

BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING 2015 WORK PLAN REPORT December 8, 2015

OVERVIEW

At every Board of Governors meeting of the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP) the board adopts a Work Plan that lists priority wetland acquisition, restoration, and enhancement projects for Southern California coastal wetlands and watersheds. Annually, this Work Plan is updated to include community-based restoration projects of the WRP Community Wetland Restoration Grant Program (CWRGP). The adopted Work Plan is a valuable tool for communicating regional priorities and funding needs and for facilitating WRP partner agency collaboration.

The Board of Governors at its last meeting, held on November 20, 2014, adopted 1 new project for addition to the Work Plan. Members of the Wetlands Manager Group had reviewed this application and selected the project based on the WRP Project Evaluation Criteria (see *WRP Project Evaluation Criteria*) for an out-of-cycle addition to the Work Plan.

Additionally, since the last Board of Governors meeting, 4 projects have been completed.

UPDATE:

Over the past 15 years WRP projects have acquired 8,247 acres of wetlands and associated habitat and restored more than 4,900 acres. More than \$633 million dollars has been spent on WRP projects. This includes 98 completed Work Plan projects and \$2,690,000 spent on 129 CWRGP projects. The State of California has contributed more than half of that funding.

THE WORK PLAN

The Board of Governors has adopted each of the previous Work Plans. The WRP Wetlands Managers Group is submitting this 2015 Work Plan to the WRP Board of Governors for adoption.

Projects on the Work Plan were chosen to help achieve the WRP's six Regional Goals:

- 1. Preserve and restore coastal wetland ecosystems
- 2. Preserve and restore stream corridors and wetland ecosystems in coastal watersheds
- 3. Recover native habitat and species diversity
- 4. Integrate wetlands recovery with other public objectives
- 5. Promote education and compatible access related to coastal wetlands and watersheds
- 6. Advance the science of wetlands restoration and management in Southern California

The Work Plan is not a grant program. However, it is used by some agencies to guide project funding decisions. The Coastal Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Board and other WRP partner agencies use the Work Plan to identify priority projects for funding within the region.

Table 1 shows new projects that are recommended for an out-of-cycle addition to the Work Plan, and projects completed or removed from the Work Plan are presented in the tables below. The project tables are organized by county from north to south.

NEW PROJECTS TO BE ADDED THE WORK PLAN IN 2015

Table 1: Recommended projects to add to the Work Plan

Project Name	Description	Estimated Cost	County	Project Classification	Habitat type	Project Lead
San Jose Creek Fish Passage Project	This project will improve two sites on San Jose Creek that are barriers to steelhead passage. Both sites will be improved to provide stable and safe access and improved fish passage with the greatest flood conveyance and least maintenance requirements.	Upstream Site: \$957,212 Downstream Site: \$959,592	Santa Barbara	Restoration	Riparian	Southern California Steelhead Coalition
Newland Marsh Acquisition	Acquisition of 44 acres for future restoration of degraded coastal saltmarsh presently owned by CalTrans.	CalTrans – Confidential	Orange	Acquisition	Wetland	Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy
Santa Margarita River Fish Passage Project	65% design plans to remove two key steelhead passage barriers on Santa Margarita River (an abandoned Sandia Creek river crossing and bridge that cross the Santa Margarita River)	\$510,178	San Diego	Restoration	Riparian	Southern California Steelhead Coalition

WORK PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WRP Work Plan Newly Funded Projects

The table below provides a summary of those projects newly funded since November 2014.

Table 2: Newly funded Work Plan projects

Project Name	Description	Estimated Cost	Funder	County	Project Classification
MacHutchin Property Acquisition	Acquire the 3.54 acre MacHutchin property at Buena Vista Lagoon	\$1,550,000	WCB	San Diego	Acquisition
San Diego Canyon Wetlands Restoration Project	Restoration plan for upland habitat in San Diego Canyons	\$348,616	SCC	San Diego	Restoration

CDF&W: CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, NFWF: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, SCC: State Coastal Conservancy,

USFWS: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, WCB: Wildlife Conservation Board

WRP Work Plan Highlights November 2014- November 2015

WRP partners have made significant progress in implementing projects on the WRP Work Plan over the past year.

