grant for enhancements to the Isleton Museum to celebrate Asian American heritage; and a planning grant for a Historical Maritime Museum in the City of Stockton to support community-based efforts to provide workforce training and highlight the significance of maritime history in the Delta region. Conservancy staff has removed barriers to accessing state dollars by providing technical assistance to grantees, using a rolling application deadline, aiding applicants with the process, providing advance payments, allowing monthly invoicing and allowing a longer time between pre-proposal and final proposal.

Updates to our work to remove barriers in 2024 include streamlined processes, consistency across funding programs and revised templates for all applicants and grantees. This work allows many smaller or community-based organizations that historically lack technical capacity to access, apply for, receive and manage state funding. The Conservancy is also expanding its work with tribes to work more collaboratively on joint objectives and encourage grantees to do the same.

MOVING FORWARD

The Conservancy will continue to develop relationships with tribes and the Delta community to help grow the relevance and impact of the organization’s work. The Conservancy will also continue to provide technical assistance and assess and address barriers to State resources for underserved communities. As the Conservancy receives additional funds, it will consult with community groups to continue to improve the grant process.

Updates to our work to remove barriers in 2024 include streamlined processes, consistency across funding programs and revised templates for all applicants and grantees.



The Rivers and Mountains Conservancy’s (RMC) mission is to preserve open space and habitat in order to provide for low-impact recreation and educational uses, wildlife habitat restoration and protection, and watershed improvements within its jurisdiction. The Conservancy’s territory includes eastern Los Angeles County and western Orange County, a vast and varied area with mountains, valleys, rivers, coastal plain, and coastline.

RECENT PROGRESS

The Community Connections to Wildlands program provides overnight camping experiences specifically for youth from underserved communities, at no cost to participants or their families. The program provides all necessary equipment, food, transportation, and programming from experienced naturalists. The Community Connections to Wildlands program has also funded several capital improvements to make natural areas more accessible to program participants and their communities.

The RMC continues to invest in its longstanding partnerships with local Conservation Corps, providing valuable job training, internships, experience, and educational opportunities for youths in their communities. Through the RMC’s River Rangers program, corpsmembers monitor the physical conditions, environmental health, and development of green space along the Los Angeles River. River Rangers foster a sense of identity for the LA River as a place for its communities to enjoy recreational opportunities and learn about the river’s history and environmental resources. The RMC’s Wildland Firefighter Training & Fuel Reduction Project kicked off in 2024 and saw Conservation Corps crew members clearing brush and removing combustible fuel on Catalina Island, providing valuable experience to corpsmembers while protecting the underserved community of Avalon from wildfires.

In 2024 the RMC’s Lower LA River Para Todos Campaign ensured that equity and community stabilization remained central factors in continued open space development along the river. The campaign informs the community about river revitalization efforts, projects and activities

since the completion of the Lower LA River Revitalization Plan. RMC staff continue to engage with the community regarding their concerns, ideas and needs in order to shape current and future projects along the Lower LA River.

MOVING FORWARD

RMC staff continue to work closely with California Native American tribes, soliciting their input for projects at the mouth of the San Gabriel River through a Tribal Advisory Group. A Tribal Access Plan is expected in 2025, that will contain tribal specific access features for the soon to be restored Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands, a historically and culturally significant location to local tribes.

In 2025 the RMC will continue to build partnerships to develop open space projects and programming that center environmental justice in some of the nation’s densest, park-poor and pollution burdened communities, specifically adjacent to the Lower Los Angeles River.





The San Joaquin River Conservancy is a regionally governed agency created to develop and manage the San Joaquin River Parkway, a planned 22-mile natural and recreational area in the floodplain extending from Friant Dam to Highway 99. The Conservancy’s mission includes acquiring approximately 5,900 acres from willing sellers; developing, operating, and managing those lands for public access and recreation; and protecting, enhancing, and restoring riparian and floodplain habitat.

RECENT PROGRESS

Through the Climate Resilience and Community Access Grants, the Conservancy’s Governing Board awarded more than \$1.4 million to the Sierra Resource Conservation District (SRCD) to implement nature-based solutions and enhance organizational capacity for projects and programs addressing the climate crisis while promoting equitable access to outdoor recreation. SRCD will conduct comprehensive assessment surveys across all 20 San Joaquin River Conservancy owned properties and based on those findings, the Conservancy will identify up to five properties that would benefit most from restoration efforts and make recommendations on projects with a nature-based solutions approach.

The Governing Board initiated a pilot working group known as Parkway Action and Community Engagement (PACE), which is intended to discuss community issues related to the San Joaquin River Parkway and provide feedback on proposed projects. These conversations help guide the Board’s priorities and will shape a new 5-year Strategic Plan that aims to better reflect community voices and ensure projects benefit a wide range of people.

In 2021, Assembly Bill No. 559 amended the San Joaquin River Conservancy Act, restructuring the Governing Board to include two new members: one representative from a California Native American tribe and one youth member. The Conservancy is proud to announce that the youth member position was successfully filled by Stephanie Ruiz in November. The tribal representative is currently vacant and applications are being accepted.

The Conservancy has designated a new tribal liaison, Erin Aquino-Carhart with the Wildlife Conservation Board. Erin will work with the new

Conservancy’s Executive Officer, Kari Daniska, to increase tribal engagement and provide for early and meaningful engagement in the planning and implementation of our work along the San Joaquin River Parkway.

The Conservancy initiated the formal regulations process for Conservancy owned properties. Draft regulations include exemptions or allowances for the tribal community including access to historically and culturally significant locations on Conservancy properties.

In November, the Conservancy, in partnership with the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust, reopened Ball Ranch for public access and recreation.

The Conservancy initiated a renaming process to consider renaming Conservancy properties that are named after former owners and rename them properties to honor natural, historical or cultural values.

MOVING FORWARD

In January 2025, the Conservancy reopened Wildwood Native Park located in Madera County, an underserved area in the Central Valley. The Conservancy adopted draft Proposition 68 Grant Guidelines that reflect our commitment to increase access to grants. The guidelines will provide guidance for and prioritize projects that benefit priority populations and underserved communities. The Conservancy plans to develop a Tribal Consultation Policy and Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy committed to advancing fairness, representation, and a sense of belonging in all aspects of its work. These plans will address current inadequacies and will offer strategies to improve early and meaningful communication, solicit input for projects, mitigate development impacts and promote equitable access to the San Joaquin River Parkway.



The San Diego River Conservancy is an independent, non-regulatory state agency established to preserve, restore and enhance the San Diego River Area. The Conservancy’s 18-member Governing Board consists of both state and local representatives, creating a diverse partnership dedicated to conserving this highly valued resource of statewide significance. The San Diego River Conservancy’s mission is accomplished by conserving land, and providing recreational opportunities, protecting wildlife species and native habitat, water quality, natural flood conveyance, historical, cultural, and tribal resources, and supporting educational opportunities.

