



# COMMUNITY WETLAND RESTORATION GRANT PROGRAM

## 2026 Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project Community Wetland Restoration Grant Program

### PROGRAM INFORMATION AND APPLICATION GUIDELINES

#### BACKGROUND

The Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP) Community Wetland Restoration Grant Program (CWRGP) has provided funding to over 180 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](#), 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](#).

The goals of the program are to 1) build local capacity to plan and implement wetland restoration projects, 2) promote community involvement in wetland restoration activities, and 3) foster education about wetland ecosystems.

**CWRGP Priority Communities:** CWRGP projects selected in 2026 must provide meaningful and direct benefits to people and communities that have historically faced systemic barriers resulting in limited access to natural resources, and other systemically excluded communities.

CWRGP Priority Communities fit into one or more of the following definitions based on quantifiable factors such as income and vulnerability to climate hazards (i.e., extreme heat, flood, sea level rise, drought, wildfire).

- **Disadvantaged community (DAC):** A community with a median household income of less than 80 percent of the area average or less than 80 percent of statewide median household income.
- **Severely disadvantaged community (SDAC):** A community with a median household income of less than 60 percent of the area average or less than 60 percent of statewide median household income.
- **Vulnerable population:** A subgroup of population within a region or community that faces a disproportionately heightened risk or increased sensitivity to impacts of climate change and that lacks adequate resources to cope with, adapt to, or recover from such impacts.

The selection committee will use the following tools to evaluate whether your project will provide meaningful and direct benefits to CWRGP Priority Communities:

- Prop 4 DAC / SDAC tool  
<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/aa723fdf521a44c9a428f1a46cd38a09>
- Vulnerable Communities Platform <https://vcp.lci.ca.gov/>

This CWRGP grant round will be administered and funded by the [State Coastal Conservancy \(SCC\)](#).

**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 (e.g., 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.

## PROJECT DURATION AND AWARD

We anticipate that approximately \$300,000 will be awarded in this grant round and that 3-5 projects will be selected. Applicants may request a grant amount of up to \$100,000. The average grant amount awarded for each project is expected to range between \$30,000 - \$100,000. The project duration may be up to a maximum of three years.

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

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

## ELIGIBLE HABITAT TYPES AND PROJECTS

**Eligible Habitat Types:** Wetlands and associated habitat can include coastal wetlands (e.g., tidal marshes), shallow subtidal habitat (e.g., intertidal zones), streams, rivers, wetland-adjacent riparian habitat, depressional wetlands (e.g., vernal pools), and transitional upland habitat adjacent to wetlands (e.g., dunes, riverbanks, coastal sage scrub).

**Eligible Projects:** To be eligible for funding, projects must 1) restore wetland or wetland associated habitat, 2) involve the community in the restoration implementation, and 3) include an educational component. More detail and examples of these components are described below:

- (1) **Restoration of a coastal wetland, coastal stream corridor, or other non-tidal wetlands:** Projects must have, as a primary goal, the restoration of an eligible habitat type

(see above) within southern California, from Point Conception to the U.S.-Mexico border. Priority will be given to projects that are ready for implementation.

- a) Eligible activities include, but are not limited to:
- Removing invasive plant species, trash, debris, and other pollutants
  - Installing and maintaining native trees, plants, and shrubs
  - Developing and installing trails and interpretive elements that support habitat restoration
  - Installing bioswales, mulch, or other features that encourage water infiltration

(2) **Community involvement in restoration activities:** Projects must actively engage community members in restoration activities. Through the CWRGP, the SCC aims to create significant benefits for both the region’s wetland resources and the region’s communities. Projects should offer hands-on restoration opportunities that engage and educate the nearby community, resulting in measurable restoration outcomes. The CWRGP is particularly interested in projects that engage a diverse array of community members in the participating projects (see “CWRGP Priority Communities” in Background section).

(3) **Projects must include an educational component:** The project’s restoration activities must have a clear educational component. While hands-on participation and education can often go hand in hand, applicants should explicitly describe how community members will learn about their local wetland ecosystem as they participate in restoration activities.