Through the support of the NOAA Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration National and Regional Partnership Grants program the Coastal Conservancy worked with NOAA staff to select projects from the WRP Work Plan that supported NOAA trust resources.

The WRP projects selected for inclusion in the Partnership Grant program included:

- Southern California Abalone and Kelp Forest Habitat Restoration Project
- San Diego Bay Native Oyster Restoration Project
- Upper Newport Bay Eelgrass Restoration Project
- Alamitos Bay Olympia Oysters Restoration
- Carpinteria Creek Circle G Fish Barrier Removal Design Project
- Carpinteria Creek Pinkham Fish Passage Construction Project
- Mission Creek Fish Passage Construction Project
- Ojai Valley Trail Steelhead Passage Construction Project

Completion of the final fish passage barrier removal at Circle G in Carpinteria Creek represents the culmination of years of barrier removal projects in the Carpinteria watershed and constitutes a true victory for steelhead recovery in Southern California.

Many WRP partner agencies also contributed funding to these projects including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wildlife Conservation Board, State Coastal Conservancy, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

In addition, 8 Community Wetland Restoration Grant Program projects were completed in the last year. Through these projects, community organizations and volunteers were able to join in Southern California wetlands restoration efforts. Participants were able to remove invasive plant species, replant areas with native wetland and transitional vegetation and join in the experience of renewing our wetlands landscape for the benefit of humans and other species. These projects are listed in Table 3 below.

Completed & Removed Projects

A total of 4 WRP projects were completed since the last Board of Governors meeting in November 2014. Table 3 below lists those projects completed during this time period. The full list of all WRP completed projects can be found in Attachment 2: *Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project Completed Projects*.

Table 3: Completed WRP Work Plan and CWRGP Projects November 2014 - November 2015

Project Name	Description	Estimated Cost	County	Type of Project	Status
Carpinteria Creek Restoration Project: Circle G Construction	Removed the final fish passage barrier in Carpinteria Creek to support steelhead recovery	\$820,000	Santa Barbara	Work Plan	Complete
Alamitos Bay Oyster Project	A 60 square meter oyster bed was created in Alamitos Bay using volunteers from the community. Scientific monitoring activities have been ongoing since the bed was constructed. Densities of native oysters on the restored bed during the most recent sampling period were 65-103 times the average reference location density.	\$89,100	Los Angeles	Work Plan	Complete
Upper Newport Bay Eelgrass	Restored 1.417acres of eelgrass beds in Upper Newport Bay and determined the most successful method of planting was bare-root bundling. In January 2014, 1.417 acres of eelgrass was mapped along DeAnza Peninsula.	\$156,000	Orange	Work Plan	Complete
Famosa Slough Acquisition	Acquire 10 real estate parcels totaling approximately 0.9 acres of privately held property adjacent to Famosa Slough.	\$950,000	San Diego	Work Plan	Complete
Mission Canyon Cape Ivy Eradication Project	Infestations of Cape Ivy, Kikuyu Grass, and other non-native plants that had established near the terminus of the Santa Barbara water tunnel in upper Mission Canyon (Mission Creek) have been eliminated at the project site through several rounds of manual weeding over multiple years of volunteer events.	\$10,800	Santa Barbara	CWRGP	Complete
Ventura River Upper Estuary Volunteer Restoration and Wetland Education Program	A volunteer restoration and wetland education program has promoted hands-on community involvement in monthly volunteer restoration activities and service learning opportunities in the Ventura River upper estuary. Through In-class wetland education presentations, and river field trips for predominantly minority, low-income, and underserved local students and by opening this valuable river parkway property to the public – the ongoing goal is to reconnect Ventura to a largely forgotten and previously neglected river.	\$30,000	Ventura	CWRGP	Complete
Playa Del Rey Habitat Restoration Project	The project has sought to maximize the impact of habitat restoration along Ballona Creek by training inner-city youth in native plant identification, habitat restoration, and nursery operations; engaging the community through twelve volunteer events and educational opportunities; propagating	\$25,500	Los Angeles	CWRGP	Complete