RECENT PROGRESS

The Conservancy’s Governing Board approved eight grants totaling \$6.1 million from the Wildfire Early Action Plan in 2024. A quarter of the funding went to tribal governments and 63% to historically underfunded communities to implement fire resilience and restoration projects.

MOVING FORWARD

The Conservancy will continue public outreach and engagement opportunities, technical assistance and workshops for historically underfunded communities. The Conservancy will also participate in the Eco Ambassadors program in the winter, spring and fall hosted by Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, which offers inspiring programming to high school students. The Conservancy plans to update its Tribal Consultation Policy and attend the Tribal EPA Workshop on tribal access, co-management, ancestral land return and carbon sequestration.





Through direct action, alliances, partnerships, and joint powers authorities, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy’s (SMMC) mission is to strategically buy back, protect, preserve, restore, and enhance treasured pieces of Southern California to form an interlinking system of urban, rural, and river parks, open space, trails, and wildlife habitats that are easily accessible to the public.

RECENT PROGRESS

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) and Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority (MRCA) continued to support beach trips from urban areas to the Malibu coast, particularly for communities historically excluded from beach access. In 2024 SMMC hosted five trips to the beach for adults and kids that included lunch, surfing lessons and ocean safety education provided at no cost. Also included was a day for community leaders to discuss with MRCA what types of amenities their communities need to encourage maximum coastal access in Malibu, such as safe spaces for historically excluded groups, water safety for kids and adults who’ve never been to the ocean and lack swimming skills and more.

SMMC and MRCA expanded its promotion of equitable coastal access by increasing signage in both English and Spanish along the coast. This includes adding QR codes at coastal accessways in Malibu, which provide information on tidal conditions and where the public portions of the sandy beach are to help visitors know where they are welcome.

SMMC and MRCA also updated the free mobile phone app “Our Malibu Beaches,” which helps visitors navigate and enjoy Malibu’s beaches. The app provides directions and expert tips on how to access the public sections of the beaches. The app is now compatible with new operating systems for all mobile phones.

In 2024, SMMC and MRCA continued their series of social media posts highlighting that the Malibu coast is a place of refuge from extreme heat-impacted inland communities in advance of forecasted extreme heat events. These posts aim to ensure that members of the public understand these public resources are available to them to find relief from the heat.

SMMC supports land acquisition and through grants to community-based nonprofits in the Northeast Los Angeles hilltops for workforce development, fire resiliency projects and native plant restoration projects. Additional parcels were acquired along with trail work will help link preserved parcels.

SMMC granted funds for the acquisition of Mill Creek Ranch in Old Topanga Canyon. In 2024, the ranch’s former equestrian center and trails were improved to support access for disabled youth and young adults served by Regional Centers. In November, the SMMC and MRCA sponsored four trips for children with disabilities, introducing them to the beautiful natural environment and hands-on interaction with horses and other animals.

MOVING FORWARD

In 2025, Los Angeles County is expected to transfer surplus land in Big Tujunga Canyon to MRCA from Los Angeles County. This land is expected to be a significant opportunity for tribal co-management.



The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is a state agency with the mission to initiate, encourage, and support efforts to improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra-Cascades Region, its communities, and the people of California.

RECENT PROGRESS

The 40-Acre Conservation League’s 2024 acquisition of a beautiful 650-acre parcel of land in the mountains of Placer County is a step toward inclusion of historically underrepresented communities in California’s Sierra-Cascade. The purchase by California’s first and only Black-led conservancy was supported by grants from both the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservation Board. With the purchase, the 40-Acre Conservation League marks a major milestone in their effort to create welcoming spaces for all Californians to connect with and enjoy the great outdoors.

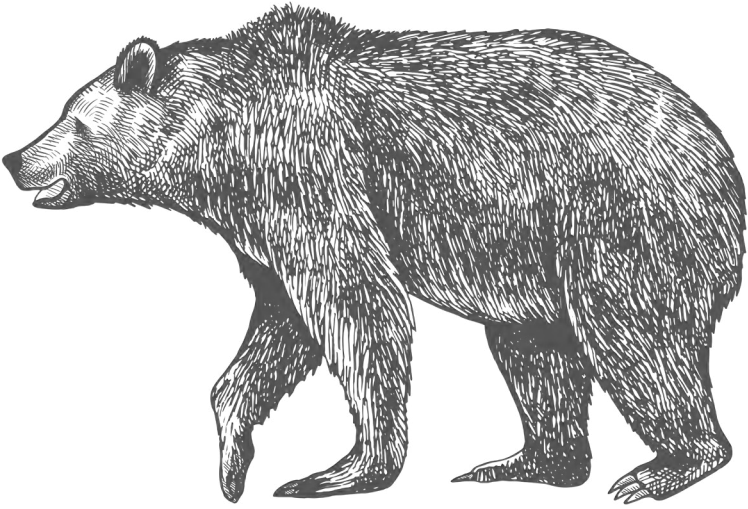
The Sierra Nevada Conservancy continued to work closely with Sierra-Cascade tribes. Highlights include a grant under the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program to the California Heritage Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP) a non-profit affiliated with the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe and the launch of a pilot tribal capacity-building program intended to level the playing field for tribal entities seeking state natural resource grant funding.

The grant to CHIRP will reduce hazardous fuels on tribal lands along Deer Creek just outside the town of Nevada City. Funding will support partnership development, training of tribal members, planning, permitting and the implementation of a cultural burn, along with replanting culturally and ecologically important plants in the restored landscape. Through cultural-burning practices, the focus will be on demonstration and education of tribal members in the use of traditional ecological knowledge.

MOVING FORWARD

The SNC recently updated its five-year strategic plan to embed equity into both organizational and programmatic goals and objectives. Highlights include, making it a priority to ensure a diverse range of communities benefit from land conservation efforts and taking a close look at which areas have — and haven’t — received support from the agency in the past.

The SNC also launched a pilot tribal capacity building program that has recruited representatives from 12 different Sierra-Cascade tribes to participate in a series of paid trainings and knowledge-sharing opportunities tailored to the needs of the pilot cohort. The curriculum will cover a range of topics from project management, grant administration, contracting and other skills and is scheduled to begin in early 2025.





The California Coastal Commission is committed to protecting and enhancing California’s coast and ocean for present and future generations. It does so through careful planning and regulation of environmentally sustainable development, rigorous use of science, strong public participation, education, and effective intergovernmental coordination.

RECENT PROGRESS

The Commission worked with eight community advisors to update its Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance to better reflect community needs. The guidance, which applies to coastal development permits and updates to Local Coastal Programs, was adopted in November. The Commission also released a resource guide to help local governments plan in ways that consider impacts to underserved communities and make the coast more accessible to all.

The Commission’s Spanish Program expanded its capacity, increasing the number of state-certified bilingual Spanish staffers from two to four people. This growth supports greater accessibility to the Coastal Commission for California’s Spanish-speaking communities by providing translation services for publications, public comment and other types of engagement during Commission hearings and other meetings.

