



Department of Parks, Open Space, and Cultural Services  
Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience

# FY 2025–26 Measure Q Grant Program Final Funding Recommendations

Citizens Oversight Advisory Board | May 27, 2025

**SECTION 1**

# **MAY 6 MEETING RECAP**

# Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Wildfire Protection Act



## Land Trust / RCD

20%

\$700k / ea

## Cities

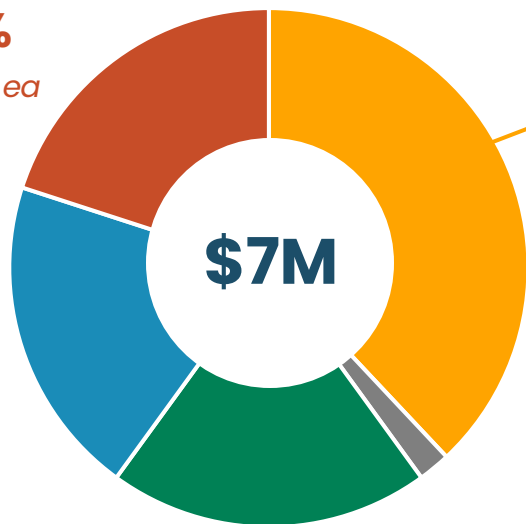
20%

Santa Cruz ~\$546k  
Capitola ~\$200k  
Scotts Valley \$200k  
Watsonville ~\$456k

## Unincorporated County

20%

~\$1.4M



**40 % (\$2.8M)**  
**Competitive Grant Program**

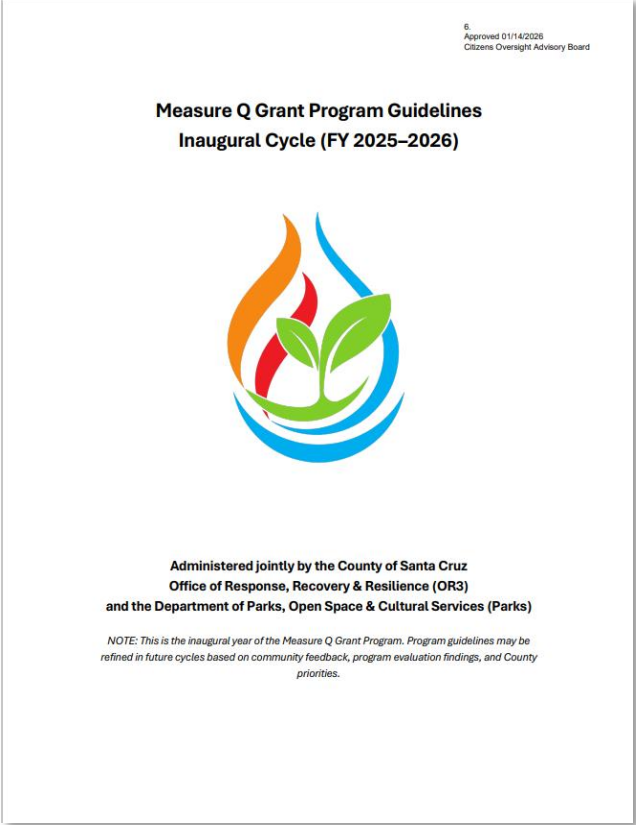
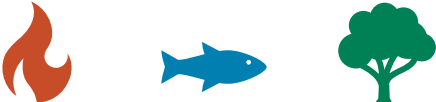
5% admin budget (~\$180k)

# Grant Program Design

## VISION PLAN + GRANT GUIDELINES

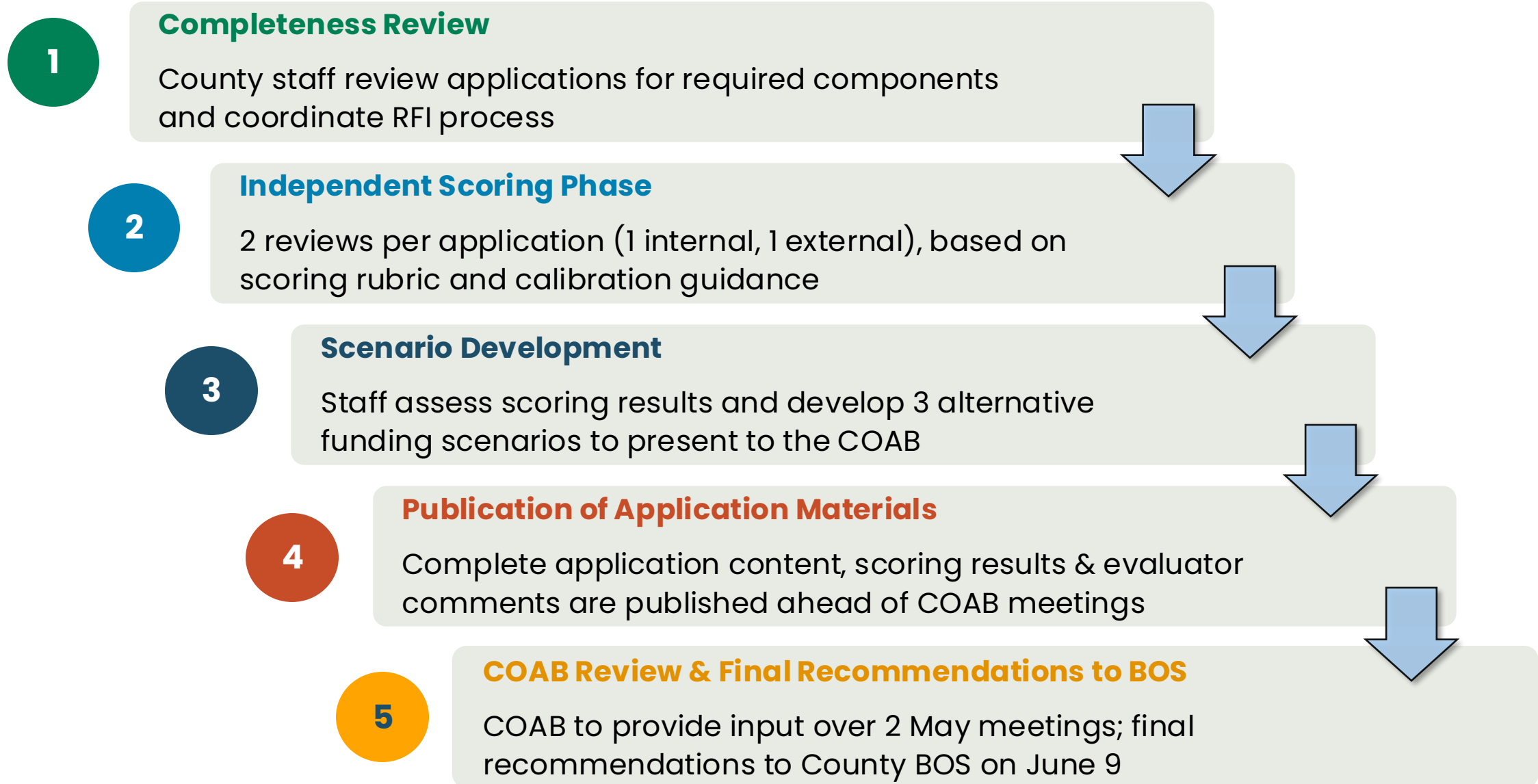


### PRIORITY THEMES



### TIER 1 + TIER 2 SCORING RUBRIC

# Grant Evaluation Process (March 16 – April 15)



# Funding Scenario Frameworks



1 2 3

## Scenario A

"ORDINAL RANK"

Fund top 6-7 scoring projects in each category until budget is allocated.

✓ Straightforward alignment with grant scoring guidelines, honors process conveyed to applicants

⚠ Geographic concentration in South County (75% of Tier 2 dollars)

⚠ Public agencies dominate top-scoring projects



## Scenario B

"GEOGRAPHIC BALANCE"

Redistribute among top 10 to achieve greater geographic balance.

✓ Greatest county-wide geographic balance

⚠ Deviation from rank order; removal of South County Projects which are highly aligned with Vision Plan



## Scenario C

"SCALE OF IMPACT"

Redistribute among top 10 with a focus on impact metrics (i.e., acres treated)

✓ Objective rationale, maximizes 2 year impact and community visibility of grant program

⚠ Less tethered to competitive grant application guidelines made available to applicants



# May 6 COAB Meeting – Discussion Themes

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## Additional Context & Data

- **Additional mapping** – COAB members requested additional mapping and visualization resources to contextualize funding recommendations
- **Direct allocation projects** – COAB members requested to see FY25-26 direct allocation expenditure areas to add context to competitive grant awards for agencies which also receive direct allocation funds
- **Clearer labeling of set asides** – remove set-aside minimums when considering geographic balance of competitive funding pool



# May 6 COAB Meeting – Discussion Themes

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## Portfolio – Level Values

- **Geographic balance and equity (Scenario B)** – projects serving the Pajaro Valley (historical underinvestment) map favorably onto grant scoring criteria; commissioners discussed geographic vs. needs-based equity
- **Scale of impact and measurable outcomes (Scenario C)** – visible, high-impact projects could provide a more objective basis for departures from rank order
- **Fidelity to published process (Scenario A)** – honoring the scoring process provides transparency to applicants
- **Institutional balance** – public agencies are structurally advantaged in competitive grant process; commissioners asked whether direct allocation recipients should be viewed differently in the competitive process
- **Thematic balance** – ensuring 3 Vision Plan priority themes (wildfire, water, parks) are meaningfully represented in year 1