Project Name	Description	Estimated Cost	County	Type of Project	Status
	more than 1000 native plants from Ballona Wetlands seed stock; and developing innovative techniques to maximize native plant propagation that will act as a model for future restoration projects.				
Upper Newport Bay Eelgrass Restoration Project	The project restored approximately 0.25 acres of eelgrass in Upper Newport Bay as a part of an ongoing larger multi-year, community-based project. The grantee engaged volunteers in restoration activities. Volunteers came from the local community in Newport Beach including schools involved in Coastkeeper's watershed education program and Back Bay Science Center's education programs, local university students, local divers from various dive shops and clubs, and local business employees.	\$14,960	Orange County	CWRGP	Complete
Batiquitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve North Shore Restoration	The project represented the first phase of a multi-phased wetland, riparian, and Coastal Sage habitat restoration program within Batiquitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve. Restoration included replacing invasive eucalyptus trees with Torrey Pine and other more appropriate native California coastal trees to create better nesting habitat for native birds.	\$23,300	San Diego	CWRGP	Complete
Alpine Watershed Stewardship Program	The project built on the grantee's existing partnership with Second Chance-San Diego, a local non-profit, to educate and engage inner city, at-risk youth in environmental service-learning projects and to restore creeks and streams of the upper San Diego River. The project engaged volunteers from other partner groups including San Diego City and County, the San Diego River Conservancy, local fire districts, tribal entities, and several non-profits. Restoration efforts primarily focused on removal of the non-native Arundo donax and planting of native, riparian species.	\$30,000	San Diego	CWRGP	Complete
EDI Explorers, A Force for Blue	The project performed wetland and watershed restoration at a coastal marsh within the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge and an upland riparian wetland within the Crestridge Ecological Reserve with a service-learning model for elementary school students. US Fish and Wildlife and the Endangered Habitats Conservancy prepared sites for restoration efforts by conducting mechanical and chemical non-native plant removal in project areas. Students planted native species in both project areas in the context of science field trips. More than a dozen classes from two local school districts participated in the watershed/wetland restoration activities.	\$29,400	San Diego	CWRGP	Complete

Project Name	Description	Estimated Cost	County	Type of Project	Status
Tijuana Estuary Community Based Habitat Enhancement Project	The project enhanced the capacity of local residents to engage in the active habitat restoration and enhancement of the Tijuana Estuary and River Valley through a series of stewardship events. Students were educated on the importance of the restoration and preservation of wetland habitat, particularly the Tijuana Estuary, through in-class presentations. Volunteers were educated by staff and other trained volunteers. In the stewardship events, volunteers entered riparian and coastal sage scrub habitats to remove non-native plants, install native species, and remove trash and waste-tires by hand. This was a collaborative effort between the grantee and the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve.	\$30,000	San Diego	CWRGP	Complete

CWRGP: Community Wetland Restoration Grant Program

SUMMARY OF WRP WORK PLAN 2016

Upon its adoption by the Board of Governors, the 2016 WRP Work Plan will comprise 53 priority projects. These include 8 acquisition, 22 restoration and 23 planning projects. Full project descriptions and funding details are available at www.scwrp.org

