

# 2024 Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP) Community Wetland Restoration Grant Program

# PROGRAM INFORMATION AND APPLICATION GUIDELINES

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| BACKGROUND |  |  |

The Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP) Community Wetland Restoration Grant Program (CWRGP) has provided funding to over 170 community-based restoration projects in coastal wetlands and along coastal stream corridors in the southern California region over the past 20 years. This program supports achieving Goals 1-3 of the WRP [Regional Strategy 2018](https://scwrp.databasin.org/pages/regional-strategy-report), by restoring coastal wetlands, streams, adjacent habitats, and other non-tidal wetlands. The program has a specific emphasis on Objective 1 of Goal 3: **Support Community-Based Restoration Projects**. A partial compilation of projects funded in past CWRGP cycles can be found on the WRP website [*Project Board*](https://scwrp.org/projects/?funding_level=cwrgp&program_type=restoration&project_status=completed&list=0).

The goals of the program are to build local capacity to plan and implement wetland restoration projects; promote community involvement in wetland restoration activities; and foster education about wetland ecosystems. The CWRGP seeks to engage and benefit people and communities that include but are not limited to lower-income individuals and households, people with disabilities, Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrant communities, and other systemically excluded communities (“CWRGP Priority Communities”).

The CWRGP will be administered and partially funded by the [State Coastal Conservancy (SCC)](https://scc.ca.gov/) and partially funded by the [Wildlife Conservation Board](https://wcb.ca.gov/) (WCB), and the [San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC)](http://rmc.ca.gov/).

The CWRGP is particularly interested in funding projects falling within 1.5 miles of the main stem or tributary of the Lower Los Angeles River corridor. Please refer to the red outlined area on this [map](https://www.arcgis.com/apps/instant/minimalist/index.html?appid=22229eddcae04cf8a4d05c541a04e055) to see if your project falls within that area. Note that while this has been identified as a priority area, we are accepting proposals for projects within coastal wetlands and coastal stream corridors throughout the southern California region.

**CWRGP Priorities:** To achieve the objective to support community-based restoration projects, the CWRGP will prioritize funding for projects that:

1. Engage CWRGP Priority Communities to restore or enhance coastal wetlands and coastal stream corridors.
2. Implement restoration projects that have strong community benefits such as community engagement, education, workforce development, career and leadership development.
3. Demonstrate community-led planning and implementation of desired projects that are anchored in community expertise, for example projects that utilize community leaders, community-based organizations, tribal members, local planners, or local and state government officials.
4. Increase organizational capacity to plan and implement habitat restoration projects.

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| **PROJECT DURATION AND AWARD**  |  |  |

We anticipate that approximately $580,000 will be awarded in this grant round and 5-8 projects will be selected (more projects may be selected dependent on application requests). **Applicants for projects within the identified priority region of the Lower Los Angeles River Corridor (the red outlined area on this** [**map**](https://www.arcgis.com/apps/instant/minimalist/index.html?appid=22229eddcae04cf8a4d05c541a04e055)**) can request a grant amount up to $150,000. Applicants for projects outside of this region may request a grant amount up to $100,000.** **The average grant amount awarded will range between $30,000 - $100,000.** The project duration will be a maximum of two and a half years, and projects should be completed by October 1 of 2027.

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| ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS |  |  |

Eligible applicants include 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, local government agencies (City or County), other public agencies, federally recognized tribes, and nonprofit or public universities. Proposals demonstrating partnerships between more than one community-based organization and/or local public agencies are prioritized.

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| ELIGIBLE HABITAT TYPES AND PROJECTS |  |  |

**Eligible Habitat Types**: Wetlands and associated habitat can include coastal wetlands (e.g., tidal marshes), streams, rivers, wetland-adjacent riparian habitat, depressional wetlands (e.g., vernal pools), and transitional upland habitat adjacent to wetlands (e.g., dunes, riverbanks, and coastal sage scrub). The CWRGP is particularly interested in funding projects falling within 1.5 miles of the main stem or tributary of the Lower Los Angeles River corridor. Please refer to the red outlined area on this [map](https://www.arcgis.com/apps/instant/minimalist/index.html?appid=22229eddcae04cf8a4d05c541a04e055) to see if your project falls within that area.

To be eligible for funding, projects must restore wetland or wetland associated habitat and involve the community in the restoration implementation. Projects that are ready to implement will be prioritized; more specifically:

**Restoration or preservation of a coastal wetland, coastal stream corridor, or other non-tidal wetlands:** Projects must have as a primary goal the restoration of a coastal wetland (estuarine or vernal pool) or a coastal stream corridor in southern California from Point Conception to the U.S.-Mexico border.

**Community involvement and educational component:** Project implementation must engage community members and have an educational component. Through the CWRGP, the SCC is attempting to make significant impacts to both the region’s wetland resources *and* the region’s communities, with projects that engage and educate the community through their hands-on participation in restoration, resulting in measurable restoration outcomes. This education linked to a restoration experience provides numerous positive feedbacks to the community, such as creating a sense of place, fostering stewardship of wetland habitats, and improving environmental awareness. The CWRGP is particularly interested in engaging a diverse array of community members in the participating projects (see “CWRGP Priority Communities” in Background section above).

**Other eligible activities:** Additional activities can be supported by this program so long as they are directly related to a specific, identifiable restoration project. These additional eligible activities include project development, planning, and capacity building. Capacity building includes organizational capacity (i.e., internal training and staffing support) and workforce development (i.e., career and leadership development) directly related to the restoration project.