The Commission issued an Enforcement Order to the organizers of the Huntington Beach Air Show for blocking public access to state tidelands and waters in violation of the Coastal Act. As part of the resolution, the event organizers opened and maintained three free public access corridors to the beach and provided free tickets to underserved youth and their families for prime viewing areas, ensuring greater inclusivity for low-income households, communities of color, inland and rural communities, and youth impacted by the foster and carceral systems.

The Commission’s EJ and Mapping teams launched the Coastal California Environmental Justice Mapping Tool (CCEJ Tool). Designed to assist in the implementation of the Commission’s EJ Policy, the tool combines environmental and demographic data, allowing applicants, analysts and the public to screen for potential environmental justice concerns. This new resource will enhance project reviews and outreach to impacted communities. The tool and its User Guide are now available on the Commission’s website.

The Coastal Commission introduced a new Affordable Housing webpage, a collaborative effort between the Environmental Justice, Legislative and Statewide Planning Units. The webpage offers resources on housing in the coastal zone, case studies of affordable housing projects and a detailed story map highlighting the history of exclusionary housing policies in California. This online resource is designed to support public and local government efforts to promote a range of housing opportunities along the coast.

The 2023/24 WHALE TAIL® Grants round was one of the largest in the program’s history, awarding funding to 60 projects across 31 counties. The program continues to advance equity, accessibility and inclusion, with funded projects focusing on low-income, dual-language learners, rural, tribal and other underserved communities. This year’s grantees are expected to engage over one million direct participants.

Photo by Whale Tail Grant-funded programming from Canal Alliance.



***“The Coastal Commission really puts forth their best foot to ensure small organizations have a chance at truly making a difference in the coastal space.”
—Whale Tail Grantee Feedback***

MOVING FORWARD

Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the first five years of implementation of the Commission’s EJ Policy, which was adopted in 2019. This evaluation will help shape the strategic direction and growth of the EJ program over the next five year period.

Develop a strategy for promoting meaningful engagement earlier in the Coastal Development Permit and Local Coastal Program planning processes, including incorporating the recently developed mapping tool more effectively into project development and regulatory review.



The California State Lands Commission manages 4 million acres of tide and submerged lands and the beds of navigable rivers, streams, lakes, bays, estuaries, inlets, and straits. These lands, often known as sovereign or public trust lands, stretch from the Klamath River and Goose Lake in the north to the Tijuana Estuary in the south, the Colorado River in the east, and from the Pacific Coast three miles offshore in the west to world-famous Lake Tahoe in the east, and includes California’s two longest rivers, the Sacramento and San Joaquin. The Commission oversees sovereign land granted in trust to about 70 local jurisdictions, which are predominantly prime waterfront lands, coastal waters, and the lands underlying California’s major ports. The Commission also protects state waters from marine invasive species introductions and prevents oil spills by regulating oil transfers at marine oil terminals. The Commission is a leader in the fight against climate change and transitioning away from fossil fuel to clean energy, managing a portfolio of renewable energy leases and working alongside the California Energy Commission and others to bring offshore wind energy to California.

RECENT PROGRESS

The Commission and the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation memorialized a commitment to pursue a co-management framework for land formerly used for offshore oil and gas development. This first-of-its-kind agreement memorializes the Commission’s intent to partner with the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation to support shared land stewardship and California’s commitment to conserve 30 percent of the state’s lands and coastal waters by 2030 (known as the 30×30 initiative).

The Commission spearheaded and convened internal feedback sessions to gather input on its Environmental Justice Policy implementation. During these sessions, staff assessed our progress over the last five years, explored ways to continue improving, and identified priorities and goals for the year ahead. These feedback sessions offered staff the opportunity to reflect on the key goals in the Policy and position the Commission for success in the year to come as staff develop a plan to incorporate feedback and implement new ideas.

The Commission continued to implement its Environmental Justice and Tribal Consultation Policies, evaluating lease and permit applications through with these considerations and providing meaningful outreach and engagement with underserved communities and consultation with tribes. Staff conducted outreach on numerous lease applications and projects, sending over 180 letters and engaging with 12 community-based

organizations and eight tribal governments. Key outreach initiatives that are ongoing involve offshore oil and gas operations in Ventura County, a proposed desalination facility in Monterey County, and a memorandum of understanding with the Port of Long Beach and the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District related to offshore wind development and deployment. The Commission will consider the MOU and these lease applications in December 2024 and in 2025.

Commission staff helped plan and attended CNRA’s first-ever environmental justice and equity summit. The in-person event held in Sacramento, brought together community advocates, tribal members, and state leadership. Participants discussed the state of equity in the natural resources space, how to get underinvested communities more public funding, how to meaningfully engage impacted communities to inform our decision-making, how to ensure we protect the most vulnerable communities from climate impacts and how to have a just transition to clean energy. The day featured speakers, panel discussions and listening sessions, all of which will inform an updated CNRA environmental justice and equity policy.

The Commission directed staff to engage with lessees in the Tijuana River Valley to understand and address impacts from transboundary flows

on public access at Border Field State Park and in the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve. Staff are also working with environmental justice organizations and regional partners to identify opportunities to elevate and support efforts to solve the pollution crisis.

MOVING FORWARD

The Commission received a nearly \$22 million federal grant to monitor and reduce methane emissions from oil and gas operations and for environmental restoration of well sites. Commission staff will focus on plugging and abandoning marginal conventional and idle wells in Long Beach near underserved and disadvantaged communities.

We plan to develop our 2026-2030 Strategic Plan based on the principles of environmental justice and equity. We also hope to update and strengthen our environmental justice and tribal consultation policies and continue learning and improving how we implement them, with the goal of providing tangible benefits to underserved communities. The Commission also hopes to provide more staff training and education so we can better serve California’s Native American Tribes and underserved communities.



“Having an opportunity to access our sacred lands supports our efforts of cultural revitalization, restores our historical practices, and reinforces our tribal sustainability and sovereignty. It is an honor to continue to work with state and local agencies on this endeavor, creating a model of community for future generations.”

—Chair Gabriel Frausto,
regarding the Rincon Island memorandum of intent.



The California Energy Commission (CEC) is the state’s primary energy policy and planning agency leading the state to a 100 percent clean energy future for all. The CEC plays a critical role in creating the energy system of the future — one that is clean, modern, and ensures the fifth largest economy in the world continues to thrive.

RECENT PROGRESS

The CEC opened an informational proceeding to get input on how to improve the department’s outreach, policies, programs and projects to make sure that all Californians, especially those from underserved communities have access to energy resources and benefit from energy policies. The CEC will develop recommendations based on this feedback from community leaders, government representatives, environmental justice leaders, environmental groups and other member of the public. The proceeding will also support finalizing the CEC’s justice, access, equity, diversity and inclusion or JAEDI Framework and creation of an action plan, which will detail how the CEC will ensure its programs and policies benefit all communities, increase access to clean energy and support a workplace where everyone feels they belong.