Table 4: WRP Work Plan 2016

No.	Project Name	Description	Estimated Cost	County	Project classification	Habitat/ project type
1	Gaviota State Park Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Plan	Develop a plan to restore the Gaviota Creek wetlands and watershed. Includes planning for a vehicle stream crossing, berm removal, sediment control and campground relocation	\$665,000	Santa Barbara	Planning	Riparian
2	San Jose Creek Fish Passage Project	This project will improve two sites on San Jose Creek that are barriers to steelhead passage. Both sites will be improved to provide stable and safe access and improved fish passage with the greatest flood conveyance and least maintenance requirements.	Upstream Site: \$957,212 Downstream Site: \$959,592	Santa Barbara	Restoration	Riparian
3	Atascadero and Maria Ygnacio Steelhead Restoration Design	Develop engineering designs for six major fish passage barriers along Maria Ygnacio Creek.	\$339,000	Santa Barbara	Planning	Fish Passage
4	Maria Ygnacio Aijian Barrier Removal	Remove a concrete stream crossing that acts as a barrier to the upstream migration of steelhead trout	\$773,000	Santa Barbara	Restoration	Fish Passage
5	Arroyo Burro Creek Arundo Removal Project	Remove non-native invasive weed, <i>Arundo donax</i> , from the bed, banks, and overbanks of Arroyo Burro Creek and its tributaries.	\$100,000	Santa Barbara	Restoration	Invasives
6	Arroyo Burro Restoration at Las Positas	Develop a riparian restoration plan for approximately 2,000 feet of Arroyo Burro Creek in the City of Santa Barbara.	\$270,000	Santa Barbara	Planning	Riparian

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7	Devereux Slough Restoration	Restore 50 acres of coastal habitats at the UC Reserve's Coal Oil Point property and support recovery of rare plants and threatened and endangered bird species.	\$412,000	Santa Barbara	Restoration	Coastal Wetlands
8	Devereux Slough: Ocean Meadows Restoration	Restoration of 57 acres of wetland habitat, including 24 acres of intermittently tidal estuarine wetlands and six acres of upland and transitional habitat.	\$9,459,000	Santa Barbara	Restoration	Coastal Wetlands
9	Mission Lagoon and Laguna Creek Restoration Project	Complete the design, planning, and permitting phases for the Mission Lagoon and Laguna Creek Restoration Project.	\$850,000	Santa Barbara	Planning	Coastal Wetlands
10	Matilija Dam Removal: Engineering and Design and Acquisition	Preliminary engineering and design for the removal of Matilija Dam on the Ventura River.	\$21,325,000	Ventura	Planning and Acquisition	Fish Passage
11	Stewart Canyon Creek	Restore the riparian ecosystem of the lower Stewart Canyon Creek, starting at Fox Canyon Barranca to its confluence with San Antonio Creek	\$588,000	Ventura	Restoration	Riparian
12	Ventura River Parkway	Create a River Parkway along the lower 15 miles of the Ventura River to protect habitat, create wildlife linkages, reconnect the river to its floodplain and create recreational opportunities.	\$8,000,000	Ventura	Acquisition	Riparian
13	Santa Clara River Parkway Acquisitions	Acquire fee title and conservation easements along the lower 15 miles of the Santa Clara River for inclusion in the Santa Clara River Parkway.	\$14,669,000	Ventura	Acquisition	Riparian
14	Santa Clara River Estuary McGrath State Beach	Restore coastal salt marsh and riparian forest habitats at the Santa Clara River Estuary at McGrath State Beach.	\$204,900	Ventura	Planning	Coastal Wetlands
15	Ormond Beach Wetlands: Acquisition, Part 2	Acquire the privately owned portions of the Ormond Beach wetlands.	\$48,000,000	Ventura	Acquisition	Coastal Wetlands
16	Ormond Beach Wetlands Restoration Plan	Prepare final restoration plan for the 900- acre Ormond Beach wetlands area.	\$600,000	Ventura	Planning	Coastal Wetlands
17	Arundo Removal North San Fernando Valley	Remove <i>Arundo donax</i> from five canyons that drain to the Los Angeles River in the north San Fernando Valley	\$110,000	Los Angeles	Restoration	Invasives
18	Sepulveda Basin Plan	Restoration planning and design for a mile of bioengineered bank stabilization of the Los Angeles River within the Sepulveda Basin.	\$485,000	Los Angeles	Planning	Riparian
19	Solstice Canyon Acquisitions	Acquire 428 acres in the upper Solstice Canyon watershed of the Santa Monica Mountains	\$9,050,800	Los Angeles	Acquisition	Riparian
20	Upper Malibu Creek Feasibility Study (Rindge Dam)	Conduct USACOE feasibility study for restoration of the Upper Malibu Creek watershed.	\$3,900,000	Los Angeles	Planning	Fish Passage
21	Malibu Creek Comprehensive Restoration	Implement recommendations from the Lower Malibu Creek and Lagoon Resource Enhancement Study through enhancement of riparian corridor in the Malibu Creek Watershed.	\$350,000	Los Angeles	Restoration	Riparian