# May 6 COAB Meeting – Discussion Themes

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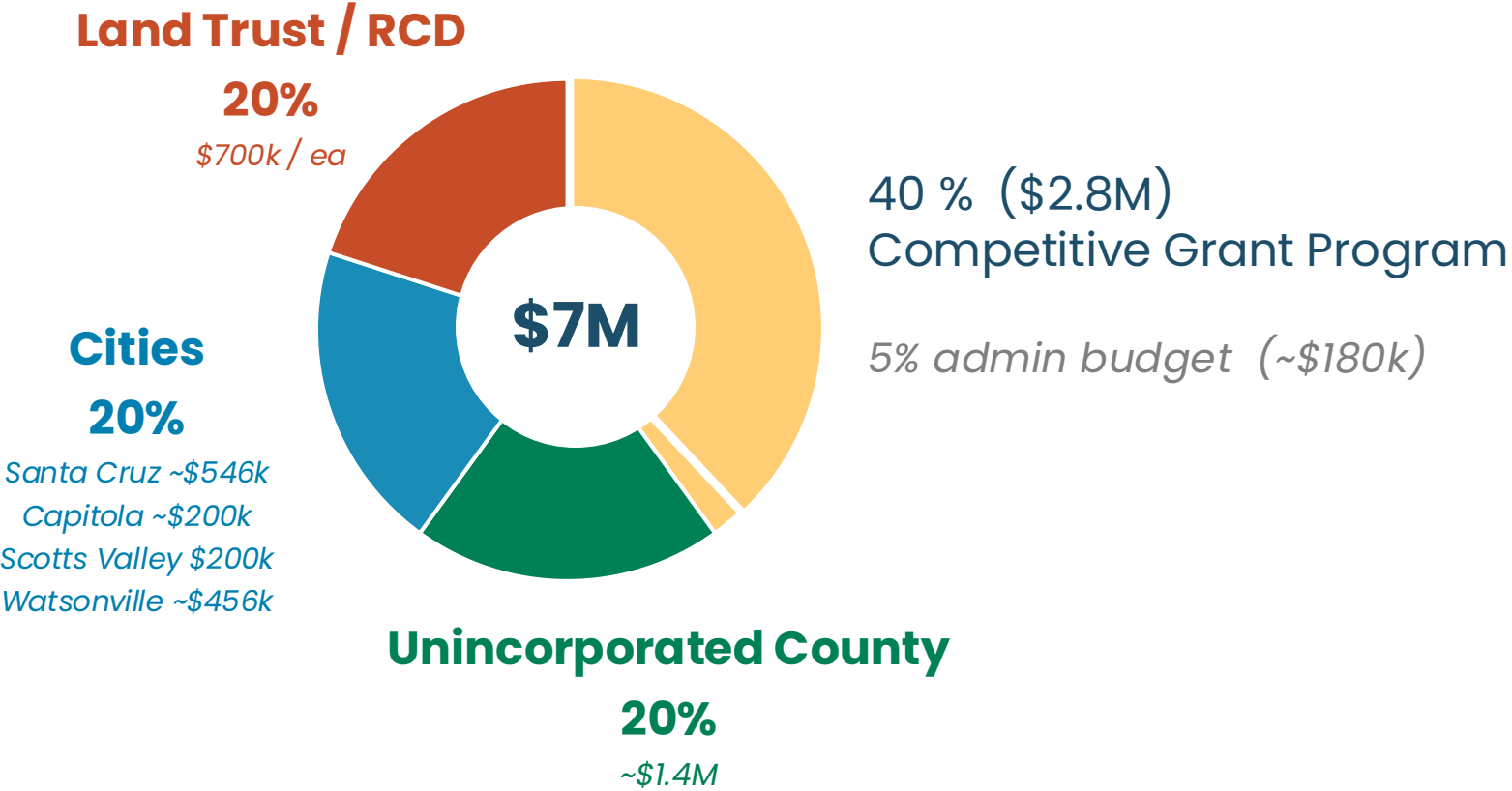
## August “After Action” – Topics for Additional Review

- **Decision making process** – sticking to scoring criteria provides most transparency to applicants; future grant guidelines could explicitly state the role of factors that will inform portfolio-level recommendations post-scoring
- **Geo-balance guardrails** – considering “ceilings” of investment in any one geographic area or any one applicant
- **Recurring eligibility limits** – setting clear limits around successive award eligibility could ensure that funds are used to support discrete projects or capacity building, rather than base program/operations support
- **Consider nonprofit and tribe accessibility** – monitor application trends over time and consider how to structure the Q grant program to support organizational capacity of tribes and nonprofits.
- **Pro-active / targeted outreach** – assess opportunities for outreach fiscal sponsorship in under-represented areas to encourage application development

**SECTION 2**

**PRELIMINARY UPDATE  
ON FY25-26 DIRECT  
ALLOCATION PROJECTS**

# Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Wildfire Protection Act










# County of Santa Cruz

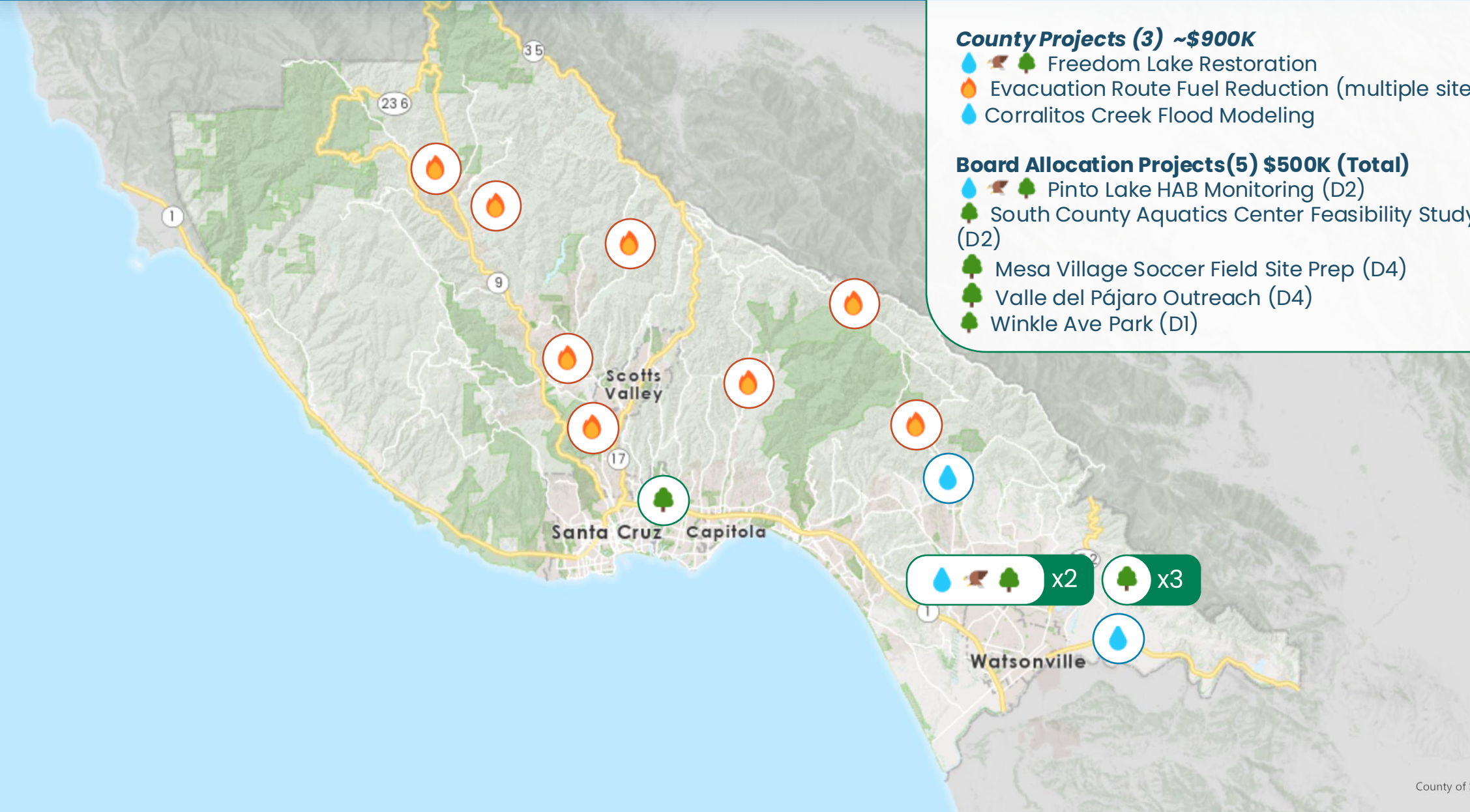
## FY25-26 Direct Allocation Projects – COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ ~\$1.4M