The CEC reached a milestone of investing more than \$100 million for tribal clean energy projects through programs like the Energy Conservation Assistance Act, the Long Duration Energy Storage Program and the Electric Program Investment Charge Program. Funding has resulted in microgrid installations for seven tribes statewide, which are small-scale electrical systems that provide and manage power independent of the larger electric grid. They are used to support facilities with critical energy needs like hospitals, business facilities or emergency operations centers. Microgrids are especially important to tribal communities since some experience frequent power interruptions, infrastructure issues or natural disasters. Microgrids are also important tools in helping California meet its clean energy goals because they help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support grid reliability and facilitate higher levels of distributed generation. California Native American tribes are leading the way with

their partnerships with the state of California on these innovative and impactful projects.

As of July 2024, 63% of the CEC’s Clean Transportation Program investments went towards projects that benefit underserved communities. The department has been focusing on addressing barriers and ensuring electric vehicle charging infrastructure is built in tribal, rural and urban communities, including charging “deserts” such as Imperial Valley. The Clean Transportation Program also released its first Tribal Electric Vehicle Infrastructure, Planning, and Workforce Training and Development solicitation.

CEC staff-led groups to develop recommendations to advance a number of initiatives to increase language access, labor and workforce development, diversifying suppliers, community outreach and ensuring programs and policies benefit communities. The recommendations are designed to make sure the CEC’s programs and policies benefit all communities, increase access to clean energy, support a diverse workplace where everyone feels they belong and more.

The CEC participated in the Imperial Valley Civic Ecosystem Initiative led by the Governor’s Office to advance philanthropic partnerships that support local governments and community groups in the Salton Sea region, to help them grow and get the technical support they need. The goal is to create a new model for developing clean energy industries in a fair and inclusive way, boosting the local economy and improving job opportunities and quality of life for residents. California is set to become a leader in lithium production as global demand increases. The state plans to build a top-tier battery manufacturing industry alongside lithium mining and processing, bringing economic



growth and well-paying jobs to local communities. The “Lithium Valley Vision” focuses on developing a world-class lithium industry in the Salton Sea region. This includes expanding geothermal energy production, conservation efforts, and economic development, ensuring real benefits for local residents. This area, near the Mexican border in the Eastern Coachella and Imperial Valleys, holds some of the world’s largest lithium deposits.

MOVING FORWARD

In 2025 CEC will launch the Equitable Building Decarbonization Direct Install Program. The program will include remediation, energy efficiency and electric upgrades to existing single-family homes, multi-family homes and manufactured homes for low-income households in under-resourced communities. Measures will include heat pump water heaters, induction cooktops, LED lighting, insulation, electric clothes dryers, smart thermostats and more. Three regional administrators representing Northern, Central and Southern California will partner with community-based organizations and others to implement the statewide program. A Tribal Direct Install Program is in development with a launch anticipated in 2025-2026 and will be open to California Native American tribes and tribal members.

In 2025, the CEC will host workshops to improve public engagement, create inclusive policies, track policy successes and to expand the pool of suppliers and workforce development. These efforts are part of CEC’s program to integrate justice, access, equity, diversity and inclusion or JAEDI in an effort to improve its public policies and programs for all Californians. Similarly, the CEC will also continue to focus on internal efforts to ensure an inclusive work environment where all employees feel valued and supported.



The California Fish and Game Commission works to protect California's native fish and wildlife in their natural habitats for their cultural and intrinsic value, and to support a rich and sustainable outdoor heritage for all generations to experience and enjoy.

RECENT PROGRESS

In 2024, the California Water Commission conducted extensive outreach in an effort to support equity. The California Fish and Game Commission has been developing and implementing a plan to help ensure that wildlife conservation and management policies and regulations are fair, inclusive and accessible to all Californians. Internally, staff holds a monthly session to raise awareness and foster discussion on how equity principles intersect with its work — from creating fish and wildlife policies and regulations to engaging with the public. In addition, during the Commission's bi-monthly public meetings, the executive director presents topics on how the department is making improvements, such as increasing outdoor opportunities for underrepresented communities and ensuring that policies do not disproportionately impact these communities. By integrating these considerations into both internal culture and public-facing decisions, the Commission is working toward a more inclusive approach to protecting California's fish, wildlife and natural resources.

The Commission's Tribal Committee meets three times per year, bringing together California tribes and tribal communities, partner agencies, non-governmental organizations and members of the public to discuss policies and initiatives that impact tribal interests in fish and wildlife management. These meetings provide a dedicated space for tribal representatives to share their perspectives, concerns and priorities directly with a member of the Commission. Recognizing the importance of tribal sovereignty and traditional ecological knowledge, the committee has been dedicating a portion of each meeting to presentations and discussions on co-management — a collaborative approach that allows tribes to take an active and direct role in managing and

conserving natural resources alongside state agencies. By fostering these collaborations, the Commission is honoring tribal stewardship, supporting integration of Indigenous knowledge into wildlife management, and advancing policies that respect and support California's tribal communities.

In late 2024, the Commission launched a stakeholder survey aimed at gathering valuable insights on how the Commission engages with the community and its approach to decision-making. By listening to a diverse range of voices, the Commission aims to identify areas where it can improve its outreach, make its processes more inclusive and ensure that everyone, especially underrepresented communities, are able to participate. The responses will help guide the Commission in refining its practices and developing strategies that promote fairness, equity and diversity in its policies and outcomes.



Commissioner Erika Zavaleta working on her archery form with guidance from a volunteer instructor at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Hunter Education Program.



The California Water Commission explores water management issues from multiple perspectives and formulates recommendations to advise the Department of Water Resources, and, as appropriate, the California Natural Resources Agency, the Governor and Legislature on ways to improve water planning and management in response to California's changing hydrology. The Commission consists of nine members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate. The Commission supports policies that result in sustainable water management and a healthy environment statewide.

RECENT PROGRESS

In 2024, the California Water Commission conducted extensive outreach in an effort to support equity in the development of the Commission's next strategic plan. Staff conducted two online surveys — one for all interested parties and the general public and one for tribes — that aimed to understand barriers to engagement in the Commission's work. Staff also held conversations with representatives from multiple tribes and a variety of interested parties to understand different groups' priorities and gain deeper insight into how to address barriers to engagement.

As part of the effort to promote engagement in the Commission's work, in October 2024 Commission staff began hosting and promoting ongoing virtual office hours sessions, which provide the public with regular opportunities to ask questions about the Commission, its work and how to participate in meetings and processes. The goal is to help improve understanding of the Commission's work and empower more people to participate in our work. Staff plans to continue holding office hours in 2025.

The Commission has an internal Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Working Group, which held monthly meetings open to all staff interested in participating. In 2024, the Working Group held a variety of team building events which included promoting a work environment where everyone feels welcome, discussions about the impact of societal barriers on both staff and the public they serve and celebrated the diversity of California with informational presentations and activities.

By late 2024, the Commission expects to adopt a new strategic plan to guide the Commission's activities from 2025 to 2029. The plan will include goals and objectives meant to increase efforts to improve our engagement with communities in the Commission's work.

