

Measure Q Grant Program – FY 2025–26

Application Summary

County of Santa Cruz · Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience (OR3) and Department of Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services

53 eligible applications · Total requested: \$8,892,077

Contents

[Tier 1 – Community Catalyst Grants \(29 applications · \\$1,137,484\)](#)

[Tier 2 – Community Impact Grants \(24 applications · \\$7,754,593\)](#)

Project titles link to the corresponding full application in the attached document.

[PV] = Pajaro Valley set-aside. [SVR] = San Vicente Redwoods set-aside.

Summaries generated by Claude Sonnet 4.6 from applicant-submitted executive summary content.

Tier 1 – Community Catalyst Grants (29 applications · \$1,137,484 requested)

Grants of \$5,000–\$50,000 supporting new ideas, local stewardship, community education, and smaller restoration or planning activities.

App #	Organization	Project Title	Requested	Themes	Summary
58	COASTAL WATERSHED COUNCIL	River Stewards	\$50,000	Water Resources, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat	Engages unhoused Santa Cruz residents in weekly riparian stewardship along the lower San Lorenzo River, pairing habitat restoration with workforce development and equitable Riverwalk access. Builds on a prior program model that achieved 48% employment and 37% housing placement rates among participants.
66	AMAH MUTSUN LAND TRUST	Enhancing Environmental Health and Protecting Eco-Cultural Heritage through the Return of Indigenous Stewardship to	\$49,987	Water Resources, Wildfire/Forest Health, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat	Funds scoping and planning at Pescadero Ranch in the Juristac Tribal Cultural Landscape to identify ecological and cultural resource needs and develop a strategy for returning Indigenous stewardship to this site. Includes initial surveys, data consolidation, and a phased implementation roadmap.

App #	Organization	Project Title	Requested	Themes	Summary
75	Regeneraci6n - Pajaro Valley Climate Action, a fiscally sponsored project of Community Initiatives	Pajaro Valley Youth PhotoVoice Open Space Access	\$33,909	Parks/Recreation/Equity	Runs a five-week youth program engaging Watsonville and Freedom high school students in documenting community perspectives on open space access through photography, writing, and advocacy workshops. Builds youth capacity and local awareness around equitable access to parks and natural areas.
83	Loma Prieta Community Foundation	Strategic Canopy Reduction in the Wildland-Urban Interface: A Community-Driven Approach to Protect Homes, Infrastructure,	\$50,000	Wildfire/Forest Health, Wildlife & Habitat	Reduces canopy bridges along approximately 6 miles of roadway in the wildland-urban interface, creating targeted fuel breaks to slow fire spread across tree canopies and protect homes, evacuation routes, and neighboring communities. Applies USDA NRCS and NFPA best practices for vegetation management.
87	COMMUNITY BRIDGES	Resilience in Motion: Integrating Family Resource Centers and Lift Line for Emergency Preparedness and Safe Evacuation	\$50,000	Parks/Recreation/Equity	Integrates Community Bridges' Family Resource Centers with Lift Line paratransit to build coordinated evacuation and emergency preparedness capacity for seniors and residents with disabilities across Santa Cruz County. Draws on lessons from the 2023 Pajaro flood to strengthen trusted community infrastructure.
96	Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks	Kids2Parks	\$14,915	Parks/Recreation/Equity	Restores field trip access to Santa Cruz State Parks for Title I school students who have lost transportation funding, reconnecting low-income youth to redwood forests, beaches, and coastal sites. Builds lasting connections between underserved children and shared public natural resources.
97	Esperanza Community Farms	Bringing culturally-relevant engagement on climate and nature to the Pajaro Valley: the Dia de Esperanza Festival and building an	\$49,207	Parks/Recreation/Equity, Agricultural Lands	Hosts the bilingual Dia de Esperanza Festival at Esperanza Community Farms to connect Pajaro Valley residents with organic and regenerative agriculture, drawing 600+ attendees onto the land for educational and cultural programming. Builds an Esperanza Corps of trained community stewards for ongoing environmental engagement.

App #	Organization	Project Title	Requested	Themes	Summary
99	Urban Works Santa Cruz	Inclusive Horizons: Adaptive Nature Access & Stewardship	\$46,230	Water Resources, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Coastal Protection	Expands the Wheels & Waves and Mindful Movement programs to provide adults with disabilities and seniors structured pathways to coastal access, accessible trails, and intergenerational stewardship. Removes financial and physical barriers that limit vulnerable populations' access to Santa Cruz County's natural spaces.
102	BONNY DOON FIRE SAFE COUNCIL INC	Bonny Doon Spring Chipping Project	\$10,000	Wildfire/Forest Health	Provides chipping services to all Bonny Doon residents for fire clearance biomass removal, with contractor costs covered by grant funds and approximately 300 volunteer hours contributed by the Fire Safe Council as match.
104	Homeless Garden Project	Securing Permitting for Homeless Garden Project Permanent Site	\$50,000	Agricultural Lands	Funds permitting and planning for the Homeless Garden Project's acquisition of a 4-acre permanent farm site, enabling continuation of its 30-year-old therapeutic farming, job training, and transitional employment programs after departing Natural Bridges. Supports development of farm beds, production facilities, and community infrastructure.
115	Santa Cruz County Parks	Pinto Lake Water Quality Monitoring to Reduce Harmful Algal Blooms	\$48,000	Water Resources, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat, Coastal Protection	Conducts comprehensive water quality sampling and tributary monitoring at Pinto Lake to identify phosphorus sources driving recurring harmful algal blooms that degrade habitat, threaten public health, and limit recreational access. Supports progress toward the State's 2029 Pinto Lake Nutrient TMDL requirements.
124	Center for Applied Ecological Remediation	Harnessing Forest Biomass for Wildfire Resilience and Soil Health: Assessing Biome Logs in the Santa Cruz Mountains	\$24,156	Water Resources, Wildfire/Forest Health, Wildlife & Habitat	Tests Biome Logs—partially buried woody debris inoculated with saprotrophic fungi—as a post-fire soil stabilization and vegetation recovery strategy in Bonny Doon, comparing outcomes against pile burning, lop-and-scatter, and control plots. Generates replicable data on fuel reduction, soil moisture, carbon sequestration, and erosion control.
129	Loma Prieta Community Foundation	Loma Prieta Ave Evacuation Corridor Fuel Reduction	\$46,500	Wildfire/Forest Health, Wildlife & Habitat	Implements professional vegetation management along the Loma Prieta Avenue evacuation corridor in the Santa Cruz Mountains WUI, reducing canopy fuels that threaten safe evacuation and emergency access. Supports a recently designated Firewise USA community in mobilizing neighborhood-led hazard mitigation.

App #	Organization	Project Title	Requested	Themes	Summary
131	Santa Cruz County Fire Department	Truck Trail Emergency Response Navigation and Water Infrastructure Initiative	\$6,000	Water Resources, Wildfire/Forest Health, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat	Installs mile markers and navigation infrastructure along rural truck trail networks used by emergency responders in forested watersheds and open-space corridors throughout unincorporated Santa Cruz County. Improves situational awareness and response coordination in terrain where access gaps increase risk during wildfire and medical emergencies.
152	REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CA	Coastal Water Resilience Hub: A Youth-Centered Community Education Platform for Local Water Issues and Solutions	\$45,884	Water Resources, Wildfire/Forest Health, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat, Coastal Protection, Agricultural Lands	Creates a youth-centered interactive exhibit platform at the Seymour Center connecting students and the public to local water resilience challenges and the agencies, nonprofits, and researchers working to address them. Fills a gap in public education linking visible climate stressors to regional solutions.
153	Santa Cruz County Fire Department	Strategic Water Supply Enhancements for Rural Areas-Pilot Program	\$29,158	Water Resources, Wildfire/Forest Health, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat	Restores and expands remote water supply infrastructure at two high-risk rural sites—Nisene Marks and the South Skyline ridgeline—to support wildfire suppression in steep, forested terrain with limited water access. Replaces non-operational tanks and extends water delivery capacity where small ignitions can rapidly escalate.
161	Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County and Scotts Valley	Central Fire and Scotts Valley Fire Wildfire Resilience Partnership	\$50,000	Wildfire/Forest Health, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat, Coastal Protection	Partners Central Fire District and Scotts Valley Fire District with Xyloplan to model fire pathways, map high-risk zones, and prioritize vegetation management and residential risk reduction across both districts. Enables data-driven mitigation, repeatable measurement of progress, and targeted community education over a three-year program.
166	Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Cruz County	Outdoor Equity & Wellness Initiative: Facilitating Access and Equity to Local Parks and Recreation for Boys & Girls Club Youth	\$50,000	Parks/Recreation/Equity	Provides consistent transportation for youth from Santa Cruz, Live Oak, and Scotts Valley Boys & Girls Club locations to access educational field trips and recreation at local, County, and State parks. Removes geographic and financial barriers preventing low-income youth from engaging with the region's natural resources.

App #	Organization	Project Title	Requested	Themes	Summary
179	BLACK SURF SANTA CRUZ INC	Expanding Coastal Access, Ocean Safety, and Surf Education in Santa Cruz County	\$50,000	Parks/Recreation/Equity	Expands Black Surf Santa Cruz's Pop-Up Program and Prepare to Pop-Up cohort to serve 90–100 participants annually, removing financial, cultural, and psychological barriers to coastal recreation for communities of color and low-income residents. Directly advances equitable access to Santa Cruz County's coastal public spaces.
196	O'Neill Sea Odyssey	Youth Action for Water Quality and Coastal Health	\$39,800	Water Resources, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Coastal Protection	Connects Live Oak School District students in grades 4–6 to public coastal spaces through hands-on ocean and water quality learning programs, in partnership with Save Our Shores. Removes transportation and financial barriers that have historically limited coastal access for historically underserved youth.
201	Sustainable Conservation	Extended Cover Cropping for Water Conservation in Pajaro Valley (tier 1)	\$35,706	Water Resources, Agricultural Lands	Pilots year-round cover cropping on temporarily fallowed farmland in the Pajaro Valley to demonstrate its effectiveness in reducing groundwater and reclaimed water demand. Addresses aquifer overdraft and seawater intrusion challenges critical to SGMA compliance in the region.
205	Clean Oceans International	Expansion and Support of Environmental Plastic Assessment Program in Santa Cruz County	\$50,000	Water Resources, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat, Coastal Protection	Expands Clean Oceans International's Environmental Plastic Assessment Program with quantitative beach surveys, waterway monitoring, and community cleanups across Santa Cruz County coastal zones. Combines pollution research, public education, and hands-on removal to reduce plastic entering the ocean.
206	Santa Cruz County Fire Department	Real-Time Digital Signage for Wildfire Preparedness	\$43,982	Wildfire/Forest Health, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat, Coastal Protection, Agricultural Lands	Installs real-time digital signage in High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones to deliver live alerts on wildfire conditions, evacuation orders, road closures, and burn day status to drivers and residents. Improves situational awareness and supports faster, safer evacuation and traffic management.
210	SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS TRAIL STEWARDSHIP	Miller Property County Park Expanded Trails Assessment and Design	\$40,000	Parks/Recreation/Equity	Funds trail mapping, design, and planning for up to 8 miles of new trail at the 410-acre Miller Property County Park near Boulder Creek, currently underutilized with no formal public access despite a new parking lot. Advances the County Parks Department's goal of activating this conservation easement property for public recreation.

App #	Organization	Project Title	Requested	Themes	Summary
225	South Skyline Firesafe Council	Las Cumbres Shaded Fuel Break Project	\$10,000	Water Resources, Wildfire/Forest Health, Wildlife & Habitat	Improves and maintains a shaded fuel break along approximately 50 feet of roadside corridors and strategic areas within the Las Cumbres Conservation Corporation HOA, including seven roads and priority community areas. Supports wildfire risk reduction in a forested residential community.
232	MILPA	Sembrando La MILPA: Milli Mizpetzoanis (MILPA Explorers)	\$46,500	Parks/Recreation/Equity	Engages underrepresented youth in Santa Cruz County in nature exploration and outdoor programming through culturally grounded, place-based experiences connecting participants to local ecosystems. Builds environmental stewardship identity and outdoor access for communities with limited prior engagement with natural spaces.
248	Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired	Creating Accessible Park Experiences for the Blind and Visually Impaired	\$50,000	Parks/Recreation/Equity	Provides Orientation and Mobility guided walks for blind and visually impaired visitors to safely access County parks and open spaces, filling a critical gap in accessible outdoor programming. Expands Vista Center's existing Vision Rehabilitation services to park settings countywide.
252	Save The Waves Coalition	The Santa Cruz Surf Access & Resilience Initiative	\$42,550	Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat, Coastal Protection	Conducts a countywide assessment of public surf and ocean access points along the Santa Cruz coastline, documenting trail and infrastructure conditions at surf breaks with input from surfers and coastal stakeholders. Produces prioritized recommendations for rehabilitation, hazard mitigation, safety improvements, and climate-adaptive solutions.
256	Farm Discovery at Live Earth	Increasing Outdoor Environmental Education Access and Native Species Planting in the Pajaro Valley	\$25,000	Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat, Agricultural Lands	Expands native habitat restoration, invasive species removal, and environmental education programming on a 1.2-acre farm within Live Earth Farm in the Pajaro Valley, serving youth from underserved schools. Integrates regenerative land management practices to improve soil health, biodiversity, and equitable outdoor access.

Tier 2 – Community Impact Grants (24 applications • \$7,754,593 requested)

Grants of \$50,000–\$500,000 supporting complex, multi-benefit projects. Includes Pajaro Valley [PV] and San Vicente Redwoods [SVR] set-asides.

App #	Organization	Project Title	Requested	Themes	Summary
61	SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS TRAIL STEWARDSHIP	Pinto Lake County Park Pump Track Reconstruction by Santa Cruz Mountains Trail Stewardship	\$350,000	Parks/Recreation/Equity	Reconstructs the deteriorating pump track at Pinto Lake County Park in Watsonville with a durable paved surface, restoring a heavily used youth cycling and recreation amenity that has become unsafe due to erosion. Expands equitable recreation access in an underserved South County community.
64	County of Santa Cruz Parks Department	Greyhound Rock Coastal Environmental Education and Interim Camping Program	\$135,000	Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat, Coastal Protection	Establishes a managed outdoor education and interim camping program at Greyhound Rock, converting an underutilized coastal property into a site for habitat stewardship, environmental programming, and equitable nature access for South County residents. Integrates coastal resilience and public access goals.
73	City of Capitola	Soquel Creek Riparian Habitat Restoration at Rispin Park	\$325,000	Water Resources, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat, Coastal Protection	Removes invasive plant species and restores native riparian habitat along Soquel Creek within Rispin Park, a publicly owned and permanently protected site in Capitola. Improves watershed health, ecological resilience, and long-term riparian function.
74	SAN LORENZO VALLEY WATER DISTRICT	Measure Q Infrastructure Investment and Resilience Upgrades for Fire-Impacted Water Systems	\$500,000	Water Resources, Wildfire/Forest Health	Consolidates three small, CZU fire-damaged water systems—Forest Springs, Bracken Brae, and Big Basin Water Company—into a single reliable public supply serving approximately 1,000 vulnerable San Lorenzo Valley residents. Addresses failing infrastructure, inadequate storage, and fire flow deficiencies.
82	City of Watsonville [PV]	Watsonville City Plaza Revitalization Project	\$600,000	Parks/Recreation/Equity	Revitalizes Watsonville City Plaza—a National Register historic site and cultural heart of downtown—restoring its bandstand and fountain, upgrading infrastructure, and adding recreational features to support 20+ annual community events. Expands equitable public gathering space in the Pajaro Valley.

App #	Organization	Project Title	Requested	Themes	Summary
89	Peninsula Open Space Trust [SVR]	San Vicente Redwoods – Targeted Stream Crossing Repairs to Protect Water Quality	\$425,000	Water Resources, Wildfire/Forest Health, Wildlife & Habitat	Completes road work at 5–7 stream crossings on tributary roads within San Vicente Redwoods, improving drainage and reducing sediment delivery to protect water quality and aquatic habitat. Complements shaded fuel breaks identified in the CAL FIRE Community Wildfire Prevention Plan.
90	Long Term Recovery Group of Santa Cruz County	Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz County: The Zone-0 Equity & Workforce Initiative	\$398,266	Wildfire/Forest Health	Provides free Zone-0 ember-resistant clearing to 100 high-risk residences for seniors, low-income households, and people with disabilities to meet AB 3074 requirements and support insurance readiness. Pairs direct assistance with local workforce training through the Santa Cruz County Fire Safe Council.
112	Forest Lakes Neighborhood Firewise and Safety Association	San Lorenzo Valley Forest Health & Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project	\$500,000	Wildfire/Forest Health, Wildlife & Habitat	Deploys a mobile air curtain burner to process 800+ tons of hazardous biomass across 25,000 acres of CZU fire-impacted wildland-urban interface in the San Lorenzo Valley, where landfill costs and burn restrictions have left fuel loads compounding since 2020. Addresses a disposal bottleneck that current methods cannot keep pace with.
113	Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association	Wildfire and Ecology Resilience via Beneficial Fire in Santa Cruz County	\$399,360	Water Resources, Wildfire/Forest Health, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat, Agricultural Lands	Implements prescribed burns on three shovel-ready private properties—Star Creek Ranch near Watsonville, Molino Creek Farm near Davenport, and 699 Ryder Road in Scotts Valley—including fuel preparation, control line work, and burn coordination. Expands prescribed fire capacity and builds on established relationships with adjacent landowners.
121	WATSONVILLE WETLANDS WATCH [PV]	Pajaro Valley Watershed Stewardship, Habitat Restoration, and Outdoor Access and Equity Project	\$350,000	Water Resources, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat	Implements riparian habitat restoration, school greening, and wetland trail improvements at three Watsonville sites in collaboration with the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency and PVUSD. Leverages committed match funding, community volunteer programs, and 35 years of watershed experience to improve ecosystem health and equitable outdoor access.

App #	Organization	Project Title	Requested	Themes	Summary
123	PAJARO VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT [PV]	PVUSD Tier 2 Pajaro Valley Set-Aside Grant: Rolling Hills Middle School Track and Field Recreation Access Project	\$500,000	Parks/Recreation/Equity	Constructs an ADA-compliant permanent restroom at Rolling Hills Middle School to complete a modernized track and field facility within the Watsonville Slough watershed, serving a disadvantaged community with limited park access. Removes a sanitation barrier that currently prevents full public use of an existing recreation investment.
142	FRIENDS OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PARKS	Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements: Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play	\$279,500	Water Resources, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat	Funds Phase 1 park improvements at Mesa Village County Park near Watsonville, informed by five years of bilingual community outreach and surveys with local residents. Expands equitable access to nature and recreation in a Pajaro Valley neighborhood historically underserved by parks infrastructure.
145	Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History	Expanding Community Safety and Access at Evergreen Cemetery	\$373,642	Wildfire/Forest Health, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat	Expands programming, maintenance, and community safety infrastructure at Evergreen Cemetery in Santa Cruz, supporting artists-in-residence, public events, tree removal, and site improvements to open this historic public space to broader community use. Addresses deferred maintenance and safety needs that limit current public access.
172	CITY OF SANTA CRUZ	San Lorenzo Flood Control System - Debris Boom Project	\$300,000	Water Resources, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat	Installs a debris boom system on the San Lorenzo River to manage seasonal shoaling at the river mouth, building on a 2025 flood control improvement to reduce mechanical breaching and protect adjacent neighborhoods, beaches, and endangered fisheries. Improves water quality and reduces uncontrolled lagoon breach risks.
174	RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF SANTA	Rural Lands Assistance Program Pilot	\$342,140	Wildfire/Forest Health	Pilots a rural resiliency program offering private landowners in wildland-urban interface communities both technical and financial assistance for forest health, wildfire preparedness, erosion control, water management, and habitat improvement. Develops a replicable model for a future countywide program through the Resource Conservation District.
176	Peninsula Open Space Trust [SVR]	San Vicente Redwoods – Botanical Resource Management Planning	\$75,000	Water Resources, Wildfire/Forest Health, Wildlife & Habitat	Develops a Botanical Resource Management Plan for San Vicente Redwoods, assessing invasive, rare, and sensitive plant communities and producing prioritized management recommendations to guide long-term habitat stewardship. Led by Sempervirens Fund.

App #	Organization	Project Title	Requested	Themes	Summary
204	FoodWhat Incorporated [PV]	FoodWhat: A Justice-Rooted Homebase in the Pajaro Valley for Youth Empowerment, Belonging, & Land Stewardship	\$383,021	Water Resources, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat, Agricultural Lands	Supports FoodWhat's holistic site planning process for 5.25 acres of newly acquired land in Watsonville, developing a permanent homebase for its youth empowerment, organic farming, and food justice programs. Creates community open space and workforce development infrastructure in the Pajaro Valley.
212	PAJARO REGIONAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT AGENCY	Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Project Feasibility Study & College Lake Borrow Study	\$390,000	Water Resources, Wildlife & Habitat, Coastal Protection, Agricultural Lands	Funds a feasibility study for the Pajaro River Bridge to Bay flood reduction project (\$280K) and a College Lake geotechnical borrow study supporting habitat restoration and groundwater sustainability (\$110K). Addresses urgent flood risk and water quality challenges in the lower Pajaro River watershed.
228	City of Watsonville	Watsonville Fire Training Center Pavement Replacement & Water Reclamation System Feasibility Study	\$100,000	Water Resources	Conducts a feasibility study evaluating replacement of aging asphalt at the Watsonville Fire Training Center with concrete and installation of a water reclamation system to capture and reuse water from fire training exercises. Develops conceptual designs, cost estimates, and environmental review requirements.
239	REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CA	Santa Cruz Community Seed Strategy	\$143,457	Water Resources, Wildfire/Forest Health, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat, Coastal Protection, Agricultural Lands	Develops Santa Cruz County's response to the National and California Seed Strategies by expanding local collection, propagation, and production of source-identified native seed to supply restoration projects countywide. Addresses a critical bottleneck limiting ecological consultants and land managers from executing needed habitat restoration.
245	Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc.	Sol Y Tierra: Climate Justice Learning Series and Climate Adaptation Work Crews	\$509,000	Water Resources, Wildfire/Forest Health, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat, Coastal Protection	Expands the Sol y Tierra program countywide, combining culturally adapted family nature excursions, a climate justice learning series, and paid climate adaptation work crews for farmworker families, unsheltered residents, and low-income communities. Co-designed with UCSC's Center for Coastal Climate Resilience, building on a 2024-25 Pajaro Valley pilot.

App #	Organization	Project Title	Requested	Themes	Summary
251	Peninsula Open Space Trust [SVR]	San Vicente Redwoods – Public Access Improvement Project	\$100,000	Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat	Maintains and improves the 7.5-mile public trail system at San Vicente Redwoods for hikers, bikers, and equestrians to keep the trail network durable, accessible, and welcoming. Led by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County.
255	Sustainable Conservation	Extended Cover Cropping for Water Conservation in Pajaro Valley (tier 2)	\$196,207	Water Resources, Agricultural Lands	Examines extended cover cropping on temporarily fallowed farmland in the Pajaro Valley as a strategy to reduce groundwater and reclaimed water demand, addressing aquifer overdraft and seawater intrusion. Builds on a Tier 1 companion pilot to develop grower-ready guidance for broader SGMA compliance.
259	United Service Agency, Inc.	EcoFrontiers Docuseries: Capturing Measure Q in Action – Tracking Funded Projects, Measurable Outcomes, and Participatory	\$80,000	Water Resources, Wildfire/Forest Health, Parks/Recreation/Equity, Wildlife & Habitat, Coastal Protection, Agricultural Lands	Produces an eight-episode short-form documentary series following Measure Q-funded projects to educate the public on where funds are going, how projects are being implemented, and what measurable outcomes are being achieved. Provides community accountability and builds public understanding of Measure Q's countywide impact.

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 58 Type: Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: River Stewards

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

58

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

River Stewards

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

COASTAL WATERSHED COUNCIL

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

Greater than 10% cover of native species and less than 10% cover of highly invasive species.

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

10

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Laurie Egan

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Executive Director

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Erin	Loury	[REDACTED]
Kaiya	Giualiano-Monroy	[REDACTED]
Miranda	Hansen	[REDACTED]
Kaiya	Giualiano-Monroy	[REDACTED]
Miranda	Hansen	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

107 Dakota Ave, Santa Cruz, California, 95060

PARCEL NUMBER

There is no parcel number for the Santa Cruz Riverwalk park. See attached map for further detail of

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.97400599111500

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.02182998974899

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

—

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Council Districts 2, 4 and 1

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The San Lorenzo River Stewards project will take place along the lower, leveed San Lorenzo River lagoon in downtown Santa Cruz. Specifically, this area is part of the Santa Cruz Riverwalk Park from the Soquel Avenue bridge toward the river mouth on the east and west banks of the river. The area undergoing habitat enhancement is closest to the water's edge (most ecologically significant) between the paved Riverwalk path and the river on the inboard side of the levee.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Not sure

DAC/SDAC NOTES

Census Tract Number 06087101000 is considered disadvantaged by the United States Council on Environmental Quality Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. It meets more than 1 burden threshold and the associated socioeconomic threshold by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. Communities along the lower San Lorenzo River, including riverside neighborhoods such as the Beach Flats/Lower Ocean neighborhoods and communities of people experiencing homelessness, have significant disparities in access to safe, accessible outdoor spaces and are extremely vulnerable to climate impacts. Each of these communities are the indirect and direct beneficiaries of this project, respectively.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

CWC and the City of Santa Cruz share a current Memorandum of Agreement outlining work performed in the San Lorenzo River levee, which spans an initial four-year term (2026-2030) and is renewable for up to five successive five-year terms, for a maximum duration of 25 years or until January 1, 2055. The City of Santa Cruz holds a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 nationwide permit (NWP File 268761S) and a Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) for the City of Santa Cruz Routine Maintenance Activities Project issued by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife to conduct vegetation management. These permits allow for routine maintenance activities, including vegetation control on banks, seeding/planting of riparian vegetation, and removal of invasive vegetation. Project activities are also compatible with the maintenance operations of the City of Santa Cruz Parks Department, which maintains the Santa Cruz Riverwalk park, and the City of Santa Cruz Public Works Department, which maintains the flood control channel. The Coastal Watershed Council (CWC) has successfully implemented project activities similar to River Stewards within the San Lorenzo River since 2016 in compliance with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and CA Fish and Wildlife Permits, as held by the City of Santa Cruz. Please note that the San Lorenzo River Stewards project activities do not require CEQA review, as they are consistent with existing City projects for vegetation management.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	Yes	Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) for the City of Santa Cruz Routine Maintenance Activities Proje	Secured by the City of Santa Cruz
State Water Control Resources Board	NA	Consistent with existing vegetation management activities; no additional permitting required	
US Fish and Wildlife	NA	Consistent with existing vegetation management activities; no additional permitting required	
City/County Construction Permits	NA	Consistent with existing vegetation management activities; no additional permitting required	
Coastal Commission	NA	Consistent with existing vegetation management activities; no additional permitting required	
Other	Yes	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 Permit (NWP File 268761S)	Secured by the City of Santa Cruz

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

5

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

CWC anticipates minimal readiness delays or dependencies. As an existing contractor with the County of Santa Cruz, CWC carries all required insurance. CWC has an existing written agreement with the City of Santa Cruz to conduct this work at this project site. While this project would initiate a new partnership with People First, we have held planning talks to launch the program since November 2025 to ensure all program details, including budget, staffing and logistics, are ready for timely implementation. CWC will hire one part-time, temporary Seasonal Restoration Technician to support the program, which our organization has previously hired in a timely manner for past River Stewards programs by recruiting former River Stewards participants and UC Santa Cruz students.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

50000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

172356

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$25,540	\$32,390	\$43,201	\$101,131
Fringe Benefits	\$6,303	\$7,121	\$0	\$13,424
Travel	\$100	\$135	\$0	\$235
Supplies	\$3,287	\$6,078	\$0	\$9,365
Contractual / Consultants	\$7,270	\$11,410	\$0	\$18,680
Other Direct Costs	\$0	\$7,040	\$0	\$7,040
Indirect Costs	\$7,500	\$14,981	\$0	\$22,481

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

CWC's River Stewards program will engage people experiencing homelessness living in Santa Cruz shelters in weekly environmental stewardship opportunities along the lower San Lorenzo River to improve equitable access to the Riverwalk and critical riparian habitat. While many unhoused residents have spent nights unsheltered along the river, they have received few

environmental education and training opportunities to steward this riparian habitat and participate in environmental solutions. CWC staff, working in partnership with homeless services provider People First, will recruit, train, and engage over 20 unduplicated unhoused participants from July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027, in hands-on stewardship to enhance native habitat, improve social outcomes for participants and increase equitable parks access for the riverside neighborhoods. Over multiple months, each River Stewards participant will remove debris and invasive species, seed new native species, and perform habitat enhancement site maintenance, while learning about the riparian ecosystem. The result will be greater than 10% native plant cover and less than 10% highly invasive plant cover in CWC's habitat enhancement zones as well as social outcomes. For example, in 2024-25, 48% of River Stewards participants gained employment and 37% gained housing. The 2026-27 iteration of the River Stewards project builds off these past program successes and lessons learned. CWC launched River Stewards in 2022, operating successfully for three years until the program's previous partner, Downtown Streets Team, ceased operations. With support from Measure Q, CWC can pivot to a new, ready-to-go partnership to re-launch this program with proven ecological and social benefits.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

CWC's River Stewards program is designed to deliver multi-benefit outcomes that serve people, nature, and create a more resilient San Lorenzo River. The project provides significant benefits in equitable parks access, wildlife and habitat protection, and water resources management. The lower San Lorenzo River was highly impacted by the construction of its levees in the 1950s, which resulted in poor soils where invasive species have thrived, and which impeded access for more than 10,000 riverside residents to their closest park. The inboard levee slopes lack biodiversity and are dominated by ruderal grassland and invasive species ranked as "high" on the California Invasive Plant Council Inventory. A diversity of riparian plants plays a critical role in ensuring the survival of special-status species, including the San Lorenzo's federally-listed endangered coho salmon, threatened steelhead trout, and endangered tidewater goby, as well as California Species of Special Concern, including the western pond turtle, tricolored blackbird, and yellow warbler. As River Stewards replace invasive species with native plants, this creates 1) new nutrients to support diverse insects and pollinators, with cascading benefits for terrestrial and aquatic species, 2) structural habitat and shelter for special status species, and 3) benefits at the water's edge, including nesting habitat, shade to reduce water temperatures, and increased habitat complexity for fish and aquatic wildlife. The project also provides water resources benefits in improved water quality as River Stewards remove trash, debris and waste, while newly seeded native species reduce soil erosion. Focusing on the lower San Lorenzo is also important for equitable parks access. Santa Cruz County is unique in that 98% of residents live in proximity to outdoor recreation opportunities (DataShare, 2024). However, proximity does not equal accessibility. Access to safe recreational spaces is disproportionately challenging for historically underserved residents in disadvantaged communities along the lower San Lorenzo River. Riverside residents, both housed and unhoused, report safety and accessibility challenges that prevent them from recreating. In 2023-24, the city's Parks & Recreation Department gathered 1,679 pieces of feedback on riverfront parks; 25% concerned safety, the most requested change. These figures are supported by surveys, focus groups, and community meetings hosted by CWC since 2013, in which residents consistently identify a lack of safe spaces as the primary barrier to enjoying the Riverwalk. Further, outside of CWC's programs, there are no opportunities for environmental education and stewardship along the Riverwalk. CWC's River Stewards program seeks to engage unhoused individuals in partnership with homeless service provider People First to enhance the riparian ecosystem and the riverfront park while they chart a path out of homelessness. The program also works to shift perceptions of homelessness, as community members witness their unhoused neighbors stewarding park spaces. This addresses community needs by creating safe, affordable, accessible recreational spaces that support the health and well-being of all community members.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The River Stewards project is driven by a multi-benefit approach, delivering ecological impact to the lower San Lorenzo River and its special status species, social benefits to people experiencing homelessness, public health benefits to low-income residents in disadvantaged riverside communities, and economic benefits as part of the revitalization of downtown Santa Cruz. Transforming

the banks of the river from swaths of highly invasive plants to a diversity of riparian plants plays a critical role in ensuring the survival of special-status species, while weekly environmental education and stewardship events strengthen connections between unhoused residents and the river that they rely on and impact daily. This work provides beneficial opportunities for unhoused individuals who are rarely included in community discussion and action to effect positive environmental change, and is a meaningful part of their path out of homelessness. These impacts have been measured through past program success as well as industry studies on the benefits of urban river revitalization. This program previously operated in partnership with homeless service provider Downtown Streets Team (DST) from 2022 to 2025 before DST closed its doors. In that time, CWC led 654 volunteer experiences for 54 unique individuals with 1,347 volunteer hours spent to remove 447 pounds of trash and 7,361 square feet of highly invasive plant species. Participants seeded native plants over 2,066 square feet, growing 1,460 native plants to benefit the ecology and biodiversity of the lower San Lorenzo River ecosystem. River Stewards received case management from DST during their participation in River Stewards, and from 2024-25, 48% of participants gained employment and 37% gained housing. Through this program, participants have also fostered a love for the lower San Lorenzo River and an understanding of how to care for the unique river system. CWC staff reported seeing participants at the river outside of program cleaning up others' trash and debris from the riverbank on their own time. For the larger community, the program ensures safe recreational access to the Riverwalk, as participants remove hazardous debris, including needles, waste and broken glass, and clear vegetation from the path. It also works to heal the community and shift perceptions of homelessness, as community members witness and experience their unhoused neighbors cleaning up and improving shared spaces. This has great benefits to public health and economic well-being. A UCLA Fielding School of Public Health Study (Jackson 2014, Urban River Parkways: An Essential Tool for Public Health) found that for every \$1 invested in trails like urban river parkways, communities save \$3 in direct medical benefits and health care savings. CWC has focused its efforts on the lower San Lorenzo River since 2013, before any plans for Santa Cruz's riverfront development. In that time, CWC has successfully advocated for downtown development efforts to incorporate the Riverwalk into their designs, and for public paseos to connect residents and visitors to the river. The River Stewards program will help ensure this new era for the Santa Cruz riverfront is inclusive and equitable.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The public benefit of the River Stewards project is one of its greatest strengths. While tackling the significant environmental challenge of improving critical habitat in the San Lorenzo River's lagoon and most impacted stretch of river (NOAA NMFS, Coastal Multispecies Recovery Plan, Vol. IV: Central California Coast Steelhead, 2016), the project also addresses one of the County's most intractable challenges: homelessness. Through this win-win approach, there is clear, visible value for the community in both ecological and social outcomes, and visible change to Santa Cruz's central park space with increased biodiversity and access. The River Stewards program operated successfully for three years, serving more than 50 unhoused individuals before concluding a partnership with the Downtown Streets Team as it shuttered its doors in 2025. With support from Measure Q, CWC can pivot to a new, ready-to-go partnership to re-launch this effective and successful program after the Downtown Streets Team partnership concluded. This is a proven concept that can be easily re-launched to begin immediately with Measure Q funding. As visible changes are seen by the community, the River Stewards project also builds capacity for long-term positive changes to the leveed, lower San Lorenzo. Conducting habitat enhancement work in a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-constructed levee requires significant oversight and approval from local and federal agencies, which CWC has successfully navigated and secured. By continuing to work on habitat enhancement in the leveed area, CWC continues to coordinate with local and federal agencies to ensure that these short-term activities lead to long-term success.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

CWC's River Stewards will engage 20 or more unduplicated individuals aged 18 and older who are currently experiencing homelessness or are at severe risk of losing their homes in Santa Cruz. Participants, recruited from the Armory Shelter and RV Safe Parking Sites, will receive environmental education and gain work experience that preserves and protects our coastal watershed while improving their own health and well-being. According to the 2025 Point-In-Time Count (Applied Survey Research), 862 unhoused people are currently living in the City of Santa Cruz (31% increase from 2024). Of these, 612 live unsheltered (59% increase from 2024), meaning they sleep outdoors, on the street, or in parks, tents, or vehicles, and the Riverwalk has been an attractive location for unsheltered residents. River Stewards program participants reflect the wider demographics of Santa Cruz County's unhoused population. In Santa Cruz County, 100% of unhoused residents have household incomes that are Extremely Low or Very Low; 49% are White, 37% are Hispanic/Latinx, 2% are multi-racial, 3% are Native American/Alaskan, 7% are Black, and 2% selected other; 72% identify as Male, 27% identify as Female, and 1% identify as other; 9% are ages 65+; 85% have been homeless for 1 year or more; and 75% report having one or more disabling conditions. While the City of Santa Cruz measured decreases in homelessness in previous years, 2025 brought a wave of challenges, with homeless service organizations losing federal funding that resulted in loss of services. This included the October 2025 closure of the Downtown Streets Team, the organization with which CWC had partnered since 2022 to develop and implement the River Stewards program. Federal changes will continue to strain unhoused residents in 2026-27, when requirements to access Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly known as food stamps) will change for able-bodied adults, shifting to now require 20 hours of work/training per week to access SNAP benefits. CWC's River Stewards program can help participants

fulfill a portion of this requirement through volunteerism along the San Lorenzo River. The River Stewards program will not only directly engage and educate the unhoused population of Santa Cruz, it will also indirectly positively impact the 10,800 residents living along the 2.5-mile Santa Cruz Riverwalk park adjacent to the lower San Lorenzo River, from the Tannery Arts Center to the Beach Flats. According to the American Community Survey (ACS) 2023 5-Year Data Profiles of riverside neighborhoods' residents, 18% are immigrants; 38% are people of color; and 21% of persons live below the poverty line, including 21% of children and 16% of seniors. These historically underserved residents face inequities in accessing outdoor spaces. The proposed program responds to these needs by creating safe, affordable, accessible recreational spaces that support the health and well-being of all community members, both housed and unhoused.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

CWC's River Stewards Program increases safe, affordable, and accessible outdoor recreational spaces and supports the health and well-being of at least 20 unique people experiencing homelessness and 10,800 riverside residents annually. Impacts include: - Increased safety - Participants clean hazardous debris, including needles and broken glass, and clear vegetation from the path, ensuring safe recreational access. Residents shift their perceptions of unhoused community members and feel an increased sense of safety as they observe unhoused neighbors cleaning up shared spaces. CWC also employs a security guard during all outdoor events, including River Stewards program days. - Increased access to nature - Participants are taught how to access environmentally sensitive areas with care. River Stewards learn the names, qualities, and behaviors of native riparian plants and animals, and the timing of ecological events like spring bird nesting. Receiving a \$20 stipend and a free meal allows participants to focus on program hours spent in nature rather than trying to make ends meet. All residents benefit from an improved parkway that encourages active recreation and environmentally friendly commuting. - Improved health - Participants experience increased self-esteem, improved mood, and substance abuse reduction, as River Stewards activity days require participants to be sober. One participant shared about the program: "For me it's just good therapy, and a chance to learn about nature. I'm bonding with the river and learning about flora and fauna. It feels good, good for the brain and the body." Another shared that spending afternoons outdoors with CWC at the river is a therapeutic experience that she did not have access to as a child. - Improved well-being - Participants develop skills and knowledge that empower them to secure employment and/or housing with the support of their case manager. Participants can add River Stewards to their resume and use CWC staff as references when applying for jobs. - Compounding benefits - Participants share stewardship skills and knowledge with their peers in and out of the program. This peer-to-peer sharing is particularly important among the unhoused community, where barriers and challenges often exist for accessing environmental messages and stewardship actions. - Improved ecosystem function - Participants remove invasive species and plant native riparian vegetation, generating cascading ecological benefits: new nutrients that support diverse insects and pollinators, structural habitat and shelter for special-status species (including tricolored blackbird, yellow warbler, and western pond turtle), and water's-edge improvements, including shade to reduce water temperatures and increased habitat complexity for federally-listed coho salmon, steelhead trout, and tidewater goby.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

Vegetation management activities, including removing highly invasive species, seeding new native plants and maintenance (mulching, pruning, watering, etc.) do not include ground disturbance or capital improvements. Seeding is conducted in accordance with techniques previously used by indigenous peoples taught to CWC staff by the Amah Mutsun Land Trust and creates minimal ground disturbance as no digging is required.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

Weekly Activities The program consists of weekly, three-hour stewardship activities at the Santa Cruz Riverwalk from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. led by CWC's River Ecologist and supported by CWC's Seasonal Restoration Technician. Activities are cancelled during inclement weather for safety reasons, and past years have averaged 44 weekly River Stewards activities in a given year. Each weekly stewardship day hosts up to eight participants, a figure determined by what has worked best over the past three

years of implementing this program. Participants can and are encouraged to participate for multiple weeks or months, and CWC's goal is to engage 20 or more unduplicated people experiencing homelessness over the course of a year for 1,056 total volunteer hours. As participants gain experience, they are given increased responsibility and leadership opportunities. New participants that join the program often work with more experienced volunteers, which also helps to build community among the River Stewards. Each session begins with a provided meal, safety talk, and instruction on the day's topics and activities. Participants then engage in hands-on stewardship, with pauses for breaks, sharing, and reflection. Training incorporates environmental stewardship principles with an emphasis on plant and wildlife identification, habitat restoration tools and techniques, and native plant care. Stewardship activities include site remediation, invasive species removal, native species seeding, and park maintenance. Each participating individual receives a \$20 stipend per session. Activities are adapted as needed to ensure full participation. For example, a past participant who used a wheelchair participated fully alongside peers after CWC staff adapted activities and supplies accordingly. Evaluation Ecological outcomes are measured via Percent Cover Surveys using a standardized point-intercept transect methodology. This protocol involves 100-foot transect lines at predetermined locations within CWC's 2-acre habitat enhancement site. At each point along the transect, staff record every plant species present, generating precise, repeatable percent cover data. This eliminates subjectivity inherent in visual estimation and allows CWC to establish baseline conditions, measure progress toward restoration goals, and adapt habitat management strategies over time. Participant sign-in sheets are used to monitor participation goals, and qualitative feedback is used to determine the impacts of the program on the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors of participants. Partnerships Central to the River Stewards Program is a partnership with both the City of Santa Cruz (as the landowner) and a local homeless services nonprofit organization, People First. People First will provide case management and other related services to River Stewards participants. People First recruits participants from among the people experiencing homelessness living at the Armory Shelter and RV Safe Parking Site. CWC will regularly meet with project partners People First (at minimum monthly or up to weekly) and the City of Santa Cruz (as needed) to discuss project successes and challenges, and problem-solve as needed. The tracking and assessment tools named here support these conversations and inform any necessary changes.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Personnel CWC Executive Director, Laurie Egan oversees all operations and programs, ensuring that CWC meets its strategic objectives within their time frames and budgets. She oversees contracting and insuring the program, as well as financial management and reporting. CWC River Ecologist, Kaiya Giuliano-Monroy coordinates with program partners and manages the River Stewards program, including its educational curriculum and volunteer program activities. She trains and manages participants, conducts environmental surveys, records session data, prepares tasks and tools for volunteers, and ensures a meaningful, positive and safe experience for participants. CWC Seasonal Restoration Technician (to be hired) will support CWC River Ecologist. CWC has successfully recruited hires in a timely manner for this temporary, seasonal role when previously posted in both 2024 and 2025, including one previous River Stewards participant. Supplies and Materials As a continuously operating program, CWC already has many of the supplies and tools that can be reused from year-to-year, only needing to purchase replacement items as they break or wear down or consumable items. Examples of items that need replacement include heavy duty tarps (\$36 each), tools including shovels, trowels, loppers, etc. (~\$30 each), gloves (\$9 each), knee pads (\$15 each), etc. Examples of consumable items include contractor trash bags (\$50 per box), mulch (\$22 per unit), flagging materials (\$0.12 per unit), First Aid Kit restock (\$60 per unit), etc. Travel Minimal travel costs are included to support mileage reimbursement at the IRS standard business mileage rate for the year in which the work is performed (currently \$0.725 for 2025). Paid parking is occasionally required at a rate of approximately \$6 per session. Food It is essential to provide food to program participants to achieve project success. When experiencing homelessness, supporting basic needs can become a full time job. By providing a nutritious meal and snacks to participants, CWC eliminates a significant barrier to participation, allowing people experiencing homelessness to attend the program and be fueled so they can participate fully. External Contracts External contracts will be used in part to hire Allied Universal to provide security during the event (\$220 per event). Past participants have shared that security is helpful for their full participation in the program, as it not only creates a safe working environment, but they can also trust that any items brought to the program will be kept safe outdoors. This is particularly important for people experiencing homelessness that, due to their circumstances, may be carrying hard to replace items like a social security card in their belongings. External contracts will be used to support staff time for People First, a homeless services nonprofit organization as program partner at a rate of \$75 per hour. While any partnering organization providing homeless services will provide case management services as part of their typical operations, there are increased personnel costs required to operate a successful partnership with CWC. These additional funds will allow case managers and support staff to provide support to CWC staff to ensure an effective program.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

Project Coordination/Administration (July 2026- June 2027) CWC will continually review progress and coordinate upcoming activities. CWC will complete grant administration tasks, including invoicing and reporting. Throughout the year, CWC will track program metrics to ensure accuracy during final reporting. Partnership Development/Implementation (July 2026-June 2027) CWC will meet monthly with People First staff to build relationships and problem solve as necessary, ensuring streamlined coordination. This will include troubleshooting any behavioral issues that arise and deciding how to help participants positively engage with this program. CWC will visit People First shelter sites (Armory and RV Safe Parking) and program activities to assist with recruitment by building relationships and trust over time, which is key to engaging the participant demographic. People First staff will attend river stewardship days as needed to create familiar connections, support participants in acclimating to the program, and manage any interpersonal or interpersonal conflict, as partner staff are trained in these fields as homeless service providers. CWC and

People First staff will also stay in regular communication over email and phone and communicate program updates to participants in person. In person communication with participants at their shelter site is important as communication via email and telephone is less reliable within the participant demographics. Environmental Education & Stewardship (July 2026-June 2027) Each weekly session is three hours long from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., consisting of both education activities and hands-on stewardship. A mandatory break and a meal are provided to ensure participants have the capacity to meaningfully engage in the program. Participants have continued opportunities for learning as stewardship activities change with the seasons throughout the year. This stewardship and continued maintenance help increase native species and reduce competition from invasives at CWC's habitat enhancement site. Native Seed Collection (June-September 2026) CWC will collect native seeds with volunteers to use at the habitat enhancement site in winter 2026-27. Collection will take place in summer and fall when most native seed is ripe. CWC collects local native seed during the same year of installation as these seeds prove most viable. Invasive Species Removal (July 2026-June 2027) Invasive mitigation and removal will target ice plant, Himalayan blackberry, and other California Invasive Plant Council-listed invasive species. Invasives are removed throughout the year to make room for more beneficial native species to thrive and to reduce encroachment of highly competitive invasive species. Plant Maintenance (July 2026-June 2027) Participants will care for newly seeded native plants on the 2-acre restoration site. Participants will remove/repress weeds and conduct ongoing hand watering and maintenance as needed. Weeding slows down encroachment on the seed plots, allowing native plants to establish without competition. Watering is necessary for the first year after seeding to ensure the success of native seed plots. Environmental Monitoring (April-May 2027) A survivorship survey and point intercept percent cover survey will be conducted, including training, monitoring, and reporting. Participants engage in this survey in spring, as this is the industry standard survey period for percent plant cover.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

River Stewards is a model multi-benefit program that has attracted statewide interest. Since launching the program in 2022, CWC has been approached by other organizations and agencies seeking to replicate its approach. CWC staff presented about the program at the California Society for Ecological Restoration (SERCAL)'s annual conference in 2025 and the program was featured in SERCAL's biannual news journal in 2026 to highlight the multi-benefit approach to ecology practitioners. The California Coastal Commission (a past funder) has featured River Stewards publicly to garner statewide interest, and the City of San Luis Obispo consulted CWC to design a similar program in their community. As programs like River Stewards begin to launch across California, River Stewards stands apart as an established, evidence-based model with years of documented ecological and social outcomes. The program's geographic focus is itself innovative. The San Lorenzo River lagoon is a critical nexus for watershed-wide habitat enhancement, yet working there requires navigating a complex permitting landscape governed by federal, state, and local agencies. CWC has successfully done so since 2016, securing and maintaining the permits necessary to conduct restoration in this sensitive corridor. This track record matters beyond the Riverwalk. By demonstrating that community-based restoration can succeed in a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-built structure, CWC is setting a precedent that can help support similar efforts in other highly impacted riparian environments, such as along the Pajaro River. Partnership is a key component of this model that not only supports successful program outcomes, but also helps build capacity for future Measure Q projects. This cross-sector model expands Santa Cruz County's capacity to respond to environmental and community challenges in ways that traditional conservation programs cannot. When environmental organizations, social service providers, and municipal government align around a shared project, the result is a more resilient local infrastructure for future habitat enhancement work. This is precisely the kind of multisector collaboration that Measure Q was designed for and strengthens Santa Cruz County's long-term ability to steward its natural resources. The River Stewards program also builds local capacity by creating a pipeline of trained environmental stewards. Participants leave the program with hands-on restoration skills, ecological knowledge, and a documented work history they can bring to future employment. As the program engages new participants year over year, Santa Cruz County develops a broader base of people equipped to contribute to habitat restoration efforts for years to come. For example, one River Steward, Loren, participated in CWC's program for six months before securing a part-time landscaping position that he holds today.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Volunteer Hours Leverage, Leveraged Funds, Efficient Use of Funds, Other

BONUS NARRATIVE

CWC's River Stewards program leverages strong partnerships, volunteer hours, matching dollars, and efficient use of funds. CWC has a proven track record of building durable partnerships to support the River Stewards program. Its partnership with the City of Santa Cruz has been fruitful and long-lasting, providing additional capacity to City departments to support vegetation management and maintenance of the Riverwalk Park. CWC's previous partnership with the Downtown Streets Team to operate River Stewards only ended because the regional, Bay Area-wide organization shuttered its doors in 2025 amidst federal funding shifts. Amidst all of this change, CWC has successfully recruited a new partner, People First, and each organization shares the belief that this can be a new, sustainable win-win partnership that benefits both the participants in People First's shelters as well as the ecology of the lower San Lorenzo River. Volunteer hours are a critical component of cost-effective restoration efforts along the lower San Lorenzo River. Because of permitting requirements, restoration efforts in the levee must be conducted by hand. Additionally, because of theft and vandalism along the lower river, traditional irrigation systems cannot be installed to water newly seeded plants. Due to these constraints, consistent manual support is required to conduct any successful restoration effort along the lower

river. River Stewards provides hands-on restoration in a meaningful way for unhoused volunteer participants who, through the program, gain job experience, build community, and have their basic needs met (through food and stipends). An estimated 352 volunteer experiences are contributed annually to habitat enhancement through this program. The \$50,000 Measure Q request represents less than half of the program's total budget, with additional funds pending from the California Coastal Commission Whale Tail program (which funded River Stewards in 2023 and 2025), as well as private sector donors. This base of diverse, multi-sector support reflects the program's broad appeal and demonstrated impact. Because CWC has conducted habitat enhancement activities along the lower river since 2016 and has coordinated River Stewards since 2022, the program is cost-effective in utilizing durable hand tools that can be reused year over year, with costs limited to consumables and replacements. This significantly reduces the program costs compared to newer efforts launching from scratch. Finally, one remaining bonus benefit is in workforce development. River Stewards has produced measurable impact in job preparedness for its participants, with 48% of participants gaining employment following their participation in River Stewards from 2024-25, outcomes that exceed typical results from California's broader homeless service system. While these outcomes reflect the combined support of CWC and partner organization case managers, they demonstrate that connecting people experiencing homelessness to meaningful, paid outdoor work is a viable pathway toward stability. Each participant leaves with transferable restoration skills, ecological knowledge, and a verifiable work history.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

Measure Q Budget FINAL.pdf

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

Project Timeline Measure Q.pdf

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

CWC PW-Parks MOACAO Approved 2026-01-01 - reduced file size.pdf

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

LOS_City of Santa Cruz.pdf, LOS People First Measure Q.pdf

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

Measure Q CWC Organizational Information.pdf

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

IMG_7317 Small.jpeg, IMG_5668 2 Small.jpeg, IMG_7896 Small.jpeg, IMG_2246 Small.jpeg

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Laurie Egan

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Laurie Egan, Executive Director

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 66

Type: Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

Project: Enhancing Environmental Health and Protecting Eco-Cultural Heritage through the Return of Indigenous Stewardship to Pescadero Ranch

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

66

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Enhancing Environmental Health and Protecting Eco-Cultural Heritage through the Return of Indigenous Stewardship to Pescadero Ranch

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

AMAH MUTSUN LAND TRUST

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Acres treated

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

1,340

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Jacob Sackin

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Grants Manager

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

1335 Riverside Rd, Watsonville, CA 95076, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

110-281-01

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.9224

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.654

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band (AMTB) is a non-federally recognized Tribe with over 600 members who are the descendants of Mutsun and Awaswas speaking Indigenous people who lived for over 13,000 years along California's Central Coast and survived the Santa Cruz and San Juan Bautista missions. Amah Mutsun Land Trust (AMLT) is an Indigenous-led nonprofit, founded by the AMTB, that combines traditional Indigenous environmental management with contemporary restoration, scientific research, and cultural revitalization to steward the lands and waters within the ancestral territories of Indigenous Mutsun and Awaswas peoples. AMLT engages Tribal Members, community volunteers, conservation organizations, and public land agencies in stewardship and conservation partnerships that restore sacredness to ancestral Mutsun and Awaswas lands. Through these projects, AMLT and the AMTB return to the path of traditional ecological knowledge, conserving cultural and natural resources, restoring Indigenous

sovereignty, and bringing recent generations closer to the landscape and customs in which Amah Mutsun culture and identity once flourished. The Amah Mutsun have survived a brutal history of colonization and forced assimilation that removed them from their ancestral homeland, cutting them off from their cultural practices and their role as stewards of the land and sea. As a result, many Tribal members have suffered from poverty, physical and emotional health problems, and a loss of their vital connection to their land and culture. Tribal elders have also witnessed recent generations growing further from the landscapes and customs through which Mutsun culture and identity once flourished. This situation undermines community cohesion and connection to ancestral knowledge and the environment, which are essential for a thriving culture and the overall well-being of the Tribal community.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

N/A

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The 1,340-acre Pescadero Ranch is located along Pescadero Creek at the southeastern-most edge of Santa Cruz County, approximately 10 miles east of Watsonville. The property is home to multiple at-risk species and provides critical terrestrial and aquatic habitat and wildlife connectivity between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Gabilan Range through the Aromas Hills. Purchased in October 2024 by Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), the property provides watershed and biodiversity protection, carbon sequestration, and scenic beauty to the surrounding communities.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

None needed.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

1

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

AMLT is currently ready to engage in this project with its current staff and partners. AMLT does not yet have a formal MOU in place with POST, but it is anticipated that a MOU will be in place by the proposed grant start in July 2026. POST has expressed strong support for this work.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

49987

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

49987

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$34,226	\$0	\$0	\$34,226
Fringe Benefits	\$9,241	\$0	\$0	\$9,241
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Contractual / Consultants	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Indirect Costs	\$6,520	\$0	\$0	\$6,520

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

AMLT proposes a scoping and planning project at Pescadero Ranch—a portion of the Juristac Tribal Cultural Landscape located in the south-east corner of Santa Cruz County. The project will identify and prioritize important cultural and ecological resource management needs and work towards developing a collaborative vision and implementation strategy for returning long-term Indigenous stewardship to this sacred Tribal landscape. Project objectives include: 1) collecting and consolidating existing Tribal, historical, environmental, and geospatial data for the property 2) developing a phased strategy for Integrative Cultural Resource Surveys (ICRS) on the property and conducting initial ICRS work in priority locations 3) sharing background information and initial ICRS findings with AMTB leadership and incorporating the Tribe's recommendations into project activities and stewardship planning 4) engaging with the current landowner, POST, and other regional conservation partners in landscape-level visioning and planning for future ecological analysis and stewardship implementation at Pescadero Ranch and adjoining properties. Anticipated project benefits include the identification and protection of Tribal cultural heritage; the development of survey and stewardship strategies and plans to improve aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem health, wildlife connectivity, and wildfire resilience; and the return of Tribal access and stewardship to culturally significant ancestral lands from which Indigenous people have been excluded for generations.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 1 Application**THEMATIC AREAS**

Water Resource Management, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

The project will develop strategies to improve water resource management through the enhancement of aquatic health and flood resilience along Pescadero Creek and a limited reach of the Pajaro River, including by planning for native riparian plant restoration and the reduction of cattle grazing impacts to sensitive aquatic habitats. Strategies for wildfire risk reduction, wildlife and habitat protection, and broader forest and ecosystem health will be supported within the context of preliminary assessments and collaborative planning for stewardship of native plant and animal assemblages and the eventual return of cultural burning to the property. Through access to Pescadero ranch, the project will allow historically underserved Tribal members to explore and

steward culturally significant landscapes and waterways from which the Amah Mutsun and their ancestors have been excluded for hundreds of years.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

This project will deliver important ecological and social benefits over the grant year through enhanced understanding of priority stewardship needs, restored Tribal access, and strengthened collaborative conservation vision and partnership. The fundamental purpose of the project is also to lay the groundwork for long-term management with multiple benefits for environmental health and climate resilience linked to wildlife habitat improvements through native plant restoration and the reduction of invasive species, improved watershed integrity and cultural resource protection through reduced grazing impacts to sensitive aquatic and terrestrial environments, greater wildfire resilience through vegetation management and the eventual return of controlled burning, and revitalization of Tribal connection and presence on the landscape through active Indigenous stewardship. This project has significant potential to leverage other funds as AMLT and POST are currently working in close partnership, with input from other regional partners and stakeholders, to develop a diverse funding strategy to support integrated stewardship planning and longer-term implementation at Pescadero Ranch and across the larger Juristac Tribal Cultural Landscape. It has a high equity impact through returning Tribal access to the land through involvement of AMLT's Native Stewardship Corps and Tribal leadership over the project year and through planning for long-term Indigenous stewardship and access involving the larger AMTB.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Public benefits of this project include comprehensive data gathering and planning for long-term integrative stewardship of ecosystems with extremely high conservation and eco-cultural values, as well as opportunities to return Tribal access to sacred landscapes from which the Tribal community has been excluded for generations. In terms of Strategic Alignment, this project is deeply aligned with the State's 30X30 initiative and especially with its focus on the returning of Tribal ancestral lands. It is also in alignment with the State's Tribal Nature-Based Solutions work to put traditional Indigenous Stewardship practices back on the land.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

AMLT is an Indigenous-led nonprofit that combines traditional Indigenous environmental management with contemporary restoration and cultural revitalization to protect and steward the lands and waters within the ancestral territories of Indigenous Mutsun and Awaswas peoples. AMLT was formed in 2014 by the AMTB, a non-federally recognized Tribe with over 600 members who are the descendants of Mutsun and Awaswas speaking Indigenous people who lived for over 13,000 years along California's Central Coast and survived the Santa Cruz and San Juan Bautista missions. AMLT engages Tribal Members, community volunteers, conservation organizations, and public land agencies in stewardship and conservation partnerships that restore Indigenous values and sacredness to ancestral Mutsun and Awaswas lands. Through these projects, AMLT and the AMTB return to the path of traditional ecological knowledge, conserving cultural and natural resources, restoring Indigenous sovereignty, and bringing recent generations closer to the landscape and customs in which Amah Mutsun culture and identity once flourished.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

At the present time AMLT and POST do not have plans for public access to Pescadero Ranch. However, the public will benefit greatly from this project through future wildfire resilience as well as the beauty and biodiversity of the property which this work will help to preserve, adding to the health and well-being of the local population. This project will provide Tribal members access to Pescadero Ranch, a central portion of Juristac where they have lacked access for generations.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

POST, the current landowner, strongly supports the project (see Letter of Support). AMLT and POST are currently developing a MOU that would give AMLT comprehensive access to Pescadero Ranch and adjoining POST-owned lands within the Juristac Tribal Cultural Landscape to complete the scope of work proposed in this project.

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

AMLT has established innovative partnership agreements and MOUs with conservation organizations and public land agencies on more than 150,000 acres of conserved lands to enable Indigenous stewardship, Tribal access, and co-management. AMLT has a proven record of utilizing its ICRS methodology at Cotoni Dairies National Monument (attachment included), the Quiroste Valley Cultural Preserve at Aho Nuevo State Park, and other areas around the Central CA Coast. AMLT also worked extensively in these areas and at Pinnacles National Park, Elkhorn Slough, Pie Ranch, San Vicente Redwoods, and other locations, working with AMLT staff to create and implement surveys and stewardship management plans, and engage in trainings and on the ground stewardship work.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

The 1,340 acre Pescadero Ranch encompasses landscapes and waterways that are both vital to regional environmental health and resilience and sacred to the AMTB, whose ancestors conducted ceremonies and stewarded plant and animal communities here for millennia. With its purchase in late 2024 by POST, this important property's eco-cultural and conservation values can again be prioritized and enhanced. This planning project led by AMLT will support these values by laying a foundation for the return of long-term Indigenous stewardship to Pescadero Ranch through the completion of the following objectives: 1) Collect and consolidate existing Tribal (e.g. oral histories and ethnographic evidence), historical, and environmental data for the property, through interviews, archival and desk-based research, and targeted on-site reconnaissance. These data will be used for establishing a fuller understanding of the site's cultural and historical ecology and current conditions, or creating new and refining existing geospatial data sets, and for informing planning for future environmental analysis, monitoring, and stewardship efforts. 2) Develop a phased strategy for conducting Integrative Cultural Resource Surveys (ICRS) on the property and undertake initial ICRS work in priority locations to guide eco-cultural heritage protection and long-term integrated stewardship planning (including planning and implementation components). This objective utilizes a systematic methodology developed by AMLT and partners for conducting archaeological and ethnobotanical surveys across large, complex landscapes (see AMLT's Cotoni Dairies Survey Work attachment for further detail). 3) Consult regularly, and at least quarterly, with the leadership of the AMTB to share information and initial ICRS findings and to incorporate the Tribe's input and recommendations into project activities and future access and stewardship plans. This objective envisions at least one in-person visit by Tribal leadership to Pescadero Ranch. 4) Engage with POST and other regional conservation partners (e.g. the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association) in landscape-level visioning, site visits, and planning for collaborative activities including monitoring of wildlife presence and movement, aquatic and terrestrial habitat surveys, and planning for wildfire risk reduction and future applications of cultural and prescribed fire. These meetings will support the identification of key resource management needs and the development of collaborative strategies for funding and implementing future stewardship efforts at Pescadero Ranch and adjoining properties.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

To implement the proposed scope of work, grant funding is requested for AMLT personnel costs (staff salaries with fringe benefits at 27%). Across the grant year, 120 hours of time each is allocated for the Director of Programs, the Cultural Resources Program Manager, the Tribal Historic Preservation Coordinator, and the Ethnobotany Specialist to support overall project development and coordination; data collection, analysis, and management; site visits; Tribal and partner communications and meetings; Integrative Cultural Resource Survey (ICRS) design and implementation; and reporting. Forty hours of time is allocated across the grant year for each of eight Native Stewardship Corps positions for their support with data collection and analysis, conducting targeted ICRS work, and Tribal and partner communications and meetings. The pay rate listed for the NSC is for all 8 members to conduct one hour of work. Thirty-six hours is allocated for the Lands Project Manager, who will support project coordination; data collection, analysis, and management; and Tribal and partner communications and meetings. Thirty hours is allocated across the grant year for the Executive Director for participation in site visits and for Tribal and partner communications and meetings. Twenty hours of time is allocated for the Land Acquisition Specialist for participation in Tribal and partner communications and meetings and site visits. In addition to the personnel costs outlined above, indirect costs are included at 15% to cover general expenses such as Human Resources, IT, and Finance and Accounting.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

Project work is anticipated to begin in July 2026 with desk- and field-based data collection and analysis to gather new and consolidate existing information, and to identify and map important landscape features, existing infrastructure, and areas of interest and concern. This gathering of background information will occur over the initial 1-2 months of the project and will guide site selection and prioritization for detailed Integrative Cultural Resource Surveys (ICRS) and the planning of future ecological monitoring and survey efforts on the property. Further reconnaissance and initial ICRS surveys will be conducted from late summer 2026 through early summer 2027, with the specific timing of different survey components coinciding with seasonal conditions. For example, initial surface-level archaeological surveys will occur in late summer and fall of 2026 during times of reduced vegetation cover, and detailed ethnobotanical surveys will occur in late winter through early summer of 2027 during periods of florescence. AMLT Program staff will consult at least quarterly with leadership of the AMTB to share findings and receive input on the Tribe's priorities for site access and stewardship; at least one visit to the site by Tribal leadership during the project year will be scheduled based on their preference and availability. From mid 2026 through early 2027, AMLT Program staff and executive leadership will engage with POST, adjoining landowners, and other key regional conservation partners to develop shared objectives and strategies for collaborative landscape-level conservation in the project area and to gain partner support in the creation of a funding and implementation strategy for long-term Indigenous stewardship at Pescadero Ranch and within the larger Juristac Tribal Cultural Landscape. All aspects of the project, including background data collection, initial ICRS and other survey work, and partner outreach and strategy development supported by the grant will conclude by the end of June 2027. Upon the completion of the project, AMLT will create external and internal documents that summarize the findings and tribal priorities around cultural and ecological resources across the property.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

AMLT returns Indigenous stewardship to California's Central Coast, advancing conservation and cultural revitalization through innovative collaborations and agreements. However, much of the organization's work has been located on Awaswas ancestral lands (northern and central Santa Cruz County), which are owned and managed by other groups. In alignment with Tribal priorities, AMLT is undergoing a strategic transition to an increased focus on the conservation and stewardship of culturally significant lands within Mutsun ancestral territory (southern and south-eastern Santa Cruz County). AMLT is rapidly building its capacity around land acquisition and long-term stewardship, with AMLT acquiring its first property in late 2025 and set to acquire its second property in early 2027. AMLT is currently in discussions with POST about the future stewardship and ownership plans for the POST-owned portions of the Juristac Tribal Cultural Landscape, including Pescadero Ranch. This project is also innovative in advancing the state's 30X30 efforts by exploring land repurposing and remediation to address historical land use and applying TEK to restoration efforts. In addition, AMLT's ICRS is an innovative, proactive, and comprehensive approach to cultural resource assessment and stewardship planning. AMLT has developed a protocol for ICRS, which comprehensively documents important archaeological sites and culturally significant landscape and vegetation features to identify priority areas for resource protection, stewardship, and potential acquisition. AMLT was established as a nonprofit in 2014 by the AMTB and has 28 staff members, over half of which are Tribal members. Strong cash reserves make AMLT well positioned to manage reimbursable grants and AMLT has developed the backend staffing and knowledge to manage large multi-year grants and projects.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Leveraged Funds, Efficient Use of Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

AMLT has a history of strong partnership and engagement with regional conservation and resource management organizations and agencies, as well as Indigenous cultural and environmental practitioners, that will contribute importantly to the success of this project. AMLT's collaborative efforts include a longstanding partnership with POST around the protection of the Juristac Tribal Cultural Landscape and San Vicente Redwoods, diverse engagements with the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County and the Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association, sustained collaboration with the Santa Cruz District of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, including eco-cultural resource protection and prescribed fire training for the Native Stewardship Corps, ongoing participation in regional multi-stakeholder planning initiatives and advisory groups (e.g. Pajaro Watershed Climate Resilience Planning, Integrated Regional Water Management, and Pajaro Compass), and support from cultural fire practitioners with the Indigenous Stewardship Network and the Cultural Fire Management Council. AMLT also partners with the Trust for Public Land in its lands work and with the state of California through a current grant with the CNRA to build the capacity of AMLT's lands program. AMLT is able to leverage these relationships and associated funds, as well as a grant with the California Council of Land Trusts, to help fund a consultant-supported Integrated Stewardship Management Planning process. Lastly, AMLT has recently significantly increased internal staff capacity, particularly for the Finance and Accounting team, such that invoicing and project allocation is more efficient, leading to better on the ground planning and allocation of organizational resources.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[AMLT Measure Q Pescadero Ranch budget.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

PescaderoRanch_PropertyDetail_16x9_NoPlanning_20231227TR.pdf

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

POST_LOS_AMLT MQ App.pdf

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

AMLT_2018_CCD_Integrative_Cultural_Resource_Survey_Scope_Figure_1_Redacted.pdf

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Jacob Sackin

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Grants Manager

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 75 **Type:** Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Pajaro Valley Youth PhotoVoice Open Space Access

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

75

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Pajaro Valley Youth PhotoVoice Open Space Access

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Regeneración - Pajaro Valley Climate Action, a fiscally sponsored project of Community Initiatives

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Regeneración - Pajaro Valley Climate Action, a fiscally sponsored project of Community Initiatives

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Education population

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

150

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Nancy Faulstich

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Executive Director

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

23 E Beach St, Watsonville, CA 95076, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.91080580000000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.75638870000000

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

—

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

District 2

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Pajaro Valley - Watsonville, Freedom; access to open spaces in Santa Cruz County including City of Watsonville, beaches, unincorporated areas

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Not sure

DAC/SDAC NOTES

Census tracts 6087110401 and 6053010101 - Cal enviroscreen 5.0 draft. Climate and Economic Justice Screening tool - Watsonville.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

N/A

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA		
State Water Control Resources Board	NA		
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA		
Coastal Commission	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

N/A Note dates are estimate based on expected grant timeline.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

33909

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

47845

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$18,000	\$0	\$13,800	\$31,800
Fringe Benefits	\$5,940	\$0	\$0	\$5,940
Travel	\$200	\$0	\$136	\$336
Supplies	\$1,950	\$0	\$0	\$1,950
Indirect Costs	\$4,423	\$0	\$0	\$4,423
Other Direct Costs	\$3,396	\$0	\$0	\$3,396

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The Pajaro Valley Youth PhotoVoice Project is a five-week leadership and visual storytelling program engaging 6-8 high school students from Watsonville and Freedom in documenting community perspectives on access to open spaces. Through weekly educational workshops utilizing photography, writing, and dialogue, youth participants will develop skills in communication, advocacy, and creative expression while examining barriers and opportunities related to equitable access to parks and natural areas. This third annual iteration centers the theme of open space access and builds on prior PhotoVoice outcomes, which demonstrated increased youth confidence, advocacy capacity, and hopefulness. The project culminates in a public gallery reception attended by approximately 100 community members, with an additional estimated 350-1,000 viewers engaging with the photographs and narratives online and through partner advocacy campaigns. The project is supported by cross-sector collaboration between community partners and UCSC faculty in Art and Education. UCSC Associate Professor Karolina Karlic will serve as Community Arts Engagement Lead, supervising undergraduate and graduate Arts Division students who will mentor participants and assist with workshop facilitation and exhibition production. Pending support includes a \$1,000 ARI Mini-Grant and up to \$5,000 in ARI Equity and Innovation funding to support student stipends and arts engagement. Additional in-kind faculty supervision will contribute to project match. Funding is requested to support staff salaries, student stipends, supplies, transportation, refreshments, and exhibition costs across recruitment, workshop implementation, and public presentation phases.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

As noted in the Measure Q vision document, "Many Santa Cruz County residents, particularly in the southern part of the county, in Watsonville and surrounding communities, lack equitable access to quality parks, beaches, and open spaces." (p 55) The Pajaro Valley Youth PhotoVoice Open Space Access Project will address this inequity directly. Through youth eyes and voices, existing barriers to access will be documented and contemporary hopes and visions for future access will be preserved through photos and stories. The finished products will be displayed at galleries and online and can be used to advocate for increased equitable access with elected officials and with future Measure Q funded projects. Ease of access will strengthen climate resilience for the Latine working class local population, who generally live in less healthy and more crowded conditions than the rest of Santa Cruz County. They also live in areas with much lower tree canopy and fewer acres of parks per resident compared to North Santa Cruz County residents. (In 2024 Watsonville had 9.4% tree canopy while Santa Cruz had 39% - Pajaronian, Into the Woods, May 2024.) In 2023 before the addition of Valle del Pajaro Park, Watsonville residents had 2.25 acres per 1000 residents compared to a national average of 10 acres per 1000 residents. Our project will encourage youth and their families to reap the benefits of time in nature: improved mental health and physical well-being through exercise and recreation, spiritual connection to the outdoors and enhanced sense of being one with nature, inspiration of the desire to conserve and protect open spaces, and social connection with friends and family in peaceful, beautiful settings. The PhotoVoice project will include environmental education to raise awareness about open spaces in Santa Cruz County, transportation opportunities and gaps to access these open spaces and the resources available there, as well as education about climate change and how it is impacting our community. According to the literature review included in the appendices, every plan reviewed identified "robust, inclusive community engagement" as the foundation to build from in regards to planning and implementation of conservation efforts, reduction of hazards, recreation and

parks, and climate response. Our project will take one meaningful step toward ensuring long-term, inclusive access to the outdoors with a primary focus on community engagement.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The Pajaro Valley Youth PhotoVoice Open Space Access Project will prioritize Equity Impact and will also bring in match funding through in-kind support from UCSC. Participants will be selected from local public high schools with a majority Latine, low income population. With fewer acres of parks per person, and lack of public transportation or safe routes for active transportation to the beach, the rural, Latine working class population of the Pajaro Valley has reduced access to Santa Cruz County open spaces compared to the rest of the County. For example, it is common for families living within a few miles of the ocean to have never gone to the beach. Our project will help build generational care for the environment by recruiting local public high school students to document barriers and visions for accessing open spaces, involving families in gallery displays, and using the photographs and stories for public campaigns that can spark solutions to access challenges. In-kind funding from UCSC through an ongoing partnership will strengthen and broaden the project by bringing in content area expertise, additional support and mentorship for the students, and a wider audience. UCSC Arts Division Student Role and Faculty Supervision Role of UCSC Arts Photography Students UCSC Arts Division students (undergraduate and graduate students in Art, Environmental Art and Social Practice, and related fields) will serve as creative mentors and technical facilitators throughout the Pajaro Valley Youth PhotoVoice Project. In the role of UCSC student fellows/intern collaborators, they will: -Provide hands-on instruction in digital photography, visual storytelling, and ethical image-making practices -Support youth participants in developing weekly photo assignments and artist statements -Facilitate small-group critique sessions that center youth voice and leadership -Assist in editing, printing, and preparing work for public exhibition Help design and install the culminating gallery reception -Document the workshop process for archival and advocacy use UCSC students will model creative inquiry, collaborative practice, and socially engaged art methodologies, while gaining experiential training in community-based arts facilitation. Pending funding to support this participation includes: ARI Mini-Grant to Karolina Karlic to support UCSC student stipends (\$1,000) ARI Equity and Innovation Funding to strengthen the UCSC Arts connection to the PhotoVoice project, including student stipends and materials support (up to \$5,000) In addition, in-kind faculty supervision time from the Art Department will contribute to the project's overall match. Faculty Supervision and Training Role UCSC Associate Professor of Art Karolina Karlic will serve as Community Arts Engagement Lead. In this role, she will: Recruit UCSC student mentors in photovoice methodology and ethical community arts practice Provide pedagogical oversight and curriculum co-design Supervise students in workshop facilitation and community engagement Guide exhibition design and public presentation strategy Ensure alignment with best practices in socially engaged art and equity-centered collaboration Karlic will provide an estimated in-kind contribution of faculty time (value to be determined for match purposes), including preparation, supervision, and public event participation. Emily Reigh will coordinate evaluation throughout the project and provide research assistant and/or graduate assistant support to evaluate project impact.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

1 - Public benefit: The Pajaro Valley Youth PhotoVoice project will meet the prioritization principle of public benefit during all phases of the project. It will bring Measure Q to the attention of a large pool of high school students during the recruitment phase. It will support the goal of increasing equitable access to outdoors as students document favorite places and barriers to access through photos and stories. It will build awareness of existing parks, facilities, and transportation available for the students and their families. Gallery displays will bring students and families together in public settings with elected officials, non-profit staff, and community leaders. Photos, stories and an online gallery will be available for ongoing advocacy. The project will expand youth leadership 2 - Readiness: While not an implementation project requiring shovel-readiness, we are ready to carry out another iteration of this educational project. 3 - Strategic alignment We will work closely with partners such as the County Park Friends, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, UCSC and others throughout the project. We will invite partners to table with information at the reception and seek additional displays of photos and narratives at partner locations, raising the visibility of the final results.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

With a mission of achieving climate justice through community-driven solutions, Regeneración works to center Pajaro Valley residents in plans and projects designed to improve climate resiliency, adapt to the changing climate, and mitigate future effects by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Our target community will be students attending Pajaro Valley public high schools, primarily students living in Watsonville and Freedom, and their families. The national standard for green spaces is 10 acres per 1,000 residents: that number for Watsonville is roughly 2.25 acres per 1,000 residents (SC Weekly, 2021). Watsonville is designated as a SB535 Disadvantaged Area and AB 1550 Low-Income Community. Two census tracts in downtown Watsonville (6087110401 and 6053010101) rank in the highest percentile on Cal EnviroScreen Draft 5.0 at 95.25 and 92.67 respectively, which

is higher by several percentage points than measured in Cal EnviroScreen Draft 4.0. According to the US Census, as of July 2024, the City of Watsonville has a population of 51,320. 82.3% identifying as Hispanic or Latino 14.7% poverty rate Average 3.36 persons per household 74.5 % of households have someone over age 5 speaking language other than English at home. Population per square mile of 7841 This project will elevate the voices of students from the majority Latine, Spanish speaking, low income population to center their perspectives on the changing climate, the importance of access to open space, visions for the future, and identification to current barriers to access. The project is anticipated to have ripple effects from the students, through their families, friends, and the larger community, as those who have faced systematic and structural barriers to equitable access are given a voice and a platform in which to advocate for change.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Health and well-being, Access to nature

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Recent engagement data collected by Regeneración reveals that local residents feel limited by lack of open space and want more access. The Photo Voice project will meet Tier 1 program goal of delivering community education which will increase community resilience through revealing barriers to accessing space and lead to advocacy and removal of barriers for the community of focus: rural Latine working class families. It will have a positive impact on the community through empowering residents to investigate and understand barriers and share information learned widely. There will be key leadership opportunities for youth, new and deepened connections between organizations, agencies, and residents, and increased open space access for underrepresented populations. The project will engage 6-8 high school students and their families. Parents and siblings will be involved over the year as students progress through the workshops, share photos, and visit open spaces together, including introduction to the new Valle del Pajaro park. Bilingual students will provide language access for monolingual family members. The gallery reception will draw an estimated 100 people from a cross section of the community and will provide a key opportunity for student advocacy and leadership as they help build bridges to the broader community for their family members in attendance. Photos and narratives will be viewed by an additional estimated 350 -1000 people and can be used by partners for advocacy. (An article on the Photo Voice process and assets from 2025 is in development by UCSC's, Emily Reigh, PhD, for submission to the journal, Children, Youth & Environments.) Pre and post surveys and interviews will be administered to gauge photovoice students' baseline awareness of and utilization of open spaces, and assess changes over the project timeline. Additionally, the survey and interviews will elicit how participating in photovoice helped them to develop advocacy skills. Finally, surveys and brief interviews will be administered at the community reception to understand how the project results impacted attendee's knowledge of barriers to open space access for Pajaro Valley residents and development of solutions to inequities. Research on the previous iteration of the photovoice project showed that it helped students to feel more hopeful about the future (75% felt "a lot" more hopeful and 25% felt "some" more hopeful). Furthermore, participants learned to work in solidarity with others from different backgrounds and to communicate their stories to the broader community. For example, one said "Working with other people that go to different high schools and have different backgrounds just made a sense of community. We were all brought together because we all care about something." Others commented "Photovoice helped me to not be nervous to talk in front of new people" and "If I were to go to one of the city council meetings, I feel like I'd be a lot more confident and comfortable being able to share my opinions, knowing that different people might feel that same way about a problem in our community."

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

N/A - workshops will take place at an indoor meeting space.

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

N/A

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

- Recruit 6-8 students from area high schools through presentations and interest form - Organize and conduct (5) 2-hour educational workshops to develop youth as visual storytellers and community advocates -Guide students to document and analyze their community's access to open spaces through homework assignments in between the workshops and group discussions. -If funds allow, arrange group field trip to a site chosen by students. -UCSC Associate Professor of Art Karolina Karlic will serve as Community Arts Engagement Lead and Assistant Professor of Science Education Emily Reigh will coordinate

evaluation. UCSC Arts Division students (undergraduate and graduate students in Art, Environmental Art and Social Practice, and related fields) will serve as creative mentors and technical facilitators throughout the Pajaro Valley Youth PhotoVoice Project. -Organize 1-2 gallery receptions for the general public, electeds, educators, etc. Partner organizations will table at reception with information about open spaces, recreation options, conservation projects, etc. -Create and publicize online photo gallery -Seek opportunities to utilize project results for further community education and advocacy to continue expanding equitable access to open space ie through presentations to elected officials, research publications, news reports, etc.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The request of \$33,909 will cover staff salary and fringe benefits (\$23,940), high school student participation stipends (\$2,000), photo printing and other supplies (\$1,950), transportation (\$200), reception, publicity and other direct expenses (\$1,396) and indirect costs (\$4,423) to support our required 15% Fiscal Sponsor fee of government income received. UCSC in-kind contribution valued at \$13,800 will support faculty advisement throughout the project and student participation in workshops and gallery receptions.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

The project will take place during the 2026-27 school year with preparation beginning over the summer. Months 1-3 - recruitment of high school and university students Months 3-6 - workshops and individual mentoring Month 6 -9 - display preparation and gallery reception Month 9-12 - online gallery publicity; exploration of second gallery display; advocacy; final evaluation

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

This project lies at the intersections of art, environmental justice, and leadership development. Regeneración staff members have conducted two prior Photo Voice projects in 2024 and 2025 involving Pajaro Valley students. (Galleries on our website: <https://www.regenerationpajarovalley.org/pajarovalley-photo-voice-project2025>). We have cultivated partnerships with UCSC Faculty who are interested in continuing to support through mentorship, evaluation, and connections to UCSC student interns. We are excited about this funding opportunity to support our third iteration of the Photo Voice project since it aligns perfectly with our desired theme of access to green/open space. The Photo Voice receptions have been wonderful community events drawing attendance from a broad cross section of the Pajaro Valley community. Partners will be invited to table at the opening reception. We envision representation from groups such as County Park Friends and Santa Cruz Land Trust who have partnered at past events and we will utilize this opportunity to reach out to other organizations striving for equity access to open spaces. Staff qualifications: Eloy Ortiz - Project Advisor: Eloy is the special projects manager for Regeneración.. He manages the Pajaro Valley Transformative Climate Communities Planning Grant, working with local leaders and residents to design community-based climate solutions. Eloy also helped lead the Monterey Bay Area Climate Justice Collaborative, serves as a sector author for the Fifth California Climate Assessment and sits on the steering committee for the Pajaro Disaster Long Term Recovery Alliance. He created and led the first PhotoVoice project and closely supervised Maria Perez to lead the second one. Maria Perez - 2026 Project Lead: Maria holds a Bachelor of Science in Conservation and Resource Studies from the University of California Berkeley. Maria is the Community Outreach Manager at Regeneración. She was a founding member of the non-profit when she was in high school. Currently Maria leads staff and volunteers in bilingual community outreach to encourage community-led and equitable climate solutions in the Pajaro Valley, which encompasses the areas of Watsonville, Freedom and Pajaro. Maria led the 2025 PhotoVoice project including recruitment of students, facilitation of workshop sessions, and management of logistics.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Volunteer Hours Leverage, Leveraged Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

Our project will leverage volunteer support from our Regeneración base (estimated 40 hours) to support gallery receptions and in-kind support from UCSC through UCSC Associate Art Professor Karolina Karlic, the Art + Science Director of the Kenneth S. Norris Center for Natural History, and Graduate Director of UCSC Environmental Art and Social Practice MFA Program), and UCSC Assistant Professor of Science Education Emily Reigh. UCSC will contribute an estimated 150-250 hours of support from faculty and students. See project prioritization principles narrative for detailed description of the UCSC partnership.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Measure Q_2026_Karlic_Letter_of_Support.pdf

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

2025 Impact One Page Regeneración: Regeneration - Pajaro Valley Climate Action.pdf

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

Noemi Greenery vision 2025 PhotoVoice.png, Jesus Pinto Lake 2025 PhotoVoice.png, Vicente speaking at photo mic 2025.jpg, Dayanara at photos with audience 2025.jpg

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

Vicente speaking at photo mic 2025.jpg, Dayanara at photos with audience 2025 photovoice.jpg

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Laurette Canizares

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Laurette Canizares Client Services Manager

SIGNATURE DATE

03/11/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 83

Type: Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

Project: Strategic Canopy Reduction in the Wildland-Urban Interface: A Community-Driven Approach to Protect Homes, Infrastructure, watersheds, neighboring Firewise and non-Firewise communities, and Ecosystems.

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

83

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Strategic Canopy Reduction in the Wildland-Urban Interface: A Community-Driven Approach to Protect Homes, Infrastructure, watersheds, neighboring Firewise and non-Firewise communities, and Ecosystems.

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Loma Prieta Community Foundation

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Summit Watershed Protection League

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Miles treated

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

10

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Sanjay Khandelwal

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

President, LPCF

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Lou	McTamaney	[REDACTED]
Kathryn	Stewart	[REDACTED]
Sanjay	Khandelwal	[REDACTED]
Lou	McTamaney	[REDACTED]
Lou	McTamaney	[REDACTED]
Kathryn	Stewart	[REDACTED]
Sanjay	Khandelwal	[REDACTED]
Sanjay	Khandelwal	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

389 Summit Canyon Dr, Los Gatos, California, 95033

PARCEL NUMBER

Roughly 192 parcels impacted.

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

37.12983605047100

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.95968709130700

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The Santa Cruz Mountains Summit area, often referred to locally as the Loma Prieta region, is a high-elevation, unincorporated community straddling the ridgeline between Santa Cruz and Santa Clara counties in central California. This area is predominantly rural, unincorporated, characterized by sparse population densities, forested landscapes, limited infrastructure, and a focus on preserving natural resources, agriculture, and open spaces. The project primarily serves the Summit ridge and adjacent slopes in the Santa Cruz Mountains' South Interior and North Interior planning areas (per the San Mateo-Santa Cruz CWPP), extending benefits to broader regions through interconnected fuel breaks and improved roadways. These include: Core Region: 5.6-mile Summit Road corridor from Highway 17 to Highland Way/Mount Bache, plus extensions to Soquel San Jose Road (totaling over 15 miles of treated roadways by 2024), Villa Del Monte ~5 miles of roadway. Focuses on reducing canopy fuels in redwood/Douglas fir-dominated zones. Broader Mountain Communities: Evacuation and suppression benefits extend to 25,000 residents across the Santa Cruz Mountains, including San Lorenzo Valley (north) and Pajaro Valley (south), by linking to other fuel reduction efforts. Watershed and Ecological Regions: Protects Soquel Creek and Los Gatos Creek watersheds, which supply water to downstream areas like Soquel and Los Gatos. Enhances forest health by removing invasives (e.g., eucalyptus, acacia) and promoting resilient vegetation. Adjacent Areas: Ties into regional wildfire resilience plans, serving nearby rural zones like Redwood Estates, Las Cumbres (west) and Lexington Hills (north), with potential for expansion by neighboring Firewise communities. Overall, these efforts prioritize rural safety in a fire-prone landscape, with ongoing maintenance through community and county-funded chipping, pile burning, canopy reduction, and monitoring for erosion or invasives. The community is located along the forested ridge of the Santa Cruz coastal mountains. This community that has been in existence since the late 1800s straddles the county line between Santa Cruz and Santa Clara counties centered around the railroad line between Los Gatos and the city of Santa Cruz that existed from the 1880s to the 1930s. The community, now comprises around 1500 households, four churches, a volunteer fire department, a general store, a number of retail services and a K - 8 mountain school.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

District 1

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Central Summit Watershed between Lexington Hills and Laurel. Unincorporated Santa Cruz County. Our entire Firewise community is comprised of 240 homes.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

We do not believe we need any permits. We will get needed approvals from homeowners.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

DURATION AMOUNT

months

6

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

We are ready to start work!

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

50000

50000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Contractual / Consultants	\$43,700	\$0	\$0	\$43,700
Indirect Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel	\$300	\$0	\$0	\$300
Other Direct Costs	\$6,000	\$0	\$0	\$6,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

This proposal outlines a comprehensive plan for reducing canopy bridges along approximately 6 miles of roadway to mitigate community and neighboring communities' wildfire risks and exposure. The project focuses on the roadway as the barrier width plus an additional 5 feet on either side, creating a targeted fuel break to prevent fire spread across the canopy. Based on best practices from organizations like the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the approach emphasizes vegetation thinning, pruning, and understory management to enhance roadway safety, evacuation, and fire resilience. Key elements include: Project Scope: Treatment of a 40-foot-wide corridor (assuming a standard 30-foot rural roadway width + 5 feet each side) over 6 miles, covering approximately 29 acres. Methods: Mechanical thinning, pruning to create vertical fuel breaks, tree removals, and potential prescribed burns where feasible. Estimated Cost: \$50,000.00 (initial implementation), with annual maintenance at 10-20% of initial costs, born by applicant community. Benefits: Reduced wildfire spread, improved evacuation routes, and enhanced habitat in some cases. Timeline: 3-6 months for implementation, starting as soon as possible in all approved areas.

PROJECT START DATE

PROJECT END DATE

05/01/2026

11/01/2026

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Wildlife and Habitat Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

The project integrates multiple interconnected themes to ensure a holistic approach to risk reduction, emphasizing public safety, ecological health, and community resilience. 1. Fuels and Forest Health Management Focuses on reducing hazardous fuels through vegetation thinning, pruning, and understory removal to promote healthier forest structures and wildfire resilience. Aligns with strategies for creating fuel breaks and managing ladder fuels, as seen in fuels and forest health projects that prioritize defensible space and landscape treatments. 2. Community and Infrastructure Protection Emphasizes safeguarding roadways as critical infrastructure for evacuation and emergency response, including home ignition zones (HIZ) and defensible space around structures. Incorporates community engagement, codes, and ordinances to reduce wildfire risk in wildland-urban interface (WUI) areas, such as hardening structures and creating buffer zones and more defensible spaces. 3. Landscape and Ecosystem Resilience Addresses broader landscape planning, including prescribed burns and mosaic treatments to interrupt fuel continuity while preserving ecological diversity. Promotes adaptation to climate change by restoring resilient landscapes, such as through regional strategies tailored to diverse vegetation types like forests and chaparral. 4. Environmental Justice and Cross-Cutting Themes Integrates considerations for underserved communities, ensuring equitable access to mitigation benefits and addressing social vulnerabilities in wildfire-prone areas. Weaves in themes like climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and long-term recovery planning to balance risk reduction with environmental stewardship. 5. Research, Monitoring, and Adaptive Management Supports ongoing evaluation of mitigation effectiveness, including post-treatment monitoring and applied research on fire behavior, smoke impacts, and ecosystem recovery. Encourages partnerships for data-driven adjustments, such as updating plans based on new scientific insights and community feedback. These thematic areas ensure the project not only mitigates immediate wildfire risks but also contributes to long-term sustainability and resilience in the face of increasing fire threats due to the dangerous surrounding unmanaged forestlands.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

These untreated roadways were identified as a high-priority area due to their dense canopy cover, which facilitates fire bridging and poses a significant risk of rapid fire spread across our community and into neighboring communities. Historical data indicate that the Lexington Fire in 1985 was able to jump Summit Road and many others due to significant canopy bridging, where untreated roadways have contributed to larger conflagrations, impeding emergency response, evacuations, and significantly increasing wildfire spread. The all of these roadway serve as a critical evacuation routes for the community, as does Summit Road for neighboring communities, making their protection essential for public safety. Risk modeling data also places these roadways in a "Priority 1" category due to potential for active crown fires and high consequence impacts on adjacent wildlands and infrastructure.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

For this roadway project, secondary principles refine the treatment sequence by prioritizing segments with the highest integration of vulnerability and exposure, using iterative assessments to adapt to seasonal changes. Cost-optimized methods, like prescribed burns in feasible areas, are favored to enhance efficiency, while community engagement ensures equitable benefits. This layered approach complements the primary prioritization, promoting sustainable and adaptive wildfire mitigation. In essence, these secondary principles ensure the project remains responsive, equitable, and optimized, contributing to broader wildfire resilience goals through refined, data-informed decisions. Additionally, all surrounding Firewise communities should seek to complete the same objectives.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

This canopy bridge reduction project delivers key benefits to 240 homes and 630 residents in the immediate area, as well as surrounding communities, by creating fuel breaks that mitigates wildfire risks. Grounded in effective mitigation strategies, it enhances safety, economy, and social well-being. Safety and Protection: Reduces fire spread and improves evacuation routes, lowering risks to lives, homes, and firefighters. Protects against ember ignition and provides better access for suppression, benefiting WUI zones. Economic Savings: Cuts suppression costs by 20-25%, reduces insurance premiums, and preserves property values. Avoids post-fire economic losses for residents and enables funding for further resilience efforts. Health, Environmental, and Social Gains: Improves air quality by minimizing smoke, supports ecosystem health, and fosters community engagement through partnerships. Promotes equity for underserved groups with accessible mitigation support. Overall, the project

builds long-term resilience, transforming vulnerable areas into safer, more sustainable communities.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

This project adds significant value to the community by fostering wildfire resilience through collaborative efforts, protecting lives and property while promoting social cohesion and equity. It creates a safer environment and empowers local involvement, extending benefits to surrounding areas via shared resources and knowledge and reduced risk of wildfire spread. Resilience and Equity: Enhances community capacity to withstand wildfires, prioritizing underserved groups with targeted support, such as free assessments and fuel reduction services. Economic and Social Value: Builds trust and partnerships, leading to sustained mitigation and future potential grant funding for larger, critical need risk reduction projects. Outreach and Engagement: Employs relational strategies like face-to-face meetings, community workshops, and social media campaigns to educate on risks and actions. Involves stakeholders in planning (e.g., CWPP development) for input on priorities, using Firewise educational efforts and awareness to build long-term partnerships within our rural mountain community. Activities include virtual and in-person community gatherings, door-to-door outreach, and collaboration with local leaders to ensure inclusive participation and address barriers to project implementation and overall Firewise methods and practices. In summary, the project delivers enduring value by integrating outreach to empower communities, ensuring equitable, effective, informed, and proactive wildfire mitigation.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant does not have a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land, Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

This project has been communicated via email and in-person community meetings for several years. To date, no resident has objected to or expressed concern about the project. Of course, we will include all impacted residents in the planning and coordination of work to make sure they are fully aware of the outcomes and how they will affect their properties.