### County Projects (3) ~\$900K

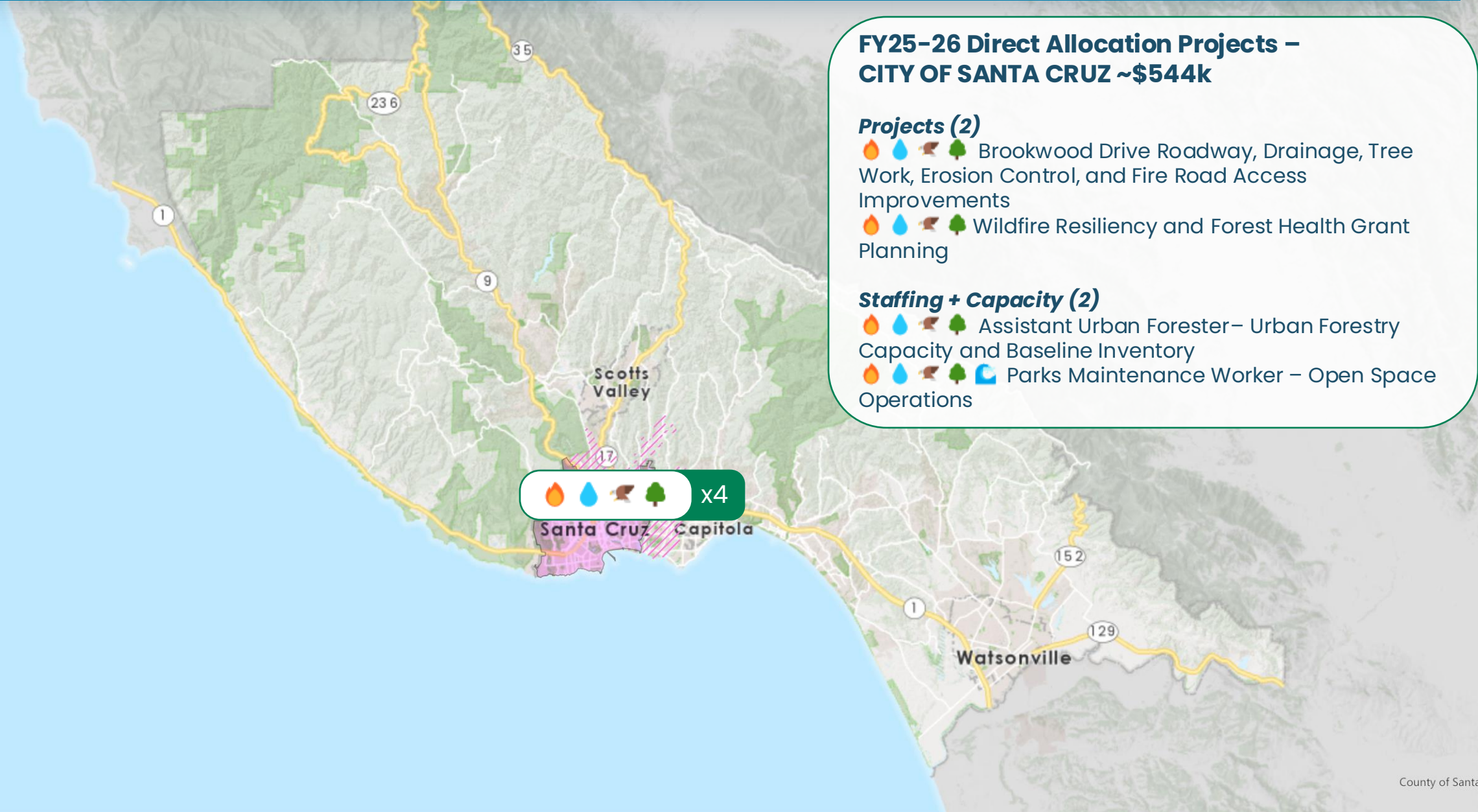
-    Freedom Lake Restoration
-  Evacuation Route Fuel Reduction (multiple sites)
-  Corralitos Creek Flood Modeling

### Board Allocation Projects(5) \$500K (Total)

-    Pinto Lake HAB Monitoring (D2)
-  South County Aquatics Center Feasibility Study (D2)
-  Mesa Village Soccer Field Site Prep (D4)
-  Valle del Pájaro Outreach (D4)
-  Winkle Ave Park (D1)



# City of Santa Cruz



## FY25-26 Direct Allocation Projects – CITY OF SANTA CRUZ ~\$544k

### Projects (2)

- 🔥💧🏞️🌳 Brookwood Drive Roadway, Drainage, Tree Work, Erosion Control, and Fire Road Access Improvements
- 🔥💧🏞️🌳 Wildfire Resiliency and Forest Health Grant Planning

### Staffing + Capacity (2)

- 🔥💧🏞️🌳 Assistant Urban Forester – Urban Forestry Capacity and Baseline Inventory
- 🔥💧🏞️🌳👤 Parks Maintenance Worker – Open Space Operations

# City of Capitola

## FY25-26 Direct Allocation Projects – CITY OF CAPITOLA ~\$200k

### **Projects (1)**

🌳 Park at Rispin Mansion – Park Development and Public Access Improvements

### **Staffing + Capacity (2)**

🌳 Parks Maintenance – 2 new maintenance workers



# City of Scotts Valley

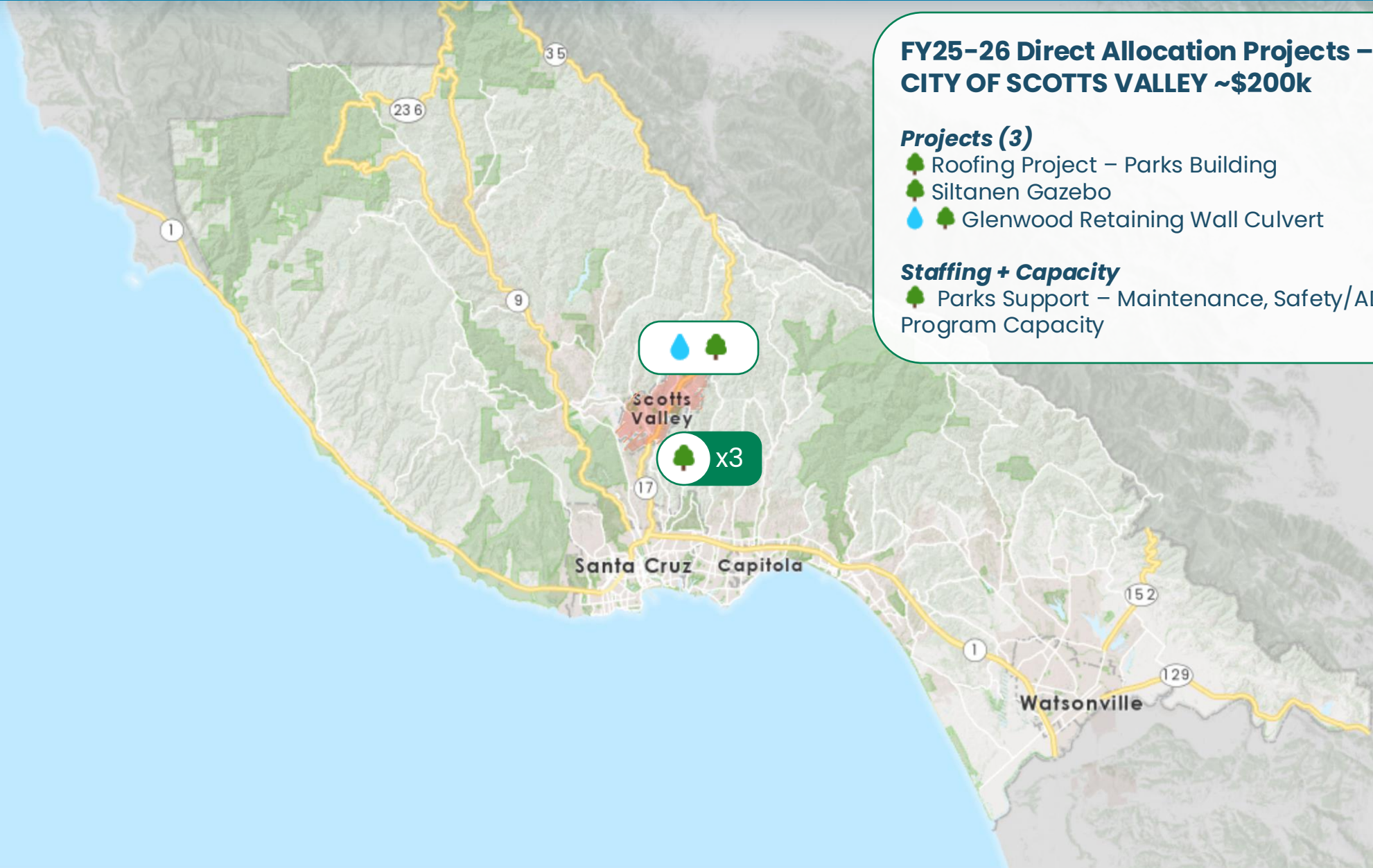
## FY25-26 Direct Allocation Projects – CITY OF SCOTTS VALLEY ~\$200k

### Projects (3)

- 🌳 Roofing Project – Parks Building
- 🌳 Siltanen Gazebo
- 💧 🌳 Glenwood Retaining Wall Culvert

### Staffing + Capacity

- 🌳 Parks Support – Maintenance, Safety/ADA, and Program Capacity



# City of Watsonville

## FY25-26 Direct Allocation Projects – CITY OF WATSONVILLE ~\$460k

### Projects (Planned - 3)

-    Pinto Lake HAB Monitoring
-  Ramsey Park Renaissance
-  Gap Funding for City Plaza