22	Cold Creek Riparian Acquisitions, Part 2	Acquire an additional 40 acres of riparian and upland habitat along Cold Creek, a perennial tributary to Malibu Creek, for inclusion in the 1319-acre Cold Creek	\$5,000,000	Los Angeles	Acquisition	Riparian
23	Topanga Creek and Lagoon Restoration Program	Preserve. Restore riparian and lagoon habitats and improve fish passage in Topanga Creek and Lagoon.	\$4,216,000	Los Angeles	Planning	Fish Passage & Riparian
24	Los Angeles River Taylor Yard Acquisition	Acquire the 42.6 acre Taylor Yard property adjacent to the Los Angeles River in the City of Los Angeles for the purpose of ecological restoration.	\$25,000,000	Los Angeles	Acquisition	Riparian & Wetlands
25	Ballona Wetlands Restoration Planning	Identify, evaluate and design restoration alternatives for Ballona Wetlands.	\$10,400,000	Los Angeles	Planning	Coastal Wetlands
26	Deforest Wetlands Restoration	Development of a two-mile long 39 acre riverfront park with wetlands, upland habitat, interpretive displays and public access trails.	\$6,791,000	Los Angeles	Construction	Riparian & Wetlands
27	San Gabriel River Arundo Removal	Remove 80 net acres of <i>Arundo donax</i> from the San Gabriel River and Rio Hondo at Whittier Narrows.	\$978,000	Los Angeles	Restoration	Invasives
28	Los Cerritos Wetlands Conceptual Restoration Plan	Prepare a conceptual restoration plan for the Los Cerritos Wetlands.	\$500,000	Los Angeles	Planning	Coastal Wetlands
29	Los Cerritos Wetlands Acquisitions	Acquire 100 acres of the Hellman property in Seal Beach for the purpose of wetland restoration.	Confidential	Los Angeles	Acquisition	Coastal Wetlands
30	Riparian Enhancement at Audubon Starr Ranch Sanctuary	Removal of 11 acres of non-native periwinkle and 125 acres of non-native olive trees along Bell Creek	\$245,000	Orange	Restoration	Invasives Riparian
31	Newland Marsh Acquisition	Acquisition of 44 acres for future restoration of degraded coastal saltmarsh presently owned by CalTrans.	Confidential	Orange	Acquisition	Coastal Wetlands
32	Newport Valley Habitat Restoration	Use volunteers to restore 15 acres of riparian and coastal sage scrub habitat in a drainage that flows directly into the Upper Newport Bay.	\$601,000	Orange	Restoration	Invasives
33	Aliso Creek Estuary Restoration	Develop a conceptual restoration plan to restore coastal wetland habitats to Aliso Estuary	\$300,000	Orange	Planning	Coastal Wetlands
34	Santiago Creek Arundo Control and Habitat Restoration	Remove approximately 140 acres of <i>Arundo</i> donax and associated invasives to recover native habitat and wildlife.	\$2,391,000	Orange	Restoration	Invasives
35	Santa Ana River, Featherly Regional Park Restoration	Complete the removal of the remaining 20 acres of <i>Arundo donax</i> from Featherly Regional Park.	\$492,600	Orange	Restoration	Invasives
36	Orange Coast River Park	Develop and implement an action strategy for the Orange Coast River Park, a 1,000 acre mosaic of wetland, riparian, and upland habitats along the lower three miles of the Santa Ana River.	\$25,000,000	Orange	Planning	Coastal Wetlands & Riparian
37	Serrano Creek Stabilization and Restoration Phase II, Reach 2 & 3	Stabilize the creek beds and banks, restore riparian habitat, and reduce sediment loadings to Newport Bay.	\$2,000,000	Orange	Planning	Riparian
38	San Joaquin Marsh Enhancement - Phase II Implementation	Enhance approximately 120 acres of perennial marsh.	\$3,700,000	Orange	Restoration	Coastal Wetlands