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

—

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

Drawing from established best practices, the project will use a combination of mechanical and manual techniques to reduce canopy density and create fire-resilient conditions. Methods are adapted from NFPA's Community Wildfire Mitigation Pocket Guide and similar resources, focusing on horizontal and vertical fuel spacing. Step-by-Step Approach Site Assessment (Pre-Implementation): Conduct a survey to identify high-risk areas, vegetation types, and environmental constraints (e.g., protected species). Prioritize based on fuel load, topography, and road usage. Use tools like photo points for before/after documentation. Vegetation Removal and Thinning: Remove dead, damaged, or diseased trees and understory vegetation. Thin tree crowns to achieve 20+ feet of spacing between canopies (horizontal break). Prune lower limbs to 6-15 feet height (vertical break) to eliminate ladder fuels. Create a vegetation-free zone 4-10 feet from the pavement edge, using inert materials if needed. Fuel Break Creation: Implement shaded fuel breaks along the corridor, retaining larger trees while removing flammable undergrowth. Where feasible, incorporate prescribed burns to reduce fine fuels (subject to permits and weather). Disposal and Maintenance: Chip or remove debris to avoid creating new fuel sources. Schedule annual inspections and touch-ups. Safety and Compliance: Coordinate with local fire agencies (e.g., CAL FIRE guidelines). Minimize disruption with traffic control during work. These methods can reduce fire suppression costs by 20-25% in treated areas by limiting fire intensity and spread.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The budget for this canopy bridge reduction project is estimated at \$50,000.00 for initial implementation, with annual maintenance costs ranging from 10% to 20% of the initial outlay. These figures are derived from per-acre cost data from comparable wildfire mitigation efforts in regions like California and the Lake Tahoe Basin, adjusted for the project's 29-acre scope. Key cost components include hand/mechanical thinning and pruning (\$1,400-\$1,900 per acre), which form the bulk of expenses due to labor and equipment needs, and optional prescribed fire integration (\$900-\$1,100 per acre) to optimize efficiency where conditions allow. Site assessment and planning (\$5,000-\$10,000) ensure targeted interventions, while debris disposal and equipment (\$10,000-\$20,000) account for safe removal of materials to prevent secondary hazards. Variations in the budget stem from

site-specific factors such as terrain complexity, vegetation density, and regulatory requirements, which could increase costs in steeper or more remote areas. To maximize value, the budget emphasizes cost-effective methods that yield long-term savings, such as reduced fire suppression expenses (estimated 20-25% lower in treated areas). Other funding opportunities, including CalFire grants, state wildfire programs, or federal initiatives could not only offset costs, but enhanced the projects effectiveness over time, and making the project more sustainable. Annual maintenance ensures enduring benefits, with a focus on adaptive budgeting based on post-implementation monitoring. We anticipate that our Firewise fundraising efforts will enable us to fund all future maintenance efforts needed to maintain this projects effectiveness far into the future. We currently raise roughly \$6,000.00 per year from the community to support our community chipping program and other projects. This prudent allocation supports high-impact wildfire mitigation while aligning with fiscal responsibility and potential for future funding.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

Timeline and Next Steps Month 1: Planning and permits. Months 2-4: Implementation (ideally fall/winter to avoid fire season). Month 5-6: Monitoring and final reporting. Ongoing: Annual maintenance. Next steps: Conduct a site-specific survey for refining budget and scope. Contact local authorities for permits, engage trusted vendors to schedule work segments, consult each segment's property owner.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

This project incorporates innovative wildfire mitigation techniques while building local capacity for sustained resilience. Innovations include integrating mechanical thinning with prescribed burns to create vertical fire breaks and shaded fuel breaks, reducing canopy continuity and ladder fuels more effectively than traditional methods. Use of inert materials in vegetation-free zones and advanced mapping for targeted treatments further enhances efficiency. Emerging tools like long-lasting protective gels may be piloted for high-risk segments. Capacity building focuses on partnerships for technical support, training, and equipment acquisition to address implementation gaps. Through outreach and CWPP integration, it empowers our and surrounding communities with skills for ongoing mitigation, securing grants for similar and larger-scale projects. This dual focus ensures innovative, scalable solutions that strengthen regional wildfire preparedness.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Volunteer Hours Leverage, Leveraged Funds, Efficient Use of Funds, Other

BONUS NARRATIVE

This project offers bonus incentives and additional value beyond core mitigation goals, enhancing its community support. Bonuses included for the 240 homes and 630 residents, extend to free homeowner wildfire assessments and priority access to lower-cost insurance discounts post-implementation, and better peace of mind knowing that wildfire spread has been slowed, reduced, or eliminated. Surrounding communities gain spillover bonuses, such as shared knowledge and possible collaborative fuel reduction events/projects, fostering regional alliances. Innovative elements, are expected to be the spreading of the concept of fuel breaks and canopy reduction to surrounding Firewise communities, emphasizing wildfire mitigation sustainability, and promoting the implementation of similar projects throughout the region. Overall, these bonuses amplify impact, enhance community and regional collaboration, maximize the regions resiliency to wildfire, and increase stakeholder buy-in.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

Map_83_Screenshot 2026-03-12 123411.jpg

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

LOS-CSWF-MQ-2026-03-12_scrufzsc - fixed.pdf, Patti Hughes LOS.scanned.jpeg, Measure Q Grant Proposal LOS LMCT_signed.pdf, swpl_allanerbes_LOS.jpg

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

Summit Road-canopy-bridges_x_____xNzbKJFw0hS-8KiW1Fj2HWA..x_____x_ags_0b8e976c-1f0d-11f1-8ecb-12c20c, Sunset-canopy-bridges_x_____x8qC5Z

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

sanjay khandelwal

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Sanjay Khandelwal, President, Loma Prieta Community Foundation

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 87

Type: Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

Project: Resilience in Motion: Integrating Family Resource Centers and Lift Line for Emergency Preparedness and Safe Evacuation

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

87

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Resilience in Motion: Integrating Family Resource Centers and Lift Line for Emergency Preparedness and Safe Evacuation

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

COMMUNITY BRIDGES

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Population served

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

800-1000

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Michael McMurtry

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Grant Writer and Coordinator

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Tony	Nunez Palomino	[REDACTED]
Raymon	Cancino	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

519 Main St, Watsonville, CA 95076, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.91187040000000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.75883740000000

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

—

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Watsonville City Council District 2

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The project will serve in all of Watsonville and throughout Santa Cruz County.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Yes

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

N/A

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA		
State Water Control Resources Board	NA		
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA		
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

The proposed project builds on existing infrastructure, partnerships, and operational systems, which significantly reduces readiness delays. The Family Resource Center (FRC) network is already established across Santa Cruz County and actively engaged in community outreach, case management, and emergency resource navigation. Lift Line is an operational paratransit service with established routes, trained drivers, dispatch systems, and eligibility processes. Because both systems are currently functioning, implementation can begin immediately upon award. There are no anticipated permitting or environmental review requirements associated with this project, as activities focus on public education, outreach, coordination, and transportation service utilization rather than construction or capital improvements. Potential dependencies include coordination with County emergency management agencies to ensure alignment with existing evacuation protocols and communication systems. However,

Community Bridges has established working relationships through prior emergency response efforts, including during and after the Pajaro flood, which positions the organization to integrate quickly into broader preparedness planning. Another consideration is participant engagement, particularly among seniors and individuals with disabilities who may require targeted outreach and trust-building before registering for emergency transportation support. This risk is mitigated through the trusted presence of the FRC network and its longstanding relationships within vulnerable communities. Overall, the project is considered implementation-ready, with minimal external dependencies and strong operational capacity to launch activities within the proposed timeline.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

50000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

77028

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$31,000	\$15,848	\$0	\$46,848
Fringe Benefits	\$10,604	\$6,087	\$0	\$16,691
Supplies	\$750	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,750
Other Direct Costs	\$1,000	\$500	\$0	\$1,500
Indirect Costs	\$6,646	\$3,593	\$0	\$10,239

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

Resilience in Motion is a countywide emergency preparedness initiative serving Santa Cruz County through an integrated partnership between Community Bridges' Family Resource Centers (FRCs) and Lift Line paratransit services. The project builds on lessons learned during and after the Pajaro flood, when trusted community hubs and coordinated transportation proved critical to protecting vulnerable residents. Family Resource Centers will serve as the backbone of preparedness and recovery efforts by delivering emergency education, conducting outreach to seniors and individuals with disabilities, and coordinating disaster planning resources. Lift Line will function as the operational mobility solution, ensuring that residents who lack reliable transportation can safely evacuate or access essential medical and recovery services during floods, wildfires, and severe storm events. Rather than reacting to emergencies, this initiative formalizes a proactive, countywide preparedness model. Through workshops, one-on-one preparedness planning, and targeted outreach in high-risk flood and wildfire zones, the project will strengthen coordination before disasters occur. The goal is to serve approximately 1,200 vulnerable residents annually with direct preparedness education and emergency mobility support. By integrating trusted community infrastructure with specialized transportation services, Resilience in Motion strengthens Santa Cruz County's ability to protect seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income households during climate-related emergencies. Pajaro serves as proof of concept: when mobility and trusted community networks work together, recovery is faster, safer, and more equitable.

PROJECT START DATE

—

PROJECT END DATE

—

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

Resilience in Motion advances the thematic area of Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity by addressing a critical but often overlooked barrier to equitable access: safe and reliable mobility during and after climate-related emergencies. Santa Cruz County's parks, open spaces, and natural areas are essential community assets that support public health, recreation, and environmental stewardship. However, for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income residents, access to these spaces - and safe evacuation from them during disasters - is not guaranteed. Climate events such as flooding, wildfire, and severe storms increasingly impact parks and surrounding neighborhoods. The Pajaro flood demonstrated that vulnerable residents living near waterways and open space corridors face disproportionate risks when mobility options are limited. During that crisis, coordinated

transportation and trusted community hubs proved essential to ensuring safe evacuation and continued access to essential services. This project formalizes those lessons into a proactive, countywide preparedness model. Family Resource Centers (FRCs) will serve as trusted local hubs delivering emergency preparedness education, resource navigation, and coordinated outreach to vulnerable residents across urban and rural communities. Lift Line will function as the operational mobility system, ensuring seniors and individuals with disabilities can safely evacuate from flood-prone or wildfire-affected areas and access recovery services when parks, roads, or natural areas are impacted. By strengthening emergency mobility and preparedness in communities adjacent to parks, waterways, and wildfire-prone landscapes, the project protects equitable access to natural spaces while prioritizing the safety of those most at risk. Equity is central to this approach: residents who lack private vehicles, live in geographically isolated areas, or face mobility challenges are disproportionately affected during environmental emergencies. Integrating transportation access with trusted community-based outreach reduces these disparities and ensures that preparedness resources reach those who need them most. Resilience in Motion supports long-term community access and environmental equity by aligning human safety with landscape resilience. When residents can move safely, remain connected to resources, and recover more quickly from disasters, parks and natural areas remain inclusive, accessible community assets for all.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Resilience in Motion advances Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Equity Impact, and Climate Resilience Value through an integrated emergency preparedness and mobility model serving Santa Cruz County. Multi-Benefit Outcomes: This project delivers layered and mutually reinforcing benefits. By integrating the Family Resource Centers (FRCs) with Lift Line transportation services, the initiative strengthens emergency preparedness, improves evacuation coordination, protects vulnerable residents, and supports continuity of care during and after disasters. In addition to enhancing public safety, the project reduces strain on emergency response systems by proactively educating residents and establishing mobility plans before disasters occur. The model also supports public health by ensuring seniors and individuals with disabilities can access medical care and recovery services during disruptions. These combined benefits - safety, mobility, health access, and coordinated disaster response - demonstrate a comprehensive, multi-benefit approach that extends beyond a single service or outcome. Equity Impact: Climate-related disasters disproportionately affect residents with limited mobility, low incomes, language barriers, or lack of access to private vehicles. Seniors, individuals with disabilities, farmworker families, and residents in flood-prone or wildfire-prone areas face heightened risks during evacuation and recovery. This project directly addresses structural inequities by prioritizing outreach and preparedness planning for those most vulnerable. The FRC network serves as a trusted access point in both urban and rural communities, ensuring culturally responsive, bilingual engagement. By strengthening mobility access through Lift Line and targeted preparedness education, the initiative reduces barriers that historically limit equitable emergency response and recovery outcomes. Climate Resilience Value: Santa Cruz County faces increasing climate threats, including flooding, wildfire, and severe storms. The Pajaro flood underscored the urgent need for coordinated, mobility-centered preparedness strategies. This project transitions from reactive emergency response to proactive resilience planning by formalizing lessons learned during and after that disaster. Through workshops, one-on-one preparedness planning, and coordinated transportation readiness, the initiative strengthens evacuation capacity and community adaptation to climate-related risks. By aligning trusted community infrastructure with emergency mobility systems, the project enhances the County's long-term resilience and readiness for future climate events. Together, these prioritization principles demonstrate that Resilience in Motion is not simply a transportation or outreach effort - it is a systems-based resilience strategy designed to protect vulnerable populations while strengthening the County's emergency preparedness framework.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Resilience in Motion advances Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, and Readiness by strengthening Santa Cruz County's emergency preparedness infrastructure through an integrated, community-based mobility model. Public Benefit: This project delivers broad, countywide public benefit by improving emergency readiness for vulnerable residents while strengthening overall disaster response systems. Seniors, individuals with disabilities, low-income households, and residents living in flood-prone or wildfire-prone areas face disproportionate risks during climate-related emergencies. By providing preparedness education, coordinated outreach, and mobility planning through the Family Resource Centers (FRCs) and Lift Line, the project protects those most at risk while reducing strain on emergency services. Improved evacuation readiness, continuity of medical access, and coordinated transportation benefit not only individual participants but the broader community by enhancing safety, reducing preventable emergency interventions, and strengthening local response capacity. Strategic Alignment: The project aligns with countywide climate adaptation, emergency management, and equity priorities. Santa Cruz County has experienced increasing climate-related threats, including flooding, wildfire, and severe storm events. Lessons learned during and after the Pajaro flood demonstrated the need for proactive coordination between trusted community hubs and transportation systems. This initiative

formalizes that model, transitioning from reactive disaster response to structured preparedness planning. By integrating emergency education with operational mobility infrastructure, the project complements existing emergency management frameworks and advances long-term climate resilience goals. Readiness: The initiative is implementation-ready. The FRC network is already established and actively serving communities across the County. Lift Line is an operational transportation system with trained drivers, dispatch protocols, and established service areas. Existing partnerships with local agencies and community stakeholders support coordinated emergency planning efforts. The project does not require permitting, construction, or environmental review, allowing activities to begin immediately upon award. Staff capacity, outreach systems, and operational infrastructure are already in place, minimizing startup delays and ensuring efficient deployment of resources. Together, these elements demonstrate that Resilience in Motion is not a conceptual effort but a scalable, ready-to-launch strategy that delivers measurable public benefit while advancing the County's climate and emergency preparedness priorities.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

Resilience in Motion will serve vulnerable residents across Santa Cruz County, with a primary focus on seniors, individuals with disabilities, low-income households, and residents living in flood-prone or wildfire-prone areas. These populations face disproportionate risks during climate-related emergencies due to mobility limitations, lack of private transportation, language barriers, and economic constraints. Seniors and individuals with disabilities are a central user group for this project. Many rely on paratransit services such as Lift Line for daily mobility and are at heightened risk during evacuation scenarios. Without coordinated transportation planning, these residents may be unable to evacuate safely, access medical appointments, or obtain essential recovery services during and after disasters. Low-income households and farmworker families - particularly in communities such as Pajaro, Watsonville, Live Oak, and other unincorporated areas - also face increased vulnerability. Many live in housing located near waterways, agricultural fields, or hillside areas with elevated flood or wildfire risk. Limited financial resources and lack of reliable transportation further compound their exposure to emergency disruptions. Rural and geographically isolated communities in the San Lorenzo Valley and North Coast areas are another priority group. In these regions, evacuation routes may be limited, and access to centralized services can be delayed during severe weather or wildfire events. Coordinated outreach through the Family Resource Centers (FRCs) will help ensure preparedness education and mobility planning reach these residents before disasters occur. The project will prioritize individuals who lack access to private vehicles, have functional or access needs, require bilingual engagement, or are already connected to FRC case management and Lift Line services. Through targeted workshops, one-on-one preparedness planning, and emergency mobility coordination, the initiative aims to serve approximately 1,000-1,200 vulnerable residents annually. By focusing on those most at risk while strengthening countywide preparedness systems, Resilience in Motion ensures that emergency planning efforts are inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the diverse needs of Santa Cruz County communities.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Resilience in Motion advances Public Safety and Health and Well-being by strengthening emergency preparedness and mobility coordination for vulnerable residents across Santa Cruz County. Climate-related disasters - including flooding, wildfire, and severe storms - pose significant risks to seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income households who may lack reliable transportation or access to timely emergency information. This project addresses those risks directly by integrating trusted Family Resource Centers (FRCs) with Lift Line transportation services to create a proactive preparedness system. Public safety is enhanced by ensuring residents understand evacuation procedures, know how to access transportation assistance, and have individualized preparedness plans in place before a disaster occurs. Through workshops, one-on-one preparedness consultations, and targeted outreach in flood- and wildfire-prone areas, the project reduces preventable emergency response burdens and improves safe evacuation outcomes. Health and well-being are strengthened by maintaining continuity of care during emergencies. Lift Line provides critical access to medical appointments, pharmacies, and recovery services, particularly for seniors and individuals with disabilities. FRC staff will support residents in developing emergency plans that prioritize medication access, mobility coordination, and post-disaster resource navigation - reducing isolation and health complications during service disruptions. Outreach and engagement are central to this model. The FRC network's longstanding presence in both urban and rural communities allows for culturally responsive, bilingual communication tailored to the needs of diverse populations. Engagement strategies will include community workshops, partnerships with senior housing complexes, collaboration with local service providers, and direct outreach to high-risk neighborhoods. By leveraging trusted relationships established during and after the Pajaro flood, the initiative builds on community trust to encourage participation in preparedness planning. The project aims to serve approximately 1,000-1,200 residents annually through direct education, preparedness coordination, and emergency mobility support. By aligning mobility infrastructure with community-based engagement, Resilience in Motion strengthens the County's ability to protect its most vulnerable residents while enhancing overall public safety and community health resilience.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant owns the property for the proposed project

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

The proposed project does not include ground disturbance, capital improvements, or construction activities. Instead, the initiative leverages existing infrastructure, programs, and partnerships to deliver emergency preparedness education and mobility coordination services across Santa Cruz County. Community Bridges is well positioned to execute this program through its established Family Resource Center (FRC) network and the operational Lift Line paratransit system. FRCs already serve as trusted community hubs that provide resource navigation, case management, and community outreach to vulnerable residents, including seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income households. Lift Line is an active transportation service with trained drivers, dispatch systems, and established routes throughout the County. Because these systems are already in place, the project can be implemented immediately upon award without delays associated with permitting, construction, or environmental review. Staff capacity, community partnerships, and outreach channels are already established, allowing the project to focus on expanding preparedness education, mobility coordination, and emergency planning. The program will build upon Community Bridges' experience responding to recent climate-related emergencies, including the Pajaro flood. Lessons learned during that response demonstrated the importance of trusted community hubs and coordinated transportation services in ensuring vulnerable residents can safely evacuate, access medical care, and connect to recovery resources. By utilizing existing infrastructure and proven service delivery systems, the project is implementation-ready and can efficiently deliver measurable outcomes related to emergency preparedness, public safety, and community resilience.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

Resilience in Motion will strengthen emergency preparedness and mobility coordination across Santa Cruz County by integrating Community Bridges' Family Resource Centers (FRCs) with Lift Line paratransit services. The project builds on lessons learned during and after the Pajaro flood, when coordinated transportation and trusted community hubs played a critical role in protecting vulnerable residents and connecting them to recovery resources. The project will implement a proactive, countywide preparedness model focused on education, mobility planning, and emergency coordination for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income households who may face barriers to safe evacuation during disasters. Family Resource Centers will serve as the community-based backbone of the initiative. Through workshops, community presentations, and one-on-one consultations, FRC staff will provide emergency preparedness education and assist residents in developing individualized disaster plans. These plans will address evacuation readiness, communication planning, medication access, and mobility needs during flood, wildfire, or severe storm events. Outreach will prioritize residents in flood-prone areas such as Pajaro and Watsonville, wildfire-prone communities in the San Lorenzo Valley and North Coast, and neighborhoods with high concentrations of seniors and individuals with disabilities. Lift Line will function as the operational mobility component of the project. The program will coordinate with residents to identify transportation needs in advance of emergencies and ensure individuals who rely on paratransit services understand how to access transportation assistance during evacuation scenarios or service disruptions. This proactive planning allows transportation providers and local emergency partners to better identify residents who may require additional assistance, including those with ambulatory or medical needs. The project will also include targeted outreach and enrollment efforts to connect residents with preparedness resources and emergency mobility planning. Engagement strategies will include collaboration with senior housing communities, local service providers, community organizations, and trusted leaders within vulnerable neighborhoods. Through these coordinated efforts, the project aims to directly serve approximately 1,000-1,200 residents annually with preparedness education, emergency planning, and mobility coordination services. By aligning trusted community infrastructure with operational transportation systems, Resilience in Motion strengthens Santa Cruz County's ability to safely evacuate vulnerable residents, maintain access to essential services during disasters, and improve long-term community resilience.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The proposed budget supports the implementation of Resilience in Motion, a countywide emergency preparedness and mobility coordination initiative integrating Community Bridges' Family Resource Centers (FRCs) with Lift Line paratransit services. Funding will support personnel, program delivery costs, outreach activities, and limited administrative support necessary to successfully implement the project. Personnel: Personnel costs represent the primary investment in the project and support staff responsible for emergency preparedness education, community outreach, and program coordination. FRC staff will conduct preparedness workshops, provide one-on-one disaster planning consultations, and coordinate outreach to vulnerable populations across Santa Cruz County. Staff will also assist residents in developing evacuation plans and connecting to mobility resources through Lift Line services. Fringe Benefits: Fringe benefits are calculated according to Community Bridges' standard benefit rate and support employee health insurance, payroll taxes, and other required benefits associated with personnel supporting project implementation. Travel: Travel funds support local transportation and mileage reimbursement for staff conducting outreach, workshops, and preparedness planning activities throughout Santa Cruz County. Travel is necessary to reach both urban and rural

communities, including flood-prone areas such as Pajaro and Watsonville and wildfire-prone regions such as the San Lorenzo Valley and North Coast. **Supplies:** Program supplies will support the development and distribution of emergency preparedness materials, workshop resources, and printed educational guides. Supplies may also include outreach materials, preparedness checklists, and translation of educational resources to ensure accessibility for diverse communities. **Contractual / Consultants:** Limited contractual services may be used to support specialized services such as translation, interpretation, culturally responsive outreach support, or technical assistance for emergency preparedness education. **Other Direct Costs:** Other direct costs may include workshop-related expenses, community engagement events, meeting space when necessary, and materials used to support preparedness education and enrollment in emergency mobility planning. **Indirect Costs:** Indirect costs support the administrative infrastructure required to manage the program, including financial oversight, reporting, compliance, and organizational support services necessary to ensure successful program implementation. Overall, the budget prioritizes direct service delivery and community engagement while leveraging existing infrastructure through the FRC network and Lift Line transportation services. By building on established systems, the project maximizes efficiency and ensures that funding directly supports preparedness education, mobility coordination, and improved disaster resilience for vulnerable residents across Santa Cruz County.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

Resilience in Motion will be implemented over a 12-month period and is designed to launch immediately upon award because it builds on existing infrastructure and programs operated by Community Bridges. The Family Resource Center (FRC) network and Lift Line transportation system are already operational, allowing the project to focus on program coordination, community outreach, and preparedness education without delays associated with permitting, construction, or infrastructure development. **Months 1-2: Program Coordination and Planning** During the initial phase, project staff will finalize coordination protocols between the Family Resource Centers and Lift Line transportation services. Staff will review lessons learned from recent climate-related emergencies, including the Pajaro flood, to refine outreach strategies and preparedness education materials. Partnerships with local agencies, senior housing communities, and community organizations will be confirmed to support outreach and workshop delivery. **Months 3-10: Community Outreach and Preparedness Implementation** The core program activities will take place during this phase. FRC staff will conduct community workshops, presentations, and one-on-one preparedness consultations across Santa Cruz County. Outreach will focus on seniors, individuals with disabilities, and residents living in flood-prone and wildfire-prone areas. Participants will receive guidance on evacuation planning, emergency communication strategies, and continuity of medical care during disasters. Staff will also assist residents in identifying transportation needs and understanding how to access Lift Line services during emergencies or service disruptions. Coordination with senior housing communities and local service providers will help ensure vulnerable residents are aware of preparedness resources and mobility support options. **Months 11-12: Evaluation and Program Refinement** During the final phase, program staff will evaluate outreach efforts, participation levels, and preparedness outcomes. Data collected throughout the project - including workshop participation, individual preparedness consultations, and emergency mobility planning enrollments - will be reviewed to assess program impact. Findings will be used to refine future preparedness outreach strategies and strengthen coordination between community-based service providers and transportation systems. This evaluation phase will also support reporting requirements and inform long-term sustainability of the preparedness and mobility coordination model. By leveraging existing programs and partnerships, the project can move quickly from planning to implementation, ensuring vulnerable residents receive timely preparedness education and mobility planning support before the next climate-related emergency occurs.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

Resilience in Motion represents an innovative, systems-based approach to emergency preparedness by integrating community-based service hubs with operational transportation infrastructure. While emergency preparedness education and paratransit services typically operate independently, this project intentionally links Community Bridges' Family Resource Centers (FRCs) with Lift Line transportation services to create a coordinated preparedness and mobility model for vulnerable residents across Santa Cruz County. The innovation of this project lies in shifting from a reactive disaster response model to a proactive preparedness framework that identifies mobility needs before an emergency occurs. Through the FRC network, residents will receive personalized preparedness education and assistance developing evacuation plans that account for medical, mobility, and transportation needs. By connecting these plans to Lift Line services in advance, the program allows transportation providers and local partners to better understand and prepare for residents who may require evacuation assistance or specialized mobility support during disasters. This model is informed directly by lessons learned during the Pajaro flood, where trusted community hubs and coordinated transportation played a critical role in ensuring residents could access services and recover safely. Rather than treating those experiences as isolated emergency responses, this project formalizes those lessons into a replicable preparedness system that can strengthen countywide resilience. Community Bridges has the capacity and experience necessary to implement this initiative effectively. The organization operates an established network of Family Resource Centers that provide outreach, case management, and community engagement services across Santa Cruz County. These centers maintain longstanding relationships with vulnerable populations and are trusted access points for culturally responsive, bilingual support. Lift Line is an operational paratransit service with trained drivers, dispatch systems, and established service areas throughout the County. This existing infrastructure provides a reliable mobility platform that can be leveraged to support emergency preparedness planning without requiring new transportation systems or capital investment. Together, these programs provide a strong operational foundation for implementation. Staff expertise, established partnerships, and proven community engagement strategies ensure that the project can be launched immediately and scaled effectively. By combining trusted community

infrastructure with transportation coordination, Resilience in Motion introduces an innovative preparedness model that strengthens both emergency readiness and long-term community resilience.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Volunteer Hours Leverage, Leveraged Funds, Efficient Use of Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

Resilience in Motion is strengthened through strong partnerships, leveraged resources, and efficient use of existing infrastructure to maximize community impact while minimizing new costs. **Strong Partnership / Collaboration** The project builds on longstanding collaborations between Community Bridges programs, local service providers, and community organizations across Santa Cruz County. The initiative integrates the Family Resource Centers (FRCs), trusted community hubs that provide resource navigation and case management, with Lift Line paratransit services, the region's established transportation provider for seniors and individuals with disabilities. In addition, Community Bridges works closely with senior housing communities, disability service organizations, local government agencies, and community-based partners to expand outreach and preparedness education. These partnerships allow the project to reach vulnerable residents efficiently while aligning efforts with broader emergency preparedness and resilience initiatives throughout the county. **Volunteer Hours Leverage** Volunteers play an important role in supporting outreach and community engagement activities. Community volunteers and community partners will assist with workshop logistics, outreach events, and distribution of preparedness materials. Volunteers also help connect residents to available services by sharing information within their communities, helping to expand the reach of preparedness education. By incorporating volunteer engagement, the program increases community participation while strengthening local ownership of disaster preparedness efforts. **Leveraged Funds** This project leverages significant existing investments in Community Bridges programs and infrastructure. The Family Resource Center network and Lift Line transportation services are already established and operational, allowing the project to build on these resources rather than creating new systems. Existing funding that supports FRC services, community outreach, and transportation operations contributes to the program's overall impact, ensuring Measure Q funds are used strategically to expand preparedness education and mobility coordination rather than duplicating existing services. **Efficient Use of Funds** The project is designed to maximize efficiency by utilizing existing staff expertise, community partnerships, and operational transportation systems. Because the initiative does not require construction, capital improvements, or new infrastructure, funds can be directed toward direct community engagement, preparedness education, and mobility coordination. By aligning trusted community-based outreach with an operational transportation system, the project delivers measurable preparedness outcomes while minimizing administrative overhead and startup costs. This approach ensures that resources are used effectively to strengthen emergency preparedness and protect vulnerable residents across Santa Cruz County.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Measure Q internal budget.xlsx](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

[Project Timeline.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Michael McMurtry

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Grant Writer and Coordinator

SIGNATURE DATE

03/10/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 96 Type: Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Kids2Parks

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

96

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Kids2Parks

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

—

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Population served

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

2,824

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Kat Bailey

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Philanthropy & Sales Director

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

1543 Pacific Ave, Santa Cruz, CA, 95060

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.97622840000000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.02720810000000

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The Kids2Parks program is a three-county program that serves Title-1 students in Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, and coastal San Mateo counties. We are seeking Measure Q funding for students at Santa Cruz county Title-1 schools.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

The Kids2Parks program is county-wide and falls under several council districts.

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The Kids2Parks program serves students at 26 eligible Title-1 schools across Santa Cruz County. Eligible schools are part of the

following school districts: Bonny Doon Union Elementary, Happy Valley Elementary, Live Oak Elementary, Pajaro Valley Unified, San Lorenzo Valley Unified, Santa Cruz Elementary, SBE - Watsonville Prep, Scotts Valley Unified, and Soquel Union Elementary.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 30 - Dawn Addis

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Not sure

DAC/SDAC NOTES

Census tracts identified as disadvantaged in the United States Council on Environmental Quality Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool that are served by the Kids2Parks program: Number: 06087101000 Number: 06087121500 Number: 06087110700 Number: 06087110600 Number: 06087110502 Number: 06087110501 Number: 06087110200 Number: 06087110100

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

N/A

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA		
State Water Control Resources Board	NA		
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA		
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

9

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

The Kids2Parks program is an ongoing partnership between Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks, California State Parks, and local teachers and administrators at Title-1 schools. The program has been running for more than 10 years and has served more than 16,000 students. The Kids2Parks runs during the academic year (August - June). There are no project delays or dependencies anticipated for the academic year 2026/27.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

14915

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

109637

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Travel	\$1	\$0	\$0	\$1
Personnel	\$0	\$15,550	\$0	\$15,550
Fringe Benefits	\$0	\$2,880	\$0	\$2,880
Supplies	\$0	\$900	\$0	\$900
Contractual / Consultants	\$13,125	\$13,125	\$0	\$26,250
Other Direct Costs	\$0	\$50,900	\$0	\$50,900
Indirect Costs	\$1,790	\$11,367	\$0	\$13,157

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The Santa Cruz State Park district is a wealthy one: rich in redwood forests to explore, miles of beaches to walk and spot migrating whales, coastal bluffs full of wildlife and wildflowers, and historic buildings that illuminate our shared past. But there are children in our community who never visit these critical shared public spaces. Field trips once provided access to State Parks to all students, but transportation budget cuts have led many Title-1 schools in our area to drastically limit or eliminate field trip funding. The Kids2Parks program was created to bring those students into state parks, and make sure they know that they belong there. The Kids2Parks program brings 2nd- 4th grade students from eligible Title-1 schools in Santa Cruz county to the Castro Adobe State Historic Park, Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, Natural Bridges State Beach, the Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park, Seacliff State Beach, the Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, and Wilder Ranch State Park. A field trip can be life-changing, and a Kids2Parks field trip is specifically tailored to students who may never have stepped foot in a State Park. Friends has been a strong partner and collaborator with State Parks for 50 years. Through powerful community fundraising and by leveraging day-use fees collected at State Parks, Friends is in a unique position to supercharge support for outdoor access and ensure that our cherished State Parks are thriving and available to all.

PROJECT START DATE

09/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

Thousands of students in our community experience the reality of living mere miles from state beaches and redwood parks without access to these public lands. The issues affecting access can range from park entry fees that are beyond a family's budget, immigrants' fear of people in uniform, lack of transportation, lack of days off, and fear of the ocean or forest. Field trips were once a solution to many of these barriers, but budget cuts have drastically reduced or eliminated field trip funding at Title-1 schools Santa Cruz county. In 2015, Friends and California State Parks launched Kids2Parks to pay the bus transportation costs for these field trips, thereby increasing access to local state parks and their educational programming to students at Title-1 schools. Since 2015, Friends has introduced our beautiful state parks to over 16,000 students from low-income communities in the tri-county area. Friends seeks funding from Measure Q to cover the transportation costs for field trips for students in Santa Cruz county.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

There are multiple beneficial outcomes from Kids2Parks trips, as highlighted by teachers who have provided feedback after their field trips. Feedback indicates that many of the students served by the Kids2Parks program do not have regular access to the

State Parks in our community, and the field trips leave a lasting impact. The Kids2Parks program reaches students in an equitable way by focusing on Title-1 schools, where many students face challenges to accessing public lands. The families of these students often work multiple jobs and lack flexible time off or access to vehicles, and day-use parking rates often fall outside these families' budgets. The Kids2Parks program reaches these students and their families through their schools and provides positive, high-quality educational experiences that encourage them to become life-long state park visitors. Friends fundraises creatively in the community by asking park visitors to round up their purchase in our four ParkStores to benefit Kids2Parks through our Pennies for Parks program. Friends receives monthly donations to Kids2Parks from the Envirotoken Program at New Leaf Community Markets, which allows customers who bring reusable bags to their stores to donate their bag fee a local nonprofit. Friends also solicits donations from local businesses and offers the opportunity to pay for trips for an entire class.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The Kids2Parks program provides public benefit to students at Santa Cruz Title-1 schools by providing them with high-quality, educational outdoor experiences. The Kids2Parks program also encourages these students to return with their families and further explore the benefits of time spent outdoors in public lands. After more than ten years of operation, the Kids2Parks program stands ready to continue serving students and their families in Santa Cruz county. The Kids2Parks program aligns strategically with Measure Q by focusing on equitable access to state parks, particularly for low-income students and families in the Santa Cruz community who face barriers to these public spaces.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

The population served by the Kids2Parks program are 2nd-4th grade students enrolled in Title-1 schools in Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, and San Mateo counties. Friends seeks funding from Measure Q funds for field trips that serve Title-1 students in Santa Cruz county in academic year 26/27. In academic year 2024/2025, the Kids2Parks program provided 99 field trips for 3,504 students from 33 Title-1 schools. Of the Santa Cruz students, the majority are from 13 elementary schools in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District. These students are 76% Hispanic, 75% are defined as Socioeconomically Disadvantaged by the California Department of Education, and 48% are English learners. Watsonville is a rural Latino farming community located in south Santa Cruz County.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

The Kids2Parks program is ultimately about so much more than field trips: it's about connecting students to State Parks by bringing them there, and making sure they are told that they belong in parks and the parks belong to them. The vision is that these students and their families will continue a relationship with State Parks beyond their initial visit, and that they will see parks and public lands as places of solace, inspiration, recreation, and rejuvenation. Kids2Parks programs are designed for students who are not used to spending time in state parks, and emphasis is placed on safety, comfort, and belonging. Before the field trip itself, students are given a brief virtual introduction with the State Park interpretive ranger who will conduct this program. This introduction builds familiarity and excitement, and gives the students a chance to ask questions and allay any fears they might have about spending time outdoors or around people in uniform. State Park staff report that this introduction is particularly helpful for students who have never visited a State Park. Right at the beginning of the field trip, State Park staff emphasize that the parks belong to the students and encourage them to come back and explore with their friends and family. State Park staff talk about low-cost options for families who cannot afford day use parking fees, such as the library park pass program. For trips that take place at a state beach, ocean safety is discussed and students are taught to never turn their back on the ocean. State Park staff report that students who participate in Kids2Parks programs are particularly excited to spend time learning outside. In addition to learning about the park's history and the importance of conservation, students are encouraged to think about how they might grow up and work to protect parks and enjoy them with their own families.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

K2P field trips take place in Santa Cruz-area State Parks: LIST

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

The Kids2Parks program funds State Park field trips and does not require ground disturbance or capital/site improvements.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

The scope of the Kids2Parks project is to reach out to teachers and administrators at eligible schools and assist them with applying to the program if needed; work closely with State Park interpretive staff to set a sustainable and equitable number of field trips for each academic year; provide troubleshooting and support to State Park staff and teachers when issues arise in booking field trips; pay the invoices for buses chartered for these trips; and solicit and organize feedback from teachers and administrators about how the program benefits the students served.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The budget for the Kids2Parks program is determined by the cost of the buses booked for each individual field trip. This can vary widely across school districts, but the average cost of a bus for a Kids2Parks trip in Santa Cruz county is \$375. In academic year 26/27, we anticipate funding 70 Kids2Parks field trips within Santa Cruz county. Friends of Santa Cruz State parks are seeking Measure Q funds for 35 of these trips. The other 35 trips are funded by a variety of sources including individual contributions, business contributions, and other foundation grants. Personnel Costs - represents 25% of Outreach Coordinator staff time to run the Kids2Parks program. Fringe Benefits - 18% of personnel expenses. Other Direct Costs - Friends funds Interpretive Staff Ranger positions throughout the Santa Cruz State Park district. The percentage of those salaries dedicated to running Kids2Parks programs is shown as Other Direct Costs. Contractual Costs - bus rentals as detailed above. Indirect Costs - 12% of expenses.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

Work on the Kids2Parks program occurs year-round. In spring 2026, Friends staff will meet with State Park interpretive staff and together determine how many Kids2Parks field trips can be made available for the coming academic year, and make any necessary updates to the field trip descriptions, website and applications. Friends staff then conduct outreach to teachers and schools and prepares for the application process, which opens at the end of July and lasts for 3 weeks. By September 1st, approved applicants are contacted and instructed to book their field trips directly with State Park staff. Friends staff works with State Park interpretive staff to ensure that approved Kids2Parks applicants are given access to a priority registration period, particularly for field trip programs that fill up quickly every year. Trips run from September through end of May, and transportation invoices are sent to Friends by teachers and school administrators and processed throughout that time period. Fundraising for the Kids2Parks program happens year-round in order to ensure adequate access to the program.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks is a vital partner with California State Parks, creatively working to ensure our cherished local parks and beaches are thriving and available to all. Friends' innovative and collaborative community partnership provides support and investment for education, equity and inclusion, conservation, facilities improvements, historic preservation and cultural events. Founded in 1976, Friends is passionately dedicated to the preservation of our spectacular natural environment and rich cultural history. Friends also operates five ParkStores, offering nature- and history-themed merchandise for sale to benefit local parks and beaches. Friends funds the administration of the Kids2Parks program and works in close collaboration with teachers and school administrators in Santa Cruz county and State Park Interpretive staff. As part of the operating agreement between Friends and California State Parks, Friends also funds the salaries of nearly all State Park Interpretive staff in the Santa Cruz State Park District, and pays for program supplies used in field trips, such as candle wax, art supplies, corn masa, propane, and scientific supplies. All grants and donations received by Friends go toward a thriving education and interpretation program within state parks. Friends works to hone and grow the Kids2Parks program with close collaboration and feedback from teachers and school administrators in the tri-county area. Every year, Friends undertakes significant outreach to teachers through newsletters, the Friends website, and social media channels. Friends staff work closely with teachers and State Park interpretive staff through the process of applying for and scheduling field trips. The capacity of the Kids2Parks program to serve students in Santa Cruz county is greater because of this collaboration.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Leveraged Funds, Efficient Use of Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

The following quotes come from teachers in Santa Cruz county who attended a Kids2Parks field trip with their classes: "Gives my students the opportunity to explore our local parks. Most of my students had never been to Henry Cowell even though they live 30

minutes away. They (students) loved to see the redwoods in person" -Maria Rocha, Mintie White Elementary School - Henry Cowell I loved exposing my students to a new experience that they may not be able to get at home. 90% of them had never been there, including myself. Please continue with free access. -Maribel Zuniga, Ohlone Elementary School - Henry Cowell I really appreciate the experience and the donations. Our students usually don't have a chance to visit even in a town close to our town. Thanks again. I feel grateful and appreciative of all the volunteers and everyone who helps out make this possible." -Elida Guerrero, 3rd Grade at Freedom Elementary - Wilder Ranch

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

Friends_One-PageHandout2025_8.5x11_noQR.pdf

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

41_Page_37.jpg, 42.jpg, K2P Thank You.jpg

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Katherine Bailey

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Katherine Bailey, Philanthropy & Sales Director

SIGNATURE DATE

03/11/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 97

Type: Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

Project: Bringing culturally-relevant engagement on climate and nature to the Pajaro Valley: the Dia de Esperanza Festival and building an "Esperanza Corps"

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

97

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Bringing culturally-relevant engagement on climate and nature to the Pajaro Valley: the Dia de Esperanza Festival and building an "Esperanza Corps"

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Esperanza Community Farms

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Esperanza Community Farms

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Outreach population

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

700

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Courtney Scott

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Deputy Director

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Mireya	Gomez-Contreras	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

275 Lee Rd, Watsonville, CA 95076, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.90736790000000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.78885060000000

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

—

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

U. S. Representative 20th District State Senator 17th District State Assembly 29th District County Board of Ed Board - Area 7
Cabrillo Comm. College Board - Area 7 Pajaro Valley USD Board - Area 7 County Supervisor 2nd District Pajaro Valley Water
Mgt. , Division A

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Watsonville, CA and the Pajaro Valley in Santa Cruz County

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

US Council on Environmental Quality

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

N/A

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA		
State Water Control Resources Board	NA		
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA		
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

This project is ready to begin immediately. The Dia de Esperanza Festival is already planned for October and will go ahead with or without this funding. The additional elements we propose to add through this proposal, including the education activities and the ongoing Esperanza Corps, will be ready to be added to our work plan as soon as funding is approved. In addition to using the event production template from previous years, we've established a strong network of 7 organizational event advisors who are ready to support this year's Festival. Of the more than 30 event volunteers who supported the event last year, over 50% were returning volunteers from the 2024 festival. Finally, we already have 3 sponsorships secured, totaling over \$7K. We anticipate the

base cost of the festival to be close to \$30K this year, which we will cover through sponsorships, but Measure Q funding will allow us to integrate meaningful, relevant, and actionable education and engagement experiences for people of all ages and backgrounds.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

49207

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

49207

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$16,740	\$0	\$0	\$16,740
Fringe Benefits	\$2,511	\$0	\$0	\$2,511
Supplies	\$1,300	\$0	\$0	\$1,300
Indirect Costs	\$7,506	\$0	\$0	\$7,506
Travel	\$1,500	\$0	\$0	\$1,500
Contractual / Consultants	\$9,000	\$0	\$0	\$9,000
Other Direct Costs	\$10,650	\$0	\$0	\$10,650

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The "Dia de Esperanza" Festival, hosted by Esperanza Community Farms, aims to bring the Pajaro Valley together to enjoy nature through farm tours and outdoor activities, and to celebrate and learn about organic and regenerative agriculture in the County. Last year, over 600 members of the public were welcomed onto the Land, enjoyed learning about protecting our natural environment, visited our organic farm, and celebrated the richness of organic and regenerative agriculture on the Central Coast. The festival is a bilingual and multicultural celebration and event that offers educational, creative, and interactive experiences - all aimed at drawing the community onto the land, and inspiring them to become involved in protecting nature. In the past, the festival has offered bird watching, bike riding, composting workshops, and outdoor meditation classes. Our key partners in this project have been The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, City of Watsonville Public Works Dept., Ecology Action, Mujeres en Accion, Regeneracion Pajaro Valley and others. We propose, with Measure Q funding, to leverage this festival in two ways to help Measure Q achieve its five-year vision: 1. Community Engagement/Volunteer Stewardship: To build a cohort of 50 or more Spanish-speaking South County residents to engage in city and county-wide advocacy and stewardship events and activities on nature, climate, and organic/regenerative agriculture. 2. Access/Education: To provide an opportunity for safe and equitable access to nature in South County and to educate members of the public about water resource management, soil health, wildlife & habitat protection

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Agricultural and Work Land Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

For the past two years, Esperanza Community Farms has strategically focused on expanding community involvement in organic and regenerative agriculture and promoting education about the water, wildlife, and climate benefits that such agriculture can bring to our county. We have done this primarily by planning and hosting the Organic Agriculture Festival at our Watsonville farm and on the neighboring Watsonville Slough Farm, owned by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County. We propose, this year, with Measure Q funding, to theme the festival to teach festival-goers about the water cycle and how they can protect our water resources, as well as the ecological and wildlife benefits of farming organically and regeneratively. We will also leverage the festival to develop a large cohort of community members ready to engage as environmental advocates in future county and city events and processes,

as well as future Esperanza Community Farms events that draw the public into nature, such as our annual U-Pick event at our organic farm, which takes place on conservation lands managed by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County. The unique physical setting of Esperanza Community Farms allows us to demonstrate to visitors how natural wildlife and agriculture can coexist through the application of agroecological principles.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The Dia de Esperanza Festival and the Esperanza Corps have been designed from the beginning to achieve multi-benefit outcomes and to have an equity impact. As an organization, we believe that preserving nature and combating climate change require all hands on deck, and this festival and the newly proposed Esperanza Corps are about engaging a population that has typically not engaged in these processes. Dia de Esperanza is the only organic agriculture festival in this area, and it is held in Watsonville to ensure we can reach the population with the greatest need for engagement. The event is specifically designed as a racial equity project and to ensure language access for the Spanish-speaking population in South County. We ensure a safe, fully accessible nature experience at the festival, where families and attendees also learn about protecting our natural environment through organic agriculture, composting, water conservation, and more. This is a festival where kids will enjoy playing in an open field, on a farm, in a jump house, and in the sun. The festival is designed to be an active, exploratory, and connecting space where natural and cultural resources are celebrated and protected, and the additions proposed in this application will significantly strengthen the event's education and engagement activities, so people walk away informed and ready to act on nature and climate issues. The idea for the Esperanza Corps comes from our direct experience in partnering with underrepresented communities like Watsonville, and working together on complex solutions to complex challenges - like improving the food system and tackling climate change. We believe these complex solutions work best over the long term, and our approach is to work steadily and invest heavily in building trust. We have established trust with this community, and one of the things we have done very well is open doors for people to become directly involved in civic and change movements. We are cultural translators and movement-building facilitators, helping people become involved without the hesitation and self-doubt that are common in unfacilitated spaces and processes. This is work we will now be able to incorporate into the Festival and beyond due to the creation of the Esperanza Corps, which specifically aims to engage this community so they are ready to participate in civic engagement processes, to build climate resilience in their community, and so they know how to respond to climate change crises, whether it be wildfires, flooding, or another natural disaster.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Building awareness and skills to advocate for environmental and climate-related challenges requires meaningful participation from the entire county, and residents in South County have typically been excluded from these processes. The engagement proposed in this application not only benefits the community directly involved, but also improves the ultimate outcome and the pace of the work when as many of the County population as possible are aware and equipped with the skills to take action at any given point on any given climate problem, such as fires and floods. As a specific example, when the Pajaro River flooded a few years ago, we were contacted about two weeks later by some of our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) members who live there. They called us for help, saying they felt ignored. They had been trying to call the larger nonprofits and county departments providing disaster relief, but they weren't getting the help they needed and were seeking support for basic needs like food, water, and personal hygiene. Our team mobilized quickly and created a short 3-minute film with these CSA members, which helped put pressure on the responding organizations. The people involved felt more powerful to speak directly to the responders and local governments. This taught us the value of equipping the community with an understanding of how to influence local governments, how to be an agent of change, and how to navigate in response to climate-driven crises (and to learn this in advance of crises). The Esperanza Corps will enable skill-building and civic engagement in a group, building power and collective knowledge, and we know that groups working together to navigate complicated systems will have more success when they know what they are asking for and how to ask for it. This is the experience and training that the Corps will receive through the activities and events we plan throughout the year.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

The Dia de Esperanza festival was originally designed by our staff to rebuild a local social culture of reciprocity and informed decision-making, in particular in the food supply and agriculture sectors. As we engaged in deeper and deeper conversations with our partners, such as WIC, Salud Para la Gente, Gardenia Amor y Cariño, and Raíces y Cariño, it became increasingly clear that families in Watsonville were not finding opportunities to come together in outdoor spaces to learn, play, grow, and connect. The festival aims to fill that gap. The Esperanza Corps will aim to recruit 50 Spanish-speaking members from South County, drawn from and around Watsonville. Many of the families we work with through our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program are

immigrant and farm-working families, and this is a large part of the Festival audience. Therefore, we expect this population to also make up a large part of the Esperanza Corps. The Dia de Esperanza festival and the Esperanza Corps will reach three circles of communities. We will market the event and the Corps in Spanish and English to families living in and around Watsonville. Next, we will expand countywide to partner with vendors, artists, and key stakeholders through marketing agreements (the county office of education), radio, and print & digital media platforms. Finally, we will reach beyond Santa Cruz County to help attract small BIPOC farmers, arts councils, and climate-justice organizations.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

It is well documented that city and countywide planning processes often struggle to engage the Spanish-speaking communities living in South County, including the engagement process that went into developing Measure Q. The Measure Q Community Engagement Summary states: "While participation was broad, lower-income, Latino, and South County communities were underrepresented," and that "Implications for Measure Q implementation include the need for stronger partnerships with trusted South County messengers and culturally relevant engagement methods." We believe Esperanza Community Farms could help, in part, fill this gap as one of the "trusted South County messengers", and that the festival is an ideal "culturally relevant engagement method." We have a proven track record in this department. At the 2025 festival, County State Parks conducted a survey over 2 days and gathered over 100 responses, compared with surveys at other south county events, which gathered fewer than half that number. We attribute this to Esperanza's use of community-centered and culturally-informed design and execution elements. The "Esperanza Corps" would help fill this engagement gap in future initiatives and consultations. We will create a group of South County residents who are educated and motivated to participate in initiatives that improve the natural environment around us, and who have given their consent to be contacted in the future for such events. The activities at the festival will enable us to gather contact information from a wide swathe of residents interested in participating, and we can then activate this group to engage in culturally informed outreach and engagement. Equitable access to this type of content and civic engagement opportunities benefits not only South County neighbors but also accelerates social change. We hope to reach a tipping point, where approximately 25% of the population we engage begins to take action locally, thereby building momentum for rapid, widespread change.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

This project uses existing land leased by Esperanza Community Farms and neighboring land held by our landlord the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County. We will also use a space at Pajaro Valley High School, adjacent to our farm, for the Festival this year. All of these sites are ready to be used without further improvements or capital projects required.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

We propose, with Measure Q funding, to leverage the Dia de Esperanza Festival in two ways to help Measure Q achieve its five-year vision: 1. Community Engagement and Volunteer Stewardship: To build a cohort of 50 or more Spanish-speaking South County residents to engage in city and county-wide advocacy and stewardship events and activities on nature, climate, and organic/regenerative agriculture. 2. Access and Education: To provide an opportunity for safe and equitable access to nature in South County and to educate members of the public about water resource management, soil health, wildlife & habitat protection, and the interrelation of these elements in a thriving ecosystem. We will achieve both of these ambitions by collaborating with 3 key partners to plan education activities and pledge events for the Dia de Esperanza festival. These activities will be designed to educate and motivate attendees to protect our water and natural resources and to encourage them to sign up for the "Esperanza Corps." We will aim to recruit at least 50 people to join the Corps. The activities at the Festival, including those on the water cycle, preserving/creating wildlife habitat, and agroecological farming, will directly lead to an invitation to sign up for the Esperanza Corps to stay involved in the work going forward. For example, the activity on the water cycle will likely teach Festival participants how to conserve water, build rain gardens, and invite them to sign up with the Corps and become involved in ongoing projects to improve the water cycle and advocate for water-conservation policies in our community. We will work in partnership with the organizations

delivering the education activities to create ongoing opportunities for engagement with the Corps, so that both organizations mutually benefit from this engagement. We will keep this group of people involved and engaged regularly through our existing Informa Text system, which allows us to reach out to a large number of people at once and does not require Measure Q funding. Following the Festival, we will invite the Corps to relevant stewardship activities, as well as wider city and county activities and meetings, such as public forums and consultations, and events such as the Earth Day celebrations that happen each year in Watsonville. As an example of a specific activity we would invite this group to, last year we hosted an educational visit to the wastewater treatment facility for our CSA member families to learn how we, as residents and farmers, can conserve water resources. We will plan 2-3 similar activities to engage the Esperanza Corps after the festival and help them learn how to take action on climate and nature in their community. Corps members will be given stipends for their participation in events and activities, in recognition of the time and energy they will need to spend. While we remain committed to supporting the Corps after the grant period ends, we will work with Corps members to develop peer leadership to take the Corps forward with less ECF leadership after the grant ends.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Contractors Each of the three contracted organizations will receive \$3,000 to deliver educational activities at the festival and to work with Esperanza to create ongoing engagement activities, for a total of \$9,000. They will plan and deliver educational events at the Festival, facilitate the collection of Corps member information, and, over the course of the year, help us identify and plan activities for the Corps to be involved in. These activities could include civic engagement, such as events/meetings with local leaders, environmental cleanup efforts, volunteer planting days, etc. Examples of possible organizational partners include Eat for the Earth, Community Water Center, Brown People Camping, and Latino Outdoors. Personnel To lead the ongoing engagement of the Esperanza Corps, we will reserve \$16,740 of the grant to fund Esperanza Community Farms staff time. This will enable us to regularly contact the Corps, coordinate with partners to identify and create activities and events for the Corps to participate in, and undertake all the administrative activities involved in running such a group. This project will be led by ECF Executive Director, Mireya Gomez-Contreras, and supported by ECF Deputy Director and Community Engagement Manager. Staff time is also allocated to our finance manager to ensure the proper administration of grant funds. This staff time was calculated by: Executive Director - \$45/hour x 10 hours per month x 12 months = \$5,400 Deputy Director - \$35/hour x 5 hours per month x 12 months = \$2,100 Community Engagement Manager - \$28/hour x 15 hours per month x 12 months = \$5,040 Finance Manager - \$35/hour x 10 hours per month x 12 months = \$4,200 Fringe benefits were calculated at 15% on \$16,740 in staff costs = \$2,511 Supplies, Travel and other Direct Costs ECF will also use \$9,450 from the grant to fund Corps activities and stipends. This money will go towards event fees, transportation for the Corps to the event, meals, incidentals for day-long activities, and any materials needed for those activities. This is calculated based on arranging or hosting 3 events over the 12-month period. Each event has a supplies budget of \$100, event and catering costs of \$800, and a \$500 travel budget, for a total of \$1400 per event. Participants will receive a stipend for their time and participation; this was calculated as 50 people x 3 events x \$35 stipend per person per event = \$5,250. \$4,000 will go towards activities led by Esperanza Community Farms to host the educational activities at the festival, increase festival attendance, and encourage people there to sign up for the Esperanza Corps. This will include: \$2000 for a sound system and sound engineer for two days to enable announcements at the festival and drive participants towards the education and Corps recruitment activities; \$1000 for marketing the festival; \$500 to support hired equipment for the educational activities, such as tents, tables, and chairs; and \$500 in prizes for signing up for the corps. Indirect costs are calculated at 18%

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

We propose the following timeline for this project: July - September 2026 1. Contract partners to deliver education and pledge events at Festival 2. Plan festival activities and PA announcements to draw participants to the Corps sign-up activities 3. Market the festival, secure prizes for signing onto the Corps 4. Plan the first activity for future Corps members October 2026 1. Deliver education activities and recruit 50 Corps members at the Festival 2. Using ECF's existing Informa Text service, follow up with Corps member soon after the Festival to invite to the first event/activity November/December 2026 1. Deliver the first Corps activity/event and administer stipends 2. Plan the second Corps activity/event March/April 2027 1. Deliver the second corps activity/event, likely around Earth Day 2. Plan the third Corps activity/event May/June 2027 1. Deliver the third Corps activity/event 2. Gauge the interest of members to stay involved in the Corps and develop peer leadership to take the Corps forward with less ECF involvement

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

Esperanza Community Farms has a proven record of using arts and culture as an innovative tool to build participation and involvement in and with historically marginalized communities in Watsonville and the Pajaro Valley. The Día de Esperanza is an expression of this innovation, and works at the intersection of agriculture, climate, nature, and creative and cultural arts. We know that art and culture are tools that build common ground and have opened doors for stronger community engagement within our work. This innovative method is what will ensure the successful recruitment and retention of the Esperanza Corps. We do not involve people just for the sake of engagement but to build community and solidarity, and we do this with the help of exciting and enticing art and cultural activities like the festival. This is our bread and butter, and we are extremely proud to submit this proposal to develop the Esperanza Corps in this way. In addition to Esperanza's capacity to deliver this work, we will be building the capacity of Corps members and the Pajaro Valley communities more broadly. This will enable Corps members to build their capacity for future civic engagement, advocacy, stewardship, and more.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Volunteer Hours Leverage

BONUS NARRATIVE

This proposal relies on the strength of 3 local partners who will help us deliver this work. In addition, the Dia de Esperanza festival has strong involvement from existing Esperanza volunteers. In the past years of the festival, we had numerous volunteers, many of whom returned from the previous year. We will continue to engage volunteers in the festival as we did in 2024. Our goal is to engage a total of 40 volunteers who will support a range of activities, including hospitality, first-aid booth, pre-event setup, vendor setup support, runners, clean-up crew, and co-MCs. Our goal is to have 20% of the volunteers be from our CSA membership. And we anticipate a diverse group of youth and adult volunteers, bilingual and monolingual, from different walks of life. We offer a volunteer orientation and a walk-through of the grounds to help them feel connected to the physical space and to each other. Most volunteers will be involved in the implementation of the festival. It's important for the long-term sustainability of the festival and for rebuilding the social narrative to build community power and collective ownership. Volunteers' hands and hearts are a vital element in the success of this festival.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Courtney Scott

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Courtney Scott, Deputy Director

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 99 **Type:** Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Inclusive Horizons: Adaptive Nature Access & Stewardship

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

99

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Inclusive Horizons: Adaptive Nature Access & Stewardship

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

—

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Urban Works Santa Cruz

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Population served

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

1,195 served annually

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Katie Gentile

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Executive Director

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

230 Poplar Ave, Santa Cruz, CA 95062, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

009-151-03-000

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.98244390000000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.00813810000000

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

Urban Works Santa Cruz is an urban organization in District 4 serving as a regional anchor for inclusive recreation. While based in the City of Santa Cruz, our adaptive "Wheels & Waves", art programs, and adaptive yoga & movement provide essential services to residents across the County of Santa Cruz - including Capitola, Scotts Valley, Watsonville, and unincorporated areas like Live Oak and Aptos - as well as San Jose, ensuring equitable access to nature for historically underserved populations.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

District 4

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The proposed project will serve Santa Cruz County with a focus on delivering inclusive programs within the Cities of Santa Cruz, Capitola, and Watsonville, as well as the unincorporated community of Aptos. By utilizing diverse public spaces - ranging from the Santa Cruz Harbor for adaptive sailing to public parks and coastal access points in Aptos and Watsonville for our 'Wheels & Waves' and art-based workshops - we ensure a broad geographic reach. While Urban Works Santa Cruz maintains a regional presence, this specific project is dedicated to expanding equitable recreation access for residents with disabilities throughout South, Mid, and North Santa Cruz County. This distribution ensures that Measure Q funds directly benefit both incorporated municipalities and unincorporated residential areas, fulfilling the county-wide mission of the Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, and Wildfire Risk Reduction Act. Lastly, our intergenerational garden will take place in the heart of Midtown, gifted to us by the Trinity Presbyterian Church of Santa Cruz.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

N/A

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA		
State Water Control Resources Board	NA		
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA		
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

Our project exhibits high readiness with established frameworks for all three pillars: the intergenerational garden, sailing access, and community camping. The executive team is in place, and site access is secured through existing regional partnerships, allowing for immediate scaling upon fund disbursement. Project Readiness & Status The intergenerational garden is currently in the pre-construction phase. Site planning and conceptual designs are finalized, and we are prepared to initiate the formal bidding

and contractor-hiring process immediately upon securing Measure Q support. The sailing and camping initiatives are operationally mature, with logistical structures ready for the 2026 seasonal launch. Dependencies & Potential Delays • Contractor Scheduling: The primary dependency for the garden is the availability of local specialized contractors. We will mitigate potential delays by maintaining a secondary list of vetted vendors to ensure construction remains on schedule. Funding Integration: Full implementation of the expanded program scope is dependent on synchronizing Measure Q funds with our Spring 2026 virtual fundraising revenue. • Environmental Factors: Execution of maritime and agricultural activities is subject to coastal weather patterns and seasonal planting windows. Our phased implementation strategy ensures that each phase of our programs can advance independently, minimizing the impact of any single dependency on the overall project timeline.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

46230

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

117720

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$18,180	\$18,180	\$36,360	\$72,720
Travel	\$650	\$650	\$1,400	\$2,700
Supplies	\$21,050	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$28,550
Construction	\$3,750	\$2,300	\$0	\$6,050
Equipment	\$2,100	\$0	\$0	\$2,100
Contractual / Consultants	\$500	\$0	\$2,500	\$3,000
Other Direct Costs	\$0	\$2,600	\$0	\$2,600

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

Urban Works Santa Cruz (UWSC) is launching the Intergenerational Nature Access Initiative, a strategic expansion of our "Wheels & Waves" and "Mindful Movement" programs. This project provides adults with disabilities and local seniors with three specific pathways to nature, bridging the gap between Santa Cruz's vulnerable populations and its natural beauty. Our three core pillars include: 1. Water Resource Protection (The Blue Space Axis): By removing physical and financial barriers to the Monterey Bay through our Salty Sheep sailing program, we fulfill Measure Q's mandate for equitable natural resource access. Participants become active stewards through "Blue Space" therapy and marine wildlife education, empowering marginalized voices as lifelong advocates for our coastal ecosystem. 2. Parks, Trails, and Public Access (The Adaptive Garden): We will transform our Santa Cruz hub into an inclusive "living classroom" featuring ADA-compliant raised beds and sensory paths. Senior "Garden Mentors" will work alongside participants with disabilities to grow organic produce, integrating watershed education and drought-tolerant gardening practices. 3. National Park Camping Trips: Building on our history of successful retreats, we will host quarterly road trips to major parks. These excursions remove logistical barriers to travel, providing accessible transportation and staff support for immersive forest experiences. By pairing 30+ senior volunteers with 150+ participants with disabilities, we foster "social resilience" while addressing the dual crises of isolation and mental health. This initiative ensures that Santa Cruz's parks and waters remain a resource for everyone, regardless of ability.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Coastal Protection and Adaptation

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

This initiative bridges the gap between Santa Cruz's vulnerable populations and the region's natural beauty. Program Summary (for context): Build out and regular programing in Urban Works ADA accessible public garden. Regular sailing outings on a 37ft

catamaran. Two ADA accessible trips to National parks in California. Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity. - The Urban Works Adaptive Garden & Intergenerational Hub will transform our outdoor space into an inclusive, living classroom featuring ADA-compliant raised beds and sensory paths. Senior volunteers will serve as Garden Mentors, working alongside participants with disabilities to grow organic produce in the garden beds and nurture native plants in our permaculture demonstration garden. Other activities include adaptive garden yoga, wildlife workshops, & composting classes. - By removing the physical and financial barriers that typically exclude the disability and senior communities from accessing our local shores, the Salty Sheep sailing program fulfills Measure Q's mandate for equitable natural resource access. Specifically, we provide weekly group therapy sessions supplemented by bimonthly intensive mobile ocean classrooms. In these sessions, participants engage in hands-on marine science and water quality monitoring. - We will host National Park Trips. Building on our history of camping retreats (like Camp Krem in Yosemite) we will host two road trips to major parks. These trips remove the logistical and financial barriers to travel, providing staff support and accessible transportation for those with disabilities to experience and learn about California's natural beauty. Water Resource Management. - Participants will conduct monthly beach cleanups while receiving formal educational lessons on pollution and marine conservation to foster long-term environmental stewardship. - Our sailing and coastal education programs transform participants into active stewards of the Monterey Bay through hands-on 'Blue Space' therapy and marine wildlife education. - empowering Santa Cruz's most marginalized voices to become life-long advocates for our coastal ecosystem and the protection of our diverse marine species. - Our garden workshops will emphasize local watershed health and rain-catchment education. - Our range of gardening methods will give participants various hands-on examples of drought tolerant gardening practices. Wildlife and Habitat Protection - Our public garden project will include bat, owl, & bird boxes, butterfly and pollinator garden space, and a permaculture corner hosting native plant species. These features will support local wildlife while providing hands-on education about wildlife and habitat protection. Public Health & Resilience - Our intergenerational model addresses the dual crises of senior isolation and mental health challenges within the disability community through nature-based yoga, educational workshops, and social connection.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Equity Impact

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Equity Impact - The main focus of Urban Works' programing is equity impact. Specifically we create programs for individuals with disabilities. Our recreation-based programs are designed to encourage community - Our programs are designed with people with disabilities in mind but are open and free to everyone. Because many face barriers to accessing community in nature, we provide adaptive support so individuals of all abilities can fully participate. Rooted in inclusion, our programs bring people together through shared experiences of learning, recreation, and stewardship. When diverse communities connect in nature, empathy grows, barriers dissolve, and belonging deepens - building a more inclusive and compassionate Santa Cruz, one garden bed, one sail, and one trail at a time. - Our public garden program is located at 230 Poplar Ave. This neighborhood is designated "low income". Our programs in the garden will be open to the public and we will encourage participation among the neighbors and local community. Match Funding and Leveraging Potential - The ~\$21,000 listed in matching cash is committed or received today. We have applied for an additional grant for ~\$23,000 which would provide additional matching cash. - Urban Works is always partnering with other organizations. Collaboration is a core tenant of the organization. - The space for the garden program has been made available by an initial three year commitment (January 2026 - January 2029) by a community organization that owns the property. With community engagement space can be used ongoing. - The sailing program is a partnership with the Salty Sheep organization. This partnership includes a captain who has volunteered his skills for the cause. - We have partnered with local Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, and non-profits to fundraise for all three of the projects listed in this grant. We have received initial donations from three different organizations, as well as multiple individuals, for these three programs. - We have matching funds from a personal donor that has committed to three years of base level funding. - We have applied to multiple grants. - We already have secured volunteers who are experts in agriculture and horticulture to help us educate and operate within our garden space. Multi-Benefit Outcomes - We have already listed multiple benefits per program in thee priorities section. Again, to summarize: the benefits of the proposed programs include providing health education through growing organic produce, developing natural public spaces on donated private property, benefiting butterflies and pollinators, educating diverse groups about coastal watersheds and marine life, creating advocates and stewards for our local wildlife, serving disabled individuals, serving elderly, serving underprivileged, and facilitating diverse community, Climate Resilience Value - Turning a large private yard with grass into an organic food and permaculture garden is a redevelopment of the space for much more ecologically healthy uses. - Providing environmental education and promoting advocacy among more of the local community helps get more people behind causes related to climate protection.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

This project is designed for maximum Public Benefit by transforming existing natural resources into accessible community assets. Rather than serving a niche demographic, our framework addresses broad community needs, from protecting our local

watersheds to providing low-barrier recreational opportunities for an aging population. Our goals are in perfect Strategic Alignment with the core mandates of Measure Q. We aren't just requesting funds for a single park; we are creating a network of access that spans from the coastline to the forest. Our focus on watershed education aligns with the county's water protection goals. Our adaptive infrastructure aligns with the mandate to expand and maintain public trails and park safety for all residents. Our intergenerational programming ensures that the investment from Measure Q has a long-term impact, cultivating the next generation of environmental stewards while honoring the contributions of our seniors. By leveraging our existing partnerships and clear project roadmap, we ensure that these funds are used efficiently to create a visible, lasting impact on the quality of life and the health of the environment in Santa Cruz County.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

Urban Works Santa Cruz is dedicated to a simple, sobering reality: In Santa Cruz County, the beauty of our natural resources often ends where the pavement stops. Our mission is to bridge that gap for three specific, interconnected populations who have been historically sidelined from our parks and coastal assets. 1. Individuals with Developmental, Physical, & Intellectual Disabilities Our primary demographic includes residents of all ages living with diverse disabilities. While Santa Cruz is world-renowned for its coastline, these neighbors are often "spectators" of the Monterey Bay rather than participants. • The Barrier: A lack of specialized adaptive equipment and trained facilitators makes the sand and water a literal dead-end. • The Action: Through programs like Salty Sheep Sailing and Wheels & Waves, we provide the literal "bridge" over the sand and onto the water, transforming a logistical barrier into a site of physical agency and therapeutic recreation. 2. Families & Caretakers Disability is a shared experience. We serve the parents, siblings, and professional caretakers who navigate the daily isolation of 24/7 care. • The Strategy: Our programming is designed to be inclusive, not exclusive. By providing a space where families can recreate together - through Adapted Yoga and Community Arts - we provide essential mental health respite and build a peer-support network that prevents caretaker burnout. 3. Local Seniors & Aging Populations As mobility decreases with age, many long-term Santa Cruz residents find themselves exiled from the very parks they spent decades supporting and enjoying. • The Strategy: We provide low-impact, adaptive social and physical engagements. This intergenerational approach ensures that aging in our county does not result in the "indoor isolation" that leads to rapid cognitive and physical decline. Why This Group is the Priority for Measure Q The Measure Q Community Catalyst grant was designed to facilitate Equitable Park Access. By focusing on those with the highest physical and cognitive barriers to entry - the disabled, their families, and the elderly - Urban Work Santa Cruz ensures that "public" land is truly public. We are not just maintaining a trail; we are ensuring that every resident, regardless of their physical or cognitive journey, has a right to be on it.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Urban Works Santa Cruz provides the "human infrastructure" that makes environmental protection meaningful. While Measure Q funds physical land and water improvements, we provide the specialized access that ensures our most vulnerable citizens - those with developmental, physical, and intellectual disabilities, their families, and seniors - are not left behind at the pavement's edge. The Three Pillars of Impact 1. The Adaptive Garden (Environmental Agency): This is more than a park; it is a sensory-integrated "living lab." Here, neurodivergent participants and seniors engage in tactile stewardship - native planting and water-wise gardening. This provides therapeutic value while directly contributing to the county's wildfire resilience and water quality goals. 2. Wheels & Waves (Coastal Equity): We transition residents from "spectators" to "stakeholders." By providing the specialized equipment for inclusive sailing and kayaking, we foster a deep, personal connection to the Monterey Bay. You cannot ask a community to protect a coastline they are physically barred from experiencing. 3. Horizon Road Trips (Regional Stewardship): We remove the geographic and sensory barriers to our regional wilderness. These trips provide the mentorship and logistics necessary for first-generation "outdoorsmen" with disabilities to claim ownership of our National and State Parks. Outreach & Engagement: The "Trusted Network" Model We don't rely on broad-market advertising; we engage through deep-rooted community trust. • Direct Advocacy: Our outreach is funneled through existing partnerships with local disability advocacy groups, senior centers, and adaptive healthcare providers. We meet our participants where they already receive care. • The Caregiver Respite Loop: By intentionally designing programs that serve the family and caretakers, we create a sustainable participation model. When the caregiver feels supported and seen, the participant's engagement shifts from a one-time event to a lifelong habit of outdoor stewardship. • Radical Visibility: By holding our adaptive sailing and gardening sessions in high-traffic public spaces, we act as a "rolling invitation." This visibility normalizes the presence of adaptive athletes in our parks, dismantling social stigmas and encouraging isolated families to step out of their homes and into our community. Conclusion: The Catalyst Effect A trail is only as valuable as the people who can walk it. Urban Work Santa Cruz ensures that Measure Q's environmental legacy is inclusive. We are not just preserving land; we are cultivating a new, diverse generation of environmental advocates who finally have the tools to protect the Santa Cruz County they love.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

—

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

I. Project Overview & Public Access The Inclusive Horizons initiative is a multi-modal program designed to bridge the "accessibility gap" for seniors and disabled individuals in Santa Cruz County. Centered at our anchor site at 230 Poplar Avenue in Midtown, this project provides a sanctuary for social resilience. To ensure maximum public benefit, the Midtown site will maintain consistent access: • Daily (Mon-Fri): 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM | Weekends (Sat-Sun): 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM. • Extended Access: During scheduled community events, concerts, and workshops. II. Technical Infrastructure & Accessibility (Midtown Site) We are eliminating physical barriers by installing professional-grade, durable infrastructure: • Adaptive Planting Systems: Construction of four (4) six-seater raised cedar garden beds, height-engineered for wheelchair and seated accessibility. • Stabilized Sensory Pathways: 500 sq. ft. of permeable sensory pathways, providing a smooth transition from the city sidewalk into the garden core. • The "Community Circle" Plaza: A central gathering area for social programming and respite. III. Blue Space Therapy: The Salty Sheep Sailing Program Expanding our "Blue Space" therapy access, this scope funds a partnership with the Salty Sheep to provide marine-based healing and watershed education: • Aquatic Wellness: Weekly group therapy sessions and bimonthly intensive "mobile classrooms" on the water. • Environmental Literacy: Participants engage in marine science and water quality monitoring, linking Midtown's watershed health directly to the Monterey Bay. IV. Horizon Road Trips & "Wheels & Waves" Excursions To ensure that physical disability does not limit discovery, this scope supports high-impact outdoor travel and adventure: • National Park Road Trips: Quarterly, fully-accessible "Horizon" excursions to major parks like Yosemite. These trips remove the logistical and financial barriers to nature-based exploration for our seniors and neurodivergent guests. • Whitewater Rafting: As part of our "Wheels & Waves" program, we provide seasonal adaptive rafting trips, offering participants the rare opportunity to experience the thrill of the river in a safe, expertly-guided environment. V. Measure Q: Urban Watershed & Climate Resilience • Stewardship: Utilizing 90% California-native flora and permeable surfaces at Poplar Avenue to capture and filter rainwater, protecting local groundwater and reducing the urban heat island effect. VI. Conclusion: A Legacy of Total Inclusion By funding this comprehensive scope, the committee is investing in a "shovel-ready" physical asset and a proven mobile program. Urban Works Santa Cruz is building a gateway to the world - from the soil of Midtown to the rapids of our rivers and the trails of our National Parks.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The Inclusive Horizons: Adaptive Nature Access & Stewardship initiative advances Measure Q's vision by creating equitable, adaptive entry points to Santa Cruz County's land and waters. Through three complementary programs: the Adaptive Garden, Salty Sheep Sailing, and National Park Trips to transform environmental education into inclusive community practice. The total project cost is \$165,720, supported by \$46,230 in Measure Q funds, \$74,230 in cash match from volunteers, partners, and private donors. Personnel (\$72,720): People are the foundation of accessibility. Trained staff and volunteers make it possible for participants with mobility and sensory differences to engage fully in gardening, sailing, and wilderness exploration. Garden (\$28,080): Weekly workshops led by environmental educators and volunteers teach adaptive gardening, watershed stewardship, and pollinator habitat care. Sailing (\$18,720): Adaptive crew assistants and instructors lead weekly "Blue Space" sessions centered on marine ecology, coastal safety, and water quality. Camping (\$18,550) and volunteers facilitate three 72 hour camping trips annually, integrating forest health practices. Each role is partially funded by Measure Q, matched with cash, and strengthened by community volunteer hours. Travel (\$2,700): Covers gas and vehicle costs for accessible transportation during camping excursions. Partner nonprofits provide matched vehicle rentals and additional fuel support, ensuring participants with disabilities can reach remote recreation sites that are otherwise inaccessible. Equipment and Supplies (\$30,650): Garden Equipment (\$2,100) includes adaptive tools, a rain catchment barrel, and composting materials to establish the physical infrastructure. Sailing (\$18,550) provide soil, native and pollinator plants, and accessible gardening materials that connect participants directly with local watershed restoration. Camping Supplies (\$10,000) include adaptive gear, tents, sleeping mats, and first-aid kits to make outdoor participation safe and dignified for all. Contractual / Consultants (\$3,000): Specialists expand technical depth across programs. Environmental consultants guide native plant and soil health design for the garden; marine ecologists inform curriculum; and conservationists support field education for camping trips. Their expertise ensures Measure Q investments result in lasting ecological outcomes. Construction (\$6,050): Garden (\$3,750) supports the installation of raised cedar beds, accessible sensory pathways, and a permeable "Permaculture Corner" designed for rain capture and groundwater recharge - directly fulfilling Measure Q's climate adaptation goals. An additional \$2,300 partner match from Shared Earth covers the locking mechanisms aboard the Salty Sheep, further improving marine access and safety. Other Direct and Indirect Costs (\$50,620): We have already raised \$2,600 from local service organizations for adaptive improvements in the garden program. A major \$48,000 cash match has been secured for new high efficiency motors and safety u

investments that advance water resource conservation and emissions reduction. We have service organizations earmarked for adaptive improvements in the garden program.. A major cash match of \$48,000 reflects new high efficiency motors and safety upgrades to the Salty Sheep sailboat - investments all that directly support water resource conservation and emissions reduction. Another local additional accessibility improvements to the sailboat.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

Phased rollout of each program is designed to build participation, establish infrastructure, and expand outdoor programming throughout the first year. Months 1-3: Program Preparation, Development, & Outreach Adaptive Coastal Sails: Weekly sailing outings will occur immediately. Ocean stewardship planning will begin alongside participant outreach. Staff will coordinate sailing schedules with the Salty Sheep sailboat for additional education focused sails. We will consult with marine biologists, oceanographers, and coastal ecologists to develop educational programming on marine ecosystems, wildlife, and coastal conservation. These efforts ensure sailing experiences integrate environmental education and create equitable access to Monterey Bay. Adaptive Garden: Initial beds built immediately by existing staff and volunteers along existing ADA path. Program coordination and volunteer recruitment infrastructure will be established while curriculum development begins. Permaculture and ecological site assessments will be conducted for permaculture corner with swale to demonstrate rainwater capture, soil regeneration, and watershed stewardship. Staff will finalize the garden plan, phases, and materials budget. The garden will be designed as an inclusive learning space with ADA-compliant raised beds, accessible pathways, and sensory planting areas. National Park Trips: Destinations and logistics for the first accessible Horizon Trips to parks will be confirmed. Coordination with organizations specializing in accessible transportation and accommodations will occur, and consultations with naturalists, botanists, and wildlife biologists will support development of hands-on environmental education activities. Months 4-6: Site Preparation, Recruitment, & Early Program Activities Adaptive Coastal Sails: Salty Sheep sailing outings will launch participants onto Monterey Bay. Will provide safe ocean access with adaptive supports to introduce the Blue Space framework, linking time on the water with marine wildlife education and coastal stewardship. Adaptive Garden: Garden site preparation: clearing, leveling, and mapping layouts for additional raised beds, pathways, and irrigation. Materials will be sourced, permaculture corner prepared with contouring and soil work for the swale system. Recruit and train 10+ senior Garden Mentors to support gardening activities and participant engagement. National Park Horizon Trips: Planning continues for upcoming park trips; participant recruitment, safety planning, equipment sourcing, & training team leads to assist participants during travel and outdoor activities. Months 7-9: Construction and Expanded Programming Adaptive Coastal Sails: Regular sailing sessions will expand participant access and reinforce ocean stewardship through guided discussions and wildlife observation. Adaptive Garden: Accessible garden beds and pathways completed. Irrigation installed. Begin planting drought-tolerant vegetables, herbs, and pollinator-supporting plants. Permaculture corner will be completed with signage explaining the swale system and regenerative practices. Participants engage in hands-on workshops on soil health, water conservation, and sustainable food production. National Park Horizon Trips: First Trip launched, providing accessible transportation and guided outdoor education in forests, parks, and public lands. Months 10-12: Full Program Implementation Adaptive Coastal Sails: Ongoing sails continue connecting participants with the ocean and beach cleanups, & reinforce marine conservation education. Adaptive Garden: Host regular workshops and harvesting activities where seniors and adults with disabilities grow produce together while learning sustainable gardening techniques. National Park Horizon Trips: Quarterly park trips continue, offering experiences that deepen participants' connection to forests, trails, and protected landscapes

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

Urban Works Santa Cruz moves beyond traditional inclusion by creating a Social-Environmental Hybrid model. We innovate by designing spaces that serve dual purposes: technical stewardship and cultural connection. The Multi-Generational Garden: Our Inclusive Adaptive Garden is not a segregated space; it is a community hub. We innovate by stacking services. Morning therapeutic horticulture for seniors and adults with disabilities leads into afternoon community concerts, cooking classes, and adaptive yoga. This ensures the garden is a vibrant "Town Square" that dissolves the social barriers between the disabled community and the general public. Stewardship as Therapy: We innovate by giving participants agency. Instead of being passive observers, our users lead environmental efforts like native planting and water-wise irrigation. We prove that accessibility is not just about "being there," but about being an active contributor to the county's wildfire and water resilience. Capacity: Specialized Expertise & Community Trust Our capacity is defined by our "human capital", the specialized knowledge required to safely and effectively bridge the gap between our target groups and the outdoors. Specialized Expertise: Our team possesses the high-level expertise required to facilitate complex adaptive activities, from Salty Sheep Sailing and Wheels & Waves to sensory-integrated gardening. We maintain the rigorous safety protocols necessary to serve residents with significant physical and intellectual needs. Resource Efficiency: We operate with a lean and focused model. By leveraging a dedicated volunteer base and strategic community partnerships, we ensure that grant funding is funneled directly into program equipment and participant access rather than administrative overhead. Strategic Partnerships: Our capacity is amplified by our deep integration into Santa Cruz. We work alongside local senior centers and disability advocacy groups to reach our participants. These "trusted networks" mean we spend less on marketing and more on the specialized care and equipment that makes our programs successful. Conclusion: A Proven Engine We are a "Community Catalyst" in the truest sense. Urban Works Santa Cruz has the operational experience to turn a Tier 1 investment into a permanent social and environmental asset. We are ready to scale our proven model to ensure that every Santa Cruz resident, regardless of mobility or neurodiversity, can participate in our county's future.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Volunteer Hours Leverage, Leveraged Funds, Efficient Use of Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

I. Institutional & Civic Partnerships Our impact is amplified through a strategic network of alliances that ensure our programs are professionally managed and community-aligned. We operate in close coordination with Santa Cruz County Parks and Recreation and the Coastal Commission to ensure our coastal and park-based activities meet the highest standards of environmental stewardship. Our mission is further championed by local pillars of service, including the Rotary Club and Lions Club, and bolstered by collaborative programming with Shared Adventures and Save Our Shores to provide inclusive marine and outdoor recreation. II. Proven Fiscal Stewardship & Leveraged Funds Urban Works has demonstrated exceptional fiscal maturity by independently securing over \$68,000 in private donations and community fundraising this year. Capital Innovation: A significant \$50,000 donation was utilized to replace the Salty Sheep engines with modern, high-efficiency units. This ensures our aquatic programming exceeds current emission standards, directly supporting Measure Q's mission of watershed protection. The Funding Gap: While these private funds, including an additional \$18,000 from grassroots campaigns, have been successfully leveraged for vessel safety and capital operations, they are strictly restricted to these environmental upgrades. This Measure Q request represents the "final mile" of funding, acting as the critical catalyst to build out the public-facing adaptive infrastructure at 230 Poplar Avenue. III. Volunteer Power & Operational Efficiency Our "Social Infrastructure" is powered by a dedicated volunteer force, including seniors and university students. By leveraging over 1,500 annual volunteer hours coordinated through our civic partners, we multiply the value of every dollar granted. These volunteers provide the specialized 1-on-1 support required for our neurodivergent participants, effectively doubling our operational capacity without increasing overhead. IV. Strategic Resource Management Urban Works operates with a "resource-first" mindset. By utilizing the 230 Poplar Avenue site, a centrally located Midtown anchor, we minimize transportation costs and maximize neighborhood accessibility. Every dollar granted by Measure Q is funneled directly into "shovel-ready" infrastructure. Urban Works Santa Cruz is not a "siloed" organization; we are a community-backed engine of inclusion. With our sailboat upgrades secured, our community garden location committed, and our volunteer force ready to deploy, Measure Q funds will allow us to achieve a new level of outdoor access for all Santa Cruz County residents.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

Current 54' x 64' Space (2).pdf

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

LetterofSupport_UrbanWorks.pdf, LCI Measure Q LOS.pdf, Measure Q support letter- Shared Adventures.pdf

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

Untitled design.png, IMG_1767.jpeg, IMG_1768.png

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Katie Gentile

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Katie Gentile

SIGNATURE DATE

03/12/2025

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 102 Type: Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Bonny Doon Spring Chipping Project

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

102

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Bonny Doon Spring Chipping Project

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

BONNY DOON FIRE SAFE COUNCIL INC

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Residents protected

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

10000.

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Susan T Mason

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Board Member

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Lisa	Schallop	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

3644 Felton Empire Rd, Santa Cruz, CA, 95060

PARCEL NUMBER

Entire community

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

37.05792269816915

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.12217945668755

PROJECT JURISDICTION / CITY

Unincorporated Santa Cruz County

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

All parties in Bonny Doon who sign up for the chipping program

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

—

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT

District 3 - Justin Cummings

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Bonny Doon residents who request vegetation chipping

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

Material processed is already cut by property owners as fire safety efforts. Chips are left on the property.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA		
State Water Control Resources Board	NA		
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA		
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

weeks

DURATION AMOUNT

3

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

Dates are approximate, could vary by a week depending on contractor availability.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

10000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

10000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Contractual / Consultants	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$10,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

Chipping available to all residents for fire clearance biomass. Funds pay contractors. Match of about 300 hours of Firesafe council project management.

PROJECT START DATE

05/04/2026

PROJECT END DATE

05/22/2026

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

Clean up fuel reduction biomass for our residents contributing to fire safety and hopefully insurance cost reduction.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Having this program available encourages homeowners to clear fuel from their property

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Safer properties are a common good. As we saw during CZU burning structures endanger neighboring houses.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

Bonny Doon

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Defensible space

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

Biomass is stacked at the curb for the contractor to chip

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

Applicants apply and stack cuttings.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

This grant would allow several more days of chipping. We would have less need to prioritize

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

About 3 weeks

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

Providing a service community wide that encourages defensible space.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Volunteer Hours Leverage

BONUS NARRATIVE

Overall this is a much better solution than smoke from burning and cost of landfill.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Susan Mason

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Susan Mason Board Member

SIGNATURE DATE

03/27/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 104 Type: Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Securing Permitting for Homeless Garden Project Permanent Site

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

104

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Securing Permitting for Homeless Garden Project Permanent Site

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

—

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Homeless Garden Project

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

4

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

Agricultural Acres Protected (so that Sustainable Ag education can be provided including individuals

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Paul Goldberg

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Director of Development

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

Shaffer Rd, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

003-061-09

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.95684745737861

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.06184724730895

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The West side of Santa Cruz is most directly affected by te Project.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Council 6

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The project serves the County broadly, with the City of Santa Cruz most directly benefitting given the location on the west side.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

Categorically Exempt

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

Application (CP25-0118) for permits identified above currently under review at City Planning. Responses are due from the City within 30 days from 23 February 2026. Narrative needed HGP is being advised by architect and developer Matthew Thompson, who has decades of experience designing and developing properties in Santa Cruz County. Additionally, Ron Swenson must apply for and secure a minor land division (MLD), creating a separate 4-acre parcel upon which the development anticipated by the above-referenced application will be pursued.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	Yes	City Planning has approved redesignation as exclusive AG .- Still need Coastal Permit; Design Permit	Ongoing
Coastal Commission	No	Has designated the acreage as agriculture and approved LCPA	Only on appeal

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

1

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

See above regarding dependencies upon (1) City application review and (2) Swenson MLD application.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

50000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

225000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Other Direct Costs	\$50,000	\$175,000	\$0	\$225,000

Homeless Garden Project (HGP) is nearing a critical juncture in the long held pursuit of a permanent home. After 30 years of farming at the Natural Bridges farm site on the westside of Santa Cruz, HGP is nearing acquisition of 4 acres to be the permanent home for the organization. HGP is planning to develop our organic farm site and several buildings that support our non-profit's organizational goals in addition to meeting the needs of our social enterprises, including farm beds, value-added production workshop and barn, commercial kitchen, farmstand and more. HGP serves individuals experiencing homelessness with transitional employment in an effort to help them obtain stable jobs and housing. Securing this land for the benefit of the Santa Cruz community is in direct alignment with Measure Q's vision. HGP has farmed approximately 3.5 acres of the 10-acre Natural Bridges Farm site, owned by Ron Swenson, continuously since 1995. In 2023, HGP entered into a land purchase and sale agreement with Mr. Swenson, allowing a four-year window for HGP to purchase four acres of land at the NBF site for continued programming and related farming. A grant to assist with securing permitting fees, will provide critical support in ensuring this agricultural lands' protection.

PROJECT START DATE

04/06/2026

PROJECT END DATE

03/31/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Agricultural and Work Land Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

The purpose of this project is to ensure HGP's continuity at Natural Bridges Farm, where we have been investing in soil health during 30+ years of agricultural production using organic and sustainable agriculture practices.. Providing permanence for Natural Bridges Certified organic farm, that serves as a social enterprise vehicle for HGP's transitional employment program will ensure that the land will remain in production for the community, while helping individuals experiencing homelessness to obtain housing and employment. HGP utilizes an innovative model, and is rooted in Santa Cruz's County's deep history with organic agriculture. HGP was the first farm in Santa Cruz County to incorporate the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model to nourish our community and continues to pioneer the use of therapeutic agriculture in service delivery to people experiencing homelessness. HGP's Feed 2 Birds programs provides shares of healthy, organic produce to the community to help combat food insecurity via partnerships with local nonprofits. Assisting HGP with moving forward with the purchase of the land will ensure our ability to continue to deliver these direct benefits to the community.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

HGP maintaining operations on the land HGP has farmed for more than three decades on the westside of Santa Cruz benefits the community in numerous ways - ecologically, socially, and economically - via programs for individuals experiencing homelessness, for recipients of the distributed shares of our organic produce to food insecure neighbors, community volunteering and educational programs, and the community at large. This project includes workforce development and environmentally sustainable land stewardship at the very core of its objectives, representing a desire to benefit the community -particularly people experiencing homelessness, historically underserved individuals who may not have access to healing and meaningful connection to the land-and in deep alignment with Measure Q objectives. In 2019 HGP completed a \$3.5 million capital campaign for our permanent home and are close to securing a \$1million grant from the California Coastal Conservancy, leveraging Measure Q funding in a real and actionable project. Organic agriculture within the City of Santa Cruz also represents local climate resilience. We believe we are in close alignment with state sea-level guidance and help with climate change mitigation and sequestering carbon in soil. HGP serves as a model incorporating climate solutions into other benefits like skills-building for the community and local sustainable agriculture. With a workforce development program serving people experiencing homelessness who have been historically disadvantaged, HGP is able to expand access to public, working land. By helping HGP maintain operations on its Natural Bridges Farm land, this funding will secure safe and equitable access to the community, adjacent to other preserved lands of Antonelli Pond and UCSC's coastal campus, in addition to the rail trail.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Readiness. The Homeless Garden Project's organic farm expansion is nearing realization and Measure Q funds can play a key role in helping advance the project that has clear public benefit and is in deep alignment with strategic objectives. This project will steward the land for generations, deepening our commitment to ecological farming and community resilience. We build healthy, living soil through annual compost applications, nitrogen-fixing cover crops, and diversified plantings of vegetables, culinary herbs, and flowers. These practices strengthen on-farm biodiversity, sequester carbon, and increase the soil's water-holding capacity - demonstrating how regenerative agriculture can address climate change and conserve precious water resources. Public Benefit. As part of our mission, we distribute more than 50% of our harvest to community members experiencing food insecurity, ensuring that our environmental stewardship directly benefits local families. Through robust volunteer and education programs, we invite the community to learn how food can be grown in harmony with the environment, inspiring future generations to care for the land and one another. That the public benefits from our Project is core to our mission and values, our purpose for existing and for securing a permanent site at which we can carry out this work. There is a clear strategic alignment with Measure Q's vision of preserving agricultural lands and we are grateful for this application opportunity for funding support to help address fee expenses.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

The program serves adults who are experiencing homelessness, ages generally range from people in their 20s to 60s. We serve women, men, and gender non-conforming individuals. All of our trainees fall under the federal poverty level. The vast majority of our trainees cite the City of Santa Cruz as their residence. Many have had involvement with the criminal justice system. Recipients of our CSA Scholarship Fund include people who are homeless or recently housed, veterans in need of housing assistance, recently incarcerated people, survivors of domestic violence,, low-income individuals living in the Pajaro Valley, low-income school-age students in foster care, individuals living with mental illness and their families and people experiencing homelessness. We estimate about 1,250 people currently benefit from our Feed Two Birds program that distributes our organic produce via our peer non-profit partners that supply the healthy food to their clients. Here are the recipients for this year: Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Occupational Therapy Program Monarch Services Encompass Community Services: Housing Support Dept of Veteran's Affairs/ HUD VASH Volunteer Housing Navigators Black Health Initiative Housing Matters Santa Cruz Santa Cruz County Office of Education-FosterEd Program Senderos Grey Bears The Cultivating Community program cultivates volunteers who wish to participate in sustaining our program through the farm, store, office or events and those interested in learning more about our mission or organic farming. Our volunteers come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Volunteers--individuals and groups--include students, professionals, medical students, scouts, families, service clubs and seniors. As a community farm, we aim to serve all people and help the community as a whole embrace our unhoused members, who often feel isolated and looked down upon. We believe every community should one day have a farm and garden for individuals experiencing homelessness in their town.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

HGP was founded with the initial goal of increasing the health and well-being of individuals experiencing homelessness and that has remains at the core of our work as we have grown and continually enhanced the program. As a community organic farm, providing healthy organic food to our community, the benefits of our holistic program go beyond our transitional employment program participants. Our farm is a managed green space, open to the public, inviting hands-on educational volunteerism in addition to access to organic healthy produce. Our farm connects the open space of Antonelli Pond, the rail trail and UCSC's coastal campus trails. HGP's innovative model remains rooted in organic agricultural, careful stewardship of the environment and empathetic care for our neighbors, all values that define the Santa Cruz community.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

—

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

Acquiring NBF as HGP's permanent home is a necessary step for the stability of the organization and for the organization's ability to deepen and grow our community impact. For the first time in HGP's history, the organization will be able to consolidate operations, hosting farm activities on the same site as the value-added workshop and staff offices. Therapeutic agriculture is key to our organization's holistic approach, and simply put, you can't have a farm without land. To move forward with our acquisition, our activities supported by this grant will be to cover the necessary permitting needed so that we may move forward with NBF as the permanent home for our activities. Owning the land will allow HGP to plan our programs and permanent home strategically to deepen and grow our impact with people experiencing homelessness, including people in recovery, justice involved individuals returning from incarceration, and former foster youth by helping individuals successfully build a path to self-sufficiency and belonging. This program also develops a sense of dignity and belonging identified as key to the Upward Mobility Framework developed by Urban Institute. Through this program, our trainees feel the respect, dignity, and belonging that come from contributing to their family, work, and community and are valued for those contributions. HGP impacts many additional community members by providing paid share as well as free shares of organic, healthy produce and with educational and volunteering programs, open to all in the community. For more information about our program benefits, please see The Homeless Garden Project: A Guide to Transitional Employment and Therapeutic Agriculture.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The costs listed in the submitted budget are our best estimates at associated costs for fees necessary to complete the acquisition and building process. We estimate permit fees for this project will be \$225,000 total and a \$50,000 contribution from Measure Q would make a significant impact in our ability to purchase and develop the site for HGP's permanent home.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

We have submitted a pre-application packet to the City Planning Department for their initial response, expected by March 24th. At that point we will learn additional requirements, if any. This could include a Coastal Development Permit and any other City permits needed. Since the Coastal Commission has approved the Local Coastal Program Amendment, these applications will not need Coastal Commission approval unless appealed. Once all permits have been approved, including the Minor Land Division, we can purchase the land. After the sale is completed, HGP will prepare and submit for building permits which we anticipate will be among the more costly of the fees. The project timeline is dependent on City staff's and other unknown variables, so our timeline represents a best estimate.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

HGP has been innovating for services for individuals experiencing homelessness since our inception in 1990. The field of transitional employment has grown alongside HGP as we innovate and experiment with our programs to provide the most effective services that will help improve the lives of the people experiencing homelessness that we serve, which has led to our success rate of 95% of graduates obtaining stable employment and 88% obtaining stable housing since 2014. There are many examples of our innovation - such as being one of the first community Farms to embrace the Community-Supported Agriculture model. We have often received requests from individuals eager to start a similar project in their community and thanks to support from the Noble and Lorraine Hancock Fund, we were able to partner with the Center for Economic Justice and Action (CEJA) at UCSC to help us create a manual so others may learn from our years of experience. The manual was created over a 13 session learning share with Everyone Village, a Eugene-based non-profit looking to start an agricultural enterprise to complement their tiny-home and safe parking program. Over 13 sessions, staff from Everyone Village, plus a graduate student from the University of Oregon landscape design school, had a virtual learning exchange with our staff, culminating in a site visit. Their garden enterprise is doing well and serves as a test case success story. CEJA participated in every learning session and worked diligently afterwards to capture the information in the sessions in a manual format. We are pleased to now have the 262 page manual, with a foreword by Chez Panisse and Edible Schoolyard founder, Alice Waters. Here is the link to the online manual, Homeless Garden Project: A Guide to Transitional Employment and Therapeutic Agriculture: <https://homelessgardenproject.org/media-center/> In 2023, HGP was recognized for our innovative approach as a Community Changemaker by the UCSC Chancellor's Innovation and Impact Award, which awards an organization in the Santa Cruz region that has contributed significantly to driving regional economic prosperity through innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship, or support for growing the innovation ecosystem in close collaboration with the university.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Volunteer Hours Leverage, Leveraged Funds, Efficient Use of Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

During our 36 years, HGP has made many strong partnerships throughout the community. It is these relationships and partnerships that have helped power our growth. From donors (individuals, foundations and businesses) to peer homeless services agencies recommending clients for our program to supportive volunteers to landlords and employers willing to open opportunities to our graduates, it is partnerships throughout Santa Cruz that has allowed us to flourish. We are grateful for the strong partners and collaborators that seek to make a better, more inclusive and equitable Santa Cruz for all. HGP has benefited from many volunteers over the course of our program and the pursuit of a permanent home is no different. We benefit greatly from volunteer Board members who have taken the lead in helping manage the building process. Additionally on this project we have received \$39,500 so far in in-kind support from our volunteer architects, and as we move forward, we expect that once again, the generous support from our community will help our dream of a permanent home for HGP be realized. These funds will be leveraged against a \$1,000,000 request to the state's coastal conservancy, in addition to \$500,000 received from CDFA during the initial campaign in 2019. An additional \$3,000,000 from private sources has been secured to make this long held dream a reality and Measure Q funds are needed to ensure the project can be fully realized.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

Measure Q Timeline.pdf

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

09-10-25 Pre App Permit Draft Set.pdf

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

Good Times article 4 page-2.pdf

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

neil simmons our beautiful farm with mission (1).jpg

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Paul Goldberg

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Paul Goldberg, Director of Development

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 115 Type: Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Pinto Lake Water Quality Monitoring to Reduce Harmful Algal Blooms

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

115

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Pinto Lake Water Quality Monitoring to Reduce Harmful Algal Blooms

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

—

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Santa Cruz County Parks

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Population served

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

60,000 residents

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Zane Mortensen

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Parks Planner III

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

Watsonville, CA

PARCEL NUMBER

050-141-11

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.95698966687221

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.77204193453466

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The proposed project serves residents of the Pajaro Valley region of South Santa Cruz County, including both urban and unincorporated communities within District 2 and District 4. Pinto Lake is located north of the City of Watsonville and serves residents of Watsonville. The watershed includes a mix of urban development, agricultural lands, and rural residential areas that contribute to nutrient loading within Pinto Lake. Monitoring activities will occur within the lake and at key tributary inflows draining these mixed land uses, benefiting urban residents of Watsonville, unincorporated South County communities, and downstream jurisdictions within the Pajaro River watershed.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Not applicable

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The proposed project will serve the Pajaro Valley region within District 2, including Pinto Lake County Park, Pinto Lake City Park, and the contributing watershed that ultimately drains to the Pajaro River and Monterey Bay. Monitoring activities will occur within Pinto Lake and at key tributary inflows that discharge into the lake. Pinto Lake serves residents of the City of Watsonville and surrounding unincorporated South County communities and is specifically identified in Measure Q funding priorities for watershed and water quality improvement in the Pajaro Valley.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

No

DAC/SDAC NOTES

The project area is located within the Pajaro Valley region of South Santa Cruz County and serves several Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) identified through CalEnviroScreen 4.0, including Census Tracts 6087110501, 6087110300, and 6087110400. The project site is also directly adjacent to disadvantaged census tracts identified under the United States Council on Environmental Quality Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, including Census Tracts 06087122500, 06087110700, and 06087110600. By addressing nutrient-driven harmful algal blooms at Pinto Lake, the project will directly benefit these communities by improving public health protections and enhancing safe recreational access. Pinto Lake is a key recreational and community resource for South County residents and improving water quality supports equitable access to safe and reliable outdoor spaces for nearby disadvantaged populations.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

The proposed project consists of temporary water quality sampling and short-term tributary gaging that do not involve grading, permanent structures, or physical alteration of streambeds or banks. As such, no regulatory permits are required. Santa Cruz County Parks has extensive experience coordinating environmental compliance and permitting watershed, restoration, and park infrastructure projects, including consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and other relevant agencies when required.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No	Temporary monitoring and sampling activities only. No streambed alteration, grading, or permanent in	
State Water Control Resources Board	No	No discharge of pollutants or construction activities. Monitoring and data collection only.	
US Fish and Wildlife	No	Monitoring activities only. No federal nexus and no habitat disturbance anticipated.	
City/County Construction Permits	No	No permanent structures or construction activities proposed. Temporary monitoring equipment only.	
Coastal Commission	No	Project consists of temporary monitoring activities with no development or land use change.	
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

1

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

The proposed project is ready for implementation. The County has already obtained detailed cost estimates and scope confirmation for tributary gaging, laboratory analysis, and field sampling services. Monitoring locations, sampling parameters, and frequency have been identified, and consultant coordination can proceed immediately upon confirmation of funding. The project does not require environmental permits, construction approvals, or land use entitlements, as activities consist solely of temporary gaging and water quality data collection. No design development or regulatory review is required prior to implementation. The primary dependency for project initiation is confirmation of full project funding. The County has secured \$80,000 in matching funds and is requesting Measure Q funding to complete the annual monitoring budget. Upon award, field mobilization and sampling can begin promptly to capture seasonal nutrient loading and algal bloom conditions. The project is considered low risk and fully feasible within the 12-month grant term. The scope relies on established monitoring protocols, secured consultant quotes, and defined sampling locations, with no regulatory approvals or construction activities required. This streamlined structure ensures timely implementation and completion within the proposed funding period.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

48000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

128000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$11,500	\$19,244	\$0	\$30,744
Travel	\$2,000	\$3,400	\$0	\$5,400
Contractual / Consultants	\$14,000	\$22,904	\$0	\$36,904
Other Direct Costs	\$20,500	\$34,452	\$0	\$54,952

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

Santa Cruz County Parks is seeking Measure Q funding to support a comprehensive water quality sampling and tributary monitoring program at Pinto Lake in the Pajaro Valley. Pinto Lake has experienced recurring harmful algal blooms (HABs) driven by elevated phosphorus loading from upstream nonpoint sources. These blooms degrade water quality, pose habitat and public health concerns, and limit recreational access for South County residents. Pinto Lake is also listed as impaired for nutrients under the State Water Resources Control Board's Pinto Lake Nutrient Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), which requires progress toward phosphorus reduction and improved water quality conditions by 2029. This project will implement targeted in-lake water quality sampling and tributary gaging to quantify nutrient concentrations, seasonal loading patterns, and bloom dynamics. Monitoring will occur within Pinto Lake and at key inflows to identify which tributaries contribute the greatest phosphorus loads. The data collected will guide in-lake and upstream management strategies, including targeted Best Management Practices (BMPs), to reduce bloom frequency and severity and support implementation of the Pinto Lake Nutrient TMDL. The project is implementation-ready, with defined sampling locations, established protocols, and secured consultant quotes. The \$128,000 project budget includes \$80,000 in secured matching funds from Supervisor Kimberly De Serpa and the City of Watsonville. Measure Q funding will close the remaining funding gap and allow full implementation of the monitoring program. County Parks separately applied for a \$1,000,000 319(h) grant to fund a major in-lake treatment to reduce HABs.