# RCD of Santa Cruz County

## FY25-26 Direct Allocation Projects – RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT ~\$700k

-  **Watershed Restoration (Countywide)**  
*Anna Jean Cummings HCP  
Lower Scott Creek at Swanton Pacific*
-  **Forest Health (Countywide)**  
*South County Oak Woodland Restoration Program  
Private Lands Cost Share Program Development  
Low-Cost Project Maintenance Fund*
-  **Stewardship in Agriculture (Countywide; North Coast + Pajaro Valley)**  
*Cover Crop Program  
Irrigation and Nutrient Management Program*
-  **Community Engagement and Resilience (Countywide)**  
*Community Resilience Coordinator Role  
Countywide Chipping Program  
Rural Living & Community Resilience Program*

**Impact Reporting and Evaluation  
Contingency and Disaster Response**

 x2





 x2

# Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

## FY25-26 Direct Allocation Projects – LAND TRUST

### **Recreational Trail Establishment, Improvement, and Maintenance**

*Glenwood Open Space Preserve  
San Vicente Redwoods Trails Management*

### **Endangered Species Recovery and Habitat Stewardship**

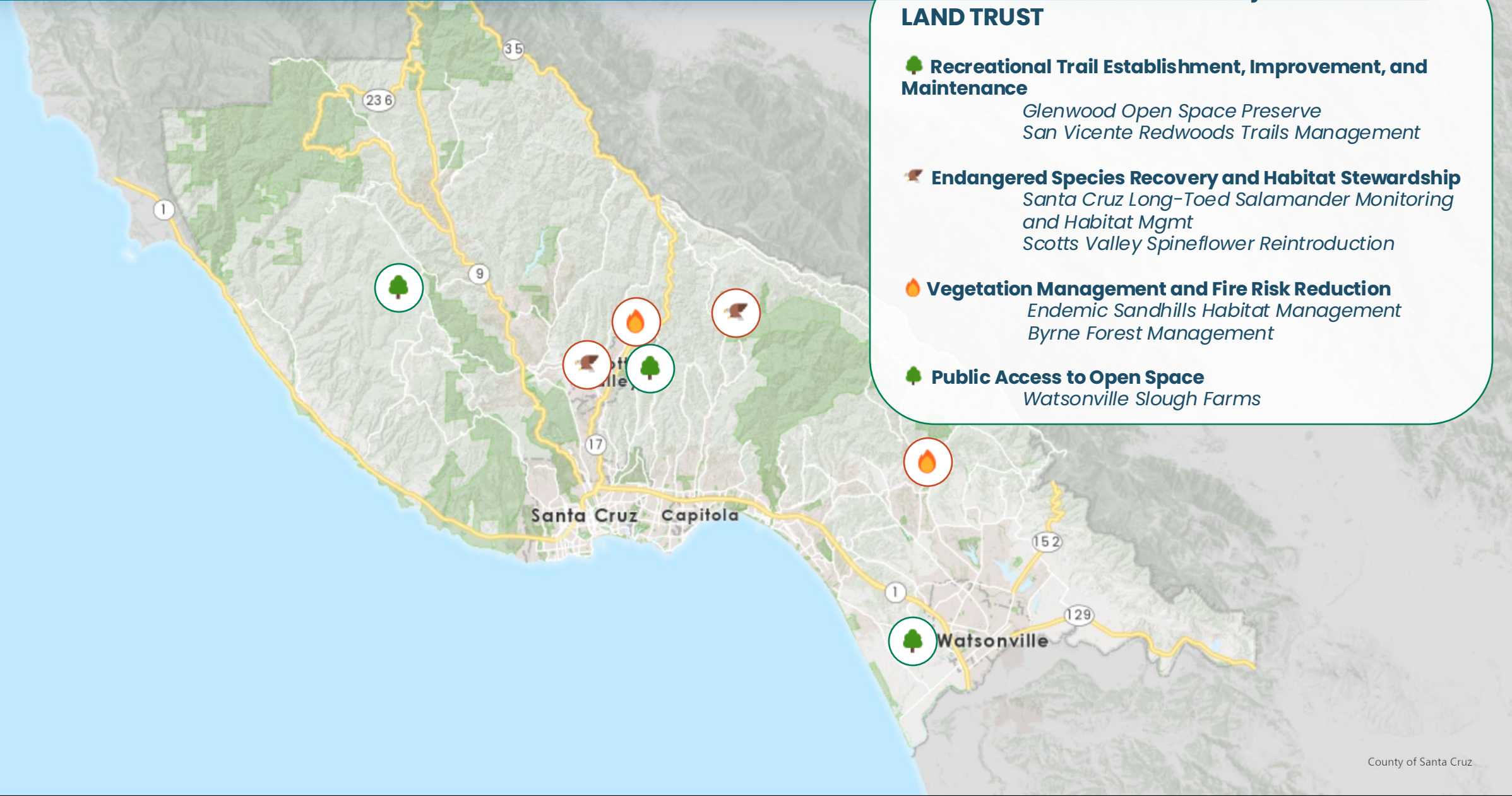
*Santa Cruz Long-Toed Salamander Monitoring and Habitat Mgmt  
Scotts Valley Spineflower Reintroduction*

### **Vegetation Management and Fire Risk Reduction**

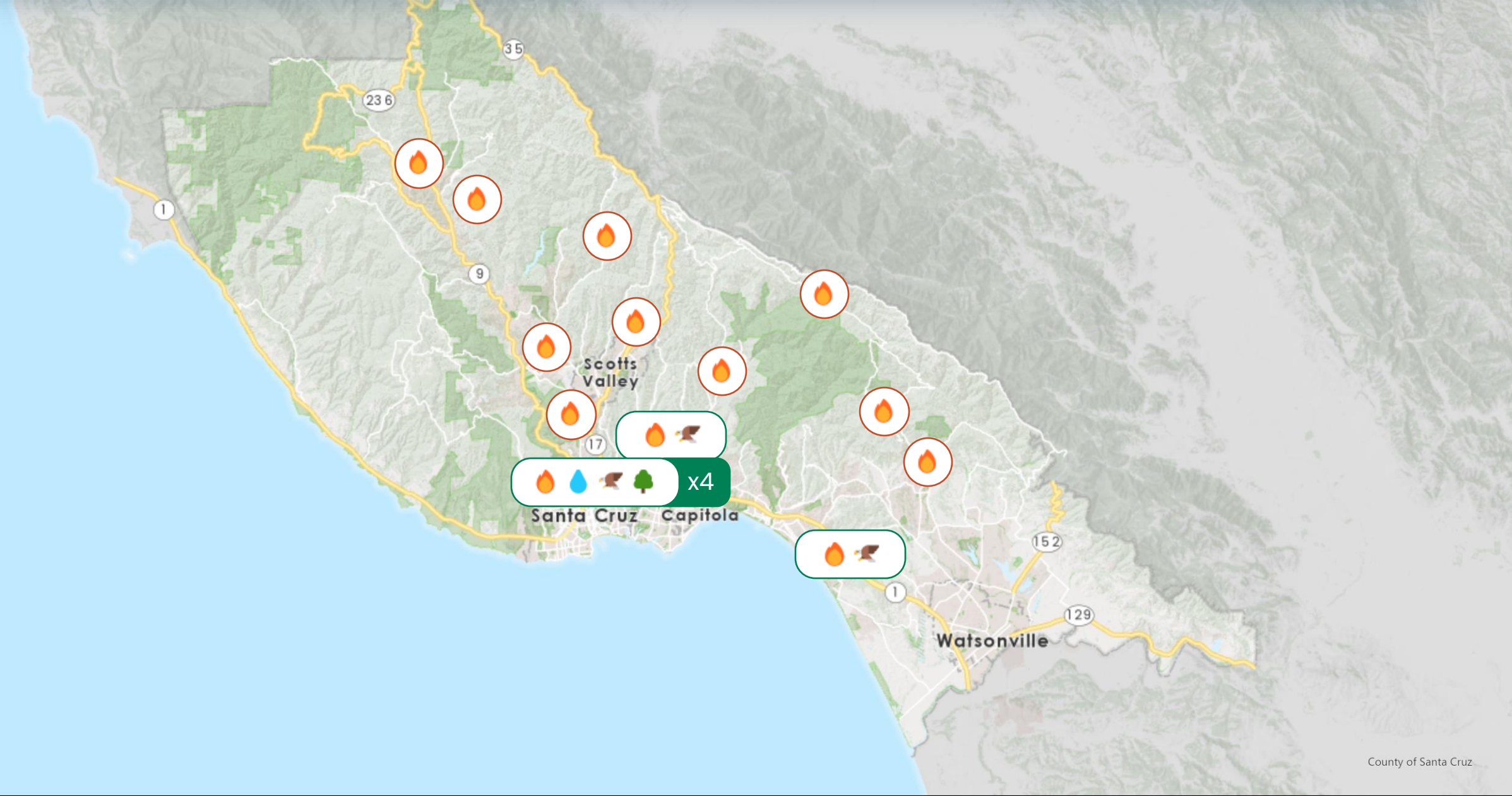
*Endemic Sandhills Habitat Management  
Byrne Forest Management*