**Sample project types and activities** (this list is not fully inclusive of all eligible project types/activities):

1. Removal of invasive plant species, trash, debris, and other pollutants
2. Installation and maintenance of native trees, plants, and shrubs
3. Intertidal or shallow subtidal habitat restoration
4. Development and installment of trails and interpretive elements that support habitat restoration efforts
5. Training and development of leadership skills as part of restoration activities (e.g., interns training student participants in coastal ecology)
6. Educational workshops or outreach that educate volunteers about wetland ecosystems, watershed issues and ecological benefits of habitat restoration, as part of restoration activities

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| APPLICATION SELECTION AND GRANT AWARD PROCESS |  |  |

**Project Selection:** A selection committee that includes staff from WCB, RMC, and the SCC will review the CWRGP applications and evaluate each application based on how well it meets the Selection Criteria below. Other agencies that participate in the WRP and that could potentially consider funding CWRGP projects will be invited to participate in the selection committee as well. See “Grant Process” below for additional details.

**Selection Criteria:** Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Extent to which the project will restore coastal wetlands, streams, adjacent habitats, and other non-tidal wetlands.
2. Extent to which the project meaningfully engages CWRGP Priority Communities to restore or enhance coastal wetlands and coastal stream corridors.
3. Degree to which the project implements restoration projects that have strong community benefits such as community engagement, education, workforce development, career development, and leadership development.
4. Extent to which the project demonstrates community-led planning and implementation of desired projects that are anchored in community expertise.
5. Extent to which the project will advance meaningful hands-on community involvement in a wetland restoration project, particularly involvement beyond the traditionally engaged environmental groups.
6. Degree to which the project will help build the applicant’s capacity to plan and implement wetlands restoration projects and/or increase community engagement in wetland restoration projects.
7. Applicant experience and capacity to implement the project and provide required long-term protection agreements.

**Grant Process:**

1. Applications are due by 5pm PT on **May 17, 2024**.
2. A committee will review applications at a meeting in June 2024 and select the projects that will be recommended to the SCC for a grant at a public SCC board meeting.
3. Applicants may be asked to provide clarification on their proposed project or additional information about their project regarding CEQA review, consultation with local tribes and consistency with local coastal planning.
4. Provisional notification of the grant award or denial will be made by end of June 2024.
5. Staff will recommend that SCC Board approve funding at public hearing in September or November 2024.
6. Notification of grant approval will occur directly following the SCC Board meeting. Should other funding agencies engage in application review and identify select projects for recommendation under other funding sources, those determinations will be communicated to affected applicants.
7. The SCC will enter into grant agreements with successful applicants during Winter of 2024/2025. After signing the grant agreements, the grantee must satisfy additional conditions (such as a detailed scope and budget, proof of insurance, and any necessary permits and approvals) prior to beginning work.
8. Funding for all projects receiving SCC funding will be available by early 2025.

Table 1: Grant Cycle Timeline

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| Schedule | Milestone / Activity |
| February 2024 | Request for Proposals Released |
| March 21, 2024 | Informational Webinar  |
| May 17, 2024 | Applications are due by 5pm PT |
| June 2024 | Provisional notification of award or denial |
| September or November 2024 | SCC Board approval |
| Winter 2024/2025 | Sign grant agreements, satisfy conditions, and begin projects  |

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| OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLYING: |  |  |

1. The CWRGP is designed for relatively small-scale projects or a small portion of a larger project that can achieve on-the-ground restoration while engaging CWRGP Priority Communities. A project should have clearly defined goals and outcomes that can be achieved between one and three years (depending on the project needs). **If you are unsure if your project meets required selection criteria, please send a short project description (approximately 1 paragraph) to** **Maravilla.Clemens@scc.ca.gov** **before completing and submitting a full application.** You may also request a consultation meeting if you have further questions.
2. The SCC will award no more than one CWRGP grant per applicant. Therefore, if you have multiple project concepts, select the highest priority for the proposal.
3. CWRGP grants will not be awarded solely for experiments or research.
4. Funding of an ongoing monitoring project will not be granted. Startup costs (capital costs) for a monitoring project or monitoring and maintenance tied to a specific restoration project may be considered if required to ensure project success. These types of activities must be included in the budget and completed within the project cycle.
5. Projects proposed for transitional upland habitat must demonstrate a clear connection and benefit to the adjacent wetland habitat.
6. If the applicant is not the landowner of the project site, the applicant will need to provide evidence of landowner approval prior to project implementation.
7. Grant recipients may be required to enter into **15–20 year grant agreements** to ensure long-term protection of the property (i.e., restored property is operated, used and maintained for the project purpose for 15-20 years).

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| APPLICATION PROCEDURES |  |  |

The Application Guidelines and Application Template are available for download on the CWRGP [webpage](https://scwrp.org/community-wetland-restoration-grant-program/). Your completed application must be submitted via email to maravilla.clemens@scc.ca.gov **by May 17, 2024 at 5pm PT** (please see below for further instruction). You should receive confirmation that your application was received within three business days. Please be aware that all documents submitted to the Conservancy become public records. The Conservancy will assume that submitted photos are permissible for use unless the applicant clarifies otherwise.

If applying electronically is not possible, hard copy applications must be postmarked by May 17, 2024, and sent to:

**Maravilla Clemens**

**California State Coastal Conservancy**

**1515 Clay St. 10th Floor**

**Oakland, CA 94612**

If able, please also send an email to maravilla.clemens@scc.ca.gov so staff is aware of your incoming hard copy application.

Please follow the following guidelines for electronically submitting proposals via email: application cover page, project narrative, project budget, and attachments should be uploaded as ***one*** file in Microsoft Word or converted to a pdf file if possible. Name the electronic file by the project name. Do not embed picturesin the proposal text; place them in the file after the proposal narrative and have them well labelled. To ensure that your electronic file is not excessively large, make sure your photos are an appropriate size.

**INQUIRIES** should be directed to:

Maravilla Clemens

California State Coastal Conservancy

maravilla.clemens@scc.ca.gov