MOVING FORWARD

In 2025, the Commission will consider a resolution aligned with the California Natural Resources Agency and the Human Right to Water — and one that commits to considering how we serve all Californians in all aspects of the Commission's work.

The Commission will develop and begin to implement a targeted outreach approach to increase engagement in our work that considers connecting with tribes, underserved populations and other key communities in Commission decisions.

As part of the effort to promote engagement in the Commission's work, in October 2024 Commission staff began hosting and promoting ongoing virtual office hours sessions, which provide the public with regular opportunities to ask questions about the Commission, its work and how to participate in meetings and processes.

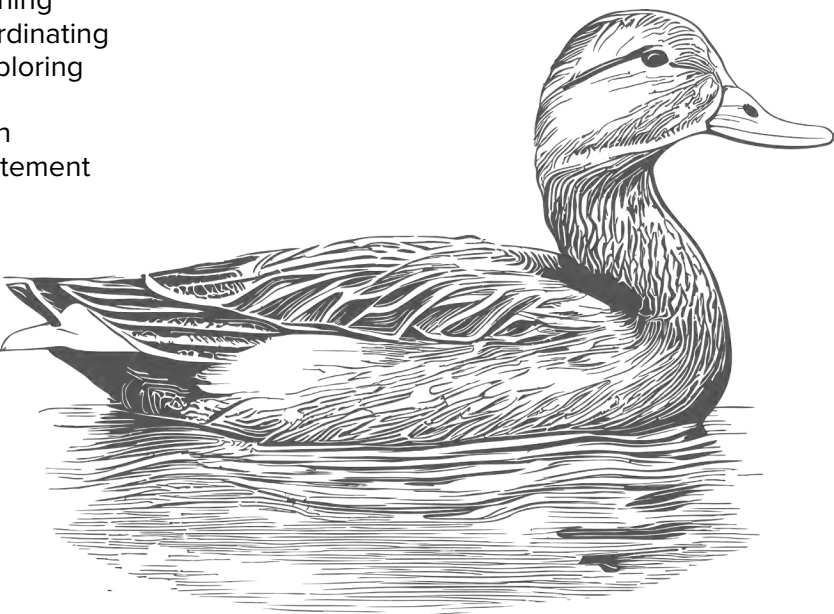


The Central Valley Flood Protection Board (Board) is the State regulatory agency responsible for ensuring that appropriate standards are met for the construction, maintenance, and protection of the flood control system that protects life, property, and wildlife habitat in California’s vast and diverse Central Valley from the devastating effects of flooding. Board issues encroachment permits and works with other agencies to improve the flood protection structures, enforces removal of problematic encroachments, represents the State as the non-federal sponsor in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for federal flood risk reduction projects, adopts five-year updates to the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP), and keeps watch over the Central Valley’s continually improving flood management system.

RECENT PROGRESS

The Central Valley Flood Protection Board is advancing equity and environmental justice by streamlining its permitting process for the Governor’s Middle Mile Broadband Initiative (MMBI). This initiative expands fiber optic broadband access to unserved and underserved communities across California, bridging the digital divide. By executing a resource agreement with the California Department of Technology and CalTrans, the Board provides adequate staffing to expedite permit processing and inspections needed for broadband installation.

As part of the regional flood planning effort being implemented by the Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Partnership, the Board’s Tribal Liaison has coordinated with 16 Tribes for feedback and input on the development of the planning documents. Additionally, the Board is coordinating with tribes on reinternment efforts and exploring opportunities for tribal co-management and access on Board managed property in accordance with the Governor’s 2020 Statement of Administration Policy, Native American Ancestral Lands.



MOVING FORWARD

The Board will continue to work with the Department of Water Resources to develop a 2027 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Update to promote flood system equity in future flood management strategies, particularly those that consider climate change, which disproportionately affects disadvantaged communities. The Board hopes to evaluate equity gaps in its regulatory functions and engage with its team and the regulated community to identify opportunities to provide benefits to underserved communities.



The Colorado River Board of California (Board) was established in 1937 to protect California’s rights and interests in the resources provided by the Colorado River and to represent California in discussions and negotiations regarding the Colorado River and its management. Seven counties in Southern California receive water and hydroelectric energy from the Colorado River. Colorado River water is used for drinking water by over 19 million people in Southern California and irrigates over 600,000 acres of agricultural lands that produce fruits, vegetables and other crops that help feed our nation’s families.

RECENT PROGRESS

The Colorado River Board of California (Board) held meetings throughout Southern California to ensure in-person relationship building with members of the communities we serve. Board agencies hosting the meetings facilitated tours that increased the knowledge and understanding of Board members, staff and the public on local usage and management of Colorado River water.

The Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe hosted the Board’s November meeting. Prior to the meeting, the Fort Yuma Quechan and Bard Ward District co-hosted a tour which provided an opportunity for Board members, staff from the Board’s member agencies and the public to improve our understanding of water infrastructure in the area, ongoing water conservation programs and the water needs and planning in these communities.

The Board is working closely with Native American tribes to develop Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead. This includes the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe in California which is actively engaged in discussions involving technical staff from water agencies reliant on water from the Colorado River. The Board is also actively engaged in the Post-2026 Federal-Tribes-States Work Group, an initiative led by the Bureau of Reclamation to facilitate discussions regarding water management along the Colorado River.

MOVING FORWARD

In coordination with California’s Colorado River water and power users, the Board will continue working on the development of the Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead (Post-2026 Guidelines). The Board is committed to collaborating with the federal government, tribes, Mexico and the six other Basin states receiving water from the Colorado River as we develop solutions to adapt to reduced water supplies due to the impacts associated with climate change.



The Delta Protection Commission is committed to the protection and health of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta in California. The Commission protects, maintains, enhances and enriches the overall quality of the Delta environment and economy. The Commission does this with a focus on agriculture, heritage, recreation, and natural resources while remaining mindful of the importance of the Delta to all Californians. Valuing the needs of the Delta as well as the needs of the State is fundamental to achieving the Commission’s vision: an ideal synthesis of cultural, ecological, and agricultural values in a sustainable, healthy, and celebrated way of life.

RECENT PROGRESS

The Commission updated its Socioeconomic Indicators Report, broadly measuring the Delta’s economic and social well-being including the agricultural economy, labor market, education, road infrastructure and economic and employment security. Newly added were broadband internet adoption and access rates in the Delta, which are socioeconomic necessities that lag significantly behind the state.

The Delta Protection Commission created a tribal position on the Delta Protection Advisory Committee and appointed Steven Hutchason, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Wilton Rancheria Tribe, to the tribal seat.

The Commission engaged in tribal consultation for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area (NHA) Management Plan, which was submitted to the Secretary of the Interior in March for approval.

Consultation has been critical to expanding the plan’s discussion of Native American history, traditions and resources in the Delta and shaping plan strategies.