### **Public Access to Open Space**

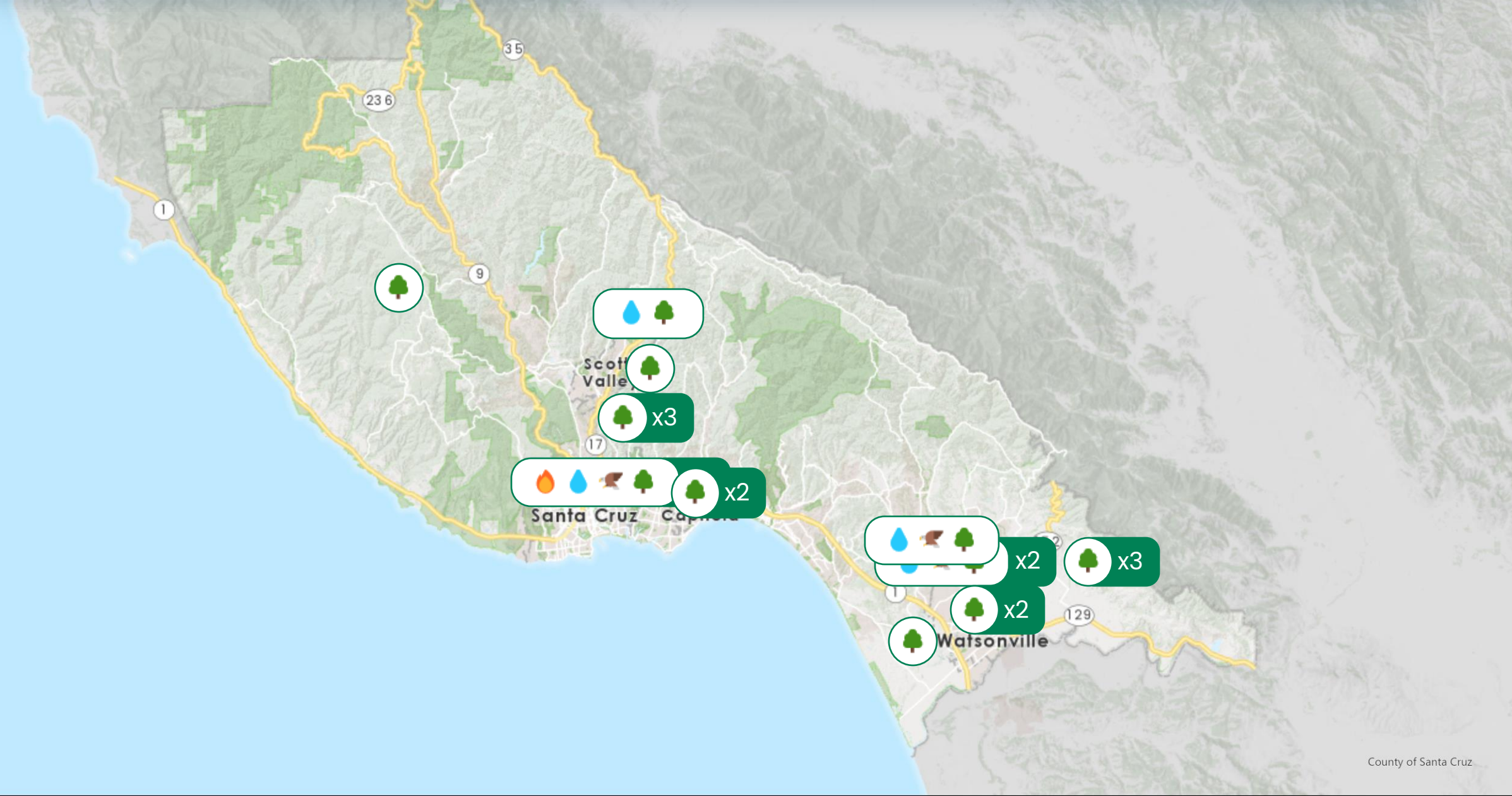
*Watsonville Slough Farms*



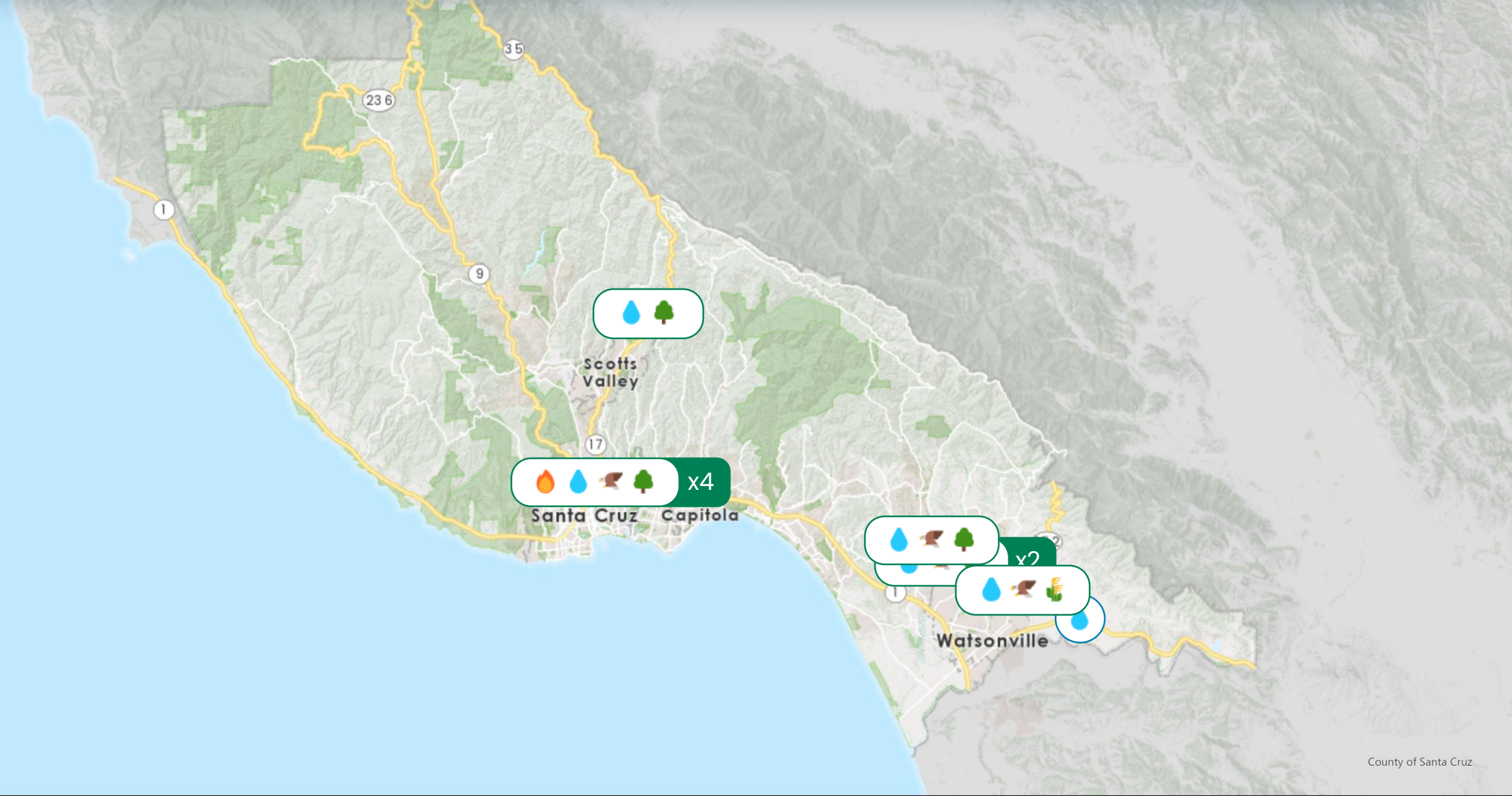
# All Projects – Wildfire



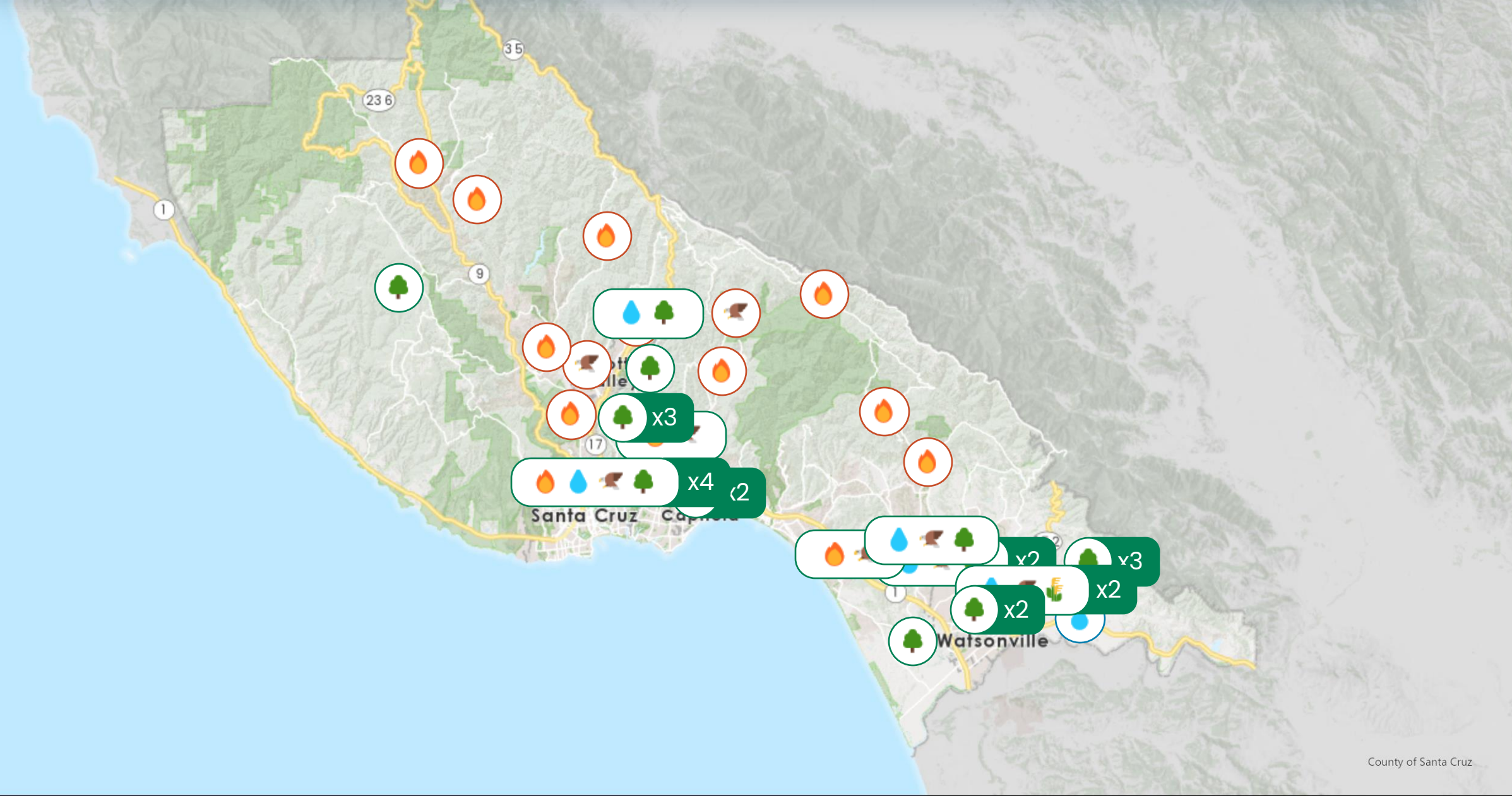
# All Projects – Parks



# All Projects – Water Resources



# All Projects – All Themes



**SECTION 4**

**FINAL GRANT AWARD  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

# Funding Scenario Frameworks

May 6 Scenarios

Additional COAB  
Feedback

"Synthesized" Portfolio

1 2 3

**Scenario A**  
*(Fidelity to Process)*



**Scenario B**  
*(Geographic Balance)*



**Institutional Balance**  
**Thematic Balance**  
**Equality vs. Equity**













**Final Staff  
Funding  
Recommendation**



**Scenario C**  
*(Scale of Impact)*

# Final Staff Recommendations **Tier 1**



Project	Themes	Avg. Score	Asked	Recommended Award
<b>River Stewards</b> Coastal Watershed Council		97	\$50,000	<b>\$50,000</b>
<b>Pinto Lake Water Quality Monitoring to Reduce Harmful Algal Blooms</b> Santa Cruz County Parks		92	\$48,000	<b>\$48,000</b>
Truck Trail Emergency Response Navigation and Water Infrastructure Initiative Santa Cruz County Fire		86.5	\$6,000	—
<b>Kids2Parks</b> Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks		85	\$14,915	<b>\$14,915</b>
<b>Real-Time Digital Signage for Wildfire Preparedness</b> Santa Cruz County Fire		81.5	\$43,982	<b>\$43,982</b>
Strategic Water Supply Enhancements for Rural Areas – Pilot Santa Cruz County Fire		79.5	\$29,158	—
<b>Creating Accessible Park Experiences for the Blind and Visually Impaired</b> Vista Center		79	\$50,000	<b>\$50,000</b>