39	Aliso Creek Mainstem Riparian Restoration	Ecosystem restoration in a seven-mile reach of Aliso Creek and 1,000 feet of the Wood Canyon tributary.	\$45,000,000	Orange	Restoration	Riparian
40	San Juan and Trabuco Creek Watershed Steelhead Recovery Plan	Implement the San Juan and Trabuco Creeks Steelhead Recovery Plan	\$25,000,000	Orange	Restoration	Fish Passage & Riparian & Coastal Wetlands
41	Trabuco Creek Fish Passage Project	Planning and design of a fish ladder under Highway I5 along Trabuco Creek.	\$1,875,000	Orange	Planning	Fish Passage
42	Buena Vista Lagoon Restoration Plan - Preliminary Engineering and EIR/S	Prepare a joint CEQA/NEPA document for restoration of Buena Vista Lagoon and preliminary engineering plans for the restoration.	\$1,700,000	San Diego	Planning	Coastal Wetlands
43	Batiquitos Lagoon Exotics Removal and Revegetation	Remove exotics and revegetate approximately 16 acres of wetland and upland habitat adjacent to Batiquitos Lagoon.	\$350,000	San Diego	Restoration	Coastal Wetlands & Invasives
44	San Elijo Lagoon Restoration Planning and Engineering	Develop restoration alternatives through preliminary engineering to protect diversity and quality of habitats through restoration of tidal circulation and ecological functions at San Elijo Lagoon.	\$1,590,000	San Diego	Planning	Coastal Wetlands
45	San Diego Canyon Wetlands Restoration Project	Produce Canyon Enhancement Action Plans for 1,234 canyon acres (wetlands and upland slopes) and 15.6 miles of stream corridor in 9 urban canyons.	\$348,000	San Diego	Planning	Coastal Wetlands Riparian
46	Mission Bay Gateway Conceptual Plan	Develop conceptual plans to protect and improve core functions of 40 acres of existing tidal wetland habitat in the Kendall Frost/Northern Wildlife Preserve.	\$430,000	San Diego	Planning	Coastal Wetlands
47	San Dieguito Watershed Invasive Species Control and Re-vegetation	Restore 874 acres of riparian and marsh habitat in the San Dieguito Watershed in northern San Diego County.	\$4,766,000	San Diego	Restoration	Invasives & Coastal Wetlands
48	Rose Creek Watershed Opportunities Assessment Implementation	Implement recommendations of the Rose Creek Watershed Opportunities Assessment, including completing a watershed-wide hydrologic study; planning for creation of wetlands at the mouth of Rose Creek; and designing trail linkages.	\$1,165,000	San Diego	Restoration	Riparian
49	San Diego River Watershed Riparian Restoration Program	Implement a watershed-based invasive, non- native plant control program in the San Diego River Watershed.	\$5,000,000	San Diego	Restoration	Riparian
50	Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program	Final design, engineering and permitting for the Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program	\$2,000,000	San Diego	Planning	Coastal Wetlands
51	MacHutchin Property Acquisition	Acquire the 3.54 acre MacHutchin property at the Buena Vista Lagoon.	\$1,550,000	San Diego	Acquisition	Coastal Wetlands
52	Santa Margarita River Fish Passage Project	65% design plans to remove two key steelhead passage barriers on Santa Margarita River (an abandoned Sandia Creek river crossing and bridge that cross the Santa Margarita River)	\$510,178	San Diego	Restoration	Riparian
53	WRP Community Wetland Restoration Grants Program	Provide grants up to \$30,000 for restoration and enhancement projects consistent with the goals of the Wetlands Recovery Project.	Numerous	Regional	Restoration	Riparian, Invasives, Coastal Wetlands