As part of outreach for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA Management Plan, the Commission worked with local organizations and residents to include discussion of Asian, Black and Latino residents’ contributions to Delta history and strategies focused on telling these stories and protecting important resources.

The Commission worked to expand its communication with Delta residents and stakeholders through a number of actions including highlighting on its website articles about the 2009 march through the Delta for marriage equality, access to water recreation for people with disabilities, women in Delta history, and the advancement of digital equity in Isleton with the much-awaited arrival of broadband internet.

A widespread lack of broadband in the Delta means that outreach efforts there cannot require high bandwidth. The Commission retooled all forms from fillable PDFs, which are very difficult to use on phones, to web-based forms, which are easily accessed on phones and completed with cell phone signal.

The Commission also ensured that outreach for the Delta Heritage Forum, an annual event organized by the Commission that celebrates the region, included flyers placed in community gathering places throughout Delta legacy communities, where internet access is limited.

MOVING FORWARD

The Commission will continue to engage in tribal consultation and outreach to a range of groups for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Management Plan and implementation.





The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) works with lead agencies, higher learning institutions, museums, the public, and California Native American tribes to protect Native American sacred sites from disturbance and desecration. The main goals of the NAHC are to help protect ancestors from being disturbed before ground disturbance, help to identify the tribe that is the most likely descendant for an inadvertent unearthing or discovery of ancestors, and to facilitate and enforce the return of ancestors and ancestral collections back to their respective tribal families.

RECENT PROGRESS

The Native American Heritage Commission continues to make progress in the development of regulations to implement and interpret statutes under its authority. In 2024, The NAHC held virtual and in-person round table discussions with California Native American tribes throughout the State on the NAHC’s draft Contact List Regulations. The NAHC also held virtual round table discussions and individual tribal consultations on draft California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (CalNAGPRA) Mediation and Dispute Resolution Regulations.

MOVING FORWARD

The NAHC will continue to prioritize regulations through Moving Forward. The NAHC anticipates entering the formal rulemaking process for draft regulations that have undergone a tribal comment period and releasing additional draft regulations for tribal comment. Those draft regulations may include Sacred Lands File regulations, CalNAGPRA Enforcement regulations and Most Likely Descendant regulations.



The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC/Commission) protects and enhances San Francisco Bay and advances the Bay’s responsible, productive, and equitable uses for this and future generations in the face of changing climate and rising sea levels.

RECENT PROGRESS

The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission organized five workshops with community-based organizations in underserved neighborhoods to discuss the Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan and to gather feedback from residents on the Plan’s Guidelines for all shoreline jurisdictions throughout California. This outreach will help ensure a broader perspective contributes to the plan, especially from communities that are the most vulnerable with the least ability to adapt.

BCDC contracted with a consulting company to conduct an organizational development assessment of its Environmental Justice Advisors Program, which aims to ensure that the voices of underrepresented populations are included in the decision-making process. After administering focus groups within the BCDC and multiple workshops with the advisors and staff, the consulting groups created a final report of their

findings which aim to help strengthen the process.

BCDC applied and received a NOAA Coastal Resilience Fellow who joined the agency in August. The NOAA Fellow will be conducting a historical analysis of the BCDC’s permits through an environmental justice lens. The fellow will also work to create tools to implement environmental justice more successfully into permitting, including an EJ checklist and a guidance document for meaningful community engagement.

MOVING FORWARD

Having obtained funding, BCDC will conduct two Shoreline Leadership Academies in 2025. The Academy aims to build capacity and awareness so residents in underserved communities can participate in their local jurisdiction’s planning for sea level rise, in compliance with Senate Bill 272.





The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) is an independent board under the California Natural Resources Agency that works closely with the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Board administers programs that protect land, restore and enhance wildlife habitat and provide wildlife oriented public access. The Board is a key partner in implementing the State's 30 X 30 goals of advancing efforts to conserve biodiversity, increasing climate resilience, and providing access to nature for all.

RECENT PROGRESS

The 40-Acre Conservation League, California's only Black-led conservation group acquired the Tahoe Forest Gateway property in Placer County in 2023 with Wildlife Conservation Board funding. Now, with additional WCB support, 40-Acre is developing plans to create a safe and inclusive space that welcomes diverse populations to enjoy the outdoors.

WCB is supporting the Klamath River Renewal Corporation's planning for improvements to public access and recreational opportunities along the Klamath River in Siskiyou County, following the decommissioning of the four Klamath River dams.

WCB provided the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation a \$12.5 million grant to help convert a portion of the Puente Hills Landfill into Puente Hills Regional Park and restore key habitats onsite. This will be Los Angeles County's first new regional park in 30 years.

WCB awarded a block grant to Resources Legacy Fund (RLF), a nonprofit organization that advances conservation, environmental equity and climate solutions through collaboration and partnerships. The funding will help provide technical assistance to disadvantaged and tribal communities in Southern California. RLF will support these historically underserved communities in developing projects that deliver biodiversity and climate benefits.

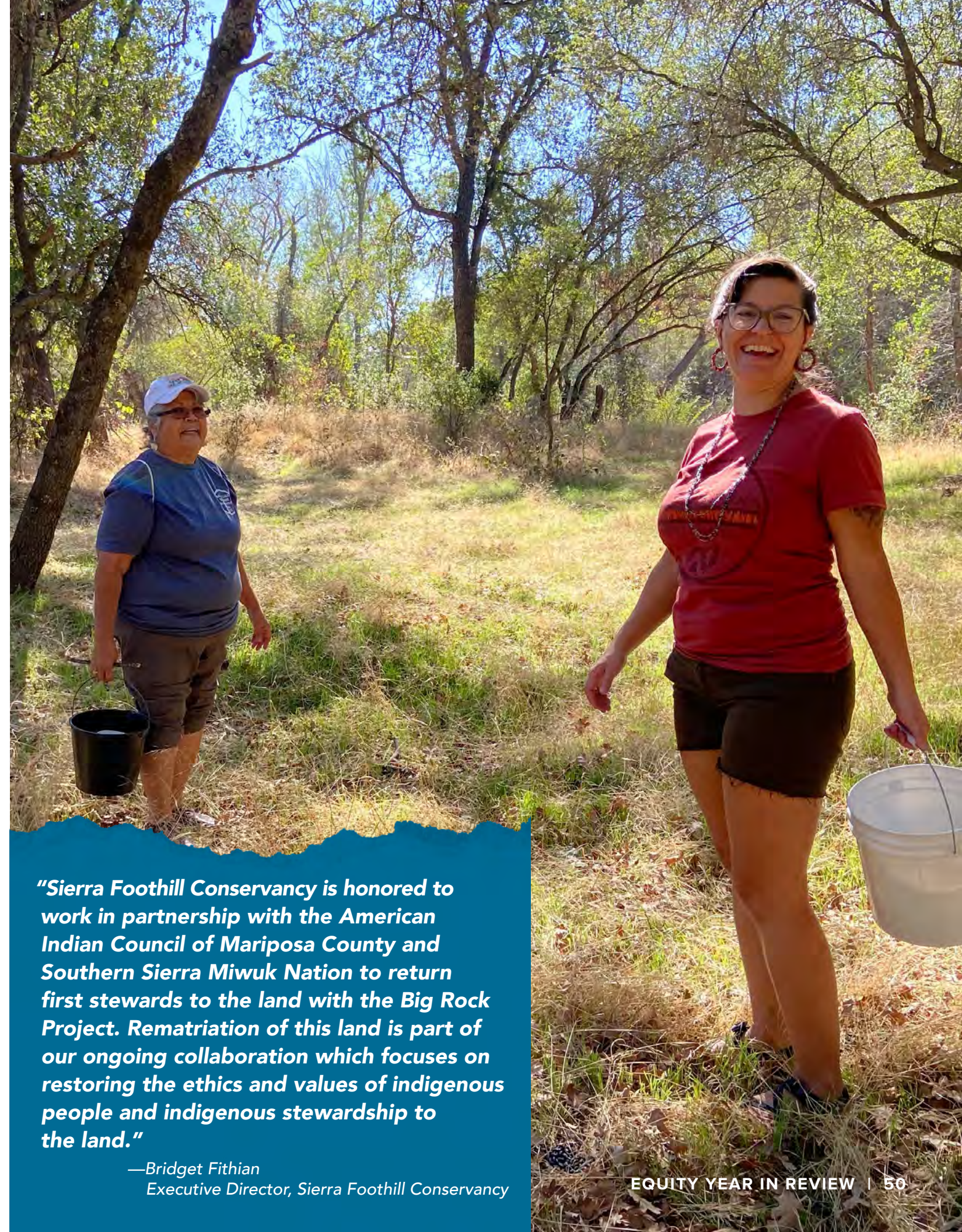
WCB provided \$520,000 to the American Indian Council of Mariposa County for acquisition of a 96-acre ancestral land return property in Mariposa County, which will be stewarded by the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation for habitat conservation and cultural preservation.