PROJECT START DATE

07/06/2026

PROJECT END DATE

07/05/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, Coastal Protection and Adaptation

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

This project directly advances the Measure Q Vision Plan priorities for the Pajaro Valley by addressing water quality challenges at Pinto Lake and its contributing tributaries. The work supports Water Resource Management, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, and Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity goals by improving watershed conditions while protecting a key habitat and community resource. Because Pinto Lake drains to the Pajaro River and ultimately flows to the Monterey Bay, conditions in the lake directly influence downstream water quality. High levels of HABs from Pinto Lake were implicated in the death of 21 sea otters in the early 2000s. Managing nutrient levels at the lake is therefore essential not only for local recreation but also for protecting the health of the broader watershed and Monterey Bay and the wildlife and habitats in those areas. The lake and surrounding wetlands also support sensitive freshwater and riparian habitats that provide important habitat for native fish, migratory birds, and other wildlife. Pinto Lake is also subject to nutrient reduction requirements under the State Water Resources Control Board's Pinto Lake Nutrient TMDL, which establishes targets for reducing phosphorus inputs to improve lake conditions. As one of the few freshwater recreational lakes in South County, Pinto Lake supports fishing, boating, shoreline access, picnic areas, walking paths, and community events. Its accessibility and amenities make it an especially important outdoor space for families who may have limited access to alternative recreational resources. The project responds to recurring HABs at Pinto Lake driven by excess nutrient inputs, particularly phosphorus from upstream nonpoint sources. While the general cause of these blooms is understood, the relative contribution of individual tributaries and seasonal nutrient loading patterns has not been fully defined. Through targeted in-lake water quality sampling and tributary monitoring, the project will clarify where nutrients enter the system and how they influence bloom formation. The resulting data will guide upstream and in-lake management strategies to more effectively reduce bloom frequency and severity while supporting implementation of the Pinto Lake Nutrient TMDL. This data-driven approach promotes proactive watershed management rather than reactive treatment and ensures that future restoration investments are targeted, cost-effective, and grounded in measurable outcomes. The project also advances Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity by protecting and improving a heavily used public resource serving South County residents. Pinto Lake County Park and Pinto Lake City Park provide accessible recreational opportunities for the City of Watsonville and surrounding unincorporated communities, including several surrounding census tracts identified as Disadvantaged Communities. For many families in the Pajaro Valley, Pinto Lake is one of the most accessible outdoor recreation areas in the region. Recurring HABs can limit safe recreational use, reduce fishing opportunities, and raise public health concerns, disproportionately affecting communities with fewer alternative recreational options. By enabling targeted nutrient reduction strategies, this effort supports safer fishing and boating conditions, improves reliability of park access, and strengthens equitable access to healthy outdoor space for South County residents, including the City of Watsonville and surrounding unincorporated Santa Cruz County communities.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Pinto Lake is both an important recreational resource for South County and a key part of the Pajaro River watershed. This project focuses on practical, data-driven actions to address recurring HABs that affect water quality, public health, and reliable park access. By identifying where excess nutrients enter the lake and how they contribute to bloom formation, the project will help ensure that future management efforts are targeted and effective rather than reactive. Understanding the primary nutrient sources allows the County to focus management strategies where they will have the greatest impact. This approach will support solutions that reduce bloom frequency, improve recreational conditions, improve sensitive aquatic and riparian habitat, and protect downstream waters that ultimately flow to the Pajaro River and Monterey Bay. The monitoring program supports improved habitat health, stronger watershed function, and more reliable recreational access. Pinto Lake serves South County residents, including those in the City of Watsonville and nearby unincorporated communities. Several of these areas include census tracts identified as Disadvantaged Communities. For many families in the Pajaro Valley, the lake is one of the most accessible outdoor recreation areas in the region. When HABs occur, they can limit safe recreation and raise potential health concerns. These impacts are felt most by communities with fewer alternative outdoor recreation opportunities. The information collected through this project will help guide long-term solutions to improve water quality and protect reliable and equitable access to safe outdoor recreation for South County residents. The project also contributes to long-term climate resilience. Warmer temperatures and shifting precipitation patterns can increase nutrient loading and create conditions that allow HABs to develop more frequently and persist for longer periods. As climate patterns continue to change, understanding how nutrients move through the watershed and enter Pinto Lake becomes increasingly important. By improving the County's understanding of seasonal nutrient inputs, flow conditions, and watershed dynamics, this effort will help inform management strategies that can better respond to climate-related stressors and protect water quality over time. This effort is supported through a strong local partnership focused on improving conditions at Pinto Lake. Supervisor Kimberly De Serpa and the City of Watsonville have committed a combined \$80,000 toward the monitoring program. If awarded, Measure Q funding will provide the remaining resources needed to complete the preliminary data collection and move the project forward toward future implementation. County Parks has also applied for a \$1 million 319(h) grant to support a major in-lake treatment aimed at reducing HABs, and the monitoring proposed through this project will provide important data to

help guide and support that effort. The work is also part of broader watershed coordination with the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and other regional partners working to address nutrient loading throughout the watershed. These partners are coordinating future funding opportunities, including a planned Proposition 4 grant application focused on watershed-scale improvements that will complement in-lake management actions at Pinto Lake.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

This effort delivers clear public benefits by supporting long-term improvements to water quality, sensitive habitat, recreational access, and environmental health. Pinto Lake is an important public recreational resource for South County residents and provides opportunities for fishing, boating, walking, and community gatherings, among other recreational amenities. Recurring HABs can limit safe recreation and raise public health concerns, reducing reliable access to this important community space. By identifying the primary sources and timing of nutrient inputs that contribute to recurring HABs, the monitoring program will provide the information needed to guide effective long-term management strategies that protect public health and maintain safe recreational access. The work strongly aligns with the priorities identified in the Measure Q Vision Plan. Improving the water quality, recreation, and habitat value of Pinto Lake is specifically mentioned as a priority project in Water Resources Management, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, and Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity thematic areas in the Vision Plan. Pinto Lake is part of the Pajaro River watershed and drains downstream waters that ultimately discharge to the Monterey Bay. As a result, water quality conditions in the lake influence the habitat quality and health of the broader watershed. Improving understanding of how nutrients enter the lake and move through the watershed will help guide future upstream and in-lake management actions aimed at reducing HABs and improving water quality. This information will support more targeted watershed management strategies that strengthen long-term watershed health, improve ecological resilience, and help protect both recreational resources and downstream water bodies. The monitoring effort is well positioned for immediate implementation. Monitoring locations have been identified, consultant cost estimates have been obtained, and the majority of project funding has already been secured. Because the work focuses on water quality sampling and monitoring activities that do not involve construction or permanent improvements, it can be implemented quickly and efficiently without the need for additional permitting or environmental review. If awarded, Measure Q funding will provide the remaining resources needed to initiate the monitoring program and complete the work within one year of funding disbursement.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

Pinto Lake serves a wide range of South County residents, including families in the City of Watsonville and nearby unincorporated communities throughout the Pajaro Valley. Both the City and County operate independent Pinto Lake Parks that are adjacent to the lake. Several neighborhoods surrounding the lake fall within census tracts identified as Disadvantaged Communities, making the Pinto Lake City and County Parks especially important and accessible outdoor spaces for nearby residents. For many families in the region, the lake and surrounding parks provide one of the most convenient opportunities to access nature, exercise outdoors, and spend time with family and friends. The parks support a variety of recreational uses that attract visitors from across the Pajaro Valley. Community members regularly visit the lake for fishing, boating, shoreline access, walking, and picnicking. In addition to the lake itself, the park includes a range of recreational amenities such as baseball fields, soccer fields, a disc golf course, a volleyball court, RV camping, picnic pavilions, and a bicycle pump track. These facilities support youth sports programs, family recreation, and community gatherings, making the park an important recreational destination for residents throughout South County. The lake and surrounding natural areas also provide opportunities for outdoor learning related to water quality, watershed health, and local habitat and ecosystems. Nearby schools can use the lake and parks as part of environmental education activities, and local community gardening programs reflect the strong connection many residents have to the natural resources of the Pajaro Valley. Local anglers are one of the primary user groups at Pinto Lake, and fishing remains one of the most common activities at the parks. The lake has historically supported recreational fishing opportunities that are highly valued by the surrounding community. When HABs occur, they can limit fishing activity, reduce overall recreation use, and raise concerns about water safety. These impacts affect both regular park visitors and nearby residents who rely on the lake as an accessible recreation area, particularly communities with fewer alternative outdoor recreation options. The monitoring program proposed through this project will help identify the sources and timing of nutrient inputs that contribute to HAB formation. The information collected will guide future management actions aimed at improving water quality and reducing bloom frequency, helping ensure that Pinto Lake remains a safe, healthy, and accessible recreational resource for South County residents.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Pinto Lake County Park provides an important outdoor recreation and community gathering space for South County residents, including families in the City of Watsonville and nearby unincorporated communities throughout the Pajaro Valley. The lake and

surrounding park support a range of recreational opportunities, including fishing, boating, walking/running trails, youth sports, and community gatherings. Park amenities such as baseball fields, soccer fields, a disc golf course, and a bicycle pump track provide accessible recreation opportunities for residents of all ages. For many families in the region, Pinto Lake offers one of the most convenient opportunities to access nature and outdoor recreation close to home. Maintaining safe access to this resource is important for community health and well-being. Recurring HABs can limit safe recreation, reduce fishing opportunities, and raise concerns about water safety for park visitors and pets. When these conditions occur, they can affect the ability of families and youth sports programs to safely use the park and surrounding facilities. Because nearby neighborhoods fall within census tracts identified as Disadvantaged Communities, reliable access to safe outdoor recreation is particularly important for residents who may have fewer recreation options available nearby. Improving water quality at Pinto Lake therefore supports public safety and helps maintain reliable access to nature and outdoor recreation for South County residents, which contributes to the community's health and well-being. The project also supports community education and environmental stewardship. The lake and surrounding watershed provide opportunities for hands-on learning related to water quality, watershed processes, and local ecosystems. The County has already engaged nearby academic institutions, including Cabrillo College and the University of California, Santa Cruz, through site visits and discussions with students focused on watershed health and lake ecology. These interactions provide students with real-world learning opportunities while helping build community awareness around the causes and impacts of HABs. There are several freshwater lakes within the Pajaro Valley, and these natural resources are an important part of the community's identity. Improving water quality at Pinto Lake will positively influence the community's identity and livability. This effort also benefits from regional collaboration with organizations working to improve watershed conditions throughout the Pajaro Valley. Ongoing coordination includes partnerships with County Environmental Health, the City of Watsonville, the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and Central Coast Water Quality Preservation Incorporated. These organizations are actively involved in watershed management, agricultural stewardship, water quality protection, and land conservation throughout the Pajaro Valley. The monitoring program supported through this project will identify the sources and timing of nutrient inputs that contribute to HAB formation at Pinto Lake. Once the primary sources of phosphorus have been identified, the County and its partners will be well positioned to develop and implement targeted mitigation strategies. Because many of the key watershed partners are already engaged, the information generated through this effort can quickly support coordinated actions to reduce nutrient loading, limit the recurrence of HABs, and protect this important recreational and community resource for the Pajaro Valley.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant owns the property for the proposed project

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

The proposed project focuses on water quality sampling and tributary monitoring and does not involve construction, ground disturbance, or permanent site improvements. As a result, the program can be implemented quickly and efficiently using established monitoring methods and existing technical partnerships. Santa Cruz County Parks has already developed a monitoring framework for the project, including identified sampling locations and coordination with technical partners. Consultant cost estimates have been obtained for tributary gaging and monitoring support, and the majority of project funding has already been secured. The County also works closely with local and regional partners, including County Environmental Health, the City of Watsonville, the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, and other watershed stakeholders who are actively involved in water quality and watershed management efforts in the Pajaro Valley. Because the project focuses on data collection and monitoring, the work can begin as soon as funding is secured and can be completed within one year of funding disbursement.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

The proposed project will implement a coordinated water quality monitoring program to better understand the sources and timing of nutrient inputs contributing to recurring harmful algal blooms (HABs) at Pinto Lake. The effort combines tributary monitoring and in-lake sampling to quantify nutrient loading, track bloom conditions, and identify the primary drivers of HAB formation within the watershed. A central component of the project will be the installation and operation of stream gages on key tributaries that flow into Pinto Lake. These gages will measure stream stage and flow conditions, allowing the project team to estimate discharge and better understand how water enters the lake from upstream areas. Periodic field visits will include streamflow measurements, equipment maintenance, and grab sampling to characterize water quality conditions in each tributary. Sampling will focus on nutrients associated with algal growth, particularly phosphorus, which has been identified as the primary driver of HABs in Pinto Lake and is the focus of nutrient reduction targets established under the Pinto Lake Nutrient TMDL. The monitoring program will help quantify tributary phosphorus loading and provide the data needed to guide management actions required to meet TMDL

reduction targets. In addition to tributary monitoring, the project will implement an in-lake water quality sampling program at multiple shoreline and open-water stations. Sampling will track nutrient concentrations, algal biomass, cyanotoxins, and related indicators used to evaluate HAB conditions and overall lake health. Sampling frequency will increase during the primary bloom season to capture changes in water quality and algal activity as blooms develop. Field measurements will also include basic water quality indicators such as temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, and conductivity to better understand the physical and chemical conditions that influence bloom development. Continuous monitoring will complement the field sampling program. Existing in-lake sensors operated by project partners will provide high-frequency measurements of key water quality parameters during the bloom season. This data will help track short-term changes in water conditions and provide additional context for interpreting the discrete sampling results. Data collected through the monitoring program will be compiled and analyzed to evaluate nutrient concentrations, tributary loading patterns, and seasonal variability within the watershed. The resulting dataset will provide the scientific foundation needed to guide future water quality management at Pinto Lake. By identifying which tributaries contribute the greatest phosphorus loads and when those loads occur, the County and its partners will be able to prioritize upstream best management practices and in-lake management strategies aimed at reducing nutrient inputs and limiting the recurrence of HABs.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The total project budget for the Pinto Lake Water Quality Monitoring and Tributary Assessment Program is \$128,000, based on detailed cost estimates developed for the proposed one-year monitoring effort. The budget supports implementation of a comprehensive monitoring program designed to improve understanding of nutrient loading to Pinto Lake and inform future management actions aimed at reducing recurring HABs. A portion of the project budget supports stream gaging and tributary monitoring conducted by a qualified hydrologic consultant. Balance Hydrologics will install and operate stream gages at key tributaries flowing into Pinto Lake and conduct field visits to measure streamflow and collect water quality samples during both baseflow and storm conditions. These measurements are necessary to quantify how much water and nutrients are entering the lake from upstream areas and to better understand how tributary inputs influence lake water quality. Consultant services for gage installation, monitoring, and data analysis total \$36,904, which include nutrient sampling associated with tributary monitoring. The remainder of the budget supports in-lake water quality monitoring and laboratory analysis conducted throughout the year. Field sampling will occur regularly to track water quality conditions, bloom development, and seasonal nutrient dynamics within the lake. Personnel costs associated with field sampling and sample collection total \$30,744, with an additional \$5,400 allocated for travel associated with monitoring visits and field work. This combined allocation reflects staff time and field expenses needed to conduct regular monitoring visits and collect water samples at established monitoring locations. Laboratory analysis represents a significant component of the monitoring program. Laboratory testing will include analysis of nutrients (such as nitrate, orthophosphate, total nitrogen, and total phosphorus), chlorophyll-a, algal toxins, heavy metals, and alkalinity. These parameters are essential for evaluating HAB conditions and identifying the nutrient drivers contributing to bloom formation. Laboratory analysis costs total \$54,952 and support multiple sampling events throughout the year to capture seasonal changes in water quality conditions. Together, these budget components support a coordinated monitoring effort that will generate the data needed to understand how nutrients enter Pinto Lake, how those inputs change throughout the year, and how they contribute to HAB formation. The budget reflects a cost-effective approach that combines consultant expertise for stream gaging with County-led monitoring and laboratory analysis to produce high-quality scientific data. The project also benefits from substantial local funding support, with the majority (\$80,000) of project funding already secured through partner contributions. Measure Q funding will provide the remaining support needed to implement the monitoring program and ensure that the full dataset can be collected within the one-year project period.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

The proposed monitoring program will be completed within a 12-month project period and can begin as soon as funding is awarded. Because the project focuses on water quality monitoring and data collection rather than construction or site improvements, no additional permitting or environmental review is required prior to implementation. Monitoring locations have already been identified, consultant cost estimates have been obtained, and project partners are prepared to begin work immediately once funding is secured. During the initial phase of the project, the County will coordinate with the project consultant to finalize monitoring logistics and install stream gaging equipment at key tributaries flowing into Pinto Lake. Installing the gages early in the project timeline will allow tributary monitoring to capture the end of the wet-season flow conditions, when storm events and seasonal runoff typically deliver the largest nutrient loads to the lake. Routine site visits conducted during this period will focus on measuring streamflow, collecting tributary water quality samples, and documenting flow conditions needed to estimate nutrient loading from upstream areas. Following installation of the monitoring equipment, the project will transition into the primary data collection phase. County staff will conduct regular in-lake water quality monitoring while the consultant continues periodic tributary monitoring and streamflow measurements. Sampling will be structured to capture seasonal patterns in lake conditions and nutrient inputs. Monitoring frequency will increase during the primary HAB season, typically occurring between March and October, when blooms are most likely to develop and water quality conditions can change rapidly. During the late fall and winter months (November through February), in-lake monitoring will occur at a reduced frequency to document baseline conditions. Tributary monitoring may increase during storm events to capture peak flow conditions and better quantify nutrient loading entering the lake during high runoff periods. Data collected throughout the monitoring period will be compiled and reviewed on an ongoing basis to evaluate seasonal nutrient loading patterns, tributary contributions, and overall watershed dynamics influencing water quality in Pinto Lake. At the conclusion of the one-year monitoring period, the project team will analyze the results to develop a

comprehensive dataset that can guide future management strategies aimed at reducing nutrient inputs, improving water quality, and limiting the recurrence of harmful algal blooms.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

This project supports innovation and capacity-building by establishing a coordinated monitoring framework that connects lake conditions with watershed nutrient inputs. While monitoring programs are common, this effort brings together tributary stream gaging, targeted nutrient sampling, and in-lake HAB monitoring into a single integrated dataset designed to identify the primary drivers of nutrient loading to Pinto Lake. By linking watershed inputs to lake conditions, the project will generate the type of actionable information needed to guide future water quality improvements and restoration strategies. The project also strengthens local capacity to address water quality challenges through collaboration between multiple regional partners. The monitoring program builds on ongoing coordination among Santa Cruz County Parks, County Environmental Health, the City of Watsonville, the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and Central Coast Water Quality Preservation Incorporated. Academic partnerships with Cabrillo College and the University of California, Santa Cruz further expand the project's capacity by incorporating student engagement and field-based learning opportunities tied directly to lake monitoring activities. These partnerships allow the project team to move quickly from data collection to implementation. Once the monitoring program identifies the primary sources and pathways of phosphorus entering Pinto Lake, the partner organizations involved in this effort will be positioned to collaboratively develop and implement watershed management strategies aimed at reducing nutrient loading and limiting the recurrence of HABs. Potential actions could include upstream land management practices, targeted runoff reduction strategies, or in-lake treatment approaches. In addition to addressing immediate monitoring needs, this project builds a scientific foundation for future restoration investments at Pinto Lake. The dataset produced through this effort will allow the County to develop targeted mitigation strategies and implement long-term water quality improvements that benefit recreation, public health, and ecosystem conditions while supporting the required implementation of the Pinto Lake Nutrient TMDL.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Leveraged Funds, Efficient Use of Funds, Other

BONUS NARRATIVE

This effort builds on a strong network of local partnerships that are already working to improve water quality and watershed conditions in the Pinto Lake area. Santa Cruz County Parks is coordinating closely with County Environmental Health, the City of Watsonville, the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and Central Coast Water Quality Preservation Incorporated. Each organization brings a different role and expertise, ranging from watershed management and restoration planning to water quality monitoring and community engagement. By coordinating across these groups, the monitoring effort can draw on existing technical knowledge while helping ensure that the results quickly translate into practical watershed management strategies once the primary sources of nutrient loading are better understood. Measure Q funding represents an efficient use of public funds by completing the remaining portion of a monitoring program that already has substantial local investment. The total project cost is approximately \$128,000, with \$80,000 already committed through local funding sources (City of Watsonville and County). Measure Q support will provide the remaining funds needed to carry out a full year of coordinated tributary and in-lake monitoring. By filling this final funding gap, the program can move forward immediately while maximizing the value of local funds already committed to understanding and improving water quality conditions at Pinto Lake. County Parks has also applied for a \$1 million NPS 319(h) grant to support a future in-lake treatment effort, and the monitoring proposed through this project will provide important data needed to guide and support that work. The monitoring work will also support compliance with water quality requirements established under the Pinto Lake TMDL adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board. The TMDL requires reductions in phosphorus loading to address recurring HAB conditions and improve overall lake health, with local agencies expected to demonstrate progress toward meeting these targets by 2029. At present, limited data exists to clearly identify the relative contributions of different tributaries and watershed sources. The information generated through this monitoring program will help fill those gaps and guide future management actions needed to reduce nutrient loading and support long-term improvements to water quality at Pinto Lake.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Pinto Lake Monitoring_Budget Summary.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[Pinto Lake Monitoring_Site Map.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS
Pinto Lake Monitoring_Photos.pdf

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS
No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Zane Mortensen

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Zane Mortensen, Parks Planner III

SIGNATURE DATE

03/12/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 124

Type: Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

Project: Harnessing Forest Biomass for Wildfire Resilience and Soil Health: Assessing Biome Logs in the Santa Cruz Mountains

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

124

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Harnessing Forest Biomass for Wildfire Resilience and Soil Health: Assessing Biome Logs in the Santa Cruz Mountains

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

—

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Center for Applied Ecological Remediation

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Education population

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

\$250,000

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Maya Elson

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Lead Researcher

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

211 Sunlit Ln, Santa Cruz, California, 95060

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

37.06715097980000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.12721297616500

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The proposed fuels management research and pilot implementation will take place at 211 Sunlit Lane in Bonny Doon, within unincorporated Santa Cruz County. The project directly benefits the surrounding neighborhood by reducing hazardous fuel loads, lowering radiant heat potential, and strengthening defensible space within the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ). Indirectly, the broader Santa Cruz Mountains region benefits through demonstration, data generation, and development of replicable fuel treatment strategies appropriate for small private landowners.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Not applicable

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

While project implementation is site-based, the knowledge, data, and materials developed through this Tier 1 project are intended to support broader application throughout Santa Cruz County. The study is designed to benefit land managers and residents in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), where wildfire risk is highest and effective fuels management strategies are urgently needed. Two primary study sites are located in unincorporated Santa Cruz County in the Bonny Doon area. One site was impacted by the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire and will provide valuable information for residents and land managers seeking long-term post-fire recovery strategies. The second site has not experienced recent wildfire and will provide comparative data relevant to wildfire preparedness and prevention in similar ecosystems. The project also includes development and field testing of a "Wildfire Resilience Biocompost," an inoculant derived from locally sourced beneficial microorganisms that can be applied in fuels management and restoration efforts throughout Santa Cruz County. In addition, the project incorporates comparative soil moisture and fuel treatment data collected from plots at San Vicente Redwoods to inform methodology refinement and potential countywide application. Together, these sites provide a representative foundation for evaluating the feasibility of microbial-assisted fuels management strategies that could be implemented more broadly across the county's fire-prone landscapes.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

Based on the limited scope and nature of the proposed activities, the project is anticipated to qualify for a categorical exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Prescribed fire activities funded through Measure Q will only involve planning, monitoring, and outreach components, including development of a prescribed burn plan, coordination of permitting with CAL FIRE, logistical preparation, and community engagement. Any physical on-site implementation activities associated with the study and broadcast burn - such as installation of control lines, site preparation, and burn operations - will be supported through alternate funding sources and volunteer participation. Prescribed fire activities will be conducted pursuant to CAL FIRE permit requirements and in accordance with all applicable safety and regulatory standards. In collaboration with the Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association, the project team is preparing both a Prescribed Burn Plan and a Smoke Management Plan. Consultation with University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources is also underway to ensure that the burn planning process follows best practices for safe and legally compliant implementation. The project team has prior experience coordinating research, monitoring, and fuels management projects involving multiple partners, contractors, and volunteers, and is committed to ensuring all regulatory requirements are met before implementation.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	Yes	Broadcast Burn Permit (LE-7/8)	Currently drafting burn plan

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

1

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

This project builds on ongoing research conducted by CoRenewal and the Center for Applied Ecological Remediation examining microbial inoculation for post-fire toxin mitigation, ecological regeneration, and carbon storage. Consultation with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band is ongoing. The project team has established strong partnerships to support implementation. Collaborators include the Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR), San José State University (SJSU), University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC), and the Santa Cruz County Long Term Recovery Group (SCCLTRG). These partnerships provide technical expertise, implementation support, and community engagement capacity. Project infrastructure is already in place. Experimental plots comparing Biome Logs, pile burning, lop-and-scatter, and untreated controls have been established, and preliminary monitoring of soil moisture, soil carbon, microbial composition, and fuel characteristics is underway. Site preparation for a future broadcast burn, including reduction of ladder fuels, has begun. An initial site visit and planning meeting with the Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association's Program Manager has already occurred to support burn planning and implementation. The Biome Logs Project builds on prior research supported by CoRenewal and a Carbon Fund grant through UCSC. The study is a part of Maya Elson master's thesis at SJSU, and thus continues to receive technical advice and support from professionals at SJSU. Additional support has been received through a 2025 grant from the Greene Foundation. Materials and equipment have largely been donated, and volunteers and UCSC interns have supported installation and monitoring work. The Amah Mutsun Land Trust Native Stewards have also committed in-kind support for pre-burn site preparation. Potential delays may include weather constraints, permitting timelines, and coordination of operations. However, the project timeline incorporates flexibility to accommodate these factors. Overall, the project is well underway with established study sites, active monitoring, and strong institutional and community partnerships.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

24156

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

62187

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$2,600	\$5,900	\$10,000	\$18,500
Fringe Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Equipment	\$278	\$1,506	\$540	\$2,324
Supplies	\$612	\$100	\$682	\$1,394
Contractual / Consultants	\$1,000	\$1,298	\$6,600	\$8,898
Other Direct Costs	\$17,470	\$3,365	\$8,040	\$28,875
Indirect Costs	\$2,196	\$0	\$0	\$2,196

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

As megafires and subsequent flooding intensify across the western United States, innovative wildfire resilience methods are crucial. The Biome Logs Project in Bonny Doon advances research on fungi and soil microbes' role in mitigating wildfire risk: stabilizing soils, retaining moisture, sequestering carbon, reducing erosion, and supporting vegetation regeneration through Biome Logs: partially buried woody debris inoculated with local saprotrophic fungi and mycorrhizal rich compost produced using Dr. Elaine Ingham's Soil Food Web principles. By comparing biome logs against pile burning, lop-and-scatter, and control plots, we will generate critical data on fuel reduction, soil moisture retention, total organic carbon, calcium content, microbial community composition, and biomass volume. This data is the key to the project's multi-benefit outcomes: it will establish whether biome logs can transform hazardous biomass into a resource for long-term ecosystem health and climate resilience. This analysis will also include financial evaluation to assess cost-effectiveness compared to traditional treatments. One of the study sites will be integrated into a future prescribed burn to evaluate how pre-treatment with biome logs influences fire behavior and soil resilience, elevating the study from simple fuel treatment comparison to a landscape-scale climate adaptation model. Measure Q funding is requested for three specific project goals: soil testing, Wildfire Resilience Biocompost extracts and broadcast burn plans.

Demonstrating that soil health and fire resilience can be achieved together through this integrated model will yield a scalable, community-ready model for mitigating fire risk and bolstering long-term ecological health.

PROJECT START DATE

04/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

03/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Wildlife and Habitat Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

The Biome Logs Project directly addresses Measure Q's core priorities of wildfire resilience, climate adaptation, watershed protection, and ecological restoration in Santa Cruz County. Communities across the Santa Cruz Mountains face high levels of wildfire, flood and erosion risk, hazardous fuel accumulation, water quality challenges and habitat degradation. Addressing these interconnected challenges requires integrated, place-based solutions. Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health: The project evaluates and compares fuel management strategies within the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ), directly supporting wildfire risk reduction for residents in fire-prone areas. By managing woody biomass, we are enhancing shaded fuel breaks, reducing the need to remove valuable trees such as redwoods for fuels reduction. Biome Logs aim to reduce fuels and increase soil moisture retention while retaining ecological benefits, contributing to longer-term landscape resilience. This approach supports forest health by fostering soil microbial diversity, increasing soil moisture and rebuilding soil structure - key foundations for vegetation recovery and ecosystem function. By integrating fungi and beneficial microbes, we promote belowground biodiversity, enhancing conditions for native plant regeneration. Water Resources Management: Erosion, runoff, water contamination and reduced water retention are issues faced by Santa Cruz Mountains residents, particularly those within the CZU Lightning Complex footprint. By improving soil structure and moisture retention, Biome Logs have the potential to reduce erosion and improve infiltration, supporting watershed health and protecting downstream water quality. These benefits are particularly relevant in steep, fire-affected terrain common throughout Santa Cruz County. A prior research collaboration with Santa Cruz Long Term Recovery Group and CoRenewal, the Fire Ecology Network in X-site Studies (FENiXS) program evaluated components of this methodology for their potential to protect waterways from contaminants from structure burns, reduce erosion and increase carbon storage. Our findings indicated that our fungal and microbial inoculants reduced Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons, increased soil-stable aggregates, and elevated the potential for carbon sequestration in the Wildland Urban Interface following catastrophic wildfires. Biome Logs emerged from this study as a way of utilizing on-site organic matter to protect and enhance water quality in the long-term fire recovery process. Climate Adaptation: This project contributes to climate adaptation by transforming woody debris - often treated as waste - into a resource for carbon storage and soil regeneration. Biome Logs are designed to enhance soil organic carbon and support microbial communities that stabilize carbon in soils. This aligns with regional climate goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration in working and natural lands. Mycorrhizal fungi support and climate resilience by improving soil water retention, plant survival during drought and soil stabilization during floods. This project cultivates and creates habitat for these microbes to strengthen ecosystem adaptation. Community-Based and Scalable Solutions: Through collaboration with a network of practitioners, this project emphasizes community engagement, knowledge sharing, and workforce development. The research is designed to provide landowners and land managers in the Wildland Urban Interface with the tools and information they need to balance ecological integrity with low-cost, accessible, and scalable solutions.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

This project addresses urgent wildfire resilience and ecological recovery needs in Santa Cruz County, where communities continue to experience elevated fire risk following the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire. Hazardous fuel accumulation, soil degradation, and increased erosion risk remain pressing concerns in the Santa Cruz Mountains, particularly within the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ). This project prioritizes equity and accessibility by developing a method that is intended to be cost-effective and replicable for small landowners in areas with wildfire risk and who have been affected by wildfire. Many residents in the wildland-urban interface face financial and logistical barriers to managing woody debris. By evaluating the financial costs of each treatment alongside ecological metrics, the project seeks to identify strategies that are both effective and economically feasible. There is no single optimal fuel management technique, each site has its own set of challenges and opportunities. We are seeking to better understand the feasibility and affordability of different fuel management techniques, as well as evaluate an emerging tool

in the array of fuel management techniques. The project is prioritized because it integrates wildfire mitigation with measurable climate, watershed, and soil health benefits. By testing Biome Logs alongside standard treatments and untreated controls, the project provides comparative data to inform land management decisions grounded in both fire safety and ecological outcomes. The work is site-ready, with established experimental plots and ongoing monitoring. It leverages existing collaborations and builds on prior fuel reduction efforts, ensuring that Measure Q funding would accelerate implementation rather than initiate planning. The prescribed burn component is coordinated with experienced practitioners and aligned with regulatory requirements, reducing uncertainty in project execution. The Wildfire Resilience BioCompost will continue to be a resource for residents and ecosystems of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Finally, the project generates locally relevant, data-driven insights that can inform future wildfire resilience planning in Santa Cruz County. Its emphasis on monitoring soil moisture, soil carbon, microbial diversity, and fuel reduction effectiveness ensures that outcomes are measurable and transferable. By addressing immediate fire risk while contributing to long-term climate and watershed resilience, this project represents a high-impact and forward-looking investment aligned with Measure Q priorities.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

This project advances the principle of readiness by strengthening the capacity of landscapes and communities in Santa Cruz County to prepare for and respond to wildfire, drought, and extreme weather events. In the aftermath of the CZU Lightning Complex Fire, many areas in the Santa Cruz Mountains remain vulnerable to future fires, as well as secondary impacts such as erosion, flooding, and prolonged soil degradation. This project addresses these risks proactively by improving both fuel conditions and underlying soil resilience. By reducing hazardous woody biomass in the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ), the project directly enhances preparedness for future wildfire events, lowering the likelihood of structure ignition and reducing fire intensity near communities. At the same time, it evaluates Biome Logs as an approach that not only reduces fuels but also improves soil moisture retention, helping landscapes better withstand drought and recover more quickly after disturbance. Increased soil moisture and improved soil structure can reduce fire severity, support vegetation regrowth, and enhance overall ecosystem stability under climate stress. The project also contributes to readiness for extreme precipitation events. By increasing infiltration and stabilizing soils through organic matter and microbial activity, the treatments tested in this study may help reduce erosion risk, improve slope stability, and protect downstream water resources during heavy rain events. In addition, this work builds practical, place-based knowledge that can inform future preparedness efforts. By comparing conventional fuel treatments with an innovative, ecologically based approach, the project generates actionable data for landowners and land managers seeking to prepare their properties for multiple hazards. The focus on scalable, low-cost methods further supports broader community readiness by making effective strategies more accessible. Overall, this project enhances readiness not only by reducing immediate fire risk, but by strengthening the ecological conditions that enable landscapes to better resist, absorb, and recover from wildfire and extreme weather events.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

This project serves a range of stakeholders in Santa Cruz County, with a primary focus on residents and landowners in the wildland-urban interface (WUI), particularly in the Santa Cruz Mountains. These communities face ongoing wildfire risk, fuel accumulation, and post-fire environmental impacts following the CZU Lightning Complex Fire. Many property owners are responsible for managing vegetation within the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) but often lack affordable and efficient options for doing so. This project directly supports these landowners by evaluating and developing practical fuel management strategies that reduce fire risk while improving soil and ecosystem health. A key user group includes small private landowners who may not have access to large-scale equipment or financial resources for conventional fuel treatments. By testing low-cost, scalable approaches such as Biome Logs - constructed from on-site woody debris - the project aims to provide accessible solutions that can be implemented without specialized infrastructure. Cost tracking within the study further supports this group by identifying economically feasible practices. The project also benefits land managers, restoration practitioners, and fire professionals working in the region. By generating comparative data on pile burning, lop-and-scatter, and Biome Logs, the research provides evidence-based insights that can inform management decisions across public and private lands. These findings are relevant to organizations engaged in forest health, fuels reduction, and climate adaptation planning. In addition, the project engages a broader network of community-based organizations and practitioners, including collaborators such as the Center for Applied Ecological Remediation and FENiXS. Through this network, knowledge and practices developed through the project can be shared across regions, supporting peer-to-peer learning and broader adoption. Students and researchers also represent an important user group. The project provides hands-on learning opportunities in soil science, fire ecology, and ecological monitoring, contributing to workforce development in climate resilience and land stewardship. Finally, downstream communities and ecosystems benefit indirectly through improved watershed health. By enhancing soil stability, increasing water retention, and reducing erosion risk, the project supports water quality and ecosystem function beyond individual project sites. Overall, this project serves diverse user groups by delivering practical, science-based, and accessible strategies that enhance wildfire preparedness, ecological resilience, and community capacity in Santa Cruz County.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

In the face of heightened wildfire risk, residents of Santa Cruz County need practical guidance on wildfire risk mitigation strategies. Nature-based solutions adapted to the local context, like Biome Logs and Wildfire Resilience Biocompost, are promising methods for addressing this need with additional benefits. This project will solidify understanding and provide actionable data and educational material for residents to make informed decisions that enhance public safety. Public safety is the central community value guiding this project. Hazardous woody debris accumulation, prolonged drought, and increasingly extreme fire weather contribute to elevated risk within the wildland-urban interface (WUI) in the Santa Cruz Mountains. This project directly advances public safety by reducing hazardous fuels within the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) while strengthening soil and ecosystem conditions that influence fire behavior and post-fire recovery. Reducing excess woody biomass lowers the probability of structure ignition during wildfire events. At the same time, treatments designed to enhance soil moisture retention and soil stability may moderate fire intensity and reduce secondary hazards such as erosion, flooding, and sediment transport that can threaten roads, homes, and water systems during heavy rain events. The project is grounded in respectful consultation with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band and other ARA (Awasswas/Ramaytush) descendants connected to the Santa Cruz region. This project seeks to complement - not replace - Traditional Ecological Knowledge by exploring how microbial and biomass-based treatments may support soil regeneration and watershed stability alongside cultural fire practices. Opportunities for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and participation will continue to be offered to interested Native Stewards. This research is conducted as part of a graduate thesis at San Jose State University, with collaboration and technical support from University of California Santa Cruz. These partnerships expand local capacity in fire ecology, soil science, and climate resilience. Community engagement is integral to advancing project outcomes. In addition to on-site demonstrations for landowners and neighbors, a public workshop in collaboration with University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources will be held to share findings and provide practical guidance on wildfire-resilient land management. A landowner questionnaire will be distributed alongside dialogue with potential users to assess feasibility, cost barriers, and community receptivity to Biome Logs as a fuels treatment strategy. Clear, accessible educational materials will be developed, summarizing cost comparisons, ecological outcomes, and safety implications of each treatment method. Additionally, collaboration with practitioner networks will continue to broaden dissemination across community and professional audiences. Beyond immediate risk reduction, the project generates locally relevant data to inform safer land management countywide. By measuring fuel reduction effectiveness alongside soil moisture, soil carbon, and microbial indicators, the research supports science-based decision-making that integrates fire safety with long-term ecological resilience. Ultimately, this project strengthens community resilience not only by reducing immediate fire hazards, but by equipping residents, land managers, and students with practical tools and knowledge. By combining applied research, public education, and collaborative stewardship, the project contributes to a more informed, prepared, and resilient Santa Cruz County.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Applicant owns the property for the proposed project

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

—

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

This project includes applied fuels treatment implementation, ecological monitoring, prescribed fire, and community education components. 1. Monitoring and Laboratory Analysis Existing experimental plots comparing Biome Logs, pile burning, lop-and-scatter, and untreated controls will continue to be monitored. Soil moisture is measured continuously using in-situ soil moisture probes. Soil samples are analyzed for total organic carbon and calcium at the Maltz Lab at the University of Connecticut. Soil microbial communities from both treatment plots and the Wildfire Resilience Biocompost are monitored using microscopy and quantitative field assessment (Microbiometer) at two timepoints. Molecular analysis of whole microbial communities (PCR-based methods) is conducted through the CALeDNA Lab at the University of California Santa Cruz. An initial subset of samples has already been processed. Measure Q funding will support expanded laboratory analysis to increase sample size and ensure statistically robust comparisons across treatments. 2. Broadcast Burn Preparation and Permitting The project includes preparation for a prescribed broadcast burn within established experimental units. A prescribed burn plan is being developed in accordance with permitting requirements through CAL FIRE. This includes defining burn objectives, identifying appropriate weather and fuel

moisture conditions, and establishing safety protocols. Permit acquisition and coordination with qualified fire personnel are integral components of this phase. 3. Burn Implementation and Severity Assessment A trained burn crew equipped with appropriate safety gear and fire suppression tools will implement the broadcast burn under approved conditions. Post-burn assessments will measure burn severity using standardized indicators, including visual assessment, soil surface condition, and fuel consumption metrics. 4. Education and Community Dissemination The project includes educational and outreach activities designed to share findings with the broader community. These include public workshops, on-site demonstrations, and development of accessible materials summarizing ecological outcomes, fuel reduction effectiveness, and cost considerations. Findings will be synthesized in a final report and integrated into a graduate thesis and submitted to scientific journals for publication, contributing to both local knowledge and broader wildfire resilience research. Together, these components ensure that fuel reduction, ecological monitoring, prescribed fire implementation, and community education proceed in an integrated and measurable manner, generating actionable data to inform wildfire resilience strategies in Santa Cruz County.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The Biome Logs Project budget supports research, community engagement, and wildfire resilience activities designed to evaluate fuels management strategies in Santa Cruz County. The total project budget is \$62,187, including \$24,156 requested from Measure Q, with additional support from the Greene Foundation (\$10,000), the UCSC Carbon Fund (\$2,169), and \$25,862 in in-kind contributions including volunteer labor, donated materials, and partner support. This diversified funding structure demonstrates strong leveraged investment and community participation. Personnel Personnel funding supports the core labor required to conduct the research and manage project activities. Measure Q funds will partially support a Lead Scientist stipend, which covers project oversight, research coordination, data analysis, and reporting. Two project interns will assist with field monitoring, data collection, and site maintenance. Additional project management support is provided through CoRenewal. Education and Outreach Funds are allocated for community engagement activities, including a public informational meeting in Santa Cruz, a workshop on Biome Logs and long-term wildfire recovery strategies, and development of educational materials. These efforts will help share findings with landowners, land managers, and community members interested in wildfire resilience practices. Supplies and Equipment Supplies include materials necessary for microbial cultivation and soil sampling, such as saprotrophic fungal spawn, wildfire resilience biocompost extracts, and soil sampling bags. Equipment purchases include field tools and monitoring equipment such as hand tools, soil sieves, soil moisture sensors, and bulk density measurement equipment required for plot installation and monitoring. Contracts and Consultants Consultant funding supports specialized expertise necessary for project implementation, including consultation with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band to ensure that project activities are informed by responsible stewardship practices and Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Soil Analysis A major component of the budget supports laboratory analysis of soil properties, including total organic carbon, calcium, microbial biomass, and microbial community composition using eDNA analysis. These analyses will allow the project team to evaluate how different fuels treatments influence soil health and ecosystem recovery. Prescribed Burn Planning and Activities Funding requested from Measure Q would support development of a Prescribed Burn Plan, Smoke Management Plan and permit acquisition in coordination with the Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association. Indirect Costs A 10% administrative fee supports grant management through the Center for Applied Ecological Remediation, including financial administration, reporting, and compliance. Centre for Applied Ecological Remediation will also support the Biome Logs project through expert consultation, data and knowledge sharing about soil fungi analysis and integration of bioremediation methods to address soil contaminants. Overall, the project leverages substantial in-kind support and partner funding to maximize the impact of Measure Q resources while advancing wildfire resilience research and community preparedness in Santa Cruz County.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

This project follows a phased implementation and monitoring timeline designed to support wildfire preparedness, soil restoration, and community engagement in Santa Cruz County. Completed and Ongoing Work (Through February 2026) Preliminary study activities - including initial sample collection and Biome Log test installations - were completed by the end of February 2026. Planning and preparation for the primary study has also been completed, including microbial inoculant cultivation, site assessments and selection, logistical planning, contractor coordination, contractor mobilization, and material staging. Installation activities have included trench excavation, placement of woody materials and inoculants, and implementation of conventional fuel treatments (lop-and-scatter and pile burning). Community engagement efforts - including workshops and meetings in Santa Cruz - are ongoing and will continue throughout the project period. Financial recordkeeping and cost tracking are also underway to support a financial feasibility analysis and community risk/benefit assessment. Permitting and Broadcast Burn Preparation: Summer and Fall 2026 Permit acquisition for the broadcast burn is currently in progress and is expected to be completed by December 2026. Burn unit site preparation, contractor mobilization, and burn plan development will occur concurrently to ensure readiness once permits are secured. Broadcast Burn Implementation: Winter 2027 The broadcast burn is scheduled for January-March 2027, contingent upon suitable weather and fuel moisture conditions. Timing will prioritize safety and regulatory compliance while aligning with ecological objectives. Monitoring and Assessment: 2026-March 2027 Ecological assessments are ongoing and will be completed by March 2027. These include: -Soil sample collection and in situ soil moisture and pH measurements -Microbial composition verification -Soil laboratory analyses (total organic carbon, calcium, microbial communities) -Bulk density and biomass volume estimates -Site monitoring before and after broadcast burn -Statistical analysis of collected data is scheduled to be completed by the end of March 2027. Written reports and the associated graduate thesis will also be finalized by the end of March 2027. Project Completion: March 2027 Final deliverables - including a financial feasibility study, education and outreach, community receptivity report, and synthesis of findings - will be completed by March 2027. This phased

approach ensures that fuel reduction, ecological monitoring, and community engagement proceed in parallel, strengthening wildfire readiness while generating actionable data for long-term resilience planning.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

The Biome Logs Project advances an innovative, ecologically based fuels treatment approach for the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). Pile burns, lop and scatter, mastication and wood chipping each have appropriate uses, but also have limitations-financially, logistically and ecologically. This methodology strategically repositions whole logs and woody debris to reduce hazardous fuel continuity while enhancing soil moisture retention and habitat complexity. The approach integrates locally sourced beneficial microorganisms - particularly saprotrophic fungi - within a bio-compost matrix designed to accelerate decomposition, improve soil structure, and support ecological regeneration. By pairing fuels reduction with microbial and soil restoration strategies, the project expands the range of tools available to landowners and practitioners seeking to balance fire safety with ecosystem function. We are frequently asked why this hasn't been done before, and hope to fill this research gap with broad potential. The innovation lies not only in the treatment itself, but in its applied, comparative evaluation. Biome Logs are being tested alongside pile burning, lop-and-scatter, and untreated controls to generate measurable data on fuel reduction effectiveness, soil moisture retention, soil carbon, and microbial community response. This evidence-based framework strengthens the project's relevance for real-world decision-making. The project also integrates consultation with Indigenous fire stewardship perspectives and transdisciplinary scientific collaboration, fostering a more holistic approach to wildfire resilience. By bridging applied research, cultural knowledge, and community engagement, the project supports practical, locally grounded innovation. Capacity to implement and scale the work is supported through academic and technical partnerships, including collaboration with San Jose State University and University of California Santa Cruz for soil and microbial analysis. Established experimental plots, active monitoring systems, and burn planning processes demonstrate readiness and operational capability. Preliminary financial tracking indicates that the Biome Logs methodology may offer a cost-competitive alternative to conventional treatments, particularly for small private landowners in the WUI who lack access to heavy equipment. More than 30 unsolicited inquiries from land managers and institutions - including federal and nonprofit partners - demonstrate growing interest in microbial and soil-based approaches to wildfire resilience. To support responsible dissemination, the project team has developed educational materials and small-scale microbial inoculation kits for demonstration and training purposes. These tools allow for structured feedback, iterative refinement, and expanded community participation. Overall, this project builds local technical capacity while advancing an innovative, scientific approach to wildfire mitigation. If validated through continued monitoring, the Biome Logs methodology could provide Santa Cruz County landowners and practitioners with a scalable, ecologically grounded addition to existing fuels management strategies.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Volunteer Hours Leverage

BONUS NARRATIVE

A defining strength of the Biome Logs Project is the substantial amount of volunteer labor, in-kind professional support, and community participation that has already been mobilized to advance the work. These contributions significantly extend the impact of requested Measure Q funding and demonstrate strong community investment in wildfire resilience and ecological restoration in Santa Cruz County. The project is driven in large part by the extraordinary volunteer commitment of project lead Maya Elson, who has already contributed hundreds of unpaid hours to research design, field installations, monitoring, partnership development, and grant preparation. This level of personal investment reflects the long-term commitment behind the project and ensures continuity and careful stewardship of the research. The project's main study site is located on property that Maya co-owns and stewards, demonstrating a strong personal commitment to the project's success and safety. Student involvement has also been central to the project's progress. Undergraduate interns from the University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC) have contributed extensive field labor and research assistance. UCSC interns alone have contributed more than 600 volunteer hours to date, assisting with study site preparation, installation of biome log treatments, soil sampling, monitoring, and data organization. Additional student participation is expected to continue throughout the monitoring phase of the project, providing valuable experiential learning opportunities while expanding the project's implementation capacity. The project also benefits from the voluntary guidance and expertise of a broad network of professionals. Dr. Mia Maltz, a soil microbial ecologist at the University of Connecticut, has generously provided scientific mentorship and technical guidance for the project's soil and microbial analyses despite not being formally affiliated with San José State University. Her expertise strengthens the scientific rigor of the study and supports high-quality research outcomes. Community-based stewardship organizations are also contributing their time and expertise. The Amah Mutsun Land Trust Native Stewards have committed to assisting with on-the-ground stewardship activities related to site preparation and prescribed fire readiness. In addition, Jared Childress of the Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association (CCPBA) has offered to volunteer his time to support burn planning and implementation guidance. Local residents have also shown strong interest and support for the project. Supportive neighbors have participated in volunteer workdays to help with site preparation and installations, and many have expressed interest in continuing to participate as the project progresses. The project team is also actively building collaborative relationships with regional organizations working on wildfire resilience, including the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County and the Fire Safe Council of Santa Cruz County, which may further expand community engagement and knowledge sharing as the project develops. Together, these volunteer efforts, professional contributions, and community partnerships represent thousands of dollars in leveraged value and demonstrate broad local support for the project's

goals of advancing wildfire resilience, ecological restoration, and community preparedness.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

Budget - Biome Logs - Measure Q Budget 3_5_26.pdf

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

_Timeline - Biome Logs - Timeline for Q.pdf

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

Site Map and Block Layout.png

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

UCANR Letter of support.pdf, CAER letter of Support.pdf, Esak Ordonez letter of support.pdf, Letter of Support - Jared Childress.pdf

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

IMG_1187.jpeg, B - BL 12:6:25.jpeg, Biome Logs Overview.jpg

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Maya Elson

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Maya Elson, Lead Scientist

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 129 **Type:** Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Loma Prieta Ave Evacuation Corridor Fuel Reduction

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

129

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Loma Prieta Ave Evacuation Corridor Fuel Reduction

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Loma Prieta Community Foundation

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Loma Prieta Community Foundation

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Residents protected

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

350

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Sanjay Khandelwal

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

President, LPCF

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Nancy	Long	[REDACTED]
Nancy	Long	[REDACTED]
Nancy	Long	[REDACTED]
Nancy	Long	[REDACTED]
Nancy	Long	[REDACTED]
Nancy	Long	[REDACTED]
Sanjay	LPCF	[REDACTED]
Nancy	Long	[REDACTED]
Nancy	Long	[REDACTED]
Sanjay	LPCF	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

24277 Loma Prieta Ave, Los Gatos, CA, 95033

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

37.12244597762047

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.92800836281820

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

This is in the unincorporated area of Santa Cruz county served by District 1. Loma Prieta Avenue is home to approximately 300+ residents and is the only evacuation route in an emergency for the residents. It is a daily school bus route. The road is regularly traveled by visitors to local wineries and also by hikers.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

—

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Along the entire Loma Prieta Avenue, most on the approximately 40' County right of way. Most of the work will be done within the first 1/4 mile of the road where overgrowth of fire fuel brush, trees and shrubbery create a serious hazard in the event of a wildfire.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

There are no permits required.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

10

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

The project is ready to start immediately upon approval and receipt of the grant. Loma Prieta Avenue is a Firewise community with neighbors and volunteers ready to assist.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

46500

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

46500

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Equipment	\$6,000	\$0	\$0	\$6,000
Supplies	\$1,500	\$0	\$0	\$1,500
Contractual / Consultants	\$32,000	\$0	\$0	\$32,000
Other Direct Costs	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
Indirect Costs	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

Serving the Loma Prieta area in the Santa Cruz Mountains, the Loma Prieta Community Foundation is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit, volunteer organization, dedicated to building and supporting a strong sense of community in the Summit area. The Loma Prieta Avenue Community Wildfire Fuel Reduction Project is a neighborhood-led hazard mitigation initiative designed to reduce catastrophic wildfire risk along a critical evacuation corridor in Santa Cruz County's wildland-urban interface. Recently designated a Firewise USA® community, Loma Prieta Avenue residents are mobilizing to address hazardous vegetation conditions that threaten safe evacuation and emergency access. The project will implement professional shaded fuel reduction, removal of dead and ladder fuels, and defensible space improvements along the community's only evacuation route. It will also protect the Summit store, a vital business in the community, and also a number of wineries in the area. Community engagement and Firewise education will reinforce long-term maintenance and wildfire preparedness. This effort directly advances Measure Q priorities by reducing hazardous fuels, protecting evacuation infrastructure, improving forest resilience, and strengthening community safety. The project delivers immediate life-safety benefits while establishing sustainable stewardship practices.

PROJECT START DATE

—

PROJECT END DATE

—

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Wildlife and Habitat Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

This effort advances Measure Q priorities by protecting evacuation routes for over 300 residents and local businesses, reducing catastrophic wildfire potential, improving forest and habitat health, and strengthening neighborhood resilience.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The Summit area is a small rural community within Santa Cruz County that often is a lower priority due to our smaller size and remote location. The area is home to thousands of residents, who are in extreme danger in the event of a wildfire, given the overgrowth and fire fuel along county maintained roads. Loma Prieta Avenue is an important roadway, with businesses and hundreds of homes. As it borders the Lexington Reservoir basin, the area is a direct route for wildlife to pass through. Parts of the road, especially near Summit Road, have a canopy of trees and vegetation that would make evacuation impossible in a wildfire. It has not been maintained by the county or utility companies and requires large equipment to address it. Once completed, there is a strong volunteer community to maintain and raise funds for long term upkeep.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

This effort advances Measure Q priorities by protecting evacuation routes for over 300 residents, reducing catastrophic wildfire potential for residents, improving forest and habitat health, and strengthening neighborhood resilience. Additionally, in addition to the residents, this route is heavily traveled by the general public visiting the area, and the work will protect our local businesses, most notably Wrights Station Winery and Summit Store. Burrell School and other wineries in the area will also be impacted.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

The primary beneficiaries of this project are Summit Area residents, who would be highly impacted if a fire took out the Store. Of course, the more than 350 residents who live along Loma Prieta Avenue and depend on it as their sole evacuation route will also see a major impact. In a wildfire emergency, this roadway is not optional - it is the only viable path to safety. During recent wildfire events in the Santa Cruz Mountains, including the CZU Lightning Complex fires, mountain communities experienced road congestion, limited visibility from smoke, falling trees, and delayed emergency response. These events reinforced a clear lesson: evacuation corridors must be maintained and defensible before a fire begins. Loma Prieta Avenue also serves a broader public. It is a daily school bus route transporting children in Kindergarten through 8th grade. It is traveled by visitors to local wineries and the mountain store, utility workers maintaining critical infrastructure, delivery vehicles, and emergency responders. During peak seasons and weekends, traffic increases significantly, expanding the number of individuals who could be impacted during a fast-moving wildfire event. Clearing hazardous vegetation, reducing ladder fuels, and implementing shaded fuel reduction improves visibility, reduces the risk of roadside ignition, and lowers the likelihood that falling trees or intense flame lengths could block passage. In a wind-driven fire scenario, even minutes matter. Ensuring safe ingress and egress protects families, children, visitors unfamiliar with the terrain, and first responders entering the area. By investing in this important Summit Area project, Measure Q funding directly safeguards lives and strengthens resilience in a high-risk wildland-urban interface community that has already witnessed the devastating consequences of wildfire in Santa Cruz County.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Access to nature

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Community and resilience are some of the defining values of the Summit area. Residents understand that living in the Santa Cruz Mountains requires active stewardship. The memory of recent wildfires - homes lost, evacuations under red flag warnings, weeks of smoke-darkened skies - remains immediate and personal. This project reflects a proactive commitment to reducing risk rather than reacting to disaster. Fuel reduction along important evacuation corridors supports safer evacuation, improved emergency access, and reduced fire intensity adjacent to homes and infrastructure. By lowering fuel continuity and removing hazardous vegetation, the project helps prevent small roadside ignitions from escalating into catastrophic wildfire events. This aligns directly with Measure Q's goals of prevention, preparedness, and infrastructure protection. At the same time, the community deeply values access to nature. Loma Prieta Avenue borders Summit Road, which is a major route in the community, and is a popular walking route for residents and visitors who cherish the forested landscape and rural character of the area. The shaded fuel reduction approach balances safety with ecological stewardship by retaining healthy canopy while reducing ladder fuels and dead material. This improves forest health, biodiversity resilience, and long-term sustainability without clear-cutting or altering the character of the neighborhood. The community's recent Firewise designation demonstrates a shared commitment to maintaining defensible space and ongoing wildfire preparedness. Residents are not simply seeking funding - they are actively participating in long-term resilience. Through this project, public safety and environmental stewardship are advanced together, protecting both the people who live here and the natural landscape that defines the Santa Cruz Mountains.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

Contractor shall perform vegetation management activities to reduce wildfire hazards along the roadway corridor. Work includes:
•Removal of dead, dying, and hazardous vegetation •Ladder fuel reduction up to defensible space standards •Selective canopy thinning to reduce crown fire potential •Creation of shaded fuel break along roadway edges •Chipping or hauling debris
•Compliance with environmental best practices •Site safety management Contractor shall coordinate with project leadership to ensure work aligns with Firewise principles and Measure Q reporting requirements.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

Every landowner is a member of the recently approved Firewise Community and supportive of the project and this grant application. If required, we will get landowner's written permission once we have confirmation we can proceed. The project areas are all within the county road right-of-way easements.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The proposed budget supports professional implementation of wildfire fuel reduction along approximately 52,000 sq ft of the critical transportation and evacuation corridor. Funds support local project management, scheduling, contractor oversight, volunteer coordination, reporting, and compliance documentation. This ensures safe implementation, Measure Q reporting accuracy, and long-term stewardship planning. Certified vegetation management professionals will perform canopy thinning, ladder fuel removal, defensible space creation, and debris processing using wildfire mitigation best practices. Includes chipping equipment rental, safety gear, erosion control materials if required, signage, and outreach materials for Firewise education. Budget includes limited rental or use of specialized cutting/chipping equipment directly supporting hazard reduction activities.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

Months 1-2: Planning & Mobilization •Site assessment and hazard mapping •Contractor procurement •Volunteer orientation
•Outreach kickoff Months 3-6: Fuel Reduction Implementation •Dead vegetation removal •Canopy thinning •Shaded fuel break creation •Debris chipping and disposal Months 7-9: Community Engagement •Firewise workshops •Maintenance training
•Resident defensible space guidance Months 10-11: Monitoring & Adjustment •Follow-up site inspection •Hazard reduction verification •Volunteer maintenance coordination Month 12: Reporting & Closeout •Effectiveness documentation •Final reporting
•Sustainability planning

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

The Loma Prieta Avenue Community Wildfire Fuel Reduction Project reflects a community-driven, evacuation-focused approach that directly advances Measure Q's wildfire resilience and public safety priorities. Rather than treating scattered parcels, this project strategically concentrates on the neighborhood's sole evacuation corridor - approximately one-quarter mile of roadway where overgrown canopy, ladder fuels, and dead vegetation create significant life-safety risk. Prioritizing evacuation infrastructure ensures that residents and first responders have safer access during wildfire emergencies. The project integrates professional shaded fuel reduction with structured community participation through the neighborhood's newly established Firewise designation. By combining contractor-led mitigation with Firewise education, the project establishes not only immediate hazard reduction but also long-term maintenance commitments. This dual approach strengthens forest health while reducing catastrophic fire potential and supports Measure Q's emphasis on prevention and preparedness. Capacity for implementation is strong and clearly demonstrated. Residents have completed Firewise risk assessment activities, organized leadership, and mobilized neighborhood participation. A defined treatment area has been identified, and qualified, insured vegetation management professionals will complete work consistent with County and CAL FIRE standards. Community leaders will coordinate outreach, contractor scheduling, and ongoing stewardship to ensure accountability and continuity. Importantly, this project builds durable neighborhood resilience. By focusing on a shared evacuation route and engaging residents collectively, the effort fosters cooperation, shared responsibility, and sustained defensible space practices. The Loma Prieta Avenue community is prepared not only to implement this project successfully but to maintain and expand wildfire risk reduction efforts over time, aligning fully with Measure Q's goals of protecting lives, infrastructure, and forest health. The project will be a showcase for the Loma Prieta Community Foundation and for the Summit Area in general.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Volunteer Hours Leverage, Leveraged Funds, Efficient Use of Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

The Loma Prieta Avenue Community Wildfire Fuel Reduction Project strongly meets and exceeds Measure Q bonus criteria by demonstrating meaningful collaboration, significant volunteer engagement, leveraged resources, and an efficient use of public funds. Strong Partnership and Collaboration: This project is built upon coordinated neighborhood leadership and formal Firewise participation, creating an organized structure for implementation and long-term stewardship. Residents are working collaboratively with qualified, insured vegetation management contractors to ensure treatments meet County and CAL FIRE standards. The project aligns with regional wildfire resilience strategies and complements existing defensible space and fuel reduction efforts within Santa Cruz County's wildland-urban interface. By integrating professional expertise with community coordination, the project represents a true public-private partnership model. Volunteer Hours Leverage: The neighborhood's Firewise designation reflects substantial resident engagement, with our community already exceeding the required annual volunteer hours in just the first two months of the year. Our community volunteers including risk assessments, planning meetings, and community outreach. Volunteers will contribute hours toward project coordination, communication with property owners, site preparation, and post-treatment monitoring. These in-kind contributions significantly extend the value of Measure Q funding and demonstrate strong local commitment to wildfire risk reduction. Leveraged Funds: In addition to grant funding, residents are investing personal resources in defensible space improvements on adjacent properties, ensuring that the evacuation corridor treatment is reinforced by parcel-level mitigation. This layered investment amplifies the project's impact and creates a multiplier effect beyond the specific roadway segment funded under this request. Efficient Use of Funds: The project's defined scope - approximately one-quarter mile of high-priority evacuation roadway - ensures targeted, high-impact treatment. By focusing on a critical life-safety corridor rather than dispersed acreage, funds are directed where risk reduction benefits are greatest. The use of professional contractors ensures work is completed safely, efficiently, and in compliance with best practices, minimizing the need for costly re-treatment. Community oversight and ongoing Firewise maintenance commitments further protect the investment over time. Together, these elements demonstrate that the Loma Prieta Avenue project not only aligns with Measure Q priorities but maximizes public benefit through collaboration, stewardship, and responsible fiscal management.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Meas Q Budget Firewise Project - Mar11.xlsx](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[FIREWISE MAP LP AVE.jpg](#), [LOMA PRIETA AVE MAP.jpg](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[Ben Abeln - Summit Store.pdf](#), [Dan Lokteff - Wrights Station Winery.pdf](#), [26_Loma Prieta Avenue Community Wildfire Fuel Reduction Project.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[LP AVE 7.jpeg](#), [LP AVE 6.jpeg](#), [LP AVE 5.jpeg](#), [LP AVE 4.jpeg](#), [LP AVE 3.jpeg](#), [LP AVE 2.jpeg](#), [LP AVE 1.jpeg](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

[FIREWISE MAP LP AVE.jpg](#), [LOMA PRIETA AVE MAP.jpg](#), [LP AVE 7.jpeg](#), [LP AVE 6.jpeg](#), [LP AVE 5.jpeg](#), [LP AVE 4.jpeg](#), [LP AVE 3.jpeg](#), [LP AVE 2.jpeg](#), [LP AVE 1.jpeg](#)

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

sanjay khandelwal

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Sanjay Khandelwal, President, LPCF

SIGNATURE DATE

03/11/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 131 **Type:** Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Truck Trail Emergency Response Navigation and Water Infrastructure Initiative

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

131

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Truck Trail Emergency Response Navigation and Water Infrastructure Initiative

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Santa Cruz County Fire Department

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Santa Cruz County Fire Department

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Miles treated

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

160

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Sam Filson

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Division Chief

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

Santa Cruz County Truck Trails

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.97411710000000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.03079630000001

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

This project enhances emergency access and navigation for rural and wildland-urban interface communities throughout Santa Cruz County, including unincorporated areas with limited infrastructure. Residents in these areas are historically underserved, facing remote, unpaved roads, poorly marked trails, limited access to public services and higher vulnerability to wildfires and climate-related hazards. Rural communities in the Santa Cruz County mountains are characterized by dispersed settlements, forested watersheds, and remote transportation networks. Residents living in these areas often face significant geographic and infrastructure barriers that limit access to emergency services, transportation, and essential resources. Many homes are reached by steep, unpaved roads with limited signage, making it difficult for emergency responders to quickly locate incidents. During wildfires, medical emergencies, or evacuation events, these navigation challenges can increase response times and place residents at greater risk. Evacuation routes in some areas are narrow, underdeveloped, or inconsistently marked, further complicating emergency operations. Transportation and connectivity gaps also affect these communities. Public transit is largely unavailable, leaving residents dependent on personal vehicles to reach medical care, groceries, schools, and government services often located many miles away in lower-elevation towns. Heavy rains, landslides, wildfire activity, or road damage can temporarily isolate neighborhoods and delay emergency or social service response. Infrastructure limitations further contribute to these challenges. Indicator signs, road markers, and clearly identified water access points for firefighting are often absent or inconsistent across jurisdictions. This lack of standardized infrastructure can hinder coordination between local fire districts, emergency medical services, park agencies, and land managers responding to incidents across shared landscapes. These communities also face heightened climate and disaster risks, particularly from wildfire, flooding, and landslides affecting forested mountain terrain. With fewer infrastructure resources and longer response times, residents in these rural areas often experience disproportionate impacts during emergencies. As a result, rural mountain communities in Santa Cruz County remain historically underserved compared to more urbanized parts of the county. Strengthening navigation, access, and emergency infrastructure along rural truck trails will help address these gaps by improving responder access, supporting coordinated response across jurisdictions, and enhancing safety and resilience for residents, visitors, and surrounding natural landscapes. The proposed project offers a relatively low-cost and effective strategy to serve these rural areas where emergency access can be limited and gaps in navigation infrastructure can worsen disaster impacts.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Not applicable.

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Priority locations will be selected using the Vision Plan's wildfire risk mapping and thematic guidance, focusing on areas with: - High wildfire exposure - Limited access or complex terrain - Critical evacuation corridors. The proposed project will serve multiple truck trails and emergency access roads located throughout Santa Cruz County. These routes are primarily located in rural and forested areas of the county and function as critical access corridors for fire response, emergency medical services (EMS), park operations, and land management activities. Project improvements will occur along the following Santa Cruz County truck trails and access roads: Atherton Peak Truck Trail, Aptos Creek Fire Road, Rattlesnake Gulch, Warranella Road, Warranella-Quarry Road, Mill Creek Truck Trail, Penstock Truck Trail, Eagle Rock Road, Little Basin Truck Trail, Pine Mountain Road/Tan Bark Loop, Hihn Hammond Road, Chalks Road, Middle Ridge Road, Kings Creek Truck Trail, SLVWD Road, and Ramsey Road/Gamecock, as well as some remaining portions of truck trails that cross into San Mateo County. (See attached maps.) These routes connect remote parklands, watersheds, and wildland-urban interface areas across Santa Cruz County and are frequently used by fire personnel, EMS providers, County and State Park Staff, utility partners, and our local residents for recreational access to nature. Installing mile markers, access signage, and identifying nearby water sources along these truck trails will improve emergency response coordination, help responders quickly locate incidents, and support wildfire suppression efforts.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

Initial Study Completed

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

The proposed project is considered low risk and implementation-ready. Project activities will involve installing truck trail mile markers, access signage, and identifying nearby water sources along existing truck trails and access roads. Because all work will occur within previously developed corridors and will not involve ground-disturbing construction or expansion of facilities, no additional permits are anticipated.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

10

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

Once funding is allocated, implementation can proceed quickly along priority routes throughout Santa Cruz County, allowing the project to be implemented efficiently and provide immediate benefits for emergency response, wildfire preparedness, and safe access to rural parklands.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

6000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

8000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Supplies	\$6,000	\$2,000	\$0	\$8,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The proposed project serves rural and wildland-urban interface communities throughout Santa Cruz County, including unincorporated areas and State Park lands where emergency access and navigation infrastructure are limited. These landscapes

include a remote truck trail network, forested watersheds, and open-space corridors that are frequently used by residents, visitors, land managers, and emergency responders. Communities located near these public lands depend on reliable access routes for wildfire response, medical emergencies, evacuation support, recreational access and physical activity. The installation of truck trail mile markers, access signage, evacuation route indicators, and water infrastructure signs along key routes will improve route identification and enable first responders to locate incidents more quickly. The mile markers will also indicate nearby water sources, helping fire and EMS personnel identify and access additional water tanks and other available supplies needed for wildfire suppression and emergency response. These improvements will provide standardized signage to support multiple jurisdictions and agencies - including State Park operations, local fire districts, EMS providers - while also enhancing safe navigation for residents and visitors accessing rural lands. The project advances the Vision Plan's goals by strengthening emergency preparedness, protecting evacuation routes, improving operational readiness, and supporting neighborhood scale hazard mitigation. By improving safe and reliable access to and through rural lands and by increasing situational awareness with directional signage in high-risk terrain, the project enhances the long-term resilience of Santa Cruz County's natural landscapes and the communities that depend on them.

PROJECT START DATE

06/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

04/01/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

This project supports multiple priorities identified in the Measure Q Vision Plan, including water resources management, public access to parks and recreation, equity, wildfire resilience, forest health, and natural resource protection. By installing truck trail mile markers, access signage, and identifying nearby water sources and evacuation routes, the project directly strengthens emergency response capacity for fire districts, EMS providers, and County Parks staff. Enhanced infrastructure along these critical routes enables responders to locate incidents more quickly, access water for wildfire suppression, and navigate remote areas safely. The project advances climate and community resilience by protecting natural resources and minimizing the risk of wildfire damage to surrounding ecosystems and communities. Mile markers and signage improve safe and equitable access to rural lands and open spaces, supporting public use while promoting environmental stewardship. By strengthening interagency coordination and operational efficiency - benefiting multiple jurisdictions and partners, including fire departments, EMS providers, and land managers - and by improving response times and situational awareness in high wildfire-risk areas, the upgrades provided through this project help protect forested watersheds, wildlife habitat, and surrounding communities. The project integrates public safety, recreation access, and natural resource protection in alignment with the Vision Plan's goals for resilient landscapes and communities.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The project advances climate resilience by strengthening wildfire preparedness in wildland-urban interface areas, ensuring water resources are identifiable and accessible for suppression efforts, and helping protect forested landscapes from fire-related damage. Improved access and navigation along truck trails supports the Vision Plan's goals of reducing wildfire risk, safeguarding ingress and egress routes, and enhancing the long-term sustainability of Santa Cruz County's natural lands. The project also promotes equity by improving safe and reliable access to rural parks and open spaces for diverse community members, including those in underserved or remote areas who rely on these routes for recreation, education, and community engagement. By improving infrastructure along existing corridors, the project reduces barriers to access and ensures that all residents and visitors can safely benefit from Santa Cruz County's natural resources. This project delivers multiple benefits by integrating public safety, environmental protection, water resource awareness, and equitable access into a single, cost-effective investment. The project leverages existing partnerships, draws on prior experience with similar infrastructure projects, and includes matching funding from Santa Cruz County Fire, demonstrating strong local commitment and support. Together, these resources establish a scalable model for enhancing emergency access, wildfire preparedness, and public safety along rural truck trails, while also improving safe access to natural lands for all community members.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

This project demonstrates significant public benefit by improving safety, access, and emergency response capabilities for residents, visitors, and first responders in rural and wildland-urban interface areas of Santa Cruz County. The installation of truck trail mile markers, access signage, and identification of nearby water sources will complement emergency response, aid during a wildfire response, and provide safer navigation for the public accessing parklands and open spaces. These improvements benefit multiple stakeholders, including State Parks, fire personnel, EMS providers, and the broader community. The project exhibits strong strategic alignment with the goals outlined in the Measure Q Vision Plan, including wildfire resilience, public safety, natural resource protection, and equitable access. By targeting critical truck trails and emergency access routes, the project directly supports county priorities for protecting communities, enhancing climate resilience, and ensuring safe and equitable access to natural lands. This project demonstrates strong readiness, guided by the expertise of the local CAL FIRE Pre-Fire Engineer. All work will take place along existing corridors with minimal ground disturbance and hence no additional permits are required, allowing implementation to begin promptly. Project proponents will coordinate closely with partnering landowners, while the match funds from Santa Cruz County Fire show strong local support.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

The proposed project will benefit a wide range of community members and user groups throughout Santa Cruz County, particularly those who live, work, or recreate in rural and wildland-urban interface areas. Primary beneficiaries include local residents, park visitors, outdoor recreationists, and emergency responders who rely on truck trails and access roads for navigation, safety, and emergency response. Fire districts, emergency medical services (EMS), State Parks staff, residents, and visitors will all benefit from the installation of truck trail mile markers, access signage, and the identification of nearby water sources. These improvements will help first responders locate incidents more efficiently, strengthen coordination during wildfire and medical emergencies, and improve access to water resources needed for suppression efforts. Faster response times and better situational awareness will help reduce risks to people, property, and surrounding natural resources. Community members and visitors who use these park and open space lands for hiking, trail running, biking, nature observation, and other outdoor activities will also benefit from clearer signage and improved route identification. These enhancements will help people navigate remote areas more safely and confidently, reducing the risk of becoming lost and improving overall access to the park system. The project will also support park operations staff and land managers responsible for maintaining and monitoring these areas. Improved infrastructure will assist with routine maintenance, emergency coordination, and the long-term stewardship of the truck trail network throughout Santa Cruz County, ensuring these natural spaces remain safe and accessible for everyone.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

In addition to strengthening public safety, the project enhances community health and well-being by supporting safe access to parks, trails, and open space areas. Many of the truck trails included in this project serve as important access routes for recreation, outdoor exploration, and environmental education. Clear signage and improved navigation will help visitors safely reach and enjoy these natural areas while reducing the risk of becoming lost or delayed during emergencies. The project also supports community identity and livability by protecting the natural landscapes that are central to the culture and quality of life in Santa Cruz County. Maintaining safe and resilient infrastructure within park and rural lands ensures that residents and visitors can continue to enjoy these spaces while improving wildfire risk mitigations. Outreach and engagement for this project will include coordination with local fire personnel, emergency responders, private land stewards, and park staff to identify priority locations for mile markers and signage. Input from these partners helps ensure that improvements meet operational needs for emergency response while also supporting safe public and private access to natural lands. Through this collaborative approach, the project reflects shared community priorities for safety, recreation, and stewardship of Santa Cruz County's park and open-space system.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

The project does not involve ground disturbance or capital/site improvements. All activities occur along existing corridors, including installation of truck trail mile markers, access signage, and identification of nearby water sources, which require no excavation or permanent construction.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

Project activities will include identifying priority locations for mile markers and signage along existing truck trails and access roads used for emergency response and park operations. Mile markers will be installed at consistent intervals to improve route identification and help first responders quickly locate incidents within remote and forested areas. In addition, signage will indicate the location of nearby water tanks and other available water sources that can support wildfire suppression efforts. The project will occur along several existing truck trails and rural access routes within State Parks and open space networks, including Atherton Peak Truck Trail, Aptos Creek Fire Road, Rattlesnake Gulch, Warranella Road, Warranella-Quarry Road, Mill Creek Truck Trail, Penstock Truck Trail, Eagle Rock Road, Little Basin Truck Trail, Pine Mountain Road/Tan Bark Loop, Hihn Hammond Road, Middle Ridge Road, Kings Creek Truck Trail, SLVWD Road, and Ramsey Road/Gamecock. Additional key routes are the same truck trails in both San Mateo and Santa Cruz Counties, including these truck trails: Chalks, Whitehouse Creek, Gazos Creek, Johansen, China Grade, Bicentennial, Ward and Hickory Oaks (see maps). These routes provide important connections through rural landscapes, forested watersheds, and wildland-urban interface areas where emergency access and clear navigation are critical.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The proposed project seeks Measure Q funding to install durable, weather-resistant mile markers and signage along designated truck trails in Santa Cruz County, improving public safety and wildfire response. Requested funds will cover only the purchase of materials and the equipment needed for installation. All labor for installation, project coordination, and ongoing maintenance will be provided by Santa Cruz County Fire personnel and CZU CAL FIRE personnel at no additional cost, ensuring efficient use of funding and leveraging local expertise. Santa Cruz County Fire is also contributing a partial monetary match to extend the project's impact by adding signage along critical access truck trails in Santa Cruz County that cross into San Mateo County. This match maximizes Measure Q funds and strengthens regional coordination for wildfire preparedness and emergency response. By focusing funding exclusively on materials and installation equipment, the project ensures a high return on investment. Using Santa Cruz County Fire and CZU CAL FIRE staff for labor keeps costs low. Each item purchased - mile markers, posts, and installation tools - directly supports project objectives, enhancing emergency access, guiding response personnel, and improving situational awareness for first responders and the public.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

Once materials are purchased and received, installation will begin along the identified truck trails and access roads. Project proponents will install mile markers and access signage at consistent intervals, including markers that identify nearby water sources that may be used for wildfire suppression. Because the work will occur within existing truck trail corridors and does not involve major construction, installation is expected to proceed efficiently. Following installation, the second phase will focus on verifying that all markers and signage are properly placed, clearly visible, and effective in supporting incident location and emergency response. During this phase, GPS coordinates will be recorded for each installed mile marker, and this information will be shared with NetCom and the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) to support emergency response and dispatch operations. Together, these improvements will strengthen emergency preparedness, help first responders quickly identify locations during incidents, and support safe access to rural lands throughout Santa Cruz County.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

This project demonstrates both innovation and strong capacity to enhance emergency access and public safety in rural areas of Santa Cruz County. It takes a practical, creative approach by combining infrastructure improvements - truck trail mile markers, access signage, and identification of water sources - with strategic prioritization of critical routes, creating a model that can be replicated and scaled across the County. By integrating emergency preparedness, wildfire risk reduction, and public access in a single initiative, the project addresses multiple challenges efficiently and cost-effectively. The project draws on the expertise of the local CAL FIRE Pre-Fire Engineer to guide planning and placement, ensuring all improvements are practical and effective. Matching funds from Santa Cruz County Fire further demonstrate local support and readiness to move the project forward. By establishing a clear, scalable model for marking critical routes and resources, this project can serve as a template for future improvements in emergency access and public safety throughout the County.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Leveraged Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

Santa Cruz County Fire is providing a partial monetary match to support this project, contributing additional resources to expand signage along critical access truck trails in Santa Cruz County that have portions extending into San Mateo County. Instead of cutting off the project at the county line, matching funds will be used to complete the truck trails that access Santa Cruz County but have portions into San Mateo County. This match helps to fulfill the intent of the project and demonstrates strong collaboration. By leveraging existing partnerships, this project draws on prior experience with similar infrastructure projects, and includes matching funding from Santa Cruz County Fire, demonstrating strong local commitment and support. Together, these resources establish a scalable model for enhancing emergency access, wildfire preparedness, and public safety along rural truck trails, while also improving safe access to natural lands for all community members. An additional benefit of the project is its ability to maximize the impact of Measure Q investments while enhancing regional coordination for wildfire preparedness and emergency response.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

Batt3_letter_port_20260310.pdf, Batt4_letter_port_20260310.pdf

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

2026_LoS_State Parks_MileMarkers.dotx.pdf

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

TT Attachment.pdf

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Jahaira Zaragoza

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Jahaira Zaragoza Forestry Assistant II

SIGNATURE DATE

03/08/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 152

Type: Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

Project: Coastal Water Resilience Hub: A Youth-Centered Community Education Platform for Local Water Issues and Solutions

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

152

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Coastal Water Resilience Hub: A Youth-Centered Community Education Platform for Local Water Issues and Solutions

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CA

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Outreach population

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

40,000

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Christina Richardson

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Assistant Professor of Cooperative Extension

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Heather	Nibblett	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

100 McAllister Way, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.97411710000000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.03079630000001

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The project will serve Santa Cruz County across both urban and rural communities. It will reach residents and school groups in the City of Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Scotts Valley, and Capitola, as well as in unincorporated areas, including Soquel, Aptos, Live Oak, the San Lorenzo Valley, North Coast communities, and the Pajaro Valley region. Content will reflect local water systems and jurisdictions across county watersheds and groundwater basins, with targeted outreach during two free Community Days to improve access for underserved communities.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Not applicable (county-wide)

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The project will be physically located at the Seymour Center in the City of Santa Cruz, which will serve as the central site for the Water Resilience Hub exhibit and Community Days. The content and outreach, however, will serve the broader Santa Cruz County region, including the City of Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Scotts Valley, Capitola, and unincorporated areas such as Soquel, Aptos, Live Oak, the San Lorenzo Valley, North Coast communities, and the Pajaro Valley region. The exhibit will highlight water challenges and solutions occurring across these jurisdictions and watersheds.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Not sure

DAC/SDAC NOTES

The project will prioritize outreach to disadvantaged communities identified in Santa Cruz County using the U.S. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST). The following Santa Cruz County census tracts are identified as disadvantaged under CEJST: 06087101000 (Pop. 8,081) 06087121500 (Pop. 5,196) 06087110502 (Pop. 6,423) 06087122500 (Pop. 6,988) 06087110200 (Pop. 7,957) 06087110100 (Pop. 7,760) 06087110300 (Pop. 7,275) 06087110400 (Pop. 8,077) 06087110700 (Pop. 3,159)

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

Not applicable

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

1

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

The project is ready to proceed upon award, with no regulatory or permitting dependencies. The exhibit will be installed at the Seymour Center, an existing public facility with established exhibit infrastructure and staff capacity, with no site acquisition or construction needs. Digital production timelines could vary depending on participant availability. The project schedule includes buffer time between content development and final installation to accommodate such minor delays without affecting the launch date.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

45884

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

58127

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$8,423	\$8,423
Fringe Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$3,820	\$3,820
Supplies	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$3,000
Other Direct Costs	\$36,000	\$0	\$0	\$36,000
Indirect Costs	\$6,884	\$0	\$0	\$6,884

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

Santa Cruz County is experiencing increasingly visible climate and water stressors. In response, local agencies, nonprofits, land stewards, and researchers are advancing a range of efforts to strengthen regional water resilience. Despite this progress, there is limited public awareness and youth-focused education that connect these challenges to the people and projects working to solve them. To address this need, the Coastal Water Resilience Hub will serve as a youth-centered platform translating local water challenges into accessible, solution-focused learning experiences. Located at the Seymour Center in the City of Santa Cruz, the Hub will feature a curated, multi-theme interactive exhibit highlighting locally informed water issues, practical solutions underway, and the people implementing them across Santa Cruz County. The exhibit will connect challenges to real solutions grounded in local water systems and decisions. Content will feature community voices spanning local and regional water agencies, growers and land stewards, nonprofits, public land managers, educators, and researchers, with an emphasis on showing what solutions look like on the ground and how youth and families can learn more and get involved. The project includes three core deliverables: (1) creation and installation of the exhibit, (2) two Water Resilience Community Days offering free admission with targeted outreach to disadvantaged communities, and (3) an open-access digital platform hosting exhibit content and packaged educational assets. By elevating local efforts, including Measure Q-supported projects where relevant, the Hub will increase public understanding, expand youth access, and strengthen long-term community capacity for water resilience.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/01/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, Coastal Protection and Adaptation, Agricultural and Work Land Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

The Coastal Water Resilience Hub is a cross-cutting community education initiative that supports multiple Measure Q thematic areas by increasing public understanding, visibility, and engagement around locally implemented projects. Although the Hub is educational in nature, its content reflects on-the-ground efforts occurring across Santa Cruz County. Water Resource Management: The exhibit will highlight a range of local water supply strategies, including surface water operations, managed aquifer recharge, and expanded use of recycled water. By demonstrating how agencies and communities respond to drought, supply variability, and overdraft, the Hub can strengthen public literacy around long-term water resilience investments. Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health: The Hub will feature locations undergoing forest health treatments (such as the Soquel

Demonstration Forest) and post-fire watershed recovery (Big Basin, Swanton Pacific Ranch) to help connect forest management decisions to downstream water quality and community safety. Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity: The project will expand public access to locally informed learning at the Seymour Center and through open-access online learning materials. Two Water Resilience Community Days will offer free admission, with targeted outreach to disadvantaged communities to reduce barriers to participation. Wildlife and Habitat Protection and Coastal Protection and Adaptation: The exhibit will showcase multi-benefit wetland restoration projects (e.g., Elkhorn Slough and Watsonville Slough) and efforts to protect coastal groundwater and prevent seawater intrusion (e.g., the Soquel Water Project). These examples will help highlight how habitat stewardship and coastal adaptation can protect water quality, reduce flood risk, and safeguard freshwater resources. Agricultural and Working Land Protection: The Hub will highlight emerging practices that protect and sustain local water resources while maintaining agricultural viability in the Pajaro Valley, north coast watersheds, and other working landscapes. This focus reflects Santa Cruz County's importance as one of California's major agricultural producing regions and the need to support water resilience in our working lands. Across all themes, community engagement is central. The Hub will elevate agencies, land managers, farmers, nonprofits, educators, and researchers, creating a public-facing platform that connects residents, especially youth, to local resilience efforts supported by Measure Q and other regional initiatives.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The Coastal Water Resilience Hub was designed to align with Measure Q's prioritization principles by delivering high public value through multi-benefit outcomes, match funding, equity-focused access, and clear climate resilience relevance. Multi-Benefit Outcomes: The Hub connects multiple local water challenges to solutions already in practice across Santa Cruz County, including groundwater protection, recycled water, wetland restoration, agricultural water stewardship, coastal aquifer protection, and wildfire watershed recovery. By integrating these themes into a single youth-centered platform, the project provides co-benefits across water supply security, watershed health, habitat protection, public safety, and community preparedness. Match Funding and Leveraging Potential: The project leverages significant in-kind contributions and existing partnerships to stretch Measure Q dollars. Project leadership and content curation will be supported through existing salary support at UC ANR, eliminating direct project labor costs. Equity Impact: Two Water Resilience Community Days will provide free admission with targeted outreach to disadvantaged communities identified through CEJST and to Watsonville-area schools and families. Open-access digital content will also expand reach beyond the Seymour Center. Climate Resilience Value: The Hub directly advances climate resilience by improving public understanding of local climate challenges and the strategies to adapt to or mitigate them (including drought, flooding, wildfires, and sea level rise). By elevating real projects and the people implementing them, the project builds community capacity to support and sustain long-term climate adaptation investments.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Public Benefit: The project provides broad public value by creating an accessible platform for youth and families to learn about local water systems and resilience strategies. Located at the Seymour Center, the exhibit will serve several tens of thousands of annual visitors (~40,000) and will be supplemented by two Water Resilience Community Days offering free admission with targeted outreach to disadvantaged communities. By packaging content into an open-access digital platform, the project extends benefits beyond the physical exhibit, ensuring long-term accessibility for educators, community groups, and residents across Santa Cruz County. Strategic Alignment: The Hub is intentionally aligned with Measure Q priorities and highlights locally implemented projects across water resource management, wildfire risk reduction, habitat restoration, coastal protection, and agricultural stewardship. By elevating ongoing efforts from local agencies, nonprofits, working lands stakeholders, and research institutions, the project strengthens public visibility and understanding of investments already underway in the County. Readiness: The project leverages established infrastructure and partnerships to ensure timely implementation. The exhibit will be installed at the Seymour Center, an existing public facility with staff capacity and exhibit experience. Project leadership, content curation, and institutional partnerships are already in place, and no permitting, land acquisition, or environmental review is required.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

The primary target community for the Coastal Water Resilience Hub is youth across Santa Cruz County who are developing awareness of climate and water issues that will shape their future. The exhibit is designed to make complex local water challenges accessible and engaging, helping students connect science, management, and community decision-making in ways relevant to their lives. Secondary user groups include families, educators, and community members who visit the Seymour Center. The exhibit will provide place-based learning for residents from both urban and rural areas, including the City of Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Scotts Valley, Capitola, Soquel, Aptos, the San Lorenzo Valley, North Coast communities, and the Pajaro Valley region. The project will prioritize outreach to disadvantaged communities identified through the U.S. Council on Environmental

Quality Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST). Two Water Resilience Community Days will offer free admission with targeted outreach to schools and families in these areas. Where feasible, transportation coordination will be explored to reduce access barriers for students in schools serving the identified CEJST tracts. Educators represent another key user group. By packaging digital content into open-access materials, the project supports teachers seeking locally grounded examples to supplement science and environmental curricula. Finally, local agencies, nonprofits, working land managers, and community organizations benefit from increased visibility of their water resilience efforts. By elevating a broad range of voices and projects, the Hub strengthens community awareness and cross-sector understanding of water challenges and solutions across Santa Cruz County.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

The Coastal Water Resilience Hub advances multiple community value areas by strengthening public understanding of local water systems, climate risks, and the solutions shaping Santa Cruz County's future. **Public Safety:** The exhibit will highlight real local strategies that protect water supply reliability while also reducing hazards to people, infrastructure, and ecosystems. For instance, it will show how forest health treatments and post-fire recovery reduce wildfire risk and protect source watersheds, how groundwater recharge supports drought resilience, and how wetland restoration reduces the impacts of flooding. The Hub, therefore, helps youth and families understand how water management and land stewardship directly support community safety and resilience. **Health and Well-Being:** Clean, reliable water is foundational to community health. The Hub will connect water quality, watershed protection, and sustainable supply planning to everyday well-being. By showcasing how local agencies, scientists, and community partners protect drinking water and ecosystems, the project reinforces the relationship between environmental stewardship and public health. **Access to Nature:** The exhibit will feature local places such as Loch Lomond, Elkhorn Slough, Big Basin, and working agricultural lands in the county. By highlighting these landscapes and the people who care for them, the Hub strengthens community connections to local ecosystems and promotes stewardship of natural resources. **Community Identity and Livability:** Water defines Santa Cruz County's identity, from coastal communities to agricultural valleys and redwood-covered watersheds. The Hub will feature the diverse organizations, agencies, farmers, land managers, and researchers working to sustain these systems. By elevating local voices and projects, the exhibit reinforces a shared sense of responsibility in community resilience efforts. Outreach and engagement are central to the project design. Two Water Resilience Community Days will provide free admission with targeted outreach to disadvantaged communities identified through CEJST. The open-access digital platform ensures continued access beyond the physical exhibit. Together, these efforts expand participation, reduce barriers, and create a safe space for youth and families to engage with local water resilience efforts.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

The proposed project does not involve ground disturbance, capital construction, or site improvements. The Coastal Water Resilience Hub will be a new exhibit installed within the existing indoor space at the Seymour Center through the new SeeMore HQ platform, a top-of-the-line exhibit opportunity designed for high-quality digital and interactive content.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

The Coastal Water Resilience Hub will create a youth-centered, place-based learning platform at the Seymour Center that connects Santa Cruz County's water challenges to real solutions underway in the community. Through curated digital storytelling and interactive content, the exhibit will elevate local projects, agencies, nonprofit partners, and researchers who are actively shaping water resilience across the region. The project includes three core components described below. 1. Curated Multi-Theme Water Exhibit: The exhibit will be organized as stacked modules that connect locally informed water challenges to examples of solutions underway in Santa Cruz County, highlighting the people and places implementing them. Digital exhibit content will use short-form storytelling and interactive elements, with QR codes linking to expanded online content. Theme 1: Drought and unreliable rainfall. Examples of local solutions underway: surface water storage, conservation, and supply management. a) Example project highlights: Loch Lomond and coastal source waters (Laguna/Majors), including what changes during a dry/wet

water year. b) Potential community voices: Santa Cruz Water Department; Coastal Watershed Council. Theme 2: Groundwater overdraft. Examples of local solutions underway: managed aquifer recharge and groundwater protection. a) Example project highlights: what recharge sites look like and how they function, and how groundwater levels are monitored. b) Potential community voices: UC scientists; groundwater agencies; local farmers participating in recharge efforts. Theme 3: Flooding and sea level rise. Examples of local solutions underway: multi-benefit wetland restoration and floodplain reconnection. a) Example project highlights: Elkhorn Slough (Hester Marsh) and Watsonville Slough Farm and their benefits. b) Potential community voices: Elkhorn Slough Foundation; Land Trust SC, UC scientists; CSU Central Coast Wetlands Group. Theme 4: Agricultural water demand and pollution. Examples of local solutions underway: crop transitions, irrigation/fertilizer efficiency, and land repurposing. a) Example project highlights: irrigation decisions and testing at the UCSC Farm and farm sites throughout the county. b) Potential community voices: UC Agroecology and UC ANR scientists; local farmers; Resource Conservation District staff; Sustainable Conservation. Theme 5: Seawater intrusion. Examples of local solutions underway: coastal groundwater protection with injection wells. a) Example project highlights: the Soquel Water Project and how communities protect underground freshwater resources. b) Potential community voices: Pure Water Soquel; local groundwater agencies. Theme 6: Wildfire impacts on watersheds. Examples of local solutions underway: forest health treatments and post-fire recovery. a) Example project highlights: Big Basin, Soquel Demonstration Forest, and Swanton Pacific Ranch. b) Potential community voices: RCD of Santa Cruz County; CalFIRE; watershed groups; UC researchers. 2. Water Resilience Community Days: Two free admission days will be held during the first year with focused outreach to underserved schools and communities, including CEJST-identified tracts. Events will include guided engagement with the exhibit and opportunities to meet local practitioners featured in the Hub. 3. Open-Access Digital Platform and Packaged Assets: All exhibit content will be hosted on an open-access website, including an ArcGIS Story Map featuring local projects and community groups. Digital assets will be packaged for educators, community organizations, and partners to integrate into their own programming.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The budget supports the development and launch of the Coastal Water Resilience Hub at the Seymour Center, including the creation of a curated multi-theme digital exhibit, two Water Resilience Community Days, and an open-access digital platform hosting exhibit content and packaged educational assets. Supplies (\$3,000): Supplies will support exhibit and event delivery needs, including materials for short hands-on demonstrations/pop-ups during the Water Resilience Community Days, website and illustration support, basic printing and signage, and other program supplies needed to support exhibit creation and youth engagement activities. Digital asset creation (\$26,000): This category supports production of the exhibit's digital content and associated online assets. Funds will cover video and photo capture, editing, graphic design, and development of interactive digital components that highlight local water challenges, solutions underway, and community voices. This line also includes costs associated with building and maintaining the open-access digital platform, such as website development support, basic hosting and domain expenses as needed, integration of online content, and creation of an ArcGIS Story Map featuring local projects and community groups. Digital assets will be packaged for reuse by educators and partner organizations. Free admission days (\$10,000): Funds will support two Water Resilience Community Days to reduce barriers to participation for youth and families, with targeted outreach to disadvantaged communities. This line item covers free admission offsets for an estimated 833 adults. In-kind Match: Salary and fringe benefits for Christina Richardson, totaling \$12,243, will be provided by the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources. Total (Year 1): \$39,000. Indirect costs (IDC) are applied at the applicant's negotiated rate, for a total of \$45,884. With in-kind match, the project total is approximately: \$58,127.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

The project will be implemented over a 12-month period, with exhibit development occurring during the first 11 months and public launch in the final month. Months 1-9: Planning and Content Development During the first nine months, the project team will confirm exhibit themes and refine module structure in coordination with Seymour Center staff and community partners. This phase includes outreach to local agencies, nonprofits, land stewards, and researchers to confirm participation and featured projects. Site visits and interviews will be conducted to capture visual and narrative content. Digital storytelling elements, graphics, and exhibit materials will be drafted and reviewed. By the end of Month 9, draft exhibit content and core digital assets will be completed. Months 10-11: Production and Installation During Months 10 and 11, digital assets will be finalized and formatted for exhibit display. Exhibit components will be designed and fabricated as needed. The open-access website will be built, including integration of QR codes linking exhibit content to expanded digital materials. The ArcGIS Story Map featuring local projects and community groups will be completed and tested. By the end of Month 11, the exhibit will be installed at the Seymour Center and the digital platform will be live. Month 12: Launch and Community Engagement The final month will focus on public launch and outreach. Targeted communication will be conducted with schools, educators, and community partners, including outreach to disadvantaged communities identified through CEJST. The official exhibit launch will occur during this period. Two Water Resilience Community Days will be hosted, providing free admission and guided engagement with the exhibit. Open-access digital materials will be publicly released and promoted.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

The project is innovative in its structure and delivery. It combines a youth-centered physical exhibit with digital storytelling and an open-access online platform. The inclusion of an ArcGIS Story Map featuring local projects and community groups allows visitors to visualize where resilience efforts are happening across Santa Cruz County and understand their geographic context. This

layered approach supports both in-person engagement and long-term digital access. The Hub also builds capacity by creating reusable educational assets that can support schools, community organizations, and partner agencies beyond the grant term. By packaging digital content for educators and community partners, the project strengthens future outreach and program development across institutions. In addition, the project builds community capacity by elevating local practitioners and strengthening cross-sector visibility. By connecting agencies, land managers, researchers, and nonprofits within a shared public-facing platform, the Hub supports long-term collaboration and public understanding of ongoing resilience investments. Finally, the project strengthens institutional capacity at the Seymour Center and among partners to communicate complex water and climate issues in accessible, youth-focused ways. The exhibit and digital platform establish a scalable model that can be updated, expanded, or adapted as new Measure Q-supported projects and regional initiatives emerge. Together, these elements position the Coastal Water Resilience Hub not only as an educational exhibit but as a long-term capacity-building tool for water resilience in Santa Cruz County.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Leveraged Funds, Efficient Use of Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

Strong Partnership/Collaboration: The project is built around collaboration with local agencies, nonprofits, land stewards, researchers, and educators whose work will be featured in the exhibit. Partners may include, but are not limited to: local water agencies, the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, Elkhorn Slough Foundation, Pure Water Soquel, Central Coast Wetlands Group, CalFIRE, Sustainable Conservation, UC ANR, and UCSC-affiliated programs. Project leadership is grounded in long-term research and engagement in Santa Cruz County, with established working relationships across many of the agencies, nonprofits, and land managers involved, enabling efficient coordination and authentic community representation. Rather than creating a new standalone program, the Hub serves as a shared platform that elevates existing community efforts and Measure Q-supported projects, strengthening cross-sector visibility and collaboration. **Leveraged Funds:** The project leverages significant in-kind contributions. Project leadership and content curation are supported through existing salary coverage at UC ANR, reducing direct personnel costs to the grant. The Seymour Center provides exhibit space, institutional infrastructure, and support for staff coordination. **Efficient Use of Funds:** The majority of requested funds directly support digital content creation and public access. By investing in high-quality digital assets and an open-access platform, the project creates materials that can be reused by educators, community groups, and partners beyond the grant term. The exhibit's location at the Seymour Center ensures immediate public reach without the need for capital construction or site improvements. This approach maximizes long-term community benefit while minimizing overhead and infrastructure costs.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Seymour Center Letter of Support.pdf

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

Seymour Center Letter of Support.pdf

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Christina Richardson

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Christina Richardson, Assistant Professor of Cooperative Extension

SIGNATURE DATE

02/27/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 153 **Type:** Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Strategic Water Supply Enhancements for Rural Areas-Pilot Program

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

153

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Strategic Water Supply Enhancements for Rural Areas-Pilot Program

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Santa Cruz County Fire Department

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

Annual Visitors

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

200,000

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Sam Filson

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Division Chief

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

Aptos Creek Fire Rd, Aptos, CA, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

37.04293600434433

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.90449304813231

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The proposed project serves rural, high risk wildfire communities in two distinct region area/ upper Aptos Creek watershed and the South Skyline ridgeline. Both locations are characterized by remote terrain, limited water availability for suppression, and long response times due to distance from fire stations. As the Measure Q Guidelines note, eligible projects must "demonstrate clear public benefit to the County's residents, watersheds, natural resources, or ecosystems," and this project directly advances those goals by strengthening wildfire resilience and improving emergency readiness. The Nisene Marks area consists of dispersed rural residences, high traffic of recreationists on forested lands and steep fire-prone landscapes. Since 2021, there have been 5 wildfires in Nisene Marks with several others in the surrounding areas. Yet, the existing water tanks on Aptos Creek Fire Road are currently non-operational, leaving firefighters without a reliable drafting or refilling station during an emergency. Restoring and standardizing this remote water system directly benefits residents, first responders, and recreationists who rely on an accessible water source for fast-moving fires and public safety. These water tanks will improve wildfire resilience and strengthen natural resource protection as defined in the core values of the Vision Plan. The second pilot location will serve the communities of South Skyline. These residents are a highly active Firewise community and have already taken proactive action to increase their local water availability for a wildfire response. The residents have already purchased a supplemental water tank and are currently collaborating with the Santa Cruz County Pre-Fire Engineer to identify the most beneficial location. The proposed project is designed to complement and expand the efforts by installing additional standardized water tanks in other strategic locations along the ridge communities. These two locations will create a replicable model for remote water infrastructure that can be expanded across other high-risk, highly populated rural zones. These critical water infrastructure resources will improve wildfire suppression efforts, increase fire fighters' safety, and most importantly benefit the surrounding communities that would be impacted by a fire in the steep terrain surrounding the South Skyline communities.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

The two project areas are located in unincorporated Santa Cruz County and governed by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors instead of a City Council.