<b>Expanding Coastal Access, Ocean Safety, and Surf Education in Santa Cruz County</b> Black Surf Santa Cruz		78.5	\$50,000	<b>\$50,000</b>
Outdoor Equity & Wellness Initiative: Facilitating Access and Equity to Local Parks and Recreation for Boys & Girls Club Youth Boys & Girls Club of SC		76.5	\$50,000	—
<b>Las Cumbres Shaded Fuel Break Project</b> South Skyline FSC		76	\$10,000	<b>\$10,000</b>

# Final Staff Recommendations **Tier 1**



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**Tier 1 Total**

7 projects

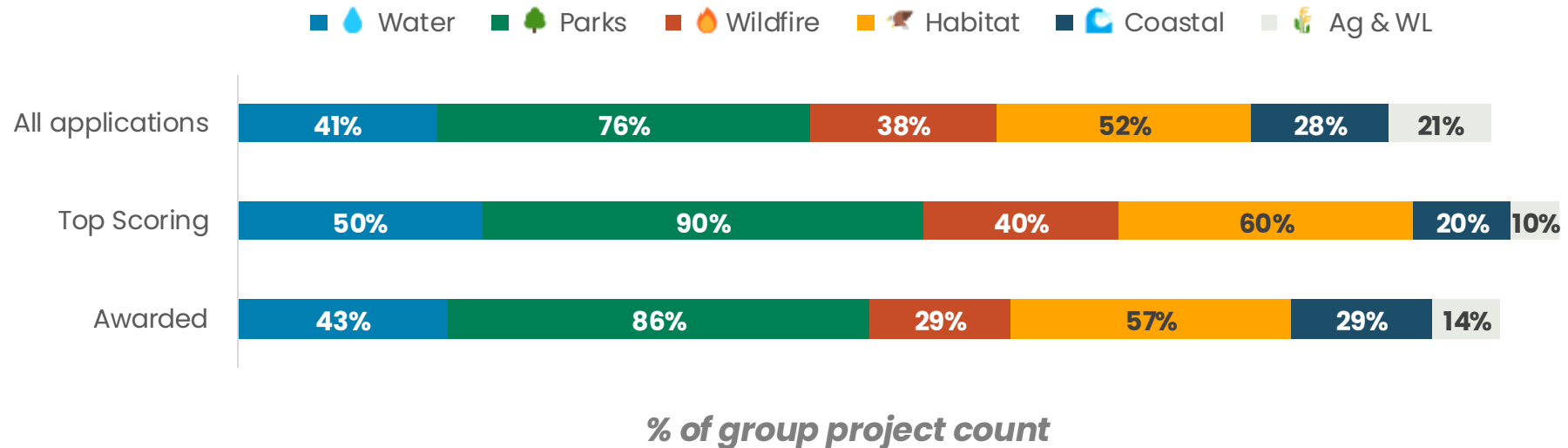
\$266,897

# Final Staff Recommendations **Tier 1**










Project	Themes	Recommended Award
<b>River Stewards</b> Coastal Watershed Council	Water, Parks, Habitat	\$50,000
<b>Pinto Lake Water Quality Monitoring to Reduce Harmful Algal Blooms</b> Santa Cruz County Parks	Water, Habitat	\$48,000
<b>Kids2Parks</b> Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks	Parks, Habitat	\$14,915
<b>Real-Time Digital Signage for Wildfire Preparedness</b> Santa Cruz County Fire	Wildfire	\$43,982
<b>Creating Accessible Park Experiences for the Blind and Visually Impaired</b> Vista Center	Parks	\$50,000
<b>Expanding Coastal Access, Ocean Safety, and Surf Education in Santa Cruz County</b> Black Surf Santa Cruz	Parks, Coastal	\$50,000
<b>Las Cumbres Shaded Fuel Break Project</b> South Skyline FSC	Wildfire	\$10,000

**Tier 1 Total**  
7 projects  
\$266,897



# Final Staff Recommendations **Tier 1**

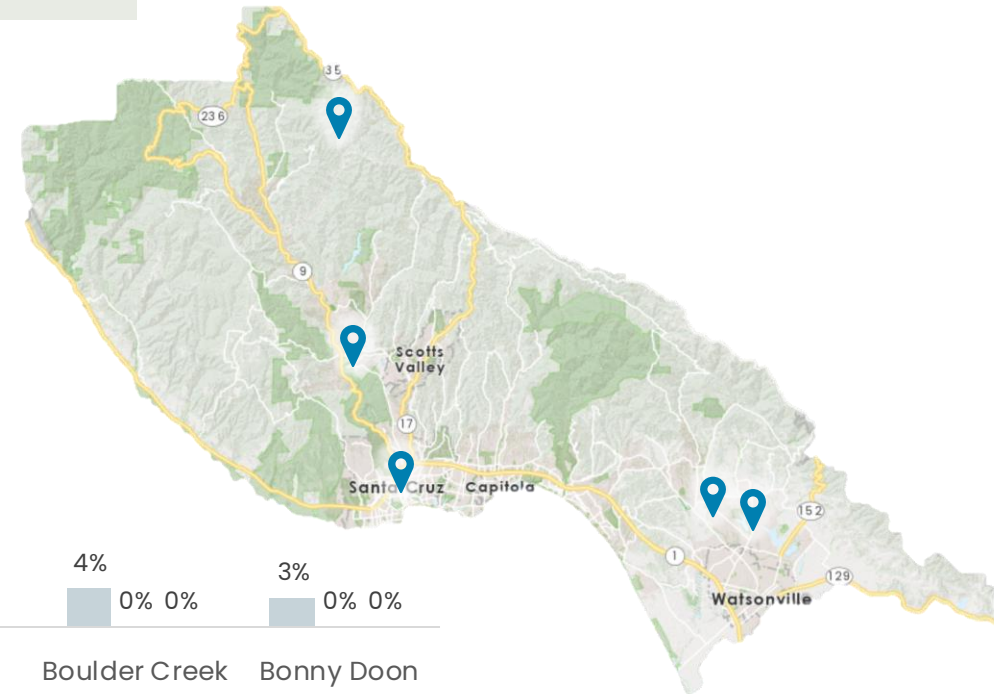
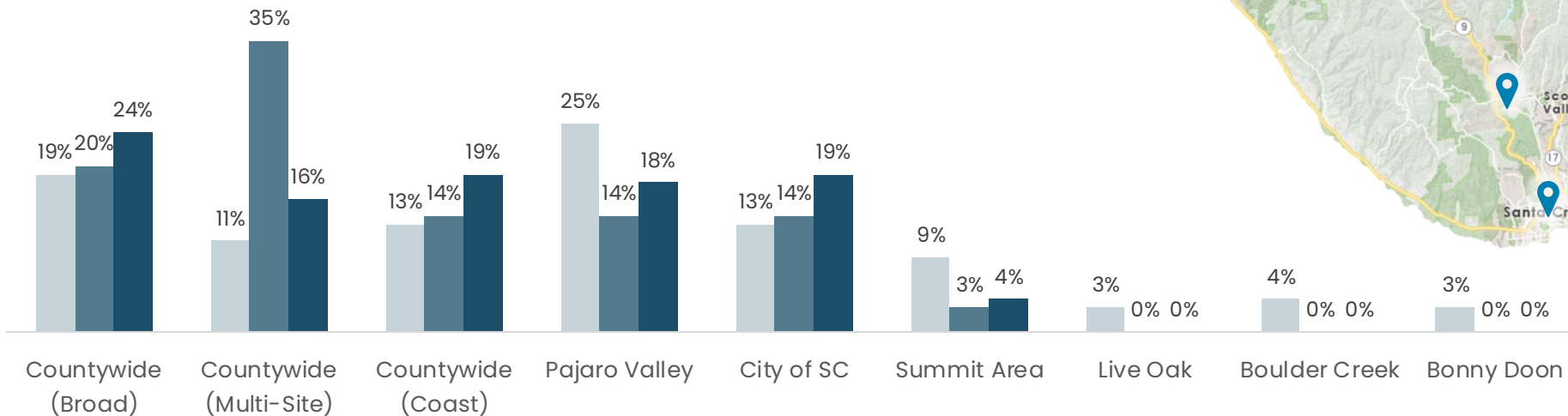