WCB executed the ancestral land return of the 40-acre Mount Whitney Fish Hatchery in Inyo County from California Department of Fish and Wildlife to the Fort Independence Indian Community of Paiute Indians of the Fort Independence Reservation, who will steward the property for habitat conservation and restoration, public access and cultural preservation.

MOVING FORWARD

WCB is updating its Strategic Plan for 2025-2030 with public and tribal input from workshops and listening sessions. The Strategic Plan Update will reflect WCB's continued commitment to removing barriers to its programs and working with underserved communities and Native American tribes.

WCB is developing an online application and project management portal to streamline the grant process for applicants, grantees and WCB staff. WCB's portal will provide a clear, consistent process and make its grant programs more accessible to a wider applicant pool.



"Sierra Foothill Conservancy is honored to work in partnership with the American Indian Council of Mariposa County and Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation to return first stewards to the land with the Big Rock Project. Rematriation of this land is part of our ongoing collaboration which focuses on restoring the ethics and values of indigenous people and indigenous stewardship to the land."

—Bridget Fithian
Executive Director, Sierra Foothill Conservancy



Delta Stewardship Council

A CALIFORNIA STATE AGENCY

The Delta Stewardship Council (Council) was created to advance the state’s goals for the Delta, which include a more reliable statewide water supply and a healthy and protected ecosystem, achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique characteristics of the Delta as an evolving place. To do this, the Council developed an enforceable long-term sustainable management plan for the Delta to ensure coordinated action at the federal, state, and local levels. The Delta Plan, adopted in 2013, includes both regulatory policies and non-binding recommendations.

RECENT PROGRESS

The Delta Stewardship Council released a public review draft of its Tribal and Environmental Justice Issue Paper, which was a recommendation of the 2019 Delta Plan Five-Year Review. The paper documents tribal and community perspectives of tribal justice and EJ issues and needs in and around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and includes recommendations for the Council and other agencies working in the Delta. The Council partnered with community-based organizations in the Delta through its EJ Expert Group. This collective of four community groups built a foundation for Council staff’s relationships with the vulnerable communities they serve and allowed for community expertise to be incorporated into regional planning efforts.

As part of its ongoing climate adaptation initiative Delta Adapts, council staff attended more than 18 community events and meetings, reaching more than 200 people in some of the Delta’s most socially vulnerable communities. These events allowed staff to connect with community organizations, local governments, and individuals to share background on the Council’s climate adaptation and tribal and EJ initiatives, hear community concerns, and incorporate their priorities into its forthcoming climate adaptation plan. This outreach is part of the Council’s effort to build robust risk communication resources to share flood, water supply and quality, and climate information across the Delta to advance resilience and adaptation in the region.

The Council also focused on amplifying the voices of historically marginalized groups in venues where they have not usually been

heard. This included a co-hosted workshop on state agency and community organization partnerships with the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission and the San Francisco Estuary Partnership, a hosted panel on tribal engagement at the State of the Estuary Conference, and the Bay-Delta Science Conference whose theme “Cultivating Connections for a Dynamically Changing Climate” was attended by over 800 people and included plenary speakers and panels focused on the interweaving of traditional knowledge.

The Council continues to advance community-based research by connecting scientists with tribes and underserved communities through its Science for Communities (SFC) program. In 2024, the Council hosted its second SFC, which supported four community-focused projects and 18 research scientists.

The Council hired its first-ever Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer, created a new Climate Change and Environmental Justice Unit, and conducted numerous cultural humility trainings for the Council members and staff. To better document how tribes want to interweave traditional knowledge and western science in the Delta, Delta Science Program staff conducted interviews with five Tribes with cultural and traditional ties to the Delta watershed. The interviews focused on successful (and unsuccessful) examples of interweaving traditional knowledge and Western science, as well as barriers to interweaving, and suggested next steps for agencies.

MOVING FORWARD

The Council plans to publish a first-ever regional climate adaptation plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta – Delta Adapts: Creating a Climate Resilient Future - that will serve as a framework for adaptation, help align practitioner priorities and highlight the need for investment in the Delta. The forthcoming document reflects an iterative, inclusive process that incorporates the diverse perspectives of the Delta and incorporates equity throughout.

The Council is planning a series of traditional knowledge (TK) roundtables in partnership with a Tribal planning team, focusing on experiences, interests, concerns, opportunities, and challenges for interweaving TK and Western science and to identify scientific and policy approaches for interweaving TK and Western science.

The Council will support a Social Science Extension Specialist hired by California Sea Grant to conduct and facilitate research, education, and outreach projects that address the human dimensions

of Delta water management, ecosystem management, and Delta as Place issues. Topics addressed by the Extension Specialist will build on priorities identified in Delta Adapts, the Tribal and Environmental Justice Issue Paper, and other Council products.

After publishing a final Tribal and Environmental Justice Issue Paper, staff will present a resolution to the Council for approval that includes several actions for the Council to take, including conducting an environmental justice gap analysis of the Delta Plan, updating the Council’s social vulnerability index, and updating the Council’s public participation plan.