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The two proposed project locations are in high-risk wildfire areas within Santa Cruz County. The first site is located in the Forest of Nisene Marks State Park along Aptos Creek Fire Road. This area consists of dispersed rural residences, high traffic of local recreationists, private timberlands, and seasonal tourists. Replacing the non-operational water tanks will restore a critical water source. The second project site is along the South Skyline ridgeline also within the unincorporated Santa Cruz County along Highway 35 and Highway 9. This area is notorious for traffic collisions in heavily forested areas. Given the high number of emergency incidents occurring along this corridor each week, expanding access to additional water sources is a strategic priority for effective response operations.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

CEQA/NEPA completed

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

No permits are expected for this project as the first site would be a replacement of the existing water tank and the second location would be in collaboration with the South Skyline communities.

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

DAC STATUS

—

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

DURATION AMOUNT

months

12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

The project is highly implementation ready, with minimal anticipated delays. Both components of standardized water tanks. Aptos Creek Fire Road is an unpaved access route that can become muddy or impassable during winter storms, which may temporarily limit heavy equipment access. The area also experiences high recreational use during the summer, so coordinating safe access for tank removal and installation may require scheduling around peak visitation periods. No readiness delays are anticipated for the South Skyline water tank installations.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

29158

29158

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies	\$29,158	\$0	\$0	\$29,158

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

This project strengthens wildfire resilience in two high-risk rural regions of unincorporated Santa Cruz County - the Nisene Marks area and the South Skyline ridgeline - by restoring and expanding remote water infrastructure essential for effective wildfire suppression. These landscapes include steep forested terrain, dispersed rural residences, and limited access to reliable water sources, conditions where small ignitions can rapidly escalate into large fires. The project advances priorities identified in the Measure Q Vision Plan, particularly wildfire risk reduction, water resource management, and community safety. At the Nisene Marks site, the project will replace a non-operational water tank that previously served as a critical drafting point for first responders. Restoring this water source will improve wildfire suppression capacity in an area accessed by Aptos Creek Fire Road and serving both rural residents and the approximately 150,000-200,000 annual visitors to The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park. Along the South Skyline ridgeline, the project complements ongoing wildfire preparedness efforts by highly engaged local residents by expanding reliable water access for emergency response in a remote, high-risk corridor. Together, these two installations create a replicable pilot model for standardized remote water infrastructure, improving firefighter safety, reducing response times, and protecting approximately 400 rural residents while strengthening broader countywide wildfire resilience.

PROJECT START DATE

PROJECT END DATE

06/01/2026

03/01/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

This project directly advances two core Measure Q Vision Plan thematic areas - Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health and Water Resource Management - by restoring and expanding remote water infrastructure essential for effective wildfire suppression in two high risk rural regions of Santa Cruz County: Nisene Marks and the South Skyline. The South Skyline is a steep, heavily forested terrain where scarce water availability and extended response times heighten wildfire vulnerability. In Nisene Marks, replacing the non operational water tank restores a vital drafting point for initial attack. It also benefits the 150,000-200,000 annual visitors to The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, where recreational traffic and seasonal conditions can complicate emergency access. Along the South Skyline ridgeline, the project builds on the momentum of a highly engaged Firewise community that has already purchased a supplemental tank and is working with the County's Pre Fire Engineer to determine the optimal installation site. Adding additional tanks at strategic locations further increases suppression capacity across a corridor known for multi agency use. These improvements strengthen initial attack effectiveness, reduce the likelihood of small ignitions becoming large incidents, and enhance firefighter safety - core outcomes emphasized throughout the Measure Q Vision Plan. The project also ensures that responders have dependable, strategically located water sources during wildfire events, reducing the need for shuttling and improving overall suppression efficiency.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

This project strongly aligns with the prioritization principles of the Measure Q Vision Plan by delivering multi-benefit outcomes, leveraging existing investments, and strengthening long-term climate resilience across two high-risk wildfire regions in Santa Cruz County. The project provides multiple public benefits by integrating wildfire risk reduction, water resource management, community safety, and natural resource protection into a single infrastructure investment. Restoring and expanding remote water tanks improves suppression capacity for first responders, helping protect rural homes, forested watersheds, and public lands. These improvements also support safe access to surrounding recreation areas, including The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, while protecting wildlife habitat and reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire impacts to ecosystems and nearby communities. The project builds on existing investments and community preparedness efforts, particularly in the South Skyline area where residents working with fire personnel have already undertaken proactive wildfire mitigation measures. Measure Q funding will leverage these local contributions by expanding critical water infrastructure that supports coordinated response between emergency services and land managers. This collaborative approach maximizes the impact of public funds and demonstrates strong regional commitment to improving wildfire preparedness. By restoring and expanding reliable water sources in remote wildland-urban interface areas, the project strengthens the county's ability to respond to increasingly frequent and severe wildfires driven by climate change. Improved access to water for suppression helps slow fire spread, protect forest health and watershed resources, and safeguard rural communities that face heightened climate risk. These investments enhance long-term resilience by improving emergency response capacity, reducing potential wildfire damage, and strengthening long term climate resilience across two high-risk wildfire regions in Santa Cruz County.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

This project clearly supports the secondary prioritization principles of the Measure Q Vision Plan by providing meaningful public benefit, demonstrating strong strategic alignment with regional wildfire preparedness goals, and showing clear implementation readiness. The project provides direct public safety benefits by improving access to reliable water sources for wildfire suppression in high-risk rural areas of Santa Cruz County. Restoring and expanding remote water infrastructure will help firefighters respond more quickly and effectively to wildfires, protecting rural homes, public lands, and critical natural resources. These improvements also benefit the many residents and visitors who use nearby public lands, including The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, by reducing wildfire risk and supporting safer recreational access. The project aligns closely with regional wildfire preparedness and resilience strategies that prioritize strengthening emergency infrastructure in the wildland-urban interface. By improving water availability and response capacity in remote areas, the project supports broader county and community efforts to reduce wildfire risk, protect evacuation corridors, and safeguard forested watersheds and habitats. The project demonstrates strong readiness for implementation. Project locations have been identified, community partners are engaged, and the work builds on existing

infrastructure and preparedness initiatives already underway in these areas. Because the project focuses on restoring and upgrading established water systems, installation can proceed efficiently once funding is secured, allowing benefits to be realized quickly for both emergency responders and the surrounding communities.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

This project serves a diverse community, public agencies, and visitors who rely on safe, efficient wildfire response in the upper Aptos Creek watershed near Nisene Marks and in the South Skyline communities along Highway 35 and Highway 9. The Nisene Marks site provides indirect benefit to the 150,000-200,000 annual visitors to The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park. This landscape experiences heavy recreational use from hikers, runners, mountain bikers, and families, and emergency access can be complicated by narrow roads, seasonal weather, and high visitor volume. Restoring reliable water availability at this location strengthens public safety by ensuring that responders have immediate access to water during wildfire events, reducing the likelihood of delayed suppression in an area with limited evacuation routes. The project also delivers a direct and substantial public safety benefit to the approximately 300 homes located throughout the South Skyline communities. These neighborhoods sit within steep, forested terrain where water scarcity and long response times significantly increase wildfire vulnerability. By expanding water availability through additional standardized tanks, the project improves initial attack effectiveness and enhances protection for residents who face some of the most challenging wildfire conditions in the county. Beyond the immediate project areas, additional suppression capacity in these high risk wildfire areas provides meaningful benefits to the communities of Aptos, Day Valley, and Summit Road. Fires originating in the upper Aptos Creek watershed or along the Skyline ridge can behave unpredictably, moving rapidly downslope toward populated areas under the best of conditions. At the same time, the steep topography of these regions also favors uphill fire spread, which is the most common fire behavior pattern and poses significant risk to the communities situated higher on the slopes. Strengthening water infrastructure at these very high fire severity zones reduces the likelihood that such events escalate into large, fast moving wildfires. This water infrastructure highlights the project's critical value to residents, visitors, and emergency responders, while contributing to safeguarding our recreational landscapes.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

This project delivers significant community value by strengthening public safety, access to nature, recreation opportunities, and overall community well-being in rural areas of Santa Cruz County. Outreach and engagement with local residents and local fire personnel have highlighted the importance of reliable emergency infrastructure in remote communities where wildfire risk is high and access to resources can be limited. By restoring and expanding water infrastructure used for wildfire suppression, the project helps protect rural homes, public lands, and the residents and visitors who rely on these areas. The project also supports safe access to nearby natural parks and open spaces that are central to community life and regional recreation. Many of the routes served by this infrastructure provide access to popular outdoor destinations such as The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, where residents and visitors hike, bike, and connect with nature. Strengthening wildfire preparedness in these areas helps ensure that the watershed and lands remain safe and accessible for recreation, education, and community gathering. Beyond recreation, protecting these natural environments contributes to the health and well-being of local communities. Access to forests, trails, and open space supports physical activity, mental health, and environmental education. At the same time, reducing wildfire risk helps safeguard wildlife habitat, forested watersheds, and the scenic landscapes that define the identity and livability of Santa Cruz County's mountain communities. Through collaboration with residents, fire personnel, and land managers, the project reflects a shared commitment to protecting both people and place. By improving emergency readiness while maintaining safe access to natural lands, the project strengthens the long-term resilience, livability, and community identity of Santa Cruz County's rural mountain regions.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

—

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

This project will restore and expand critical wildfire water infrastructure at two high risk Skyline ridgeline - to improve initial attack effectiveness, reduce refill time, and strengthen Both components use a standardized wildland initial attack (IA) tank configuration to ensure compatibility fire engines inlets. At the Nisene Marks site, the project replaces a non-operational as a key drafting point for wildfire response in the area. The new installation follows the IA configuration described in the attached schematic. Construction at both sites will follow a streamlined installation process designed for firefighter accessibility in Type 3 engines. Each location will begin with preparation of a compacted Class II base rock pad to create a stable foundation for the tank. Once the pad is established, the 5,000 gallon poly tank will be set in place and secured for structural stability under variable weather and seismic conditions. Local equipment operators will then install the galvanized and stainless steel components included in the standard IA configuration, including the stainless steel for absorbing movement and preventing stress on fittings over time. This installation method reduces long-term maintenance needs and ensures reliable drafting during emergency operations.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Measure Q funding is being requested to purchase the materials needed to install four 5,000 gallon water tanks, each outfitted with Fire Department Connection (FDC) compatible hydrants for use during an emergency. All Measure Q funds will go directly toward the purchase of these materials. Santa Cruz County Fire will cover and manage all labor, installation, construction oversight, and project management as a contribution and a strong agency partnership. Having County Fire lead the implementation keeps overall project costs low, shortens installation timelines, and ensures the tanks are installed to the operational standards firefighters rely on. This approach reflects the intent of the Measure Q Vision Plan - leveraging local capacity to deliver projects using Measure Q funds for materials and relying on County Fire's technical expertise, technical implementation ready, and aligned with community driven resilience goals. This partnership is a cost effective investment that strengthens wildfire suppression capability in two of the most vulnerable areas, maximizing the value of Measure Q funding.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

All project coordination will begin as soon as Measure Q funding is awarded, with close collaboration with State Parks to ensure that work at the Nisene Marks site does not overlap with peak recreation season. Once the installation window is confirmed, crews will proceed with site preparation, install the tanks using the standardized IA configuration, and complete all testing needed to verify reliable drafting. Because the project involves multiple material purchases, parts, and installation schedule, the full timeline is estimated at 10-12 months.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

This project introduces an innovative, replicable model for remote water infrastructure in high-risk, hard-to-access areas of Santa Cruz County. By restoring and expanding water tanks in the Nisene Marks area and along the South Skyline ridgeline, the project integrates wildfire suppression, water resource management, and strategic site planning into a single, coordinated approach. These installations address steep, forested terrain with dispersed residences and limited water availability - conditions where small ignitions can quickly escalate - providing a scalable solution for other rural wildfire-prone corridors in the county. The project also builds operational capacity and interagency coordination. In Nisene Marks, replacing a non-operational water tank restores a vital drafting point long relied upon by first responders, improving initial attack effectiveness and reducing response times. Along the South Skyline ridgeline, the project leverages a highly engaged Firewise community and collaboration with local fire personnel to strategically site supplemental tanks, enhancing suppression capacity in key response corridors. Together, these improvements strengthen firefighter safety, emergency response efficiency, and long-term community resilience. By standardizing water infrastructure, the project enhances the county's capacity to respond effectively to wildfires, reduces the risk of small ignitions becoming large incidents, and provides a model for future infrastructure investments in remote, high-risk areas.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Leveraged Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

This project delivers significant bonuses and community benefits by strengthening wildfire resilience in two high-risk rural regions of Santa Cruz County - Nisene Marks area including the upper Aptos Creek watershed and the South Skyline ridgeline - through the restoration and expansion of remote water infrastructure essential for effective wildfire suppression. Beyond the direct

improvements to emergency response, the project demonstrates a strong commitment to collaboration and partnership. Local fire personnel, parks staff, and highly engaged community stakeholders are actively involved in planning, site selection, and implementation, ensuring that the infrastructure meets operational needs while enhancing safety for both responders and residents. The project also leverages existing investments and community contributions to maximize impact. In the South Skyline area, a proactive Firewise community has already purchased supplemental water tanks and worked with the local Pre-Fire Engineer to identify optimal installation locations. Measure Q funding builds on these efforts and creates a scalable model for other high-risk areas. Together, these elements provide multiple benefits: improved firefighter safety, reduced response times, strengthened initial attack capability, and enhanced protection for approximately 400 rural residents and public lands, including The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park. By combining strong partnerships, leveraged funds, and coordinated planning, the project amplifies the effectiveness of Measure Q investments while delivering long-term resilience, community safety, and regional preparedness for wildfires.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

Attachment-Water Tank install.pdf

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

Water Tank Schematic.pdf

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

South Skyline FSC_LOS_Measure Q Grant.pdf, 2026_LoS_State Parks_Watertank.dotx.pdf

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Jahaira Zaragoza

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Jahaira Zaragoza Forestry Assistant II

SIGNATURE DATE

03/11/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 161 **Type:** Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Central Fire and Scotts Valley Fire Wildfire Resilience Partnership

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

161

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Central Fire and Scotts Valley Fire Wildfire Resilience Partnership

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County and Scotts Valley Fire District

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County and Scotts Valley Fire District

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Population served

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

120,000

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Erin Collins

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Fire Marshal

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Erin	Collins	[REDACTED]
Nigel	Miller	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

930 17th Ave, Santa Cruz, CA 95062, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.96796390000000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.98440320000000

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

Central Fire District (Aptos, City of Capitola, La Selva, Live Oak, Rio Del Mar, Soquel, and rural unincorporated areas near and around these communities) and the Scotts Valley Fire District (City of Scotts Valley, Branciforte, Glenwood, Pasatiempo, Rolling Woods, and the unincorporated area near and around these communities)

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Central Fire District - 5 district base elected Directors Scotts Valley Fire - 5 elected directors (at-large)

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Boundaries of Central Fire District and Scotts Valley Fire District

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

Permitting not required.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

3

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

No delays

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

50000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

173400

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000
Fringe Benefits	\$0	\$300	\$0	\$300
Supplies	\$0	\$100	\$0	\$100
Contractual / Consultants	\$50,000	\$122,000	\$0	\$172,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County and Scotts Valley Fire Protection District have partnered to request a catalyst grant to identify and reduce the highest wildfire risks in our communities. Over a three-year program, the Districts will engage Xyloplan to model fire pathways and map high-risk zones so we can prioritize residential risk reduction, target vegetation-management treatments, and focus mitigation where it will deliver the greatest protective impact. Grant funding will enable rigorous, repeatable measurement of mitigation progress, allow us to pilot innovative treatment and outreach strategies, and guide data-driven community education so residents know where and how to act. Investing in this project will strengthen local wildfire resilience, maximize limited mitigation resources, and produce actionable planning tools that protect lives, homes, and critical infrastructure - making it a high-value, cost-effective step toward a safer community.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2028

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, Coastal Protection and Adaptation

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

Xyloplan is a dynamically updated risk analytics platform that integrates multiple data sources to assess wildfire risk and community vulnerability. By identifying likely ignition mechanisms and quantifying ignition probability, Xyloplan enables agencies to prioritize prevention, target mitigation where it will have the greatest effect, and monitor outcomes over time. A modest investment in Xyloplan will pay exponential dividends: it helps protect high value primary wildlife habitat across Santa Cruz County. The platform directly supports Measure Q objectives by reducing hazardous fuel loads, increasing landscape resilience, and identifying where shaded fuel breaks and other treatments will be most effective. It will also serve as a practical community engagement tool, raising awareness of fire preparedness in the neighborhood. The Fire Districts' efforts will evaluate and target Area D (Aptos Hills / Larkin Valley), Area E (Henry Cowell corridor and Nisene Marks watershed), and Area G (mountain and upper watershed zones). The project will emphasize Area D's sandhill ecosystems and Area F's urban live oak and tree cover needs, aligning with community sensitivity. Wildlife and habitat protection is integral to this effort, too. Central Fire and Scotts Valley are home to rare and vulnerable ecosystems - sandhills, coastal dunes, maritime scrub, and riparian corridors - and to species such as the Mount Hermon June beetle, Zayante band winged grasshopper, Santa Cruz tarplant, California snowy plover, and numerous endemic plants. Data driven planning, ecologically informed fuel removal, low impact mechanical thinning, and targeted community education all contribute to measurable wildfire risk reduction that protects people, property, and the region's irreplaceable natural heritage and sensitive species - strengthening public safety and ecological resilience across the districts.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Prioritization principles for the Xyloplan wildfire risk project include: 1. Matching funds at the project level and sites where District funding will be matched or leveraged to maximize grant impact. - Outcome: Greater scope and efficiency

of mitigation, and stronger sustainability. 2. Leveraging relationships and partnerships - Principle: Prioritize projects that build or utilize durable partnerships across our agencies, landowners, utilities, other fire agencies, and community groups. - Outcome: Faster implementation of the mitigation efforts, shared resources in planning, integrated and collaborative monitoring, and identifying pathways to scale successful treatments. 3. Climate resilience and ecosystems - Principle: Prioritize projects that reduce near term fire risk while enhancing long term landscape resilience to climate change, spread risk, preserved ecosystem services (carbon sequestration, water regulation), and improved adaptive capacity of forests and watersheds. 4. Equity and community impact - Principle: Prioritize actions that reduce disproportionate wildfire risk and identify if underserved communities or historically marginalized communities have greater risks in their communities. - Outcome: Equitable distribution of risk management, identification of higher risk areas, increased community trust and participation, and reduced disparities in recovery burden. Result: A transparent, data driven prioritization process that strengthens partnerships, advances climate resilience, and ensures equitable protection across the districts.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Public benefits of deploying Xyloplan for wildfire risk reduction - Fewer losses of life and property by enabling faster, targeted mitigation and prevention. - Reduced smoke exposure and improved public health from fewer and less intense fires. - Lower long term public costs for firefighting, recovery, infrastructure repair, and insurance claims. - Reduced erosion and sedimentation impacts on downstream communities. - Preservation of local ecosystems, biodiversity, and habitat for threatened and endemic species. - Economic stability for homeowners and businesses by protecting high value real estate and reducing disruption to commerce and tourism. - Job creation through mitigation, biomass processing, and monitoring activities. - Improved community preparedness and resilience via targeted outreach, education, and transparent, accessible risk information. - Smarter public investment - limited funds are used where they deliver the greatest safety and ecological return. - Ecosystem values by protecting parks, trails, and open space from catastrophic loss.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

The primary beneficiaries of this grant will be residents and visitors within the Scotts Valley and Central Fire District service areas - nearly half of the county's population. This population includes large numbers of vulnerable individuals (seniors, people with disabilities, limited English households), fixed income families, renters, and other residents who may need to evacuate during wildfire. Many neighborhoods in these districts are high risk, with steep slopes and egress that amplify evacuation challenges. Funding this project will directly protect one of the county's densest concentration of people, address equity gaps in preparedness and mitigation, and reduce catastrophic risk where it would have the greatest human impact. This will be done through a more efficient and effective use of the limited funding available.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Public Safety Community Value: • Risk reduction: Identification of the highest risk areas, targeted inspection that will lead to targeted home hardening, defensible space projects, and prioritized fuel reduction treatments. This will lower ignition risk and slow fire spread near residential areas, particularly where single ingress/egress routes create acute evacuation hazards. • Improved and safer evacuations: Identifying and targeted remedies for difficult areas will improve evacuations and timely egress - specifically for residents without vehicles, seniors, people with disabilities, and low income households. Health and Well Being Community Value: • Direct protection of vulnerable health needs: Home hardening and defensible space measures protect residents and prevent destruction within our communities. • Reduced smoke exposure: Strategic fuel treatments and community chipping programs decrease the intensity of nearby fires and associated smoke, improving air quality and reducing respiratory impacts for children, older adults, and those with chronic conditions. Community Identity and Livability • Preserving neighborhoods and local character: Preventing structural loss protects schools, businesses, cultural institutions, and historical assets that define community identity in Scotts Valley and Aptos. • Equitable protection: Xyloplan does not discriminate, and neither does fire. Planning and hardening will be applied fairly to all residents including renters, fixed income households, and limited English residents ensures the benefits of mitigation and preparedness are distributed fairly. This maintains social networks and fabric, and reduces displacement risk after events like seen in the CZU Fire. • Livability enhancements: Vegetation management and defensible space implemented with best practice aesthetics and native plantings can improve neighborhood appearance, reduce invasive species, and support local biodiversity - all enhancing daily quality of life.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

Not required for this grant request. Site control agreements are either unnecessary or progresses. Our first priority is to identify the highest risk areas across the community verification. Defensible space inspectors will then target those priority zones and work mitigation measures. Because homeowners will be performing and managing most treatments on their own properties, formal site work agreements are unlikely to be required. If any parcel-specific agreements need them as part of the project's implementation and documentation process. This phased approach ensures funds are directed immediately to risk reduction while preserving the ability to secure site control only where it is essential.

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

The grant request is to use a dynamic risk modeling computer program to identify risks within the two fire districts service areas. The product, known as XyloPlan Fire Modeling ("XFM"), utilizes Fire Pathways™ technology with advanced fire modeling and spatial data analysis to assess the movement of wind-driven fire through vegetative and structural fuels. These technologies form the foundation of XyloPlan's Fire Pathways Mitigation Prioritization Analysis and provide the analytical basis for evaluating wildfire risk to the built environment. The Fire Pathways™ framework helps identify the regional threat factors that contribute to a wildland fire overwhelming suppression efforts and transitioning into the built environment, where an urban conflagration sequence may occur. The XyloPlan Fire Model (XFM) simulates fire spread through vegetative and built environments. Through simulation of wind-driven fire movement, the analysis highlights: % The likely routes fire will take through the wind-driven incident % The entry points where fire is most likely to transition from the wildland fire through the built environment, via surface fire, structure-structure transmission, and spread with targeted mitigation efforts The information gained by Xyloplan will allow the agencies to target high risk areas of the community and reduce / mitigate the risks in these areas. Although some of these efforts may lead to ground disturbance and site improvements, , the grant request does not include ground disturbances or site improvements.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

The scope of this project is to apply Xyloplan analytic software across the Central and Scotts Valley Fire Districts. Xyloplan is a risk analytics platform that provides analytics that will create a visualization of a risk assessment and track community risk over time. It also create scenarios of home hardening/defensible space and vegetation management recommendations that can be used to target high risk areas. The scope of this project will include: - Fire Weather Analysis: conduct a detailed analysis of local weather conditions using weather data and will evaluate characteristic high severity fire weather scenarios to use for modeling. - Wildland Fire Simulation: Using Xyloplan technology, will create detailed fire models that simulate wildfire scenarios based on worst-case local weather conditions. - Regional Risk Segmentation: Taking inputs from our wildland fire simulation and evaluating the potential for conflagration initiation, we will provide aggregated risk assessments at a regional level. The Districts can use the relative scores in each region to help prioritize areas of focus for mitigation projects or more detailed assessment. - Entry Points: We will provide a summary of Entry Points where Fire Pathways intersect densely-spaced values at risk and identify areas that should be prioritized for mitigation. - Structure Risk Assessment: will use the tool to assess risk to structures in the study area from wildland and urban fire, which will provide the ignition probability, likely ignition method (surface fire, structure-structure, ember), and community ignition sequence contributions. - Structure Mitigation Prioritization: We will generate a priority list of structures or parcels for mitigation by fire exposure type. The specific recommendations for on-parcel mitigations by ignition type will be provided and can be used to align and prioritize outreach, incentive, inspection, and enforcement efforts for home hardening and defensible space programs. - Work Unit Segmentation: We will segment the built environment into areas of related fire shed that can be considered for mitigation campaigns. Adjacent structures should generally be mitigated within the same campaign in order to achieve the network benefit of mitigations. - Extended Defensible Space Mitigation Priorities: define extended defensible space priority areas at the edge of the built environment that would most effectively interrupt fire paths and delay the transition of wildland fire to the built environment. - Existing or Planned Vegetation Management: While extended defensible space is often the most effective use of vegetation management resources, we will work with your team to model the effectiveness

BUDGET NARRATIVE

This budget supports deployment, configuration, modeling, analysis, and staff training required to deliver the Xyloplan risk analytics platform and all scope deliverables across the Central and Scotts Valley activity and line item categories; each is necessary to produce defensible risk products use after project completion. The \$50,000 portion requested in this grant will cover 2/3rds of the first year's use of Xyloplan. All additional costs will be shared between the Fire Districts using their budgeted funds. Staff time and incidentals for this project will

be covered by the Fire Districts. Information gained from this effort will be implemented using existing fire district resources. The Districts will use its funds to market how this was a Measure Q Grant Project.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

Three months after the award of the grant, the Districts will provide Xyloplan with the data needed for their analysis. Xyloplan will deliver the maps within 2 months following the data transfer. Deliverables for this project is a risk map, GIS files of the vulnerability assessment, list of residential properties that should be prioritized for mitigation and recommended methods of mitigation. Not greater than two months after the delivery of the Maps, Staff will develop a mitigation strategy and plan to target the high risk community areas within the Fire Districts.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

Xyloplan is a new and innovative tool used by progressive fire agencies to make their mitigation efforts more effective and efficient. This effort will support the District's mitigation efforts through targeted mitigation. It is used throughout the California, Colorado, Arizona and other west coast states, but this application would likely be the first time it is being used in this County.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Leveraged Funds, Efficient Use of Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

This project advances multiple grant bonus priorities by demonstrating interagency partnership, resource leverage, and operational / financial efficiency. Scotts Valley and Central Fire are jointly collaborating on the Xyloplan deployment, and resulting data will be shared with CAL FIRE and County Fire in the State Responsibility Area. This coordination creates opportunities for additional multi agency mitigation and resilience actions. Xyloplan is an ideal platform consistent, reproducible risk analyses that support regional decision making that is easy for local resources (fund leveraging): the two districts pool funding to cover project costs, and the Scotts Valley Fire Marshal serves as Division Head for both agencies, enabling shared staffing (including defensible space inspection) pathway modeling will be applied across both districts so inspectors can target the high risk areas. With staff time and combined funding, this project is financially feasible and scalable. Finally, the project creates more efficient use of funds through stronger enforcement outcomes. Prioritized, data driven targeting allows for more efficient use of funds and enforcement where they will reduce the most risk - accelerating impact and improving public safety while using limited resources more effectively.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

Service Area Map.docx

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

Agency Overview.docx

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

Photos of product.docx

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Mark Correira

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Mark Correira, Fire Chief (Scotts Valley Fire)

SIGNATURE DATE

03/12/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 166

Type: Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

Project: Outdoor Equity & Wellness Initiative: Facilitating Access and Equity to Local Parks and Recreation for Boys & Girls Club Youth

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

166

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Outdoor Equity & Wellness Initiative: Facilitating Access and Equity to Local Parks and Recreation for Boys & Girls Club Youth

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Cruz County

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Education population

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

500

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Andrew Cunningham

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

VP of Development & Marketing

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Lis	DuBois	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

250 California St, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.96569833401303

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.03489603068847

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

Our Santa Cruz, Live Oak, and Scotts Valley Clubs serve youth from throughout Santa Cruz County, including residents of the City of Santa Cruz, City of Scotts Valley, City of Capitola, City of Watsonville, and unincorporated County. We regularly serve members from all local school districts, with the majority attending the Santa Cruz City Schools, Live Oak, Scotts Valley Unified School, San Lorenzo Valley Unified, and Soquel Union School Districts. Collectively, the youth we serve are a diverse reflection of our County's residents, representing urban, suburban, and rural families across a wide range of socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial demographics.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Our Clubs are located within the following Districts: - California St / Downtown Santa Cruz Clubhouse - City of Santa Cruz (District 3) - Live Oak Clubhouse - Unincorporated Santa Cruz County (District 1) - Scotts Valley Clubhouse - City of Scotts Valley (District 5) In addition, we serve youth from - and plan to visit parks and outdoor recreational spaces located within - Santa Cruz County District 2 and District 4 .

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Our proposed "Outdoor Equity & Wellness Initiative" will serve Boys & Girls Club youth members from the Cities of Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, Capitola, Watsonville, and unincorporated County. Through this project, we will transport youth from our three Clubs to for recreational and educational field trips to local City, County and State parks, including but not limited to: Big Basin State Park, San Vicente Redwoods, Seacliff State Beach, Wilder Ranch State Park, Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, and The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, as well as city beaches and recreational parks and pathways, such as the completed stretches of the Rail Trail and bike path. From the Measure Q Vision Plan's "Parks, Recreation, and Public Access and Equity Priority Geographies" (pg 58), our programs and will nature-based field trips will include outings and recreational activations in the following prioritized geographic areas: 1) South County Beach Access (trail connections and slough access) 2) Urban and Rural Trail Connectivity (integrated park/trail opportunities) 3) Underserved neighborhoods countywide (pocket parks, schoolyards, urban greening) 4) North Coast (new access points, regional trails)

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

DAC STATUS

Not sure

SDAC STATUS

Yes

DAC/SDAC NOTES

Our Downtown Santa Cruz and Live Oak Clubhouses are located within SDAC-designated communities according to the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

No such permits are necessary for transporting Boys & Girls Clubs youth to Santa Cruz County outdoors and recreational parks and facilities. We abide by all relevant laws (CA DMV, CA Dept. of Transportation), as well as Boys & Girls Clubs of America safety precautions and best-practices when transporting youth.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA	NA	
State Water Control Resources Board	NA	NA	
US Fish and Wildlife	NA	NA	
City/County Construction Permits	NA	NA	
Coastal Commission	NA	NA	
Other	NA	NA	

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

2

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Cruz County (BGCSCC) is prepared to implement the proposed Outdoor Equity & Wellness Initiative immediately upon award of Measure Q funding. We anticipate no technical, permitting, or environmental delays that would hinder the program's rollout. The project will activate quickly thanks to existing infrastructure. BGCSCC currently operates four Ford Transit passenger vans, two of which are owned and two of which are rented. We use these vehicles to transport youth from schools to our Clubs every day afterschool, as well as for field trips during Winter, Spring, and Summer Break camps. If awarded, a Measure Q grant will allow us to transition away from a long-term rental model by allowing us to purchase two vehicles over the course of the two-year grant term. Because we currently operate vans of this specific make/model, our staff is already trained in their maintenance, safety protocols, and operation. Moreover, our organization has a demonstrated history of procurement and fleet management. Having already purchased and integrated two vehicles into our current service model, we have established vendor relationships and internal systems to source and activate these assets quickly. The same is also true for insuring and servicing our fleet. This funding will double the number of vehicles we own, ensuring reliable transportation for year-round park excursions rather than being subject to rental terms or seasonal availability. Lastly, our proposed project does not include dependencies. Several current staff are trained and authorized to drive youth in our existing vehicles. We have a Youth Behavioral Health Specialist on our staff, and she has expressed a strong interest in integrating nature-based wellness activities into our curriculum. And, we have existing relationships with several local organizations, including Coastal Watershed Council, Community Bike Collective, and Mountains2Sea, which will help facilitate a seamless launch.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

50000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

105770

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$4,000	\$12,850	\$0	\$16,850
Equipment	\$45,000	\$25,000	\$0	\$70,000
Other Direct Costs	\$500	\$150	\$0	\$650
Indirect Costs	\$0	\$12,500	\$0	\$12,500
Fringe Benefits	\$0	\$3,370	\$0	\$3,370
Travel	\$0	\$800	\$0	\$800
Supplies	\$500	\$600	\$500	\$1,600

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Cruz County (BGCSCC) respectfully requests \$50,000 in Measure Q Tier 1 Community Catalyst funding to launch a transformative outdoor equity and mental health initiative for local youth. This project addresses a critical gap by providing consistent, reliable transportation for kids and teens from our Santa Cruz, Live Oak, and Scotts Valley Clubhouses to take educational and recreational nature-based field trips to a range of local, County and State parks, and ensuring that geographic and financial barriers do not prevent local youth from accessing our region's abundant natural resources. This initiative is designed around the "nature as a tool" philosophy. BGCSCC's Behavioral Health Specialist will partner with our Clubhouse staff to plan and lead monthly outings that introduce youth to new settings to manage stress, reduce anxiety, move their bodies, breathe fresh air and improve overall well-being. These excursions will foster resilience and emotional regulation through structured outdoor recreation. This project will strengthen relationships between local youth-serving organizations, allowing BGCSCC to tap the expertise of partners with specialized environmental skills and curricula. We will deepen existing ties with the Coastal Watershed Council and Community Bike Collective to focus on environmental stewardship and active transit, and pilot a new partnership that will leverage Mountains2Sea's expertise in nature-based wellness and stress management. Through this investment, BGCSCC will catalyze a sustainable model for equitable outdoor access, providing youth with high-impact experiences that promote peer connectedness, empower the next generation of environmental stewards, and prioritize mental wellbeing.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2028

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

The mission of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Cruz County is to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens. We do this by providing a range of high-quality, engaging programs that foster academic success, character and leadership development, and healthy lifestyles. This approach directly mirrors the core tenets of the Measure Q Vision Plan. By providing accessible and affordable after-school and summer programming for over 1,500 youth annually, BGCSCC serves as a vital bridge to recreational and environmental opportunities for historically underserved youth in our community. A central priority of Measure Q is directing resources toward "historically underserved or disadvantaged communities to reduce disparities in access." BGCSCC's Live Oak and California Street Clubs are strategically located in high-need areas where families often face financial or transportation-related barriers to traditional recreation. Through longstanding trusted relationships, robust scholarship programs, and staff-supervised transportation from schools to our facilities, BGCSCC removes hurdles that often prevent young people from participating in local recreational offerings. Measure Q also emphasizes "expanding safe and equitable access to parks, trails, and coastal areas." The proposed project will literally provide access: via free transportation, park fees, and trained mentors and staff to provide educational and recreational opportunities. BGCSCC has a long history of providing a range of activities, such as our Surf Club, aquatics programs, and beach, fishing and aquarium field trips, which help to provide local youth with their first meaningful connection to the Monterey Bay. These initiatives do more than teach skills; they foster a sense of belonging that aligns with the Measure Q goal of enhancing public access for all residents regardless of socioeconomic status. In alignment with Measure Q's "Multi-Benefit Outcomes" principle, BGCSCC will integrate environmental education into the proposed project curriculum. Field trips to area parks will not only focus on recreation, physical activity, and mental wellbeing, but will also use natural settings as "outdoor classrooms" to teach youth about local ecosystems, water conservation, and biodiversity. By engaging the next generation of Santa Cruz County residents in volunteer stewardship and nature-based play, we will be cultivating the future land stewards necessary for the long-term success of the Measure Q vision. We will collaborate with qualified partners, such as Coastal Watershed Council, Community Bike Collective, and Mountains2Sea to incorporate specialized ecological, recreational, and mental health programming into our curricula. Lastly, BGCSCC maintains a long-standing partnership with Santa Cruz County Parks, regularly utilizing facilities like Simpkins Family Swim Center and local County parks for field trips and athletic activities. This existing partnership model demonstrates "Readiness" and "Strategic Alignment" to ensure that grant funds will immediately translate into actionable community benefit. In summary, a Measure Q investment in BGCSCC is an investment in the "Equity Impact" and "Public Benefit" of our County's park system. We are uniquely positioned to ensure that the vision of a resilient, accessible, and equitable Santa Cruz County is realized for the youth who need it most.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

BGCSCC centers our operational model on the Measure Q core principle of Equity Impact. As defined in the Measure Q Vision Plan, high priority is given to projects that "reduce disparities in access, health, and climate risk" for historically underserved or disadvantaged communities. BGCSCC is uniquely positioned to deliver these outcomes by serving as a primary recreation and safety hub for the county's most vulnerable youth. Our organization serves more than 1,500 youth annually, and with 51% of our members identifying as youth of color and many coming from single-parent or foster households, a Measure Q investment in our programs is a direct investment in social equity. We are committed to ensuring that the benefits of our community's amazing parks and recreation system are accessible to all young people. Our facilities are located in neighborhoods with high concentrations of low- to moderate-income families, higher-density housing, and limited private green space. By maintaining extremely low membership fees and providing robust financial scholarships, we ensure that cost is never a barrier to participation in our programs. This directly addresses the Measure Q priority of ensuring that investments reach communities where "opportunities for external match may be limited" but the need for equity is highest. Moreover, a core component of our mission is bridging the "recreation gap." While Santa Cruz County is world-renowned for its natural beauty, many of our members lack the transportation, equipment, or mentorship required to safely access the incredible outdoor resources that surround us. Programs like our Surf Club provide more than just physical activity; they offer a sense of "coastal belonging" to youth who have grown up near the ocean but have never had the equipment, transportation, or family connection to build a sense of familiarity with the water. By providing the funding needed to expand our fleet of Club-owned vehicles and schedule regular excursions to nearby parks, a grant from Measure Q will turn the Vision Plan's goal of "expanding safe and equitable access" into a daily reality for the low-income youth who attend our Clubs. Equity also includes protection from climate risks. During extreme

as during the CZU fire: our Clubs serve as safe, climate-controlled environments for our young people to the outdoors via regular field trips, our programs will plant the seed that may empower them to become leaders in local conservation and active participants in ensuring our County's resilient future.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

BGCSCC serves as a cornerstone of the county's social infrastructure, aligning with the Measure Q goal of providing "clear, visible value for the community." Our programs provide: Enhanced Safety: A supervised, prosocial environment for over 1,500 youth during the critical after-school hours. Health and Wellness: Direct access to physical recreation, including free play, recreation, and organized sports, which combat sedentary lifestyles and promote mental well-being. Environmental Literacy: By introducing youth to the Monterey Bay through our Surf Club, we create a public benefit that lasts a lifetime - fostering a generation that values and protects our coastal resources. Measure Q funds will allow us to increase the number of youth who have the opportunity to experience the outdoors via new monthly field trips to parks and recreation sites. Partnerships: Our existing collaboration with the Coastal Watershed Council, Community Bike Collective, and Santa Cruz County Parks ensures that our environmental education is scientifically grounded and avoids duplication of effort, fulfilling the Measure Q priority of "strengthening partnerships." Strengthening Regional Plans: BGCSCC's programming does not exist in a vacuum; we are a key implementation partner that helps to fulfill several local and state initiatives identified in the Vision Plan's literature review. These include the "California Outdoors for All Strategy" by directly advancing the state's goal of expanding outdoor access for all, regardless of zip code or income, and the "Santa Cruz County Parks Strategic Plan" by reinforcing the County's goal of maximizing the utility and reach of existing park assets while also diversifying and making more equitable those who access these places. Immediate Execution and "Early Wins": A primary goal for the first five years of Measure Q is delivering "visible improvements and early action." Our proposed project is uniquely "shovel-ready" for several reasons. First, our Santa Cruz, Live Oak, and Scotts Valley Clubs are currently serving 1,500+ youth members per year. We own two vehicles and are well-positioned to grow our owned van fleet. Our proposal does not require complex environmental permitting or capital construction, ensuring that funds can be deployed immediately to launch our programs. A Proven Track Record: With decades of experience in youth development, BGCSCC has the administrative capacity to manage grant requirements effectively, ensuring high accountability and immediate "Public Benefit." By funding BGCSCC, Measure Q secures a high-merit project that is ready to deliver on the promise of an accessible, equitable, and healthy Santa Cruz County starting on day one.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Cruz County serves a diverse population of over 1,500 youth annually, ranging in age from 5 to 18. Our program participants align directly with the Measure Q Vision Plan's priority to serve "historically underserved or disadvantaged communities." Approximately 60% of our members come from low-income households that qualify for free or reduced-price lunch at school. By providing a safe, affordable "second home" during out-of-school hours, we serve families who often lack the financial resources to access private recreation or specialized environmental activities. However, our programs are also not exclusive, meaning that they are available to all families, including dual income households with working parents, who may pay into the Measure Q funds via property taxes. This results in program enrollment that is truly reflective of our community. Beyond socioeconomic status, our youth members reflect the rich racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of Santa Cruz County. More than 50% of our members identify as youth of color, and many are English Language Learners. We provide a culturally responsive environment where youth from all backgrounds feel a sense of belonging in the county's recreational landscape. Our staff similarly reflect the community we serve, with many of our professionals coming from similar backgrounds, including first generation college students and recent graduates. We specifically strive to serve youth who "need us most," including those in foster care, those experiencing housing instability, and those from single-parent households. For these young people, the Club is not just a recreational outlet but a critical support system that provides mentorship and stability. In alignment with the Measure Q focus on geographic equity, BGCSCC operates across three strategic locations. Our Live Oak Clubhouse is located in a higher-density, unincorporated, and underserved area of the mid-county with limited access to private green space. Our Santa Cruz Clubhouse serves a wide range of urban youth and provides a central hub for coastal access programs. Our Scotts Valley Clubhouse offers an ideal jumping off point for programming in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and ensures that young people from working families and lower-income households living in one of our County's more affluent communities have access to the supports they need. The Measure Q Vision Plan identifies the "recreation gap" as a major barrier for underserved youth. Our target user groups are those who statistically have the least access to our County's natural wonders. Many of our members live just miles from the Monterey Bay yet have never stepped on a surfboard or participated in a guided nature hike. By serving as the primary bridge to these experiences via two newly-purchased Club vehicles and regular field trips to nearby parks and recreational spaces, BGCSCC will help to ensure that the "Public Benefit" of Measure Q is felt by the residents who have historically been left out of conversation efforts.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Through our proposed "Outdoor Equity & Wellness Initiative," BGCSCC will provide an essential community value that transforms local parks and recreational assets into tools for social equity, health, and resilience. Our approach will center on five of the six Community Value areas, ensuring that the Measure Q Vision is realized for the youth who often experience the greatest barriers to these benefits. Enhancing Health, Well-being, and Recreation: The Club is a primary driver of health and well-being for the 1,500+ young people we serve each year. We offer structured recreation opportunities, including organized sports and aquatics, as well as a prosocial alternative to unsupervised time, that supports the social-emotional wellbeing of the youth we serve. Beyond daily physical activity, we provide a holistic safety net that includes free healthy meals every day, and the support of a dedicated Behavioral Health Specialist who helps youth process trauma and build emotional resilience - a critical "community benefit" identified in the Measure Q Vision Plan. Expanding Access to Nature and Recreation: With the support of Measure Q, BGCSCC will serve as the "last mile" connection to Santa Cruz County's natural wonders. We will intentionally bridge the "recreation gap" highlighted in the Measure Q Vision Plan, using newly-purchased vehicles to transport Club youth on monthly field trips from higher-density areas like Live Oak to the coast and redwood state parks. These outings will make the outdoors accessible by providing the mentorship and equipment (wetsuits, boards, hiking gear, snacks, park entrance fees, and facilitated activities) that make these spaces inclusive for low-income youth and families of color. Community Identity and Livability: Our Clubhouses are anchors of community identity, and our staff develop meaningful connections with the young people we serve. This project will allow our team to further foster a "conservation ethic" by turning local parks into outdoor classrooms, teaching youth that they are the rightful owners and future stewards of these lands. This sense of belonging is vital to the long-term livability of Santa Cruz County, ensuring that our parks remain vibrant and protected for generations. Outreach and Engagement: To ensure our programs reach those who "need us most," BGCSCC employs a "trusted messenger" model of outreach and engagement. We offer bilingual & culturally relevant programming, with 51% of our members identifying as youth of color and more than 40% identifying as Hispanic/Latino, bi-cultural, or multi-racial. Our staff reflects this diversity, providing bilingual outreach and ensuring all programming is culturally responsive. We maintain strong relationships with local schools and districts, encourage youth to co-design Club activities, and regularly invite feedback from Club families. If awarded, a Measure Q grant to BGCSCC would leverage the Club's existing, high-trust network to deliver meaningful outdoor education and recreation opportunities to some of the county's most vulnerable residents.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

BGCSCC maintains full site control over our points of departure. We own our Scotts Valley and Downtown Santa Cruz Clubs, and hold long-term leases for our Live Oak and California Street locations. Our proposed project will facilitate youth transportation to Santa Cruz County Parks and State-managed recreational areas. These are public lands designated for the exact recreational and educational uses proposed in this application. BGCSCC will operate within standard park regulations, including the payment of all required day-use or visitor fees. And because the project involves no ground disturbance or permanent capital improvements on these lands, formal "site control" agreements or construction permits are not required. We will leverage existing collaborative relationships with Santa Cruz County Parks and Coastal Watershed Council to ensure our presence in these spaces is coordinated and supportive of regional conservation goals.

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

BGCSCC is uniquely positioned for immediate execution because this proposal scales existing, proven programs rather than initiating new construction or environmental engineering projects. We possess the administrative infrastructure and specialized staff needed to deploy Measure Q funds starting on day one. Our three Clubhouses - located in Santa Cruz, Live Oak, and Scotts Valley - are fully operational hubs with established safety protocols and check-in systems. We currently serve youth from hundreds of local families, and maintain active relationships with local schools, libraries, and community organizations that ensure our ability to continue expanding our reach. We currently own and maintain two passenger vans. Measure Q funds will directly support the expansion of our fleet, which in turn will allow us to transport more youth to local parks. In addition, Measure Q dollars will help to fund specialized gear, fuel, staffing, and park fees without requiring new transit permits. Our staff includes caring youth development professionals, many of whom have backgrounds in education and social work. They bring a wide range of professional expertise to their roles and regularly participate in training provided by Boys & Girls Clubs of America. In addition, our Behavioral Health Specialist will help to ensure that our proposed recreational activities are trauma-informed and accessible to youth facing emotional or social challenges. We maintain strict youth-to-staff ratios, particularly for field trips, and provide staff with

Red Cross first aid and CPR certification. Partnership Network: We have active, long-standing partnerships with Santa Cruz County Parks and the Coastal Watershed Council. These allow us to utilize public lands and pre-existing curricula to implement programming immediately. By focusing on programmatic expansion and "mobile access" to nature, we bypass the lengthy CEQA and permitting timelines associated with capital projects, ensuring that Measure Q provides an "Early Win" for the community.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

With support from Measure Q, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Cruz County will launch an Outdoor Equity & Wellness Initiative, a comprehensive program designed to dismantle the primary barrier preventing our youth from engaging with local natural resources: reliable transportation. A \$50,000 award from Measure Q will allow BGCSCC to transition away from a high-cost vehicle rental model to permanent ownership of two additional 10-passenger Ford Transit vans. This strategic investment will catalyze a sustainable, year-round program that connects youth from our Downtown Santa Cruz, Live Oak, and Scotts Valley Clubhouses to the expansive network of Santa Cruz County and California State Parks in our local community. The core of this initiative is "Nature as a Tool" - using the outdoors to improve the mental health and ecological literacy of our members. Over the two-year grant period, we will facilitate more than 500 youth outings (averaging 16 youth per trip across three clubs each month). These outings will not only be field trips, but rather intentional, curriculum-driven excursions designed in alignment with the Measure Q Vision Plan's focus on Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity. Recognizing the rising mental health challenges facing today's youth, our Behavioral Health Specialist will accompany participants on these recreational and educational outings. By moving therapeutic practices from the Clubhouse to the park, we provide youth with a serene environment to practice mindfulness, stress reduction, breathing, movement and emotional regulation. This "Nature-Based Wellness" approach ensures that recreation serves as a foundation for long-term resilience. This project also serves as a bridge between youth and local environmental experts. We will deepen existing partnerships with the Coastal Watershed Council and Community Bike Collective to engage youth in hands-on stewardship, such as water quality monitoring and trail maintenance. Furthermore, we will pilot a transformative partnership with Mountains2Sea, leveraging their expertise in outdoor healing adventures to provide high-impact, nature-based mentorship. This project directly addresses the Measure Q Evaluative Principles of Equity Impact and Multi-Benefit Outcomes. The program will serve youth from working families who often lack the time or means to transport their children to county parks (equity). Purchasing these vans eliminates recurring lease costs, allowing us to redirect operational funds toward expanded programming (sustainability). And by fostering a generation of youth who feel a sense of belonging in our parks, we are cultivating the future environmental stewards of Santa Cruz County (community benefit). By investing in the BGCSCC Outdoor Equity & Wellness Initiative, Measure Q will provide the literal and figurative "vehicle" for our youth to thrive in our local natural world, ensuring that our county's public lands are truly accessible to all.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Cruz County respectfully requests a grant of \$50,000 to launch the Outdoor Equity & Wellness Initiative. This project is designed to eliminate the primary barrier - reliable transportation - preventing our 1,500+ diverse youth members from accessing Santa Cruz County's natural resources. When leveraged with additional funds, an investment of \$50,000 from Measure Q would fund two Ford Transit passenger vans, as well as staffing and direct costs for an estimated 36 educational and recreational field trips to Santa Cruz area State, County and local parks. The majority of the request (\$45,000) would be allocated towards the purchase of two 10-passenger Ford Transit vans. This strategic investment aligns with the Measure Q principle of Leveraging Potential and Sustainability. Currently, BGCSCC relies on high-cost, month-to-month vehicle rentals for two of our four-van fleet in order to meet our transportation needs. By transitioning to permanent ownership, we eliminate recurring monthly rental fees, allowing us to redirect long-term operational funds back into direct youth program expenses. This ensures that the "vehicle" for outdoor equity remains a permanent community asset. This van would grow our owned fleet from 2 to 4 vehicles. We will allocate \$4,000 towards personnel costs to ensure safe, supervised, and impactful excursions. This funding supports the staff who will serve as drivers and mentors to chaperone over 500 unique youth outings over the grant term, as well as our Youth Behavioral Health Specialist. This on-staff specialist will lead monthly outings, utilizing "nature as a tool" to manage stress and anxiety. This integration of mental health support into outdoor transit directly fulfills the Measure Q Multi-Benefit Outcomes priority. The remaining \$1,000 will cover direct expenses for the program, including gas for the vans, auto insurance, park entrance fees (when required), and additional booster seats for youth passengers. This budget represents a highly efficient use of public funds, as it leverages BGCSCC's existing \$2.5 million annual operating budget and established "back-office" infrastructure. The project is uniquely "shovel-ready" because we currently operate a similar fleet, our staff is already trained in maintenance, safety protocols, and operations. By funding this initiative, Measure Q will provide the literal and figurative vehicle for our youth - particularly those from Severely Disadvantaged Communities in Live Oak and Downtown Santa Cruz - to build a sense of belonging and stewardship in our local parks and coastal areas.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

Months 1-2 (July and August 2026) will focus on procurement and onboarding. Upon receipt of funds, BGCSCC will initiate the purchase of the Measure Q-funded 10-passenger Ford Transit vans. Simultaneously, the Youth Behavioral Health Specialist and program staff will develop the "Nature as a Tool" curriculum, integrating mental health wellness goals into the scheduled outings. Month 3 (September 2026) will mark the launch of our proposed pilot program. With the vehicles integrated into the fleet, the Club will implement a schedule of weekly trips from the Santa Cruz, Live Oak, and Scotts Valley Clubhouses. Initial focus will be on high-demand coastal access points identified in the Measure Q Vision Document as priority geographies, such as the North Coast

bluffs, San Vicente Redwoods, and South County beaches. Months 4-12 (October 2026 - June 2027) will transition into the school year implementation of our program. Staff will facilitate approximately 3 outings per month, one from each Clubhouse location. Utilizing 2 vans, each outing will aim to take 16 youth and 3-4 staff mentors into natural spaces of Santa Cruz County. Quarterly reviews will assess youth engagement levels and transit efficiency. At month 12 (June 2027), we will complete our year 1 evaluation and submit our first annual report to the Citizens Oversight Advisory Board documenting the number of youth served from Severely Disadvantaged Communities. Year 2 (July 2027 - June 2028) will mark full-scale implementation of the program. With our two new vans in operation, the Club will scale to its full capacity, facilitating an estimated 36 outings. Trips will expand to include more inland "Wildfire Risk" and "Forest Health" education sites in the Santa Cruz Mountains to foster a county-wide stewardship ethic, while also continuing to visit coastal sites, and recreational pathways like the bike and pedestrian paths. Month 24 (June 2028) will feature the completion of our project, with final data collection and analysis on program outcomes, including behavioral health metrics and total "nature-based hours" logged by participants. Alignment with Measure Q Readiness: Because BGCSCC currently operates a modest fleet, there is no "learning curve" for maintenance or safety protocols. As prioritized in the Vision Document's Secondary Principles, this project delivers "early action and visible results," moving from funding to field trips within the first 90 days of the grant cycle.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

BGCSCC brings a rare combination of deep institutional history and modern programmatic integration to the Outdoor Equity & Wellness Initiative. Our capacity to execute this project is rooted in over 55 years of service as a trusted local non-profit dedicated to the youth of our county. BGCSCC is a cornerstone of the local social fabric, currently serving over 1,500 youth annually. For the families we serve, our Clubs serve as a "third space" where members spend a significant amount of time second only to their home and school environments. This high level of engagement gives us a unique window into the needs of our youth and the trust required to introduce them to new outdoor experiences. Our organizational capacity is further evidenced by our professional staffing, including seasoned youth development professionals with backgrounds in education and social services, and a Behavioral Health Specialist. Our team are experts in managing large-group logistics, field trip safety, and trauma-informed care. Moreover, we already operate a complex transportation network. Having successfully purchased and activated two vehicles in our current fleet, we have the established safety protocols, maintenance schedules, and vendor relationships necessary to immediately double our owned fleet with Measure Q funds. And as a 55-year-old organization, we possess the robust "back-office" administrative infrastructure required to manage the fiscal tracking and reporting standards of the Measure Q Grant Program. The integrated wellness approach to the proposed program also represents strategic innovation. Rather than creating a standalone "nature program," our innovation lies in the intentional integration of mental health support into our proposed field trips. By bringing our Behavioral Health Specialist on monthly park outings, we provide a therapeutic setting that helps youth manage stress and anxiety using the outdoors as a practical tool. This approach aligns with the Measure Q Vision Plan's goal of delivering Multi-Benefit Outcomes - improving both physical access to parks and the mental well-being of the participants. This project also supports operational sustainability by introducing a more efficient fiscal model. By transitioning from high-cost, temporary rental vehicles to permanent asset ownership, we maximize the Public Benefit of this grant. Ownership ensures that the "vehicle" for outdoor equity remains a permanent fixture of our programming, providing long-term readiness to serve Santa Cruz County youth for years to come.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Volunteer Hours Leverage, Leveraged Funds, Efficient Use of Funds, Other

BONUS NARRATIVE

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Cruz County is uniquely positioned to maximize the impact of Measure Q funding through a sophisticated blend of fiscal leverage, professional expertise, and a robust volunteer network. By investing in our transportation infrastructure, the County would not just be funding a vehicle; it would be catalyzing a highly efficient, community-supported ecosystem. Our organization operates a \$2.5 million annual budget, reflecting 50 years of fiscal maturity and community trust. We do not rely on a single funding stream. Rather, our work is sustained by nearly \$1 million of philanthropic support from individual donors and institutional grants, and strong partnerships with local school districts that leverage "Expanded Learning Opportunities Program" (ELOP) funding to ensure our programs remain accessible to the young people who need them most. This request for \$50,000 in Measure Q funding represents a strategic "last-mile" investment. While our general budget covers professional salaries and facility costs, Measure Q funds will be used to purchase the critical physical assets-the vehicles used to transport our youth-which will unlock the Park, Recreation, and Public Access benefits for our members. Our capacity is significantly amplified by a dedicated pool of volunteers who provide specialized skills and mentorship, including specialized volunteer coaches for our Surf Club and Mountain Bike Club who bring technical expertise in outdoor recreation. And while we leverage the power of volunteers to scale our impact, we maintain a rigorous standard for youth safety. Every individual who interacts with our members - whether a paid professional or a volunteer coach - must complete at minimum a background check, LiveScan fingerprinting, and training in mandated reporter requirements and trauma-informed care. This foundational commitment to safety best practices ensures that as we expand access to parks throughout our region, our members are guided by mentors who are not only skilled in outdoor stewardship but are also experts in maintaining a safe, supportive environment. Finally, this project leverages active partnerships with the Coastal Watershed Council, Community Bike Collective, and a new proposed pilot with Mountains2Sea. These relationships ensure that our outings are integrated into the broader regional effort to foster environmental literacy and

mental well-being across the County.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

BGCSCC Measure Q Map 2026.png

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

BGCSCC Measure Q Map 2026.png

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Lis DuBois

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Executive Director

SIGNATURE DATE

03/06/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 179 **Type:** Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Expanding Coastal Access, Ocean Safety, and Surf Education in Santa Cruz County

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

179

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Expanding Coastal Access, Ocean Safety, and Surf Education in Santa Cruz County

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

BLACK SURF SANTA CRUZ INC

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Outreach population

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

Pre-/Post-Program Survey Questions

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Esabella Bonner

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Executive Director

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Jahyzanna	Wieder	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

185 W Cliff Dr, Santa Cruz, CA, 95060

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.96137757586027

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.02443886890997

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

—

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

at-large city council

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Beaches and parks within Santa Cruz County including but not limited to Cowell's Beach (City of Santa Cruz), Pleasure Point County Park Beaches, Capitola City Beach, Manresa State Beach, the intertidal and nearshore coastal zone at these locations, and use of associated facilities such as bathrooms/benches.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

City of Santa Cruz - Cowell Beach Management Plan states that any nonprofit or tribal entity teaching free surf lessons (expanding public access to the beach) is exempt from the permitting process/ surf school ordinances.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No	N/A	N/A
State Water Control Resources Board	No	N/A	N/A
US Fish and Wildlife	No	N/A	N/A
City/County Construction Permits	No	N/A	N/A
Coastal Commission	NA	N/A	N/A
Other	No	N/A	N/A

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

1

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

Black Surf Santa Cruz is prepared to begin implementation immediately upon grant award. The proposed programs build upon established and recurring programming that has been successfully delivered in prior seasons. Core infrastructure, including trained volunteer coaches, standardized ocean safety protocols, curriculum, equipment inventory, and community partnerships, is already in place. The primary dependencies relate to seasonal scheduling, participant enrollment, and routine coordination for beach use where applicable. These are standard operational processes that BSSC has successfully navigated in previous program cycles. No construction, land acquisition, or complex environmental permitting is required for implementation. The program operates within existing public coastal access points and follows established safety and risk management procedures. Potential minor delays may include weather conditions or adjustments to scheduling based on participant availability. These variables are anticipated and built into program planning and do not affect overall project feasibility or readiness. While additional

aligned funding sources are being pursued to expand and sustain long-term programming, the proposed Measure Q request supports core activities and does not depend on external approvals or matching funds to initiate services. Overall, the project is operationally ready, administratively prepared, and capable of launching immediately upon award notification, ensuring timely delivery of equitable coastal access and community recreation benefits.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

50000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

97700

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$16,950	\$16,950	\$8,090	\$41,990
Fringe Benefits	\$6,275	\$6,275	\$0	\$12,550
Equipment	\$750	\$0	\$0	\$750
Supplies	\$3,625	\$3,625	\$0	\$7,250
Contractual / Consultants	\$5,600	\$900	\$0	\$6,500
Other Direct Costs	\$9,300	\$10,750	\$0	\$20,050
Indirect Costs	\$7,500	\$760	\$350	\$8,610

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

Black Surf Santa Cruz (BSSC) seeks \$50,000 in Measure Q funding to expand equitable access to Santa Cruz County's coastal recreation spaces through our Pop-Up Program (PUP) and Prepare to Pop-Up (P2PUP) programs. These programs directly advance Measure Q priorities related to Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity by removing financial, cultural, and psychological barriers that have historically limited participation in ocean recreation among Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color. During the grant period (July 2026-June 2027), BSSC will implement 10 Pop-Up Program surf sessions and one multi-session Prepare to Pop-Up cohort, serving approximately 90-100 participants annually. Programs provide free surf instruction, ocean safety education, equipment, and culturally affirming community support. Participants build practical coastal literacy skills including wave and tide awareness, safe ocean entry and exit, water quality awareness, and rip current safety. The project generates measurable community benefits through increased recreation access, improved ocean safety knowledge, strengthened environmental stewardship, and expanded public use of Santa Cruz County's coastal spaces. Programs are supported by 15 trained volunteer surf coaches certified in CPR/AED, first aid, water safety, and trauma-informed practices, helping expand community safety capacity in Santa Cruz County waters. Measure Q funds will leverage an additional \$47,700 in cash and in-kind support, bringing the total project investment to approximately \$97,700. Since 2020, BSSC has served more than 1,000 participants, demonstrating strong community demand and organizational capacity. Through partnerships, volunteer leadership, and culturally grounded programming, this project expands safe, inclusive coastal recreation while cultivating long-term stewardship of Santa Cruz County's

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

Black Surf Santa Cruz advances the Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity priority by intentionally increasing access to the coast for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and other historically excluded residents. While Santa Cruz County is home to extraordinary public coastal resources, access has not always been equitable. During the Jim Crow era and beyond, Black communities were systematically denied access to pools and beaches nationwide. That exclusion was also present locally.

Historical records document that Black tourists were barred from hotels and auto camps in Santa Cruz between the World Wars, and in 1942 members of the all-African American 54th Coast Artillery Company stationed at Lighthouse Field were refused service by local businesses. In the decades following World War II, African American families faced housing discrimination and resistance when attempting to integrate neighborhoods (Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, *To Know My Name: A History of African Americans in Santa Cruz County*). These histories reflect broader patterns of exclusion shaping generational access to public space. Barriers continue to limit participation, including financial constraints, lack of equipment or transportation, limited swimming experience, generational trauma, and experiences of discrimination. BSSC operationalizes Measure Q's commitment to equitable access through established, free programs that reduce structural barriers to ocean recreation. We provide all necessary equipment (90% of participants need to borrow gear), trained volunteer coaches reflective of the communities we serve, trauma-informed instruction, and culturally affirming community spaces. Nearly half of our members report zero prior surfing experience, and 73% express interest in water and ocean safety education - demonstrating both need and demand. According to the Santa Cruz County Black Health Matters Initiative Spotlight survey by United Way, 35% of Black/African American respondents reported experiencing systemic racism "often" or "very often" in the past 12 months, and 44% reported frequent microaggressions. These experiences directly affect whether individuals feel safe accessing public outdoor spaces. BSSC mitigates these barriers by creating culturally relevant coastal programming where participants feel welcomed, represented, and supported. We believe environmental justice must include equitable access to clean, healthy coastal environments. When historically excluded communities build positive relationships with the ocean, they are more likely to engage in conservation, advocacy, and stewardship that protect these public resources for future generations. This alignment also supports Coastal Protection and Adaptation by fostering environmental stewardship. BSSC programs including the Pop Up Program (PUP), Prepare to Pop Up (P2PUP), and the Liberation Paddle Out incorporate ocean literacy and coastal awareness education. Participants learn safe ocean entry and exit, how to assess waves and tides, recognize rip currents, identify beach breaks, understand water quality, and observe how coastal conditions shift due to weather and watershed activity. Our measure of success extends beyond physical access. It includes psychological safety, increased confidence in ocean environments, water safety knowledge, and participants' desire to return independently and help protect our coastline - often purchasing their own equipment, bringing guests to the coast, participating in surveys, or volunteering.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Black Surf Santa Cruz's proposed programs center equity as our driving prioritization principle. Our work directly advances Santa Cruz County's Equity Statement: "Equity in action in Santa Cruz County is a transformative process that embraces individuals of every status, providing unwavering support, dignity, and compassion. Through this commitment, the County ensures intentional opportunities and access, fostering an environment where everyone can thrive and belong." Black and BIPOC residents have long faced structural barriers to accessing beaches and ocean recreation, from systemic racism and redlining to financial constraints, generational trauma, and lack of representation in surf culture. Our programs remove these barriers by providing no-cost programming, trained coaches, transportation support when possible, and trauma-informed instruction in affirming community spaces. Cultural relevance is central to our equity impact. Surfing originates from Native and Indigenous ocean cultures, including Native Hawaiians and Africans. Reclaiming this history helps participants see themselves as rightful ocean stewards and "ocean people," countering narratives of exclusion and strengthening feelings of belonging. The project also delivers significant Multi-Benefit Outcomes. First, it increases meaningful public access and recreation in coastal spaces for residents who would otherwise not participate. Second, the project builds climate literacy and environmental awareness. Participants learn about ocean health, including water quality, coastal hazards, and how tides, storms, and watershed runoff affect beach conditions in Monterey Bay. Programs are canceled after major storms due to sewage runoff, creating real-time learning opportunities about infrastructure, climate change, and public health. These conversations help participants understand how coastal ecosystems function and encourage responsible ocean recreation and stewardship. Climate impacts disproportionately affect Black and BIPOC communities, as seen during recent Pajaro Valley floods and other regional climate events. Ensuring these communities have safe, supported access to coastal spaces is both an equity and climate resilience strategy. When participants develop positive relationships with the ocean, they are more likely to engage in long-term stewardship and advocacy. Our programs also strengthen community safety capacity. BSSC maintains 15 trained volunteer coaches certified in CPR/AED, first aid, water safety, and trauma-informed practices. By increasing the number of skilled, community-rooted surfers in the water, we expand the network of individuals equipped to recognize hazards and respond in emergency situations beyond our programs. This community-based safety capacity contributes to safer coastal recreation environments and strengthens public preparedness in Santa Cruz County waters. We measure impact through pre- and post-program surveys that assess ocean confidence, water safety knowledge, sense of belonging, and intent to continue recreating independently. Success is defined not only by participation numbers, but by increased confidence, climate awareness, skill-building, and long-term engagement with public coastal resources. Finally, this project leverages match funding and existing partnerships, including support from entities such as the California Coastal Conservancy and Justice Outside, Liberation Paddle Out sponsorship revenues, and our major donors and family foundations that invest in our work, strengthening financial sustainability and maximizing Measure Q investment.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Black Surf Santa Cruz's proposed programs demonstrate strong strategic alignment with County, State, and regional plans focused on equitable access, healthy environments, and public coastal stewardship initiatives. Our work directly aligns with the Santa Cruz County Parks Strategic Plan (2018) and 2023 Update, which emphasize expanding access to parks and recreation, increasing participation among underserved communities, and advancing 'Healthy Environments' as a countywide priority. BSSC directly supports these goals by increasing meaningful use of public coastal spaces among residents who historically have not accessed or felt welcomed in these environments. Our programs also align with the California Coastal Act, which protects public access to the coastline, and with the California Outdoors for All Initiative, which seeks to expand outdoor access for underserved communities statewide. Additionally, our work supports Pathways to OPC's 30x30 by cultivating community-based ocean stewardship and fostering long-term relationships with coastal ecosystems. Locally, our approach embodies the spirit of the County's Equity Statement, ensuring intentional opportunities and access so that all residents can thrive and belong. BSSC adheres to the belief that environmental justice must extend beyond clean air and water to include access to safe and healthy recreational spaces that allow people to connect to the natural world. This aligns with the California Coastal Commission's commitment to ensuring equitable access to clean, healthy, and accessible coastal environments for communities disproportionately burdened by pollution or historic exclusion. In terms of Public Benefit, BSSC programs improve community safety, environmental literacy, and recreational opportunity. Participants gain water safety knowledge, ocean awareness, and climate education related to storm impacts, runoff, and water quality. Programs are supported by 15 trained volunteer coaches certified in CPR/AED, first aid, water safety, and trauma-informed practices. By increasing the number of skilled and safety-trained ocean recreators in Santa Cruz County waters, we expand the broader public safety net beyond our programs. Equitable access to nature is a public health strategy. Research consistently demonstrates that time outdoors improves cardiovascular health, reduces stress and anxiety, strengthens social connection, and supports long-term mental health outcomes. For communities disproportionately impacted by racism, economic inequity, and chronic stress, safe access to restorative outdoor spaces can reduce isolation and mitigate risk factors associated with maladaptive coping behaviors and long-term reliance on public health and social service systems. BSSC advances this upstream prevention approach by increasing physical activity, confidence, and belonging in public coastal spaces through free, culturally affirming programs focused on historically excluded communities - ensuring broad and measurable public benefit. Finally, our Pop-Up Programs and Prepare-to-Pop-Up cohorts are established, permitted, and operational models with demonstrated success and demonstrate strong readiness. We maintain necessary coastal permits, trained staff and volunteers, established evaluation tools (pre- and post-program surveys), and strong community partnerships. Funding will allow us to expand and deepen an existing, proven framework rather than pilot an untested concept. Together, our strategic alignment, demonstrated readiness, and measurable public benefit position this project as a strong investment aligned with County priorities and long-term coastal access goals.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

This project prioritizes Black and BIPOC communities who have been historically excluded from outdoor coastal recreation and surfing. These communities continue to face both visible and invisible barriers that limit participation, including financial constraints, lack of equipment and transportation, underrepresentation within surf culture, racial discrimination and microaggressions, redlining, generational trauma, and the absence of culturally safe spaces. Structural inequities continue to shape who feels welcome and safe accessing Santa Cruz County's beaches and coastal resources. Participant feedback consistently highlights how safety and belonging shape access to coastal spaces. Many participants share that they do not feel comfortable going to the beach without the support of Black Surf Santa Cruz programming, and for some, participation in our programs represents their only beach visit in a given year. These experiences reflect how social, cultural, and psychological barriers can limit meaningful public access even when beaches are physically nearby. Feelings of exclusion or discomfort can affect psychological safety in public spaces, including parks, beaches, and coastal recreation areas. Black Surf Santa Cruz addresses these inequities by delivering joyful, culturally grounded programming that expands safe and supported access to the coast. Participants receive structured surf instruction, ocean safety education, and environmental stewardship training. By removing financial barriers and providing equipment, transportation coordination, and trained volunteer instructors, the program increases equitable access to coastal recreational spaces that are often underutilized by historically excluded communities. Beyond recreation, the project also produces ecological and community resilience benefits. Participants learn about marine ecosystems, watershed connections, Indigenous and local surf history, coastal habitat protection, and responsible beach practices. Environmental education includes marine debris reduction, understanding rip currents and coastal hazards, and fostering respect for sensitive coastal habitats. Increased ocean literacy improves public safety, reduces risk in dynamic ocean conditions, and builds long-term stewardship behaviors that support healthier coastal ecosystems. Our primary goal is to create safe, positive, and accessible coastal experiences while strengthening environmental awareness and community resilience. Success is measured not only by participation numbers, but by increased ocean safety knowledge, improved confidence navigating coastal environments, and stronger environmental stewardship. By centering psychological safety, cultural affirmation, and ecological education, the project expands the definition of environmental justice to include equitable and informed engagement with public coastal spaces. This work also helps restore historical narratives. Indigenous communities, including Native Hawaiians and Native Africans, are foundational to the origins of surfing as a cultural practice. Reclaiming this history strengthens identity, belonging, and pride while cultivating participants as future environmental leaders. BSSC directly serves

approximately 500 participants annually across Santa Cruz County and the Monterey Bay region. Participants range from youth to elders, with the majority identifying as Black or BIPOC. Many are first-time or beginner ocean recreators who report little to no prior experience in the ocean, limited swimming ability, or fear rooted in past negative or unsafe experiences. Through culturally affirming programming and supportive instruction, BSSC helps participants build confidence, develop ocean safety skills, and reconnect with the coast in meaningful ways.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

This project generates strong community value across public safety, health and well-being, access to nature, recreation, and community identity. BSSC increases public safety. Participants receive water safety education and ocean literacy, including knowledge about tides, currents, storm impacts, and water quality. Programs are supported by 15 trained volunteer coaches certified in CPR/AED, first aid, and trauma-informed practices. By increasing the number of safety-trained ocean recreators in Santa Cruz County waters, BSSC contributes to a broader culture of preparedness and peer support that extends beyond program days. The project also promotes physical and mental health. Ocean recreation improves cardiovascular health, reduces stress, builds confidence, and strengthens social connection. Many participants report that BSSC programs are the only time they visit the beach each year. Creating consistent, positive experiences in coastal spaces improves long-term well-being and reduces isolation. Research often described as "Blue Mind" theory highlights how proximity to and interaction with water can reduce stress, support emotional regulation, and promote overall mental health. BSSC programs create opportunities for participants to experience these restorative benefits in safe and supportive community settings. BSSC expands equitable access to nature. For many participants, the coast has felt inaccessible due to cost, lack of equipment, or feelings of exclusion. By removing these barriers and creating culturally affirming environments, we increase meaningful public use of coastal resources. Programs also strengthen recreation opportunities and long-term engagement. All programs are free and include equipment such as surfboards and wetsuits, ensuring participants can access the coast regardless of financial barriers. Pre- and post-program surveys measure growth in confidence, safety knowledge, and intent to return independently. Many participants report plans to purchase their own equipment or bring family members back to the beach - evidence of sustainable recreation engagement. Outreach and engagement are intentionally relationship-based and community-driven. Programs are promoted through trusted community networks, partner organizations, social media, and direct member communications. Individuals join BSSC through a membership registration process that collects demographic information and helps identify participant needs, ensuring programs reach those who have historically faced barriers to ocean recreation. Partnerships with organizations such as the Santa Cruz County Black Health Matters Initiative, Puentes Nature, FoodWhat, and other community groups help expand outreach to historically excluded residents across Santa Cruz County, including Watsonville and South County communities. Finally, BSSC strengthens community identity and livability. By reclaiming surfing's Indigenous and African roots and centering belonging, we foster pride, representation, and collective care for the coast. Together, these outcomes demonstrate measurable public benefit while building a safer, healthier, and more inclusive coastal community for Santa Cruz County.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant does not have a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

This project does not include ground disturbance, capital construction, or physical site improvements. The proposed activities are programmatic and will take place at existing public beach locations and coastal recreation areas in Santa Cruz County where Black Surf Santa Cruz has already successfully hosted community surf and ocean access programs. Black Surf Santa Cruz has an established track record of implementing safe, well organized coastal programming through our Pop Up Program (PUP) and Prepare to Pop Up (P2PUP) initiatives. These programs use temporary equipment such as surfboards, wetsuits, safety gear, and educational materials that are transported to each event and removed afterward, leaving no physical impact on the site. Our team has experience coordinating beach access programming, including participant registration, volunteer coordination, water safety protocols, equipment management, and environmental stewardship practices. Programming is conducted in partnership with trained volunteer surf instructors and experienced water safety mentors who guide participants through ocean safety, surf fundamentals, and coastal awareness education. Because the program relies on existing coastal infrastructure and public beach access points, it can be implemented immediately without permitting delays or construction timelines. Black Surf Santa Cruz has

already demonstrated the ability to deliver these programs successfully, serving hundreds of participants annually while maintaining strong safety standards and environmental responsibility. By focusing on program delivery rather than physical site improvements, the project can efficiently expand access to coastal recreation, ocean safety education, and surf programming for Black, Indigenous, and other historically excluded communities in Santa Cruz County.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

Black Surf Santa Cruz's proposed programs, the Pop-Up Program (PUP) and the Prepare to Pop-Up Program (P2PUP), directly support Measure Q priorities related to Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity by expanding safe, affordable, and culturally relevant access to Santa Cruz County's coastal environments. These programs respond to a growing demand from community members who are seeking welcoming and culturally affirming ways to connect with the ocean. As participation continues to increase each year, additional resources are needed to expand programming and ensure that access remains free and available to those who face the greatest barriers to coastal recreation. Black and BIPOC communities have historically been excluded from surfing and ocean recreation due to structural inequities, financial barriers, lack of equipment, limited transportation access, and experiences of discrimination or territorialism in the water. These barriers continue to shape who feels safe and welcome along the coast. Black Surf Santa Cruz addresses these inequities by providing structured programming that removes financial barriers, increases ocean confidence, and creates spaces where participants feel supported and encouraged. During the grant period, we will implement approximately ten Pop-Up Program (PUP) events annually, supported by our volunteer surf coach program, as well as one Prepare to Pop-Up (P2PUP) cohort consisting of four to five sessions. These programs provide participants with surf instruction, ocean safety education, and environmental stewardship training while fostering belonging, joy, and connection within coastal spaces. The Pop-Up Program (PUP) is a series of free, single-day surf lessons and ocean meetups designed to increase participation in Santa Cruz County's coastal recreation spaces among communities historically excluded from surfing and ocean recreation. Each event includes a community welcome and gear fitting, an on-land instructional session covering ocean safety and surf fundamentals, guided in-water surf instruction with trained volunteer coaches, and a closing reflection that may include stewardship education or cultural discussion. Programming takes place at beginner-friendly beaches such as Cowell Beach and other accessible coastal locations. The Prepare to Pop-Up Program (P2PUP) is a multi-session ocean confidence and skill-building course designed for individuals who feel nervous or underprepared entering ocean environments. Created in response to community requests, P2PUP allows participants to build foundational knowledge and confidence through multiple learning sessions. Participants practice reading tide charts, understanding wave conditions, floating and moving safely in a wetsuit, and learning how to navigate beach breaks. Sessions may also include pool-based practice, coastal exploration, and environmental education focused on the Monterey Bay ecosystem. Demand for these programs continues to grow as more community members seek opportunities to connect with the ocean in safe and supportive environments. Last year, we engaged nearly 550 community members across programs, events, and volunteer opportunities. As participation increases, expanding program capacity requires additional funding to support staff coordination, volunteer training, equipment transportation, and program logistics. Investing in these programs will allow us to expand access to coastal recreation, reach more community members, and continue cultivating a diverse generation of ocean stewards who feel confident, welcome, and connected to Santa Cruz County's coastal environment.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

We are requesting \$50,000 in Measure Q funding to support implementation of free community ocean access programs that expand equitable recreation opportunities along the Santa Cruz County coastline. These funds leverage an additional \$47,700 in cash and in-kind contributions, bringing the total project investment to approximately \$97,700. Cash match for this project is supported through multiple committed funding sources, including a \$20,000 grant from Justice Outside / Ocean Protection Council, \$20,000 from a private Anonymous Family Foundation, and approximately \$10,000 generated through Liberation Paddle Out community fundraising efforts. These funds support core program staffing, operations, and participant access, demonstrating strong community and philanthropic investment in the program. Personnel and fringe benefits represent the largest portion of the budget and ensure the program is safely and effectively implemented. Measure Q funds will partially support the Executive Director, Operations Manager, and Lead Surf Coach who coordinate program logistics, volunteer training, safety protocols, community engagement, and evaluation. Fringe benefits are calculated at a 28% rate, reflecting the full cost of staffing required to safely operate water-based programming. Program supplies and equipment ensure safe and accessible participation. This includes surfboard, boogie board, and wetsuit rentals for participants who do not own equipment (approximately 90% of participants), transportation of equipment to program sites, and basic participant support such as food during program days. Measure Q funds will also support the purchase of program rash guards used for participant visibility and safety in the water. Contractual funding supports specialized safety and training requirements essential to program delivery, including trauma-informed training led by Dr. Darlene Hall and CPR/AED certifications for volunteer instructors and staff. In-kind contributions further extend the impact of Measure Q funds. These include support from UC Santa Cruz Humanities EXCEL undergraduate interns, as well as volunteer surf coaches who contribute significant time supporting participants in the water during both Pop-Up Programs (PUPs) and Prepare to Pop-Up (P2PUP) sessions. Volunteer instruction hours are valued at standard nonprofit in-kind rates and represent a meaningful contribution to program delivery and safety. Additional direct costs support equipment storage, transportation, and modest stipends offered to volunteer surf coaches who help deliver programming. Together, these investments allow us to deliver high-quality, culturally grounded ocean recreation programming while maximizing public investment through leveraged funding, volunteer leadership, and existing organizational infrastructure.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

Our team is prepared to begin implementation immediately upon grant award. The proposed programs build upon established and recurring programming that has been successfully delivered since 2020. To date, our small team has provided free ocean recreation programming to more than 1,000 participants, demonstrating both community demand and our operational capacity. The proposed work also builds on our ongoing partnership with the California Coastal Conservancy's Explore the Coast (ETC) grant initiative, where our programs are currently mid-cycle. Project activities will take place from July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027, and are organized across three primary phases: project management, preparation, and program implementation. Project Management (July 2026 - June 2027) Throughout the project period, staff will oversee program coordination, staffing, evaluation, and financial management. Annual staffing needs will be assessed with a focus on retaining trained staff and volunteer surf coaches year over year. All program activities and expenditures will be tracked using established organizational systems including QuickBooks Online, ADP payroll, and Little Green Light for participant management and program data. Program calendars are typically set twice annually to align with seasonal ocean conditions, with most activities occurring in late summer, fall, and spring. Staff will also apply for and maintain necessary permits, including the County of Santa Cruz Nonprofit Surf School permit, and maintain required insurance and safety protocols. Evaluation tools, including pre- and post-program surveys, will be reviewed annually and refined based on participant feedback and instructional staff input. Quarterly reporting will track recruitment demographics, participation numbers, program outcomes, and grant expenditures. Project Preparation (July 2026 - June 2027) Preparation activities will include confirming program dates with partners, coordinating volunteers, and preparing program logistics. Staff will conduct training sessions and safety certifications for volunteer surf coaches, including CPR/AED recertifications and trauma-informed training. Outreach and recruitment will occur throughout the year using email communications, social media, and community partnerships. Targeted recruitment will support enrollment in the Prepare to Pop-Up (P2PUP) cohort program. Staff will also coordinate program logistics including equipment rentals, food, transportation, volunteer schedules, and participant communication. Pre-program surveys will assess skill levels, access needs, and equipment requirements. Project Implementation (August 2026 - May 2027) During the program season, Black Surf Santa Cruz will deliver one Prepare to Pop-Up (P2PUP) cohort, serving up to eight participants across four to five instructional sessions focused on ocean safety, confidence building, and foundational skills. This program typically takes place in August / September each year. In addition, the organization will host ten Pop-Up Program (PUP) events throughout the year. Each session typically serves up to eight participants and is supported by approximately four trained volunteer surf coaches to ensure safe, individualized instruction. This program typically takes place during the Fall and Spring seasons (Fall 2026 + Spring 2027 for the purposes for this grant). The program year will conclude with recognition of P2PUP participants during the annual Liberation Paddle Out, a community celebration of ocean access, cultural connection, and collective joy along the Santa Cruz coastline which occurs annually in June.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

Our programs represent an innovative, equity-centered model for expanding coastal access while building long-term organizational capacity aligned with Measure Q priorities. Our core innovation lies in combining ocean recreation with culturally grounded, trauma-informed practices that address both physical and psychological barriers to coastal access. We recognize that access is not simply about proximity to the coast, but also about safety, belonging, and representation. By integrating ocean safety education, environmental literacy, and culturally affirming community-building into every program, we expand the traditional model of surf instruction into a holistic coastal access framework. BSSC's scalable Pop-Up Program (PUP) model allows us to serve diverse populations while maintaining consistency in safety, evaluation, and program quality. A key innovation within this structure is our "Private PUP" format, which enables us to partner directly with trusted community organizations to serve specific historically excluded groups and youth cohorts. This approach ensures programming remains culturally relevant and responsive to differing community needs rather than a one-size-fits-all model. Current and developing partnerships with organizations such as the Santa Cruz County Black Health Matters Initiative, Santa Cruz County Black Student Union, Puentes Nature, and FoodWhat strengthen this approach. These organizations have deep relationships with youth, families, and communities who may not otherwise access coastal recreation. Through collaboration, we can align ocean programming with broader goals related to wellness, environmental justice, food systems, and youth leadership development. Looking ahead, we aim to expand our scalable program model to include additional youth cohorts across Santa Cruz County with a particular focus on partnerships serving Watsonville and South County communities. By adapting our established curriculum, safety standards, and volunteer coach structure for youth-centered programming, we build a pipeline of young ocean recreators who gain early exposure to water safety, climate awareness, and environmental stewardship. This positions us to contribute to long-term Measure Q goals around healthy environments and equitable recreation access. An additional innovation within our model is the integration of community leadership development with coastal recreation access. Rather than relying solely on external instructors, we intentionally cultivate leadership from within the community. Program participants frequently return for additional sessions, deepen their skills, and ultimately transition into volunteer coaching roles. This participant-to-leader pathway strengthens long-term program sustainability while building a growing network of culturally competent ocean recreation leaders across Santa Cruz County. Capacity is further strengthened through our volunteer coach development pathway. Participants in the Prepare to Pop-Up (P2PUP) cohort program often continue participating in Pop-Up Programs and eventually transition into volunteer coaching roles. This community-rooted leadership while increasing the number of safety-trained ocean recreators in Santa Cruz County waters. Finally, BSSC uses structured registration systems and pre- and post-program surveys to collect meaningful data on participant demographics, access barriers, skill development, and confidence growth. This evaluation framework allows us to continuously refine programming, strengthen organizational capacity, and build a strong foundation for future Measure Q-aligned coastal access programming across Santa Cruz County.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Volunteer Hours Leverage, Leveraged Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

We demonstrate strong partnerships, significant volunteer leverage, diversified funding, and efficient use of public funds. Since 2020, our small but highly effective team has provided free surf and ocean recreation programming to more than 1,000 participants across Santa Cruz County. Our programs are currently supported through the California Coastal Conservancy's Explore the Coast initiative, and we are more than halfway through our second grant cycle. This continued investment affirms our readiness and ability to successfully execute and scale program outcomes. BSSC also holds the first-ever Santa Cruz County nonprofit surf school permit, granting access to Opal Cliffs/Pleasure Point. Achieved through sustained advocacy and collaboration with County and City Parks & Recreation partners, this milestone reduces long-term permitting barriers, increases program stability, and maximizes public return on investment. Strong partnerships are central to our success. BSSC collaborates with organizations including the California Coastal Conservancy, Justice Outside, the Rise Together Initiative at the Community Foundation Santa Cruz County, Black Health Matters Initiative, Surf Justice Collective, Save The Waves, CARESJ, Club Ed Surf School, Cowells Surf Shop, and local Parks & Recreation agencies. These partnerships expand access to coastal recreation spaces, environmental education resources, equipment support, storytelling platforms, and technical expertise. Volunteer leverage is a major strength of our model, with trained volunteer coaches and interns contributing significant time that extends program delivery beyond funded staff capacity. Based on projected program activities, we anticipate leveraging approximately 343 hours of in-kind service annually, including support from UC Santa Cruz Humanities EXCEL undergraduate interns and volunteer surf instructors. Two UCSC Humanities interns will contribute an estimated 145 combined hours supporting communications, community engagement, and program coordination. Volunteer surf coaches will contribute an estimated 198 hours of direct program instruction across Pop-Up Program (PUP) and Prepare to Pop-Up (P2PUP) sessions. BSSC currently has 15 trained volunteer surf coaches - approximately 85% BIPOC and 40% women - who reflect the communities we serve. Coaches complete CPR/AED certification, first aid training, trauma-informed care training, and volunteer onboarding before supporting programs. By training community-rooted instructors, BSSC increases the number of safety-equipped ocean recreators in Santa Cruz County waters beyond program days, strengthening the broader public safety network while expanding equitable access to the coast. BSSC also demonstrates strong leveraged funding and efficient use of public resources. The organization is requesting \$50,000, which will leverage an additional \$47,700 in cash and in-kind support, bringing the total project investment to approximately \$97,700. Cash match supports personnel, program operations, equipment rentals, and participant subsidies that ensure programs remain free and accessible. In-kind contributions include staff support, two UC Santa Cruz undergraduate interns, and volunteer surf coaches who assist with program delivery and safety. Additional partner contributions include training support, gear discounts, food donations, media coverage, photography, and environmental education resources. Because BSSC builds upon existing infrastructure - including established permits, trained volunteer coaches, evaluation systems, and strong partnerships - Measure Q funds will expand a proven program model's reach rather than launch a new initiative, ensuring efficient use of funds, high community return, and long-term sustainability.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Measure Q Budget - Tier 1 .pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[Cowell Beach Site Map.png](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[02.25.26 Pellerin_BSSC_Measure_Q_LOS_LPJ.pdf](#), [2.27.26 - FINAL - Letter_BSSC Measure Q.pdf](#), [Letter of Support - Measure Q - BSSC - 03022026.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[1V3A2151.jpg](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

[No file uploaded](#)

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Esabella Bonner

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Esabella Bonner, Founder and Executive Director

SIGNATURE DATE

03/12/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 196 **Type:** Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Youth Action for Water Quality and Coastal Health

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

196

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Youth Action for Water Quality and Coastal Health

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

—

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

O'Neill Sea Odyssey

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Education population

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

288

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Tracey Weiss

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Executive Director

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

██████████

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

████████████████████

PROJECT LOCATION

2222 East Cliff Drive #222

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.97411710000000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.03079630000001

PROJECT JURISDICTION / CITY

Unincorporated Santa Cruz County

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

Live Oak School District, Santa Cruz Harbor District

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Project outside of City of Santa Cruz jurisdiction, exists in unincorporated Santa Cruz County.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT

District 1 - Manu Koenig

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Project will serve eight (8) 4th and 5th grade classes from Live Oak School District. Classes will visit the Santa Cruz Harbor, Twin Lakes State Beach and be provided the opportunity to experience the Monterey Bay.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Yes

DAC/SDAC NOTES

Data collected and reflected through the California Department of Education Data Quest Website.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

Save Our Shores will secure the permit necessary with California State Parks to conduct the cleanup at Twin Lakes State Beach. We have longstanding partnerships and protocols in place to acquire necessary permits. We regularly apply for permits to conduct our cleanup events and are very familiar with the process required by each city, county and state agency having jurisdiction over various sites where our cleanup events beyond this program take place.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	Yes	California State Parks	

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

O'Neill Sea Odyssey and Save Our Shores are both mature organizations with stable leadership and a strong vision for the future and preparedness for impact. For 30 years, O'Neill Sea Odyssey has delivered free, high impact ocean education to more than 135,000 students, raising 100% of the funds required to sustain our operations each year. Together, our two nonprofits have collaborated and developed a mutually beneficial program that we have tested over the past decade and are prepared to launch in

a timely manner should we be selected for funding. Save Our Shores is ready to implement the beach clean up component of this project immediately, with experienced staff and established safety protocols in place. SOS has the permits, materials, and partnerships needed to deliver successful beach cleanups and education programs without delay. In 2025, SOS teamed up with 24 schools across 11 school districts to engage over 1,300 students (primarily in Santa Cruz County), conducting over 150 beach cleanups annually. During the same time frame, OSO served 178 classes (46% served from Santa Cruz County) supporting over 4,300 students. The exact scheduling of program activities is dependent on coordination with participating classroom teachers and school site calendars. While both partners are fully prepared to implement the project upon contract execution, program dates must align with teacher availability. We have longstanding relationships with Live Oak schools and established scheduling processes in place, and we anticipate no barriers; however, final program dates will be confirmed in collaboration with school partners to ensure strong participation and instructional alignment.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

39800

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

53398

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$17,093	\$4,939	\$0	\$22,032
Fringe Benefits	\$5,398	\$1,560	\$0	\$6,958
Travel	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,000
Equipment	\$9,724	\$5,500	\$0	\$15,224
Supplies	\$1,744	\$494	\$0	\$2,238
Contractual / Consultants	\$420	\$0	\$0	\$420
Other Direct Costs	\$0	\$1,105	\$0	\$1,105
Indirect Costs	\$1,421	\$0	\$0	\$1,421

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The Youth Action for Water Quality and Coastal Health project expands equitable access to parks, beaches, and coastal learning opportunities for students and families in the Live Oak community. Led by O'Neill Sea Odyssey in partnership with Save Our Shores, the project connects historically underserved youth from the Live Oak School District to the public coastal spaces that are part of their community but are traditionally underutilized. Serving 4th to 6th grade students from Live Oak School District, the program removes these barriers by providing transportation, hands-on learning and supported community engagement. Students will gain meaningful access to local public resources including Twin Lakes State Beach and the Santa Cruz Harbor, strengthening their connection to the parks, beaches, and coastal spaces that define the Live Oak community. Students participate in a multi stage environmental learning experience that begins with classroom lessons about watersheds, stormwater pollution, and coastal ecosystems. This learning is reinforced through hands-on marine science field experience on board the Team O'Neill Catamaran in the Monterey Bay, where students observe marine wildlife and collect ocean data. The experience culminates with a guided coastal stewardship activity and beach cleanup at Twin Lakes State Beach, where students actively contribute to protecting the health of a public shoreline. This project ensures that students develop a sense of belonging in their local parks and coastal spaces while building the knowledge and confidence to care for them. The result is a stronger connection between community, environment, and the next generation of coastal stewards.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Coastal Protection and Adaptation

Long-term research consistently demonstrates that early connection to nature fosters improved academic performance, mental health, civic engagement, and pro-environmental behavior. By cultivating an abiding appreciation for the coast and empowering youth to act, this project strengthens community engagement and volunteer stewardship while advancing the Measure Q vision of healthy watersheds, protected groundwater, resilient coastlines, and equitable access to parks and natural spaces. The O'Neill Sea Odyssey Youth Action for Water Quality and Coastal Health program, delivered in partnership with Save Our Shores, directly advances the Measure Q Vision by aligning with core thematic areas: Water Resource Management, Protecting Coastal Waters and Marine Life, Water Quality Protection and Pollution Prevention, Watershed Health, and Coastal Protection and Parks, Recreation and Public Access. At its heart, this project connects K-12 students to the natural systems that sustain Santa Cruz and equips them to become informed, skilled coastal stewards. Students begin by learning how water moves through local watersheds, from rainfall to storm drains to rivers and ultimately into the Monterey Bay. They explore how groundwater and surface water are interconnected, and how pollution entering streets and storm drains can degrade aquifers, beaches, and coastal ecosystems. By making visible the often unseen journey of water, the program reinforces the importance of protecting groundwater resources that are essential to Santa Cruz's long-term resilience. Through classroom curriculum, an on-the-water science experience, and structured beach cleanups, students see firsthand how human behavior affects water quality. By identifying the types and sources of pollution, students understand how litter, plastics, and runoff compromise watershed health and marine ecosystems. The program takes place within and adjacent to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, one of the nation's most biologically significant marine ecosystems. Students learn how coastal waters support biodiversity, fisheries, recreation, and local economies. Building an appreciation of the coast builds long-term stewardship values essential to protecting Santa Cruz's shoreline and nearshore waters. Beaches and coastal parks, including areas adjacent to Twin Lakes State Beach, serve as living classrooms. The program prioritizes access to natural spaces by fully underwriting participation costs, removing financial barriers, and providing bilingual curriculum to ensure inclusion of historically underserved communities. Lack of transportation is a common barrier for most youth who want to visit the coast. Our program will provide free transportation to classes. Many participating students have never been on a boat or engaged in hands-on coastal science. By improving access to beach spaces and marine environments, the program ensures that all youth - regardless of income, language, or background - can experience and value Santa Cruz's natural assets.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Creating equitable access to high-quality environmental education for youth in Live Oak School District is not simply an enrichment opportunity, it is a long-term investment in climate resilience, public health, and community strength. This project removes financial, cultural, and experiential barriers that have historically limited access to coastal and marine science programming, ensuring that all students, regardless of income, language, or background, can fully participate in meaningful, place-based learning. We are targeting Live Oak students for this project. Live Oak because it is home to a diverse community, and its schools serve a large number of students from lower-income households, with a significant percentage qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch, an indicator of economic need. 4th through 6th grade students are at a critical stage in their academic and personal development. Research consistently demonstrates that early, positive experiences in nature strengthen cognitive growth, improve mental health, and increase long-term civic engagement. By bringing students onto the water and onto local beaches, the program fosters a sense of belonging in natural spaces that may have previously felt inaccessible. Many participants have never stepped aboard a boat, conducted a scientific investigation outside a classroom, or seen microscopic marine life under a microscope. These experiences expand students' sense of possibility and help them see themselves as scientists, problem-solvers, and leaders. Working with classes from Del Mar, Live Oak, and Green Acres Elementary Schools, this program supports the core values of the Live Oak School District by nurturing the whole child and creating student-centered learning experiences. At the core of the program is an emphasis on understanding how individual and collective actions influence watershed health, groundwater systems, and ocean ecosystems. Students learn how storm drains connect neighborhoods to the sea, how pollution impacts marine food webs, and how simple daily behaviors - reducing waste, preventing litter, conserving water - contribute to climate resilience. By connecting local actions to global environmental systems, youth develop a practical understanding of how they can influence the health of their communities and oceans. In Santa Cruz County, there are many youth who face systemic barriers that limit their access to environmental education and outdoor learning experiences. Challenges include limited access to high-cost field trips or after-school programs and a lack of affordable, convenient transportation to natural areas such as beaches or state parks. This program addresses these systemic barriers by providing free, round-trip transportation and structured, supervised time on and near the water. Equitable access to education is foundational to climate resilience. Communities are more resilient when residents understand environmental systems, feel connected to local natural resources, and believe their voices matter. By investing in Live Oak youth today, this project cultivates informed, empowered young residents who are prepared to steward clean water, healthy beaches, and resilient coastlines tomorrow. In doing so, it builds not only environmental literacy - but a stronger, more inclusive coastal community for generations to come.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

This project demonstrates a strong level of readiness, clear public benefit, and meaningful engagement for youth in the Live Oak community. It aligns directly with the priorities of Measure Q by advancing water quality protection, watershed health, and long term stewardship of coastal ecosystems while expanding equitable access to environmental education and coastal spaces. The program is ready for immediate implementation. O'Neill Sea Odyssey and Save Our Shores are established nonprofits with decades of experience delivering environmental education and stewardship programming throughout Santa Cruz County. The program builds on a proven model that has successfully served thousands of students and relies on existing facilities, equipment, trained educators, and strong partnerships with local schools. The project can begin immediately upon contract execution, ensuring Measure Q funds generate timely environmental and community benefits. At its core, the project is designed to build environmental literacy while fostering a sense of agency and action in youth. Live Oak sits adjacent to one of the most extraordinary marine ecosystems in the world, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The Pacific Ocean covers 72 percent of the Earth's surface, produces half of the oxygen we breathe, regulates weather patterns, and sustains global food systems. Yet this living system is increasingly threatened by pollution, climate change, and plastic waste, with an estimated 5.25 trillion pieces of plastic circulating in the ocean. For the youth of Live Oak, the ocean is both backyard and birthright. Helping them understand its value and their ability to protect it is essential to building resilient communities and a healthier coast. Through the course of this project, students participate in more than eight (8) hours of integrated learning experiences that connect classroom lessons, ocean science field study, and hands-on coastal stewardship. Through inquiry based lessons they explore watershed science, stormwater systems, and the pathways through which pollution travels from neighborhoods to rivers and ultimately into the ocean. This final phase deepens learning while building confidence, leadership, and civic engagement. By applying their knowledge in their own neighborhoods, students begin to see themselves as active participants in protecting the places where they live. The program culminates in a student led community action project. Working in teams, students participate in beach cleanup activities. Allowing students to collect and categorize marine debris while contributing data to regional pollution monitoring efforts. These experiences transform abstract environmental challenges into tangible problems students can observe and help address. Students collect qualitative or quantitative data from these efforts and share their findings with teachers and program partners. The experience creates meaningful touch points that connect science, stewardship, and community pride, empowering youth to become lifelong advocates for healthy watersheds and thriving coastal ecosystems.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

Central to the O'Neill Sea Odyssey mission is the belief that knowledge and access to our natural worlds should be free and equitable. The target community for this grant is rooted in Live Oak, an unincorporated coastal community in Live Oak, and specifically serves students attending Del Mar, Live Oak, and Green Acres Elementary Schools. These schools are racially and culturally diverse, with many students from low- to moderate-income households and a significant percentage of English Language Learners. OSO provides access to its program for free. For this grant, OSO will focus on serving 4th through 6th grade youth throughout Live Oak. While no focus will be made specific to gender, it is expected that most classes will average 49% male, 49% female and 2% other. We will focus on serving classes that are over 60% in Free and Reduced Lunch Rates and have over 60% Hispanic student demographic. Participation in OSO has become a rite of passage for many students throughout our community. For this project we are targeting eight (8) classes from Live Oak School District. Data underscores both the urgency and the opportunity of serving this population. A Public Policy Institute of California poll found that non-white Californians are more likely than white residents to perceive environmental problems as serious and to support solutions. At the same time, Applied Survey Research and regional assessments from Joint Venture Silicon Valley and the Community Assessment Project reveal that low-income youth are less likely to feel encouraged to volunteer, vote, or engage in environmental practices. Only 30% report experiencing a caring neighborhood; just 24% have access to positive role models; and only 15% feel valued by their community. Yet 69% report acting on their convictions and standing up for their beliefs. OSO intentionally targets these students because they deserve access. These types of experiences validate their concerns, build scientific confidence, and position them as capable environmental stewards. By investing in Live Oak youth at this formative stage, this grant supports more than environmental education. It cultivates belonging, agency, and long-term civic engagement. It affirms that these students are not only the future majority of California but they are the force capable of protecting its coastlines, strengthening its communities, and shaping a healthier, more resilient world.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

This project creates more than environmental knowledge. It cultivates belonging, responsibility, and hope for Live Oak Students, supporting their overall health and well-being. It ensures that Live Oak youth are not only beneficiaries of Santa Cruz's natural beauty but active stewards of its future. Expanding access to nature and recreational opportunities is a central goal of this project. Research shows that time spent outdoors improves attention, reduces stress, supports emotional regulation, and enhances

cognitive development. Yet many Live Oak students would not otherwise have structured, science-based experiences on Monterey Bay or at local beaches. By bringing students into coastal parks, onto research vessels, and into hands-on marine science activities, this project ensures that all students (regardless of income, language, or circumstance) can connect with nature. These experiences combine learning with active recreation, encouraging curiosity, physical activity, and problem-solving in real-world settings. Students investigate marine ecosystems, participate in beach cleanups, and explore the shoreline, transforming natural spaces into welcoming classrooms where every child can belong. By providing both access and engaging outdoor experiences, the project nurtures environmental stewardship while promoting well-being, confidence, and a sense of agency in every student. The Measure Q Vision Plan calls for prioritizing access to natural spaces and strengthening connections between residents and the environment. This project directly fulfills that vision. Students who may never have boarded a research vessel or conducted field science along the shoreline gain meaningful experiences that build comfort and familiarity with Santa Cruz's coastal resources. When young people feel that beaches and parks are places for them, they are more likely to care for and protect them. The project also reinforces Santa Cruz's Children and Youth Bill of Rights, which affirms that youth deserve opportunities to thrive, participate, and contribute to their community. O'Neill Sea Odyssey's learning cycle combines classroom preparation, hands-on marine science, and structured stewardship action to create cumulative impact. Students do not simply observe the environment. They investigate it, analyze data, and reflect on their role in protecting it. They see firsthand how storm drains connect neighborhoods to the ocean and how pollution disrupts marine food webs. This progression builds a sense of agency. Students understand that their actions influence water quality, watershed health, and coastal resilience. Through the beach cleanup component of this project with Save Our Shores, youth develop pride in their neighborhood and a shared commitment to environmental responsibility. These experiences strengthen community identity by linking personal action to collective wellbeing. Students return to their families as ambassadors of stewardship, extending the project's reach throughout Live Oak. The long term value to the community is profound. A generation of youth who understand local environmental systems will make more informed decisions about water use, pollution prevention, and climate adaptation. They will be more likely to volunteer, advocate, and pursue careers that strengthen coastal protection and sustainability. By investing in equitable access to outdoor education today, the community builds resilience for tomorrow.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land, Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

This project takes place on public land at Santa Cruz Twin Lakes State Beach. This is adjacent to the Santa Cruz Harbor and the O'Neill Building. Classroom portion of learning will take place at the O'Neill Sea Odyssey Shoreside Education Center where we have a long-term lease in effect to utilize the space as outlined within this proposal.