Project	Geography	Recommended Award
<b>River Stewards</b> Coastal Watershed Council 	City of SC	<b>\$50,000</b>
<b>Pinto Lake Water Quality Monitoring to Reduce Harmful Algal Blooms</b> Santa Cruz County Parks 	Countywide (Broad)	<b>\$48,000</b>
<b>Kids2Parks</b> Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks 	Countywide (Broad)	<b>\$14,915</b>
<b>Real-Time Digital Signage for Wildfire Preparedness</b> Santa Cruz County Fire 	Countywide (Multi-Site)	<b>\$43,982</b>
<b>Creating Accessible Park Experiences for the Blind and Visually Impaired</b> Vista Center 	Countywide (Broad)	<b>\$50,000</b>
<b>Expanding Coastal Access, Ocean Safety, and Surf Education in Santa Cruz County</b> Black Surf Santa Cruz 	Countywide (Coast)	<b>\$50,000</b>
<b>Las Cumbres Shaded Fuel Break Project</b> South Skyline FSC 	Summit Area	<b>\$10,000</b>

**Tier 1 Total**  
7 projects  
\$266,897

## % of group funding request

■ All applications 
 ■ Top Scoring 
 ■ Awarded



# Final Staff Recommendations **Tier 2**



Project	Themes	Avg. Score	Asked	Recommended Award
<b>Pajaro Valley Watershed Stewardship, Habitat Restoration, and Outdoor Access and Equity Project</b> Watsonville Wetlands Watch		94	\$350,000	<b>\$350,000 PV</b>
<b>Rural Lands Assistance Program Pilot</b> Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County		85.5	\$342,140	<b>\$320,337*</b>
<b>Watsonville City Plaza Revitalization Project</b> City of Watsonville		82	\$600,000	<b>\$275,000* PV</b>
<b>Mesa Village Park Phase I Improvements: Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play</b> Friends of Santa Cruz County Parks		81	\$279,500	<b>\$279,500</b>
PVUSD Tier 2 Pajaro Valley Set-Aside Grant: Rolling Hills Middle School Track and Field Recreation Access Project PVUSD		81	\$500,000	—
<b>Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Project Feasibility Study &amp; College Lake Borrow Study</b> Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency		79	\$390,000	<b>\$150,000*</b>
Sol Y Tierra: Climate Justice Learning Series and Climate Adaptation Work Crews Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County		77	\$509,000	—
<b>San Lorenzo Flood Control System – Debris Boom Project</b> City of Santa Cruz		76	\$300,000	<b>\$100,000*</b>
<b>Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz County: The Zone-0 Equity &amp; Workforce Initiative</b> Long Term Recovery Group of Santa Cruz County		74.5	\$398,266	<b>\$398,266</b>
Wildfire and Ecology Resilience via Beneficial Fire in Santa Cruz County Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association		73	\$399,360	—
<b>SVR – Targeted Stream Crossing Repairs to Protect Water Quality</b> Peninsula Open Space Trust		–	\$425,000	<b>\$425,000 SVR</b>
<b>SVR – Botanical Resource Management Planning</b> Peninsula Open Space Trust		–	\$75,000	<b>\$75,000 SVR</b>
<b>SVR – Public Access Improvement Project</b> Peninsula Open Space Trust		–	\$100,000	<b>\$100,000 SVR</b>

\* Indicates reduced award. PV = contributes to PV Set-Aside allocation

Water Resources · Wildfire/Forest Health · Parks/Recreation/Equity · Wildlife & Habitat · Coastal Protection · Agricultural Lands

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**Tier 2 Total**

10 projects

**\$2,473,103**

SVR: \$600k  
PV: \$625k  
Other: \$1,248,103

\* Indicates reduced award. PV = contributes to PV Set-Aside allocation

Water Resources · Wildfire/Forest Health · Parks/Recreation/Equity · Wildlife & Habitat · Coastal Protection · Agricultural Lands

# Final Staff Recommendations **Tier 2**



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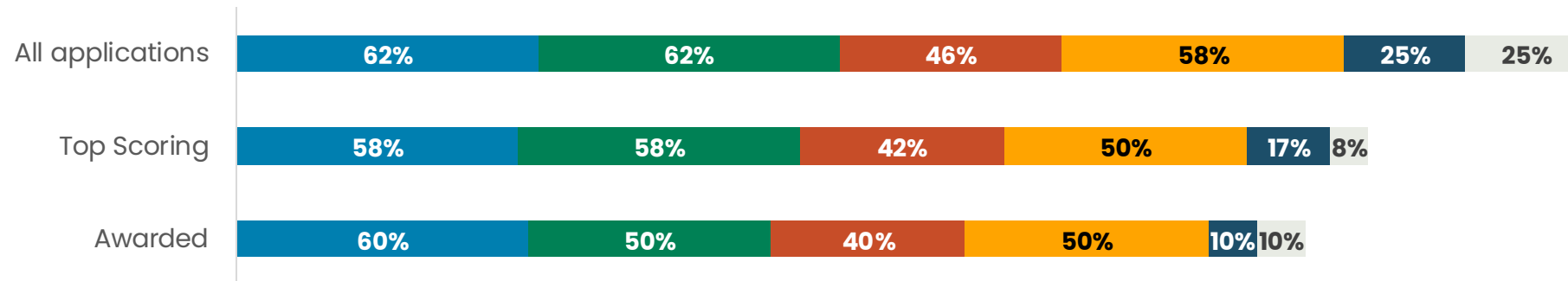
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■ Water   
 ■ Parks   
 ■ Wildfire   
 ■ Habitat   
 ■ Coastal   
 ■ Ag & WL