With its new justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) Coordinator, the Council will produce a work plan that leverages best practices and includes quantifiable metrics to effectively advance equity and respond to any identified disparities with recommended policies, practices, and/or actions.





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The California Ocean Protection Act established the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) as a Cabinet-level state policy body nested within the Natural Resources Agency that implements the Governor’s priorities for coastal and ocean policy. OPC is mandated to protect California’s coastal and ocean resources by effectively and strategically providing best available science to decision-makers, supporting targeted initiatives to protect and restore coastal and marine systems, collaboratively advancing policy, and coordinating relevant agency activities across jurisdictional, programmatic, and regional boundaries. To be successful, OPC’s work must be inclusive and reflect the diversity of perspectives and needs of California’s communities.

RECENT PROGRESS

In 2024, the Ocean Protection Council convened the inaugural Environmental Justice Advisory Board (EJ Advisory Board). Comprised of community leaders and tribal representatives, the EJ Advisory Board advises OPC and state partners on how to better address and elevate the ocean and coastal needs of environmental justice communities and California Native American tribes by providing valuable insights and perspectives. Over the year, the Board has provided valuable input on several key efforts, including embedding equity into the development of the statewide California Ocean and Coast Report Card and strategies for enhancing community science engagement in Marine Protected Area management. This work reflects OPC’s commitment to engaging community partners in ocean and coastal conservation and policy to ensure actions are equitably informed by California communities and provide meaningful benefits to communities statewide, aligning with and advancing OPC’s Equity Plan.

In partnership with Justice Outside, OPC launched a \$1 million Environmental Justice Small Grants Program to fund small, short-term projects that benefit California’s coastal environmental justice communities. In 2024, the program awarded 24 grantees to support initiatives such as ocean conservation through art, environmental education and expanding access and aquatic recreation. The high demand for funding, with \$4.6 million in requests received for this program, underscores the significant need for continued

investment in community-driven efforts that prioritize social justice, ocean conservation and equitable coastal access.

In May 2024, OPC contributed a total of \$1 million, with \$500,000 awarded to Kai Poma, a tribal non-profit representing the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians, Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians, the Round Valley Indian Tribes and \$500,000 to the ytt Northern Chumash Nonprofit representing the yak tiṭ’u tiṭ’u yak tiṭhini (ytt) Northern Chumash Tribe. The funding aims to advance Tribal Nature-Based Solutions (TNBS) projects on California’s coast. This investment comes as part of a larger commitment by Governor Gavin Newsom to award up to \$107.7 million through the Tribal Nature-Based Solutions Grant Program for 34 projects statewide that support tribal priorities related to ancestral land return, restoration, workforce development, implementation of traditional knowledges and climate resilience.

OPC launched the Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) Technical Assistance Program in 2024, in partnership with Coastal Quest, to support local, regional and tribal governments in applying for sea level rise adaptation funding through OPC’s SB 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program. This program provides tailored technical assistance to applicants from environmental justice communities, federally recognized tribes and small and rural communities, helping to build capacity in regions facing disproportionate impacts of sea level rise. By offering grant writing support and



OPC launched the first round of Environmental Justice Small Grants in partnership with Justice Outside, as part of their Liberated Paths Grantmaking Program. These inspiring grantees are expanding ocean and coastal access, stewardship, and environmental leadership in communities across California. Photos by: Alliance for Felix Cove, Black Star Polo, DiverSeaFy, Un Mar de Colores.



capacity building, the program ensures that these communities can actively prepare for sea level rise and changing conditions along California’s coast.

In 2024, OPC revised its Proposition 68 (Prop 68) Grant Guidelines to reflect OPC’s commitment to increase equitable grantmaking and access to OPC funds. The updated guidelines prioritize projects that benefit Priority Populations and Communities, refine scoring criteria and improve clarity to make the Guidelines themselves more accessible. OPC’s Prop 68 funding focuses on supporting projects that promote healthy coastal and ocean ecosystems while strengthening community resilience to climate change.

MOVING FORWARD

OPC has initiated its public planning process to inform OPC’s next Strategic Plan (2026-2030), which will guide OPC’s activities and investments through 2030. A virtual public listening session and tribal roundtable were held in November 2024, with in-person regional workshops scheduled to take place across the state in early 2025. OPC will update its Strategic Plan to explicitly uplift equity and tribal initiatives to better serve California communities. This update will further embed equity and inclusion across OPC’s work to ensure that all communities benefit from the state’s ocean and coastal protection efforts. The final 2026-2030 Strategic Plan is anticipated to be completed and brought to the OPC for approval at its December 2025 Meeting.



The California Science Center (Center) in Los Angeles is an educational and family destination that contains award-winning exhibits and world-renowned education programs. The Science Center’s mission values accessibility and inclusiveness, and aspires to stimulate curiosity and inspire science learning in everyone through fun, memorable experiences.

RECENT PROGRESS

The California Science Center continues to maintain a diverse workforce representing our surrounding community by conducting employment opportunities to increase a diverse candidate pool. The California Science Center seeks out resources to improve its Limited Examination and Employment program (LEAP), as well as continued employment of people with disabilities by collaborating with the Department of Rehabilitation’s Disability Advisory Committee.

The California Science Center encourages current staff to participate in the Upward Mobility Program, which aims to provide guidance for entry level staff interested in advancement. The agency continued to promote a revamped Upward Mobility Program in June of 2024, targeting low-paying, entry level positions. Two new applicants were approved in 2024.

The Center maintains and strengthens education program partnerships among diverse local communities by engaging with community-based organizations that work with youth ages 5 to 13. The Young Curators program continues to provide educational programming to youth from surrounding underserved neighborhoods and youth enrolled in programs with partner organizations. The California Science Center delivers educational after-school programming to four community partners, including Brotherhood Crusade, the Literacy, Arts, Culture, Education, and Recreation After-school Programs, the Heart of Los Angeles, Para Los Niños and the Los Angeles Boys & Girls Club.

The Center continues to assess language services for guests by ensuring all new exhibitions are fully bilingual in English and Spanish. Recent bilingual exhibits include the Work in Progress Gallery, the Science Court Physics Exhibit and Leonardo Da Vinci: Inventor, Artist, Dreamer. The California Science Center’s bilingual Wildlife in Focus exhibit will open before the end of 2024.

MOVING FORWARD

The California Science Center works to create a sense of stewardship among employees by providing opportunities for employee involvement in addressing concerns at regular meetings and access to training. The California Science Center plans to hold another round of trainings in early 2025, and continues to hold monthly Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) meetings, which gives staff at all levels the opportunity to interact with members and invited guests and speakers. In 2024, the California Science Center partnered with the Department of Rehabilitation as part of a joint Disability Advisory Committee.

The California Science Center will continue to look for new community partnerships for after-school programming and participation in hands-on Science Camp for the upcoming calendar year. The Center will continue to identify job boards and hiring programs that target underserved and marginalized communities throughout Los Angeles County.



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