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

The Youth Action for Water Quality and Coastal Health project builds on long standing partnerships, established infrastructure, and a proven program model, allowing for immediate implementation upon contract. Because the program utilizes existing facilities and partnerships, no construction or site improvements are required. O'Neill Sea Odyssey has successfully delivered hands-on ocean education programs since 1996. Founded by local innovator Jack O'Neill, the organization operates a well established experiential learning program that brings students onto Monterey Bay aboard the 65 foot Team O'Neill catamaran, which serves as a floating classroom. Through a long standing MOU with Team O'Neill, the vessel is dedicated to educational programming that connects youth to marine science, watershed health, and pollution prevention. Shore based learning takes place in the O'Neill Sea Odyssey classroom located within the O'Neill Building at the Santa Cruz Harbor. The classroom supports laboratory style learning and the ability to process data collected during the sailing portion of the program. While OSO does not own the building, it maintains a secure long term lease with the Harbor ensuring stable program operations for the next twenty five years. The shoreline stewardship component of the program takes place at Twin Lakes State Beach, a central gathering place for the Live Oak community located adjacent to the Harbor and Schwan Lake. As part of the Santa Cruz District of California State Parks, this beach provides an accessible environment where students can connect classroom learning to real world coastal stewardship. Program partner Save Our Shores secures all necessary permits and leads the cleanup and community science components of the program. Together, these established partnerships, with experienced educators, proven logistics, and dedicated community partners, the project is fully prepared to deliver high quality environmental education and measurable stewardship outcomes for Live Oak students.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

The Youth Action for Water Quality and Coastal Health project delivers a comprehensive, multi-phased environmental education experience that moves students from foundational knowledge to hands-on science and ultimately to community action. The program builds environmental literacy while empowering youth to understand and protect the coastal ecosystems that sustain their

community. This partnership strengthens civic engagement, helping students recognize their actions contribute to healthier watersheds and thriving coastal environments. Phase 1: The project begins by strengthening teachers' confidence and capacity to integrate ocean and watershed science into their classrooms. Teachers will receive curricula with lessons focused on ocean literacy, climate science, and STEM learning. Curriculum materials are provided in both English and Spanish to ensure accessibility for diverse classrooms. This component is approximately ninety (90) minutes of instruction. Phase 2: Participating classes then take part in the O'Neill Sea Odyssey Marine Sanctuary Field Experience, an immersive program conducted aboard a 65 foot catamaran and at the shoreside education center in the Santa Cruz Harbor. Each class rotates through learning stations focused on marine biology and navigation where students explore the ecosystems of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, including kelp forests and marine mammals, while examining how human activity influences coastal habitats. They also participate in a watershed model demonstration that illustrates how rain carries pollutants from neighborhoods into rivers and the ocean. Through these activities, students observe the connections between water quality and human behavior over the course of a three and a half hour (3 ½ Hour) experience. To ensure equitable participation, transportation scholarships will be provided for every participating class. Removing transportation barriers allows students from traditionally underserved communities to access high quality outdoor science education and transformational experiences. Phase 3: The final phase of the program focuses on applying knowledge through student led community action. Save Our Shores will lead the beach-based stewardship and community science component of the program, building directly on students' on-the-water learning experience. Students will work in teams to collect, categorize, and record debris data using established community science protocols. All collected items will be sorted, tallied, and weighed to quantify impact, reinforcing the connection between personal responsibility and measurable environmental outcomes. Save Our Shores empowers youth as capable ocean protectors while contributing meaningful data and pollution prevention benefits to the broader Monterey Bay community. Approximately one hour - (1 hour) Evaluation is embedded at every stage. Pre- and post-assessments measure gains in environmental knowledge, pollution awareness, and stewardship behaviors. Cleanup metrics document pounds and types of debris collected, while teacher feedback and student reflections provide insight into shifts in attitudes and engagement. These results demonstrate alignment with Measure Q's vision: protecting local waterways, preventing pollution at its source, and cultivating a community culture of environmental responsibility. This is more than a one-day field trip. It is a comprehensive stewardship that connects classroom learning, scientific exploration, and civic engagement. Students receive opportunities and information to understand that protecting clean shores and healthy waters is a shared responsibility and a lasting

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The O'Neill Sea Odyssey is respectfully asking for \$39,799 to support hands-on access and learning opportunities for traditionally marginalized youth from Santa Clara County schools. The Youth Action for Water Quality and Coastal Health project will be supported through a combination of private grants, in-kind contributions, and organizational support. This strategic blend of public and private investment ensures program sustainability while expanding access to high-quality, watershed environmental education for students who need it most. The County of Santa Cruz, through the Measure Q initiative is being asked to contribute approximately 75% of the total program cost. In total, 25% of this project will come from in-kind support provided by Team O'Neill (including vessel access and crew time), and O'Neill Sea Odyssey major donors. The expense breakdown is as follows: Administrative Staff (54%): This includes the salary and fringe for both OSO and SOS staff. Tasks include time for program coordination, financial tracking and reporting, classroom support, scheduling, and general operations. 78% (or \$22,490) will be charged to the project, and 22% (or \$6,500) will come from matching funds. Vessel Charter Fees (27%): This includes costs associated with operating and maintaining the Team O'Neill for 8 sessions of the program. This includes instructional staff (per Coast Guard Regulation). 62% (or \$8,804) will be charged to the project, and 28% (or \$5,500) will come from matching funds. Transportation Scholarships (7.5%): Calculated at \$500 per bus for each class, funding will support equitable access by covering transportation costs for students who might otherwise be unable to attend. 100% of the expenses in this category will be covered by the project. Program Supplies (2%): This category includes hands-on materials used during lessons and teacher professional development. The project will cover 100% (or \$920) of the total costs in this category. Evaluation and Analysis (1%): This category will cover the third-party evaluation analysis of data collected to measure program outcomes and student learning. The project will cover 100% (or \$420) of the total costs in this category. Technology and Consumable Materials (3%): Costs in this category include the technology subscriptions, updated curriculum resources, electronic communications and printed materials for student use. 78% (or \$1,744) will be charged to the project, and 23% (or \$495) will come from matching funds. Operational Costs (2%): Expenses related to the operations and administration of the OSO Shoreside classroom located at the Santa Cruz Harbor. 100% of the costs (\$1,105) will be covered by the matching funds allocated to this project. Indirect Costs (3%): Covers indirect costs incurred by SOS calculated at 15% of the direct costs incurred by the SOS portion of the project. The project will cover 100% (or \$1,421) of this category.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

Quarter 1: July to September 2026 Program planning, educator engagement, and preparation for fall implementation. Program Administration Review classroom applications from schools within the Live Oak Unified School District for the 2026 to 2027 academic year. Confirm participating classes and coordinate scheduling with educators. Coordinate logistics with program partners including O'Neill Sea Odyssey and Save Our Shores to ensure program readiness. Program Delivery Schedule participating classes for fall field experiences occurring in Q3 & Q4 of this grant period. Communication with Participating Classes regarding transportation scholarships administration Program Assessment: Review and refine program evaluation tools, including student pre and post surveys and teacher feedback instruments. Quarter 2: October to December 2026 Delivery of immersive

ocean and watershed education experiences. Program Preparation: Provide pre curriculum lesson materials to participating educators to build confidence and support classroom preparation prior to field experiences. Introducing core concepts including watershed health, water quality protection, and the connection between local communities and coastal ecosystems. Program Assessment: Gather teacher feedback to support continuous program improvement. Quarter 3: January to March 2027 Community stewardship activities and data collection. Program Delivery: Facilitate classroom field experiences for eight (8) Live Oak classes aboard the Team O'Neill catamaran in the waters of Monterey Bay. Engage students in lessons on marine ecosystems, coastal stewardship, and human impacts on ocean health. Conduct coastal stewardship visits and beach cleanup programs led by Save Our Shores. Host student cleanup and environmental stewardship experiences at Twin Lakes State Beach. Program Assessment: Collect and categorize marine debris during cleanup events to help students understand sources of pollution and human impacts on coastal ecosystems. Administer student pre and post program surveys to measure learning outcomes, environmental awareness, and connection to local coastal resources. Record and compile data related to the types and quantities of debris collected. Quarter 4: April to June 2027 Continuation of stewardship activities and project evaluation. Program Delivery: Continue beach cleanup and coastal stewardship activities for participating classes. Complete collection and organization of marine debris and pollution tracking data gathered during program activities. Program Assessment: Submit student survey results and program evaluation materials to Applied Survey Research for independent third party analysis. Synthesize findings from surveys, cleanup data, and educator feedback. Program Administration: Ensure all transportation scholarships have been administered and reimbursed. Prepare final reports documenting program outcomes, environmental impact, and expanded equitable access to coastal parks and environmental education for youth and families in the Live Oak community.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

O'Neill Sea Odyssey (OSO) was founded on a simple but transformative idea: when young people experience the ocean firsthand, they become lifelong stewards of it. Since 1996, under the vision of local innovator and philanthropist Jack O'Neill, OSO has delivered free, hands-on ocean education aboard a 65 foot catamaran on Monterey Bay. Our model demonstrates that experiential science education is one of the most powerful tools for environmental protection. Our innovation lies in the integration of rigorous academic standards, immersive field science, and measurable stewardship outcomes. Collectively, our program partnership is built around a structured learning cycle that moves students from classroom preparation to on the water scientific investigation to reflective action. Students conduct plankton tows, analyze marine food webs, learn navigation and data interpretation, and connect storm drain systems to ocean health. This approach transforms abstract environmental concepts into lived experience. Students do not simply learn about pollution prevention. They understand it, witness its impact, and commit to behavioral change. For this project, our partnership with Save Our Shores deepens that impact. Save Our Shores brings decades of expertise in pollution prevention, marine debris reduction, and volunteer mobilization in support of a thriving Monterey Bay and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. By integrating SOS's beach based education and community science model with OSO's on the water marine science curriculum, the Youth Action for Water Quality and Coastal Health program creates a seamless pathway from knowledge to action. The result is a comprehensive, place based program that advances water quality protection and coastal stewardship. Through participant surveys from past similar programs, Save Our Shores has demonstrated that overcoming access boundaries to state parks and participating in experiential learning about the local marine and coastal environments result in improvements in students' understanding of environmental issues, their sense of well-being, and their connection to nature. For example, 82% of previous participants in one program report feeling happier and less stressed, 97% feel safe, and 93% would recommend the program to peers. Similarly, data collected from the O'Neill Sea Odyssey student surveys indicate that students experience a 24% increase in environmental awareness following the completion of our ocean education program. Together, this partnership establishes the baseline that environmental education matters. Our capacity to deliver this work is strong and well established. Both organizations have well established leaders, positive reputations and have extensive experience designing and implementing high quality in person programs for Live Oak schools. Our educators are trained professionals skilled at working with diverse student populations and collaborating closely with classroom teachers. Safety protocols, risk management procedures, and logistical planning are embedded in every program phase, ensuring a safe and impactful experience for each participating class.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Volunteer Hours Leverage

BONUS NARRATIVE

The partnership between O'Neill Sea Odyssey and Save Our Shores represents a strong and longstanding collaboration rooted in a shared commitment to protecting the health of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary through education, stewardship, and community engagement. Each organization brings complementary strengths that together create a comprehensive program connecting marine science education with direct environmental action. Both organizations also maintain deep partnerships with local schools, educators, volunteers, and community members who help make these experiences possible. Longstanding relationships with teachers in the Live Oak School District ensure that the program aligns with classroom learning goals and meets the needs of students. Community partners, educators, and local supporters regularly contribute time, knowledge, and resources to strengthen the program and expand its reach. These trusted relationships help ensure consistent participation, meaningful engagement, and strong community ownership of the program's outcomes. A key element that strengthens this partnership and significantly leverages funding is the vital role of volunteers in delivering the O'Neill Sea Odyssey experience. Created in 2023, the

Volunteer program trains community members to provide student support and curriculum assistance during each trip. Volunteer Chaperones work alongside professional staff to guide students through scientific activities such as plankton tows, navigation exercises, wildlife observation, and discussions about ocean ecosystems and human impacts. These volunteers bring diverse professional and educational backgrounds and donate their time and expertise to support each voyage, serving as mentors and role models for participating youth. Their presence allows the program to maintain a high educator-to-student ratio while creating a dynamic and supportive learning environment. Volunteer participation represents a substantial in-kind contribution that greatly expands the reach and impact of the program. By contributing hundreds of hours of service throughout the year, volunteers help make it possible for O'Neill Sea Odyssey to provide high-quality, hands-on marine science education at no cost to participating schools. Their involvement reduces operational costs while maintaining the depth and quality of instruction that define the program. Recognized with a Volunteer Champion Award in 2025 through the Santa Cruz Volunteer Center, many volunteers return year after year, building institutional knowledge and strengthening relationships with educators, students, and partner organizations. Together, O'Neill Sea Odyssey and Save Our Shores demonstrate how strong nonprofit collaboration, deep community partnerships, and dedicated volunteer leadership can leverage public funding to produce meaningful environmental and educational outcomes. By integrating volunteer expertise with professional program delivery, this partnership maximizes resources while creating powerful experiences that inspire the next generation of coastal stewards.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

Measure Q Site Map.pdf, Measure Q Timeline.pdf, OSO Measure Q Project Budget 2026.pdf, Measure Q_support letter_SOS.docx.pdf, ONEILL-SEA-ODYSEE

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Tracey Weiss

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Tracey Weiss, Executive Director

SIGNATURE DATE

03/06/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 201 **Type:** Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Extended Cover Cropping for Water Conservation in Pajaro Valley (tier 1)

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

201

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Extended Cover Cropping for Water Conservation in Pajaro Valley (tier 1)

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

—

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Sustainable Conservation

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

Acre-Feet of Water Saved

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

7

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Elliot Grant

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Senior Project Manager

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

██████████

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

██████████

First Name	Last Name	Email
Thais	Arjo	██████████
Sacha	Lozano	██████████

PROJECT LOCATION

2425 Porter St, Suite 19, Soquel, California, 95073

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.98417688579500

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.95781613791300

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

Commercial Farmland in unincorporated parts of southern Santa Cruz County around the city of Watsonville

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Not Applicable

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

On farmland in the Pajaro Valley and coastal farming areas

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Yes

DAC/SDAC NOTES

The areas of the project are listed as both a DAC and SDAC. CalEnviroScreen and the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool indicates DAC, while the CA Climate Bond Prop 4 map shows SDAC for parts of the project scope as well. Link to Prop 4 Climate Bond DAC and SDAC mapping:
<https://canature.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layers=b5dfb59aa812418287a92180e70ef653>

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

No permits needed for this project. Both RCD Santa Cruz and Sustainable Conservation have extensive experience with public funding and cover cropping.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA		
State Water Control Resources Board	NA		
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA		
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

1

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

This project does not require any permitting and is ready to begin upon award. Partner growers have been identified to the start of the project to ensure project readiness.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

35706

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

85997

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Indirect Costs	\$4,657	\$0	\$6,559	\$11,216
Personnel	\$17,485	\$0	\$880	\$18,365
Fringe Benefits	\$6,994	\$0	\$352	\$7,346
Travel	\$720	\$0	\$0	\$720
Supplies	\$1,350	\$0	\$0	\$1,350
Contractual / Consultants	\$0	\$0	\$27,500	\$27,500
Other Direct Costs	\$4,500	\$0	\$0	\$4,500
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

This project will pilot the use of year-round cover cropping on temporarily fallowed active farmland and demonstrate its efficacy as a strategy to reduce groundwater and/or reclaimed water demand in the Pajaro Valley. Developing innovative strategies to support growers in reducing water demand and curbing groundwater pumping is critical for addressing aquifer overdraft, seawater intrusion, and is timely to maintain compliance with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Cover crops on temporary fallow land are an underutilized opportunity, in part because of assumptions about high water use and/or its inability to economically compensate for loss of high-value crops. Sustainable Conservation and RCD of Santa Cruz County (RCDSCC) will build upon a Covered Fallow Plan and economic analysis for the Pajaro Valley led by the RCD in 2018. The project will measure and analyze water use by cover crops compared to cash crops and collect on-farm data from 3 farmers to update the 2018 economic study. With this information, the project will develop a case study on the practice of extended sequence cover crops. The case study will highlight the potential basin-wide impact on water conservation, and ancillary soil health benefits, as well as inform potential incentives, and lay the ground to build a program to scale up this practice. The project team will conduct interviews with farmers, industry professionals, and water managers to inform what type of cover cropping strategies, incentives, and funding mechanisms would be most effective to increase adoption in support of local groundwater sustainability.

PROJECT START DATE

06/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

05/31/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Agricultural and Work Land Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

Evaluating and advancing the potential role for a year-round sequence of cover crops as a strategy to reduce agricultural water demand aligns with the ambitions laid forth in the Agricultural and Working Lands Protection, and the Water Resource Management sections of the Measure Q vision plan. The abilities of cover cropping to reduce soil erosion, protect water quality, augment soil organic matter (and associated benefits), and contribute to agricultural productivity are relatively well understood. Their potential contribution to water conservation has received less attention but given the exaggerated cycle of drought and flood redefining California's agricultural context, understanding the role cover crops can play to moderate demand for irrigation could present a transformative opportunity for agriculture and community water needs in the region. Further action is needed to realize the full potential that a longer and broader adoption of cover cropping can have in terms of water savings and climate resilience on the ag production systems of Santa Cruz County. Supporting growers to cover crop additional acreage and for longer periods each year can offset present and future groundwater pumping and reduce reclaimed water demand. Additionally, prolonged cover cropping allows parcels to rest and recover, contributing to the reduction of applied synthetic inputs while increasing the productivity and sustainability of our working lands. Additionally, cover cropping for longer periods provides habitat for pollinators,

can help alleviate soilborne pathogen pressure, and serves a key role in integrated pest management. The team seeks to demonstrate and compare the water use and operating costs of cover crops sequenced across a calendar year against marketable crop production cycles. Though there has been extensive CA-based research on a wide variety of cover cropping applications and management strategies, a key data gap on the coast is how cover crop water use during the peak growing season compares to common marketable crops in the region. Prior research has mostly examined winter cover crops, which are rain-fed and typically have low water demands. A comparison during the warm/dry season will provide a more complete picture of the potential water savings if deployed at a regional scale. This data is critical to growing regional adoption of cover cropping and complementary to other programs incentivizing sustainable practices like the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program (MLRP), the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), and the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP).

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Multibenefit outcomes: A year-round sequence of cover crops can provide multiple benefits, both on and around farmlands, including: bolstering soil health and increasing soil water holding capacity; providing pollinator and beneficial insect habitat throughout the year; reducing soil-borne pathogens by breaking the common cycle of cash crops and reducing the need to fumigate; and protecting drinking water and water resources both in terms of quality and quantity. During the rainy season cover crops can prevent soil erosion and reduce nitrate discharge to surface and groundwater. Farming on the central coast leave high amounts of residual nitrogen on the ground right before the winter rains, and cover crops can reclaim and recycle the excess nitrogen, keeping it safely locked in their tissue and making it available to subsequent crops after the rains. Preventing nitrogen from entering surface water will support healthier fisheries and freshwater ecosystems. Mitigating losses to groundwater helps protect rural drinking water. Climate Resiliency: Increasing cover crops can bolster climate resiliency. Climate models predict shorter, more intense rainy seasons with flashier floods, punctuated by prolonged droughts. Cover cropping is a climate resiliency tool because: 1) it can mitigate flooding by reducing storm runoff and increasing soil water infiltration 2) it augments soil water holding capacity which can help farms better withstand drought, and 3) rotational covered fallowing reduces demand on limited water resources. This project seeks to develop a program to increase adoption and acreage of extended cover cropping, making the Pajaro Valley more climate resilient. Match funding and Leveraging Potential: There are opportunities to support growers with reducing water demand through the Department of Conservation's Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program (MLRP). The Pajaro region is a block grantee, and most of the MLRP projects in Pajaro have been focused on permanent infrastructure or restoration. While those projects are critical to reaching sustainability, there is a need to develop viable agricultural solutions that support the diversity of small, socially disadvantaged, and farmland renters within the MLRP framework. California's Prop 4 funding has allocated 200 million to the MLRP program, with plans to roll out to regions like Pajaro over the coming years. With the information gathered to quantify and demonstrate the reduction in water use and economic impact from a cover crop fallowing strategy, this project will show how incentivized cover crops can be a viable tool to reduce pumping, and shape the framework for anew MLRP program that supports extended cover cropping, land resting, and reducing water use. Other regions in California, like the East Turlock Subbasin have pursued this strategy of utilizing yearlong cover crops in temporary (~3y) rotational fallowing and have been approved for funding under MLRP. The project team would like to evaluate this type of tool for the Pajaro valley and the broader central coast to demonstrate how [we could leverage efforts like MLRP, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies management actions, and others achieve tangible climate and water benefits in the Central Coast region through expanded use of cover crops.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Public Benefit: The project will provide benefits to the participating growers and the broader agricultural community. The growers will benefit from improved soil health, nitrogen cycling, preserving the topsoil, reducing run-off as well as gaining a better understanding of the impact of their relevant management decisions. The community will benefit by participating in building the foundation for a robust cover crop incentive that could support both agriculturalists and neighboring communities' that will aid in meeting their economic and ecological goals. Cover crops can provide some climate resiliency benefit if adopted into the common crop rotations by the increased ability to weather floods and drought and increase water availability, communities within the Pajaro Valley will benefit. Strategic Alignment: This project is aligned with multiple local, county, and state priorities and goals. At the state level, it's been estimated that large acreages of land (500,000-1 million acres) will necessarily go out of production or be repurposed to meet SGMA goals in critically overdraft regions. In these regions, incentivized temporary rotation fallowing is one strategy being employed to keep land in production while reducing groundwater pumping demands. In this study, we will use field collected data, interviews with growers, and other information sources to develop realistic scaled scenarios - based on different levels of farmer participation, acreage adoption, and environmental conditions - to illustrate how temporary (~1 year) fallowing with minimally irrigated cover crops could help reduce groundwater demands while providing benefits to farms, communities, and the environment. The 2021 Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy Priority A: Croplands identifies the adoption of climate

smart agricultural practices, including cover crops, as a method to increase "climate resiliency, soil water retention, improved water" (pg. 34). The Strategy also explicitly includes the priority to "Repurpose cropland retired or fallowed due to lack of water supply for environmental cultural and societal benefits... capturing floodwater (pg. 34), capturing the project focus of both fallowing and cover crops. The 2022 30x30 plan also includes a framework for mitigating and building resilience to climate change through conserving and managing lands using soil health practices (pg. 17). At the county level, both the SCC Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) and 2021 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan contain references to the RCDSCC as a critical partner to mitigate climate change through natural and working lands tactics, calling out flooding, drought, and soil health. The IRWMP lists multiple RCDSCC initiatives, including project #30 "farm soil management for water conservation" (pg. 3). The 2019 Pajaro River Watershed Integrated Regional Water Management Plan includes RCDSCC as a project partner that works in soil erosion control and discusses that on-farm best management practices, which would include cover crops, are an important tactic to enhance soil health and conserve water. All of the plans listed above include intersectional engagement strategies and methods to achieve these goals. This project encompasses the plans' directive of proactive and community based approaches, conducting meaningful community engagement, uplifting the voices of underserved communities and practitioners, and leveraging resources.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

The primary audience and beneficiaries of this project are the agricultural water users, industry, and water managers of Santa Cruz County. Growers will benefit from trial compensation and the various environmental and agronomic benefits of cover cropping. Agricultural industry will benefit from the pursuit of more sustainable strategies to ensure healthy farming communities and sustained production in the Pajaro Valley. Water managers will benefit by gaining insight into how cover crops can be deployed as a water demand management strategy to offset pumping as the climate continues to stress California's resources. In addition to the agricultural stakeholder beneficiaries, communities living in proximity to agriculture and those dependent on the Pajaro watershed will also benefit from this project in the longer term. If our analysis and stakeholder engagement leads to an adoption of cover crops in the local MLRP program, the community at large will benefit from on-farm climate impact reduction, such as flood risk mitigation and a less burdened aquifer due to increased soil water infiltration and reduced groundwater pumping.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Health and well-being, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

This pilot contributes to community value by engaging the community to assess local needs and inform the design of cover cropping incentive programs in Santa Cruz County and across the Central Coast Region. This project seeks to generate insights to inform the design of future cover cropping incentive programs by conducting field trials and grower interviews to produce a case study. Interviews provide essential insights for assessing community needs and increasing practice adoption among growers. Clarifying the barriers that limit grower adoption and understanding the most effective approaches to incentivizing sustainable practices will engage the community to inform future program design. Increased adoption of cover cropping resulting from the outcomes of this project contributes to community value through the various ecological benefits offered by cover crops. Improved groundwater and surface water quality is a benefit of cover cropping which is pertinent for communities adjacent to agriculture. Increasing the acreage over which cover crops are deployed in Santa Cruz County as a result of this project would expand the scale of water quality protections offered by cover cropping. Improved infiltration and water-holding capacity from wider adoption of cover crops would also mitigate the harm of flash flooding caused by climate change. Outreach for the grower interview aspect of the project entails contacting 10 growers of varying scale and commodities through the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County. The case study produced through the project will be published and presented to regional water managers like the Pajaro Valley Water Management Authority (PVWMA) for their consideration in designing irrigation water demand management schemes.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant does not have a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land, Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

Partner growers are identified, but no contact has been signed.

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

There are no permits required for any element of the project. The implementation of cover crops, installation of flow meters, and interviews on active farmland do not warrant permits from local, state or federal agencies. Both the RCD and Sustainable Conservation have extensive experience with public funding to support farmers with cover cropping and irrigation water use monitoring and technical assistance, and there has never been a need for permitting these past successful projects. The project will leverage existing RCD programs and matching funds that offer direct technical assistance and cost-share to farmers for adoption of water conservation and soil management practices including cover crops. Specifically, RCD will contribute staff time and RCD owned irrigation monitoring equipment (flowmeters and telemetry) used in the Pajaro Valley water conservation program supported by the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PV Water). Additionally, RCD will leverage direct programmatic funding allocation received from Measure Q for technical assistance and cover crop seed.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

This project will pilot the use of year-round cover cropping on temporarily fallowed active farmland and demonstrate its efficacy as a strategy to reduce groundwater and/or reclaimed water demand in the Pajaro Valley. Winter cover crops have multiple demonstrated on-farm benefits related to soil health, water infiltration and holding capacity, erosion control, nutrient recycling, pollinators, and water quality protection. On the other hand, cover cropping on additional acreage during the warm production season remains an underutilized opportunity for water conservation. Temporarily replacing a small acreage of cash crops with cover crops during extended fallow periods on a rotational basis each year can reduce irrigation water demand and offset present and future groundwater pumping. For this to work, it is critical to understand cover crop water use throughout the year, as well as costs associated with cover crop management, and opportunity cost of not planting a cash crop. In 2018 the RCDSCC, working with stakeholders of the Pajaro Valley Community Water Dialogue (CWD), facilitated the development of a Covered Fallow Plan (<https://www.communitywaterdialogue.org/covered-fallow-plan>) to incentivize covered fallow rotations to conserve water and achieve co-benefits for sustaining agriculture in the Pajaro Valley. The plan responded to landowner and grower interest in exploring rotational fallowing as one of many actions for conserving water, and it was informed by an economic analysis (Highland Economics, 2017) that assessed private and public benefits and costs under different cover cropping and cash crop replacement scenarios. According to the study, the cost per acre-foot of water conserved across different covered fallow scenarios was well within the range of other types of (built infrastructure) projects included in the 2014 PV groundwater basin management plan. This was an encouraging finding as it suggested that a rotational covered fallow program could offer a cost-effective strategy to achieve sustainable groundwater use, and the main question remained how to adequately compensate participating producers for the opportunity costs they would bear. The project will build upon the 2018 plan by measuring water consumption in a yearlong cover crop rotation compared to cash crops (using flowmeters, evapotranspiration data, and the OpenET FARMs Tool) and collecting on-farm data from farmers and stakeholders to update the 2018 economic study and better understand water conservation opportunities and operational constraints. The goal is to chart the course for developing effective incentives that can drive broad adoption, and ideally integrate the practice into the Pajaro Valley's Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) as another tool to reduce water use in dry years, similar to the Department of Water Resources' Land Flex Program tool or the East Turlock GSA's incentivizing fallowing with vegetative cover program. The project will deliver 4 outcomes: 1) a pilot on yearlong cover crop vs. cash crop water use, 2) a case study on costs, benefits, and management considerations of the practice, 3) a summary of input from growers and ag industry to gauge interest and expand impact, and 4) a summary of incentive ideas (i.e. seed cost share, water bill rebate, rent reduction, tax credit) and development pathways.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

We are requesting grant funds totaling \$35,706 with a committed match contribution totaling \$50,291. Grant funds will support personnel time, travel, supplies for cover crop establishment, grower compensation, and indirect costs. Matching funds will be provided through staff time and equipment from the RCD of Santa Cruz County, along with additional support from Sustainable Conservation staff. These combined resources will enable the project team to coordinate grower participation, implement year-round cover crop rotations, collect and analyze water use data, and develop a case study evaluating extended cover cropping to reduce groundwater demand in Pajaro Valley. Personnel: funding for Elliot Grant, Senior Central Coast Project Manager (10% FTE), Modibo Keita, Central Coast Project Manager (7%) FTE, and Environmental Data Analyst (2%FTE. Elliot will lead the project, oversee project management, including grower engagement and coordination with the RCD. He will also conduct grower interviews, collect economic data from the growers, and contribute to the development of the case study. Modibo will support project implementation and data analysis, including compiling and analyzing irrigation and water use, and creating the case study on the demonstration. The Environmental Data Analyst will assist with reviewing water use and cost data and evaluating potential impacts of extended cover cropping practices, at a basin scale. Personnel costs include fringe benefits calculated at 40% of salaries per Sustainable Conservation's fringe benefit policy. Travel: funds will support staff travel to participating farm sites to coordinate with growers on project implementation and for in-person interviews to inform the case study. Elliot will travel to the project sites an estimated 12 times to meet with growers and coordinate data collection and project implementation. Elliot will also meet growers for in-person interviews an estimated 10 times. Travel costs are for mileage (estimated 45 miles roundtrip) at the IRS 2026 rate of \$.725/mile. Supplies: we will purchase cover crop seeds to provide to the growers to ensure cover crop establishment on participating farms. Estimated cost of \$450/grower for a year. Other Direct Costs: we will compensate growers with \$1,500/grower to support their participation in this project. These funds will help offset labor, fuel, and water costs for maintaining a sequence of cover crops on an acre for a year. Indirect Costs: we are requesting 15% for indirect costs to help support the administrative expenses necessary to manage this project. Matching Contribution: the RCD of

Santa Cruz will provide significant matching contributions to support project implementation. RCDSCC will leverage Measure Q's direct programmatic funding as match to assist with recruiting and coordinating with participating growers, co-lead the grower interviews, installing and maintaining flow meters, collecting irrigation and well data, providing technical assistance for planting and terminating cover crops, and helping estimate cover crop establishment costs. Sustainable Conservation will also contribute additional staff time from our Science Communications Manager as an in-kind match. The Science Communications Manager will help design the case study and translate data and findings into clear and actionable insights.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

Starting in June 2026, the team will initiate the project with contracts with Santa Cruz County and the subaward, RCDSCC. Sustainable Conservation and RCDSCC will confirm grower participation for 3 sites, each one acre, and ensure the growers are aware of the scope and willing to share information on water use and costs. The RCD team will then install the needed monitoring equipment (flowmeters and telemetry). The RCD team will provide technical assistance to the participating growers for seeding the summer cover crop. From July to August 2026, RCD staff will collect water use information on the cash crops and summer cover crop using RCD monitoring equipment and existing well flowmeters. Sustainable Conservation will monitor Evapotranspiration (ET) remotely through OpenET's FARMS tool. Both teams will collect information on costs to the growers associated with the summer cover crop (labor, seed, water bill, fuel, rent, equipment). In early August, the growers with guidance from the RCD will terminate and incorporate the summer cover crop. Project leads from Sustainable Conservation and RCDSCC will begin interviewing growers and water managers on the concept. From September to early November 2026, RCD staff will support the grower partners with establishing the short season fall cover crop. The RCD will continue to monitor the water use, while Sustainable Conservation measures ET data. Once the fall cover crop is nearing its end, the team will collect economic information associated with the fall cover crop, then the RCD will assist with termination of the fall cover crop. Interviews continue throughout the fall, and both teams begin the first draft of the case study based on the summer cover crop water usage. Late November 2026 to April 2027 will be the long season winter cover crop. RCD staff will provide the same technical assistance to the grower, while both teams will collect respective information on water use, well data, ET data, and costs associated with the winter cover crop. Team leads will compile learnings into a summary of interview findings. While both teams incorporate the fall cover crop's water use and costs into the case study. The project will finish in May of 2027, with the teams compiling the full water use and economic data into the case study. Sustainable Conservation's analyst will model the potential impact of the practice at the Pajaro watershed scale and simulate different scenarios of adoption and water savings. Sustainable Conservation's Science Communicator will support the finalization of the case study, key findings, and interview summaries. Project leads from both organizations will produce a final report, and close out the project with Santa Cruz County.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

The team seeks to innovate upon prior cover crop research by comparing the water use and operating costs of cover crops sequenced across a calendar year to marketable crop production cycles. Along with collecting water use and operating cost data, an additional innovative element of this project is utilizing the OpenET FARMS remote sensing tool to measure cover crop water consumption by evapotranspiration (ET) in addition to flow meters. Though there has been extensive CA-based research on a wide variety of cover cropping management styles, a key data gap on the coast is how water use during the peak growing season compares to common marketable crops in the region. Prior research has mostly examined winter cover crops, the water consumption of which is typically minimal, whereas comparison during the growing season would provide a more complete picture of the potential water savings if deployed at a regional scale. Regarding ongoing research into cover crops, the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County and UC Santa Cruz have partnered to research how winter cover crops affect water and nutrient cycling dynamics. The team will incorporate the findings of this research into the case study communicating the net benefits of year-round cover cropping. This data is critical to growing regional adoption of cover cropping and complimentary to other programs incentivizing sustainable practices like the Multi-Benefit Land Re-Purposing Program (MLRP), the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), and the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP).

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Leveraged Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

This project reflects a strong and ongoing partnership between Sustainable Conservation and the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County (RCDSCC). The partnership between Sustainable Conservation and RCDSCC began through work on programmatic permitting for environmental restoration projects culminating in what is now the Santa Cruz County Partners in Restoration Permit Coordination Program. The two organizations have since partnered to address water quality issues affecting communities on the coast including on a current Fertilizer Research and Education Program grant to support farmers in using winter cover crops to mitigate nitrogen losses to surface and groundwater in Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey Counties. This project is strengthened by the collective expertise in agricultural outreach, technical assistance to growers, and water resource management. RCDSCC has deep relationships with local growers and will play a key role in recruiting participants which will leverage existing relationships, as well as utilizing RCD resources such as flow meters and technical assistance expertise. Sustainable Conservation will bring to the table a strong background in project management and analysis, policy engagement, and

a track record of impactful recommendations and guidance documents. The collaboration leverages the strengths of both organizations, as well as efficiently utilizes funds through RCDSCC in-kind contributions of staff time and equipment. These leveraged resources will increase the scale and impact of the project, while also making efficient use of the Measure Q funds.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Sustainable Conservation Tier 1 - budget spreadsheet.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

[Sustainable Conservation's tier 1 Project Timeline.docx](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[LOS for SusCon_2026 Measure Q grant_T1.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

[No file uploaded](#)

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Elliot D Grant

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Elliot Grant, Senior Project Manager

SIGNATURE DATE

11/07/1997

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 205 **Type:** Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Expansion and Support of Environmental Plastic Assessment Program in Santa Cruz County

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

205

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Expansion and Support of Environmental Plastic Assessment Program in Santa Cruz County

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Clean Oceans International

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Clean Oceans International

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

Thousands of Santa Cruz County residents and visitors would benefit from this project in various way

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

Several groups would benefit from the project: Population Served and Protected = Santa Cruz County u

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Patricia Clark

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Fundraising Coordinator

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Amelia	Labbe	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

2336 E Cliff Dr, Santa Cruz, CA, 95062

PARCEL NUMBER

The APN for the survey site at Twin Lakes is 02701110

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.96257066474367

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.00009407119764

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The Project survey sites will be located in coastal urban regions throughout the County.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Not applicable (countywide)

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

At least 8 shoreline locations in Districts 1, 2, and 3.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 30 - Dawn Addis

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

Not applicable

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA		
State Water Control Resources Board	NA		
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA		
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	Not sure	Need to check on permit requirements for potential expansion of program	

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

1

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

The Project is presently running, and the expansion may begin upon start of grant award.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

50000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

130000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$40,500	\$30,000	\$35,000	\$105,500
Equipment	\$800	\$400	\$0	\$1,200
Supplies	\$200	\$100	\$0	\$300
Other Direct Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Indirect Costs	\$7,500	\$13,500	\$0	\$21,000
Contractual / Consultants	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$2,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

Plastic debris continues to enter coastal environments through litter, runoff, and watershed transport, affecting water quality, neighborhood environments, and local wildlife. Clean Oceans International (COI) is a Santa Cruz-based 501(c)(3) environmental nonprofit working to reduce the accelerating challenge of ocean plastic pollution through research, education, innovation, and hands-on action. We are requesting \$50,000 from the Santa Cruz County Measure Q Grant Program to expand and maintain our Environmental Plastic Assessment Program (EPAP) throughout the coastal zones of the county. EPAP constitutes plastic pollution assessment and monitoring through quantitative beach plastic surveys and data management. It incorporates shoreline transect surveys, which document temporal changes in quantity, composition, seasonality, and distribution of plastic debris in the Monterey Bay region. COI has recently established an EPAP database, and we are presently bolstering our datasets so they may be used to inform policy decisions and effective action to protect local communities, water quality, and wildlife habitats. EPAP also serves as a platform to educate and engage communities on plastic pollution's local and global impacts. The program currently incorporates the power and passion of community interns from Cabrillo College, UCSC, and the Amah Mutsun Land Trust who are conducting plastic assessment surveys in Santa Cruz County. We are excited about the prospect of continuing EPAP and look forward to working toward the County's vision for clean water, healthy ecosystems, and a thriving community.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, Coastal Protection and Adaptation

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

Clean Oceans International engages a diverse community in its mission to reduce coastal plastic pollution and protect the health of Santa Cruz County's coastal environments. Each year, we work with participants ranging in age from 14 to 90, including high school and college STEM students, tribal partners, local organizations, and members of the public. Specifically, our outreach spans Delta, Pacific Collegiate, and Santa Cruz High Schools; STEM programs at UCSC, UC Davis, Cabrillo College, and the Peralta Community College District; residents of Dominican Oaks Senior Center; and regional partners such as Santa Cruz City and County, California State Parks, and the Amah Mutsun Land Trust. These partnerships also create opportunities for students from communities historically underrepresented in environmental science to participate in coastal stewardship and hands-on research. We also collaborate with community groups and employees from organizations such as Home Depot, DaVita Kidney Care, and Cisco. By engaging participants across generations and communities, COI helps expand access to coastal stewardship opportunities while building awareness of the connection between plastic pollution, water quality, and the health of coastal habitats and wildlife. This broad network strengthens COI's fieldwork, expands our monitoring capacity across parks and public coastal areas, and ensures that our programs meaningfully serve - and are informed by - a wide range of communities connected to the ocean.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

COI's Environmental Plastic Assessment Program is designed to promote the stewardship of healthy coastlines, watersheds, oceans, and communities. Through EPAP, we improve shoreline safety, water quality, and wildlife habitats by systematically and continuously removing beach plastic and other debris while fostering community stewardship and educating future environmental leaders. These efforts generate multiple benefits for Santa Cruz County, including cleaner public beaches, improved coastal habitat conditions, enhanced water quality awareness, and expanded opportunities for community participation in coastal protection. EPAP should be considered a long-term plastic pollution monitoring effort for Santa Cruz County. Measure Q support will build upon COI's existing program infrastructure and leverage the contributions of trained interns, volunteers, and partner organizations who participate in surveys, data collection, and cleanup activities. We hope to continue and expand our EPAP-specific internship throughout the life of the Measure Q Grant, strengthening the program's capacity while amplifying the impact of the County's investment.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Clean coastal zones are paramount to human and wildlife health and are also essential to the Santa Cruz County economy. Each year, more than 3 million visitors come to the county's beaches to walk, swim, fish, surf, explore tidepools, and visit destinations such as the Santa Cruz Wharf and surrounding coastal businesses. Clean, safe, and picturesque beaches and waters support tourism, outdoor recreation, and the many local businesses that depend on a healthy coastline. Santa Cruz is internationally recognized for its surf culture, drawing more than 700,000 surfers annually and generating millions of dollars in economic activity. Protecting coastal water quality and reducing plastic pollution helps sustain this iconic aspect of the region's identity while also benefiting the broader community of beachgoers who rely on clean beaches for recreation and enjoyment. Since EPAP provides consistent, long-term data on shoreline plastic pollution, it aligns closely with Santa Cruz County's goals of protecting water quality, supporting healthy ecosystems, and maintaining safe and accessible coastal environments. The program contributes locally relevant information that can help guide prevention efforts, cleanup strategies, and community awareness around plastic pollution. COI has been conducting EPAP shoreline surveys for many years and recently established a dedicated EPAP database to strengthen the management and accessibility of these datasets. With an established survey program, trained student interns and volunteers, and an expanding data infrastructure, COI is well positioned to expand and maintain EPAP monitoring throughout Santa Cruz County with support from the Measure Q Grant Program.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

The education community has been a key target for EPAP. The inception of the program began with the Cabrillo College Oceanography class when our Board Chair was the long-time instructor and department lead at Cabrillo College, and it has since grown significantly as a key initiative for COI. Today, EPAP engages high school and college students across Santa Cruz County, including interns from Cabrillo College and the University of California, Santa Cruz, providing hands-on opportunities to participate in coastal research, environmental monitoring, and community stewardship. We have also expanded outreach to underserved communities, including collaboration with the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, which joined our EPAP team in 2025. Through these partnerships, students and community members gain direct experience working in coastal environments while contributing meaningful data that supports long-term monitoring of plastic pollution. In addition, EPAP serves as a conduit for public education and community engagement through beach cleanups, outreach events, and tabling activities. Local residents, volunteers, and visitors to Santa Cruz County's beaches all benefit from cleaner shorelines and improved awareness of plastic pollution impacts. Through the Measure Q Grant, we hope to further expand the program's outreach by establishing a Beach Adoption Program that empowers Santa Cruz County citizen scientists to participate in long-term shoreline monitoring and stewardship.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

We believe EPAP is an easy and accessible way for students and community members to have a positive impact on the Santa Cruz County community and local coastal environment. The program fosters outdoor engagement, teamwork, and hands-on learning while participants conduct scientific shoreline surveys and remove plastic debris from local beaches. By helping keep beaches clean and safe, EPAP supports public access to nature and protects the recreational opportunities that Santa Cruz County residents and visitors enjoy along the coast. The removal of debris from local beaches also improves public safety for humans and wildlife by reducing the risk of injury, entanglement, and ingestion. Cleaner shorelines contribute to healthier coastal environments and enhance the overall well-being of communities that depend on Santa Cruz County's beaches for recreation, connection to nature, and quality of life. Preventing plastic debris from remaining in the coastal environment also reduces the potential for further breakdown into micro- and nano-plastics that ultimately enter the Monterey Bay.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

The Project will occur on State and County lands in Santa Cruz County. These beach parks are public lands, and do not require prior written permission to conduct plastic debris surveys.

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

Our Project is a series of surface surveys involving trash removal that does not require any digging nor construction of any kind.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

The Environmental Plastic Assessment Program (EPAP) is designed to provide long-term data sets of shoreline plastic pollution. EPAP involves a team of 3-5 people who measure a 100-meter transect line parallel to the shoreline of a given beach, then walk and collect plastic debris along four different perpendicular swaths down toward the ocean. Each swath is 5 meters wide. The plastic debris collected is categorized on a data form according to plastic type and degree of weathering. These data are then submitted to our interactive database, which is available to the public on our website. The surveys will be conducted every 2-4 weeks by citizen scientists or student interns, and a schedule will be created to meet the needs of the program and participants. For student interns, the survey period could last for a semester, quarter, or multiple quarters. Presently, COI has survey sites at Cowell, Santa Cruz Main, Twin Lakes, Seabright, Capitola, New Brighton, Rio Del Mar, and Seacliff Beaches, and would like to maintain and expand the geography serviced by the program in 2026 and 2027. As a part of this Measure Q Project, we also plan to conduct more outreach and recruit more interns and citizen scientists from underrepresented communities in South County. We also plan to consolidate and analyze the Santa Cruz County data sets and create a report for the County, which may also be made available to the public. Our hope is that data may be used for advocacy once we acquire more robust data sets. We believe that we can accomplish these goals during the 12-month life of the Measure Q Grant.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

COI will provide supplemental funding for the proposed project via private foundation grants, equipment donations, and in-kind volunteer staff hours. Some of the funders include the Sally Scholtz Family Foundation and Le Labo, Santa Cruz Works, as well as other platforms such as Benevity. In addition, we will use a portion of the Measure Q funding to submit proposals that will allow us to secure new funding in the future.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

Once the grant is awarded, COI personnel will be able to begin the project immediately. We will begin recruiting new interns for EPAP surveys at our eight existing beach sites as well as at least three new beaches, including 4-Mile State Beach, Moran Lake, and Sunset State Beach. We will conduct lectures and classroom visits at Cabrillo College's Watsonville and Aptos campuses and utilize the Handshake platform to reach the UCSC student population. We will also refurbish our equipment, which consists of measuring tapes and sieves that are subject to wear. We will establish a recruiting and survey schedule for the first six months of the fiscal year and repeat this process for the second half of the fiscal year. In February, we will lay the groundwork for the Santa Cruz County EPAP Survey Report, which will be completed by the end of June 2027.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

EPAP provides multiple benefits to the Santa Cruz County community and coastal environment. One of the most immediate impacts involves water quality, as participants remove plastic and other debris directly from the shoreline environment, helping protect wildlife habitat and prevent plastic from entering Monterey Bay. In addition, our internship program has become a valuable resume-building opportunity for many students over the past two years and has helped cultivate the next generation of ocean stewards. We also see strong public outreach benefits when engaging with the community during coastal cleanups and tabling events, where we share information about plastic pollution and ways individuals can help protect local beaches. As our plastic assessment database continues to grow, we hope to further utilize these data to inform local and regional advocacy and support evidence-based decision-making. Programs such as EPAP may also produce broader indirect benefits by supporting coastal recreation, contributing to the local economy, and encouraging outdoor activity that benefits human physical and mental health.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Volunteer Hours Leverage, Efficient Use of Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

COI has several longtime partners and collaborators with our programs. For EPAP in particular, we maintain a very strong historical partnership with Cabrillo College faculty affiliated with the biology, oceanography, and environmental science programs. We are also growing strong partnerships with The Amah Mutsun Land Trust, UCSC, the Peralta Community College District, and Oregon State University. In addition, COI has been working closely with local nonprofit organizations, One People One Reef, the Surfrider Foundation, and Pitch-In Santa Cruz County. Furthermore, COI is composed of a very passionate staff and Board, who volunteer many hours per month to help COI accomplish their goals.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

COI Letter of Support Measure Q Cabrillo College.docx.pdf, COI Letter of Support Measure Q All Earth Geo.pdf

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

UCSC Interns at Main Beach.jpg

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Patricia L Clark

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Clean Oceans International Fundraising Coordinator

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 206 **Type:** Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Real-Time Digital Signage for Wildfire Preparedness

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

206

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Real-Time Digital Signage for Wildfire Preparedness

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Santa Cruz County Fire Department

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Population served

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

—

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Jahaira Zaragoza

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

FAI

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Jahaira	Zaragoza	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

Graham Hill Rd, Felton, CA, 95018

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

37.05201005369072

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.07066835639381

PROJECT JURISDICTION / CITY

Unincorporated Santa Cruz County, Multiple jurisdictions / Countywide

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

Santa Cruz County includes a diverse mix of urban, suburban, agricultural, and rural communities that experience varying levels of

wildfire exposure and environmental risk. Residents in the San Lorenzo Valley - including Felton, Scotts Valley, and surrounding rural neighborhoods - face some of the county's greatest wildfire exposure. These forested mountain communities frequently request burn permits and experience poor air quality and seasonal fire restrictions due to elevated wildfire risk. Many residents rely on a limited number of roadways for daily travel and evacuation, increasing vulnerability during emergency events. To serve these communities, one permanent digital fire information sign would be installed at Mount Hermon Road and Graham Hill Road, a key corridor directly used by residents of Felton, Scotts Valley, the San Lorenzo Valley, and adjacent rural neighborhoods located within High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Communities in the Pajaro Valley, including areas near Freedom and Corralitos, include a large population of farmworkers, Spanish-speaking households, and multigenerational families. These communities often experience disproportionate climate-related risks and communication barriers during emergencies. Many households have limited access to digital resources such as reliable internet service, computers, smartphones, or other online communication tools, which can restrict access to real-time emergency alerts and preparedness information. The Pajaro Valley region also includes extensive agricultural lands and rural residential areas that experience cumulative environmental burdens, including exposure to agricultural pollutants, poor air quality, and other environmental stressors. These combined conditions can increase vulnerability during wildfire incidents and extreme weather events. A second permanent digital fire information sign would be installed at Freedom Boulevard and Corralitos Road, a major travel route serving Pajaro Valley residents in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Together, the San Lorenzo Valley and Pajaro Valley represent communities that face heightened wildfire risk, environmental exposure, and barriers to timely emergency information due to geographic isolation, language barriers, and limited digital connectivity. Both of the project locations were selected because they sit at the intersection of high-wildfire corridors, major commuter routes, and communities with the highest amount of wildfire threat.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

These communities are incorporated and are governed by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors rather than City Councils.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT

District 2 - Kimberly De Serpa, District 5 - Monica Martinez

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The project will primarily serve communities in the San Lorenzo Valley and the Pajaro Valley, while also affecting the broader region of Santa Cruz County. In the San Lorenzo Valley, including communities of Felton, Scotts Valley and Mount Hermon, the project would support residents in forested mountain areas characterized by small towns and rural neighborhoods along the San Lorenzo River corridor. In the Pajaro Valley, including the communities of Watsonville, Freedom, and Corralitos, the project would serve a mix of agricultural lands, residential neighborhoods, and commercial areas within one of the county's main farming regions. Although these two valleys are the primary service areas, the project would also have broader implications for transportation, infrastructure, tourism, and regional connectivity across Santa Cruz County and neighboring counties. The benefits and impacts of the project would extend beyond the immediate service areas to the wider county population and regional economy. These areas are covered by both Assembly Member Gail Pellerin and Robert Rivas.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Not sure

DAC/SDAC NOTES

Using the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, the area near Corralitos Road and Freedom Boulevard is considered disadvantaged because it meets more than one burden threshold and the associated socioeconomic threshold. Using the CalEnviroScreen latest draft version, this same area falls in the 40+% overall for pollution exposures, environmental effects, sensitive populations and socioeconomic factors.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

DAC STATUS

Yes

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

The project will be coordinated between Santa Cruz County departments. Santa Cruz County Fire will work cooperatively with the Santa Cruz County Department of Public Works to obtain an encroachment permit for the installation of signage along county road rights-of-way. Project activities will take place within previously disturbed areas along major roadways, and no new ground disturbance is expected. The project will leverage existing road infrastructure to minimize impacts. Ongoing coordination between County Fire and County Public Works will ensure that all project activities comply with county standards for safety, roadway use, and infrastructure protection.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	Yes	Santa Cruz County Fire will work cooperatively with the County of Santa Cruz Public Works Department	
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

2

CAN START UPON AWARD?

No

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

The project's readiness depends on careful coordination between County Fire, County Public Works, and PG&E, particularly at Graham Hill Road, where a new PG&E connection is required. Work along major roadways that have previously experienced land disturbance will only require a county encroachment permit which has already been started. Establishing electrical service through PG&E can take weeks to months, depending on permit reviews, scheduling, site access, and utility inspections. Because permitting and utility connections are interdependent, delays may occur if approvals or schedules are not aligned. Early coordination and proactive review will be essential to keep the project on schedule and ensure compliance with county standards, roadway safety, and fire regulations.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

43982

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

43982

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Equipment	\$36,732	\$0	\$0	\$36,732
Construction	\$5,500	\$0	\$0	\$5,500
Other Direct Costs	\$1,750	\$0	\$0	\$1,750

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The project advances the Measure Q Vision Plan by strengthening wildfire resilience, improving emergency preparedness, and protecting life, property, and critical infrastructure across Santa Cruz County. Real-Time Digital Signage for Wildfire Preparedness provides timely alerts to drivers and residents in High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. The system communicates live information on wildfire conditions, road closures, evacuation routes, burn day status, weather events, and other critical emergency notifications, helping residents and visitors make informed and safe decisions. By improving situational awareness and supporting faster evacuation and traffic management, the project delivers meaningful community safety benefits while helping reduce wildfire risk to surrounding watersheds, forests, and wildlife habitat. Early warning and evacuation guidance help minimize human-caused

ignitions, protect sensitive ecosystems, and support broader climate adaptation and disaster-resilience strategies. Rotating Spanish-language messaging ensures Santa Cruz County's large Spanish-speaking population receives timely and accessible emergency information, strengthening preparedness for residents and visitors. The signs will serve communities in the San Lorenzo and Pajaro Valleys while supporting safe travel throughout the county. Strategic placement along key transportation corridors improves evacuation coordination, traffic flow, and regional safety. The project is technically feasible and builds on existing county systems. Implementation will be led by County Fire collaborating with County Public Works, leveraging existing expertise and infrastructure, to ensure effective deployment and integration with wildfire response protocols and transportation management. The project strengthens Santa Cruz County's regional capacity to prepare for and respond to wildfire threats while protecting communities, ecosystems, and the visitor economy.

PROJECT START DATE

06/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

03/31/2028

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, Coastal Protection and Adaptation, Agricultural and Work Land Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

The project advances the thematic goals of the Measure Q Vision Plan by strengthening public safety, wildfire preparedness, equity, and community resilience through the installation of real time digital wildfire information signs in the San Lorenzo Valley and Pajaro Valley. These high risk corridors require reliable, accessible information that provides dynamic alerts in English and Spanish on fire hazard levels, burn day status, road closures, severe weather conditions, and evacuation routes, enabling residents, commuters, and visitors to respond quickly and avoid dangerous situations during emergencies. By improving situational awareness and supporting orderly evacuations, the project reduces risks to life and property while enhancing the county's overall emergency response capacity. The ability to rotate bilingual messages directly supports the Vision Plan's emphasis on equity by ensuring that rural, underserved, and disadvantaged communities have equal access to critical safety information, regardless of cell coverage or access to digital devices. The project also aligns with the Vision Plan's focus on access and connectivity by improving safe travel to parks, recreation areas, schools, workplaces, and essential services, particularly in areas with limited evacuation routes and high seasonal traffic. As wildfire behavior and extreme weather events intensify, the signage functions as adaptive, resilient infrastructure capable of evolving to help the county manage climate driven hazards more effectively. Through the integration of digital public safety infrastructure, the project embodies Measure Q priorities by increasing wildfire preparedness, improving property, improving equitable access to emergency information, and enhancing community resilience across Santa Cruz County.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

This project exemplifies the Measure Q prioritization principles by delivering multi-benefit outcomes that strengthen climate resilience, and advance equity for communities that face heightened wildfire risk, including rural and rural populations. The installation of real time digital wildfire information signs in the San Lorenzo Valley and Pajaro Valley provides dynamic, high visibility alerts to drivers and residents in high and very high fire risk areas, which share timely information on fire hazard levels, evacuation routes, road closures, burn day status, Red Flag warnings, and severe weather events, helping the public respond quickly and make informed decisions during rapidly evolving emergencies. Bilingual messaging ensures that critical safety information reaches the county's large Spanish-speaking population, overcoming communication barriers and improving equitable access to life saving alerts. The project improves emergency communication, supporting safer and more orderly evacuations, reducing roadway congestion during wildfire events, and increasing overall community preparedness. These benefits extend to residents, commuters, visitors, and emergency responders who rely on accurate, real time information to navigate high risk areas. The project advances equity objectives by prioritizing communities that have historically faced communication gaps during emergencies. Rural neighborhoods in the San Lorenzo Valley and disadvantaged communities in the Pajaro Valley - including many Spanish speaking households and farmworker families - will gain reliable access to emergency information, emergency service, income, or access to digital devices. This ensures that those most vulnerable to wildfire impacts receive timely, accessible

alerts that support safe evacuation and reduce risk. In addition, the project provides meaningful climate resilience value by addressing one of the county's most significant climate driven hazards: wildfire. As expected, the need for rapid, adaptable public safety communication becomes increasingly critical as infrastructure capable of delivering real time updates during emergencies, strengthening climate related hazards and improving community readiness. The project further demonstrates partnerships with County Fire, County Public Works, County Planning, and other agencies involved in emergency response. These collaborations ensure that Measure Q funds are used efficiently, align with existing county systems, and complement ongoing modernization of public safety infrastructure and messaging. By integrating with existing efforts, the project amplifies the effectiveness of countywide preparedness efforts and avoids duplication of resources. This project reflects the Measure Q prioritization principles and delivers a high value, scalable public safety emergency communication for approximately 270,000 county residents, enhancing preparedness supporting a more resilient and equitable Santa Cruz County.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

This project advances key secondary prioritization principles by maximizing public benefit, demonstrating strong strategic alignment with countywide goals, and showing clear readiness for implementation. By providing wildfire preparedness and related hazards, the project delivers immediate, practical benefits to residents, workers, and visitors traveling through high risk corridors in the San Lorenzo Valley and Pajaro Valley. The project provides fire locations, road closures, evacuation routes, burn day status, fire hazard levels, and severe weather alerts, helping the public make informed decisions during rapidly evolving emergencies. Bilingual messaging ensures that residents, particularly in South County - receive timely, accessible safety information, directly supporting equitable communication and reducing barriers that have historically placed vulnerable populations at greater risk. The project also demonstrates strong strategic alignment with ongoing county initiatives in emergency response, transportation, and communication. It complements existing efforts by Santa Cruz County Fire, County Public Works, and the Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience to modernize emergency notification systems and improve situational awareness along major transportation corridors. By integrating seamlessly with county emergency operations and leveraging established communication protocols, the signage enhances the effectiveness of existing programs and strengthens the project's impact. This ensures that Measure Q investments support coordinated emergency management, improve public safety, and advance countywide goals related to preparedness, communication, and equitable access to information. Readiness is another core strength of the project. Partnerships with County Fire, County Public Works, County Planning, and other relevant agencies are already in place to guide site selection, permitting, and installation. The project builds on existing signage that is already in place and widely used in public safety applications, and our local schools. By combining these efforts with the Measure Q Vision Plan, the project goes beyond addressing immediate wildfire threats, delivering coordinated, multi-benefit outcomes that enhance safety, resilience, and overall community well-being for Santa Cruz County.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

The project delivers clear and immediate community benefits by improving public safety and wildfire preparedness for residents, workers, and visitors traveling through high and very high Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the San Lorenzo Valley and Pajaro Valley. These regions experience some of the county's greatest wildfire communication challenges due to limited cell coverage, rural roadway networks, and fast changing fire conditions. By installing permanent digital signage providing real time alerts - including fire locations, evacuation instructions, road closures, burn day status, fire hazard levels, and severe weather warnings - the project ensures that critical information reaches people quickly and reliably during emergencies. The signs will serve a broad cross section of the county, including rural communities in Felton, Ben Loma, and surrounding neighborhoods where evacuation routes are narrow, heavily traveled, and highly sensitive to congestion. For these residents, high visibility roadside alerts provide an essential layer of situational awareness that supports safe movement during wildfire events and reduces the risk of bottlenecks on key corridors. In the Pajaro Valley, the project provides equally important benefits for suburban and rural communities that include a large number of farmworker families, and residents who face disproportionate barriers to receiving timely emergency information. The signage will rotate bilingual messages, ensuring that alerts are accessible to the county's significant Spanish-speaking population, strengthening equitable access to life safety information. This is especially critical in Santa Cruz County where wildfire and flood events have historically placed vulnerable populations at greater risk. The project also benefits thousands of daily commuters, school traffic, and visitors who rely on these corridors to travel between Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, Watsonville, and mid county communities. Because the signs operate independently of cellular service, they provide a reliable, countywide communication tool that reaches people regardless of connectivity, income, or access to technology. Local fire agencies, emergency responders, Fire Safe Councils, and Firewise communities also benefit from improved public awareness and reduced information delays during initial attack and evacuation operations. Clear, consistent roadside messaging helps reduce confusion, supports compliance with evacuation orders, and enhances responder safety by keeping the public informed and moving in the right direction. By integrating real time digital signage into existing infrastructure, the project provides a scalable, sustainable solution for improving public safety and community resilience.

communication and wildfire readiness strategies, the project strengthens community res most at risk regions. It provides practical, life saving information, advances equity by i for underserved populations, and establishes a scalable model that can be expanded to years.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

The project delivers significant community value by enhancing public safety, health, and well-being, and supporting the livability of Santa Cruz County communities. By installing live digital traffic signage in high and very high Fire Hazard Severity Zones, the project provides timely information to drivers and residents on critical fire conditions, emergencies, road detours and closures. Messages can rotate in Spanish, ensuring the county's large Spanish-speaking population receives accessible, actionable information. Through coordinated outreach and public engagement, the project empowers residents to understand risks, make informed decisions, and participate in community preparedness efforts. Beyond safety, the project promotes health and well-being by reducing stress and uncertainty during emergencies, ensuring residents - including those in rural or disadvantaged communities - can access critical information to protect themselves and their families. By guiding traffic safely through vulnerable areas and protecting sensitive coastal and estuary habitats, the project also enhances community livability, fostering public trust, a sense of safety, and stronger connections across neighborhoods. Through these integrated benefits, the project strengthens the quality of life for Santa Cruz County residents and visitors, advancing the county's goals for resilient, inclusive, and thriving communities.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

Site control for the project will be secured through coordination with Santa Cruz County departments. While a formal written agreement is not yet in place, the project will be implemented within county road rights-of-way, and the encroachment permit process with County Public Works has already been initiated. Sign installation will occur along roadside areas that are historically disturbed, minimizing new impacts. Santa Cruz County Fire and County Public Works will continue working together to complete permitting and planning requirements, ensuring the signage installations comply with county standards for roadway safety, infrastructure protection, and public access.

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

—

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

The project installs two permanent digital wildfire information signs at key roadway locations in the San Lorenzo Valley and Pajaro Valley to provide real time burn status updates, Red Flag warnings, evacuation messages, and information on high wildfire exposure and limited communication reliability. These areas are categorized as high and very high fire severity zones. Work includes site preparation, grading, foundation construction, trenching as needed, conduit installation, and establishing new electrical connections - most notably at the Graham Hill Road site - along with the installation of digital signage capable of remote updates and integration with emergency operations. Because both signs will be located on or close by county road rights of way, the project will be implemented in close coordination with Santa Cruz County Public Works, County Planning, and other relevant departments to secure encroachment permits, finalize location, and ensure compliance with traffic safety, utility, and infrastructure standards. This interagency approach reflects standard practice for public safety infrastructure and ensures that installation activities meet all regulatory requirements. Once installed, the signs will serve thousands of daily drivers, residents, and visitors, strengthening wildfire readiness and emergency communication across two of the county's most vulnerable regions while creating a scalable model for future expansion of wildfire information signage countywide.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The project budget includes equipment purchases, construction costs, and other direct expenses, including the encroachment permit necessary to implement the live digital traffic signage system. Estimated equipment costs total approximately \$36,732, covering the signage units, display hardware, control systems, and a 10 year warranty of all damage at these key locations in high and very high Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Construction-related costs are estimated at \$5,500, including site preparation, minor grading, and foundation work. Direct costs of \$1,750 cover the encroachment permit needed to support installation. All labor, construction oversight, and project management will be provided by Santa Cruz County Fire, leveraging their expertise in emergency planning, site safety, and coordination with County Public Works. This approach also leverages in-kind contributions from County Fire, reducing costs while ensuring work is completed efficiently, safely, and in alignment with county standards and project objectives for public safety and wildfire preparedness. All Measure Q funds will go directly toward materials and permits, while County Fire covers and manages all labor and installation, representing a substantial in-kind contribution and strong interagency partnership. Having County Fire lead implementation keeps costs low, shortens timelines, and ensures operational standards are met. This approach reflects the Measure Q Vision Plan's intent - leveraging local capacity to deliver high-impact, cost-efficient improvements that strengthen wildfire preparedness in two of the county's most vulnerable areas and maximize the value of Measure Q funding.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

The project is expected to be completed over approximately two years, with an anticipated timeline from June 1, 2026, to March 31, 2028, depending on coordination with PG&E for electrical connections. Project readiness will require collaboration between County Fire, County Public Works, and PG&E, particularly at the Graham Hill Road site where the new PG&E connection is required. Work along major roadways that have previously experienced land disturbance will only require a county encroachment permit, which has already been started. Establishing electrical service through PG&E can take weeks to months, depending on permit reviews, scheduling, site access, and utility inspections. Because permitting and utility connections are interdependent, exact timelines are not currently known. County Fire will provide ongoing maintenance of the signage and associated sites, including vegetation management, ensuring safe and reliable operation over time. Early coordination, proactive review, and close collaboration among county departments will ensure compliance with county standards, safeguard roadway safety, and meet applicable regulatory requirements. This phased implementation approach supports efficient installation of the digital signage network while minimizing potential delays related to permitting, site approvals, or utility connections. Coordination with County Fire, County Public Works, and utility partners will help align the project with existing transportation management and emergency communication systems. Long-term maintenance and monitoring will ensure the sustained effectiveness and reliability of the signage network. County Fire will oversee system operations, routine maintenance, and performance evaluation, using system usage data and emergency response feedback to refine messaging, improve operational effectiveness, and support continuous improvement over time. This coordinated approach ensures the infrastructure remains functional, responsive to evolving emergency needs, and capable of providing reliable public safety information for years to come.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

The project introduces innovative, real-time digital traffic signage designed specifically to support wildfire preparedness and emergency communication in Santa Cruz County. Unlike traditional static traffic signs that display fixed messages, these programmable digital signs allow emergency personnel to quickly update information based on changing conditions and provide visuals. Messages can communicate fire hazard levels, evacuation routes, road closures, burn day status, and extreme weather alerts, helping drivers and residents respond quickly to emerging hazards. A key innovative feature of the system is the ability to rotate messages in Spanish, ensuring that critical safety information reaches the county's large Spanish-speaking population. This capability improves equity and accessibility, allowing emergency communications to better reflect the linguistic needs of the community. By providing bilingual, real-time information directly along key roadways, the project strengthens public communication during emergencies and improves the effectiveness of evacuation and safety messaging. While digital traffic signs are used in some larger urban transportation systems, their application for wildfire preparedness, multilingual emergency communication, and rural evacuation coordination is less common. In this context, the project represents an innovative use of existing technology tailored to the specific risks and demographics of Santa Cruz County, particularly in high and very high Fire Hazard Severity Zones. The project also builds local capacity by enabling County Fire personnel to program and manage signage messages as conditions evolve. This creates a flexible communication tool that can be adapted for future emergencies, public safety alerts, and community information campaigns. By combining digital infrastructure with bilingual outreach and wildfire preparedness strategies, the project strengthens Santa Cruz County's long-term ability to communicate risk, coordinate evacuations, and protect residents and visitors.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Leveraged Funds, Efficient Use of Funds, Other

BONUS NARRATIVE

The project demonstrates strong county collaboration and efficient use of public resources. Santa Cruz County Fire and County Public Works will work together to coordinate planning, permitting, and implementation along county roadways, ensuring the

project aligns with existing infrastructure and safety standards. This collaborative approach strengthens local capacity and supports coordinated emergency preparedness across departments. A key strength of the project is its leveraging of funds and in-kind contributions. Measure Q funding will support the purchase of signage equipment and required permits, while Santa Cruz County Fire will provide substantial in-kind support, including labor, installation coordination, construction oversight, project management, and ongoing maintenance of the signs and surrounding sites. By leveraging County Fire's expertise and operational capacity, the project reduces costs, speeds implementation, and ensures the signage system meets operational standards. The project also advances equity and community access by ensuring that safety messaging can be displayed in Spanish, serving the county's large Spanish-speaking. Providing bilingual information along major roadways improves access to critical public safety communication and helps ensure that all residents and visitors can receive clear and understandable alerts during fire season and emergencies. Through strong collaboration, leveraged resources, and bilingual communication capacity, the project represents a cost-effective investment that strengthens Santa Cruz County's emergency communication infrastructure while improving equity and preparedness for vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Attachment- Digital Signs.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[AtlasBrochure-.bmp](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

[No file uploaded](#)

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Jahaira Zaragoza

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Jahaira Zaragoza Forestry Assistant II

SIGNATURE DATE

03/12/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 210 Type: Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Miller Property County Park Expanded Trails Assessment and Design

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

210

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Miller Property County Park Expanded Trails Assessment and Design

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS TRAIL STEWARDSHIP

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

Completed Conceptual Trail Network Design

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

1

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Lydia Gonzales

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Senior Manager Institutional Engagement

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

16798 Kings Creek Rd, Boulder Creek, California, 95006

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

37.16654704138100

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.12247076286300

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

Miller Property County Park is a Santa Cruz County Park just north of Boulder Creek and within the San Lorenzo Valley area of Santa Cruz County. Boulder Creek has 5,429 residents (data is from the 2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates found on data.census.gov). This mountain community nestled in the redwood trees in the Santa Cruz Mountains is home to many commuters who work in the city of Santa Cruz. Despite being a more affordable place to live than Santa Cruz, especially for families with young children, the high cost of living remains a core challenge for its inhabitants, especially with the significant inflation of the past 2 years. Moreover, while not technically an underserved community, Boulder Creek is a low income community, especially as compared to the rest of the County: the median household income in Boulder Creek is \$84,156, compared to \$117,375 in nearby Felton, \$107,893 in Santa Cruz County as a whole, and \$100,149 on average statewide. According to the California Department of Housing and Community Development, given the extremely high cost of living in Santa Cruz County, individuals earning less than \$92,500 are considered 'low income.' Further, the whole San Lorenzo Valley was

deeply impacted by the CZU Lightning Complex Fire, which started on August 16th, 2020 as a result of hundreds of lightning strikes during a summer storm. The CZU Fire was not fully contained until September 22nd, 2020, at which time it had burned 86,509 acres across Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties and 1,450 structures were lost. Almost all residents were forced to evacuate Boulder Creek during the fire. Almost 6 years later, the impacts of this fire can still be felt throughout the whole Valley. Many residents who lost homes were unable to rebuild due to the high cost of rebuilding (costs, in particular of lumber, were driven up by the demand caused by the fires throughout California) and challenges moving through insurance payout processes. Other families who lost homes and stayed in the community, continue to live on their properties in temporary dwellings including RV's and mobile homes while they work through the rebuilding process or still wait to rebuild.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

The Miller Property County Park is located in District 5 of Santa Cruz County.

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

As noted, the Miller Property County Park is located just north of Boulder Creek in unincorporated Santa Cruz County. Properly built and expanded trails in this County park will serve the local Boulder Creek and San Lorenzo Valley communities, as well as visitors to the region once completed.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

This project forms a key building block for the County and Santa Cruz Mountains Trail Stewardship (SCMTS) to be able to construct a robust trail system in Miller Property County Park that meets public access and conservation needs for this location. Once SCMTS is able to produce a comprehensive trail plan for the whole property, the County will be able to commence the public input process necessary to move towards the creation of a final design that can be appropriately permitted and then built. Based on our 2 decades of maintaining and building trails in Santa Cruz County, SCMTS has experienced all stages of this type of public engagement, design, permitting, and construction process. We therefore seek funding to ensure we can lay the groundwork for a high quality, accessible trail network that will serve a diverse set of users and provide a range of trail experiences suitable for the whole Boulder Creek community, while also protecting delicate ecosystems.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA		
State Water Control Resources Board	NA		
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA		
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

8

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

This assessment and design project is dependent on SCMTS staff availability and contractor availability and the funds to support their respective work. As such, it is in a high state of readiness once funds are awarded. To allow sufficient time for staff/contractor availability to begin work on the project, we are estimating a start date in October 2026 and allowing 8 months for the work to be completed (the work could realistically be done within 4-6 months). As such, we are confident that the project can be started and completed within the grant period. An important dependency for a robust trail network design is doing some of the mapping and site assessment after rainfall when the ground is wet, in order to be able to accurately assess how rainfall interacts with the landscape and how trails can best work with these natural processes. By planning to do assessment and mapping during the fall/winter/spring months, we should be able to meet this need. We are further able to build upon trail design and planning work that we already completed for the County for this park in the past year related to the existing informal trails on the property. See below for further details.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

40000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

46000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$16,500	\$0	\$0	\$16,500
Fringe Benefits	\$3,500	\$0	\$0	\$3,500
Contractual / Consultants	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$20,000
Indirect Costs	\$0	\$6,000	\$0	\$6,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

SCMTS seeks \$40,000 in Measure Q grant funding to start the mapping, design, and planning process for building up to 8 miles of new trail in Miller Property County Park. Miller Property County Park is an underutilized park located in unincorporated Santa Cruz County just north of Boulder Creek. The park consists of 3 contiguous parcels owned by Santa Cruz County with a conservation easement held by Save the Redwoods League, encompassing a total of approximately 410 acres. At present, there are some existing informal trails, but no formal public access infrastructure aside from a newly-constructed parking lot. The Santa Cruz County Parks Department's goal for Miller Property County Park is to expand public access to this underutilized natural resource in northern San Lorenzo Valley. To achieve this goal, there are 2 phases of activities. Phase I: formalize and renovate key informal trails, close undesired informal trails, and build a parking lot and connection between the parking lot and trails Phase II: add new trails to expand access across the Park In 2025, the Parks Department engaged SCMTS after a public RFP process to provide assessment, recommendations, and designs for Phase I. With all available County funds for the Park earmarked for activities in Phase I (already underway), SCMTS is now supporting the Parks Department in fundraising to start the initial work on Phase II.

PROJECT START DATE

10/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

05/28/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

As noted, there are some existing informal trails at Miller Property County Park, but there has been no formal public access infrastructure in the Park. The County of Santa Cruz's Department of Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services (hereafter referred to as 'Parks Department') seeks to redress this issue. By creating high quality public trails and infrastructure in this underutilized County park, the community will gain access to more of this special landscape which includes old growth redwood trees. In addition to increasing recreational access and public awareness of this park, the Parks Department seeks to protect the ecosystems on the property from climate change-related impacts and human impacts caused by informal trails. This aligns perfectly with the 2025-2030 Measure Q Vision Plan thematic priorities to increase access to parks and other outdoor areas in underserved neighborhoods, reduce wildfire risks, and protect water and the wildlife. Not only does this project start the process of opening up the rest of Miller Property County Park to the public in this low-income community, it will ultimately also support water resource management, wildfire risk reduction and forest health, and wildlife and habitat protection across the property. These benefits will be realized through the creation of a trail network that reaches across this 410 acre park. Research has proven that recreational trails increase public access as well as forest health and emergency access: in 2022, the California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force shared in their Joint Strategy that "environmentally, stewarding public lands for outdoor recreation is associated with ecosystem protection and conservation efforts that ensure watershed, forest, and habitat preservation" (available online here: <https://www.calrecvision.org/joint-strategy>). In 2023, the U.S. Department of Transportation also published a report on the critical role of trails in climate resilience and emergency response ("Trails and Resilience: Review of the Role of Trails in Climate Resilience and Emergency Response"). However, these benefits will not be realized until trails are built that can span the majority of the Miller Property County Park. This Phase II work in the Park, in turn, can not commence until a well-informed trail network concept can be shared for stakeholder and public engagement, prior to approvals and permitting. We therefore seek Tier 1 Measure Q support to start this process. Specifically, this project would involve a thorough exploration of the property to map and identify areas of constraint and of opportunity for different recreation possibilities based on topography, vegetation, geology, etc. After sharing these findings with the Parks Department (and outside experts as needed), SCMTS will then develop a conceptual trail network that clearly lays out the characteristics for each trail, potential trail user experiences, and a refined concept for a Kings Creek Bridge crossing (an initial concept was created by SCMTS during Phase I mapping). The intention is for this new trail network to include a wheelchair accessible trail and, as such, SCMTS will seek out areas suitable for this particular trail need on the property as part of the project activities.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

This project enables the County to continue to move towards the goal of opening up the whole Miller Property County Park to the public through a sustainable, high quality trail network, despite funding constraints. As noted above, recreational trails have many proven benefits including public health, environmental protection, climate change-related risk mitigation, access for emergency response, economic growth, and forest fuel breaks. Moreover, atmospheric rivers, extreme heat, and drought result in wildfires, floods, mudslides, and other outcomes (e.g. heat deaths, power outages) that disproportionately impact low-income communities. The Boulder Creek and greater San Lorenzo Valley communities know this all too well through their experiences during the CZU Lightning Complex Fire in 2020 and extreme winters that caused flooding and mudslides in 2023, to name just 2 recent examples of many. The low-income community of Boulder Creek, specifically, continues to be at risk for wildfires, floods, and mudslides. This project, once completed, will enable public input on the trail design and usage of this local park that remains largely unknown to town residents at this time. Community involvement in public access projects, especially those that can also protect the local environment and community, is not just a box to check, but a deeply necessary step for a part of Santa Cruz County that has lost a lot since 2020. Additionally, this proposed project is a cost-effective use of Measure Q funds. SCMTS provides free public stewardship throughout Santa Cruz County funded by our diverse funding streams (fee-for-service income, individual donors, memberships, corporate sponsors & grants). For example, we provide all of the maintenance for the City of Santa Cruz's unpaved trails (see Tony Elliot support letter for detail). We further offset costs through our robust volunteer programs that train and cultivate dedicated local trail stewards (SCMTS has approximately 1,000 unique annual volunteers). Our business model brings contract revenue from outside of the County in to benefit County projects, while also providing philanthropic fundraising for local public access projects. SCMTS is therefore an ideal candidate to extend the reach of Measure Q funds for this project into fundraising for the next steps in the Phase II activities.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity with an emphasis on parks improvements, trails, and access projects that expand safe, equitable access to open space was identified as a top priority in the Measure Q 2025-2030 Vision Plan. This project will commence the necessary process to significantly expand public access to a currently underutilized County park in Boulder Creek. SCMTS anticipates the trail concept map will span 6-8 miles of all-new trail on County property that has not previously been open

to the public. Furthermore, a stated goal for this trail network is to include a wheelchair accessible trail in the design (as possible based on the landscape constraints - this will be discovered during the mapping process included in this grant). In addition, the 2018 Santa Cruz County Parks Strategic Plan has the following 4 goals: Goal 1: Great Facilities - maintain and enhance the quality and accessibility of parks facilities for outstanding visitor experience Goal 2: Strong Organization Goal 3: Awesome Programs Goal 4: Effective Stewardship - steward and protect open spaces and natural, cultural, and historical resources for the enjoyment of current and future generations While the 2023 Update to the 2018 Strategic Plan found that the County is doing a good job with their facilities concentrated in high density areas, more work still needs to be done in less dense areas, especially at older sites. The findings included the following areas that need improvement relative to the County's goals: - Continue to update and maintain older facilities - Make parks more accessible to people with disabilities - Managing natural resources & fire safety - Protect above restoration or enhancement - Balance between conservation and recreation - Consult outside advisors with expertise in natural resource management - Making trails more accessible This proposed project would therefore put the County on the path to meeting Strategic Plan goals 1 and 4 and improving in all of these stated areas in the Miller County Property Park. The public benefits associated with this project will be the ability to have a say in the trail design and amenities in the Park through a community engagement process (which will only be possible after the completion of the grant activities). In the long-term, the public benefits will include recreational access to exceptional natural resources in a local park not previously officially open to the public. Benefits will also include the protection of local habitats and the community from the impacts of extreme weather and related emergencies. This project is exceptionally ready, due to SCMTS's contracted work for the County at the Park starting in 2025. We will be able to build upon the mapping work already completed for the Phase I trails on the property to produce conceptual designs for the whole property. Furthermore, SCMTS staff will already be out at the property later in 2026 to commence construction work related to Phase I.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

As noted, properly built and expanded trails in this County park will serve the local Boulder Creek and San Lorenzo Valley communities, as well as visitors to the region once completed. Boulder Creek has 5,429 residents with a median household income of \$84,156 (compared to \$117,375 in Felton, \$107,893 on average in Santa Cruz County, and \$100,149 on average statewide). According to the California Department of Housing and Community Development, given the extremely high cost of living in Santa Cruz County, individuals earning less than \$92,500 are considered 'low income.' The trail network design is intended to serve the whole community including individuals with disabilities, families with children and strollers, and the elderly.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Physical and mental health have been declining in the U.S. for decades, a trend that was aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Key factors proven to positively impact both physical and mental health are exercise, fresh air, and community. Research further confirms that connecting with nature supports mental health, well-being, and resilience, while reducing stress and improving mood. Time in nature also fosters a sense of identity, belonging, and connection to place. Building more trails, especially in a natural setting, therefore brings immense value to the surrounding community. This project will set the County and SCMTS on our way to building out a full trail network at an underutilized park in Boulder Creek. Miller Property County Park boasts spectacular nature, including rare old growth redwoods, upland/riparian redwood forests, mixed oak woodland, grassland, successional scrub, and Kings Creek running through it. Sustainably-built trails in the Park that are accessible to all will increase local access to nature and recreation, thereby increasing community health and well-being. As noted, community building and volunteer engagement are core to SCMTS's program model and mission. Once this project moves to trail construction, we would therefore host volunteer events in partnership with the Parks Department to include the community in the building of this new amenity. But before that, SCMTS will engage the community by completing the assessment, mapping, and trail design process for the Phase II trails in Miller Property County Park in alignment with this grant proposal - the completion of this project will allow the County to start the public engagement process that is a core part of bringing these trails to life. Throughout the project we will also collaborate closely with County staff and Supervisor Martinez.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land, Applicant does not have a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

This Tier 1 Measure Q project is intended to create a trail plan that is the precursor to building trails on Miller Property County Park. Therefore ground disturbance is not a part of this stage of the project.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

The project in this proposal forms an early, critical building block for the County and SCMTS to be able to build out a larger trail system in Miller Property County Park in the future (Phase II). The Parks Department's overall goal for this Park is to expand public access to this underutilized natural resource in northern San Lorenzo Valley. In 2025, the Parks Department started moving towards this goal by commencing construction of a parking lot on the property and engaging SCMTS after a public RFP process to provide assessment, recommendations, and designs using the existing informal trail network footprint. SCMTS's contract with the County included creating a base map, detailed trail designs with GPS tracks, a conceptual design for a pedestrian creek crossing, and cost estimates for trail construction and the pedestrian creek crossing. SCMTS has now been engaged to start construction on these Phase I trails in 2026. Now that the ball is rolling on revitalizing what is already on the property, SCMTS seeks to start the design and planning process for the trail expansion in the Park - Phase II - for which the County does not currently have funds. Given the duration of this type of process, starting now in incremental steps would minimize the cost burden for the County, while supporting the County's goal of generating more public awareness of this local park. The scope of this project includes: Detailed exploration of the property and identification and mapping of constraint and opportunity areas, points of interest, etc. Identification of different recreation zones based on topography, vegetation, geology, etc. I.e. where different trail experiences can best be accommodated within the property Development of a conceptual trail network that identifies desired trail experience and characteristics for all included trails and includes a wheelchair accessible trail, if possible Further refinement of the conceptual Kings Creek Bridge crossing including topographic surveying, 2D flow analysis, and preliminary engineering geologist evaluation SCMTS will present to and coordinate with county staff at all stages of this process so adjustments and refinements can be made as we go. The final trail concept design and mapping documentation will give the County viable trail network options to vet and present in a public planning process.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

We anticipate that this project will require staff time and consultant time to complete. SCMTS staff time will primarily be for our Trails Planning Director: field time on-site, scouting and mapping the property; zone map and conceptual trail corridor development, and time in collaboration with Parks Department and other external experts as needed. Our Trails Planner will support this work, with oversight from SCMTS's Executive Director. We will be able to build upon mapping work (using existing LIDAR data, for example) already completed for the Phase I trails on the property to produce the conceptual designs for the whole property. We also plan to engage consultant support for topographic surveying (\$8,000), engineering geologist evaluation (\$7,000), and 2D hydrologic flow analysis (\$5,000).