*% of group project count*

# Final Staff Recommendations **Tier 2**



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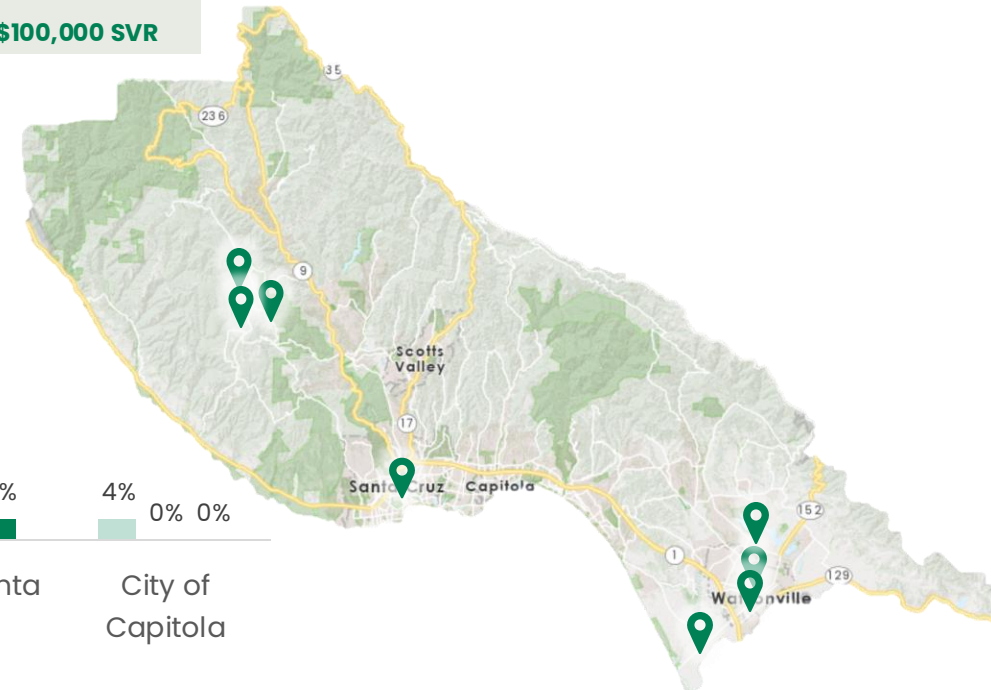
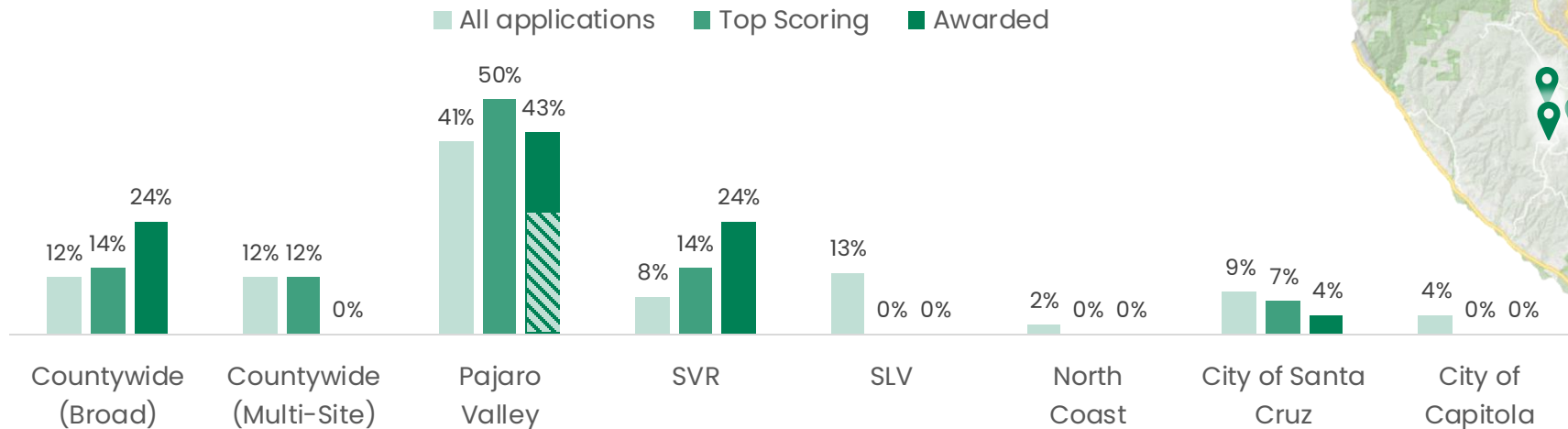
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**% of group funding request**



# Final Staff Recommendations **Tier 2**



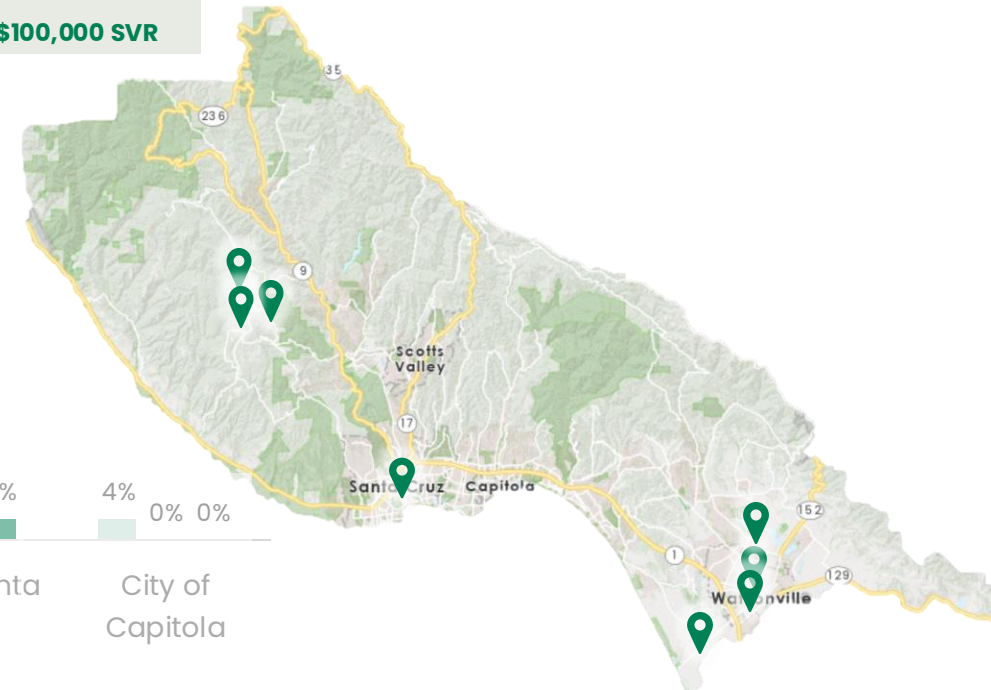
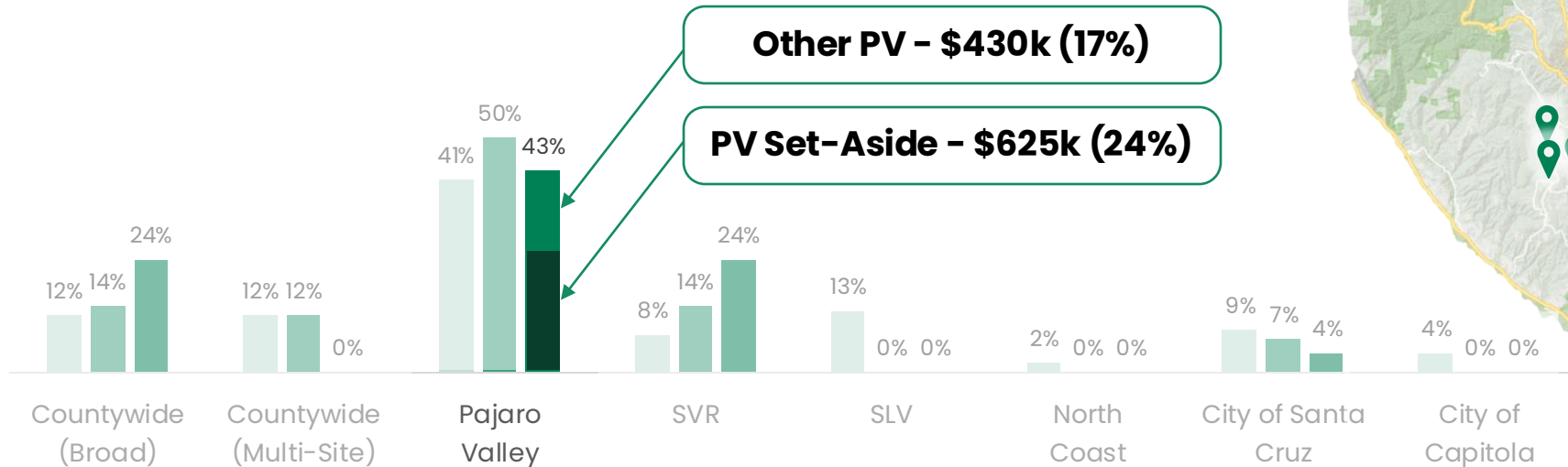
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<b>Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz County: The Zone-0 Equity &amp; Workforce Initiative</b> Long Term Recovery Group of Santa Cruz County	Countywide (Broad)	<b>\$398,266</b>
<b>SVR – Targeted Stream Crossing Repairs to Protect Water Quality</b> Peninsula Open Space Trust	SVR	<b>\$425,000 SVR</b>
<b>SVR – Botanical Resource Management Planning</b> Peninsula Open Space Trust	SVR	<b>\$75,000 SVR</b>
<b>SVR – Public Access Improvement Project</b> Peninsula Open Space Trust	SVR	<b>\$100,000 SVR</b>

**Tier 2 Total**

10 projects

**\$2,473,103**

SVR: \$600k  
PV: \$625k  
Other: \$1,248,103





# Summary of Final Recommendation

## Tier 1

- Awards reflect **institutional equity** (Fire Dept. limited to one award), **countywide reach**, and **thematic balance** across wildfire, water, and parks

## Tier 2

- **Thematic** and **geographic concentration** (PV, parks) drove key departures from rank order
- **Public agency** and direct allocation recipient awards **right-sized** to preserve budget for **nonprofit participation**
- **Pajaro Valley** share reduced from 75%+ under rank-order Scenario A to ~34% of competitive dollars (excluding both set-asides)
- Countywide **programmatic vs project awards** structured to catalyze outside state and federal leverage rather than sustain ongoing operations

# Grant Award Timeline

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Milestone</u></b>	<b><u>Status</u></b>
<b>January 26 – March 13</b>	Application period	<b>Complete</b>
<b>March 16 – April 15</b>	Evaluation period	<b>Complete</b>
<b>April 22</b>	Grant evaluation results published	<b>Complete</b>
<b>May 6</b>	<b>COAB Meeting #1</b> – Preliminary funding recommendations (scenarios)	<b>Complete</b>
<b>May 27</b>	<b>COAB Meeting #2</b> – Final funding recommendation	<b>Today</b>
<b>June 9</b>	Final grant funding selections presented to Board of Supervisors	<b>Pending</b>

# Questions?

Thank You