- a) Eligible activities include, but are not limited to:
- Training and development of leadership skills as part of restoration activities (e.g., interns, student training)
  - Educational workshops or outreach about wetlands, watersheds, and/or ecological benefits of habitat restoration
  - Curriculum development related to restoration activities.
  - Pre and post site visits with a classroom or education in an afterschool setting to prepare for the restoration

**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 activities include project development, planning, and capacity building. Organizational capacity building activities may include internal training, staffing support, and workforce development (i.e., career and leadership development) directly related to the restoration project.

## APPLICATION SELECTION AND GRANT AWARD PROCESS

**Project Selection:** A selection committee comprised of members of the Wetlands Recovery Project Wetland Managers Group will review the CWRGP applications and evaluate each application based on how well it meets the Selection Criteria below. See “Grant Process” below for additional details.

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

1. **Restoration:** Extent to which the project will restore an eligible habitat type (see eligible habitat types above).
2. **Engagement with Priority Communities:** Extent to which the project meaningfully engages CWRGP Priority Communities in hands-on restoration activities (see CWRGP Priority Communities under Background above).
3. **Community Benefits:** 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. **Co-design of Project Planning and Implementation:** Extent to which the project demonstrates community-led planning and implementation of desired projects that are anchored in community expertise.
5. **Applicant Capacity Building:** 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.
6. **Applicant Experience:** 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 **August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026**.
2. A committee will review applications at a meeting in July 2026 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 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review, consultation with local tribes, and consistency with local coastal planning.
4. Notification of whether Staff will recommend the proposed project by end of August 2026.
5. Staff will recommend that SCC Board approve funding at public hearing in December 2026.
6. Notification of grant approval or denial will occur directly following the SCC Board meeting.
7. SCC plans to enter into grant agreements with successful applicants during the Winter of 2027. After signing the grant agreements, the grantee must satisfy additional conditions (e.g., detailed scope and budget, proof of insurance, necessary permits and/or landowner agreements) prior to beginning work.
8. Funding for all projects receiving SCC funding is expected to be available by Spring 2026.

Table 1: Grant Cycle Timeline

Tentative Schedule	Milestone / Activity
April 2026	Request for Proposals Released
June 4, 2026	Informational Webinar: <a href="#">Register here</a>
August 1, 2026	Applications are due by 5pm PT
September 2026	Notification if Staff will recommend proposed project
December 2026	SCC Board decision
Winter - Spring 2027	Sign grant agreements, satisfy conditions, and begin project

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLYING:

1. The CWRGP is designed for relatively small-scale projects or a small portion of a larger project, if CEQA-compliant, 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 [Ninah.Munk@scc.ca.gov](mailto:Ninah.Munk@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 for 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 agreement prior to project implementation.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURES

The Application Guidelines and Application Template are available for download on the CWRGP [webpage](https://scwrp.org/community-wetland-restoration-grant-program/) at <https://scwrp.org/community-wetland-restoration-grant-program/>. Your completed application must be submitted via email to [Ninah.Munk@scc.ca.gov](mailto:Ninah.Munk@scc.ca.gov) **by August 1, 2026 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 SCC become public records. SCC will assume that submitted photos are permissible for use unless the applicant clarifies otherwise in writing to SCC.

Please **follow the following guidelines for electronically submitting proposals via email:** The 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 pictures in the proposal text; place them in the file after the proposal narrative and have them well labeled. To ensure that your electronic file is not excessively large, make sure your photos are an appropriate size.

If applying electronically is not possible, hard copy applications must be postmarked by August 1, 2026, and sent to:

**Ninah Munk  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1515 Clay St. 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612**

If able, please also send an email to [Ninah.Munk@scc.ca.gov](mailto:Ninah.Munk@scc.ca.gov) so staff is aware of your incoming hard copy application.

**INQUIRIES** should be directed to:

Ninah Munk  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
[Ninah.Munk@scc.ca.gov](mailto:Ninah.Munk@scc.ca.gov)