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

To allow sufficient time for staff and contractor availability to begin work on the project, we are estimating a start date in October 2026 and allowing 8 months for the work to be completed to give us plenty of time to collaborate and iterate with County staff throughout the process. This time period would also provide opportunity to explore property during the wet season, a critical step to designing trails that work with the landscape year-round. The exact sequencing of the consultant work (the topographic survey, engineering geologist evaluation, and 2D hydrologic flow analysis) will depend on consultant availability once we are able to start the project. As noted, though, we have buffered sufficient time for all of these activities within the grant period.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

Since 1997, SCMTS has been building and maintaining trails responsibly, sustainably, and collectively. We partner with agencies, cities, counties, and other land managers throughout the greater Bay Area to support access to the outdoors and community & climate resilience. In addition to trail construction and stewardship, we engage community through volunteer programs and events, provide free online & in-person education, and support local fire restoration and prevention. We have a highly skilled professional trail stewardship team with 27 full-time staff and 1,500 members. Our volunteer programs engage approximately 1,000 unique volunteers per year, providing up to 10,000 hours of public service stewardship throughout Santa Cruz County. We also hold a California Class A General Engineering Contractors License, maintain applicable insurance coverage, and are registered with the Department of Industrial Relations. Our business model combines fee-for-service trail design, construction, and maintenance work with funding from individuals, corporate sponsors, and grants to create free public access infrastructure, education, and community events that invite everyone in our community to participate in outdoor recreation and caring for the land. SCMTS mapped, designed, and built the first 9 miles of trail on Santa Cruz County's first National Monument, the Cotoni-Coast Dairies Unit of the California Coastal National Monument, which opened to the public in 2025. As such, our staff has both the experience and expertise to complete a mapping and design development project that is suitable for public comment, such as this one. With

over 25 years of building and maintaining world-class trails responsibly, sustainably, and collectively, our holistic design-build-maintain model puts us at the forefront of environmentally responsible trail construction and land stewardship in California.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Efficient Use of Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

SCMTS has a long-standing relationship with the Parks Department of mutual collaboration on trail projects. For example, we recently partnered on the Pace Trail Project at Quail Hollow Ranch County Park to build the new Pace trails. We are further about to break ground on the Felton Pump Track in the Felton Covered Bridge County Park in April 2026. This will be the first-ever pump track in the whole San Lorenzo Valley. SCMTS has raised the funds, completed the project planning, coordination, and construction and will gift the final resource back to the County once construction is complete. We often take on the fundraising for and execution of public access projects that our County or City partners have a need for, but not the capacity and/or funds to commence. We further have close relationships with Supervisors Martinez in District 5 where are Executive Director and many other staff members reside. As noted, this project is also an efficient use of funds, due to our previous and ongoing work for the County at Miller Property County Park. We will be able to build upon our existing knowledge of the landscape and maps previously created to build out an expanded map and conceptual trail network design. Further, given the typical duration of the process of bringing recreational trails to life on public property, starting the Phase II trail activities now in incremental steps will minimize the cost burden for the County, while already supporting the County's goal of starting to generate more public awareness of this local park.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Tony Elliot Letter_SCMTS.pdf

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Lydia Gonzales

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Lydia Gonzales, Senior Manager Institutional Engagement

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 225 **Type:** Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Las Cumbres Shaded Fuel Break Project

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

225

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Las Cumbres Shaded Fuel Break Project

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

South Skyline Firesafe Council

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

South Skyline Firesafe Council

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Acres treated

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

5

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Arnie Wernick

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

project lead

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
John	DeLong	[REDACTED]
Jane	Manning	[REDACTED]
John	Drew	[REDACTED]
John	DeLong	[REDACTED]
Jane	Manning	[REDACTED]
John	Drew	[REDACTED]
John	DeLong	[REDACTED]
Jane	Manning	[REDACTED]
John	Drew	[REDACTED]
John	DeLong	[REDACTED]
Jane	Manning	[REDACTED]
John	Drew	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

18260 Las Cumbres Rd, Los Gatos, California, 95033

PARCEL NUMBER

Please see parcel numbers on attached documents

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

37.20354834906900

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.06794194042099

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

Established in 1973 as a planned unit development on 1260 acres in Santa Cruz County, Las Cumbres Conservation Corporation is a neighborhood of 123 homes. It is located on the west side of Skyline Blvd., approximately two miles south of Castle Rock State Park. The development includes a Community Center building, pool and playgrounds; a self-owned and operated community water distribution system with fire hydrants, and a Santa Cruz County Fire station (Company 29) manned by volunteers.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Santa Cruz County District 5

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Project will serve the community of Las Cumbres

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

Negative Declaration

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

No additional permits are needed as we have a 2015 Notice of Exemption as CEQA updated 4/4/2025 by CAL FIRE. Please see attached docs.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
Other	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

DURATION AMOUNT

months

12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

Project is ready to start as soon as contractors are available. This is usually within 2-3 weeks after contact, but may be delayed due to weather or contractor availability.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

10000

20000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Contractual / Consultants	\$9,500	\$10,000	\$0	\$19,500
Indirect Costs	\$500	\$0	\$0	\$500

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The project improves and maintains a discontinuous shaded fuel break along roadsides and at strategic areas within the Las Cumbres Conservation Corporation Homeowners Association. The project will include fuel reduction activities for approximately 50 ft. deep along selected road boundaries. These roads include Las Cumbres Road, Old Vineyard Road, Grizzly Rock Road, Shear Creek Road, Miller Ridge Road, Knuth Road, and Favre Ridge Road. Additional fuel reduction in strategic areas may include: around the community center, along a portion of the northern boundary of the homeowners association, within islands of vegetation in the community and along a prospective escape routes. Project activities will be led and managed by Las Cumbres Conservation Corporation who is the landowner and is responsible for site selection, scope of work, contractor selection and supervision, project supervision, and all project reporting. The South Skyline FireSafe Council is the fiscal sponsor, responsible for handling all project funds.

PROJECT START DATE

PROJECT END DATE

07/01/2026

06/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Wildlife and Habitat Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

Shaded fuel breaks create strategic buffers that reduce wildfire intensity, allow firefighters to more safely attack fires, and improve forest health by thinning overcrowded trees and removing understory brush. These managed, thinned forest areas decrease the likelihood of canopy fires, lower fire severity and preserve forest resilience. They prevent large, hot fires from destroying entire habitats, allow wildlife to escape, and help ecosystems to recover faster. Additionally, they increase biodiversity and make forests more resilient to drought and insect outbreaks, which in turn secures long-term shelter for wildlife. By preventing high-intensity crown fires, fuel breaks reduce the burning of soil organic matter, which decreases the risk of sedimentation, severe erosion, and mudslides into reservoirs and streams.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Match Funding and Leveraging Potential

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Measure Q Grant funds will be matched dollar for dollar by Las Cumbres Conservation Corp. The work will be coordinated and managed by Volunteers so that the funds can go directly to contractors who will do the actual work. This is high leverage with minimal overhead, and is increased via the use of CDCR crews.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Shaded fuel breaks in Santa Cruz County strategically align with local, state, and environmental policies by creating defensible spaces that reduce wildfire intensity, protect critical infrastructure, and enhance evacuation route safety. They support the County General Plan and Measure Q goals by prioritizing forest health, reducing carbon emissions from catastrophic fires, and leveraging collaborations with CAL FIRE and the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County. Shaded fuel breaks improve wildfire readiness by reducing fire intensity and spread, enhancing emergency access, and protecting infrastructure. They align with Measure Q to reduce risks to life and property while maintaining forest health.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

Las Cumbres is a community of 123 homes located on 1260 acres in the Santa Cruz mountains. Shaded fuel breaks and fuel reduction along our roads protects homes, allows residents to escape when wildfire threatens, and facilitates access by firefighting personnel and equipment. Also, by improving defensible space, homeowners have a better chance of obtaining insurance. Additionally, maintenance and enhancement of the shaded fuel break along Las Cumbres ridge also protects the greater southern Skyline community by supporting safe fire services access in case of certain wildfire events and mitigating fire intensity and spread along a large ridgetop.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Shaded fuel breaks and accompanying roadside fuel reduction provide safer evacuation routes and access for firefighters to manage wildfires, and protect homes and infrastructure. This is an enterprise our entire community supports and is engaged in via several committees which are focused on maintaining our lands and wildfire safety. By lowering the intensity of wildfire, shaded fuel breaks reduce toxic byproducts of high intensity fires that would affect livability in forested areas. Reduction of toxic byproducts and ensuing soil sedimentation also reduces the effects of wildfires on the health and well-being of residents.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant does not have a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

As noted in our NOE as CEQA (see attached docs), ground disturbance is minimal: "The work proposed is a minor alteration to vegetation which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees and is consistent with Categorical Exemption Class 4 - Minor Alterations to Land. No activity is proposed that is listed as a limitation under CCR 15300.2 (a-f)."

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

The project improves and maintains a discontinuous shaded fuel break along roadsides and at strategic areas within the Las Cumbres Conservation Corporation Homeowners Association lands. The project will reduce fuel loads for approximately 50 ft. deep along selected road boundaries. These roads include Las Cumbres Road, Old Vineyard Road, Grizzly Rock Road, Shear Creek Road, Miller Ridge Road, Knuth Road, and Favre Ridge Road. Additional fuel reduction in strategic areas includes: around the community center, along a portion of the northern boundary of the homeowners association, and around islands of vegetation close to homes. Project activities will be led and managed by Las Cumbres who is the landowner and is responsible for site selection, scope of work, contractor selection and supervision, project supervision, and all project reporting. The South Skyline FireSafe Council is the fiscal sponsor, responsible for handling all project funds.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The budget will pay contractors directly to perform fuel reduction work for our shaded fuel breaks. These include improving and maintaining existing fuel breaks along our roads, and providing chipping for community slash generated by our homeowners and residents as part of our Firewise program. The budget allows for a combination of contracted tree service crews at approximately \$2500/day and additional contract labor at \$75/hr. CDCR crews may be utilized at approximately \$500/day. Project activities will be led and managed by Las Cumbres Conservation Corporation who is the landowner and is responsible for site selection, scope of work, contractor selection and supervision, project supervision, and all project reporting. The South Skyline FireSafe Council is the fiscal sponsor, responsible for handling all project funds.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

The work will begin within a few weeks of receiving grant approval. The schedule is flexible to allow for contractor availability and weather. Most private contractors should be available to begin work within a few weeks. CDCR crews sometimes take longer to schedule and might need to finish their work months later after winter rains. Please see the Budget/Schedule/Priority document for estimates. Project activities will be led and managed by Las Cumbres Conservation Corporation who is the landowner and is responsible for site selection, scope of work, contractor selection and supervision, project supervision, and all project reporting. The South Skyline FireSafe Council is the fiscal sponsor, responsible for handling all project funds.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

Las Cumbres has a long history of mobilizing our community to do much of the fuel reduction ourselves. For more extensive projects we utilize private contractors and CDCR crews. We have our own cadre of CDCR Sponsors to help supervise crews. We also have a Firesafe team that annually inspects and offers advice to our residents with emphasis on cost effective measures to harden their homes and increase defensible space. We have a long term relationship with our local Firesafe council and collaborate with them.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Volunteer Hours Leverage, Leveraged Funds, Efficient Use of Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

Las Cumbres has a long history of successfully implementing and managing several fuel reduction projects over more than twenty years. The work has been performed by contractors, CDCR crews, and Volunteers. All of the management and organization has been done by Volunteers so that our limited funding goes to pay for the actual fuel reduction work. We also have an equally long and strong relationship with our fiscal sponsor, South Skyline Firesafe Council, back to its founding days.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[LasCumbresBudgetSchedulePriority_2026-2027.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

[LasCumbresBudgetSchedulePriority_2026-2027.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[LasCumbresFuelReduction_Map.pdf](#), [LasCumbresAPNs_MapPhase1.pdf](#), [LasCumbresAPNs_MapPhase2.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[NOE_CEQA_2014.pdf](#), [NOE_CEQA_2015.pdf](#), [NOE_CEQA_2025_UpdateEmail.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

John DeLong

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

John DeLong, South Skyline FireSafe Council Treasurer

SIGNATURE DATE

03/12/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 232 **Type:** Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Sembrando La MILPA: Milli Mizpetzoanis (MILPA Explorers)

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

232

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Sembrando La MILPA: Milli Mizpetzoanis (MILPA Explorers)

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

MILPA

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

MILPA

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Education population

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

100

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Karina Moreno

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Program and Leadership Coordinator II

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Veronica	Miramontes	[REDACTED]
Angela	Parks	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

315 Main St, Watsonville, CA, 95076

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.90921016100045

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.75639478001536

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

—

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Not Applicable, this project will serve and different areas in the whole county.

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The Sembrando La MILPA program will convene at the MILPA office in downtown Watsonville, where we can have discussions and then travel to see and experience different parts of the whole county.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Not sure

DAC/SDAC NOTES

According to the CalEnviroScreen, the community we serve, Watsonville, has a score in the 80.93rd percentile and ranks within the top 25% of disadvantaged communities in California on the CalEnviroScreen SB535 Disadvantaged Communities Map. These data highlight the significant environmental and socioeconomic challenges faced by local residents. Additionally, the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool identifies Watsonville as being in the 85th percentile for low-income communities. These indicators underscore the need for increased access to environmental education, resources, and opportunities within the community. By expanding access to environmental knowledge and practical resources, our program aims to empower youth with the tools and information needed to support environmental stewardship and resilience in a community that stands to benefit greatly from these opportunities.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

N/A

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

weeks

DURATION AMOUNT

20

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

We do not anticipate delays in implementation, as we have established strong, trusted relationships within the community and have a demonstrated track record of successful outreach and engagement.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

46500

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

46500

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$21,694	\$0	\$0	\$21,694
Fringe Benefits	\$4,122	\$0	\$0	\$4,122
Travel	\$500	\$0	\$0	\$500
Supplies	\$4,019	\$0	\$0	\$4,019
Other Direct Costs	\$10,100	\$0	\$0	\$10,100
Indirect Costs	\$6,065	\$0	\$0	\$6,065

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

All budget lines items are within state and county guidelines. Budget line items support our project and the population that will be served through the project.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

The Sembrando La MILPA: MILPA Explorers program aligns strongly with the values of parks, recreation, access, and equity by creating culturally grounded opportunities for youth to engage meaningfully with the natural spaces in their community. Through a ten-week cohort experience, participants are introduced to outdoor environments - including wetlands, state parks, and museums - where they explore the interconnected relationships between people, land, and non-human relatives. These experiences encourage youth to view parks and natural areas not only as recreational spaces, but also as places of learning, reflection, and cultural connection. The program advances equitable access to nature by prioritizing youth who may face barriers to outdoor recreation and environmental education. By providing guided outdoor experiences, transportation support when needed, and culturally relevant programming rooted in storytelling and ancestral knowledge, Milli Mixpetzoanis helps ensure that historically underrepresented communities can access and feel a sense of belonging in parks and natural spaces. In addition, the program promotes recreation and well-being by encouraging outdoor exploration, reflective practice, and group activities that support interpersonal growth and mental health. By addressing nature deficit and strengthening environmental identity, youth gain the confidence and motivation to continue engaging with parks and outdoor spaces beyond the program. Through experiential learning and cultural teachings, participants develop a deeper understanding of ecological stewardship and environmental responsibility. This approach not only increases access to recreational spaces but also empowers youth to see themselves as caretakers and advocates for the land, strengthening long-term community relationships with parks and natural resources.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Equity Impact

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

This program should be prioritized because it addresses persistent inequities in access to environmental education, outdoor recreation, and culturally relevant programming for youth in Watsonville. Communities like Watsonville face disproportionate environmental and socioeconomic challenges, as identified by tools such as CalEnviroScreen and the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, which highlight the area as both environmentally burdened and economically disadvantaged. Despite living in a region rich in natural landscapes, many young people in the community experience barriers to accessing parks, outdoor recreation, and environmental learning opportunities. The Sembrando La MILPA: MILPA Explorers program directly addresses these inequities by creating culturally grounded pathways for youth to access and engage with parks, wetlands, and other natural spaces. Through guided outdoor experiences, storytelling, and cultural teachings that emphasize relationships between humans and non-human relatives, participants develop a sense of belonging in environments where they have historically been underrepresented. This approach recognizes that equitable access to nature is not only about physical entry to parks, but also about ensuring that youth feel welcomed, represented, and connected to these spaces. Prioritizing this program supports youth who stand to benefit the most from increased access to nature, environmental education, and culturally affirming experiences. By strengthening environmental identity, promoting mental and social well-being, and fostering environmental stewardship, the program helps cultivate the next generation of community leaders and land stewards while advancing equity in outdoor access and environmental learning.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The Sembrando La MILPA: MILPA Explorers program provides a meaningful public benefit by increasing youth access to outdoor recreation, environmental education, and culturally relevant learning opportunities throughout Santa Cruz County. Through guided visits to wetlands, state parks, and local cultural institutions, participants gain hands-on experience with natural spaces while learning about ecological stewardship, local environmental history, and the interconnected relationships between humans and the natural world. These experiences help youth build confidence in accessing parks and outdoor spaces that are available to the broader public. The program also contributes to community well-being by addressing nature deficit and promoting the social and mental health benefits associated with spending time outdoors. By fostering environmental identity, teamwork, and reflective practices, participants develop skills that support their personal development and strengthen their sense of responsibility toward shared natural resources. In addition, the program cultivates future environmental stewards who are more likely to engage in conservation, community advocacy, and responsible use of public lands. As youth deepen their understanding of environmental issues and their cultural relationships to land, they become ambassadors for stewardship within their families and communities. In this way, the program creates a ripple effect that extends beyond participants, strengthening long-term community engagement with parks, recreation spaces, and environmental conservation.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

The Sembrando La MILPA: MILPA Explorers program is open to youth from across the county but intentionally prioritizes youth from historically underserved communities like Watsonville, who are disproportionately impacted by environmental and climate-related challenges. Many young people in this community experience barriers to outdoor access, environmental education, and opportunities to engage in decision-making about the environmental issues that directly affect their lives. Through our culturally rooted teachings, outdoor exploration, and experiential learning, the program supports participants in developing meaningful relationships with the natural world and a deeper understanding of how environmental health and community well-being are interconnected. By centering youth who are most affected by environmental inequities, the program helps cultivate a sense of belonging, responsibility, and care for the land. In addition to building environmental identity, participants gain the knowledge and confidence to engage in conversations about environmental challenges and to see themselves as part of the solutions. By fostering leadership, advocacy, and stewardship, the program empowers youth to contribute to more resilient and environmentally just communities.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Our program strengthens community value by expanding equitable opportunities for youth to engage with parks, outdoor recreation, and environmental learning in Watsonville and throughout the county. Through intentional outreach and partnerships, the program connects youth, particularly those from historically underserved communities, with outdoor spaces such as wetlands, parks, and cultural institutions that are available to the broader public. By providing structured and guided outdoor experiences, the program supports public safety by ensuring youth engage with natural areas in supervised environments that emphasize respect for shared spaces, environmental stewardship, and responsible recreation. These experiences also contribute to health and well-being by addressing nature deficit and encouraging time outdoors, which supports mental health, stress reduction, and

positive social development. The program increases access to nature and access to recreation by introducing participants to parks and natural areas they may not have previously visited or felt comfortable accessing independently. Through activities such as guided exploration, storytelling, and reflective practices, youth develop familiarity with local natural spaces and gain the confidence to continue using them for recreation beyond the program. In addition, MILPA Explorers supports community identity and livability by integrating cultural teachings and environmental knowledge that emphasize the relationship between people and land. These experiences help youth recognize local natural spaces as places of learning, belonging, and cultural connection. By fostering environmental identity and stewardship, participants develop a deeper sense of responsibility for the places they live and recreate. Together, these efforts expand recreation opportunities, promote healthy lifestyles, and strengthen long-term community relationships with parks and natural resources, contributing to a more connected, resilient, and vibrant community.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

N/A

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

Our program does not involve any ground disturbances, as it is an educational initiative focused on fostering care for the environment, cultivating stewardship, and empowering youth to become informed advocates for the land and their communities.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

The Sembrando La MILPA: MILPA Explorers program is a ten-week, culturally grounded environmental education program designed to engage youth from across the county, with a priority focus on historically underserved youth in Watsonville. The program's primary goal is to cultivate environmental identity, foster stewardship, and empower participants to engage as advocates for their communities and the natural world. Participants will engage in structured outdoor experiences, including visits to wetlands, state parks, and cultural institutions, combined with workshops, storytelling, and reflective practices that integrate ancestral and ecological knowledge. These activities are designed to strengthen participants' connections to land, promote understanding of environmental challenges, and provide the tools to participate in solutions-oriented advocacy. Expected outcomes include enhanced environmental literacy, strengthened cultural resilience, improved social and mental well-being, increased confidence in accessing natural and recreational spaces, and development of leadership and advocacy skills. Participants will gain a sense of belonging in natural spaces and an understanding of how their actions impact both community and environment. The program's broader community impact includes increasing equitable access to parks and recreation, promoting environmental stewardship across generations, and fostering a cohort of youth who are equipped to advocate for sustainable and just environmental practices. By prioritizing engagement with youth most affected by environmental disparities, MILPA Explorers advances equity, community resilience, and long-term care for the local environment.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Staff FTE is calculated at .35 with fringe benefits at 19%. Travel covers mileage at .72 cents per mile per the IRS guideline. Supplies include things such as water bottles, backpacks, outdoor items, office supplies and other items needed for the curriculum. Other direct costs include Program Meals \$5,000 total - for participants at \$14 dollars per person per session to have nutritious meals and snacks, Participants Stipends \$4,000 total - for participants to receive a stipend upon completion of the program, Entrance fees \$500 - to parks and museums for youth, and Printing and or Copying \$600 - for nature guides and other curriculum related items.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

The project will take place between August 2026 and May 2027 with the two cohorts occurring during different seasons. Each cohort will gather weekly for 10 weeks for outdoor education and outings throughout Santa Cruz county. Parks, Wetlands, and Museums for this project were selected because it offers history, natural landscapes, open space, and accessible gathering areas that support outdoor learning and creative exploration.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

The Sembrando La MILPA: MILPA Explorers program is innovative because it was designed by community members with lived experience navigating the environmental and social disparities present in their own community. Program leaders first encountered

these inequities through their personal experiences growing up in Watsonville, where access to environmental education, outdoor recreation, and opportunities to participate in environmental decision-making have historically been limited for many youth. These experiences later informed their involvement in local environmental advocacy, where they recognized the need for culturally relevant pathways that connect young people to nature, environmental learning, and community leadership. Rather than approaching environmental education solely through a scientific or academic lens, the program integrates cultural teachings, storytelling, and ancestral knowledge that emphasize the interconnected relationships between people, land, and non-human relatives. This approach encourages youth to understand environmental stewardship not only as a technical practice, but also as a cultural responsibility grounded in identity, reciprocity, and care for the natural world. The program is also innovative in its emphasis on developing environmental identity before introducing complex environmental issues. By first fostering a sense of belonging in nature through guided outdoor experiences, reflective practices, and community-building activities, participants build the confidence and personal connection needed to meaningfully engage with environmental challenges and advocacy. By combining lived experience, cultural knowledge, and experiential outdoor learning, Milli Mixpetzoanis offers a model for environmental education that is community-rooted, culturally responsive, and designed to empower youth who are often underrepresented in environmental spaces to see themselves as stewards and advocates for the land.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration

BONUS NARRATIVE

—

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Measure Q Santa Cruz County 2026.xlsx](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

[No file uploaded](#)

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Angela Parks

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Angela Parks, Finance and Operations Manager

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 248 **Type:** Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: Creating Accessible Park Experiences for the Blind and Visually Impaired

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

248

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Creating Accessible Park Experiences for the Blind and Visually Impaired

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

—

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Population served

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

27

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Madeline Musante

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Director of Institutional Giving

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

██████████

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

████████████████████

PROJECT LOCATION

1509 Seabright Ave, Santa Cruz, California, 95062

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.97794942510200

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.00994461868400

PROJECT JURISDICTION / CITY

City of Santa Cruz, City of Watsonville, City of Capitola, City of Scotts Valley, Unincorporated Santa Cruz County, Multiple jurisdictions / Countywide

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

Vista Center serves all blind and visually impaired people who wish to access Santa Cruz's Parks, including both urban and rural County residents.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

N/a

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT

District 1 - Manu Koenig, District 2 - Kimberly De Serpa, District 3 - Justin Cummings, District 4 - Felipe Hernandez, District 5 - Monica Martinez

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Vista Center will provide guided walks for blind and visually impaired people through parks across Santa Cruz County.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Yes

DAC/SDAC NOTES

The above census tract tools were used to identify that our clients fall within the Disadvantaged and Severely Disadvantaged regions.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

N/a - we only require the standard entry park passes to take clients on guided tours.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA		
State Water Control Resources Board	NA		
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA		
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

2

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

Vista Center is ready to begin Phase 1 of our project at the start of the grant period. Although we've been experiencing staffing shortages over the past year, our team has compensated through training and utilizing volunteers and by sharing the workload of

open staffing roles. Long-term, this is not a sustainable model, so we intend to fill open staffing positions within the first half of the grant period. Currently, we do not have a designated Orientation & Mobility Instructor for our Santa Cruz branch, but we plan to hire one by the end of 2026. In the meantime, O&M walks are coordinated and supported by our Santa Cruz Branch Director and Program Coordinator and volunteers. O&M Instructors provide specialized instruction to low vision clients to teach them the skills to safely navigate the world, including how to properly use a white cane to navigate, understanding tactile landmarks, and navigating traffic. At Vista Center's other branches, O&M Instructors design routes through parks and public spaces, scouting ahead of time for potential hazards and providing additional training on how to navigate them. For example, if a trail has multiple tripping hazards in the form of roots or how to transition from walking on pavement to gravel. These tasks are currently being carried out by existing staff and Vista volunteers, and with this decreased capacity, one-on-one client instruction and new O&M destinations are more limited. During Phase 1, the first six months of the grant term, Vista Center will hire a Santa Cruz O&M Instructor and provide monthly outings to Santa Cruz parks we have already mapped for our clients. During Phase 2, our new O&M Instructor will expand the number of parks we visit by mapping and contacting park staff ahead of time to arrange accommodations with a park interpreter.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

50000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

76813

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$33,168	\$0	\$0	\$33,168
Fringe Benefits	\$6,153	\$0	\$0	\$6,153
Travel	\$174	\$0	\$0	\$174
Equipment	\$300	\$2,500	\$0	\$2,800
Supplies	\$414	\$0	\$0	\$414
Contractual / Consultants	\$6,150	\$21,000	\$0	\$27,150
Indirect Costs	\$3,641	\$3,313	\$0	\$6,954

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired requests a Measure Q grant of \$50,000 to provide Orientation and Mobility walks for blind and visually impaired visitors to equitably and safely access the County's parks and open spaces. Visual impairment is the third most common cause of disability globally, but despite its prevalence, public resources and spaces like parks are often inaccessible, and there are few public programs oriented to bridging this gap. Public parks are a shared responsibility and community resource intended for all to enjoy, yet they are not equitably accessible to all residents, particularly people with disabilities. Vista Center provides free Vision Rehabilitation Services to blind and visually impaired people of all ages to give them the skills to live safely and independently, regardless of their sight. With support from Measure Q funding, we propose a two-phase project, Creating Accessible Park Experiences for the Blind and Visually Impaired, to remove barriers to accessing nature and to support our local parks. We will provide one guided tour per month for 10-15 visually impaired clients. During Phase 1, we will hire a Santa Cruz O&M Instructor and continue providing tours of parks we have already mapped out for low vision guided walks. During Phase 2, our O&M Instructor will identify and map additional routes and begin outreach to the Parks Department to discuss integrating audio tours and other adaptive elements to the park.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2028

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

For individuals who are blind or visually impaired, many outdoor recreation spaces remain difficult to navigate independently due to a lack of tactile cues, accessible wayfinding systems, and trained staff who understand non-visual navigation needs. Vista Center's proposed project directly supports the goals of the Measure Q Vision Plan by expanding equitable access to parks and recreation while strengthening community participation and inclusion. This initiative aligns closely with Measure Q's priorities of Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity by helping ensure that Santa Cruz's natural spaces are usable and welcoming for all community members. While parks are widely recognized as essential for physical health, mental well-being, and environmental learning, these benefits cannot be fully realized when barriers prevent some residents from participating. By offering structured Orientation and Mobility (O&M) trainings and guided outings for people with visual impairments, Vista Center will help community members develop the skills and confidence needed to safely and independently experience local parks and trails. Through regular park visits and assessments led by trained Orientation & Mobility specialists, Vista Center clients will explore a variety of Santa Cruz County Park environments while identifying opportunities to improve accessibility. These experiences will not only create immediate recreation opportunities for participants but also generate valuable insights about trail conditions, wayfinding challenges, and safety considerations that impact blind and visually impaired visitors. The knowledge gained through these outings will inform practical recommendations for improving park accessibility, supporting the Vision Plan's commitment to making recreational infrastructure more inclusive. The project also advances Measure Q's equity goals by centering the lived experiences of community members who are often underrepresented in planning processes. Rather than treating accessibility as an afterthought, Vista Center will engage visually impaired residents as active evaluators and advisors. Their feedback will help identify improvements such as tactile route indicators, audio navigation supports, accessible interpretive materials, and other design solutions that enable independent travel. This participatory approach ensures that accessibility strategies reflect real-world use and community expertise. In addition, the project strengthens long-term access by building capacity within park systems themselves. Vista Center will provide training for park staff and rangers in sighted-guide techniques and inclusive visitor support, equipping them with practical tools to assist visitors with low or no vision. These trainings will help ensure that accessibility improvements extend beyond physical infrastructure to include knowledgeable staff and welcoming visitor experiences. Finally, this initiative reinforces the Measure Q Vision Plan's broader goal of fostering community connection with the natural environment. By creating meaningful opportunities for individuals with visual impairments to explore local parks, learn about ecosystems, and participate in outdoor recreation, the project supports both environmental stewardship and social inclusion. Through skill-building outings, collaborative assessments, and accessibility training, Vista Center will help transform parks from spaces that are nominally open to everyone into places that are genuinely accessible. In doing so, the project advances Measure Q's vision of parks and recreation systems that reflect the diversity, dignity, and full participation of the entire community.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Equity Impact

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Equitable access to nature is essential to community well-being, yet for people who are blind or visually impaired, public parks remain difficult to navigate independently. Trails often lack tactile cues, wayfinding information is primarily visual, and park staff may not be trained to support visitors with low or no vision. As a result, many residents are unintentionally excluded from spaces meant to serve the entire community. Vista Center's proposal addresses this gap directly, advancing the priority of Equity and Accessibility by helping ensure that natural spaces are truly usable and welcoming for all. Vista Center serves individuals who are blind or visually impaired throughout the region, and our clients bring invaluable lived expertise about the barriers that exist in outdoor environments. Rather than designing accessibility solutions without their input, this project places those individuals at the center of the process. This project also creates meaningful leadership opportunities for Vista Center clients. By applying their orientation, mobility, and advocacy skills in real park environments, participants help shape public spaces while strengthening their own confidence and independence. Their expertise becomes a resource that benefits both park systems and the broader community. At a time when parks are increasingly recognized as vital spaces for health, connection, and environmental learning, it is urgent that access does not remain limited to those without disabilities. By pairing the lived experience of visually impaired residents with the State Park Department's commitment to inclusion, this project offers a practical pathway toward truly accessible outdoor recreation. The result will be parks that are not just open in principle, but genuinely accessible ensuring that all residents can share the benefits of our natural landscapes.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Vista Center's project, Creating Accessible Park Experiences for the Blind and Visually Impaired, will ensure our parks are accessible to all people, regardless of their visual abilities, and we are ready to implement right away. We have already been conducting limited O&M walks with volunteers, so we have a strong framework in place and staff ready to jump into action, once funding is granted. This aligns with Measure Q's desire for project readiness and ease of implementation. At a time when National Park funding has been drastically reduced and funding to local agencies has been cut by the federal government, equity focused

projects like Vista Center's work are essential for providing meaningful, sustained access to nature. The public benefit access to parks provides is immeasurable in terms of mental health and wellness benefits.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

Vista Center provides free services to blind and visually impaired people of all ages. Depending on their diagnosis and life stage, clients come to us with a variety of needs; for example, some clients were born blind while others have diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration, or other conditions that cause them to lose their sight over time, and other clients became blind suddenly from trauma or illness. Vista Center is a crucial partner in helping visually impaired community members navigate life-changing, permanent health changes. We collect demographic data for all clients to gauge how well we are reaching local communities. In fiscal year 2025, the self-identified ethnic identities of our clients were 57% white, 14% Asian, 9% Latino, 2% Black, 2% Pacific Islander, 8% Other, and 7% declined to state. 93% of our clients qualified were at or below the poverty line per county standards, with 53% of our clients being extremely low-income, 16% very low-income, and 24% low-income. 65% of clients identified as female, 33% as male, and 2% other gender identity or declined to state. To protect our clients' safety, we do not track immigration status, but we know from our staff that a significant number of clients are immigrants and/or live in a mixed-status household. We anticipate our services will follow similar demographic patterns next year.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Vista Center's project serves Santa Cruz County's blind and low vision community, a population who is too often excluded from the parks and open spaces that define life in this region. By remedying this inequity, we support a multitude of community values. Public Safety is the foundation of this project. Through structured Orientation & Mobility (O&M) walks conducted within County parks, we will help low vision residents learn to navigate outdoor public spaces safely and independently. In Phase 2, we will translate those experiences into concrete, actionable recommendations for how parks can be made safer and more accessible for people with visual impairments, informing future design, signage, and programming decisions. Health, Well-Being, and Access to Nature: Many low vision residents have lost connection to outdoor spaces they once loved or have never had meaningful access to natural environments because inclusive pathways and support were unavailable. Restoring that connection, building the confidence and skills to navigate trails, open spaces, and park facilities independently, has profound effects on mental health, physical activity, and overall quality of life. Recreation is not a luxury; it is a component of a full and dignified life. After establishing baseline safety and mobility skills, Vista Center's mission extends to supporting clients in pursuing a joyful life. Whether that means walking along a coastal trail, visiting a nature center, or simply sitting in a park, these experiences matter and should be available to everyone. Access to Recreation and Community Identity: Santa Cruz County has one of the highest per-capita concentrations of parkland in California, and this remarkable resource is a community asset and a core part of local identity. People with disabilities are routinely denied access to these spaces, not by intent but by inadequate design and a lack of targeted support. Parks are free or low-cost by design, yet that promise of universal access remains unfulfilled for many residents with visual impairments. Vista Center helps close that gap, ensuring that the County's extraordinary natural resources belong to all who wish to enjoy them.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

N/a - Activities will take place in public parks, so we will only need the required day passes.

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

During Year 1 of our project, which covers the duration of the grant term, Vista Center will be teaching people how to navigate the parks as they exist today, meaning we do not need to conduct any construction or site improvement activities. Over the next several years, we do hope to make recommendations for improvement to the parks to make them more accessible for visually impaired residents, but those activities will fall beyond this grant term.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired requests \$50,000 in Measure Q funding to implement Creating Accessible Park Experiences for the Blind and Visually Impaired, a two-phase project designed to equitably connect blind and low vision Santa Cruz County residents with the County's parks and open spaces. Public parks are a shared community resource intended for all, but people with visual impairments frequently cannot access them safely due to a lack of adapted programming, wayfinding tools, and inclusive design. Vista Center exists to change that. Phase 1: Guided Access and Route Documentation In Phase 1, Vista Center will hire a dedicated Orientation & Mobility (O&M) Instructor based in Santa Cruz County, a staffing investment that will meaningfully expand our local capacity and directly support greater park accessibility. Our O&M Instructor will lead monthly guided walks through County parks for groups of 10-15 visually impaired clients, using routes we have already mapped for low vision navigation. These walks serve a dual purpose: they provide clients with safe, supported access to natural spaces many have never been able to visit independently, and they generate systematic documentation of route conditions, hazards, and opportunities for improvement. Throughout Phase 1, we will gather structured feedback from participants, who are uniquely positioned to identify barriers and advocate for solutions based on their lived experience. To support this work, we are building a strong advisory team. Bob Geyer, a retired public works professional who designed many of Santa Cruz County's trails, will provide expert input on accessibility considerations from a design and infrastructure perspective. We are also exploring a partnership with Roberto Manduchi, a Vista Board member and professor specializing in accessible design, to inform our methodology. Additionally, a recent Vista client has developed expertise in 3D-printed accessibility tools, including large Braille and tactile maps, and we are exploring a contract arrangement to engage them in producing tactile park maps for use during walks. This approach is both innovative and deeply empowering, recognizing that our clients are not passive recipients of services but active contributors to accessibility solutions. Phase 2: Recommendations, Mapping, and Systems Change In Phase 2, our O&M Instructor will expand the program by identifying and mapping additional accessible routes throughout the County park system. We will launch a formal outreach and collaboration effort with the Parks Department to share findings from Phase 1 and co-develop recommendations for integrating adaptive elements, including audio tours, tactile wayfinding materials, and inclusive signage, into park infrastructure. We recognize that State and County parks operate with extremely limited budgets and staff capacity, and Vista Center intends to serve as a resource and partner rather than a burden, bringing accessibility expertise, client insight, and low-cost solutions that parks staff can implement and sustain over time. By the end of the grant period, this project will have established a replicable, community-centered model for making Santa Cruz County's extraordinary park system genuinely accessible to all residents, including the thousands of blind and low vision individuals who currently cannot experience it.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Personnel: Covers the following staffing costs to run our program: - Santa Cruz Branch Director, 10% FTE: Oversees all program operations and approves project design and safety. Currently leads O&M walks until an instructor is hired and will continue to attend monthly walks to provide sighted guide support. - Program Coordinator, 10% FTE: Provides sighted guide support and coordinates client volunteers with Sophia and the rest of the branch. - Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Instructor, 20% FTE: To be hired, provides training on how to safely navigate without sight and will lead all O&M park visits. - Assistive Technology Instructor, 3% FTE: Provides Assistive Technology (AT) instruction to visually impaired clients, including how to use their phone to navigate and interact with nature, including taking photos without sight and using Be My Eyes and other resources to narrate what the photo contains and share it with their community. Fringe Benefits: Covers a portion of staff benefits, including health insurance. Travel: We estimate we will travel 240 miles (20 miles/month over 12 months) to transport clients to various parks, and we will reimburse staff at \$0.725/mile. Equipment: Materials needed to print in Braille and create tactile maps and maintenance of all equipment, including Perkins Brailier, Perkins Jumbo Brailier, 3D Printer, Tactile Map printer access, and audio recording and playing devices. Supplies: Park entry passes for clients and miscellaneous office supplies, including specialized replacement paper for the Brailier machines. Contractual / Consultants: We may pay the following consultants \$25-\$30/hour, depending on their expertise and program need: - Robert Geyer: Will provide route planning and liaison with the Parks Department. He will also provide feedback on project structure. - Bo Morgan: An expert in 3-D printing tactile maps. - Roberto Manduchi (Board member): Will provide further access to tactile map printing via his department at UC Santa Cruz and expertise on accessible design. - Tiffany Woodard: An expert Brailier and Braille Instructor. - Andrea Atilano: Client intern who provides invaluable insight into all programming as well as - outreach and community education.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

During Phase 1, Vista Center clients and staff will visit local state parks to conduct scouting walks and monthly Orientation and Mobility (O&M) assessments. Participants will evaluate existing accessibility measures, identify obstacles to safe navigation, and map routes that may already provide accessible trail experiences. This participatory approach is essential for advancing equity. Too often, accessibility decisions are made without meaningful input from the people most affected. By engaging visually impaired community members as evaluators and advisors, the project ensures that improvements reflect real user experiences rather than assumptions. Their insights will form the basis of clear, park-specific recommendations to help the State Park Department strengthen accessibility across local parks. Community feedback gathered during Phase 1 walks will directly inform the Phase 2 accessibility recommendations we bring back to the County, creating a meaningful feedback loop between lived experience and park planning. In Phase 2, Vista Center will work with park staff to translate these findings into practical improvements. Recommendations may include tactile route indicators, audio-based navigation tools, Braille materials, and tactile maps that help visitors understand the landscape before entering it. Safety enhancements will also be identified where needed to support independent travel. In addition, Vista Center will offer sighted-guide training for park rangers who lead tours or assist visitors,

building staff capacity to support inclusive experiences well beyond the duration of this project. Collaboration with State Park interpreters will further expand access to educational programming.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

Vista Center's project is innovative in several interconnected ways. Client-led design is the most innovative aspect of our project, as it is unfortunately all too rare in disability services. Rather than having sighted professionals make assumptions about what blind and low vision visitors need, Vista Center is centering the expertise of visually impaired people themselves, both in gathering real-time feedback during walks and by engaging client volunteers produce tactile maps, choose routes, and market our program to potential future clients. This flips the traditional service model and recognizes that the people most affected by an accessibility gap are best positioned to solve it. Tactile and 3D-printed wayfinding materials represent a genuinely novel application for learning about and accessing our parks. Using client-produced Braille and tactile maps for outdoor navigation in public parks is not a common or well-established practice, even though these resources are incredibly valuable for our community. When Vista Center's Santa Cruz branch moved offices this summer, a client volunteer produced large-scale, tactile maps of the new space that now reside in the entryway to our office. These maps have been an incredible tool for clients to familiarize themselves with the space, and we have had many requests to provide tactile maps for public spaces so clients can "see" and experience the outdoors for themselves. Our proposed cross-sector collaboration with local and state parks is also innovative; rather than simply running a program, Vista Center is building a feedback loop between the disability services community and parks infrastructure planning. Most parks' accessibility efforts are top-down; this project creates a bottom-up channel for lived experience to shape physical design. Finally, our proposed O&M visits to parks is rare. Orientation & Mobility instruction typically focuses on urban navigation like crossing streets, using public transit, and moving through indoor environments. Applying that methodology systematically to natural outdoor spaces, and using it to generate actionable design recommendations, is a relatively unexplored approach that has tremendous individual health and public accessibility benefits.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Leveraged Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

Vista Center's proposed project demonstrates strong partnership, collaboration, and volunteer engagement by bringing together community members, park staff, and local nonprofit partners to expand accessibility in Santa Cruz County's state parks. This collaborative model ensures that accessibility improvements are informed by lived experience, supported by park expertise, and sustained through community involvement. A core partnership in this effort is with California State Parks staff and interpreters who steward some of the region's most visited natural spaces, including Natural Bridges State Beach, Wilder Ranch State Park, The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, and Seacliff State Beach. Through organized park visits and accessibility assessments, Vista Center clients and Orientation and Mobility (O&M) specialists will work alongside park staff to evaluate trail conditions, identify navigation barriers, and explore ways to make park environments more welcoming for visitors who are blind or visually impaired. Vista Center will also offer training for park staff in sighted-guide techniques and strategies for supporting visitors with low or no vision, helping build long-term capacity for inclusive recreation. The project could also greatly benefit from alignment with the mission of Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks, a long-standing nonprofit partner that supports interpretive programming, native plant restoration, docent programs, museum exhibits, and educational events across many of the same parks included in this proposal. With its strong network of volunteers and supporters, Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks represents a valuable potential collaborator in expanding inclusive park experiences. Their programs in environmental education and stewardship could help amplify accessibility efforts by supporting inclusive interpretive events, educational programming, or volunteer-supported activities that welcome participants with visual impairments. Volunteer engagement is an important component of the project. Vista Center clients themselves will serve as accessibility advisors during park outings, contributing their lived expertise to help identify barriers and inform recommendations for improving trail navigation, interpretive access, and visitor support. This participatory role empowers community members with disabilities to directly shape public spaces while contributing valuable insights to park partners. Together, the collaboration between Vista Center, State Parks staff, Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks, and engaged community volunteers creates a strong network of support for accessible outdoor recreation. By leveraging partnerships and volunteer contributions, the project maximizes community resources while advancing the shared goal of making Santa Cruz's state parks welcoming and accessible for everyone.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Letter of Support - Bob Geyer.docx

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

O&M 1.jpg, O&M 2.jpg, O&M 3.jpg, O&M 4.jpg, O&M 5.jpg, O&M 6.jpg, O&M 7.jpg

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Madeline L Musante

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Madeline Musante, Director of Institutional Giving, Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 252 **Type:** Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant
Project: The Santa Cruz Surf Access & Resilience Initiative

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

252

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

The Santa Cruz Surf Access & Resilience Initiative

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Save The Waves Coalition

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Population served

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

270000

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Trent Hodges

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Senior Conservation Programs Manager

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Shaun	Burns	[REDACTED]
Diego	Sancho Gallegos	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

399 Beach St, Santa Cruz, California, 95060

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.96420105032800

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.02042459604399

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The Santa Cruz Surf Access & Resilience Initiative (SARI) serves residents and visitors across all of Santa Cruz County spanning urban, suburban, and rural coastal communities. The project covers public surf and ocean access points from the northern county boundary through South County, including the City of Santa Cruz, the City of Capitola, and the unincorporated communities of Aptos, Rio Del Mar, Seacliff, La Selva Beach, Live Oak, and Davenport. A priority focus is placed on South County communities,

including the City of Watsonville and surrounding unincorporated areas, where disparities in coastal access infrastructure mean that lower-income and Latino households face greater barriers to safe, high-quality recreational open space. The project will engage Spanish-speaking communities as part of its outreach and community input process. All residents and visitors who rely on Santa Cruz County's coastline as a free, publicly accessible open space system stand to benefit from this work.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

'not applicable'

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The project will serve the entire Santa Cruz County coastline, from Davenport in the north to the unincorporated South County communities down to the Pajaro rivermouth. Key areas include the City of Santa Cruz (Steamer Lane, Cowell's, Its Beach), the unincorporated communities of Live Oak and Pleasure Point, the City of Capitola, the Aptos/Rio Del Mar/Seacliff area, and around Pajaro Dunes. A priority focus is placed on South County coastal access points serving communities with limited or degraded infrastructure, including areas adjacent to Watsonville. The project is countywide in scope, with recommendations tailored to the specific conditions and needs of each access point.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 30 - Dawn Addis

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Not sure

DAC/SDAC NOTES

Census tracts 06087121500 and 06087101000 are identified as disadvantaged communities by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST). Census tract 06087122300 falls within the top 40% highest-scoring tracts in Santa Cruz County per CalEnviroScreen 4.0. These tracts encompass coastal areas with public surf and ocean access points that are prioritized under this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

This project involves desktop analysis, field surveys, community engagement and workshops, and GIS mapping - no ground disturbance, construction, or habitat modification. Accordingly, most standard permits are not anticipated. Save The Waves and the Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve have existing relationships with California State Parks, Santa Cruz County Parks, Santa Cruz County Community Development and Infrastructure, the City of Santa Cruz and the Coastal Commission through prior coastal assessments and community working groups, which will facilitate any necessary access coordination for field survey activities.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA	Assessment/planning only; no ground disturbance or habitat alteration.	
State Water Control Resources Board	NA	No construction or discharge activities.	
US Fish and Wildlife	NA	No ground disturbance or take of listed species.	
City/County Construction Permits	NA	No construction activities in this phase.	
Coastal Commission	Not sure	Field surveys within the coastal zone are non-invasive; CDP likely not required but will confirm.	

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
Other	NA	Access coordination with CA State Parks for survey activities at state beach access points.	

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

DURATION AMOUNT

months

12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

SARI is ready to launch upon grant award with no significant dependencies or delays anticipated. Save The Waves Coalition and the Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve have existing staff capacity, established relationships with County Parks, California State Parks, and coastal stakeholders, and a foundational dataset from prior surf break climate vulnerability and Surfonomics research that will accelerate project initiation. The primary workstreams - coastal access inventory, field surveys, community engagement, and GIS mapping - require no permits, no construction, and no regulatory approvals prior to starting. Access coordination with State Parks for survey activities at state beach access points is straightforward and will be confirmed in the first project month. Community engagement activities will be sequenced to align with the assessment phase, with outreach to Spanish-speaking and South County communities planned for months 3-6. Final roadmap and GIS tool delivery is anticipated in months 10-12, allowing time for stakeholder review before close of grant.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

42550

55900

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$25,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$35,000
Travel	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,000
Equipment	\$0	\$1,500	\$0	\$1,500
Supplies	\$4,500	\$0	\$0	\$4,500
Contractual / Consultants	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
Indirect Costs	\$5,550	\$1,850	\$0	\$7,400
Other Direct Costs	\$500	\$0	\$0	\$500

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The Santa Cruz Surf Access & Resilience Initiative (SARI) is a countywide project to identify, assess, and prioritize public surf and ocean access points along the Santa Cruz County coastline. SARI will document the condition of access trails, entry points, and infrastructure at surf breaks, integrating input from surfers and coastal stakeholders. The result will be actionable recommendations for areas requiring rehabilitation, hazard mitigation, safety improvements, and climate-adaptive solutions that protect both coastal infrastructure and sensitive habitats. The SARI achieves multiple social, environmental, and economic outcomes: enhancing recreational opportunities for urban and rural communities, supporting equitable access to open space, and guiding climate-adaptive infrastructure decisions. The project builds directly on Save The Waves' prior climate vulnerability assessment of the Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve, translating existing findings into concrete recommendations for County policymakers. This work also builds on the Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment project undertaken by Santa Cruz County. Deliverables include stakeholder presentations, a written report, and a publicly accessible GIS tool designed to catalyze future investments in sustainable coastal access for surfing resources. SARI aligns directly with Measure Q priorities by expanding benefits to historically underserved populations, reducing disparities in coastal recreation access, protecting coastal habitats, and building resilience to sea level rise, erosion, and extreme weather events. This initiative represents a multi-benefit investment that strengthens the economic and social value of surfing and beach access, informs strategic resource allocation, and lays the foundation for long-term stewardship of Santa Cruz County's coastline.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, Coastal Protection and Adaptation

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

SARI directly advances three of Measure Q's thematic priorities. For Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Santa Cruz County's coastline supports an estimated 783,000 annual surf visits and generates \$194.7 million in economic value annually (Save The Waves Surfonomics study). Yet public access infrastructure at many surf breaks and ocean entry points is undocumented, deteriorating, or inequitably distributed - particularly in South County communities. SARI will systematically inventory and assess all public surf and ocean access points countywide, producing a prioritized investment roadmap to guide improvements and suggested changes that enhance surfing access. Spanish-language community engagement will ensure South County and Pajaro Valley residents are meaningfully included in prioritization decisions. This will include detailed focus groups to understand community needs and dynamics. This process will also determine how different coastal access points are currently serving different surf user types and ensuring appropriate access depending on primary surf community members accessing particular breaks. SARI builds directly on Save The Waves' prior climate vulnerability assessment of the Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve, which identified surf breaks and coastal access points most at risk from sea level rise, erosion, and extreme weather. SARI translates those findings into actionable, site-specific recommendations for nature-based solutions and climate-adaptive infrastructure, giving County planners the data they need to protect coastal access assets and surfing recreation before they are lost. For wildlife and habitat protection, many of Santa Cruz County's surf breaks and coastal access corridors are adjacent to sensitive habitats - wetlands, dunes, riparian corridors, and ESHA. SARI will incorporate habitat sensitivity mapping into its access point assessments, identifying where access improvements can be designed to minimize ecological impacts and where habitat restoration can be integrated alongside infrastructure recommendations.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Multi-Benefit Outcomes: SARI is explicitly designed to generate co-benefits across recreation, equity, climate resilience, and ecological health. A single planning document will simultaneously advance coastal access for underserved communities, provide nature-based solutions guidance for climate adaptation, and integrate habitat sensitivity analysis - maximizing public return on Measure Q's investment. For leveraging funding and investment, SARI is designed as a catalyst for larger future investments. The GIS-based access inventory and investment roadmap will serve as foundational documentation for future grant applications to the Coastal Conservancy, California Department of Parks and Recreation, FEMA Hazard Mitigation, and other state and federal programs. Save The Waves will also pursue co-investment from its World Surfing Reserve network partners, surf industry sponsors, and conservation finance mechanisms it is actively developing. For this project, STW is contributing \$13,350 in cash match - 24% of total project cost - covering personnel time, field equipment, and associated overhead. In terms of equity, Santa Cruz County's South County coastal communities - including unincorporated areas near Watsonville with large Spanish-speaking and lower-income populations - have historically received less investment in parks and coastal access infrastructure than North County. SARI explicitly prioritizes these communities through targeted field assessment, Spanish-language outreach, and an equity lens applied to the investment roadmap's prioritization criteria. The project will identify and recommend corrective investments in access points serving disadvantaged census tracts. Our specialty lies in community building and understanding the different needs of a diverse coastal user base and through our process we will be able to determine how we can improve current access points to reflect different surf and recreation user bases. In terms of climate resilience value, coastal access infrastructure is among the most vulnerable assets in Santa Cruz County's public parks system. SARI's climate vulnerability assessments will help the County anticipate and mitigate losses from sea level rise, coastal flooding, and storm erosion - reducing long-term maintenance and replacement costs while protecting public safety and access continuity. This work is intended to add to the current work of the county by understanding surf infrastructure and bringing a surf ecosystem lens to the ongoing climate vulnerability work across the county.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

Public Benefit: SARI's deliverables - a written report, stakeholder presentations, and a publicly accessible GIS tool - are explicitly designed for broad public use. The GIS tool will allow residents, surfers, county planners, and partner agencies to explore access point conditions, surf infrastructure, climate vulnerability ratings, and investment priorities across the full county coastline. The project serves all of Santa Cruz County's approximately 270,000 residents, plus the more than one million annual visitors who visit the coast. In terms of strategic alignment, SARI is directly aligned with the Measure Q Vision Plan's coastal priorities and the County's broader climate resilience agenda. It complements existing County planning efforts including Local Coastal Program updates and the Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment Project, providing ground-level data on access infrastructure, surfing community inputs, and key safety gaps that need to be addressed for the surfing economy. The project also builds on the Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve designation - the first in North America - which already establishes a collaborative governance framework with County Parks, State Parks, and coastal stakeholders. SARI can begin immediately upon award with no regulatory approvals or land acquisition required. Save The Waves and the Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve have existing staff capacity, established stakeholder relationships with County Parks, Community Development and Infrastructure, State Parks, and coastal community organizations, and foundational datasets from prior climate vulnerability and Surfonomics research. The project team has identified all key partners, scoped the work, and is prepared to execute a 12-month workplan beginning July 1, 2026. A steering committee can be convened within the first 30 days of award.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

SARI serves the full breadth of Santa Cruz County's coastal users, with particular emphasis on communities that have been historically underserved by coastal access investments. In terms of general public and recreational users, all county residents and visitors who use the coastline for surfing, swimming, beach access, and recreation benefit from improved, safer, and more equitably distributed coastal access infrastructure. Santa Cruz County's 29-mile coastline hosts more than 30 public beaches and surf breaks used by an estimated 783,000 annual surf visits alone. Unincorporated coastal areas near Watsonville - including Manresa, Sunset State Beach, and La Selva Beach - serve communities with significant Latino and lower-income populations. These areas are designated as disadvantaged communities under CEJST and CalEnviroScreen. SARI will conduct dedicated Spanish-language outreach in these communities to ensure their access needs are prioritized in the investment roadmap. In terms of youth engagement, coastal access is a gateway to outdoor recreation, environmental connection, and physical health for young people. SARI will partner with local youth-serving organizations to engage young surfers and beach users in prioritization decisions, particularly in South County. The surfing community is the primary steward and user base of Santa Cruz's surf breaks. SARI will engage local surf clubs, surf schools, and the broader surfing community through the World Surfing Reserve's existing outreach networks. For integration with partner agencies and county planners, SARI's GIS tool and investment roadmap are designed for direct use by County Parks, State Parks, and coastal planning staff, enabling more strategic and data-driven capital investment decisions. This work is intended to be complementary to ongoing county work and provide key information specific to surf breaks that is often left out of planning processes.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Santa Cruz County's identity is inseparable from its coastline. Surfing, beach recreation, and ocean access are not amenities - they are central to the county's culture, economy, and community wellbeing. SARI directly strengthens this connection by ensuring that the infrastructure enabling coastal access is documented, maintained, and equitably distributed. Regular access to nature and physical activity - both strongly associated with coastal recreation - are well-documented drivers of physical and mental health. Ensuring safe, accessible beach and surf access across the county supports these outcomes for residents of all ages and backgrounds. In terms of community identity, The Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve designation recognizes the surf breaks of this county as globally significant cultural and natural resources. SARI reinforces local stewardship of these resources by producing tools that empower communities to advocate for and invest in the access points they depend on. In terms of recreation, Santa Cruz County has some of the best waves in the state if not the entire world recreate. SARI reinforces the idea that safe equitable access to the coast is just as important as providing access and infrastructure in the County's many parks and outdoor landscapes. For access to nature, SARI believes that safe access to the coast should be the right of every resident in the county and this project helps ensure that our coastal access points are prepared for the changes to come in time with our coast and adapt to our changing communities. Coastal infrastructure and access points should do as much as possible to ensure public safety and provide the resources and equipment needed for the public to address emergencies and unexpected events. In terms of outreach and engagement, SARI's engagement strategy includes three primary elements. First, stakeholder workshops will be held in at least three geographic zones (North County, Mid-County, South County) to gather input on access point conditions, priority needs, and community values. South County workshops will be conducted in Spanish with bilingual facilitation. Second, an online survey - available in English and Spanish - will be distributed through County Parks, surf schools, community organizations, and South County networks including the South County Triage Group and Monterey Bay Area Climate Justice Collaborative. Third, field visits will be conducted at key access points with local surfers, lifeguards, and community members to capture on-the-ground knowledge not captured in existing data. All engagement findings will be documented and reflected in the final investment roadmap and GIS tool.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

All assessed sites are existing public coastal access points on land managed by California State Parks, Santa Cruz County Parks, or other public agencies. No site control agreement is required; access coordination with State Parks will be confirmed in Month 1 of the project.

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

SARI is a planning, assessment, and community engagement project - no ground disturbance, construction, or site improvements are proposed. All fieldwork consists of non-invasive site visits, condition assessments, and photography at existing public access points. No permits are required to begin or complete the project. Save The Waves Coalition has successfully managed comparable multi-stakeholder planning projects across its 14 World Surfing Reserve locations globally, including prior climate vulnerability assessments and Surfonomics studies in Santa Cruz County. The organization has established working relationships with County Parks, California State Parks, and the coastal planning community that will facilitate access to sites and data. Key project staff are identified and available to begin work upon award. The GIS tool will be developed by a qualified GIS consultant and hosted on GISweb to integrate with County data with a confirmed long-term hosting plan.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

SARI will be executed in four phases over 12 months: Phase 1 - Baseline Inventory (Months 1-3): Using existing GIS data, County and State Parks records, and Save The Waves' prior climate vulnerability datasets, the project team will compile a countywide inventory of public surf and ocean access points and infrastructure collaborating with County staff. Each site will be assigned preliminary ratings for accessibility, surf infrastructure condition and safety, climate exposure, and habitat sensitivity. Special attention will be paid towards enhancing the surf recreation experience at each coastal access site. State Parks access coordination will be confirmed in this phase, as needed. Phase 2 - Field Assessment & Community Engagement (Months 3-6): Field teams will conduct site visits at all identified access points, documenting conditions with photography, GPS, and standardized assessment protocols. Simultaneously, community engagement workshops (English and Spanish) and an online survey will gather resident and user input on access quality, safety concerns, and priority needs. South County engagement will be conducted with bilingual facilitation. Phase 3 - Analysis & Prioritization (Months 6-9): Field and community data will be synthesized to produce a prioritized investment framework. Access points will be scored and ranked based on adequate surf infrastructure, condition severity, climate vulnerability, equity indicators, and community input. Nature-based solution opportunities and habitat co-benefit potential will be identified at priority sites. Phase 4 - Deliverables & Dissemination (Months 9-12): Final deliverables include a written assessment report with investment roadmap, a publicly accessible GIS tool displaying access point data and priorities, and stakeholder presentations to County staff, the Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board, and community partners. All materials will be available in English and Spanish. Key partners include County Parks, County Community Development and Infrastructure, California State Parks, and existing Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve community partners. STW will serve as lead applicant and project manager, with a GIS consultant engaged for tool development and a bilingual community engagement facilitator for South County outreach.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The total project budget is \$55,900, of which \$42,550 is requested from Measure Q. The remaining \$13,350 represents cash match contributed by Save The Waves Coalition, reflecting the organization's commitment to co-investing in this initiative. Personnel (\$35,000 | \$25,000 MQ + \$10,000 match): The largest budget category covers Save The Waves staff time for project management, stakeholder coordination, field assessment, data analysis, and report writing. The \$10,000 cash match reflects STW staff time contributed above and beyond hours charged to Measure Q, demonstrating organizational co-investment in the project. Supplies (\$4,500 | Measure Q): Field assessment materials, data collection tools, printed community engagement materials in English and Spanish, and workshop supplies. Contractual / Consultants (\$5,000 | Measure Q): A GIS consultant will develop and populate the public-facing GIS access inventory tool. A bilingual community engagement facilitator will lead Spanish-language outreach in South County. These are specialized services not available in-house. Travel (\$2,000 | Measure Q): Mileage and transportation for field assessment site visits across the full 29-mile county coastline, and travel to community engagement workshops in North, Mid, and South County. Equipment (\$1,500 | match): Desktop and camera equipment for documentation are fully covered by match funding - no Measure Q funds requested for equipment. Other Direct Costs (\$500 | Measure Q): Occupancy costs for Save The Waves Coalition. Indirect Costs (\$7,400 | 15% of direct costs, \$5,550 Measure Q + \$1,850 match): Organizational overhead covering accounting, communications, and administrative support associated with project management and grant compliance, calculated at the 15% cap on direct costs. All costs are reasonable and necessary. Fringe benefits are incorporated into personnel salary rates; no separate fringe line is required. Indirect costs cover organizational overhead. Save

The Waves maintains financial controls and grant management systems appropriate to this award size, including annual audits and grant-specific accounting.

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

SARI will be executed over 12 months beginning July 1, 2026 and concluding June 30, 2027. The project can begin immediately upon award with no pre-conditions, permits, or regulatory approvals required. Months 1-3: Baseline inventory compilation; State Parks access coordination; project steering committee convened; GIS consultant and community engagement facilitator contracted. Months 3-6: Field assessments countywide; community engagement workshops (North, Mid, South County); online survey deployment and closure. Months 6-9: Data synthesis and analysis; investment prioritization framework developed; draft report circulated to steering committee for review. Months 9-12: Final report completed; GIS tool built, populated, and launched; stakeholder presentations to County Parks, Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board, and community partners; Spanish-language materials finalized. Interim progress reports will be submitted to the County at Month 6 and Month 12. All deliverables will be completed within the grant period. No significant timeline risks are anticipated; the project scope is well-matched to the 12-month timeframe and available staff capacity.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

Innovation: SARI introduces innovative approaches to coastal planning in Santa Cruz County. There has not been a comprehensive assessment of surf break access, safety, infrastructure as well as community engagement in understanding user type in California to date. This would represent some of the most forward thinking work in valuing and upholding the quality and safety of coastal access in California. SARI's publicly accessible GIS tool will be the first comprehensive, open-access inventory of surf and ocean access points in Santa Cruz County, providing a living dataset that County Parks, State Parks, grant applicants, and community advocates can use for years beyond this project. Organizational Capacity: Save The Waves Coalition is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with 20+ years of experience protecting surf ecosystems globally. As the managing organization of the Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve - the first designated WSR in North America - STW has deep, sustained relationships with coastal stakeholders, government agencies, and surf communities throughout Santa Cruz County. The organization has successfully managed state, federal, and foundation grants, and maintains financial management systems appropriate to public grant compliance. The Director of Programs will serve as project lead, supported by regional staff with direct knowledge of Santa Cruz County's coastal communities and access infrastructure. STW's existing partnerships with California State Parks, County Parks, and South County community networks provide ready-made channels for fieldwork access and community engagement. In terms of sustainability, SARI's deliverables are explicitly designed for long-term use. The GIS tool will be hosted on a durable public platform and transferred to a County or partner agency for ongoing maintenance. This GIS tool will be created to merge seamlessly with current county work assessing sea level rise vulnerability. The investment roadmap will be used as supporting documentation for future grant applications, making SARI a force multiplier for subsequent coastal access investments well beyond the grant period.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Leveraged Funds, Efficient Use of Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

SARI is anchored by the Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve's multi-stakeholder governance structure, which includes County Parks, Infrastructure and Development, California State Parks, local surf communities, surf equity and access organizations and conservation organizations. These relationships are not new - they are the product of years of collaborative stewardship and will accelerate project execution and community uptake of deliverables. At approximately \$30,000 for a countywide coastal access assessment, GIS tool, and community engagement process serving all of Santa Cruz County, SARI represents exceptional value. STW's existing datasets, staff expertise, and partner relationships eliminate duplicative startup costs and allow Measure Q funding to go directly toward new knowledge generation and community-facing deliverables. Leveraged Funds: SARI brings \$13,325 in cash match - approximately 24% of total project cost - reflecting Save The Waves' direct co-investment in this initiative. Match includes \$10,000 in personnel time and \$1,500 in field equipment contributed by STW, plus associated indirect costs. Efficient Use of Funds: At approximately \$43,000 for a countywide coastal access and safety assessment, surf infrastructure analysis, GIS tool, and community engagement process serving all of Santa Cruz County, SARI represents great return on investment. STW's existing datasets, staff expertise, and partner relationships eliminate duplicative startup costs and allow Measure Q funding to go directly toward new knowledge generation and community-facing deliverables.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Copy of Measure Q budget.xlsx](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Capitola LOS_Save The Waves Measure Q.pdf, Letter of Support - Measure Q - STW - 03052026.pdf, SARI_LetterOfSupport_IntegralConsulting_Revell.pdf

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

2023_STW_Overview.pdf

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

PaddleOut_SantaCruz.png, Santa Cruz WSR 10th Ann. Nik.jpg, PleasurePoint_Will-Henry.JPG

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Trent Edward Hodges

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Senior Programs Manager

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 256

Type: Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

Project: Increasing Outdoor Environmental Education Access and Native Species Planting in the Pajaro Valley

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

256

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Increasing Outdoor Environmental Education Access and Native Species Planting in the Pajaro Valley

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Farm Discovery at Live Earth

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

native plants planted, # scholarships given, # acres of invasive species removed, # students taught

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

native plants planted, # scholarships given, # acres of invasive species removed, # students taught

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Hannah Ditty

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Development Manager

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

172 Litchfield Ln, Watsonville, California, 95076

PARCEL NUMBER

10913113

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.98169416607400

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.78460964084800

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The project will serve the Pajaro Valley in South Santa Cruz County including the city of Watsonville and unincorporated south county.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

not applicable

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The project will serve the Pajaro Valley in South Santa Cruz County including the city of Watsonville and unincorporated south county.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

No permits are necessary for this project.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA		
State Water Control Resources Board	NA		
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA		
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

24

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

The program expansion and increase in accesses is immediately ready, planting natives will take an initial assessment of the current status of the hedgerows and then ordering needed plants from nurseries.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

25000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

49000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$14,033	\$0	\$12,000	\$26,033
Equipment	\$900	\$0	\$0	\$900
Supplies	\$1,300	\$0	\$500	\$1,800
Other Direct Costs	\$5,767	\$0	\$0	\$5,767
Indirect Costs	\$3,000	\$0	\$11,500	\$14,500

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

Farm Discovery will expand regenerative land stewardship, habitat restoration, and environmental education programs on a 1.2 acre educational farm within the 150 acre Live Earth Farm in the Pajaro Valley of south Santa Cruz County. The project will restore native habitat, remove invasive species, expand climate smart agricultural practices, and increase equitable access to outdoor environmental education for youth from underserved schools. Measure Q funding will support native habitat planting, invasive species removal across five acres, and regenerative land management practices including low till, cover cropping, hedgerow planting, and composting. These practices improve soil health, increase biodiversity, support pollinator habitat, and enhance water retention, while strengthening climate resilience. Funding will allow program expansion, increasing hands-on environmental education that connect youth and families with sustainable agriculture and ecosystem stewardship. Through field trips, summer camps, volunteer stewardship days, and food recovery programs, Farm Discovery will engage approximately 3,800 students and community members in outdoor learning experiences focused on soil health, food systems, and environmental conservation. Transportation assistance and scholarships will ensure participation from schools and families that face financial or transportation barriers. By integrating regenerative agriculture, habitat restoration, and environmental education, this project advances countywide goals for climate resilience, improved water quality, ecosystem restoration, and equitable access to nature in Santa Cruz County.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/0028

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 1 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, Agricultural and Work Land Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

This project advances the following thematic areas: Parks, recreation, access, and equity; wildlife and habitat protection; and agricultural and working lands protection, while also delivering co-benefits for water resources management, wildfire risk reduction, and ecosystem health. Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity Farm Discovery expands equitable access to nature, agriculture, and environmental education. Funding will allow the organization to document and scale programming, increase scholarships, deepen Spanish-language integration, and provide transportation for schools where cost or logistics are barriers to participation. These investments ensure that more students, especially those from historically underserved backgrounds, can experience hands-on learning. Removing barriers to participation allows broader participation in climate stewardship and outdoor learning, strengthening community resilience while fostering a deeper connection between residents and the land that sustains them. Wildlife and Habitat Protection The project also contributes directly to regional biodiversity and habitat connectivity. We are located between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Gabilan Range; sitting within a crucial corridor of wildlife migration. By expanding native habitat through volunteer-led restoration projects including work completed by the California Climate Action Corps, AmeriCorps fellows, and community volunteers, we strengthen habitat connectivity and biodiversity. These efforts align with California 30x30. Planting native vegetation and hedgerows supports wildlife and improves ecosystem resilience to climate stressors. Agricultural and Working Lands Protection Farm Discovery uses climate-smart agriculture to strengthen the long-term health of working lands, which in turn strengthens broader environmental benefits in line with California's Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy. Cover cropping, compost, integrated pest management, smart irrigation, low-tillage, and hedgerow planting, all improve soil health. Healthy soils function as natural climate infrastructure, capturing and storing carbon, increasing water infiltration, and reducing erosion. These improvements enhance groundwater recharge, minimize siltification, reduce flood and drought vulnerability, and create natural buffers against climate-driven hazards such as wildfire and extreme storms. Diversified plantings and improved soil, which supports pollinators, beneficial insects, and wildlife habitat, allow farms to also

function as healthy ecological systems. By combining community access, ecological restoration, and regenerative agricultural practices in one place, this project delivers layered benefits: healthier landscapes, stronger communities, and greater access. It demonstrates how investment in stewardship and education produce lasting environmental and social returns for Santa Cruz County.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Farm Discovery at Live Earth advances Measure Q's prioritization principles by centering equity, multi benefit outcomes, and leveraged funding to generate lasting environmental and community benefits. Our work demonstrates how regenerative agriculture, environmental education, and community food access can intersect to address ecological degradation, disparities in access to nature-based learning, and climate vulnerability in south Santa Cruz County. According to the 2024 Santa Cruz County Community Health Assessment, 1 in 3 children in Santa Cruz County are living below the poverty line, with children in south county disproportionately affected. Watsonville's CalEnviroScreen 5.0 score is 95.25. The results range from 0-100 and represent the percentile ranking, Higher Percentile = Higher Burden. This number was calculated by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) identifying communities disproportionately burdened by pollution. Watsonville's Educational Attainment score is 95.47 and Poverty score is 91.27. These show the community need for more equitable education access, which Farm Discovery provides with its outdoor learning. We provide full and partial scholarships and transportation for school field trips serving historically underinvested schools in the Pajaro Valley. Through scholarships and inclusive program design, we remove barriers to participation and expand access to outdoor learning opportunities. These equity efforts help close opportunity gaps. In working with their food in the fields and in the kitchen, youth and families develop skills of resilience to meet the basic need of nutrition. When this works, we become a healthier community, better able to bear the strains of disaster in our bodies, in our families and in our community. We prioritize investments that deliver multiple measurable benefits. Regenerative land management practices implemented at Farm Discovery improve soil health, increase biodiversity, conserve water, and sequester carbon, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. These ecological gains are paired with community programming that increases access to fresh produce and strengthens environmental literacy. By designing programs with multi benefit outcomes and leveraging diverse funding sources, each dollar invested advances ecological restoration, climate mitigation, environmental education, and community wellbeing. A significant amount of resources directed to Farm Discovery's work are the service hours of California Climate Action Corps (CCAC) and AmeriCorps fellows. These fellows support with educational programming, food waste diversion, invasive species removal, community outreach, and leading volunteer events focusing on land stewardship, produce gleaning, and workshops. We receive many in-kind contributions from long-standing relationships with community businesses that support operational supplies and events. We also receive funding through loyal donors who give regularly. Public investment in Farm Discovery leverages private philanthropy, earned revenue, volunteer contributions, and institutional partnerships. Measure Q funding for program expansion generates environmental and social returns well beyond the grant period. Through this integrated approach, Farm Discovery ensures that resources are directed toward projects that maximize multi-benefit impact, advance equity, and build long-term climate resilience for our community.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Farm Discovery's work supports Public Benefit and is in Strategic Alignment with other overlapping jurisdictions efforts for environmental work. Public benefit comes through advancing climate resilience, reducing food waste, and strengthening connections between people and the land. The Watsonville 2030 Climate Action & Adaptation Plan identifies "climate restoration" as a key strategy for mitigating the effects of climate change, emphasizing actions that draw excess carbon out of the atmosphere through practices such as "tree planting and regenerative agriculture." Farm Discovery directly contributes to this vision by planting native habitat and farming regeneratively. These activities help increase soil health and carbon sequestration while supporting biodiversity and resilient food production. Our food waste diversion program addresses Watsonville's fourth largest cause of emissions, food waste. Food waste accounts for 8% of Watsonville's greenhouse gas emissions and was identified as a top four priority area in its Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. Farm Discovery's CCAC fellows are reducing food waste by diverting produce from the waste stream back into the food system or compost system. By diverting organic materials from landfills and returning nutrients to the soil, these efforts reduce emissions and strengthen agricultural soils. Our regenerative farming practices are also in line with many California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) programs for climate-smart agriculture and healthy soils. Farm Discovery's work aligns with regional and state priorities for climate-smart land stewardship. The Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy highlights the importance of regenerative agriculture, habitat restoration, and community engagement as pathways for reducing greenhouse gas emissions while delivering multiple public benefits. Agricultural lands not only provide food security, but also support pollinators and wildlife, help recharge groundwater, buffer communities from wildfire risk, and contribute to overall ecosystem resilience. Our programs and practices are in line with other work being done and build community knowledge and participation. Farm Discovery is ready to implement and scale these efforts

immediately. Our established educational farm, existing partnerships, and programs provide a foundation for expanding youth education, habitat restoration, and community engagement. Support from Measure Q will allow us to deepen this work, helping Santa Cruz County advance climate goals while delivering lasting benefits to its people, farms, and natural landscapes.

TARGET COMMUNITY / USER GROUPS

Our Pajaro Valley community, which encompasses south Santa Cruz County, faces some of the most severe cumulative environmental and socioeconomic burdens in California. According to CalEnviroScreen 5.0 data, the Pajaro Valley ranks in the 95th percentile statewide for cumulative environmental burden, indicating that residents are exposed to disproportionately high levels of environmental risk combined with socioeconomic vulnerability. Environmental indicators affecting the community include pesticide use (98th percentile), groundwater threats (95th percentile), and drinking water contamination (89th percentile). These conditions are closely tied to the region's agricultural economy and have direct implications for the health and wellbeing of local families. Socioeconomic conditions further compound these environmental challenges. CalEnviroScreen data shows that the community ranks in the 98th percentile for poverty, 99th percentile for educational attainment challenges, and 98th percentile for linguistic isolation. Many households are headed by immigrant families working in agriculture who face barriers related to language access, income instability, and lack of access to educational enrichment opportunities for their children. Farm Discovery's primary youth partners come from the Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD), which serves a student population that reflects these broader community challenges. PVUSD enrollment is approximately 88% Latino, with many students coming from farmworker families. Approximately 78% of students qualify for free or reduced price lunch. Many students also face barriers related to language access and limited exposure to outdoor learning environments. Despite living in one of the most agriculturally productive regions in the world, many youth in Pajaro Valley have limited opportunities to engage directly with ecosystems, understand how food is grown, or explore pathways into environmental stewardship careers. At the same time, environmental challenges such as pesticide exposure, water contamination, and climate related disruptions increasingly affect the region's long-term sustainability and public health. Farm Discovery addresses these needs by providing hands on, outdoor environmental education and farm-based learning experiences that connect youth with food systems, ecology, and community health. Our primary participants include elementary and middle school students who attend school field trips, after school programs, and summer camps, many of whom come from low income and multilingual households. Through scholarships, school partnerships, and transportation support, Farm Discovery ensures that cost and access are not barriers to participation. Currently we are able to support 17% of students participating in our programs who come from low income and underserved communities, though with Measure Q funding we hope to increase this number to our goal of 40%. Farm Discovery welcomes, and actively engages individuals and families from all backgrounds, sexual identities, abilities, and socioeconomic statuses. We strive to create a safe environment for community members to learn, grow and thrive through farm-based education and outdoor exploration. Our goal is to ensure under-resourced youth have equitable access to the physical, emotional, and intellectual benefits of our programs, regardless of socio-economic barriers. By providing equitable access to outdoor exploration and environmental stewardship opportunities, Farm Discovery helps youth develop the knowledge and skills needed to care for local ecosystems, strengthen community resilience, and support south County's long-term environmental health.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Farm Discovery's programs advance the Measure Q's Vision Plan by expanding equitable access to nature, increasing recreation opportunities, supporting community health and well-being, and strengthening community identity and livability. Through hands-on farm education, outdoor programming, and volunteer engagement, Farm Discovery connects residents of all ages, though with a focus on youth, with Santa Cruz County land. Farm Discovery increases access to nature by providing structured outdoor programs. Students, families, and community members participate in field trips, summer camps, after-school programs, and volunteer days that take place outdoors in farm fields, orchards, and other natural areas. Participants interact directly with soil, plants, animals, and seasonal cycles, building a meaningful connection to the natural environment. These programs provide nature access for youth who may have limited opportunities to spend time outdoors due to urban living environments, limited green space, or financial barriers. Farm Discovery provides recreation opportunities that combine outdoor physical activity with environmental education and skill-building. Participants engage in hands-on farm activities such as planting, harvesting, composting, caring for animals, cooking and exploring farm ecosystems. These activities encourage active outdoor recreation while promoting learning, curiosity, and stewardship. Programs are designed to be accessible and welcoming, with partnerships that bring youth from across Santa Cruz County to the farm. Volunteer days and community workdays create opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in outdoor recreational activities while contributing to the stewardship of local agricultural land. Farm Discovery programs support physical, mental, and social well-being with outdoor activities. Time spent in nature has well-documented mental health benefits, including reduced stress and improved focus, particularly for children. Participants learn about local food systems and engage directly with fresh produce grown on the farm, helping build awareness of healthy eating habits. The collaborative nature of farm tasks fosters teamwork, confidence, and social connection. In a 2025 feedback survey a parent said, "This is my son's second year attending Farm Discovery and I find it that he comes out with so much more confidence in himself. When he sees me eat what he brings it gives him so much joy. When he sees me use the things he makes it makes him stop in his tracks and say "thanks mamma" He feels important and empowered." Participants share the knowledge gained at

Farm Discovery with their families and wider community, amplifying those touched by its impact. The Pajaro Valley has strong agricultural heritage. Farm Discovery strengthens this community identity with its outdoor educational programming centered around agriculture. Programs highlight sustainable farming and the importance of protecting agricultural landscapes that define the character of south Santa Cruz County. By bringing together schools, volunteers, families, and community partners, Farm Discovery fosters community engagement and shared experiences on the land. These programs help cultivate a sense of belonging, stewardship, and pride in the region's agricultural and environmental resources, contributing to a more vibrant and livable community.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

NO GROUND DISTURBANCE EXPLANATION

This project does not need any major ground disturbance because Farm Discovery operates on Live Earth Farm which was established in 1995. All of the major infrastructure and capital investments that would require ground disturbance have already occurred and now the main ground interface is maintaining established trails, fields, and swales.

PROJECT SCOPE NARRATIVE

Farm Discovery stewards a 1.2 acre educational farm within the 150 acre Live Earth Farm, a biodiverse agricultural landscape that includes +50 rotational crops, pollinator habitats, and regenerative land management practices. This project integrates regenerative agriculture, habitat restoration, environmental education, and food recovery to generate measurable environmental and community benefits. This project will expand Farm Discovery's stewardship and education efforts across working farmland and natural habitats through the project scope which includes habitat restoration, expanded environmental education programming, and increased equitable access to outdoor experiences for local youth. Objectives: 1. Climate and Waste Reduction Divert up to 1.4 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions over 24 months through food recovery, composting, and food waste diversion programs. 2. Habitat Restoration and Biodiversity Establish 0.25 acres of native habitat plantings and remove invasive species across up to 4 acres of land over 24 months, improving pollinator habitat, strengthening biodiversity, and reducing wildfire risk. 3. Youth Environmental Education Access Increase youth participation in environmental education programming up to 60% over 24 months, engaging approximately 3,800 students through field trips and farm camps that teach ecology, regenerative agriculture, and environmental stewardship. Up to 65% of participants will come from underserved schools. 4. Regenerative Land Stewardship Maintain regenerative agricultural management across the educational garden and demonstration farm to improve soil health, increase biodiversity, and support climate resilient food production. Activities • Host field trips and summer camps focused on sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation. • Implement food recovery and gleaning programs that divert surplus produce from landfills. • Plant native habitat. • Remove invasive plant species to reduce wildfire risk. • Provide bilingual environmental education programming and materials. • Host volunteer stewardship days focused on habitat restoration, gleaning, and environmental education. Deliverables, over the 24 month project period: • Divert up to 4,000 pounds of surplus produce and food waste from landfills • Donate up to 150,000 pounds of fresh organic produce to community food partners • Plant and steward up to 150 native plants to support habitat restoration • Remove invasive species across up to 4 acres of land • Provide 50 field trip and summer camp scholarships • Provide transportation support for 10 school field trips serving historically underinvested schools • Engage approximately 3,800 students in environmental education programs • Expand school break programming by two additional weeks in both summer 2026 and 2027 • Update 100% of educational curriculum materials into Spanish and English by summer 2027 Farm Discovery sits at the intersection of agriculture, environmental stewardship, and environmental education, food access, and community engagement. In a region where communities face limited access to outdoor recreation, growing climate pressures, and inequities in environmental resources, we provide opportunities for youth and families to connect with the land, while participating in solutions that strengthen the environment and community resilience. Together, these activities advance a broader regional effort to strengthen environmental resilience in Santa Cruz County.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

A. Personnel Salary - Total: \$14,033.00 Executive Director will spend 1% of their time being aware of the programming and its deliverables, totaling \$933. Operations Manager will spend 2% of their time providing general oversight of the programming, totaling \$1,400. Farm Manager will spend 5% of their time planning and implementing the native plantings and regenerative farming practices we are requesting funding for here for compost & cover crop, totaling \$2,500. Education Manager will spend 10% of their time working on Spanish-English curriculum, trainings, and hosting school groups, totaling \$5,000. Educator is a part-time summer

hire who with this funding will spend 10% of their time leading the increase in summer camp programming, totaling \$1,800. Development Manager will spend 2% of their time reporting outcomes of the grant effectiveness metrics with data supplied by the Farm and Education Manager, totaling \$1,400. Development Assistant will spend 2% of their time recording pictures and stories and sharing information learned with the wider Farm Discovery community, totaling \$1,000. B. Supplies & Materials - Total: \$1,300.00 Native plants & mulch for 0.25 acres, approximately 150 plants, education supplies (paper, ink, laminate), compost and cover crop for 1 acre Farm Discovery fields. C. Equipment - Total \$900.00 Port-o-pottie rentals for volunteer events (\$125 per unit x 2 per event x 3 events = \$750) and additional irrigation tubing for natives (\$150) D. Other Direct Costs - Total: \$5,767.00 6 full-scholarships for summer camp (\$425 x 6 = \$2,550) and transportation costs for 6 field trips of 2-4 classes (\$536.16 x 6 = \$3,217) Six full scholarships for summer camp which is 120 hrs of environmental education and funding to cover transportation costs for six field trips for Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) where transportation costs can be a barrier to access. School buses hold approximately 50 kids, or two classes, plus teachers and chaperones, so providing transportation for six field trips would support access to 300 students. We track exact attendance in Salesforce and will report to Measure Q how many students were supported with funding. Providing field trip transportation impacts more students and summer camp scholarships allow students to engage more deeply. Participants show a 20% increase in environmental education retention in summer camps to field trips. E. Indirect Cost - Total: \$3,00.00 Power, garbage collection, equipment lease, water to irrigate natives, and employee benefits. Total: \$25,000.00. / yr

TIMELINE NARRATIVE

Project Period: July 2026 - June 2028
 July - September 2026 -Expand School Break Farm Camp program with 2 additional weeks of camp -Assess already established hedgerows to see what needs to be filled in and planning for additional native plantings
 -Invasive species removal across 0.5 acres -Connect with Second Harvest Food Bank (in addition to the already established partner of Grey Bears) for gleaning coordination
 October - December 2026 -Begin translation of educational curriculum into Spanish and English -Host fall school field trips -Begin transportation support for priority schools -Plant native habitat and pollinator species, fill in hedgerow establishment. -Continue invasive species removal -Implement winter cover cropping
 -Establishing gleaning and composting protocol -Host volunteer days January - March 2027 -Expand bilingual curriculum materials
 -Connect with schools about spring field trips, scholarships, and transportation funding -Continue invasive species removal
 -Monitor survival of native plantings -Winter produce gleaning and donations April - June 2027 -Piloting lead spring field trips in Spanish and English -Provide scholarships and cover transportation costs from PVUSD -Monitoring native plant installation and tracking where additions should be made -Continue invasive removal and habitat maintenance -Volunteer stewardship days
 -Complete bilingual curriculum updates -Apply compost Year 2 July - September 2027 -Continue expanded school break camps (2 additional weeks) -Introduce bilingual curriculum into school break camps -Maintenance of native plantings and pollinator habitat
 -Monitor biodiversity and pollinator activities -Summer gleaning and produce donations -Volunteer stewardship days October - December 2027 -Lead fall school field trips with expanded outreach to underserved schools -Continue invasive species removal
 -Maintain native plant areas and hedgerows -Plant cover cropping January - March 2028 -Winter field trips and workshops -Youth programs focused on climate resilience and watershed stewardship -Ongoing invasive species removal -Habitat monitoring and restoration maintenance -Continued produce donations to community partners April - June 2028 - Final Implementation & Project Evaluation -Lead bilingual spring field trips -Community celebration and stewardship events -Complete invasive species removal
 -Final planting and habitat improvements -Volunteer stewardship days Evaluation & Reporting -Provide an update on the impact of Measure Q funding in Farm Discovery's 2026 and 2027 Annual Report -Track participation impact, # native plants planted, # scholarships given, # acres of invasive species removed, # students taught, and # of volunteers engaged through Salesforce.

INNOVATION & CAPACITY NARRATIVE

Farm Discovery's Measure Q project represents a strategic investment in capacity building that strengthens both community stewardship and environmental education in the Pajaro Valley. Through this Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grant, Farm Discovery will expand its ability to connect local residents, particularly youth, to outdoor learning. This project directly aligns with the intent of Tier 1 funding by piloting new educational opportunities, deepening community engagement, and supporting small-scale restoration and stewardship activities that have an immediate local impact. Farm Discovery operates at the intersection of agriculture, environmental education, and community wellness. The Measure Q grant will enable the organization expand programming that integrates outdoor education with practical stewardship activities on working farmland and surrounding natural areas. By strengthening staff capacity needed to host these programs, Farm Discovery will reach more students, volunteers, and community members throughout the Pajaro Valley. A central component of the project is increasing access to place-based environmental education for local youth. Many students in the region have limited opportunities to explore the outdoors and Farm Discovery provides a safe nurturing space. Through Measure Q support, Farm Discovery will provide immersive field experiences where students learn about soil health, water conservation, biodiversity, and climate-resilient farming practices. These hands-on activities transform the farm into an outdoor classroom where science, ecology, and food systems come alive. At the same time, the project strengthens local stewardship by engaging community volunteers in small-scale restoration and land-care efforts. Participants will contribute to activities such as habitat enhancement, pollinator-friendly planting, and soil-building practices that improve the ecological health of the farm landscape. These efforts provide tangible environmental benefits while cultivating a culture of stewardship among residents who gain skills and knowledge they can apply in their own neighborhoods and gardens. Measure Q funding also helps Farm Discovery build organizational capacity. By supporting program development, educational tools, and volunteer coordination, the grant allows the organization to provide more resources for equitable access. The program prioritizes accessibility and community inclusion. Pajaro Valley is home to many agricultural families and historically underserved

communities. Farm Discovery's programs ensure that local residents have opportunities for outdoor education. As a Community Catalyst initiative, this project delivers immediate benefits, while laying the groundwork for long-term impact. By investing in education, stewardship, and community engagement, the Measure Q grant helps Farm Discovery build the human and organizational capacity needed to sustain environmental learning and land-care practices for years to come.

BONUS CATEGORIES

Strong Partnership/Collaboration, Volunteer Hours Leverage, Leveraged Funds, Efficient Use of Funds

BONUS NARRATIVE

Farm Discovery has strong partnerships with Pajaro Valley Unified School District, Encompass Community Service Transitional Age Youth Program, Notre Dame Mission Volunteers, CA Climate Action Corps, AmeriCorps, Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust, Live Earth Farm, Watsonville Wetlands Watch, Grey Bears Food What?!, and many more. Each year, dozens of volunteers contribute hundreds of hours to support operations, habitat restoration, community events, and the care of the farm. Their time and dedication expand our capacity to serve youth and families while deepening community connection to agriculture, nature, and environmental stewardship. Our partnerships with local schools, community organizations, and public agencies strengthen the reach and relevance of our work. Collaborations with educators help align our field trip and youth development programs with classroom learning, while partnerships with conservation groups and land managers support hands-on stewardship projects that benefit the health of the farm and surrounding areas. These relationships create a vibrant network of support that amplifies the impact of Measure Q investments. By leveraging volunteer energy and collaborative partnerships, Farm Discovery is able to expand access to high-quality outdoor education.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Measure Q Budget_FD.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[FD_Map_EnvroScreen_SchoolsServed.pdf](#), [Farm Discovery_Map.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[LoS_NDMV.pdf](#), [LoS_PVUSD.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[IMG_0405 2.JPG](#), [IMG_6878C813B055-1.jpeg](#), [IMG_58DDCFE273F2-1.jpeg](#), [JPEG image-43EB-9A84-92-0.jpeg](#), [IMG_9930.jpg](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Hannah Ditty

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Hannah Ditty, Development Manager

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 61

Type: Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

Project: Pinto Lake County Park Pump Track Reconstruction by Santa Cruz Mountains Trail Stewardship

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

61

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Pinto Lake County Park Pump Track Reconstruction by Santa Cruz Mountains Trail Stewardship

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS TRAIL STEWARDSHIP

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Population served

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

5000

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Lydia Gonzales

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Senior Manager Institutional Engagement

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

679 Green Valley Rd, Watsonville, California, 95076

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.96440523349000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.77003175102600

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

Pinto Lake is one of only 3 natural resources in Watsonville that the community and area visitors can use for recreation. Pinto Lake is an 8,000 year old lake, one of only a few naturally formed lakes in the Monterey Bay. As such, Pinto Lake County Park draws visitors both urban and rural from across the Pajaro Valley and Santa Cruz County as a whole. The area surrounding the Park is one of the biggest local agricultural producers in the region. As such, many community members in Watsonville and Interlaken (the census designated place - CDP - in Santa Cruz County directly across from Pinto Lake County Park on the other side of Green Valley Road) live or work in rural settings. In Watsonville 14.4% of inhabitants work in 'agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting, and mining', as do 13.7% in Interlaken (vs. 2% in California overall - 2022 US census data). The pump track in Pinto Lake is intended as a multi-age, multi-modality outdoor recreation amenity. However, as currently constructed, it only serves mountain bikers. This project will expand the scope of the pump track's usage to include skateboarders, scooter users, and roller skaters in alignment with the Park Master Plan. While a core benefit of this amenity will be its suitability for all ages and experience levels, its

primary intended audience is youth between the ages of 10-25. Based on visitor numbers for similar local pump tracks and the historical usage of this pump track, we anticipate 100-200 pump track visits per week, with an annual usage of 5,000-10,000 visitors.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Pinto Lake County Park falls within both District 4 and 2.

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

As noted, Pinto Lake County Park draws visitors both urban and rural from across the Pajaro Valley and Santa Cruz County as a whole. The majority of visitors are local community members from Watsonville City and the surrounding CPD's Amesti, Freedom, and Interlaken. The primary intended audience is youth and families from these local communities.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Not sure

DAC/SDAC NOTES

Based on both the CAEnviroScreen and the US Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, the Pinto Lake County Park itself is in a disadvantaged census tract and, critically, it serves the disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities surrounding the tract that the Park is located in.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

Categorically Exempt

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

Based on our conversations with Parks Department staff and the permits previously required for the original construction of the pump track, we know the site is categorically exempt for this project from CEQA, so only a grading permit should be needed. In order to obtain this grading permit, SCMTS will engage a civil engineer to analyze and provide recommendations with regards to stormwater runoff. Please see timeline & milestones below for further detail. SCMTS has decades of experience building trails and pump tracks in Santa Cruz County, so this permitting process is something we are familiar with and prepared for. We most recently obtained a similar grading permit to construct the Felton Pump Track at Felton Covered Bridge County Park (permit obtained in 2025, construction scheduled to start April 2026).

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	Yes	Grading Permit	Will be applied for once project is funded
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

3

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

This project's readiness depends most critically on having the necessary funds to commence work. Once sufficient funds have been raised, Santa Cruz Mountains Trail Stewardship (SCMTS) can obtain the grading permit and finalize the design and workplan in collaboration with County staff, ready to break ground in early 2027. SCMTS selected spring 2027 as a start date (funding permitting) to align with our trail crew's schedule, as well as to buffer enough time for permitting and design finalization (6 months+). One of the key benefits of this project is the ability to use existing infrastructure to reconstruct a pump track that will be safer, more durable, require minimal maintenance, and be able to be used by more community members (not just mountain bikers like the current pump track, but also skaters, scooters, and roller skaters). Per County Planning staff, there are many features that make this project particularly ready for execution (see attached project overview from Mike Pruitt, dated November 2025). Currently, the biggest delay for this project is therefore a lack of funding. If awarded this Measure Q grant, we are confident in our ability to leverage this support to raise the remaining funds from our diverse philanthropic income streams (major gift donors, sponsors, grants, community donors, in-kind support from construction partners).

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

350000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

493925

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$128,000	\$39,000	\$0	\$167,000
Fringe Benefits	\$22,000	\$11,000	\$0	\$33,000
Equipment	\$45,000	\$0	\$20,000	\$65,000
Supplies	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$150,000
Contractual / Consultants	\$9,500	\$4,000	\$0	\$13,500
Other Direct Costs	\$0	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000
Indirect Costs	\$45,500	\$15,925	\$3,000	\$64,425
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

SCMTS seeks \$350k in Measure Q grant funding to reconstruct the pump track in Pinto Lake County Park in Watsonville. A pump track is a closed circuit track where new and experienced cyclists can learn, practice, and enjoy outdoor recreation in a safe environment. The current track surface is made up of decomposed granite with a soil stabilizer, which has already heavily eroded since the track was built in 2018, making this much-needed youth recreation amenity often unsafe or unusable (due to ruts and holes) and creating environmental impacts. The County of Santa Cruz Department of Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services (hereafter referred to as 'Parks Department') has therefore requested the support of SCMTS to rebuild the track utilizing much of the original infrastructure but changing the surface to paved asphalt. This will improve user conditions, prevent erosion damage, and open the track up to a wider range of users (pump tracks are intended primarily for cyclists, but paved tracks are appropriate and welcoming for roller skaters, scooters, and skateboarders as well). 6

PROJECT START DATE

03/01/2027

PROJECT END DATE

05/28/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Request for Information

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

Per the Measure Q Vision Plan 2025-2030, increasing access to parks and other outdoor areas in South County and underserved neighborhoods, in general, is emphasized as a thematic priority. Watsonville and the South County region as a whole are the most marginalized communities in Santa Cruz County, with a high level of segregation and economic inequality as a result. Despite recent investments, there are still disproportionately fewer recreation opportunities for youth in Watsonville and South County due to this historic underinvestment. SCMTS envisions a future where outdoor adventures spark collective care for open spaces, helping communities and landscapes thrive together. SCMTS partners with agencies, cities, counties, and other land managers to support access to the outdoors and community & climate resilience. During the Measure Q stakeholder meetings, it emerged that there is a \$60M backlog of deferred maintenance in Watsonville, in addition to broader park amenity gaps across South County. SCMTS seeks to help address this gap by rebuilding the pump track at Pinto Lake County Park. The Pinto Lake County Park pump track was originally built as a result of public input for the updated 2001 Pinto Lake County Park Master Plan. In this updated park Master Plan, the intention was to build a 'skate park.' By the time of construction in 2018, it was built as a pump track in response to the growing local and regional popularity of mountain biking at that time. However, the loose track surface currently in place makes it unsuitable for skate boarders, roller skaters, roller bladers, and scooters, limiting its potential community use and not allowing for potential future shifts in user preferences. Moreover, since opening to the public in 2018, the pump track has already eroded due to the decomposed granite substrate used in the initial construction. Had the pump track received adequate investment at the time, then the track would have been able to support its originally intended users in alignment with the 2001 Master Plan, as well as the growing population of mountain bikers, while also preventing the need for substantial maintenance in such a short period of time. In partnership with the Parks Department, Supervisor Hernandez, and Supervisor De Serpa, the reconstruction of the pump track would form part of a larger effort to revitalize and expand youth recreation in the Pajaro Valley. This expanded recreation access effort includes creating a safe, durable pump track that will serve the whole community for decades to come, and a new basketball court, soccer field, and natural play area at the Mesa Village County Park adjacent to Pinto Lake. Together, these projects will significantly increase youth access to recreation in Watsonville and the Pajaro Valley. Once rebuilt, the Pinto Lake Pump Track will provide youth of all ages the opportunity to safely practice skills, enjoy healthful exercise, and build community outdoors.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

MULTI-BENEFIT OUTCOMES: As noted above, pump tracks are intended primarily for cyclists, but paved tracks are appropriate and welcoming for roller skaters, scooters, and skateboarders as well. By rebuilding the Pinto Lake Pump Track with an asphalt surface, we will be expanding the track's user base, while also creating a safer, more durable physical substrate that will last for decades to come. Reconstructing the pump track this way will further decrease the risk of the eroded decomposed granite and soil stabilizer (which is sprayed on its surface to help the granite 'stick' in place) making its way into the groundwater or even the lake (which is under restoration due to decades of harmful runoff from local agriculture). **EQUITY IMPACT:** These project benefits are all the more important in Pinto Lake County Park due to its location in Watsonville. Watsonville is among the most marginalized communities in Santa Cruz County. Due to its historical under-investment and marginalization, 2022 census data shows that Watsonville has a poverty rate of 13.8% compared to 7% in neighboring Freedom and 12.9% for the County overall. Median household income is almost \$30,000 a year less than in Santa Cruz County as a whole, and starkly lower than its neighbors: -Watsonville City: \$72,295 -Freedom: \$123,224 -Corralitos: \$152,036 Watsonville further has a high level of segregation, compared to Santa Cruz City's low-medium rate (data: Othering & Belonging Institute's Interactive U.S. Segregation Map). The communities surrounding the Park encounter significant linguistic isolation (13.9% in South County vs. 2.1% in North County, 1.5% in Mid-County, and 0.5% in San Lorenzo Valley, according to the 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year, available on [datasharescc.org](https://data.census.gov/tables/2022/acs/5year/s06012)). These disparities in income, segregation, and isolation add to the disproportionate environmental burdens, climate vulnerability, and related health outcomes in South County. Investing in projects that increase human and environmental health and well-being, while increasing community connections - like this pump track reconstruction - in Watsonville and the Pajaro Valley is therefore key to redressing these long-standing inequities. **LEVERAGING POTENTIAL:** SCMTS provides free public stewardship throughout Santa Cruz County funded through our diverse funding streams (fee-for-service income, individual donors, memberships, corporate sponsors & grants). For example, we provide all of the maintenance for the City of Santa Cruz's unpaved trails (see Tony Elliot support letter for further detail). We further offset costs through our robust volunteer programs that train and cultivate dedicated local trail stewards (SCMTS has approximately 1,000 unique annual volunteers). Our business model brings contract revenue from outside of the County in to benefit County projects, while also providing philanthropic fundraising for local public access projects (such as the trails at Cotoni-Coast Dairies). SCMTS is therefore an ideal candidate to extend the reach of Measure Q funds: if awarded, we would leverage the award to raise the remaining amount needed through our income streams. Our cost-effective project will additionally save the County significant money in reduced maintenance needs over time.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT: Per the Measure Q Vision Plan, projects with "an emphasis on parks improvements, trails, and access projects that expand safe, equitable access to open space" are an identified top priority. In particular in South County. Further, per the Vision Plan "equitable access also requires sustained investment in the maintenance and management of parks, trails and facilities to ensure these spaces remain safe, clean, and welcoming over time." This park improvement project explicitly rectifies an amenity that was intended to increase access, but has not remained safe, clean, or welcoming over time and requires ongoing maintenance due to the method of its construction. During the Measure Q stakeholder meetings, participants further emphasized that maintenance is a critical park equity issue, with the relatively poor condition of many South County parks due to underfunding as a prime example. Measure Q grant funding for the reconstruction of the pump track in the Pinto Lake County Park would directly address this issue by supporting a critical renovation and upgrade that make this much-requested outdoor recreation amenity safe, appropriate for more users, while also reducing long-term maintenance burdens for the County. In addition, by reconstructing the pump track with a paved surface, this facility will finally be able to serve all of its intended purposes in alignment with all 4 of the 2001 Pinto Lake County Park Master Plan goals (which it currently does not). Please see Bonus Categories narrative below and the attached Park Master Plan for further details. **PUBLIC BENEFIT:** A central intent of Measure Q is to expand benefits to underserved and historically marginalized communities, particularly in South Santa Cruz County. As noted, this South County project will reconstruct a degrading pump track in such a way that it is more accessible to more different types of users and will last longer with significantly reduced maintenance needs over time. The value of a paved pump track to the public lies in the community ties built surrounding these facilities and its physical & mental health benefits. Please see Target Community and Community Value narratives below for more details on the public benefit of this project. **READINESS:** As noted above, this project will leverage the existing infrastructure of the pump track to reconstruct a more durable pump track that serves a greater number of community members. The main dependency at this time is the funds to commence the work. As such, the project is exceptionally ready and can comfortably be completed within the year timeframe of the grant.

TARGET COMMUNITY

While a core benefit of this amenity will be its suitability for all ages and experience levels, its primary intended audience is youth between the ages of 10-25. Based on visitor numbers for similar local pump tracks and the historical usage of this pump track, we anticipate 100-200 pump track visits per week, with an annual usage of 5,000-10,000 visitors. Youth physical and mental health have been declining in the U.S. for decades, a trend that was aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, childhood in the United States has become increasingly centered on indoor activities, and access to nature often depends on race, income, identity, ability and zip code. Reversing this trend will require sustained, community-level effort. Key factors proven to positively impact both physical and mental health are exercise, fresh air, and community. Pump tracks provide all 3 of these in one amenity and are appropriate and safe for a wide range of ages and abilities.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Health and well-being, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

HEALTH & WELL-BEING: As noted, proven essential factors in establishing and maintaining strong physical and mental health are exercise, fresh air, and community. Pump tracks provide all 3 of these in one amenity. Physically, these continuous rolling tracks provide cardiovascular workouts and assist in acquiring new skills such as balance, a sense of speed, flexibility, physical and mental strength, coordination, and precision. Not only that, but they are particularly engaging for youth in Santa Cruz County, which is a world-famous mountain bike destination. In order to be able to enjoy mountain biking on the many fun, but often challenging trails throughout the area, participants need places to safely practice and learn. **RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES:** The current pump track at Pinto Lake County Park is no longer effective in achieving these goals, however, due to ruts and holes that continuously form due to erosion of the decomposed granite surface. By reconstructing the pump track utilizing the existing underlying infrastructure and paving the surface with asphalt, the pump track will become usable for more types of activities: paved tracks are suitable and welcoming for cyclists, roller skaters, scooters, and skateboarders. The new paved surface will further be appropriate and safe for a wide range of ages and abilities. **COMMUNITY LIVABILITY:** Free, easily accessible, outdoor recreation spaces that are welcoming to the whole family are crucial to quality of life and livability in a community. Pump tracks throughout the Bay Area are hotspots for families with children of all ages. This pump track, located in a family-friendly park with amenities that cater to younger children, other sports, and leisure for adults and the elderly, allows whole families to come and spend the day in Pinto Lake County Park and find activities that match everyone's needs. It is therefore critical that the pump track is safe, usable, and welcoming to a wide range of users. Moreover, Santa Cruz County is a world-renowned mountain biking hotspot. Dedicated places where younger or less experienced cyclists can safely learn and practice their skills before venturing out to local trails is therefore an essential local need. Pump tracks further naturally become gathering spots for outdoor and cycling enthusiasts and newcomers - hubs of activity where people connect, share advice, and cheer each other on. **OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT:** Community building and volunteer engagement are core to SCMTS's program model and mission. As

appropriate, we would therefore host volunteer events during the excavation and/or construction of the updated Pinto Lake County Park pump track (to be determined in partnership with the Parks Department). We further have strong relationships with local partners such as Watsonville Wetlands Watch and the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, who we would collaborate with for additional community engagement to publicize the reopening of the pump track once the project nears completion.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

The water quality in Pinto Lake became noticeably poor in the 1980's due to fertilizer and pesticide runoff from local agriculture and leaking septic systems. Therefore the restoration of the Lake has become an important project to improve the overall health of the surrounding ecosystem and simultaneously provide residents with safe recreational waters. This work is being led by the City of Watsonville, Santa Cruz County, Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District, community leaders, and local businesses (see more here: <https://www.watsonville.gov/728/Pinto-Lake-Restoration-Efforts>). It is therefore essential that the pump track does not increase erosion or other risks to the local environment. The current decomposed granite surface not only erodes on an ongoing basis, it also requires regular treatment with soil stabilizer. During treatment, industrial soil stabilizer has to be sprayed on the granite surface, then compacted into the surface. Please see attached photos showing the eroded surface and the treatment process from 2024. Since then, the surface has become further eroded. While a recent analysis of the soil and groundwater showed no current evidence of the stabilizer or granite in the groundwater, the risk of that occurring increases significantly over time as the track continues to erode with use. By replacing the granite surface with asphalt, this erosion issue will be resolved, creating both environmental and maintenance benefits. A new stormwater survey and water management plan are also therefore included in this project to ensure all risks to the local environment are minimized. Additionally, by reusing the existing infrastructure underlying the pump track in the reconstruction, SCMTS will incur less environmental burden than a pump track built at a new site.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Applicant does not have a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

REQUIRED PERMITS

Because this project will be reconstructing an existing site, utilizing the original infrastructure (such as drainage) already in place, there are minimal permitting requirements. As noted above, based on the permits previously required for the original construction of the pump track and our conversations with Parks Department staff, only a grading permit will be needed (the site is categorically exempt for this project for CEQA). In order to obtain this grading permit, SCMTS will engage a civil engineer to analyze and provide recommendations with regards to stormwater runoff.

PARTNER APPROVALS

Similar to our partnership with the County for the construction of the Felton Pump Track (due to break ground in April 2026), we anticipate developing an MOU and licensing agreement with the Santa Cruz County Parks Department once funding has been secured for the project. In this agreement, SCMTS would commit to the project and take on control of the site for the improvements, and donate the completed track to the county at the end of the project. The County has already provided a written assessment of the opportunities present in this project and strongly supports SCMTS taking it on. Please see attached letter from Mike Pruitt, dated November 6, 2025.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

We anticipate the reconstruction process will take approximately 3 months from groundbreaking to complete and would occur in spring 2027, if Measure Q funds are awarded. Between funds being awarded and groundbreaking, we would apply for a new grading permit for the site (the grading permit for the original track was issued in 2018) and work with the Parks Department to determine the stormwater needs and finalize the full track plan based off the stormwater analysis findings. Milestones would therefore include: - Apply for grading permit from the County: August/September 2026 - Review recommendations with County Stormwater & Parks staff: November 2026 - January 2027 - Finalize track plan with Parks Department staff: January-March 2027 - Excavate & remove existing track: March 2027 - Excavate/install additional stormwater mitigation as needed: March/April 2027 -

Construct pump track foundations using Class II aggregate: April 2027 - Place, shape & compact asphalt track surface: April/May 2027 - Install new fencing: May 2027 - Hydroseed & mulch areas surrounding track within pump track footprint: May 2027 Once completed, the maintenance of the pump track will become minimal, with a slurry seal applied 4-6 months after paving (approximately October 2027, should funding be awarded and construction completed in May 2027) and reapplied afterwards every 5 years.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

Yes

TEAM CAPACITY

Since 1997, SCMTS has been building and maintaining trails responsibly, sustainably, and collectively. We partners with agencies, cities, counties, and other land managers throughout the greater Bay Area to support access to the outdoors and community & climate resilience. In addition to trail construction and stewardship, we engage community through volunteer programs and events, provide free online & in-person education, and support local fire restoration and prevention. We have a highly skilled professional trail stewardship team with 27 full-time staff and 1,500 members. Our volunteer programs engage approximately 1,000 unique volunteers per year, providing up to 10,000 hours of public service stewardship throughout Santa Cruz County. We also hold a California Class A General Engineering Contractors License, maintain applicable insurance coverage, and are registered with the Department of Industrial Relations. Our business model combines fee-for-service trail design, construction, and maintenance work with funding from individuals, corporate sponsors, and grants to create free public access infrastructure, education, and community events that invite everyone in our community to participate in outdoor recreation and caring for the land. SCMTS recently built the first 9 miles of trail on Santa Cruz County's first National Monument, the Cotoni-Coast Dairies Unit of the California Coastal National Monument. We also funded and built the Ramsay Park Pump Track in the City of Watsonville. In addition to new trail construction and specific maintenance projects, SCMTS is committed to maintaining over 60 miles of trails and pump tracks across Santa Cruz County as a free public service. With over 25 years of building and maintaining world-class trails responsibly, sustainably, and collectively, our holistic design-build-maintain model puts us at the forefront of environmentally responsible trail construction and land stewardship in California.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

This project represents an opportunity for a high return on investment for the County due to the pre-existing track and preparation that went into it. As noted by Mike Pruitt, Santa Cruz County Planner (see attached letter), the opportunities at this site include the existing track infrastructure, which is in good shape and can be reused, existing ADA accessible parking space and an accessible ramp leading to the observation area, existing drainage infrastructure that could be repurposed for future stormwater measures (the stormwater is captured and then treated by a vegetated filter strip). In addition, the decomposed granite removed from the pump track could be repurposed on the Pinto Lake County Park walking paths and or stored on site for future use. Once sufficient funds have been raised, SCMTS can engage a civil engineer for stormwater analysis, obtain the grading permit, and finalize the design and workplan in collaboration with County staff, ready to break ground in early 2027. SCMTS selected spring 2027 as a start date (funding permitting) to align with our trail crew's schedule, as well as to buffer enough time for the permitting and design finalization (6 months+). SCMTS has ample experience both building new pump tracks and renovating existing tracks for the County of Santa Cruz, such as the Ramsay Park Pump Track and the Westside Pump Track, respectively. Our team is therefore prepared with the skills, expertise, and equipment to complete this project within the stated time period.

PROJECT PARTNERS

SCMTS has a long-standing relationship with the Parks Department of mutual collaboration on trail projects. Most recently, we have partnered on the Pace Trail Project at Quail Hollow Ranch County Park to build the new Pace trails. We are further about to break ground on the Felton Pump Track in the Felton Covered Bridge County Park in April 2026. This will be the first-ever pump track in the whole San Lorenzo Valley. Similarly, SCMTS built the Ramsay Park Pump Track in Watsonville. For both these pump track projects, SCMTS raised all of the funds, completed all project planning, coordination, and construction and then gifted the final resource back to the County. We often take on the fundraising for and execution of public access projects that the County has a need for, but not the capacity and/or funds to commence. We further have close relationships Supervisors Hernandez and De Serpa with whom we remain in close contact regarding this project.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

For this project, we would collaborate closely with Santa Cruz County Parks Department staff to finalize the design and construction of the Pinto Lake County Park pump track once the civil engineer report has been completed. We further anticipate collaborating with the City of Watsonville, Supervisors Hernandez and De Serpa, and Watsonville Wetlands Watch (who provide

ongoing plant maintenance in the area around the current pump track). As noted, SCMTS builds public access amenities for the community WITH the community through our robust volunteer, education, and outreach programs. We would therefore also communicate regularly with our local Santa Cruz County, Watsonville, and Pajaro Valley partners as the project gets underway to explore the best ways to collaborate and invite the community in to this particular project.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

0

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

0

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

0

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

0

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

—

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Costs for this project include materials, equipment, and labor (SCMTS staff) required to remove the existing decomposed granite track, update stormwater drainage, and reconstruct and pave the pump track and surrounding fencing. In addition, project costs include SCMTS staff time for project planning and design and project management. Consultant costs include fees associated with permitting and inspections. We anticipate the total cost for the project will be approximately \$500k, with \$350k requested in Measure Q support. If awarded, these funds would be leveraged to raise the remaining funds through SCMTS's robust network of individual donors, sponsors, and grant funders. Supervisors Hernandez and De Serpa have further pledged to allot funding from their discretionary funds once SCMTS has raised enough to commence the project (which this Measure Q grant funding would achieve, if awarded). SCMTS will also contribute in-kind matching support in the form of SCMTS equipment usage. Please see table above and attached budget spreadsheet for further details. Please note: per our email exchange with Clare Peabody on March 9th, 2026, we were instructed to define the "construction" line item in the budget categories presented in the Measure Q grant portal as contractual construction costs, vs. construction activities carried out by our own staff (which falls under personnel).

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

A core reason for reconstructing the pump track at Pinto Lake County Park, outside of immediate remediation of user safety issues caused by erosion, is the long-term benefit of an asphalt paved surface. Once paved, the maintenance of the pump track will become minimal, with a slurry seal applied 4-6 months after paving (approximately November 2027, should funding be awarded and construction completed in April 2027) and then reapplied approximately every 5 years thereafter. Outside of this, no track maintenance will be needed, saving the County both money and time long-term and ensuring sustained track usage and benefits to the public. Should any small cracks appear in the asphalt, they can be individually filled, without requiring a full shutdown or resurfacing of the track.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

Yes

REFERENCED PLANS

—

BONUS CATEGORIES

Long Term Stewardship Commitments

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

The 2001 Pinto Lake County Park Master Plan (attached) has the following 4 goals: 1: The park will continue to serve the recreational needs of the diverse population of Santa Cruz County. 2: The park will be designed in a manner that promotes safety, accessibility, organized youth programs and volunteer opportunities. 3: The park will be improved in ways that conserve and feature its existing natural resources. 4: The park will be planned and designed in an efficient, phased manner, allowing changes in the near future while facilitating implementation of longer range improvements. The 2001 Master Plan goes on to state, regarding Pinto Lake East: "Ease of access, low impact of development, and the opportunity to enhance this area as a recreational center make this site ideal for additional facilities." A skatepark is then explicitly called out as an ideal amenity to add to this area (it received the highest number of public votes for potential amenities to add to the Park). As noted, in its current state the pump track does NOT serve skaters of any kind, nor does it serve a diverse set of recreational needs for park visitors or organized youth programs. By reconstructing the pump track with a paved surface, this facility will finally be able to serve all of its intended purposes in alignment with all 4 Master Plan goals.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Pinto Lake Pump Track Reconstruction Budget.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[PINTO LAKE MASTER PLAN 2001.PDF](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[D4 Letter of Support for Pump Track.pdf](#), [Tony Elliot Letter_SCMTS.pdf](#), [2025.11.06_Pinto Lake County Park Pump Track Project 1.2.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

[Pinto_NOE - CEQA 6-6-2018.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[Pinto Lake Pump Track surface 2024.jpg](#), [Pinto Lake Pump Track Industrial Soil Stabilizer 2024.jpg](#), [Pinto Lake Pump Track Spraying Stabilizer 2024.jpg](#), [Pinto Lake Pump Track Spraying Stabilizer 2024.jpg](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Lydia Gonzales

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Lydia Gonzales, Senior Manager Institutional Engagement

SIGNATURE DATE

03/12/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 64 Type: Tier 2 Community Impact Grants
Project: Greyhound Rock Coastal Environmental Education and Interim Camping Program

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

64

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Greyhound Rock Coastal Environmental Education and Interim Camping Program

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

—

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

County of Santa Cruz Parks Department

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Population served

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

100

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Sarah Shea

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Parks Superintendent

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

██████████

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

██

PROJECT LOCATION

Greyhound Rock County Park

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

37.04284093536100

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.24937744140624

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

This program will serve park users, students, families, school groups from across the entire Santa Cruz County community.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

All

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Residents from all agencies will be welcomed and invited to Greyhound County Park's Outdoor Education Program.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

Our team is working to CEQA exemption.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	Yes	agreement in place	
State Water Control Resources Board	NA	CA	CA
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA	Santa Cruz	CA
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

24

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

None at this time.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

135000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

135000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$49,000	\$0	\$0	\$49,000
Fringe Benefits	\$24,000	\$0	\$0	\$24,000
Travel	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
Supplies	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
Indirect Costs	\$12,000	\$0	\$0	\$12,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education and Interim Camping Program is a multi-benefit coastal resilience, environmental education, and equitable access initiative designed to advance Measure Q's Vision Plan priorities for 2025-2030. The project will establish a managed outdoor education and structured interim camping program at Greyhound Rock, integrating coastal habitat stewardship, environmental literacy programming, and equitable access to nature for underserved South County residents. The program will convert an underutilized coastal property into a safe, ecologically managed site that provides supervised educational programming, habitat educational activities, and temporary managed camping. The project directly advances Measure Q's thematic areas of Water Resources Management, Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health, Parks & Public Access Equity, Wildlife & Habitat Protection, and Coastal Protection & Adaptation. It prioritizes multi-benefit outcomes, leverages philanthropic and state funding, and focuses

PROJECT START DATE

06/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

05/31/2028

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, Coastal Protection and Adaptation

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

The Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education and Interim Camping Program advances the goals of the Santa Cruz County Measure Q Vision Plan by expanding public access to nature-based learning opportunities while fostering environmental stewardship through immersive outdoor education. The program directly supports Measure Q's thematic areas by building community understanding of natural resource conservation, coastal ecology, and watershed systems. Greyhound Rock is a unique coastal landscape that provides an ideal setting for experiential environmental education. The program will utilize this location to provide structured educational programming that connects participants with the region's coastal ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and watershed processes. Through guided interpretation, hands-on learning activities, and overnight outdoor experiences, participants will gain a deeper understanding of how local landscapes function and why conservation and responsible land stewardship are essential. A central component of the program is place-based environmental education. Participants will learn about the ecological characteristics of the North Coast, including coastal bluffs, marine-influenced ecosystems, native wildlife habitats, and the role of watersheds in supporting biodiversity. Educational programming will explore topics such as coastal ecology, watershed dynamics, climate resilience, and the interconnectedness of terrestrial and marine systems. These experiences help participants develop environmental literacy and a stronger sense of connection to the natural world. The program also advances Measure Q's priorities related to community engagement with parks and open space. By providing access to outdoor educational programming and supervised overnight experiences, the project encourages meaningful interaction with public lands that many community members may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience. These experiences are designed to inspire long-term stewardship by helping participants understand the value of protecting natural habitats and maintaining healthy ecosystems. In addition, the program will emphasize responsible recreation and environmental awareness. Participants will learn principles such as minimizing human impacts on sensitive landscapes, understanding wildlife behavior and habitat needs, and recognizing the importance of watershed health. By promoting environmental responsibility and stewardship ethics, the program supports long-term conservation outcomes that extend beyond the site itself.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education and Interim Camping Program strongly aligns with Measure Q's primary priorities, particularly in the areas of equitable access to parks and open space, environmental education, and multi-benefit community outcomes. The program is designed to provide hands-on, experiential learning for youth, families, and community members while ensuring that the site's sensitive coastal environment remains protected. A central goal of the project is to expand access to coastal landscapes for communities that historically have limited opportunities to engage in outdoor environmental learning. The program prioritizes participation from local youth, school groups, and community organizations, providing structured field-based education that introduces participants to coastal ecology, wildlife habitat, and watershed processes. By emphasizing inclusivity and accessibility, the project advances Measure Q's commitment to equitable park access. The program fosters environmental literacy through immersive, place-based learning. Students and community members will participate in guided activities that

explore ecosystem function, coastal dynamics, and the importance of responsible land stewardship. Programming will highlight ecological interconnections and the impacts of human activities on coastal and watershed health, promoting a strong ethic of environmental responsibility and stewardship. To facilitate these educational opportunities, the project will install temporary, low-impact infrastructure such as portable outdoor classroom spaces[RH2.1][RH2.2], interpretive signage, and minimal gathering areas. All site improvements are designed to have no permanent impact on the land and can be removed or relocated as needed, ensuring protection of sensitive coastal habitats and adherence to regulatory standards. This approach allows the site to support education and overnight programming while maintaining the ecological integrity of the area. The combination of education, community engagement, and stewardship contributes to multiple Measure Q objectives simultaneously. The program delivers learning outcomes, expands outdoor access, and builds community awareness of local ecosystems, generating long-term benefits without altering the landscape. By integrating these benefits into a single, low-impact initiative, the project demonstrates how educational programs can advance county priorities effectively and sustainably.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

In addition to primary priorities, this program aligns with Measure Q's secondary prioritization criteria, including scalability, long-term sustainability, and alignment with environmental and educational goals. The program complements broader county initiatives that promote environmental literacy, outdoor education, and public access to open space. By leveraging Greyhound Rock's unique coastal setting, the project provides a rare opportunity for participants to observe coastal ecosystems, bluff dynamics, and marine-influenced habitats firsthand. These experiences support regional objectives of fostering informed stewardship of natural resources and increasing engagement with public lands. The Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education and Interim Camping Program is designed to be incrementally scalable within the site itself, allowing the program to grow in both participation and scope while continuing to protect the coastal landscape. Initial programming will focus on structured school field trips and small community groups, providing a proof-of-concept for safe, effective outdoor education. As the program establishes operational routines and builds partnerships with schools, youth organizations, and community groups, the site can accommodate additional cohorts of students, families, and community participants. Temporary, low-impact infrastructure such as portable outdoor classrooms and interpretive signage can be expanded or relocated as needed to support larger groups without altering the natural environment. Success will be measured through clear metrics, including student and family participation, number of school partnerships, community engagement events, and the volume of outdoor learning hours delivered. Additional qualitative outcomes include improvements in environmental knowledge, stewardship behaviors, and community connection to coastal ecosystems. These measurable indicators demonstrate accountability and provide a framework for program evaluation and refinement. The program's sustainability is supported by partnerships with local schools, nonprofits, and community organizations, including County Park Friends, who will serve as ongoing program partners. Volunteer involvement, educational collaboration, and community engagement ensure the program can continue well beyond the initial funding period without permanent impacts to the site. All infrastructure required to support educational programming - such as outdoor classrooms, signage, and gathering areas - is temporary, removable, and designed to minimize disturbance to the natural environment. This ensures that program operations remain compatible with sensitive coastal habitats and regulatory requirements, while allowing the site to continue functioning as a pristine natural resource.

TARGET COMMUNITY

The Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education Program is designed to expand equitable access to coastal environments and environmental education for diverse communities across Santa Cruz County, with a particular focus on youth and families who face barriers to experiencing the county's coastal landscapes. The primary target user group is K-12 students from South County school districts, including Watsonville and Pajaro Valley Unified School District. Many students in these communities have limited access to coastal parks and outdoor environmental education opportunities due to transportation barriers, economic constraints, and limited availability of structured programs. The project will provide organized field-based educational programming that introduces students to coastal ecosystems, marine-influenced habitats, watershed processes, and environmental stewardship practices. A second key audience is community college and high school students pursuing environmental science or natural resource studies. The site will serve as a field learning location where students can participate in citizen science projects, ecological monitoring, and habitat restoration activities. These experiences support workforce development by exposing students to careers in conservation, environmental science, and land stewardship. The program will also serve community-based youth organizations, afterschool programs, and summer learning initiatives that seek outdoor learning opportunities. Partnerships with local youth-serving nonprofits will ensure the site supports hands-on environmental education experiences for students who might not otherwise have opportunities to engage with coastal landscapes. In addition, the site will welcome families and community members participating in guided stewardship and environmental education events. Community volunteer days, restoration projects, and educational workshops will provide opportunities for residents of all ages to connect with the coastal environment and contribute to local conservation efforts. The Greyhound Rock site offers a particularly valuable opportunity for environmental learning because it provides direct access to multiple ecosystem types, including coastal scrub habitat, bluff landscapes, and marine-influenced environments. These ecosystems provide rich educational opportunities for exploring biodiversity, climate resilience, and watershed connections. By prioritizing participation from communities that historically have had fewer opportunities

to experience coastal environments, the Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education Program will help expand access to nature while fostering long-term environmental stewardship among Santa Cruz County residents.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

This program provides significant community value by offering residents of Santa Cruz County opportunities to connect with coastal environments through hands-on learning and outdoor experiences. The program promotes physical and mental health by encouraging children, youth, families, and community members to spend time outdoors, engaging in activities such as guided exploration, hiking, and overnight field experiences. Time in nature supports stress reduction, improved focus, and emotional resilience, contributing to overall well-being for participants of all ages. The program increases equitable access to natural areas for communities that may have limited opportunities to experience coastal ecosystems. School field trips, family programs, and community learning events provide structured opportunities for participants to explore sensitive coastal habitats safely and responsibly. By integrating recreation with environmental education, the program allows participants to enjoy the outdoors while learning about coastal ecosystems, wildlife habitat, and watershed processes, fostering a lifelong connection to the natural world. Participation in the program also strengthens community identity and livability. Greyhound Rock becomes a shared space where residents come together to learn, explore, and connect with one another, building a sense of collective responsibility for local landscapes. Students, families, and volunteers work collaboratively during educational activities and supervised overnight programs, reinforcing a culture of stewardship and a community that values its natural environment. Outreach will ensure programming is accessible and inclusive, with partnerships established with local schools, youth-serving organizations, and nonprofits to reach a diverse range of participants. Interpretive materials, guided programs, and community events will engage residents with the ecological and recreational value of the site, encouraging ongoing participation in outdoor education and stewardship. Through these efforts, the Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education Program delivers multiple community benefits, including improved health and well-being, expanded access to nature and recreation, strengthened environmental literacy, and enhanced community connection to local landscapes. By combining outdoor learning with meaningful engagement, the program supports a more resilient, informed, and connected Santa Cruz County community.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

This Program will support meaningful environmental outcomes by building environmental literacy, fostering stewardship of coastal ecosystems, and expanding public understanding of the natural resources that define Santa Cruz County. Located on the north coast the site provides an exceptional setting for environmental education due to the diversity of coastal habitats, wildlife species, and ecological processes visible within a relatively small geographic area. While the program's primary activities focus on education rather than habitat restoration, environmental education itself is a critical long-term strategy for protecting natural resources. By providing structured opportunities for youth and community members to learn directly within coastal ecosystems, the program will help cultivate the knowledge, awareness, and stewardship ethic needed to sustain these environments into the future. Participants will gain firsthand experience observing coastal landscapes, including bluff ecosystems, marine-influenced habitats, and native coastal vegetation communities. Educational programming will introduce students to the ecological relationships that support biodiversity, including habitat needs for birds, pollinators, and other wildlife that depend on coastal environments. By learning how these ecosystems function, participants develop a deeper understanding of how human activities influence environmental health and why conservation efforts are necessary. The program will also emphasize watershed and ocean connections. Many residents are unaware of the direct link between land management practices and ocean health. Through guided field learning and interpretive activities, students will explore how rainfall, runoff, and watershed systems transport water and sediment from inland areas to the coast. Understanding these processes helps participants recognize the importance of responsible land stewardship in protecting water quality and marine ecosystems. Coastal ecosystems are also on the front lines of climate change. This site offers an ideal location for teaching about coastal dynamics, including natural erosion processes, habitat adaptation, and the impacts of sea level rise. Educational programming will introduce participants to the concept of climate resilience and the importance of protecting natural landscapes that support ecosystem stability. In addition to structured school field trips, the site will support community-based learning through guided walks, educational workshops, and volunteer stewardship events that promote awareness of local wildlife and habitat conservation. These activities help translate environmental knowledge into everyday stewardship behaviors, such as responsible recreation, habitat protection, and community engagement in conservation initiatives. Through these educational impacts, the program will contribute to the long-term protection of coastal ecosystems and wildlife habitat while advancing the environmental priorities outlined in the Measure Q Vision Plan.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

REQUIRED PERMITS

The program site is located in Greyhound Rock County Park within Santa Cruz County, an area with sensitive coastal environments. To accurately determine and locate these sensitive resources, County Parks recently completed surveys for biotic and cultural resources within the project area. Project improvements will be located to avoid sensitive resources and will be located on already disturbed areas of the site. In addition, project improvements are intentionally limited to temporary, minor site enhancements that support interim outdoor educational programming. These improvements may include: minor rehabilitation of existing rustic buildings on site, the creation of small, informal outdoor classroom spaces with natural materials, installation of temporary interpretive signage, placement of temporary, movable seating areas, re-establishment of natural-surface trails, and other temporary or low-impact features designed to accommodate school groups and community education programs. The project will not involve major grading, land disturbance, construction of buildings, or other alterations to the land that would negatively impact habitat or coastal processes. To the extent that minor grading or surface improvements are required to establish natural-surface trails or gathering areas, they will be carefully designed to avoid impacts to sensitive resources and to maintain the natural character of the site. No grading permit will be required. Because the project will involve minor site enhancements that are primarily of a temporary nature to support interim educational use within an existing disturbed site, County Parks staff have determined that the project will qualify for a categorical exemption under CEQA (Class 1 and Class 4). Parks staff will work with the County's Environmental Coordinator to prepare a Notice of Exemption for the project as needed. Importantly, the educational programming itself does not require environmental permits. County Parks has already secured the necessary permissions from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to operate the programming. Once minor site improvements are completed, outdoor education activities can begin immediately.

PARTNER APPROVALS

No additional approvals or agreements are necessary for this program and interim camp site.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

The Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education Program is ready to move forward and is structured to allow for efficient implementation following grant award. Because the project focuses on environmental education and modest site improvements rather than major construction, the implementation timeline is relatively short and allows programming to begin quickly. The project will be implemented in four phases over approximately 18-24 months, with early milestones focused on administrative coordination and site preparation followed by program launch and ongoing evaluation. Phase 1: Project Initiation and Final Planning (Months 1-3) Following the award of Measure Q funding, the project team will finalize program design and coordinate with relevant departments in Santa Cruz County to confirm site use conditions for educational programming near Greyhound Rock. During this phase the team will also finalize site layout for outdoor classroom areas, interpretive features, and accessible pathways that support safe use by student groups. Coordination with partners and participants will be formalized during this time period[RH3.1]. Phase 2: Site Preparation and Educational Infrastructure (Months 4-9) During this phase the project will complete minor site improvements necessary to support outdoor learning activities. Improvements may include installation of outdoor classroom gathering areas, educational signage, seating, and accessible pathways designed to accommodate school groups and community programming. These improvements are intentionally low-impact and designed to protect the surrounding coastal landscape while making the site more accessible and functional for environmental educational activities. Phase 3: Program Launch and Initial Educational Programming (Months 10-15)[RH4.1] Once site improvements are complete, the Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education Program will begin hosting school field trips, guided educational programs, and community learning events. Initial programming will focus on coastal ecology, watershed connections, wildlife observation, and environmental stewardship. The program will work closely with school partners to schedule field visits aligned with science curriculum standards and experiential learning objectives. Phase 4: Program Expansion and Evaluation (Months 16-24) During the final phase of the initial project period, programming will expand to serve additional school groups, youth organizations, and community participants. The project team will also conduct program evaluation to measure participation levels, learning outcomes, and community engagement. Evaluation findings will inform ongoing program development and ensure that the site continues to function as a valuable educational resource for Santa Cruz County. Because the project emphasizes educational use and modest infrastructure improvements, implementation can move forward efficiently. The phased timeline ensures that the program delivers early community benefits while supporting long-term educational impact.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

Yes

TEAM CAPACITY

The Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education Program will be delivered by a team with strong experience in environmental education, program management, and stewardship of coastal landscapes in Santa Cruz County. The project team includes Recreation Professionals who have worked extensively with schools, youth organizations, and community groups to develop outdoor learning experiences that connect participants with local ecosystems. Team members bring expertise in coastal ecology, environmental interpretation, and experiential education methods that translate complex ecological concepts into engaging hands-on learning activities. Members of this team deliver similar programming at other County Park Facilities. This team has been trained in conjunction with State Park FamCamp principles as well, ready to deliver quality and safe overnight experiences. A core strength of the project team is its ability to build partnerships with schools and community organizations. The team has experience coordinating field-based education programs with teachers and school administrators to ensure that outdoor learning experiences support classroom curriculum and educational standards. This experience will allow the program to quickly establish partnerships with schools seeking outdoor science learning opportunities. The team also has experience organizing community engagement activities, including volunteer stewardship events, environmental workshops, and public education programs. These activities help expand community awareness of local ecosystems while encouraging long-term stewardship of natural resources. Operationally, the project team has demonstrated capacity to manage grants, coordinate program logistics, and oversee safe and effective educational programming in outdoor environments. Staff members are familiar with risk management practices associated with outdoor education programs and will implement appropriate safety protocols for school groups and community participants. The program will also benefit from collaboration with educators, environmental organizations, and community partners who bring additional expertise in environmental science, curriculum development, and youth engagement. These partnerships help ensure that programming remains dynamic, relevant, and responsive to community needs. Because the project focuses on educational programming rather than complex construction or large-scale environmental restoration, the expertise required for successful implementation is already well established within the project team. The team's combined experience in environmental education, partnership development, and program management positions the Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education Program for successful implementation and long-term operation. Through this experienced leadership and collaborative network, the project will be able to deliver high-quality environmental education programming that benefits students, educators, and the broader Santa Cruz County community.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

The Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education Program is highly feasible due to its focused scope, limited infrastructure requirements, and strong alignment with existing community and educational needs. The project is designed to emphasize educational programming and community engagement rather than complex physical development, which significantly reduces implementation risk. The project team has a formal written agreement with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to deliver this program and install a temporary interim campsite, ensuring full coordination with land management authorities and compliance with regulatory requirements. The site provides a naturally rich setting for environmental education. Its coastal location allows participants to observe coastal bluffs, marine-influenced ecosystems, native vegetation communities, and wildlife habitats, making it particularly well suited for hands-on learning experiences that connect students and community members directly with the natural environment. Because the project does not involve major construction or permanent landscape alterations, the infrastructure needed to support educational programming is modest and achievable within the proposed timeline. Temporary, low-impact elements can be installed efficiently and removed if needed, while maintaining the natural character of the site and protecting sensitive habitats. The interim campsite is similarly designed to be minimally invasive, providing safe overnight experiences without altering the coastal landscape. The program's feasibility is further strengthened by strong interest from educators, youth organizations, and community groups seeking outdoor learning opportunities. Operational feasibility is supported by the project team's extensive experience in coordinating outdoor educational programs and managing partnerships with schools and community organizations. The team has demonstrated capacity to organize scheduling, develop curriculum, and manage participant logistics to maximize both learning outcomes and safe site use. The program aligns closely with regional priorities related to environmental literacy, stewardship of natural resources, and climate awareness. By combining structured educational programming with community engagement, the project reinforces local planning objectives and contributes to long-term conservation outcomes. Taken together, the combination of temporary, low-impact infrastructure, a strong and experienced program team, formal agreement with California Fish and Wildlife, and clear community demand makes the Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education Program highly feasible. The project is ready to move forward quickly and deliver lasting educational, recreational, and environmental benefits to Santa Cruz County residents.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education Program will be implemented through a network of partnerships that support high-quality environmental education and expand access to coastal learning opportunities in Santa Cruz County. These partnerships bring together educational institutions, community organizations, and environmental educators to ensure the program reaches diverse participants and provides meaningful, hands-on learning experiences. A core set of partners will include local school districts and educators who are seeking opportunities to incorporate field-based science and environmental learning into their curriculum. Partnerships with teachers and school administrators will allow the program to host field trips and educational visits that support science standards and experiential learning goals. Schools will play a key role in helping identify student groups that would benefit most from outdoor environmental education experiences. The program will also collaborate with nonprofit environmental education organizations and youth-serving groups that specialize in outdoor learning. These organizations bring expertise in environmental interpretation, experiential education, and youth engagement. By working with established education providers, the program will be able to offer diverse programming formats, including guided field studies, environmental workshops, and nature-based learning experiences. Local community organizations and volunteer groups will provide additional support through participation in educational events, stewardship activities, and public engagement programs. Volunteers often play an important role in outdoor education programs by assisting with group activities, helping maintain learning spaces, and supporting community events. Coordination with relevant departments within Santa Cruz County will ensure that educational programming aligns with site management goals and resource protection priorities for the area surrounding Greyhound Rock. These relationships help ensure that the site is used in a way that supports both public education and environmental protection. The project team has experience working collaboratively with educators, nonprofit partners, and community organizations to develop and deliver outdoor learning opportunities. These existing relationships provide a strong foundation for program implementation and help ensure that the Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education Program can quickly begin serving students and community members.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

Collaboration is central to the success of the Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education Program. The program is designed to function as a shared educational resource where schools, community organizations, and environmental educators can work together to provide meaningful outdoor learning experiences in a coastal setting. The project team will coordinate closely with educators as programming is designed ensuring it supports classroom learning objectives while taking advantage of the hands-on experience when on the site. Teachers and program facilitators may collaborate to develop activities that allow students to observe coastal ecosystems, explore ecological relationships, and learn about environmental stewardship through direct experience. School partnerships will be essential to ensuring that the program reaches a wide range of students. By coordinating scheduling and curriculum alignment with teachers, the program can support regular field visits that reinforce science instruction and provide students with hands-on learning opportunities not available in a traditional classroom setting. Collaboration with nonprofit environmental education organizations will strengthen the program by bringing specialized expertise in environmental interpretation and outdoor teaching methods. These organizations often have extensive experience leading nature-based educational programs and engaging youth in experiential learning activities. Their involvement will help ensure that programming remains engaging, inclusive, and educationally meaningful. Community-based organizations will also play a role in connecting families and local residents with educational opportunities at the site. These organizations help expand participation by promoting community workshops, public learning events, and guided nature experiences. Volunteer engagement, especially through our established Park Host program will provide another important form of collaboration. Community members who care about the region's coastal ecosystems will have opportunities to assist with educational programs and support community events. Volunteer participation helps build local stewardship and creates a sense of shared responsibility for protecting natural resources. Regular coordination among partners will ensure that programming is well organized and responsive to community needs. The project team will maintain communication with partners regarding scheduling, program design, and participation goals to ensure that the site is used effectively and responsibly.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

135000

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

0

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

0

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

0

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

10

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The budget for the Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education and Interim Camping Program is designed to support the successful implementation and delivery of high-quality environmental education while maintaining a low-impact presence at the site. Funding requested through this grant will primarily support staff time, program supplies, and transportation assistance for local schools and community organizations to access the site. A significant portion of the budget is dedicated to staff time required to plan, coordinate, and deliver educational programming. Program staff will be responsible for curriculum development, scheduling school and community group visits, coordinating logistics, supervising field-based learning activities, and ensuring safe and responsible use of the site. Staff will also support outreach and partnership development with schools, youth organizations, and community groups to expand participation and ensure the program reaches a diverse range of residents across Santa Cruz County. Ongoing staff coordination is essential to maintaining consistent programming, managing participant groups, and supporting overnight educational experiences. Another key component of the budget supports program supplies[RH5.1] necessary to deliver hands-on environmental education. These supplies include educational materials, field learning equipment, and resources that allow participants to observe and engage with the coastal environment in meaningful ways. Items such as field guides, binoculars, sampling and observation tools, safety equipment, and portable learning materials will support interactive educational activities focused on coastal ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and watershed processes. Additionally, meals and snacks for overnight experiences are included in program supplies. Transportation support is also a critical element of the project budget. Many schools and community organizations face barriers in bringing students and participants to coastal environments due to transportation costs. Grant funding will help offset transportation expenses, enabling school groups, youth organizations, and community-based programs to access Greyhound Rock. By reducing these logistical barriers, the program can significantly expand participation and ensure that students and families from across the county have the opportunity to engage with the coast. The budget intentionally minimizes capital expenditures and permanent infrastructure costs. The program relies on temporary, low-impact elements and portable materials that support educational activities without altering the landscape. This approach ensures that the majority of funding is directed toward program delivery and community access rather than physical development.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

The Program is designed to provide lasting benefits to the community through ongoing environmental education and responsible stewardship of the site near Greyhound Rock in Santa Cruz County. Because the project emphasizes education and modest infrastructure rather than complex facilities, long-term maintenance requirements are relatively limited. Site improvements such as pathways, seating areas, and interpretive signage will be constructed using durable materials designed for outdoor environments and routine use by school groups and visitors. Regular site maintenance will include periodic inspection of educational infrastructure, upkeep of pathways and gathering areas, and replacement or updating of interpretive materials as needed. These activities will ensure that the site remains safe, welcoming, and functional for educational use over time. Monitoring program success will focus primarily on participation and educational outcomes. Metrics such as number of students served, number of educational programs delivered, school partnerships established, and volunteer participation will help evaluate the program's impact. These indicators will provide insight into how effectively the site is serving the community as an outdoor learning resource. Over time, continued partnerships with educators, community organizations, and environmental education providers will help ensure that the Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education Program remains active and responsive to community needs. Through these partnerships, the site will continue to function as a hub for environmental learning and stewardship.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

No

REFERENCED PLANS

—

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

The Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education and Interim Camping Program offers a compelling opportunity for immediate impact due to its exceptional level of readiness, strong institutional partnerships, and long-term commitment to environmental stewardship and

community engagement. The program has already completed key planning steps and is prepared to move directly into implementation upon funding. With a defined program structure, committed partners, and an established site, the initiative is positioned to launch quickly and begin delivering educational programming to local schools and community groups without delay. A major strength of the project is the strong collaboration among partners working to bring this program to life. The project team has established working relationships with community organizations, schools, and nonprofit partners that are ready to begin participating in educational programming. In addition, the program has a written agreement with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to implement the educational program and temporary interim campsite at the site. These partnerships ensure that the project can operate efficiently, responsibly, and in alignment with land management priorities. The program also reflects a long-term commitment to stewardship of the Greyhound Rock landscape and the broader coastal environment. By focusing on environmental education and responsible outdoor recreation, the program helps cultivate a generation of residents who understand and value the ecological importance of Santa Cruz County's coastal ecosystems. Participants will learn about wildlife habitat, watershed systems, and the importance of protecting sensitive natural landscapes, fostering lasting stewardship behaviors that extend beyond the program itself. The regional significance of the project further strengthens its value. Greyhound Rock provides a unique coastal setting where students and community members can directly experience the ecological and cultural importance of the North Coast. Programs at this site will connect participants with coastal landscapes that many residents have limited opportunities to explore through structured educational programming. By bringing youth, families, and community groups into this environment, the program expands access to outdoor learning and strengthens the county's identity as a community that values environmental education and stewardship. Together, the project's readiness to launch, strong partnerships, commitment to stewardship, and regional importance make the Greyhound Rock Outdoor Education Program a highly impactful initiative that will deliver meaningful and lasting benefits to Santa Cruz County.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Measure Q Budget.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[Greyhound Rock Letter of Support.docx.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

[Greyhound Check List .docx](#), [Greyhound Rock Program Development.docx](#)

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[IMG_2414 \(1\).jpg](#), [IMG_0177.JPG](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

[No file uploaded](#)

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Sarah Shea

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Sarah Shea, Parks Superintendent

SIGNATURE DATE

03/12/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 73 **Type:** Tier 2 Community Impact Grants
Project: Soquel Creek Riparian Habitat Restoration at Rispin Park

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

73

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Soquel Creek Riparian Habitat Restoration at Rispin Park

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

—

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

City of Capitola

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Acres treated

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

3.3

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Jessica Kahn

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Public Works Director

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

██████████

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

████████████████████

First Name	Last Name	Email
Erika	Senyk	████████████████████

PROJECT LOCATION

2000 Wharf Rd, Capitola, CA 95010, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

035-371-01, -02

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.97871867460962

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.95698299867249

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

—

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

—

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The project is located at the Park at Rispin Mansion in the City of Capitola, adjacent to Soquel Creek near Wharf Road and the Capitola Library. Work will occur within the park's riparian and natural habitat areas. The site is located at the boundary of Santa Cruz County Supervisorial Districts 1 and 2.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 30 - Dawn Addis

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

CEQA/NEPA in process

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

The City has experience delivering projects within the Soquel Creek corridor and Coastal Zone, including CEQA clearance and coordination with CDFW, RWQCB, and the Coastal Commission when required. A qualified biologist will confirm regulatory considerations during project design, and the City will complete all necessary CEQA documentation and obtain any required permits prior to implementation.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	Not sure	Work is adjacent to Soquel Creek. A Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (1602) may be required i	To be determined following biological assessment.
State Water Control Resources Board	Not sure	Permit requirements will be evaluated based on final restoration scope and extent of disturbance.	To be determined.
US Fish and Wildlife	No	No federal nexus. Consultation not anticipated.	
City/County Construction Permits	Yes	Minor City permits may be required depending on final scope.	To be obtained prior to implementation.
Coastal Commission	Not sure	Property is within the Coastal Zone. Habitat restoration activities are typically exempt or minister	To be determined.

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

24

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

The project site is publicly owned and permanently protected, and no land acquisition is required. Project initiation is dependent upon completion of biological assessment, CEQA documentation, and confirmation of any required permits. A qualified restoration biologist will prepare the final restoration plan during the first phase of the project. Implementation will be scheduled to avoid sensitive seasonal periods and to align with appropriate planting windows. The City has prior experience completing CEQA

documentation and coordinating with regulatory agencies for projects within the Soquel Creek corridor and Coastal Zone. No unusual regulatory constraints are anticipated. Preliminary coordination and consultant procurement can begin immediately following award, with on-the-ground implementation anticipated within 6-9 months.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

325000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

350000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000
Supplies	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$50,000
Contractual / Consultants	\$255,000	\$0	\$0	\$255,000
Construction	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$20,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The City of Capitola proposes the Soquel Creek Riparian Habitat Restoration at Rispin Park, a Tier 2 Measure Q Community Impact Project focused on restoring riparian function and improving watershed health along Soquel Creek. The project will remove priority invasive plant species within natural and riparian areas adjacent to the creek and implement biologist-directed native habitat restoration to enhance ecological resilience and long-term habitat quality. The project site is publicly owned and permanently protected through a recorded conservation and public access easement and a Proposition 68 deed restriction requiring continued parkland use. Despite these protections, invasive species currently degrade habitat structure, reduce native biodiversity, and limit riparian function along this lower watershed corridor prior to discharge into Monterey Bay. A qualified restoration biologist will conduct a site assessment and prepare a restoration plan to guide invasive removal, native planting, and adaptive management. Restoration activities will be designed to improve vegetative diversity, strengthen bank stability, and enhance overall riparian habitat conditions while remaining consistent with ESHA and Coastal Zone requirements. Two seasons of monitoring are included to ensure successful establishment and measurable outcomes. Interpretive signage will educate park visitors about watershed health, invasive species impacts, and habitat stewardship, strengthening community awareness of local water quality and ecological protection. This project advances Measure Q priorities by restoring wildlife habitat, improving watershed resilience, and protecting permanently conserved open space for long-term community and environmental benefit.

PROJECT START DATE

—

PROJECT END DATE

—

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, Coastal Protection and Adaptation

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

The project advances multiple Measure Q Vision Plan priorities by restoring riparian habitat and improving watershed function along Soquel Creek within the City of Capitola. The project directly supports Water Resource Management by reducing invasive plant pressure, enhancing vegetative cover, and improving riparian structure along a lower watershed corridor prior to discharge into Monterey Bay. Under Wildlife and Habitat Protection, the project restores native habitat within Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA) and permanently protected open space. Biologist-directed restoration will improve plant diversity, habitat structure, and ecological resilience within a degraded riparian and upland interface. The project also advances Coastal Protection and Adaptation by strengthening vegetative stability, improving climate resilience of riparian systems, and supporting long-term watershed health upstream of coastal resources. Finally, the project supports Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity by enhancing publicly accessible open space within a permanently protected park site. Interpretive signage will increase public awareness of watershed stewardship and ecological protection.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

This project delivers multi-benefit outcomes by improving riparian habitat, enhancing watershed function, increasing native biodiversity, and strengthening public environmental education within a permanently protected park setting. Removal of invasive plant species and restoration of native vegetation will improve habitat structure, support ecological function, and enhance soil stability along the lower Soquel Creek corridor. Interpretive signage will expand public understanding of watershed health and habitat stewardship, providing educational benefits alongside ecological improvements. The project provides significant climate resilience value by strengthening vegetative health and ecological stability within a lower watershed area vulnerable to invasive species pressure and changing precipitation patterns. Healthy riparian systems improve bank stability, enhance vegetative diversity, and contribute to long-term watershed function under variable climate conditions. By restoring native vegetation within protected open space, the project increases ecosystem resilience and adaptive capacity. The project site is publicly owned and permanently protected through a recorded conservation easement and deed restriction, ensuring that ecological improvements will provide lasting environmental and community benefit. Because no land acquisition is required and consultant procurement can begin immediately upon award, the project demonstrates strong readiness and implementability. Through targeted restoration within an urban creek corridor, the project advances long-term watershed resilience while providing sustained public and environmental benefits consistent with Measure Q priorities.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The project provides clear public benefit by enhancing ecological health within a publicly accessible park that serves Capitola residents and visitors. Restoration of riparian and natural habitat areas improves the quality, resilience, and long-term sustainability of open space adjacent to Soquel Creek. Educational signage will increase public awareness of watershed health, invasive species impacts, and habitat stewardship, strengthening community understanding of local environmental resources. The project demonstrates strong strategic alignment with Measure Q priorities by restoring habitat within the lower Soquel Creek watershed, improving ecological function in an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA), and supporting long-term watershed resilience upstream of coastal resources. The site is permanently protected through a recorded conservation and public access easement and a Proposition 68 deed restriction, ensuring that Measure Q investments will provide enduring environmental benefit. The project is ready to proceed. The City owns the property, no land acquisition is required, and consultant procurement can begin immediately upon award. A qualified restoration biologist will guide final restoration design and confirm regulatory considerations. CEQA review is anticipated to qualify for a Class 4 Categorical Exemption, and the City has experience coordinating permitting and environmental compliance within the Coastal Zone and Soquel Creek corridor. Together, these factors demonstrate a project that is publicly beneficial, strategically aligned with watershed protection goals, and prepared for timely implementation.

TARGET COMMUNITY

The project serves Capitola residents, nearby neighborhoods, and visitors who use the Park at Rispin Mansion and adjacent creek corridor for walking, passive recreation, and access to open space. The park is located near the Capitola Library and residential areas and provides accessible natural space within the central portion of the City. User groups include families, seniors, students, walkers, and community members seeking access to nature within an urbanized coastal setting. The park also serves as a connection point to the broader Soquel Creek corridor and surrounding open space areas. By restoring riparian and upland habitat within the park, the project enhances the quality, safety, and ecological integrity of publicly accessible open space. Improved vegetation health and removal of invasive species increase usability, visibility, and long-term sustainability of the site. Interpretive signage will provide educational opportunities for park visitors, supporting environmental awareness and stewardship across a broad cross-section of the community. Because the site is permanently protected and centrally located, improvements will provide lasting benefit to both current residents and future generations who rely on local parks and natural areas for recreation, health, and community connection.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Health and well-being, Access to nature, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

The project enhances community health and well-being by improving the ecological quality and long-term sustainability of publicly accessible open space at the Park at Rispin Mansion. Access to healthy natural environments supports physical activity, stress reduction, and community connection. By restoring native vegetation and reducing invasive plant dominance, the project improves

the visual quality, environmental health, and usability of the park's natural areas. The project expands meaningful access to nature within Capitola's urbanized coastal setting. The park provides walkable access to open space for nearby neighborhoods and serves residents who may not have the ability or resources to travel to larger regional parks. Restoring riparian and upland habitat strengthens the connection between the community and the Soquel Creek corridor, reinforcing the role of natural resources in everyday community life. The project also contributes to community identity and livability. Soquel Creek and coastal ecosystems are defining features of Capitola. Enhancing habitat within a permanently protected park reinforces the City's long-term commitment to environmental stewardship and watershed health. Community engagement has included prior volunteer invasive removal efforts at the site and ongoing public interest in stewardship activities. Interpretive signage funded through this project will further support education and outreach by explaining watershed health, invasive species impacts, and habitat restoration benefits. The City will continue to share project information through its website and public communications channels during implementation.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

The project improves habitat quality within riparian and adjacent upland areas along Soquel Creek by removing invasive plant species and restoring native vegetation. Invasive species currently reduce biodiversity and degrade vegetative structure within these areas. Biologist-directed restoration will increase native plant diversity, improve ecological function, and enhance habitat continuity. Improved vegetative structure supports water quality benefits by strengthening root systems, increasing soil stability, and reducing invasive-driven erosion risk. Enhanced riparian health contributes to improved watershed function within the lower Soquel Creek corridor prior to discharge into Monterey Bay. Two seasons of monitoring and adaptive management are included to ensure restoration success and measurable ecological outcomes. The project strengthens long-term habitat resilience within permanently protected open space.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Applicant owns the property for the proposed project

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

REQUIRED PERMITS

The project consists of invasive species removal and native planting within riparian-adjacent areas. CEQA review will be completed prior to implementation and is anticipated to qualify for a Class 4 Categorical Exemption. The property is located within the Coastal Zone; permit requirements, if any, will be confirmed following biological assessment and final restoration design. No land acquisition is required.

PARTNER APPROVALS

No additional landowner agreements are required as the City owns the property. Restoration activities will be conducted consistent with existing conservation and deed restrictions protecting the site. Consultant agreements for biological services and restoration implementation will be executed following grant award procedures.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

Months 1-6: Biological assessment, restoration plan, CEQA clearance Months 7-12: Invasive removal and initial planting Months 13-24: Monitoring, adaptive management, and final reporting

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

Yes

TEAM CAPACITY

The City of Capitola Public Works Department has experience delivering projects within the Soquel Creek watershed and Coastal Zone, including habitat-related and infrastructure projects requiring CEQA compliance and regulatory coordination. A qualified restoration biologist and experienced contractor will be retained to guide design and implementation.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

The proposed scope consists of invasive species removal and biologist-directed native habitat restoration within riparian-adjacent and upland areas of the Park at Rispin Mansion. Activities are limited in scale and designed to minimize ground disturbance while improving ecological function. The project does not include structural improvements or major grading, reducing implementation complexity. A qualified restoration biologist will conduct a site assessment and prepare a restoration plan that confirms regulatory considerations and guides implementation. Restoration techniques are standard, well-established practices within coastal riparian systems and are readily implementable by experienced contractors. The City has experience delivering projects within the Soquel Creek watershed and Coastal Zone, including projects requiring CEQA compliance and coordination with regulatory agencies. CEQA review is anticipated to qualify for a Class 4 Categorical Exemption for minor alterations associated with habitat restoration. The budget is aligned with the scope and includes funding for biological assessment, invasive removal, native planting, and two seasons of monitoring to ensure measurable outcomes. The phased 24-month timeline allows for appropriate seasonal implementation and adaptive management. With defined scope, professional oversight, established restoration methods, and in-kind project management support, the project is technically and administratively feasible and positioned for successful implementation.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The City of Capitola will serve as the lead applicant and project manager. A qualified restoration biologist will be retained to conduct habitat assessment, prepare the restoration plan, and oversee monitoring and adaptive management. An experienced restoration contractor will implement invasive species removal and native planting under biological direction. The project builds upon prior stewardship efforts at the Park at Rispin Mansion, including community volunteer invasive removal events. The City maintains relationships with local environmental and community organizations that have expressed interest in habitat stewardship and educational efforts within the park. The project site is permanently protected through a recorded conservation and public access easement and a Proposition 68 deed restriction. Implementation will be conducted consistent with those protections and applicable environmental regulations. Consultant and contractor agreements will be executed following grant award in accordance with City procurement policies.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

Collaboration for this project will center on coordination between City staff, the retained restoration biologist, and the restoration contractor to ensure that design and implementation are aligned with site conditions and regulatory requirements. The biologist will guide restoration priorities and seasonal timing, while the contractor will execute removal and planting activities consistent with the approved restoration plan. The City will provide project management, CEQA documentation, permit coordination, and grant administration. Ongoing communication between the City and consultant team will support adaptive management throughout the two-year monitoring period. Community engagement will occur through interpretive signage and public communication updates during implementation. The City will also explore opportunities for future volunteer stewardship activities consistent with the restoration plan. This collaborative structure ensures professional ecological oversight, coordinated implementation, and long-term stewardship within permanently protected open space.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

325000

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

0

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

25000

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

25000

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

—

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Grant funds will support biological assessment, invasive species removal across approximately three acres, native habitat restoration, two seasons of monitoring, and interpretive signage installation. The majority of funding is directed toward on-the-ground restoration labor and plant materials. City staff time for project management, CEQA preparation, and grant reporting will be provided as in-kind contribution. No indirect costs are requested.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

The project site is permanently protected through recorded conservation and parkland deed restrictions. Following completion of grant-funded monitoring, ongoing maintenance will be incorporated into the City's park maintenance program. The layered legal protections and City ownership ensure long-term stewardship and sustained habitat benefits.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

No

REFERENCED PLANS

—

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness, Long Term Stewardship Commitments

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

The project demonstrates exceptional readiness. The City owns the property, no land acquisition is required, and the scope is defined and limited to invasive removal and biologist-directed native restoration. Consultant procurement can begin immediately upon grant award. The project is anticipated to qualify for a CEQA Class 4 Categorical Exemption, further supporting timely implementation. The site is permanently protected through a recorded conservation and public access easement and a Proposition 68 deed restriction requiring continued parkland use. These layered legal protections ensure that restoration investments will provide enduring habitat and public benefit. Long-term stewardship will be supported through City maintenance programs following completion of grant-funded monitoring. The project also carries regional significance. Restoration occurs within the lower Soquel Creek watershed prior to discharge into Monterey Bay. Improving riparian habitat and reducing invasive species pressure within this corridor supports broader watershed and coastal health objectives beyond City boundaries. Together, site control, permanent protection, and defined scope position the project for timely delivery and sustained ecological benefit.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Budget_Soquel Creek.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[Site Map_Soquel Creek.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

[Schedule_Soquel Creek.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

[CEQA_Soquel Creek.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[Org Info_Soquel Creek.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[Photos_Soquel Creek.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Jessica Kahn

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Jessica Kahn, Public Works Director

SIGNATURE DATE

03/10/2016

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 74

Type: Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

Project: Measure Q Infrastructure Investment: Consolidation and Resilience Upgrades for Fire-Impacted Water Systems

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

74

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Measure Q Infrastructure Investment: Consolidation and Resilience Upgrades for Fire-Impacted Water Systems

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

SAN LORENZO VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Population served

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

1000

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Jen Torres

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

8314304636

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Chris	Klier	[REDACTED]
Rachel	Munoz	[REDACTED]
Jason	Lillion	[REDACTED]
Chris	Klier	[REDACTED]
Rachel	Munoz	[REDACTED]
Jason	Lillion	[REDACTED]
Chris	Klier	[REDACTED]
Rachel	Munoz	[REDACTED]
Jason	Lillion	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

401 Acorn Dr, Boulder Creek, CA 95006, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

083-231-02

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

37.02668463313506

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.84061210325827

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

Building Resilient Water Infrastructure for 1,000 At-Risk Customers in the San Lorenzo Valley

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

N/A

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Boulder Creek, California

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

May need to contact the County of Santa Cruz and other associated easement to obtain permits (if necessary)

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	Not sure		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	Not sure		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

1

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

Plans are complete (see attached); Ready for Construction

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

500000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

500000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Construction	\$500,000	\$0	\$0	\$500,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The San Lorenzo Valley Water District (SLVWD) is undertaking a critical infrastructure consolidate three small, fire damaged water systems - Forest Springs Improvement and Big Basin Water Company - into a single, reliable public water supply. These systems currently serve approximately 1,000 residents who remain vulnerable due to failing infrastructure, insufficient water storage, and an inability to meet modern fire flow and public health standards. The 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire caused extensive damage to essential facilities and overwhelming the capacity of the small associations that operate them. Without external investment, these communities cannot rebuild or ensure long term access to safe drinking water. SLVWD's backbone facilities required to integrate these systems into the District's regional network. Planned improvements include expanded water storage capacity, modernized pumping and electrical systems, and upsized distribution lines to meet current fire code requirements. The project also involves modifying upper retaining walls and extending lower retaining walls to create adequate level area for a third storage tank, a new pumphouse, and associated electrical equipment. These upgrades are essential to restoring system reliability, improving water quality, and strengthening fire protection in an area increasingly threatened by wildfire and climate driven hazards. Funding this initiative will directly support long term regional water security. By investing now, funders will help ensure that these communities have a safe, sustainable, and resilient water supply capable of withstanding future emergencies.

PROJECT START DATE

06/15/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/14/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 2 Application**THEMATIC AREAS**

Water Resource Management, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

The proposed consolidation of the Forest Springs Improvement and Maintenance Association, Bracken Brae, and Big Basin Water Company systems directly advances regional goals in climate resilience, public health protection, and sustainable infrastructure development. These three small water systems, serving roughly 1,000 residents in the San Lorenzo Valley, were severely damaged during the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire. The fire destroyed critical water infrastructure, reduced system reliability, and left these communities without the financial or technical capacity to rebuild to modern standards. The fire intensified in frequency and severity, the vulnerability of these isolated systems poses an escalating risk to community safety and long term water security. This project aligns with the thematic priority of community resilience and infrastructure required to integrate these systems into the San Lorenzo Valley Water District's regional network. Consolidation will provide residents with access to a stable, professionally managed water supply capable of withstanding future emergencies. Expanded storage capacity, upgraded pumping and electrical systems, and upsized distribution lines will ensure compliance with current fire flow requirements, significantly improving wildfire preparedness. The project also advances public health and environmental protection by replacing failing infrastructure with modern facilities that support reliable delivery of safe drinking water. Modifying and extending retaining walls to accommodate a third storage tank, a new pumphouse, and associated electrical equipment will create the backbone for long term system sustainability. By investing in

support a high impact initiative that strengthens regional resilience, safeguards vulnerable communities, and ensures a sustainable water supply for future generations.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The consolidation of the Forest Springs, Bracken Brae, and Big Basin water systems delivers multi benefit outcomes that extend far beyond basic infrastructure replacement. This project addresses the needs while advancing regional priorities in wildfire resilience, public health protection, climate adaptation, and sustainable water system management. 1. Wildfire and Emergency Resilience Expanding storage capacity and modernized electrical systems will enable the consolidated system to meet modern fire flow requirements - an urgent need in a region repeatedly impacted by catastrophic wildfire. Additional storage tanks and improved system hydraulics will significantly enhance firefighting capability, reduce response time limitations, and strengthen community safety during future emergencies. 2. Public Health and Safe Drinking Water Replacing failing, fire damaged infrastructure with modernized systems ensures consistent delivery of safe, reliable drinking water. Consolidation eliminates the need for multiple mutual systems and provides long term regulatory compliance, improved water quality, and operational efficiency. 3. Adaptation and Long Term Sustainability By integrating these isolated systems into SLV, the consolidated system is a more resilient, interconnected supply capable of withstanding drought, wildfire, and climate change. Modernized electrical systems and upgraded distribution lines reduce system losses and improve operational efficiency. 4. Equity and Community Protection The communities served by these mutuals lack the financial capacity to rebuild independently. Consolidation ensures equitable access to safe water and fire protection for approximately 1,000 residents who would otherwise remain at high risk. Collectively, these outcomes demonstrate a strong return on investment and provide long term benefits that safeguard public health, strengthen regional resilience, and secure long term water security.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Beyond its primary goal of restoring reliable water service to three fire damaged systems, the project delivers substantial secondary public benefits that strengthen the long term wellbeing of the San Lorenzo Valley. These benefits extend across public safety, environmental protection, economic stability, and community equity - making the project a high value investment with durable, multi sector impact. Enhanced Public Safety Modernized storage capacity and improved system hydraulics will significantly increase available fire flow, directly supporting emergency response capabilities in a region at high risk of wildfire. This improved readiness benefits not only the 1,000 residents served by the mutuals but also the broader watershed community that relies on coordinated fire suppression to protect homes, infrastructure, and natural resources. Environmental and Watershed Stewardship Modernized pumping, electrical systems, and distribution lines will reduce system losses, energy consumption, and operational inefficiencies. These improvements support sustainable resource management by minimizing leakage, reducing strain on local water sources, and enabling more sustainable resource management. Economic Stability and Reduced Long Term Costs Consolidation eliminates the financial burden on small mutuals that cannot independently rebuild or maintain compliant systems. A unified, professionally managed system reduces operational costs, improves regulatory compliance, and prevents future emergency expenditures associated with system failures. Equitable Access to Safe, Reliable Water This project ensures that vulnerable, fire impacted communities receive the same level of service, safety, and reliability as the broader district. Consolidation provides equitable access to safe drinking water and fire protection - core public benefits that small mutuals cannot achieve alone. Collectively, these secondary benefits reinforce the project's value as a transformative investment in public health, safety, and regional resilience.

TARGET COMMUNITY

The consolidation of the Forest Springs, Bracken Brae, and Big Basin water systems will deliver substantial and lasting benefits to the residents of the San Lorenzo Valley by directly improving public safety, community health, and overall livability. Approximately 1,000 residents currently depend on small, fire damaged mutual systems that lack the operational resilience needed to provide safe drinking water or adequate fire protection. This project addresses these vulnerabilities through a comprehensive upgrade of storage, pumping, electrical, and distribution facilities. Public Safety Enhanced water storage and upgraded system hydraulics will allow the consolidated system to meet modern fire flow requirements, significantly strengthening wildfire preparedness in a region repeatedly impacted by catastrophic fire. Improved reliability and redundancy ensure that firefighters have the water supply needed to protect homes, critical facilities, and natural resources during emergencies. Health and Well Being Modernized infrastructure will ensure consistent delivery of safe drinking water, reducing risks associated with failing or compromised systems. Consolidation under a professionally managed public agency provides long term regulatory compliance, improved water quality monitoring, and dependable service.

community health and stability. Community Livability Reliable water service is foundational to a functioning community. By replacing aging, fire damaged infrastructure with resilient, efficient facilities, this project improves property values, and enhances residents' confidence in their essential services. The improvements also reduce the financial burden on small mutuals, promoting long term affordability and equitable access to safe water. These improvements strengthen the social, environmental, and economic fabric of the San Lorenzo Valley, supporting a safer, healthier, and more resilient community.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

The San Lorenzo Valley Water District (SLVWD) is leading a critical infrastructure and consolidation project to consolidate three small, fire damaged water systems - Forest Springs Improvement and Big Basin Water Company - into a single, reliable, and sustainable public water supply. These systems currently serve approximately 1,000 residents who remain at risk due to failing infrastructure, limited water storage, and an inability to meet modern fire flow and public health standards. The 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire caused significant damage to water systems, destroying key facilities and overwhelming the capacity of the small associations that operate them. Without external investment, these communities cannot recover or rebuild the infrastructure required to ensure safe drinking water, adequate fire protection, and long term system reliability. SLVWD's consolidation project is a critical infrastructure project that provides the facilities needed to integrate these systems into the District's regional network. Planned improvements include expanded water storage capacity, modernized pumping and electrical systems, and upsized distribution systems to meet code requirements. The project also involves modifying and extending retaining walls to create sufficient level area for a third storage tank, a new pump house, and associated electrical equipment. These upgrades are foundational to restoring service reliability and building long term resilience in a region increasingly threatened by wildfire. This project's consolidation initiative will directly support public health, community safety, and regional water security. By investing now, funders will help ensure that these vulnerable communities gain access to a safe and sustainable water supply, improved fire protection, and infrastructure capable of withstanding future emergencies.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

The consolidation of the Forest Springs, Bracken Brae, and Big Basin water systems will generate significant environmental benefits by improving water quality, strengthening watershed health, and enhancing climate resilience across the San Lorenzo Valley. These communities currently rely on small, fire damaged systems with aging infrastructure, limited storage, contamination, system failure, and climate driven disruptions. Modernizing and integrating these systems into the San Lorenzo Valley Water District (SLVWD) will create a more sustainable and environmentally responsible water supply for the region. Improved Water Quality and Watershed Protection Upgrading storage tanks, pumping systems, and distribution lines will reduce the risk of contamination from leaks, backflow, and infrastructure failures. Consolidation under a professionally managed public agency ensures consistent water quality monitoring, regulatory compliance, and rapid response to potential threats. Modernized facilities also reduce system losses, protecting local groundwater and surface water resources within the sensitive San Lorenzo River watershed. Climate Resilience and Adaptation The project directly supports climate resilience by creating a more robust, interconnected water system capable of withstanding wildfire, drought, and extreme weather events. Expanded storage capacity increases operational flexibility during drought conditions, while upgraded electrical and pumping systems improve reliability during power outages and emergencies. Consolidation also reduces the environmental footprint of maintaining multiple small systems, lowering energy use and improving long term sustainability. Long Term Environmental Resilience By consolidating vulnerable, fire damaged infrastructure with resilient, efficient facilities, the project supports a more sustainable and protects the ecological integrity of the surrounding watershed. These improvements help ensure that the region's water supply remains reliable, clean, and environmentally responsible for decades to come.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Applicant does not have a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

REQUIRED PERMITS

May require an easement agreement with a homeowner and permits from the County of Santa Cruz.

PARTNER APPROVALS

—

TIMELINE MILESTONES

Site Preparation and Retaining Wall Construction (Months 1-12) - Modify upper retaining walls and extend lower retaining walls to create the level pad required for the third storage tank and new pumphouse. - Install foundational electrical and utility conduits. - Prepare access routes and staging areas. Milestone: Retaining wall improvements and site grading completed.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

No

TEAM CAPACITY

The San Lorenzo Valley Water District (SLVWD) has the technical expertise, organizational capacity, and proven experience necessary to successfully implement the consolidation of the Forest Springs, Bracken Brae, and Big Basin water systems. As a full service public water agency serving more than 7,500 connections across a geographic area, SLVWD routinely manages capital projects involving storage tanks, pump stations, distribution system upgrades, and emergency infrastructure restoration. Experienced Engineering and Operations Staff SLVWD's engineering team includes licensed civil engineers, project managers, and construction inspectors with extensive experience in water system design, permitting, and construction oversight. The District's operations staff - comprising certified water treatment and distribution operators - has decades of combined experience managing groundwater systems, surface water treatment, and complex distribution networks. This team has successfully restored and rebuilt critical infrastructure following the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire, demonstrating their ability to deliver projects under challenging conditions. Proven Project Delivery and Grant Management SLVWD has a strong track record of delivering state and federally funded capital projects. The District has successfully managed grants from agencies such as the State Water Resources Control Board, FEMA, and the Department of Water Resources, ensuring full compliance with environmental, financial, and reporting requirements. Specialized Expertise in Post Fire Recovery and Resilience Planning Following the CZU Fire, SLVWD implemented emergency response measures, protection measures, and long term resilience planning. This experience directly informs the District's approach to managing complex projects that requires technical knowledge of fire damaged systems, geotechnical constraints, and multi-jurisdictional infrastructure improvements. Partnerships The District works closely with regulatory agencies, local fire authorities, engineering consultants, and community stakeholders to ensure coordinated project delivery. These partnerships strengthen SLVWD's capacity to manage complex, multi-jurisdictional infrastructure improvements. Together, SLVWD's technical expertise and demonstrated success managing large scale capital projects position the District to deliver the project responsibly, and with long term community benefit.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

The proposed consolidation of the Forest Springs, Bracken Brae, and Big Basin water systems is highly feasible due to the San Lorenzo Valley Water District's (SLVWD) technical expertise, established project management capacity, and the advanced level of planning already completed. The District has conducted preliminary engineering assessments, site evaluations, and system analyses that confirm the technical viability of constructing expanded storage capacity, upgrading pumping and electrical systems, and integrating the mutual systems into SLVWD's regional network. Technical Feasibility Engineering evaluations have verified that the project site can support the required infrastructure, including the modification of upper retaining walls and extension of lower retaining walls to create the necessary level area for a third storage tank and new pumphouse. Preliminary hydraulic modeling confirms that upsizing distribution lines will meet modern fire flow requirements and improve system reliability. SLVWD's engineering team has extensive experience designing and constructing similar facilities following the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire. Operational Feasibility SLVWD has the staffing, certifications, and operational systems needed to manage the consolidated system. The District's operators, engineers, and construction inspectors routinely oversee complex capital projects and maintain compliance with state and federal regulations. Integration of the mutual systems into SLVWD's SCADA and monitoring network will ensure long term operational efficiency.

Administrative Feasibility SLVWD has a strong track record of successfully managing state and federal grants, completing environmental reviews, and delivering capital projects on schedule. The District's financial systems and procurement procedures meet all regulatory requirements, ensuring transparent and compliant project delivery. Community and Regulatory Support The affected communities and regulatory agencies have expressed strong support for consolidation, recognizing that the mutual systems cannot independently rebuild to modern standards. This alignment reduces implementation risk and ensures a clear path to permitting and construction. Together, these factors demonstrate that the project is both technically and operationally feasible, with a clear and achievable pathway to successful completion. Operational Feasibility SLVWD has the staffing, certifications, and operational systems needed to manage the consolidated system. The District's operators, engineers, and construction inspectors routinely oversee complex capital projects and maintain compliance with state and federal regulations. Integration of the mutual systems into SLVWD's SCADA and monitoring network will ensure long term operational Administrative Feasibility SLVWD has a strong track record of successfully managing state and federal grants, completing environmental reviews, and delivering capital projects on schedule. The District's financial systems and procurement procedures meet all regulatory requirements, ensuring transparent and compliant project delivery. Community and Regulatory Support The affected communities and regulatory agencies have expressed strong support for consolidation, recognizing that the mutual systems cannot independently rebuild to modern standards. This alignment reduces implementation risk and ensures a clear path to permitting and construction. Together, these factors demonstrate that the project is both technically and operationally feasible, with a clear and achievable pathway to successful completion.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The San Lorenzo Valley Water District (SLVWD) has established strong partnerships with local agencies, community organizations, and regulatory bodies to ensure the successful consolidation of the Forest Springs, Bracken Brae, and Big Basin water systems. These relationships provide essential technical support, community engagement, and regulatory coordination, strengthening the project's overall feasibility and long term sustainability. Water Systems (Forest Springs, Bracken Brae, and Big Basin) The three water systems are core project partners and have actively collaborated with SLVWD throughout the planning process. Their boards and community representatives have provided system data, access for site evaluations, and support for consolidation planning. These partnerships ensure that the project reflects community needs and that the transition to SLVWD management is smooth and equitable. Local Fire Agencies The Boulder Creek Fire Protection District and CAL FIRE have been key collaborators in assessing fire-flow requirements and identifying infrastructure upgrades needed to meet modern fire-protection standards. Their involvement ensures that the project directly supports regional wildfire resilience and emergency response capabilities. Regulatory and Funding Agencies SLVWD maintains strong working relationships with the State Water Resources Control Board, the California Department of Water Resources, and county environmental health officials. These agencies provide technical guidance, regulatory oversight, and funding coordination essential to project implementation. Their early engagement reduces permitting risk and supports compliance with environmental and Technical Consultants SLVWD partners with experienced engineering firms specializing in water system design, geotechnical analysis, and post fire infrastructure recovery. These consultants support detailed design planning, ensuring technical accuracy and cost effective project delivery. Together, the well supported framework that enhances project success, strengthens community trust,

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

The San Lorenzo Valley Water District (SLVWD) is advancing this consolidation project through a highly collaborative, multi agency effort that brings together local partners, regulatory agencies, technical experts, and community organizations. This coordinated approach ensures that the project is grounded in community needs, aligned with regional resilience priorities, and supported by the expertise required for successful implementation. SLVWD works closely with the three water systems - Forest Springs, Bracken Brae, and Big Basin - whose boards and residents have actively participated in planning discussions, system assessments, and data sharing. Their engagement ensures that the consolidation process reflects local priorities and supports a smooth transition to long term district management. Collaboration with the Boulder Creek Fire Protection District and CAL FIRE has been essential to identifying fire-flow deficiencies and shaping infrastructure upgrades that meet modern fire protection standards. These partnerships ensure that the project directly enhances regional wildfire preparedness and emergency response capacity. SLVWD also maintains strong working relationships with key regulatory and funding agencies, including the State Water Resources Control Board, the California Department of Water Resources, and county environmental health officials. Early coordination with these agencies supports efficient permitting, compliance with environmental and public health regulations, and alignment with statewide water resilience goals. Engineering and technical consultants provide specialized expertise in system design, geotechnical analysis, and post fire infrastructure recovery, strengthening the project's technical foundation. Together, these collaborative relationships create a unified, well supported framework that enhances project feasibility, reduces implementation risk, and ensures long term community and environmental benefits. SLVWD maintains strong working relationships with key regulatory and funding agencies, including the State Water Resources Control Board, the California Department of Water Resources, and county environmental health officials. Early coordination with these agencies supports efficient permitting, compliance with environmental and public health regulations, and alignment with statewide water resilience goals. Engineering and technical consultants contribute specialized expertise in system design, geotechnical analysis, and post fire infrastructure recovery, strengthening the project's technical foundation. Together, these collaborative relationships create a unified, well supported framework that enhances project feasibility, reduces implementation risk, and ensures long term community and environmental benefits.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

500000

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

0

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

0

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

0

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

—

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Site Preparation and Retaining Wall Modifications This includes grading, excavation, and structural improvements needed to modify the upper retaining walls and extend the lower retaining walls. These activities are essential to create the level pad required for the third storage tank, new pumphouse, and associated electrical equipment. Costs cover labor, materials, geotechnical oversight, and erosion control measures. Engineering, Design, and Construction Services This includes final engineering design, construction drawings, hydraulic modeling, and project management. These services ensure that all improvements meet regulatory standards, fire flow requirements, and long term operational needs. Fire Flow Improvements provide on site inspection and quality assurance during early construction phases. Funding will be used to install new water lines to meet current fire flow standards. This includes materials, trenching, and installation for priority segments that directly improve system reliability and emergency readiness.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

The project ensures equitable access to safe drinking water and reliable fire protection for approximately 1,000 residents. These benefits strengthen community stability, protect property, and support long term livability.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

No

REFERENCED PLANS

—

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

The proposed consolidation project offers benefits that extend well beyond the immediate needs of the Forest Springs, Bracken Brae, and Big Basin communities. It represents a forward looking model for how small, rural communities in California can transition toward long term resilience, sustainability, and regional integration. By taking an innovative approach to post disaster recovery by pairing infrastructure modernization with community development, rebuilding three separate, vulnerable systems, SLVWD is creating a unified, professionally managed network that improves reliability, reduces operational risk, and enhances emergency preparedness. This approach aligns with statewide goals to strengthen climate resilience, reduce fragmentation in rural water systems, and ensure equitable access to safe drinking water. The project also advances regional watershed stewardship. By modernizing pumping, electrical, and storage infrastructure, the District will reduce system losses, improve energy efficiency, and support more sustainable groundwater and surface water management. These improvements contribute to long term environmental health in the Santa Lucia Valley.

resource for both local communities and downstream ecosystems. Finally, the project delivers a replicable framework for other communities facing similar challenges. Many small water systems across California lack the financial and technical capacity to recover from wildfire damage or meet evolving regulatory standards. This consolidation effort provides a practical, scalable example of how regional partnerships, community engagement, and targeted investment can transform vulnerable systems into resilient, sustainable public assets. By supporting this project, funders are investing not only in local infrastructure but also in a statewide model for climate resilient water management.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

Budget Spreadsheet_2026.xlsx

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

2023-08-30 SLVWD FS Tank Upgrade.pdf

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Forest Springs-Letter of Support.pdf, Letter of Support from Santa Cruz County.pdf, LOS from Big Basin Water Company.pdf

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Jennifer Torres

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Jennifer Torres, Management Analyst

SIGNATURE DATE

03/12/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 82 **Type:** Tier 2 Pajaro Valley Set-Aside
Project: Watsonville City Plaza Revitalization Project

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

82

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Pajaro Valley Set-Aside

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Watsonville City Plaza Revitalization Project

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

City of Watsonville

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

City of Watsonville

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Acres treated

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

1.4 acres

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Nick Calubaquib

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Deputy City Manager

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Corey	Schaefer	[REDACTED]
Hilda	Peralta	[REDACTED]
Christopher	Krishna	[REDACTED]
Leslie	Rios	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

350 Main St, Watsonville, CA 95076, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

017-112-01

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.91025523952954

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.75612200362090

PROJECT JURISDICTION / CITY

City of Watsonville

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

—

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

District 2

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT

District 4 - Felipe Hernandez

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The City Plaza is located in the heart of Watsonville and the center of the recently designated Downtown Watsonville Cultural District.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Yes

DAC/SDAC NOTES

Census Tract 6087110300. CalEnviroscreen 4.0 Percentile = 80%.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

CEQA/NEPA completed

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

Project is under final permit review by the City of Watsonville

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
City/County Construction Permits	Yes	Under final review by City	Under final review by City

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

quarters

DURATION AMOUNT

6

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

CEQA and construction documents for this project are 100% complete. Permitting is near completed. Estimated constructions costs is \$6.2 million. Award of contract for Phase I (historical elements) is pending and scheduled for March 24, 2026. Bidding for Phase II (remainder of the project for which funds are requested) will take place summer 2026, with construction commencing in November 2026. Weather or delays in Phase I could push construction start to early 2027.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

600000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

7450000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Contractual / Consultants	\$0	\$1,250,000	\$0	\$1,250,000
Construction	\$600,000	\$5,600,000	\$0	\$6,200,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The City Plaza Revitalization Project weaves together the space's rich history with the community's current and modern use of this culturally significant asset. Known as the "heart of the city," this downtown plaza has been the focus of community gatherings and celebrations for well over a century. Watsonville City Plaza is on the National Register of Historic Places, with its classic design, which includes a bandstand and fountain. The community proposes to restore these features to their historic grandeur, preserving them for the enjoyment of future generations. Integrating new recreational features and upgrading the park's infrastructure will serve to accommodate 20+ annual events and weekly farmers' market in and around the plaza. We will update the gazebo in the center of the park, renovate the historic community fountain, improve landscaping and lighting throughout the park, and add a permanent stage with seating areas, game tables, group picnic areas, public art, a circular walkway around the middle of the plaza, a drinking fountain with bottle-filling station, bicycle parking, improved electrical infrastructure to facilitate events and performances, and signage to highlight the historical elements of the park. This project will increase recreational opportunities and protect a safe green space for residents, while augmenting the site's historical and cultural significance for one of Watsonville's densest and most disadvantaged neighborhoods. Measure Q funds are requested for construction of Phase II of this project.

PROJECT START DATE

11/02/2026

PROJECT END DATE

11/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

Known as the "heart of the city," the Plaza has been the focus of community gatherings and celebrations for well over a century. It is currently the central location of 20+ annual events - including the Watsonville Strawberry Festival, Cinco de Mayo Celebration, 16th de Septiembre, Film Festival Showings, Music in the Plaza concerts - as well as a weekly farmers' market. In 2025, the City Plaza was visited over 311,000 times by 113,000 users who spent an average of 60 minutes enjoying this celebrated outdoor space. The historic gazebo/bandstand, although iconic in local imagery, has not been usable since the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake and is too small as a modern performance venue. Its designation on the National Register of Historic Places points to several key features, including a bandstand, water fountain, historic cannons, and other elements that have been added throughout the space's close to 175-year history. All of these features are in need of repair and restoration. This project seeks to restore these historical features to preserve them for future generations. The project includes the addition of a permanent stage (including electrical and sound infrastructure), as well as additional seating and improved landscaping and lighting. The project will also upgrade electrical and irrigation systems that are decades out of date. Watsonville residents have access to 2.25 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, a stark contrast from the national average of 10 acres. With approximately 0.6 acres of park space available within the half-mile radius surrounding the park, this densely populated neighborhood is in dire need of expanded quality park space. One of only two designated parks in the city's downtown core, the Plaza is the closest to what is, and will continue to be, one of the city's most densely populated neighborhoods as high-density housing continues to be built in the downtown area. With households within a half-mile radius earning \$61,300 per year (63.6% of the statewide average), access to free, safe, vibrant outdoor spaces is critical. According to the American Community Survey, Watsonville's population is 81% Latinx, with 40% of residents not having graduated from high school. Many residents are migrant farm workers, with low educational achievement and limited English proficiency, earn low wages, and experience high rates of seasonal unemployment. Watsonville's workforce is primarily agricultural and blue collar. A higher percentage (26 percent) of the children in Watsonville are overweight--compared to 20 percent in Santa Cruz statewide - putting them at an increased risk of obesity, diabetes, and premature death. Evidence strongly suggests that improving access to parks and recreation can have marked effects on childhood obesity rates and provide long-term health benefits. Residents and families who live near the park stand to benefit greatly from a physical and mental health

perspective with this proposed project. They will be able to enjoy the new recreation amenities, take walks and exercise in and around the park, see holiday decorations, attend events and simply enjoy the outdoor space safely with their families and loved ones.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Multi-Benefit Outcomes - This project will effect many social and economic outcomes. Known as the "heart of the city," the Plaza has been the focus of community gatherings and celebrations for well over a century. Improvements to this space will support these formal and informal gatherings by preserving historical integrity, while enhancing infrastructure to support modern uses of the space. As the center of downtown, it serves as a key gathering space to draw visitors to local restaurants and shops and affect economic development. This project is part of a coordinated effort across multiple City departments to transform the area in support of the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan. Equity Impact - Watsonville residents have access to 2.25 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, a stark contrast from the national average of 10 acres. With approximately 0.6 acres of park space available within the half-mile radius surrounding the park, this densely populated neighborhood is in dire need of expanded quality park space. One of only two designated parks in the city's downtown core, the Plaza is the closest to what is, and will continue to be, one of the city's most densely populated neighborhoods as high-density housing continues to be built in the downtown area. With households within a half-mile radius earning \$61,300 per year (63.6% of the statewide average), access to free, safe, vibrant outdoor spaces is critical. According to the American Community Survey, Watsonville's population is 81% Latinx, with 40% of residents not having graduated from high school. Many residents are migrant farm workers, with low educational achievement and limited English proficiency, earn low wages, and experience high rates of seasonal unemployment. Watsonville's workforce is primarily agricultural and blue collar. A higher percentage (26 percent) of the children in Watsonville are overweight--compared to 20 percent in Santa Cruz statewide - putting them at an increased risk of obesity, diabetes, and premature death. Evidence strongly suggests that improving access to parks and recreation can have marked effects on childhood obesity rates and provide long-term health benefits. Residents and families who live near the park stand to benefit greatly from a physical and mental health perspective with this proposed project. They will be able to enjoy the new recreation amenities, take walks and exercise in and around the park, see holiday decorations, attend events and simply enjoy the outdoor space safely with their families and loved ones. Match Funding - The total estimated project cost is \$7.45 million. The City is currently approximately \$600,000 short of being able to fund full construction and will need to reduce the scope of this project prior to going out to bid for Phase II. The Measure Q funds requested would drastically reduce this shortfall and would allow for closer to 100 percent of the master plan, designed based on community input, to be constructed. Measure Q funding would be more than matched with \$3.35 million from the CA State Park's Statewide Park Program grant awarded to the City, along with a \$3 million bond issued by

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Public Benefit - City Plaza is the city's central gathering place and location of 20+ annual events. Events are typically designed for community members of all ages and highlight Watsonville's unique diversity and culture through dance, music, film, and art. This project will enhance the Plaza as a venue for these cultural events and will include the addition of public art. The weekly farmers' market highlights locally grown produce and culturally relevant prepared foods. This project will preserve the Plaza as a key green space within the urban downtown core. The renovated space will support socializing, events, and physical activities, especially as the population surrounding the Plaza grows with new high-density housing. This project is part of a coordinated effort across multiple City departments to transform the area in support of the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan. Renovating the City Plaza would be instrumental in building community pride and motivation for upcoming improvements in the neighborhood by providing a modernized gathering area for community members' changing needs, while still paying respect to the rich history of the park's origins to share with future generations and visitors to Watsonville's downtown. Readiness - CEQA and construction documents for this project are 100% complete. Permitting is near completed. Award of the construction contract for Phase I (historical elements) is pending and scheduled for March 24, 2026, with construction starting in April 2026. Bidding for Phase II (remainder of the project for which Measure Q funds are requested) will take place summer 2026, with construction commencing in November 2026, making this project more than shovel ready in the first year of grant funding. Weather or delays in Phase I could push construction start to early 2027. Strategic Alignment - This project represents the implementation of the City Plaza Master Plan, that was created in 2019 as part of the Watsonville Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. The Park Master Plan and Strategic Plan were developed through extensive community engagement, including surveys and 15+ meetings and workshops. The City adopted the Downtown Specific Plan in 2023, which positions the City Plaza as the living room of the community. The City Plaza will serve as the central neighborhood park for downtown residents as additional planned high-density housing is built. Additionally, downtown Watsonville was recently designated as one of 10 new Cultural Districts by the California Arts Council. As the epicenter of art and culture in downtown Watsonville, this designation and the addition of public art through this project support implementation of the City's first Public Art Master Plan, adopted in 2025.

TARGET COMMUNITY

The proposed park improvements will increase youth access to safe, green open space and serve as a vibrant space for community building and gatherings. Youth - There is one public elementary school, one charter school, one private K-8 school, and one public high school within the half-mile radius surrounding the park. Within two blocks of the park, there is a City run youth center, a technology-focused non-profit serving youth (Digital Nest), and the Cabrillo Community College Watsonville campus. During school lunch hours and after school, the Plaza serves as a meeting and gathering place for students traveling to and from campus. This project will benefit youth who use the park on a daily basis, as it will improve safety and security and include amenities (new seating areas, public art, open grass areas) to enjoy. Seniors - The Plaza is located five blocks from the city's only Senior Center and five blocks from three senior living communities. With few other green and open spaces available in the vicinity, the Plaza provides a destination for seniors to walk to. The proposed inner perimeter circle encourages walking within the Plaza. Throughout the day, the Plaza serves as a gathering place for seniors. In Latin America, city plazas are often used by older adults to meet with friends. The Watsonville City Plaza is used frequently in this fashion. On any given day, one finds older adults playing checkers and cards, reading, and socializing for hours with friends. This project will increase available seating to facilitate these interactions. Families - The project's permanent stage, art features, and other improvements will increase the park's attractiveness to families as a place to recreate when visiting downtown stores and restaurants. These elements will produce an increased sense of safety for all users, creating a more family friendly environment. The addition of a permanent stage and associated infrastructure (lighting, electrical, sound) included in this project will facilitate special events held in the Plaza by the City and community organizations. The 20+ events held annually in the Plaza - some drawing 60,000+ attendees over the course of a weekend - will benefit from this improved infrastructure.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Access to recreation, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Public Safety - Through the community meetings held to develop this project, many attendees cited concerns for safety at the site due to the activities of other park users, including alcohol and drug use. The design for renovation incorporates elements and features intended to attract more youth and families that will transform the park's environment and safety features, such as improved site visibility, new security lighting and cameras. Access to Recreation - With approximately 0.6 acres of park space available within the half-mile radius surrounding the park, this densely populated neighborhood is in dire need of expanded quality park space. One of only two designated parks in the city's downtown core, the Plaza is the closest to what is, and will continue to be, one of the city's most densely populated neighborhoods as high-density housing continues to be built in the downtown area. It is currently the central location of 20+ annual events - including the Watsonville Strawberry Festival, Cinco de Mayo Celebration, 16th de Septiembre, Film Festival Showings, Music in the Plaza concerts - as well as a weekly farmers' market. Health & Well-Being/Recreational Opportunities - Residents and families who live near the park stand to benefit greatly from a physical and mental health perspective with this proposed project. They will be able to enjoy the new recreation amenities, take walks and exercise in and around the park, see holiday decorations, attend events and simply enjoy the outdoor space safely with their families and loved ones. Community Identity - Known as the "heart of the city," the Plaza has been the focus of community gatherings and celebrations for well over a century. The City Plaza Revitalization Project is intended to weave together the space's rich history with the community's current and modern use of this culturally significant asset. Its designation on the National Register of Historic Places points to several key features, including a bandstand, water fountain, historic cannons, and other elements that have been added throughout the space's close to 175-year history. All of these features are in need of repair and restoration. This project seeks to restore these historical features to preserve them for future generations.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

This project will preserve the Plaza as a key green space within the urban downtown core. The expanded space will support open space for socializing, events, and physical activities, especially as the population surrounding the Plaza grows with new high-density housing. Water Quality - Through a small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) permit, the City has been installing best management practices (BMPs) to reduce sediment, nutrient, and pathogen loading to local waterbodies. The City also has implemented peak flow control measures within the system to reduce flooding. Currently, storm water from the project site discharges in sheet flow into the City's storm sewer system. The proposed project will incorporate pervious surfaces such as permeable pavers and landscape features to slow and minimize the sheet flow before it enters the system. We will utilize grading techniques and existing drainage patterns to create water-wise features such as rain gardens that further aid in water retention and soil infiltration. The natural characteristics of the turf and landscaped areas, which comprise roughly 50% of the park, will allow for enhanced treatment of existing sheet flow from impervious surfaces and drainage upgrades will encourage natural soil percolation. The project will add approximately 13,000 square feet of pervious surfaces. Rain gardens, soil substrate, and other design elements in key locations will capture, filter, and slow storm water and encourage soil infiltration to provide

moisture for plants and aid in groundwater recharge. The project will be designed to further citywide water conservation efforts and will comply with the City of Watsonville's DWR-approved Urban Water Management Plan. The city ensures that all newly installed landscapes follow the criteria set in the Municipal Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance by incorporating drought-tolerant plant selections and irrigation system components that minimize water waste. Habitat/Climate Resilience - In order to meet water consumption reduction targets, protect against future droughts, and model sustainable landscape practices to the public, the project will incorporate a number of water-saving features. A drought tolerant turf with a low evapotranspiration rate suitable for our climate will be used. Turf management activities will be conducted in a responsible way that reduces fertilizer inputs, maintenance, and associated greenhouse gas emissions, and that smartly manages irrigation and storm water to aid in supply conservation and groundwater recharge. Soil amendments will maximize water retention to help reduce irrigation demand in combination with water conserving landscape design principles such as the use of drought-tolerant plants, retentive rain gardens, shading from tree canopies, and mulch. Approximately 9,700 square feet of drought-tolerant landscaping will be added. Design, installation, and maintenance will incorporate best practices to complement the City's efforts towards sustainable landscaping, with the goal of water conservation, protection of waterways, creation of habitat, and reduction of nitrogen fertilizers, which emit greenhouse gasses. New trees will also be added to the Plaza.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Applicant owns the property for the proposed project

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

REQUIRED PERMITS

City of Watsonville Administrative Use Permit - Obtained 2019 City of Watsonville Building Permit - In process (expected March 2026)

PARTNER APPROVALS

None. City owns the property.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

March - December, 2019 - Community Engagement. November 2019 - CEQA for City Plaza Master Plan completed. February 2020 - City Council adopted City Plaza Master Plan March. 2022 - City awarded \$3.35 million SPP grant for project. November 2022 - September 2025 - Project design. 100% construction documents completed. September 2025 - March 2026 - Permitting. December 2025 - February 2026 - Bidding period for Phase I. March 24, 2026 - Award of contract for Phase I (historical elements). April - October 2026 - Construction of Phase I. July - September 2026 - Bidding for Phase II (remainder of the project for which Measure Q funds are requested). November 2026 - July 2027 - Construction of Phase II. August 2026 - Construction complete.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

Yes

TEAM CAPACITY

The City of Watsonville has a demonstrated capacity to successfully plan and execute capital improvement and park infrastructure projects through the effective and coordinated partnership between City departments and with contractors and community partners. Project Manager Robert Berry oversees all park development projects as well as city-wide projects and has 36 years experience, including oversight of the construction of a \$54 million Civic Plaza and parking structure complex, Franich Park construction, Callaghan Park renovations and the current \$34 million Ramsay Park Renaissance Project. Construction Manager Hilda Peralta has overseen construction of several park projects, along with oversight of various grants, public art and community engagement efforts. Parks Superintendent Joe Medina has over 10 years experience working in management, urban forestry, landscaping and is a Certified Arborist. Nick Calubaquib, Deputy City Manager and Parks Director has over 30 years of municipal

administrative and management experience.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

The City of Watsonville owns the property for the proposed project. The total cost of the City Plaza Revitalization Project is \$7,450,000. This includes the cost of construction, design, public art, signage, security cameras, monitoring and inspections and permit fees. Of this, \$6,200,000 is the cost of construction. This project will be built in two phases: Phase I consists of the restoration of the Plaza's main historical elements (gazebo and water fountain) at a cost of \$1.2 million. Phase II consists of the balance of the project, including a new permanent stage, seating and game areas, landscaping, walkways and hardscape and electrical and lighting upgrades. The City has received a \$3.35 million State Park Program (SPP) grant from the State of California (Prop 68). Additionally, the City has leveraged revenue from a local sales tax (Measure R) to bond for \$3.5 million for this project. With these two sources, a total of \$6.85 million is budgeted as match for this grant. This leaves the City \$600,000 short of fully funding this important community project. CEQA and 100% construction drawings are complete. Plans for construction of Phase I are already well under way, with award of the construction contract expected in March 2026. As Phase I nears completion, City staff anticipate going out to bid for Phase II. Unless additional funds are identified, staff will need to value engineer and scale back the scope of work to bring the project within budget. This would result in completing the project without some of the amenities identified by the community in the planning process, such as the seating and game tables and landscaping throughout the park. Measure Q funding is requested for construction of Phase II so that the full project as envisioned by the community may be completed.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Main Street Enterprises/Watsonville Farmers' Market - Provided continual design feedback to support Farmers' Market and other events at the City Plaza. Watsonville Film Festival - Provided continual design feedback to support Film Festival events (film showings and Dia de los Muertos) and other events at the City Plaza. Cabrillo College - Provided continual design feedback to support students at Watsonville campus. Community Health Trust of the Pajaro Valley - Active partner in community-based planning, including attending meetings, outreach and advertising throughout the community to encourage residents to attend the community planning meetings and complete the project's online survey. Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County - Supported SPP grant application efforts by attending and advocating for funding for project. Active partner in community-based planning, including attending meetings, outreach and advertising throughout the community to encourage residents to attend the community planning meetings and complete the project's online survey. Pajaro Valley Unified School District - Provided access to students to host student focus group at Watsonville High School. Teachers and administration encouraged high school age students to complete community survey. Active partner in community-based planning, including attending meetings, outreach and advertising throughout the community to encourage residents to attend the community planning meetings and complete the project's online survey through email marketing system. Pajaro Valley Arts Council - Provided expertise and consultation on current and future art related elements of the project. Active partner in community-based planning, including attending meetings, outreach and advertising throughout the community to encourage residents to attend the community planning meetings and complete the project's online survey. United Way and United Way-Jovenes Sanos - Active partner in community-based planning, including attending meetings, outreach and advertising throughout the community to encourage residents to attend the community planning meetings and complete the project's online survey. Monterey Bay Center of the California Conservation Corps - Has formally agreed to assist with the installation of drought tolerant landscaping and mulching during project construction.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

A significant number of community members and representatives from 39 government agencies and community organizations participated in the design of the City Plaza Master Plan through 15+ community meetings. Many of these organizations, including the Community Health Trust of the Pajaro Valley, Community Action Board, Pajaro Valley Unified School District, Pajaro Valley Arts and the United Way of Santa Cruz were also active partners in community-based planning, including attending meetings, outreach and advertising throughout the community to encourage residents to attend the community planning meetings and complete the project's online survey. The Watsonville Farmers' Market and Watsonville Film Festival have been crucial partners in providing feedback as the design team converted the Master Plan into construction documents. These organizations that implement events at the City Plaza throughout the year have been instrumental in assisting the City with designing a space that will facilitate the many community events held there weekly and annually. As a neighbor and organization that utilizes the City Plaza as an extension of its campus, Cabrillo College has also provided much needed feedback for this project. Many of these organizations have helped the City obtain funding for this project by providing letters of support and/or serving as advocates during site visits with potential funders. Finally, the Monterey Bay Center of the California Conservation Corps has formally agreed to assist with the installation of drought tolerant landscaping and mulching during project construction.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

600000

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

6850000

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

0

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

6850000

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

—

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The total cost of the City Plaza Revitalization Project is \$7,450,000. This includes the cost of construction, design, public art, signage, security cameras, monitoring and inspections and permit fees. Of this, \$6,200,000 is the cost of construction. This project will be built in two phases: Phase I consists of the restoration of the Plaza's main historical elements (gazebo and water fountain) at a cost of \$1.2 million. Phase II consists of the balance of the project, including a new permanent stage, seating and game areas, landscaping, walkways and hardscape and electrical and lighting upgrades. The City has received a \$3.35 million State Park Program (SPP) grant from the State of California (Prop 68). Additionally, the City has leveraged revenue from a local sales tax (Measure R) to bond for \$3.5 million for this project. With these two sources, a total of \$6.85 million is budgeted as match for this grant. This leaves the City \$600,000 short of fully funding this important community project. Plans for construction of Phase I are already well under way, with award of contract expected in March 2026. As Phase I nears completion, City staff anticipate going out to bid for Phase II. Unless additional funds are identified, staff will need to value engineer and scale back the scope of work to bring the project within budget. This would result in completing the project without some of the amenities identified by the community in the planning process, such as the seating and game tables and landscaping throughout the park. Measure Q funding is requested for construction of Phase II so that the full project as envisioned by the community may be completed.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

The City of Watsonville currently owns and maintains the City Plaza. It is not anticipated that the renovations included in this project will increase annual maintenance costs. The included irrigation and electrical upgrades will increase maintenance efficiencies and reduce water and power use and costs.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

Yes

REFERENCED PLANS

```
[{"name":"City Plaza Master Plan/ Watsonville Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan","url":"https://www.watsonville.gov/DocumentCenter/View/12311/Watsonville-Strategic-Plan---Final?bidId="},{ "name":"Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan","url":"https://www.watsonville.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23797/Adopted-DWSP-adopted-10-25-23-amended-8-26-25?bidId="},{ "name":"Watsonville Public Art Master Plan","url":"https://www.watsonville.gov/DocumentCenter/View/27237/Watsonville-Arts-Plan?bidId="}]
```

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness, High Fund Leverage, Long Term Stewardship Commitments, Strong Partnerships, Regional Significance

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

Exceptional Readiness - This project will be built in two phases: Phase I consists of the restoration of the Plaza's main historical elements (gazebo and water fountain) at a cost of \$1.2 million. Phase II consists of the balance of the project, including a new permanent stage, seating and game areas, landscaping, walkways and hardscape and electrical and lighting upgrades. CEQA and 100% construction drawings are complete. Plans for construction of Phase I are already well under way, with award of the

construction contract expected in March 2026. As Phase I nears completion, City staff anticipate going out to bid for Phase II. Unless additional funds are identified, staff will need to value engineer and scale back the scope of work to bring the project within budget. This would result in completing the project without some of the amenities identified by the community in the planning process, such as the seating and game tables and landscaping throughout the park. Measure Q funding is requested for construction of Phase II so that the full project as envisioned by the community may be completed. High Fund Leverage - The City has received a \$3.35 million State Park Program (SPP) grant from the State of California (Prop 68). Additionally, the City has leveraged revenue from a local sales tax (Measure R) to bond for \$3.5 million for this project. With these two sources, a total of \$6.85 million is budgeted as match for this grant. Long Term Stewardship Commitments - The City Plaza has served as a park and the center of Watsonville's community life since before it was deeded to the City in 1866. Due to its historical and cultural significance, central downtown location and high community use, the City intends to continue maintaining the City Plaza as the community's most prominent community space. Strong Partnerships - As previously mentioned, this project was designed through strong partnerships with close to 40 community organizations and government agencies. Upon completion, the City Plaza will continue to support the many weekly and annual events hosted by community partners throughout the year. Regional Significance - Known as the "heart of the city," the Plaza has been the focus of community gatherings and celebrations for well over a century. It is currently the central location of 20+ annual events - including the Watsonville Strawberry Festival, Cinco de Mayo Celebration, 16th de Septiembre, Film Festival Showings, Music in the Plaza concerts - as well as a weekly farmers' market. Its designation on the National Register of Historic Places points to several key features, including a bandstand, water fountain, historic cannons, and other elements that have been added throughout the space's close to 175-year history. In 2025, the City Plaza was visited over 311,000 times by 113,000 users who spent an average of 60 minutes enjoying this iconic outdoor space.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Budget Worksheet - City of Watsonville Plaza.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[Map - City Plaza.pdf](#), [Map - Disadvantaged Communities City Plaza.pdf](#), [Map - Project Location City Plaza.pdf](#), [Concept Master Plan.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[Letter of Support - Wats City Plaza Cabrillo College.pdf](#), [Letter of Support - Wats City Plaza FM.pdf](#), [Letter of Support - Wats City Plaza WFF 2.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

[Timeline - Watsonville City Plaza Revitalization Project.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

[Appendix A - Watsonville Plaza CR Tech Report_rev_101519.pdf](#), [Watsonville Plaza IS-MND FINAL DRAFT 111419.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[Organizational Information - City Plaza.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[Plaza.jpg](#), [Stateofthecity_2018-37 reduced.jpg](#), [Stateofthecity_2018-46.jpg](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

[Appendix A - Watsonville Plaza CR Tech Report_rev_101519.pdf](#), [Watsonville Plaza IS-MND FINAL DRAFT 111419.pdf](#), [Plaza.jpg](#), [Stateofthecity_2018-37 reduced.jpg](#)

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Nicolas Calubaquib

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Nicolas Calubaquib, Deputy City Manager

SIGNATURE DATE

03/06/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 89 **Type:** Tier 2 San Vicente Redwoods Set-Aside
Project: San Vicente Redwoods - Targeted Stream Crossing Repairs to Protect Water Quality

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

89

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 San Vicente Redwoods Set-Aside

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

San Vicente Redwoods - Targeted Stream Crossing Repairs to Protect Water Quality

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Peninsula Open Space Trust

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

Creek/Tributary Crossings improved

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

—

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Lauren Korth

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Institutional Engagement Officer

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Joanna	Devers	[REDACTED]
Melina	Mahood	[REDACTED]
Season	Korchin	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

Please refer to APN numbers below for parcels at San Vicente Redwoods to be covered by this Project

PARCEL NUMBER

08001110, 08001109, 08001112, 08001138, 08001137

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

37.11603020000000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.15543680000000

PROJECT JURISDICTION / CITY

Unincorporated Santa Cruz County

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

For this inaugural year of Measure Q funding, Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), in collaboration with conservation partners Sempervirens Fund (Sempervirens) and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC), seeks support for three distinct, interconnected projects at the San Vicente Redwoods property (SVR), submitted as separate but related proposals. Spanning 8,852 acres, SVR is a regionally significant property located just over the ridgeline from the San Lorenzo Valley in unincorporated Santa Cruz County. The property extends from the upper reaches of Cotoni Coast Dairies near Davenport up to Empire Grade Road just north of the Bonny Doon community. SVR provides habitat for a variety of rare, threatened, and endangered plants and animals. SVR encompasses substantial portions of four coastal watersheds: Laguna Creek, Scott Creek, Molino Creek, and San Vicente Creek. SVR falls within the more than 86,500-acre 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire burn perimeter. Conservation efforts at SVR directly serve the neighboring communities of Bonny Doon, Davenport, Boulder Creek, Felton, and Pescadero, and offer benefits to all residents in and surrounding the Santa Cruz Mountains. Measure Q funding will support efforts to minimize catastrophic wildfire threats, improve road access, enhance biological diversity, enhance public access experiences, and safeguard local drinking water. POST and Sempervirens acquired and took co-ownership of SVR in 2011, Save the Redwoods League (the League) holds a conservation easement protecting the property in perpetuity, and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC) manages public access (SVR Conservation Partners). Details about each SVR partner and our 10+ year partnership managing SVR can be found in other sections of this application. Collectively, the SVR Conservation Partners identified three priority projects for the coming year that work towards common goals of protecting neighboring communities, enhancing public access, and building climate resilience, co-developing three distinct applications for each project. The San Vicente Redwoods - Targeted Stream Crossing Repairs to Protect Water Quality Project (Project) is part of a larger fuels management effort on the property that will help prevent wildfires and improve emergency access for north Santa Cruz County communities mentioned above and the wider Santa Cruz Mountains. SVR contains over 80 miles of rural roads and 270 water crossings. The property features one of the few roads (Warrenella Road) in north Santa Cruz County that connects Empire Grade Road to Highway 1. If properly maintained, Warrenella Road and its branching roadways provide critical access to thousands of acres of undeveloped wildlands deep in the Santa Cruz Mountains. CAL FIRE has identified the SVR road network as highly strategic for fighting wildfires in this portion of the County. This access has historically played a pivotal role in ensuring emergency access and protection during past major wildfires. Measure Q funding will upgrade five to seven road crossings identified through a comprehensive road inventory prepared by a Certified Engineering Geologist (CEG). Designs for the crossing upgrades comply with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regulations and recommended practices. This Project will replace dilapidated and undersized culverts with new culverts designed to allow for the conveyance of 100-year flood storm flow. This Project will enhance and sustain important roadway access on the property, complement other roadwork enhancement efforts already completed, and improve the surrounding shaded fuel break. Culvert upgrades completed through this Project support water quality by restoring natural stream connectivity, enhancing erosion and sediment control, and mitigating floods. By reducing erosion and mimicking natural streams, the culvert improvements can help maintain healthy, oxygenated water at the site and throughout the watershed. This work directly benefits the drinking water supply for Davenport residents and supports ecological health for native vegetation and wildlife in the San Vicente watershed.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Not applicable

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT

District 3 - Justin Cummings

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The San Vicente Redwoods property is privately owned by the Peninsula Open Space Trust and Sempervirens Fund. The benefits of climate resilience work done on the property directly serve the safety of those living in the neighboring unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County and communities in close proximity - such as Bonny Doon, Davenport, and San Lorenzo Valley towns like Boulder Creek and Felton, in addition to benefits for residents throughout the County that are impacted when catastrophic wildfires break out in the region. Public access improvements on the property serve the entire county and beyond, as visitors from anywhere can utilize the sites' public trails.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

CEQA/NEPA completed

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

The land managers of this property have secured three separate Timber Harvest Plans (THP) to permit forestry operations, restoration work, and road improvements. This Project is permitted by the Phoenix THP (Phoenix Timber Harvest Plan (1-24-000054-SCR), 8/12/2024), which is the functional equivalent of an Environmental Impact Report. CAL FIRE is the lead agency for THPs, and the content of any THP is reviewed by all appropriate agencies to ensure compliance with all appropriate laws and regulations. Through the Phoenix THP, CA Fish and Wildlife issued a Streambed Alteration Agreement (June 3, 2024-NOTIFICATION NO. EPIMS-SCR-52884-R3) to permit this work.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

The San Vicente Redwoods - Targeted Stream Crossing Repairs to Protect Water Quality Project is ready to proceed once funding is secured. The crossing upgrades are fully permitted, with scopes of work finalized for contracting purposes. The roadwork to be completed as part of this Project will immediately follow the implementation of a shaded fuel break along roadways that branch off Warrenella Road. This roadwork, to be supported by Measure Q, will be contracted to be completed by the end of October 2026. Depending on contractor readiness and funding, this Project could start as soon as June 2026. Roadwork is expected to take three months and cannot occur during the rainy season, starting October 15. If work does not start before July 15, work will need to be delayed until the following spring to avoid leaving work incomplete for the winter months.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

425000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

425000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Contractual / Consultants	\$425,000	\$0	\$0	\$425,000

The SVR Targeted Stream Crossing Repairs to Protect Water Quality Project intends to complete critical road work to complement a series of shaded fuel breaks identified as priority actions in CAL FIRE's Community Wildfire Prevention Plan for San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties. Proposed roadwork entails the replacement/upgrade of five to seven crossings on tributary roads to Warrenella Road in SVR. This Project will replace severely damaged culverts that cross roads with larger capacity culverts designed to allow conveyance of 100-year flood storm flow. Upgraded crossings will alleviate current erosive conditions and mitigate erosion potential, which prevents harmful amounts of sediment from negatively impacting water quality and overall watershed health. All work will conform with the California Forest Practice Rules, and be conducted under the direction of SVR Property Manager and Registered Professional Forester (RPF), Hamey Woods, and Certified Engineering Geologist (CEG), Tim Best. The work will comply with Phoenix THP #1-24-00054SCR and all the California Department of Wildlife streambed alteration requirements. A comprehensive road inventory of all 80 miles and 270 water crossings in SVR identified the roadwork needs and specifications for the Project scope to be supported by Measure Q. The SVR Conservation Partners have been working to systematically address all problematic crossings and road sections of the property as resources allow. The SVR Conservation Partners have successfully completed numerous culvert replacement projects at SVR, utilizing the same CEG for designs and project oversight.

PROJECT START DATE

06/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

05/31/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

This proposed Targeted Stream Crossing Repairs to Protect Water Quality Project benefits water resource management and wildfire risk reduction and forest health, as the roadways and undercrossings we will be improving all connect with the San Vicente watershed. Additionally, these improvements will help maintain safe access to parts of the property critical to forest health implementation and emergency access in the case of wildfires. Water Resource Management - Culvert upgrades completed through this Project support water resource management in several ways: 1) flood mitigation - upgraded culverts will accommodate higher volumes of water, reducing flood risks during storm events; 2) restoring natural stream connectivity - installing new culverts supports the restoration of the channel's natural grade and orientation which stabilizes channel banks, slows high velocity flows and promotes healthier, more diverse and ecologically stable stream habitats; 3) erosion and sediment control - property installed and sized culverts decrease erosion around roadsides and reduce sedimentation which protects water quality throughout the San Vicente Watershed, including the drinking water source for Davenport. Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health - POST has matching grant funding from CAL FIRE that is currently being used to install a shaded fuel break along seven miles of road. This fuel break work is preparing specific units of the SVR forest for future fuels management through prescribed burning. Measure Q funding would be used to improve five to seven creek and tributary crossings that intersect with the ridgeline roads that are the center lines of the linear shaded fuel breaks that create the border of these units. These road improvements both fortify the road, preventing road damage, to ensure access to these management units, and reduce sedimentation potential transported by unmanaged stormwater across the property. The shaded fuel breaks that surround the road improvement corridor are also important regionally to influence wildfire behavior, as described in the "Prioritization Narrative" section.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project is one of three projects taking place on the property with Measure Q funds this grant cycle. Other projects applying for funding this year are the San Vicente Redwoods Public Access Improvement Project and the San Vicente Redwoods Botanical Resource Management Planning Project. Taken together, these projects serve to deliver multi-benefit outcomes, offer match funding and leveraging potential, and enhance climate resilience. As a whole, the three projects will deliver broad economic, social, and environmental benefits by expanding recreational access, protecting drinking water supplies, conserving biodiversity, enhancing wildfire preparedness, and reducing wildfire hazards. The Public Access Improvement Project enhances safe, reliable, and enjoyable recreation by mitigating moderate-risk

trees and improving trail tread and conditions on the existing trails. The San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project will improve creek and tributary crossings to reduce erosion and sedimentation into San Vicente Creek, which provides drinking water to the community of Davenport. This Project also includes road improvements along critical ridgeline corridors that support shaded fuel breaks and maintain access for land management activities and emergency response entities such as CAL FIRE. The San Vicente Redwoods Botanical Resource Management Planning Project will strengthen redwood forest health, safeguard critical water resources, and reduce wildfire fuel loads across the property. This Project supports preparation for the direct management of invasive plant species that diminish biodiversity, compete for limited water resources, and can increase wildfire risk by creating ladder fuels or dense understory growth. The plan will establish priorities for botanical stewardship and recommend effective strategies to control invasive species, such as French broom, while protecting rare and sensitive plants and plant communities. Additionally, it will provide the necessary prioritization schema and treatment recommendations that will be critical to securing additional grant funding for the implementation of the outlined work. Additionally, projects at San Vicente Redwoods demonstrate strong leveraging potential. Measure Q funds for the San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project are aligned with a \$1,350,000 CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant supporting shaded fuel break installation along the same ridgeline road network improved through the creek crossing project, and \$80,000 invested by POST in securing necessary permits for the fuel break and roadwork projects. By strengthening road infrastructure and watershed protections, local funds enhance and extend the impact of significant state investment in wildfire prevention. Finally, these projects have significant climate resilience value. Road improvements will reduce stormwater impacts during increasingly intense rainfall events, shaded fuel breaks will help reduce wildfire intensity and establish boundaries for future prescribed burns, and invasive species management will reduce ladder fuels and water competition while supporting native forest recovery following the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The Project is shovel-ready, with the remaining need being funding to initiate contractor procurement and complete implementation. The secondary prioritization principles that apply to this Project include: Public benefits - people, plants, and wildlife benefit from this Project through improved water quality, decreased vulnerability to catastrophic wildfire, increased carbon sequestration potential, enhanced biological diversity and ecological health, and increased public safety. Strategic Alignment - The Santa Cruz and San Mateo Community Wildfire Prevention Plan (CWPP) prioritizes the ridgeline roads improvement to support regional wildfire planning goals. The CWPP was developed collaboratively by CAL FIRE, Resource Conservation Districts from Santa Cruz and San Mateo Counties, US Fish and Wildlife Service, State Parks, the Bureau of Land Management, local fire districts, and community members/stakeholders. The CWPP documented community-identified hazards, assets at risk, and high-priority areas in need of fuel reduction, and priority fuel reduction actions. Readiness - This Project has been permitted, scopes fully developed, and it's ready to be sent to interested contractors for engagement. We are fully ready to spend these funds. POST and the SVR Conservation Partners have demonstrated ability to complete similar roadwork in quick succession once funding is made available.

TARGET COMMUNITY

The San Vicente Redwoods Public Access Improvement Project will benefit a diverse group of trail users and community members who rely on the property for recreational purposes. Primary users include hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians who regularly use the trail system. The largest user group is nearby residents in the rural Santa Cruz Mountains, particularly in Bonny Doon, Boulder Creek, and Felton. SVR trails also serve visitors from the broader Santa Cruz region, as well as occasional users from the greater Bay Area and Central Coast region. In addition to recreational users, student researchers from the University of California Santa Cruz utilize the property and the Phase 1 trails to conduct field research. Improvements supported by this Project will enhance the overall trail experience by reducing potential hazard risk trees, improving trail tread, controlling erosion to enhance user experience, and enabling more reliable trail access throughout the rainy season. These benefits will also support LTSCC staff who frequently monitor and steward the trail system by reducing maintenance burdens, improving operational efficiency, and helping ensure safe and sustainable management of the property for public use. SVR is immediately adjacent to Bonny Doon, in close proximity to Davenport, and adjacent to heavily forested areas that border Ben Lomond and Boulder Creek. Together, these communities contain over 6,000 households. The shaded fuel breaks and associated roadwork projects of the San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project offer the best option to protect neighboring communities by slowing the spread of fire, providing safe dry season access for fire and emergency responders, and creating locations where backburns can be lit to reduce fuels and stop wildfire spread. Additionally, creeks within the San Vicente Watershed provide the primary and backup water supply for the City of Davenport, which includes two water intakes and miles of pipes to transfer water. Proposed erosion and sediment control work will protect water quality throughout the San Vicente Watershed, which includes the drinking water source for Davenport. The San Vicente Redwoods - Botanical Resource Management Planning will cover the entirety of the SVR property. The project will synthesize and verify pre-existing survey data from 2024 regarding invasive and rare botanicals throughout SVR. The plan will establish goals and prioritization to guide future invasive plant management and protection of sensitive and rare plants and habitats. The planning process and subsequent implementation will benefit all who access the property by contributing to the health of the watershed and to fire mitigation risk.

Further, the eventual active management of invasives may contribute to a reduction in the spread of invasives to neighboring properties.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Access to nature

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Public Safety - As part of a broader property effort to install shaded fuel breaks and upgrade roads and road crossings for access, the San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project offers significant public safety benefits through forest management intended to contain wildfire, access to areas critical for addressing emergency wildfire threats, dry weather access, and land management activities. The Botanical Resource Management Planning Project will also decrease vegetation that exacerbates wildfire risk, such as annual invasives, which can accumulate a thick, flammable thatch layer. The plan will also factor in the possibility/likelihood of future prescribed fire as a tool to manage invasive plants and minimize wildfire risk. These benefits are wide-ranging and could include all residents within the surrounding Santa Cruz Mountains and beyond. Access to nature / Access to recreation - The San Vicente Redwoods Public Access Improvement Project will foster more reliable and enjoyable access to nature and access to recreation on a widely used trail system in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Hazard tree mitigation and trail tread improvement will mitigate potential risks to visitors and enhance overall trail conditions. This Project will help ensure that hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians can use the trail safely and access the trails more reliably, especially in the rainy season when downed trees and flooded trail portions are more common. As the trail system is heavily used by nearby residents in Bonny Doon, Boulder Creek, and Felton, maintaining these trails supports community members continuing to enjoy the outdoor recreation opportunities at the property and encourages connection with the redwood forest landscape through the interpretive signage that educates visitors about the redwood ecosystem and the recovery of San Vicente Redwoods following the CZU Lightning Complex Fire.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

Water Quality - This Project is designed to improve drainage and reduce unmanaged stormwater, limiting sedimentation and preventing negative water quality impacts within the watershed. The upgraded culverts will help restore natural stream flow and maintain the natural width, slope, and substrate of a stream. This type of stream habitat restoration stabilizes channel banks, slows high-velocity flows, and promotes healthier, more diverse, and more ecologically stable stream habitats. By reducing erosion and mimicking natural streams, the culvert improvements can help maintain healthy, oxygenated water at the site and throughout the watershed. Habitat - Improving locations where creek flow intersects the road will benefit downstream aquatic resources by reducing turbidity and sedimentation in San Vicente Creek. This Project improves driving access through the center line of shaded fuel breaks that will allow land managers to implement prescribed burning to the landscape. Restoring good fire in this post-wildfire landscape increases habitat heterogeneity and, therefore, biodiversity, in a currently homogeneous jumble of aggressive fire following scrub. Climate Resilience Value - Stabilizing this road enables fire/fuel management projects and forestry restoration actions that, individually and collectively, promote climate resilience. This road work supports fire prevention efforts that can reduce the catastrophic emissions from intense wildfires and prepares this area for future prescribed burns. Secure access through this road work allows for forestry restoration efforts to increase the growth, development of old-growth characteristics, and carbon storage capacity within the SVR forest ecosystem. The improving storm water management outcome of this Project supports climate resilience by reducing flood risks, minimizing erosion-related pollution, and restoring habitat and ecosystem stability in the face of extreme weather events.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Applicant owns the property for the proposed project

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

REQUIRED PERMITS

This Targeted Stream Crossing Repairs to Protect Water Quality Project is permitted through a Timber Harvest Plan, which is the functional equivalent of an Environmental Impact Report. The Phoenix THP was completed in August 2024. Through that process, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife also issued a Streambed Alteration Agreement, signed in June 2024. The THP permit authorizes work for up to 5 years.

PARTNER APPROVALS

No agreements or approvals are needed. POST is a landowner of San Vicente Redwoods, and the property is accessed through a gate from a public road. POST's co-owner of the property, Sempervirens Fund, and the conservation easement holder, Save the Redwoods League, are also fully supportive and will work with POST in collaboration. An Independent Contractor Agreement will be developed between the landowners and the selected contractor to implement the work.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

Depending on when funding is released, we will work to contract with a vendor within a month of the award, with a goal of implementing the work in the summer of 2026. If work cannot be finished by late October 2026, work will need to be delayed until late spring 2027, as a condition of the permits. Work will take less than 3 months and should be wrapped by June 2027.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

Yes

TEAM CAPACITY

The San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project will be led by Susie Petrie, POST Project Manager, and Nadia Hamey, Hamey Woods Registered Professional Forester. They have implemented similar roadwork projects on the property in the past using the same permitting mechanisms, funded by a federal grant and State Appropriation funding. POST has the infrastructure in place to manage large-scale construction contracts. Hamey Woods has overseen and ensured compliance with permit constraints on millions of dollars of road work. Overseeing this type of grant-funded road work project is standard practice for this team.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

This San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project is 100% feasible once funding is secured. The only remaining item to implement this Project is the availability of funding. This work will take 3 months, and our permits allow for work to occur between May 1 and October 14. We will finish this work either July-October 2026 or May-August 2027. POST has demonstrated its ability to complete similar grant-funded roadwork projects: in 2023, POST completed a 3-mile grant-funded road project, and in 2025, POST completed an 8-mile road project at this property.

PROJECT PARTNERS

With support from State Agencies and private fundraising, POST and Sempervirens acquired the San Vicente Redwoods property in 2011. POST and Sempervirens joined the League and LTSCC to form a partnership focused on conserving SVR. The SVR Conservation Partners co-created and adopted a Conservation Vision, a Conservation Plan, recorded a conservation easement held by the League over the property (2014), and approved a management plan based on the Conservation Plan to guide property management actions at SVR. The 2020 CZU Lightning Complex fire brought tremendous change to the landscape within SVR. Before the fire, 30 acres of SVR had been treated using prescribed and cultural burns, and more than 15 miles of shaded fuel breaks had been created. The prescribed burn areas weathered the blaze much better than the adjacent untreated parts of the property. More recent restoration progress came on September 21, 2021, when an obsolete dam was removed from Mill Creek, reopening habitat for endangered Coho salmon and other species for the first time in more than 100 years. The SVR Conservation Partners have worked diligently to assess post-fire conditions and adapt management strategies to address critical threats within the property. The partners work with the property manager and Registered Professional Forester, Hamey Woods, to provide forestry management expertise, oversee property operations, liaise with the community, and monitor site conditions. The SVR Conservation Partners have a demonstrated history of working with several collaborators throughout the region to meet various objectives, such as the Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District, CAL FIRE, Bonny Doon Fire Safe Council, Swanton Ranch, Cotoni-Coast Dairies, Big Creek Lumber, the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, biological consultants and researchers, and numerous local grading and forestry contractors. POST protects open space on the Peninsula and in the South Bay for the benefit of all. Since 1977, POST has preserved over 97,000 acres of open space in San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties. These protected lands include permanent open space, farms, and parks. As a co-owner of SVR, POST plays an active role in fuel

management across the property. Founded in 1900, Sempervirens is California's first land trust, and helped found three California State Parks. Sempervirens protects and permanently preserves redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) forests, wildlife habitat, watersheds, and other important natural and scenic features of the Santa Cruz Mountains and encourages public appreciation and enjoyment of this environment. As co-owner, Sempervirens plays an active role in managing stewardship activities throughout the property. Since 1978, the LTSCC has worked to protect, steward, and connect people to natural and working lands in the region, conserving over 19,000 acres of land to date. At SVR, the LTSCC serves as the Public Access Manager. One of the nation's longest-running conservation organizations, Save the Redwoods League has been protecting and restoring redwood forests since 1918. The League has connected generations of visitors with the beauty and serenity of the redwood forest. The League holds a permanent conservation easement on the property and leads forestry restoration projects at SVR.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

For over 10 years, the SVR Conservation Partners have convened regularly to manage the property and achieve co-developed conservation goals and outcomes. SVR is a living laboratory of forest management, ecosystem restoration, sustainable timber harvest, and current and future public access. The SVR Conservation Partners actively assess current site conditions to prioritize and implement projects that address imminent threats, align with the Conservation Vision for the property, and maximize the use of limited resources available to manage this large wildlands property. The SVR Conservation Partners have focused on revising management of the property to focus on post-fire recovery, building future wildfire resilience, creating safe public access experience for visitors of all capabilities, improving adaptivity to climate change, and active stewardship to enhance the site's biological diversity. Together the SVR Conservation Partners have completed and are in the process of completing numerous projects on the property including: removal of a dam in Mill Creek to free sediment and water flow critical for endangered Coho salmon and steelhead trout spawning habitat; creating 10-miles of shaded fuel breaks along Warrenella Road to increase wildfire resilience, create an all-season emergency access road, and provide essential access for firefighters; constructing a parking lot and seven miles of public access trails for access to nature and recreation in Santa Cruz County; and restoration of hundreds of acres of forest to reduce ladder fuels and catalyze the development of old growth conditions in the forest. The SVR Conservation Partners participate in multiple regional networks to enhance stewardship of our region. They are members of the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network (SCMSN), a collaboration of twenty-five organizations engaged in land stewardship in the Santa Cruz Mountains of California. The mission of the SCMSN is to help cultivate a resilient, vibrant region where human and natural systems thrive for generations to come. Additionally, they are part of a more recently formed organization called the Monterey Bay Climate Adaptation Action Network, (MBCAAN), a network of 30+ partners across the Monterey Bay region taking collective action to prepare communities, ecosystems, and economies for the impacts of climate change.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

425000

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

0

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

0

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

0

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

—

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

3000

BUDGET NARRATIVE

All funding will go to contractors required to implement the work on the ground. The team of contractors will include the SVR Property Manager and Registered Professional Forester, Hamey Woods, and Certified Engineering Geologist, Tim Best. We anticipate improving five to seven crossings, and potentially more as funding allows. \$3,000 per year for annual maintenance of culverts and other crossing points. Maintenance of these roads will be incorporated into our routinized maintenance for storm water impingement monitoring and, as necessary, mastication to keep the road open.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

Road maintenance costs are paid for by POST and Sempervirens Fund. The roadwork design being implemented will reduce annual maintenance costs, making POST and Sempervirens' seasonal maintenance costs better fit within their collective operating budget.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

Yes

REFERENCED PLANS

—

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

Please see Secondary Prioritization Principle Narrative section for more details about the CWPP.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Measure Q POST Combined SVR Partner Budget.pdf, Measure Q POST Budget.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[San-Vicente-Land-Uses-Map-10-22-21-1200x927.jpg](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

[No file uploaded](#)

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Lauren Korth

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Lauren Korth, Institutional Engagement Officer

SIGNATURE DATE

03/12/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 90

Type: Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

Project: Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz County: The Zone-0 Equity & Workforce Initiative

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

90

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz County: The Zone-0 Equity & Workforce Initiative

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Long Term Recovery Group of Santa Cruz County

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

100

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

Properties treated

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Tonje Switzer

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Executive Director

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

This is a County-wide project that will utilize map coordinates to identify project locations/proper

PARCEL NUMBER

Various

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.97411710000000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.03079630000001

PROJECT JURISDICTION / CITY

Unincorporated Santa Cruz County

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

This is a county-wide initiative focused on the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) in the unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County. Rather than a single fixed site, project locations are identified through a dynamic, data-driven prioritization model. Service areas are identified via CAL FIRE's High to Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Further, using granular zip-code and census-tract data from DataShare Santa Cruz County and the 2024-2025 Age Well Santa Cruz County Community Needs Assessment allow us to pinpoint "neighborhood clusters" with the highest density of seniors and adults with disabilities while also filtering for area average income. Further, by layering high-fidelity Zesti AI wildfire home-loss risk data we can surgically identify and serve clusters

of the most vulnerable residents - specifically low-income seniors and adults with disabilities living in the highest-risk ignition and home-loss probability zones. This multi-pronged approach ensures that Measure Q funds are deployed in the exact locations where they can most effectively prevent structure loss and subsequent environmental contamination.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

N/A

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT

District 1 - Manu Koenig, District 2 - Kimberly De Serpa, District 3 - Justin Cummings, District 4 - Felipe Hernandez

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The project primarily serves the unincorporated rural and semi-rural regions of Santa Cruz County, which contain the vast majority of the county's Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). While the project is county-wide, primary operations are concentrated in the San Lorenzo Valley (Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, Felton), Bonny Doon, Mid-County mountain communities (Corralitos, Summit Road, Soquel Hills), Davenport/North Coast, and the South County hills. These areas fall under the jurisdiction of the County of Santa Cruz and are served by various Fire Protection Districts and CAL FIRE. The target regions are characterized by steep topography, dense fuel loads, and "string-of-pearls" residential development where home-to-home ignition is a high risk. These communities often face "rural isolation" during disaster events, with limited ingress/egress routes and limited communication capabilities when the electric grid is down.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

This project is intentionally designed for immediate implementation and does not require new environmental or municipal permits. Because the scope is strictly limited to fuel management and maintenance of the 0-5 foot "Ember-Resistant Zone" (Zone 0) around existing residential structures on private property, the project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA under Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land) and Class 1 (Existing Facilities). The SCCLTRG has extensive experience navigating disaster-related compliance through our work on the CZU Lightning Complex and 2023 Atmospheric River recovery efforts. We maintain a strong operational partnership with the County of Santa Cruz Planning Department, ensuring that all field work adheres to Public Resources Code (PRC) 4291 and the stricter local standards of Santa Cruz County Code Chapter 7.92. Our personnel are trained to operate within these regulatory exemptions, focusing on manual fuel removal and on-site biomass processing that avoids ground disturbance. This approach ensures that 100% of Measure Q funding is directed toward field operations rather than administrative permitting delays. While the project area contains several sensitive habitats - including the Zayante Sandhills, Salamander Protection Zones, and Coastal Zone Significant Trees - the project methodology is specifically tailored to mitigate impacts. By focusing exclusively on the 0-5 foot zone immediately adjacent to built structures, the project operates within the most highly disturbed "human footprint" of the parcel. Crews will be trained to recognize the Santa Cruz Long-Toed Salamander, and in designated Salamander Protection Zones, all work is conducted in strict accordance with County Biotic Approval guidelines, avoiding soil disturbance during the rainy season. The initiative avoids the removal of significant trees as defined by County Code 16.34, unless the tree is dead, diseased, or poses an immediate hazard, in which case the appropriate emergency verification is filed with County Planning. All biomass processing follows best management practices to maintain soil stability and prevent sediment runoff into local watersheds, adhering to the County's strict erosion control standards for mountain regions.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

DURATION AMOUNT

years

1

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

By limiting work to the 0-5' structural perimeter on private parcels, we operate under established CEQA Categorical Exemptions (Class 1 and 4) which removes the typical 6-12 month environmental review lag-time associated with large-scale fuel breaks or forest health projects on public land. We utilize a standardized Liability Waiver and Right of Entry (ROE) agreement, already vetted through our Long Term Recovery rebuild and repair operations, allowing us to move quickly through neighborhood clusters. While the project involves a brief period for hiring and onboarding new staff and AmeriCorps/CERC members, the initial outreach and client identification phase can begin immediately. The SCCLTRG is the primary local partner for Zesti AI's pilot program in Santa Cruz County, operating under their strategic partnership with SBP. This gives us immediate, high-fidelity access to property-level wildfire risk data. This technology eliminates the traditional "outreach lag" by allowing us to identify and prioritize neighborhoods with clusters of high need properties before crews even hit the field. We will also utilize existing staff capacity and cross-collaborative pipelines with partners such as the Fire Safe Council (FSC) HIZ program and the Resource Conservation District (RCD) to build our initial service queue. While the procurement of a dedicated dump truck and wood chipper is essential for scaling the "chip and haul" phase of the project, our existing partnerships with Team Rubicon and All Hands and Hearts provide temporary access to specialized equipment, ensuring no gap in service during the vehicle acquisition period. As a 501(c)(3) with active disaster recovery contracts, the SCCLTRG already has the financial tracking, insurance, and reporting infrastructure in place to manage Measure Q funds immediately upon award.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

398266

491438

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$176,660	\$67,107	\$8,000	\$251,767
Fringe Benefits	\$54,618	\$0	\$0	\$54,618
Travel	\$7,000	\$13,165	\$0	\$20,165
Equipment	\$38,000	\$2,500	\$0	\$40,500
Supplies	\$9,440	\$2,400	\$0	\$11,840
Contractual / Consultants	\$30,000	\$0	\$0	\$30,000
Other Direct Costs	\$30,600	\$0	\$0	\$30,600
Indirect Costs	\$51,948	\$0	\$0	\$51,948

California's Assembly Bill (AB) 3074 establishes a new 5-foot "Ember-Resistant Zone" (Zone 0) around all structures in high-risk zones. While enforcement standards are being finalized, proactive compliance is essential to mitigate fire risk and insurance non-renewal. Many vulnerable residents - seniors, low-income households, and those with disabilities - lack the resources to begin this critical transition. The Solution: Integrated Equity & Resilience Our organization's initiative provides free Zone-0 clearing to facilitate wildfire safety and move 100 high-risk residences towards "insurance readiness". In collaboration with the Santa Cruz County Fire Safe Council, we provide Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) assessments and "next-steps" reports to all enrollees. By preventing structure ignition, we protect WUI neighborhoods from the "string of pearls" effect and provide a preventative toxicity solution for Measure Q; protecting watersheds from the heavy metals and PFAS released during catastrophic fires. Strategic Integration & Program Sustainability Our "no-wrong-door" approach to county-wide resilience is built on strategic cross-promotion with the Resource Conservation District (RCD) chipping programs and the Fire Safe Council HIZ assessments. Every home visit integrates essential disaster preparedness coaching, and educates clients on IBHS (Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety) principles to maximize their potential for retaining standard market insurance policies. Through a vocational partnership with the CAB Day Worker Center we will certify up to 40 specialized Zone-0 Technicians, creating a skilled workforce for the region. This pilot serves as a "proof of concept" for 2027 CalFresh E&T enrollment, which will allow the program to leverage 50% federal reimbursement for

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

The Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz initiative addresses the intersection of wildfire mitigation, environmental protection, and social equity. By focusing on the 0-5 foot "Ember-Resistant Zone" established by AB 3074, this project fills a critical gap in county-wide wildfire readiness. In the densely forested WUI of Santa Cruz County, the greatest threat to neighborhoods is house-to-house ignition spread. Utilizing Zesti AI risk modeling, we identify clusters where homes have a high probability of loss. Targeted Zone-0 clearing in these clusters prevents the "string of pearls" effect. To add value, we coordinate with Fire Safe Council HIZ (Home Ignition Zone) assessment program, providing enrollees with a professional "next-steps" report to guide their long-term defensible space journey. Structure fires are environmental catastrophes that release lead, arsenic, and PFAS into the soil and atmosphere. By prioritizing Zone-0 mitigation, this project stops toxins from entering the water cycle. We further support landscape health through on-site woody mass processing (chipping) and amplifying the reach of this model by cross-promoting the Resource Conservation District (RCD) chipping programs. Wildfire resilience is inextricably linked to financial stability, and we educate our clients on IBHS (Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety) principles. By aligning our mitigation work with these verified scientific standards, we increase homeowners' chances of retaining or obtaining insurance policies outside of the FAIR Plan. We also provide homeowners with a roadmap for reaching full IBHS certification. A "Resilience-Ready" home requires more than just clear space; it requires a prepared household. Every intervention includes a disaster preparedness consultation, where staff assist residents in enrolling in the CruzAware emergency alert system. This ensures that the most vulnerable residents - who may have technology or language barriers - are integrated into the county's primary life-safety communication network. Whenever appropriate we promote FireWise and MURS radio integration. By hosting AmeriCorps and CERC members, we create a leadership engine that manages volunteer "surge capacity" from partners like All Hands and Hearts. Simultaneously, our partnership with CAB Day Worker Center certifies up to 40 local laborers as Zone-0 Technicians, ensuring Measure Q funds drive local economic opportunity while protecting our neighbors.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz initiative utilizes a rigorous, multi-layered prioritization framework to ensure that Measure Q funds are deployed where they generate the greatest community and environmental return on investment. Our model integrates the following four principles. (1) This project is designed to deliver simultaneous benefits across fire safety, environmental health, and economic sectors. By clearing the 0-5 foot Zone-0, we directly increase structural defensibility, which in turn prevents the

release of toxic "ash plumes" (containing lead, arsenic, and PFAS) into the San Lorenzo Valley and North Coast watersheds. Simultaneously, the program provides vocational certification for local day laborers, creating a new tier of specialized green-sector workers in Santa Cruz County. (2) We maximize the impact of every Measure Q dollar through a high-leverage personnel model. By hosting SBP AmeriCorps and California Emergency Response Corps (CERC) members, we convert professional staff funding into a "leadership engine" capable of managing large-scale volunteer "strike teams" from All Hands and Hearts and Team Rubicon. Furthermore, this pilot is explicitly designed as a "proof of concept" to unlock CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T) funding in 2027, which will provide a 50% federal reimbursement on operational costs, doubling our future capacity to serve high-risk homes. (3) Equity is the primary filter for our service delivery. While wildfire risk is universal, the ability to mitigate that risk is not. We prioritize households that meet a "Triple-Vulnerability" threshold: (a) Physical Vulnerability: Seniors and adults with disabilities who cannot perform the manual labor required for Zone-0 compliance. (b) Financial Vulnerability: Low-income households (under 80% AMI) who cannot afford professional vegetation management services. (c) Geographic Vulnerability: Residents living within CAL FIRE's High to Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. By using DataShare Santa Cruz County and the Age Well Needs Assessment, we surgically identify neighborhood clusters where these vulnerabilities intersect. (4) Our approach moves beyond reactive brush clearing toward data-driven climate adaptation. We utilize Zesti AI risk modeling to identify "neighborhood clusters" with a high probability of wildfire loss. By focusing our efforts on these clusters, we prevent the "string of pearls" ignition effect - the house-to-house spread of fire that characterizes catastrophic WUI events. This intervention secures the wildland-urban interface against increasing climate volatility, protecting both the built environment and the natural ecosystems that define our county. * Through this integrated prioritization model, the SCCLTRG ensures that Measure Q resources are strategically invested in the long-term resilience of Santa Cruz County.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz project further reinforces its impact by aligning with secondary prioritization principles that ensure the initiative is effective, strategically sound, and ready for immediate implementation. While our direct services are provided to individual high-vulnerability households, the primary outcome is a significant collective public benefit. Wildfire does not respect property lines; a single structural ignition in a dense WUI neighborhood can trigger a "string of pearls" effect, leading to a localized firestorm that threatens entire communities, critical infrastructure, and emergency evacuation routes. By securing the 0-5 foot Zone-0 for clusters of homes, we reduce the overall fuel load and ignition potential for the entire neighborhood. Furthermore, this project provides a public health benefit by preventing the release of toxic heavy metals and PFAS into the county's shared watersheds, protecting the long-term quality of the local water supply for all residents. This initiative is explicitly designed to align with current California legislative mandates and regional resilience goals. With the passage of AB 3074, the state has signaled that the "Ember-Resistant Zone" (Zone 0) is the new standard for wildfire survival. Our project serves as a bridge for the "compliance gap" facing low-income residents, ensuring that state-mandated safety standards are accessible to all, regardless of socio-economic status. Additionally, the project supports the Santa Cruz County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Age Well Santa Cruz County framework by focusing resources on the intersection of climate risk and functional needs populations. The SCCLTRG possesses unique operational readiness to launch this project immediately upon fund disbursement. As the primary local partner for the Zesti AI Pilot, we already have access to high-fidelity, property-level risk data that allows us to bypass lengthy "identification phases" and move straight into targeted outreach. Our existing "Service Multiplier" infrastructure - including established partnerships with SBP AmeriCorps, All Hands and Hearts, and the CAB Day Worker Center - means that our field leadership, training protocols, and volunteer pipelines are already in place. Our labor-intensive model allows field operations to commence immediately, with crews performing high-impact manual clearing and prep-work as the first phase of intervention. While the procurement of a dedicated dump truck and wood chipper is essential for scaling the "chip and haul" phase of the project, our existing partnerships with Team Rubicon and All Hands and Hearts provide temporary access to specialized equipment, ensuring no gap in service during the vehicle acquisition period. Through these secondary principles, the SCCLTRG demonstrates that this is not merely a service program, but a strategically essential and "shovel-ready" infrastructure project for county-wide resilience.

TARGET COMMUNITY

The Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz initiative is designed to serve the most vulnerable residents living within the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) of Santa Cruz County. Our targeting strategy uses an equity-first "Triple-Vulnerability" framework to identify those who face the highest risk of wildfire loss but possess the fewest resources to mitigate that risk. The primary user group for this project consists of households earning less than 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). While wildfire risk is a shared geographic reality, the cost of professional vegetation management is a significant barrier for low-income families. These residents often find themselves in a "compliance gap" - aware of the safety benefits of the 0-5 foot Zone-0 but unable to afford the specialized labor and biomass disposal fees required to achieve it. By providing these services at no cost, we prevent a scenario where wildfire safety becomes a luxury available only to the affluent. In alignment with the 2024-2025 Age Well Santa Cruz County Community Needs Assessment, we prioritize seniors (ages 65+) and individuals with access and functional needs. These residents often face physical limitations that make the manual labor of defensible space maintenance - such as clearing heavy leaf litter, removing woody ornamentals, and hauling debris - impossible to perform safely. Our program provides the professional "boots on the

ground" necessary to ensure these neighbors can remain safely in their homes as the climate becomes more volatile. Using Zesti AI high-fidelity risk modeling, we identify specific neighborhood clusters in CAL FIRE's High to Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. We do not look at properties in isolation; instead, we target clusters of vulnerable homes to create "resilience blocks." This geographic prioritization protects the broader community by preventing the "string of pearls" ignition effect, where a single vulnerable home serves as a bridge for fire to spread through an entire neighborhood. A secondary but vital target group is the local day laborer population. Through our partnership with the Community Action Board Day Worker Center (CAB DWC), we are targeting up to 40 local laborers for professional vocational training and certification as Zone-0 Mitigation Technicians. This expanded cohort benefits from specialized training, bilingual safety education, and the creation of a new, high-demand career pathway within the local green economy, ensuring the community has the human capital necessary for long-term wildfire adaptation. SCCLTRG utilizes a multipronged outreach strategy, leveraging our connections with local community programs, churches, firewise communities, and neighborhood level social media groups, to ensure that our services reach those who are historically underserved and isolated. By focusing on these specific user groups, the project ensures that Measure Q funds directly support the residents who are most at risk suffering adverse disaster outcomes.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

The Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz initiative transforms wildfire mitigation into a tangible community asset by addressing public safety, environmental health, and local identity. The project's primary community value is the enhancement of collective public safety. In Santa Cruz County's WUI, structural ignitions often occur in clusters. By clearing the 0-5 foot Zone-0 for high-vulnerability homes, we create "resilience anchors" that stop the house-to-house spread of fire. This "string of pearls" mitigation logic ensures that our intervention protects not only the individual home but also the surrounding neighborhood and critical emergency egress routes for all residents. Structure fires are significant public health hazards. When a home burns, it releases a toxic cocktail of lead, arsenic, and PFAS into the atmosphere and local soil. This project acts as a preventative health measure by keeping these toxins out of our shared air and, crucially, out of our watersheds. By preventing structure loss, we protect the long-term quality of the county's drinking water supply, ensuring the physical well-being of the community remains intact post-wildfire. We define community livability through the lens of economic opportunity and local self-reliance. Our partnership with the Community Action Board Day Worker Center (CAB DWC) provides professional vocational certification for up to 40 local laborers. By training these residents as "Zone-0 Mitigation Technicians," we reinforce our community identity as a place that solves environmental challenges through local equity. This ensures that the expertise required to maintain our county's beauty and safety is held by the people who live and work here. Livability is also rooted in inclusion. The SCCLTRG serves as a "trusted messenger" for diverse populations who may be isolated by language or a lack of trust in official agencies. Our outreach strategy utilizes bilingual staff familiar with mountain living to meet residents where they are at and by identifying community hubs and "neighborhood captains". We move vulnerable neighbors toward safety through compassionate support rather than punitive enforcement. This approach strengthens the social fabric and ensures that resilience is a shared, accessible value for every resident. The SCCLTRG ensures that wildfire safety is treated as a collective public good. By focusing on public safety, environmental health, and workforce equity, we protect our most vulnerable neighbors while building the local skills and community cohesion necessary to face a changing, and challenging, climate. SCCLTRG utilizes a multipronged outreach strategy, leveraging our connections with local community programs, churches, firewise communities, and neighborhood level social media groups, to ensure that our services reach those who are historically underserved and isolated. By focusing on these specific user groups, the project ensures that Measure Q funds directly support the residents who are most at risk suffering adverse disaster outcomes.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

The Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz Initiative treats structural defensibility as the cornerstone of regional wildfire resilience. By preventing house-to-house ignition and the resulting toxic contamination, we ensure the long-term health of our watersheds and ecosystems based on verified environmental data and fire science. The primary environmental objective of this project is to build landscape-scale climate resilience by breaking the "string of pearls" ignition chain. In the dense Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) of Santa Cruz County, a manageable wildland fire can rapidly transform into a catastrophic urban-interface conflagration through house-to-house spread. By utilizing Zesti AI risk modeling - which leverages high-fidelity overhead imagery and machine learning to assess structural vulnerability - we identify and mitigate Zone-0 weaknesses in neighborhood clusters. This data-driven intervention ensures that our communities can withstand the extreme "ember cast" events and increased fire windows associated with a warming climate, as documented in the Santa Cruz County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). While wildfire is a natural ecological process, structure fires are an environmental catastrophe. According to USGS and California Water Boards studies following the CZU Lightning Complex, modern residential structures contain high concentrations of hazardous materials, including lead, arsenic, PFAS ("forever chemicals"), and heavy metals. When a home ignites, these toxins are released into the soil and atmosphere. Post-fire rainfall carries this toxic ash directly into the San Lorenzo River and North Coast watersheds. By prioritizing

the 0-5 foot Zone-0 for vulnerable households, we prevent structural ignitions at the source, ensuring these contaminants never enter the county's primary drinking water supply. Structure fires create localized ecological "dead zones" due to the highly corrosive and chemically complex runoff they generate. Data from the National Marine Fisheries Service indicates that this toxic plume poses a lethal threat to sensitive aquatic habitats and endangered species, such as the Coho salmon and Steelhead trout found in Santa Cruz County streams. By increasing structural defensibility through professional-grade mitigation, we act as a preventative barrier for our local ecosystems. Our work ensures that the natural recovery of our forests is not hindered by the introduction of synthetic toxins, allowing native flora and fauna to regenerate in a cleaner, more resilient environment. Through our investment in a wood chipper and dump truck, we implement a professional system for biomass management that prevents the accumulation of ground fuels. Improperly managed yard waste and debris can intensify ground fires and damage soil health during a wildfire event. By professionally processing, scattering and, whenever appropriate or necessary, removing these fuels from high-risk Zone-0 areas - consistent with CAL FIRE defensible space standards - we ensure the landscape remains in a state of constant readiness. This cycle of maintenance reduces the overall fuel load in WUI neighborhoods, providing firefighters with a higher probability of successful defense during an active fire event.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

We will obtain a signed Right of Entry (ROE) form from the property owner of any site before we engage in any activities on said property.

REQUIRED PERMITS

The Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz initiative is designed for immediate operational deployment, as the scope of work for Zone-0 mitigation does not trigger the requirement for local, state, or federal environmental or construction permits. The project focuses exclusively on the 0-5 foot "Ember-Resistant Zone" (Zone 0) around existing residential structures. Activities include the removal of dry organic matter, leaf litter, woody mulch, and low-growing ornamental vegetation. Because the project does not involve the removal of protected "significant trees" (as defined by County Code Chapter 16.34) or significant grading, no Coastal Zone permits or Tree Removal permits are required.

PARTNER APPROVALS

To ensure seamless multi-agency coordination and workforce integration, the SCCLTRG maintains formal MOUs with all primary project partners. These agreements define roles, responsibilities, insurance requirements, and safety standards for the following entities: Community Action Board Day Worker Center (CAB DWC): This MOU governs the vocational training pipeline, establishes certification standards for "Zone-0 Technicians," and recognizes the fair-wage labor practices utilized for the specialized mitigation crews. All Hands and Hearts and other state and national partners: These agreements establish protocols for the deployment of volunteer "surge capacity." They cover housing logistics, field supervision hierarchies, insurance, and the integration of volunteer strike teams into SCCLTRG's safety management system. AmeriCorps (SBP) and California Emergency Response Corps (CERC) Hosting: These agreements define the partnership for hosting national or state AmeriCorps members, outlining the technical leadership roles these members play in field assessment, homeowner engagement, and team coordination. While no government permits are required to perform defensible space work, the SCCLTRG utilizes a mandatory Right of Entry (ROE) Form for every participating property. No work is performed until this legal agreement is signed by the homeowner. The ROE provides: Explicit legal permission for SCCLTRG staff, AmeriCorps members, project partners, and technicians (certified or under training) to enter the private parcel and perform specific Zone-0 mitigation tasks. A comprehensive waiver of liability that protects both the homeowner and the organization regarding the work performed and the operation of specialized equipment (e.g., wood chipper) on-site. Documentation of the specific vegetation and materials to be removed or processed, ensuring homeowner alignment with AB 3074 standards prior to any physical intervention. By utilizing these MOUs and ROE forms, the project remains highly agile, allowing for immediate scaling in response to wildfire risk while maintaining rigorous legal and safety oversight.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

Quarter 1: Mobilization, Hiring & Procurement Milestone 1: Leadership Onboarding. Recruitment and hiring of the Program Manager to lead partner coordination, safety oversight, and volunteer logistics. Milestone 2: Capital Procurement. Acquisition of a used 5yd dump truck and a 12" wood chipper via public auction or specialized vendor. Milestone 3: Personnel Activation. Onboarding of SBP AmeriCorps members and the Field Coordinator; training in HIZ assessment protocols, CalFIRE defensible space standards, and IBHS resilience standards. Milestone 4: Data-Driven Targeting. Finalization of Zesti AI data overlays to identify the first three "Neighborhood Clusters" for priority outreach. Quarter 2: Training & Pilot Implementation Milestone 5:

Vocational Certification. Launch of the CAB Day Worker Center training program; completion of certification for the first cohort of 20 Zone-0 Technicians. Milestone 6: Operational Launch. Execution of the first "Resilience Blitz," servicing the first 25 high-risk residential properties. Milestone 7: Service Integration. Establishment of the referral loop with Fire Safe Council (HIZ) and RCD (Chipping); first 25 homeowners enrolled in CruzAware alerts. Quarter 3: Scaling & Surge Operations Milestone 8: Surge Capacity Activation. Deployment of national volunteer teams (All Hands and Hearts/Team Rubicon) for high-intensity summer operations; total of 75 homes serviced to date. Milestone 9: Workforce Expansion. Certification of the second cohort of 20 Zone-0 Technicians (totaling 40 certified local laborers). Milestone 10: Performance Review. Mid-year data audit of mitigation efficacy. Quarter 4: Sustainability & Roadmap Execution Milestone 11: Completion of Service Goal. Achievement of 100 high-risk residential mitigations completed with corresponding "Next-Steps" HIZ reports provided to residents. Milestone 12: Project Audit. Comprehensive analysis of biomass removed (total tonnage) and community-wide HIZ/CruzAware enrollment metrics for Year 1 reporting. Milestone 13: Transition to the 2027 E&T program for continued program sustainability.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

No

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

No

TEAM CAPACITY

The Long Term Recovery Group of Santa Cruz County (SCCLTRG) possesses the specialized leadership, administrative infrastructure, and partnership network required to successfully deliver the Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz initiative. Our team (staff and Board of Directors) combines decades of disaster recovery expertise with a proven track record of managing high-impact local, state, and national grants. Executive Director (Tonje Wold-Switzer): Bringing deep experience in disaster case management and long-term recovery coordination, the Executive Director provides strategic oversight, ensures grant compliance, and maintains high-level relationships with County OES and State VOAD partners. Program Manager (To be hired): This dedicated role will serve as the project's "central nervous system," managing the integration of diverse partners, overseeing the safety management system, interpreting Zesti AI data, and tracking all Measure Q performance metrics. Fiscal Management: The SCCLTRG utilizes established financial systems to manage multi-source funding, ensuring 100% transparency and audit-readiness for Measure Q disbursements. Bilingual Field Coordinator (To be hired): A full-time technical lead responsible for site assessments, tool maintenance, and the direct supervision of AmeriCorps members and volunteer teams. SBP AmeriCorps Members: Three dedicated members provide the boots on the ground for 0-5 mitigation work and provide volunteer coordination for local and out-of-area volunteer teams. CERC (California Emergency Response Corps Members): Two CERC members manage homeowner engagement, and disaster preparedness training (CruzAware/IBHS). The Zesti AI Partnership provides the proprietary data pipeline that allows our team to utilize advanced risk-modeling imagery, a technical capacity unique to our organization in Santa Cruz County. Our partnership with the Community Action Board Day Worker Center (CAB DWC) ensures access to a reliable, skilled local workforce. The CAB DWC has decades of experience in vocational placement and fair-wage advocacy. We develop a specialized certification curriculum that ensures our Zone-0 Technicians are trained in professional-grade mitigation, fire science, and safety protocols. CAB funnels day workers into the training program and maintains records of who has completed the training. The SCCLTRG has a history of coordinating national VOAD partners that allow us to rapidly scale operations during surge periods. These partners often bring their own logistics, housing, and heavy equipment (chippers/trucks), which are managed under the SCCLTRG's safety umbrella to achieve high-intensity neighborhood mitigation blitzes. Our team operates within a "no-wrong-door" framework alongside the Santa Cruz County Fire Safe Council and the Resource Conservation District. By sharing data, training resources, and referral loops, we ensure that our program adds maximum value to the existing county-wide resilience ecosystem without duplicating efforts. This combined team represents a "force multiplier" for Measure Q funds, merging local trust and equity with national technical expertise and a professionalized local labor force.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

The Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz initiative is highly feasible due to the SCCLTRG's "Plug-and-Play" operational model, which leverages existing leadership, established data pipelines, and a pre-vetted network of technical and workforce partners. Our approach minimizes the typical "startup lag" associated with new grants, ensuring Measure Q funds translate into near-immediate on-the-ground mitigation. The feasibility of identifying and servicing 100 high-risk homes within 12 months is anchored in our partnership with SBP and access to Zesti AI. While other programs spend months on manual surveying, our Zesti AI integration allows us to pinpoint high-vulnerability "neighborhood clusters" on Day 1. Further, our Right of Entry (ROE) and assessment protocols are already standardized through our work as a Long Term Recovery Group, allowing us to move from homeowner contact to active mitigation within days. A primary risk to project feasibility in the current labor market is recruitment. We mitigate this through a dual-track labor strategy. Our AmeriCorps and CERC members provide consistent, low-cost field supervision that is already secured via our partnerships. The project's financial feasibility is enhanced by our "Service Multiplier" model. By hosting volunteer surge capacity from national organizations like All Hands and Hearts, we effectively lower the per-home mitigation cost. These teams bring their own internal management structures, allowing the SCCLTRG Program Manager to focus on high-level safety and coordination rather than micro-managing daily labor. This allows us to scale from a 5-person crew to multiple "strike

teams" as neighborhood demand increases. While we have budgeted for a dedicated dump truck and chipper to ensure long-term autonomy, the project's immediate feasibility is not dependent on these purchases. However, field work - including manual clearing and preparation - can begin in Quarter 1 without delay. Feasibility is also a function of safety and quality control. Every project site is overseen by a professional Field Coordinator and adheres to CAL FIRE and OSHA standards. By training our staff to also conduct Fire Safe Council HIZ assessments, we ensure that the work performed is both technically sound and contributes to the homeowner's long-term "Insurance Readiness." The SCCLTRG has the administrative capacity, the technical data, and the workforce partnerships necessary to deliver this project on time and within budget. This is not a theoretical program; it is an expansion of a proven recovery model adapted for proactive wildfire resilience.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz initiative is built on a "Force Multiplier" model that leverages the unique strengths of local, state, and national partners. By coordinating these diverse organizations under a single operational umbrella, the SCCLTRG ensures that Measure Q funds are used efficiently and that no service gaps exist in the county-wide resilience network. (1) Santa Cruz County Fire Safe Council (SCCFSC): We maintain a bi-directional referral loop. SCCFSC provides Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) assessments; homeowners needing physical mitigation who meet our vulnerability criteria are referred to our program. In turn, our field teams promote SCCFSC resources to the neighbors of treated properties, including information on how to form a FireWise community. (2) Resource Conservation District (RCD) of Santa Cruz County: We maintain a bi-directional referral loop. We actively promote the RCD's community chipping, erosion, and rural roads program to our enrollees and their neighbors. This ensures that entire neighborhoods are made aware of comprehensive resources that aid in the preparedness for future adverse events, including prolonged winter storms. This further amplifies the effect of our individual parcel treatments and aligns our work with the RCD's mission of watershed and soil health protection. (3) Community Action Board Day Worker Center (CAB DWC): CAB DWC is our primary vocational partner. We collaborate to certify up to 40 local laborers as "Zone-0 Technicians." This partnership ensures that Measure Q funds drive local economic equity and provide a fair-wage career pathway for the community's workforce. (4) SBP (National Resilience Partner): SBP provides the technical backbone of the project, including the Zesti AI data pipeline and the AmeriCorps member pipeline. These members serve as our field leadership core, managing volunteer teams and leading disaster preparedness education. (5) All Hands and Hearts and other national VOAD partners These national partners provide skilled volunteer teams for "neighborhood blitzes." They provide high-intensity labor to scale our neighborhood-level impact. (6) Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS): While not a local partner, our program adopts IBHS scientific principles as our mitigation standard. We educate enrollees on these standards to help them move from the FAIR Plan toward standard market insurance eligibility. (7) CruzAware (County of Santa Cruz): We serve as a recruitment and enrollment arm for the county's emergency alert system. Our teams provide hands-on assistance to seniors and residents with technology barriers to ensure they are registered for life-saving alerts. The SCCLTRG serves as the fiscal and operational anchor for this coalition. By integrating these relationships, we move beyond siloed efforts to create a comprehensive resilience ecosystem that is greater than the sum of its parts.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

While individual partners provide specific resources, the Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz initiative is defined by the interconnectivity of its collaborative framework. This project moves beyond traditional subcontracting to create a "No-Wrong-Door" resilience ecosystem. Our collaboration is designed to eliminate duplication of effort. For example, a homeowner may enter the system through a Fire Safe Council HIZ assessment. If that resident is identified as physically or financially unable to perform the work, they are immediately transitioned to our SBP-led intake team followed by our volunteer or CAB DWC trainee crews completing the Zone-0 clearing. Simultaneously, we will promote the HIZ program and RCD chipping program to neighbors that fall outside of our eligibility parameters. This closed-loop system ensures that a single point of contact results in a comprehensive, end-to-end safety intervention beyond the individually treated properties. A core element of our collaboration is the cross-pollination of expertise. We work alongside and train together with our partners. By training our staff and AmeriCorps members to conduct HIZ assessments and educating volunteers and day workers on IBHS principles, we create a unified technical language across all organizations. This ensures that whether a resident speaks with a volunteer, a certified technician, or a program manager, they receive consistent, scientifically-backed advice on wildfire mitigation and insurance readiness. Our collaborative model allows for a "Ready-Set-Go" approach to labor. The SCCLTRG acts as the permanent administrative anchor, while our relationships with All Hands and Hearts and others provide "surge capacity." This allows us to scale from baseline operations to high-intensity neighborhood "blitzes" without the overhead of permanent staffing increases. By collaborating with trusted community messengers like the CAB Day Worker Center, we bypass the traditional barriers to government-funded programs. Our outreach is not just multilingual; it is trust-based. We leverage the cultural competency of our partners to reach isolated seniors and low-income households, ensuring that the most vulnerable residents are not only served but are active participants in the county's broader safety network, including the CruzAware system.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

398266

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

85172

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

8000

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

93172

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

—

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz budget is a strategic investment designed to maximize field impact while building permanent county infrastructure for wildfire resilience. The total request of \$398,265.70 leverages an additional \$93,172.00 in matching funds and in-kind resources. 1. Personnel and Fringe Benefits (\$231,278) The personnel structure is designed as an Operational Backbone to manage high-volume volunteer and trainee labor. Project Management & Coordination (\$127,160): Includes a full-time Program Manager (\$71,000) and a Field Coordinator (\$56,160) to lead partner coordination, safety oversight, and daily site operations. A significant match of \$67,107 is provided for the Field Coordinator role. SBP AmeriCorps Members (\$49,500): Covers the cost for three AmeriCorps members serving as field team leaders. Fringe Benefits (\$54,618): Covers health insurance, workers' compensation, and payroll taxes for direct project staff. 2. Capital Equipment & Maintenance (\$46,000) This project invests in durable community assets that will remain in Santa Cruz County for long-term resilience: Dump Truck & Wood Chipper (\$38,000): Procurement of a used 5yd dump truck (\$20,000) and a professional-grade 12" wood chipper (\$18,000). A \$2,400 match is applied to the chipper value. Fleet Maintenance & Fuel (\$8,000): Dedicated funds for preemptive tune-ups and operational fuel for the two primary pieces of heavy equipment. 3. Operations, Supplies & Travel (\$69,040) Travel & Reimbursement (\$7,000): Covers mileage reimbursement for staff and strike teams. This is heavily leveraged by a \$13,165 match in partner vehicle contributions. Workforce Development (CAB Day Labor Center) (\$30,000): Stipends and local outreach for vocational trainees. Field Supplies & Safety (\$9,440): Includes the initial tool load-out (chainsaws, loppers, PPE, MURS radios) and a portable field AED. Volunteer & Vocational Support (\$22,600): Covers volunteer housing/logistics (\$10,000) and vocational support (\$12,600) for certifications and reporting software. 4. Administrative Overhead (\$51,947.70) A standard 15% indirect cost rate is applied to the direct project costs of \$346,318. This covers essential administrative infrastructure, including office rent, financial auditing, and human resources. 5. Leveraged Match (\$93,172) This project is strengthened by a significant \$93,172 leverage, including a personnel match (\$67,107) that contributes to our field coordination. Vehicle & Travel Match (\$13,165): Partner-provided vehicle use and fuel. Programmatic Match (\$12,900): Includes CERC member funds (\$8,000), tool contributions (\$2,500), and capital match (\$2,400).

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

The primary vehicle for long-term viability is the transition to a CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T) third-party provider model by 2027. By launching a vocational training and certification model with the CAB Day Worker Center during this pilot, SCCLTRG is positioning the program for a 50% federal reimbursement model in 2027. This strategy moves the program beyond reliance on local grants, using Measure Q as seed capital to unlock recurring federal dollars for wildfire mitigation. The certification of up to 40 local laborers through the CAB Day Worker Center creates a permanent professional asset. These technicians gain specialized knowledge in AB 3074 and IBHS principles, transforming informal labor into a recognized "green economy" career pathway. This creates a skilled workforce available for private-market defensible space work. Physical mitigations in Zone-0 provide lasting structural survivability. By aligning work with IBHS (Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety) standards, we provide homeowners with the documentation necessary to retain coverage or seek discounts in the standard market. Each intervention includes maintenance and next steps education, empowering residents to sustain and improve their Ember-Resistant Zone. While most wildfire mitigation programs are reactive, relying on resident self-enrollment, our project is innovative in its use of Zesti AI risk modeling to move toward a predictive model. Additionally, the Zesti AI data baseline allows partners to quantify risk reduction over time, providing the metrics required to advocate for future state/federal funding and continued insurance underwriting within Santa Cruz County's WUI neighborhoods.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

Yes

REFERENCED PLANS

[{"name":"Santa Cruz County 2021-2026 LHMP","url":"https://www.santacruzcounty.us/OR3/Resilience/HazardMitigationPlan.aspx"}, {"name":"Santa Cruz County CWPP (2023 Update)","url":"https://www.rcdsantacruz.org/cwpp"}, {"name":"Aging Well in Santa Cruz County Report","url":"https://www.santacruzhealth.org/Portals/7/Pdfs/AgingWell/Aging%20Well%20Report%20Final.pdf"}, {"name":"California Wildfire Action Plan","url":"https://wildfirevets.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/californiawildfireandforestresilienceactionplan.pdf"}]

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness, High Fund Leverage, Long Term Stewardship Commitments, Strong Partnerships, Regional Significance

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

The Resilience-Ready Santa Cruz initiative is explicitly designed to implement and advance the goals of several key local and state regulatory, safety, and equity frameworks. 1. State Mandate: Assembly Bill (AB) 3074 This project serves as a primary implementation tool for AB 3074, which established the new 5-foot "Ember-Resistant Zone" (Zone 0) requirement for all structures in High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. By providing professional mitigation for vulnerable residents who cannot meet this requirement on their own, the SCCLTRG ensures that this state mandate is enacted equitably across Santa Cruz County. 2. Santa Cruz County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) The project directly supports the LHMP's wildfire mitigation objectives, specifically those aimed at reducing structural vulnerability in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). Our focus on neighborhood clusters aligns with the plan's emphasis on landscape-scale risk reduction and protecting critical community assets from catastrophic loss. 3. Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) The initiative fulfills several high-priority action items within the Santa Cruz County CWPP. Specifically, it addresses the identified need for "targeted assistance programs" for seniors and low-income residents to achieve defensible space compliance. By integrating professional biomass removal through our RCD partnership, we further the CWPP's goals regarding community-wide fuel reduction. 4. Age Well Santa Cruz County (Master Plan for Aging) In alignment with the Age Well Santa Cruz County framework, this project addresses the "Emergency Preparedness and Resilience" domain of the county's multi-year plan for older adults and people with disabilities. Our "boots-on-the-ground" assistance with CruzAware enrollment and physical property mitigation supports the plan's goal of ensuring that seniors can safely "age in place" even in high-risk environmental zones. 5. CalFresh E&T 2027 Sustainability Roadmap While the Year 1 pilot is funded by Measure Q, the program is designed to meet the rigorous criteria for CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T) providers. By establishing a proven vocational pathway for CAB Day Worker Center participants, we are positioning this program to align with state-level workforce development goals, eventually leveraging 50% federal reimbursement to sustain these resilience services long-term. Our interest in E&T expansion stems from the 80-hours-per-month work, volunteer, or training CalFresh recipient mandate for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) that was officially expanded and reinforced by a new federal law, H.R. 1, and signed by the president on July 4, 2025. With our program we can ensure CalFresh recipients have ample opportunity to fulfill their requirements while also providing training in a field that is bound to expand following the AB 3074 mandate.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Measure Q Application Budget_SCCLTRG.xlsx](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[AH&H Letter of Support – SCCLTRG Measure Q Application.pdf](#), [CAB Letter of Support – SCCLTRG Measure Q Application.pdf](#), [FSC Letter of Support – SCCLTRG Measure Q Application.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[Organizational Information_SCCLTRG.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

[No file uploaded](#)

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Tonje Wold Switzer

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Tonje Wold Switzer

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 112 Type: Tier 2 Community Impact Grants
Project: San Lorenzo Valley Forest Health & Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

112

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

San Lorenzo Valley Forest Health & Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

—

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Forest Lakes Neighborhood Firewise and Safety Association

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

Tons

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

800

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Craig Winter

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Chairman

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

CA-9, Felton, CA, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.97411710000000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.03079630000001

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The San Lorenzo Valley Forest Health & Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project serves the rural, unincorporated communities of the San Lorenzo Valley (SLV) in the Santa Cruz Mountains of Santa Cruz County. These communities - Felton, Ben Lomond, Brookdale, Boulder Creek, Zayante, and Lompico - are spread along the Highway 9 corridor and surrounding mountain roads, home to approximately 25,000 residents. The valley is characterized by dense redwood and mixed-conifer forest, steep terrain, narrow winding roads with limited evacuation routes, and an aging infrastructure of homes built among heavy tree canopy. The 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire burned over 86,000 acres in this region, destroying nearly 1,500 structures and demonstrating the existential wildfire threat facing these communities. Subsequent winter storms in 2023 and 2024 downed thousands of trees and deposited massive amounts of woody debris across the valley, compounding the fuel load. Many SLV residents are moderate-income households who lack the financial resources to independently remove hazardous biomass from their properties. The project will collect and process this material at no cost to residents, rotating burn operations and quarterly community engagement events across the valley to ensure geographic equity from Boulder Creek to Felton.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

District 5

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The project will serve the entire San Lorenzo Valley: Felton, Ben Lomond, Brookdale, Boulder Creek, Lompico, Zayante, Mount Hermon, Forest Lakes, Bracken Brae, Hillaire, Riverside Grove, Bear Creek Road communities, Upper Highway 236 communities, Big Basin residential pockets.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

The Association will submit MBARD's Air Curtain Burner Checklist immediately upon grant award to initiate the permitting process. The project's mobile BurnBoss T24 air curtain burner will rotate across burn sites throughout the San Lorenzo Valley year-round, weather permitting. Because MBARD offers two permitting pathways for air curtain burners - a burn permit under Rule 438 or a stationary source Authority to Construct/Permit to Operate under Rule 200 - the Association will work directly with MBARD staff during Months 1-3 to determine the appropriate pathway for this operation. The Association intends to pursue a permit structure that enables year-round operations rather than restricting the air curtain burner to designated burn days. The BurnBoss T24 is a controlled combustion device that reduces particulate emissions by up to 98% compared to open burning - the burn-day framework under Rule 438 was designed for uncontrolled open fires that produce substantially greater smoke impacts. An equipment-based ATC/PTO with opacity monitoring conditions would allow the project to maximize operational days and processing throughput while maintaining air quality standards, which is especially important given the San Lorenzo Valley's designation as a Smoke Sensitive Area under Rule 438 Part 9. The BurnBoss diesel engine will be registered through CARB's statewide Portable Equipment Registration Program (PERP), and the project will comply with all applicable requirements under 40 CFR Part 60 including Subpart EEEE for air curtain incinerators burning clean wood waste. EPA removed Title V requirements for these devices effective April 17, 2024, unless otherwise subject. The Association chairman serves on the Felton Fire Protection District board of directors with direct working relationships with CAL FIRE San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit and Santa Cruz County Fire, facilitating multi-agency coordination for burn permits and site safety.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
Other	Not sure		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

2

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

The project can begin immediately upon grant award with no major dependencies. The Forest Lakes Neighborhood Firewise & Safety Association has organizational capacity, board governance, and 501(c)(3) status in place. No land acquisition, environmental review, construction, or legislative approvals are required. Equipment procurement is the primary timeline driver. All equipment is purchased new from factory and dealer stock with known delivery timelines. The BurnBoss T24 ships factory-assembled in 45-60 days. The F-550 truck, dump trailers, equipment tilt-deck trailer, and water trailers are available from Northern California dealers within 30-60 days. The new excavator may require 30-90 days depending on dealer inventory. All procurement runs in parallel, with equipment operational by Month 3. MBARD permitting runs concurrently with procurement. The Association will submit MBARD's Air Curtain Burner Checklist immediately upon award and work with MBARD staff during Months 1-3 to determine the appropriate permit pathway. Because the San Lorenzo Valley is a designated Smoke Sensitive Area under Rule 438, the Association intends to pursue an equipment-based Authority to Construct/Permit to Operate under Rule 200 rather than a burn-day-restricted open burning permit - the BurnBoss is a controlled combustion device reducing emissions by up to 98%, warranting year-round operational authority with opacity monitoring rather than burn-day restrictions designed for uncontrolled open fires. The BurnBoss diesel engine will be registered through CARB's statewide Portable Equipment Registration Program. MBARD's ATC process includes a 30-day completeness review followed by up to 180-day evaluation, so early filing is critical. The self-contained equipment package eliminates third-party dependencies: the F-550 and tilt-deck trailer provide independent excavator transport, and two 500-gallon water trailers provide CAL FIRE-required fire suppression supply. First pilot burn campaign targets Month 3 under interim authorization, with full permitted operations by Month 6.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

500000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

500000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$14,000	\$0	\$0	\$14,000
Travel	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,000
Equipment	\$330,000	\$0	\$0	\$330,000
Supplies	\$43,100	\$0	\$0	\$43,100
Contractual / Consultants	\$54,900	\$0	\$0	\$54,900
Construction	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,000
Other Direct Costs	\$28,000	\$0	\$0	\$28,000
Indirect Costs	\$24,000	\$0	\$0	\$24,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

Every year the San Lorenzo Valley's wildfire risk grows as thousands of tons of dead trees, invasive vegetation, and woody debris accumulate across 25,000 acres of densely forested wildland-urban interface - fuel left behind by the 2020 CZU fire and six years of continued forest decline. Current disposal options cannot keep pace: open burning is restricted, landfill hauling costs \$150-\$300 per ton, and chipping cannot handle large-diameter logs and root balls. The fuel stays in place. The risk compounds. This project breaks that cycle. A mobile Air Burners BurnBoss T24 air curtain burner will process 800+ tons of hazardous biomass at up to 8 tons per operating day - reducing visible smoke by up to 98% compared to open burning and producing only nutrient-rich biochar. No landfill waste, no diesel truck convoys hauling material over the hill, no smoke events degrading valley air quality. The only output is clean ash that goes back into the soil. An excavator, F-550 truck, equipment trailer, dump trailers, and water trailers create a fully self-contained system that moves site to site across Felton, Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, and Brookdale - clearing evacuation routes, thinning overgrown wildland-urban interface, removing invasive species, and restoring forest health at no cost to residents. Professional operators run heavy equipment while CAL FIRE/NWCG-certified volunteer sawyers handle chainsaw work, contributing 2,000+ hours. Eight quarterly community events build lasting resilience. \$500,000 request: \$330,000 new equipment (10-15 year community asset), \$104,000 operations, \$42,000 engagement, \$24,000 indirect (5.0%).

PROJECT START DATE

—

PROJECT END DATE

—

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Wildlife and Habitat Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

This project directly advances the Vision Plan's top thematic priority of Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health while delivering co-benefits to Water Resource Management and Wildlife and Habitat Protection - the multi-benefit approach Measure Q explicitly emphasizes. Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health. The Vision Plan identifies that many forested lands, both public and private, are second- and third-generation stands that have not seen natural fire cycles or proper management for decades, causing fuels and biomass to accumulate. The 2020 CZU Lightning Complex fires demonstrated the consequences. This project delivers precisely what the Vision Plan calls for: hazardous fuel reduction along evacuation routes, neighborhood-scale hazard mitigation through Firewise communities, and defensible space around WUI communities - using biomass processing and biochar production, project types explicitly named in the Vision Plan. The mobile BurnBoss air curtain burner processes 800+ tons of hazardous biomass across 500 acres of the San Lorenzo Valley over 24 months, treating the Highway 9 corridor and Zayante/Lompico areas identified as priority geographies. The project integrates community protection and emergency preparedness through green waste removal at no cost to residents, combined with Firewise engagement and quarterly public education events - entry points the Vision Plan identifies for deeper community involvement in risk reduction. The trained volunteer sawyer workforce directly addresses the Vision Plan's emphasis on workforce development to strengthen local capacity in forest management. Water Resource Management. The Vision Plan identifies the San Lorenzo River watershed as a priority geography for water quality and salmon recovery. This project reduces wildfire risk across the river's upper watershed, directly protecting the drinking water supply for 25,000+ residents who depend entirely on local rainfall, streams, and groundwater. Catastrophic wildfire would devastate water quality through erosion, sedimentation, and contamination - precisely the risks of ecosystem impacts from catastrophic wildfire the Vision Plan's watershed health project type addresses. Biochar produced from processed biomass improves soil water retention and reduces erosion when applied to restoration sites, delivering watershed health benefits beyond fire risk reduction alone. Wildlife and Habitat Protection. The Vision Plan notes that disrupted fire regimes and invasive species threaten Santa Cruz County's biodiversity. This project removes invasive species like French broom, acacia, and eucalyptus alongside hazardous native fuel loads - combining fuels management with habitat restoration as the Vision Plan recommends. Reducing catastrophic fire risk protects habitat for threatened coho salmon and steelhead in the San Lorenzo River system, marbled murrelet nesting habitat in remaining old-growth stands, and the diverse riparian and forest ecosystems sustaining the county's remarkable biodiversity. Biochar application to restoration sites supports native plant regeneration, improving ecological integrity in treated areas. Multi-Benefit Integration. Every ton of biomass this project processes simultaneously reduces wildfire risk, protects watershed function, and improves habitat - exemplifying the multi-benefit outcomes Measure Q prioritizes. The project positions the community to compete for CAL FIRE, Prop 4, and FEMA BRIC funding using documented performance data, fulfilling the Vision Plan's emphasis on leveraging Measure Q investments to attract additional resources and build long-term resilience.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Multi-Benefit Outcomes. This project delivers simultaneous results across four Measure Q priorities with a single equipment investment. Every ton of biomass processed reduces wildfire risk, protects watershed health, restores native habitat, and improves air quality - all at once, not sequentially. Clearing hazardous fuel from evacuation routes directly protects 25,000 residents while removing invasive Scotch broom, French broom, and eucalyptus restores conditions for native species recovery. The BurnBoss air curtain burner's 98% smoke reduction means fuel can be processed year-round without the air quality trade-offs that limit open burning, particularly in the San Lorenzo Valley's designated Smoke Sensitive Area. Biochar produced as the sole byproduct sequesters carbon for centuries while improving soil health in community gardens and restoration sites. The volunteer sawyer program simultaneously builds workforce skills, strengthens community bonds, and extends operational capacity beyond paid contractor days. Match Funding and Leveraging Potential. The \$500,000 investment unlocks approximately \$73,500 in volunteer labor (2,000+ hours at Independent Sector California rate), partner agency support from CAL FIRE and local fire districts at no cost, and donated materials from local tree service companies. More importantly, the new equipment package becomes a permanent community asset with 10-15 year useful life - generating ongoing biomass processing capacity that leverages the initial grant investment across a decade of operations. Post-grant, the Association will pursue CAL FIRE Fire Prevention Grants, FEMA BRIC funding, and California Fire Safe Council programs using demonstrated throughput data as proof of concept. Fee-for-service processing for commercial properties, HOAs, and county agencies will generate operational revenue. The grant creates infrastructure that attracts future funding rather than consuming it. Equity Impact. The San Lorenzo Valley's rural mountain communities include significant populations of elderly residents, people with disabilities, and families on fixed incomes who cannot afford \$150-\$300 per ton commercial biomass disposal. The project eliminates this cost barrier entirely - processing hazardous material at no charge to any resident regardless of income. Bilingual outreach ensures Spanish-speaking families have full access to services and events. The volunteer sawyer certification program provides workforce development for residents of all

backgrounds. Eight quarterly events rotate across four valley communities for geographic equity, and the mobile equipment reaches properties on remote mountain roads that fixed-facility programs cannot serve. Climate Resilience Value. Preventing catastrophic wildfire is among the highest-impact climate actions available at the local level - a single uncontrolled fire event releases more carbon than years of managed fuel reduction. The BurnBoss converts woody biomass into stable biochar that sequesters carbon in soil for hundreds of years, unlike chipping (which decomposes and re-releases carbon within years) or landfilling (which generates methane). Reducing fuel loads across 200+ acres of wildland-urban interface directly lowers the probability and severity of climate-driven fire events. The self-contained equipment eliminates diesel truck convoys hauling material to distant facilities, and new equipment with factory warranties ensures optimal fuel efficiency and emissions performance. Building a trained local workforce for ongoing fuel management creates permanent adaptive capacity for a community facing increasing fire risk under climate change.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Public Benefit. Every dollar of this grant directly serves 25,000 residents across the San Lorenzo Valley's most fire-vulnerable communities. The project charges nothing - no fees, no assessments, no cost-sharing. Hazardous biomass is collected and processed wherever it threatens homes, evacuation routes, and community infrastructure, regardless of property ownership or income. No commercial operator currently offers mobile air curtain burning in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The project creates a capability that does not exist today and makes it available to everyone. The benefits compound over time. Equipment purchased with grant funds remains in community ownership for 10-15 years, processing biomass long after the grant period ends at marginal operating cost. Volunteer sawyers trained through the program continue contributing skilled labor for years. Eight quarterly community events build fire preparedness knowledge and neighbor-to-neighbor resilience networks that persist independently of any funded program. The public benefit is not a 24-month service contract - it is permanent community infrastructure for wildfire resilience. **Strategic Alignment.** The project directly implements priorities identified in the Santa Cruz County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, CAL FIRE's Unit Strategic Fire Plan for the San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit, and the County's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. The San Lorenzo Valley is consistently identified as among the highest wildfire risk areas in Santa Cruz County, with limited egress, aging infrastructure, and dense forest fuels that have only worsened since the 2020 CZU fire. Measure Q was created in part to address exactly this kind of urgent, community-scale environmental and safety need. The project aligns with state priorities under California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, which calls for dramatically scaling the pace and scale of vegetation treatment. Air curtain burning is specifically recognized by CAL FIRE and EPA as a preferred alternative to open burning. The Association chairman's seat on the Felton Fire Protection District board ensures direct coordination with the agencies responsible for fire protection planning in the valley, embedding this project within the broader institutional framework rather than operating in isolation. **Readiness.** This project has zero barriers to immediate start. The Association has 501(c)(3) status, board governance, financial management capability, and an established network of agency relationships. No land acquisition is needed - operations occur on public roadsides, county lands, and private parcels with owner permission. No environmental review is required - CEQA categorical exemptions under Class 4 and Class 33 apply, with a Notice of Exemption to be filed. No construction or legislative approval is pending. All equipment is purchased new from factory and dealer stock with known delivery timelines of 30-90 days. No used equipment search, no auction bidding, no condition uncertainty. MBARD permitting runs concurrently with procurement - the Air Curtain Burner Checklist is submitted on day one. The self-contained equipment package means no third-party haulers, no rented equipment, no external dependencies. First burn campaign targets Month 3. Full operations by Month 6. Grant funds convert to tons of biomass removed faster than any project requiring site acquisition, design, permitting, or construction.

TARGET COMMUNITY

The project serves the rural, unincorporated communities of the San Lorenzo Valley in the Santa Cruz Mountains of Santa Cruz County, including Felton, Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, Brookdale, Zayante, and Lompico. The service area encompasses approximately 10,000 households and 25,000 residents living in densely forested wildland-urban interface with limited evacuation routes - primarily Highway 9 and Highway 236. These communities were directly impacted by the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex fire, and the accumulated fuel from that event plus six years of ongoing forest decline creates compounding risk that grows every fire season. Residents on fixed incomes and elderly homeowners represent the largest underserved group. Commercial biomass disposal costs \$150-\$300 per ton when collection, hauling, and tipping fees are combined - costs most mountain residents simply cannot bear. Dead trees lean over driveways. Downed limbs block defensible space. Brush piles grow year after year. These residents know the risk but lack the financial means to address it. The project eliminates the cost barrier entirely, processing hazardous material at no charge on any residential property with owner permission. Residents with mobility limitations and disabilities face compounding vulnerability. They cannot perform the physical labor of cutting and hauling material themselves, cannot easily evacuate when fire threatens, and cannot afford to hire private contractors. The mobile equipment package comes directly to their properties - the excavator, dump trailers, and volunteer sawyer crews handle everything from cutting to loading to transport to processing. Spanish-speaking families in the valley often lack access to fire safety information and community programs delivered only in English. Bilingual outreach materials, bilingual signage at burn sites, and bilingual content at all eight quarterly community events ensure these families receive equal access to services, education, and volunteer opportunities. Young

families and new residents who moved to the valley after CZU may not fully understand the fire risk environment they live in. Community events provide hands-on education - live equipment demonstrations, defensible space workshops, and direct interaction with CAL FIRE and fire district personnel. The volunteer sawyer certification program gives younger residents a meaningful way to contribute to community safety while building practical skills through CAL FIRE/NWCG training. Emergency responders and fire agencies benefit directly from cleared evacuation corridors and reduced fuel loads along access roads. Every ton removed from roadsides and the wildland-urban interface improves response times and reduces the likelihood of entrapment during a fire event. The Felton Fire Protection District, CAL FIRE San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit, and Santa Cruz County Fire all operate in terrain where narrow mountain roads bordered by heavy fuel loads create life-safety risks for firefighters and civilians alike. The broader watershed community benefits from preventing the catastrophic erosion and sedimentation that follow uncontrolled wildfire. The San Lorenzo River and its tributaries support threatened coho salmon and steelhead trout - species whose recovery depends on intact riparian corridors that a single major fire could destroy. Protecting these watersheds protects downstream water quality for the entire region.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Public Safety. The project's core mission is protecting 25,000 valley residents by removing the hazardous fuel that turns routine ignitions into catastrophic wildfire. Every ton of biomass cleared from evacuation routes, the wildland-urban interface, and community-adjacent forest lands directly reduces the probability and severity of the next fire event. The San Lorenzo Valley's limited egress - primarily Highway 9 and Highway 236 - means that fuel accumulation along these corridors is not just a fire risk but a life-safety threat during evacuation. The 2020 CZU fire demonstrated exactly how quickly these communities can be cut off. Clearing biomass from roadsides and the WUI ensures that when the next fire comes, residents and emergency responders have passable routes and defensible positions. Health and Well-Being. Uncontrolled wildfire produces devastating smoke events that harm respiratory health across the entire region - not just the burn area. The 2020 CZU fire blanketed the San Francisco Bay Area in hazardous air quality for weeks. By removing fuel before it burns uncontrolled, the project prevents these large-scale smoke events entirely. Equally important, the BurnBoss air curtain burner's 98% smoke reduction compared to open burning means the processing itself does not degrade local air quality. Residents near burn sites experience virtually no smoke impact - a critical advantage in the San Lorenzo Valley's designated Smoke Sensitive Area where open pile burning already causes neighbor complaints and health concerns. Reducing wildfire threat also addresses the chronic stress and anxiety that valley residents report living with every fire season, particularly those who experienced CZU firsthand. Access to Nature and Recreation. The San Lorenzo Valley's identity is inseparable from its forests. Trails, creek corridors, and forest roads that have become impassable due to downed trees and accumulated debris will be cleared and restored, reopening access to the natural spaces that define the community's character. Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, Fall Creek, and dozens of community trails and swimming holes depend on surrounding forest health. Removing hazardous fuel from adjacent lands protects these treasured places from catastrophic fire while restoring safe recreational access for hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, and families. Community Identity and Livability. The San Lorenzo Valley's residents chose to live in the forest. The shared experience of CZU - evacuation, loss, rebuilding - forged deep community bonds. This project channels that shared purpose into sustained collective action. Eight quarterly community events rotating across Felton, Ben Lomond, Brookdale, and Boulder Creek bring neighbors together around a tangible, visible mission: protecting the place they call home. Live equipment demonstrations show residents exactly how their fuel problem is being solved. The volunteer sawyer certification program transforms passive concern into active participation - neighbors trained to CAL FIRE/NWCG standards working alongside professional operators on their own community's behalf. Bilingual outreach ensures Spanish-speaking families are included in every event and every opportunity. The project does not just reduce fire risk - it strengthens the community fabric that makes the valley worth protecting.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

Water Quality and Watershed Protection. The San Lorenzo River and its tributaries - Zayante Creek, Fall Creek, Bean Creek, Boulder Creek - form the primary watershed for the valley and supply drinking water to downstream communities. These waterways support federally threatened coho salmon and steelhead trout whose recovery depends on intact riparian corridors, cool water temperatures, and low sediment loads. A single catastrophic wildfire through accumulated fuel would strip vegetation from steep hillsides, triggering massive erosion that buries spawning gravels, raises water temperatures, and degrades aquatic habitat for decades. Post-CZU erosion demonstrated this pattern - debris flows and landslides delivered enormous sediment pulses into the San Lorenzo River system. By removing hazardous fuel from riparian zones and adjacent hillsides before it burns uncontrolled, the project preserves the vegetative cover that holds soil in place, filters runoff, and maintains the stream conditions that salmonid recovery requires. The BurnBoss produces zero liquid discharge - no runoff, no chemical residue, no contamination risk to waterways. Water trailers used for fire suppression at each burn site are managed under CAL FIRE protocols preventing discharge to streams or wetlands. Habitat Restoration. Targeted removal of invasive species is integral to every burn campaign.

Scotch broom, French broom, non-native eucalyptus, and acacia aggressively colonize disturbed areas throughout the valley, outcompeting native vegetation, altering soil chemistry, and dramatically increasing fire risk through volatile oils and rapid biomass accumulation. These species cannot be controlled by chipping alone - root balls and dense stands require excavation and complete destruction to prevent regrowth. The air curtain burner provides that destruction at high volume, processing invasive material alongside hazardous native deadfall in a single operation. Removing invasive canopy and understory opens space for native redwood, tan oak, madrone, and Douglas fir regeneration. Restoring native plant communities supports wildlife across the Santa Cruz Mountains ecosystem - from marbled murrelet and northern spotted owl in the canopy to California giant salamander and Santa Cruz black salamander in the understory. Biochar returned to treated areas improves soil structure and mycorrhizal networks that support native plant establishment. Climate Resilience. Preventing catastrophic wildfire is among the most impactful climate actions available at the community level. Uncontrolled forest fire releases enormous quantities of stored carbon - a single major event can negate years of managed fuel reduction. The BurnBoss converts woody biomass into stable biochar that sequesters carbon in soil for hundreds of years, fundamentally different from chipping (which decomposes and re-releases carbon within years) or landfilling (which generates methane under anaerobic conditions). Processing 800+ tons of biomass into biochar represents meaningful carbon sequestration while simultaneously reducing the fuel available for uncontrolled release. The self-contained mobile equipment eliminates diesel truck convoys hauling material to distant facilities - keeping operations local and minimizing transport emissions. Reducing fuel density across 200+ acres of wildland-urban interface builds structural resilience into the forest itself, creating conditions where fire behaves manageably rather than catastrophically under the hotter, drier conditions climate change is delivering to the Santa Cruz Mountains.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

This project operates as a mobile biomass processing service across hundreds of parcels, public roadsides, and county lands throughout the San Lorenzo Valley - it does not occupy a fixed project site. The entire equipment package is self-contained and mobile: the BurnBoss air curtain burner is trailer-mounted, the excavator travels on its own tilt-deck trailer towed by the project's F-550 truck, and dump trailers and water trailers deploy independently. The system arrives at a location, processes accumulated biomass over one to several days, and moves on. No permanent improvements, structures, or fixed installations are constructed at any location. Site control is established through three mechanisms depending on land ownership: Private Parcels - Written Right-of-Entry Agreements. The Association will execute written right-of-entry agreements with each property owner before work begins on their land. These agreements specify scope of work, access dates, material to be removed, equipment to be used, liability and indemnification provisions, insurance requirements, and site restoration obligations. The Association's network of 20 recognized Firewise USA communities across the valley provides direct relationships with property owners who have already expressed interest in biomass removal. Right-of-entry agreements are standard practice for fuel reduction programs throughout California and will be executed on a rolling basis as burn campaigns move across the valley. County Roadsides and Public Lands - Agency Coordination Agreements. Biomass collection and processing along county-maintained roads and on county parcels requires coordination with Santa Cruz County Public Works. The Association will establish a written coordination agreement covering notification procedures, traffic management, approved staging and burn locations, and encroachment permit protocols. The county has strong institutional interest in roadside fuel reduction - accumulated debris along Highway 9, Highway 236, and connecting mountain roads threatens public safety and county infrastructure. Additional coordination agreements with CAL FIRE and the SLV Water District will provide access to state responsibility area lands and water district properties where hazardous fuel treatment is a shared priority. Community and Partner Lands - Memoranda of Understanding. For operations on lands managed by community organizations, HOAs, or partner agencies, the Association will execute MOUs establishing access terms, operational parameters, and mutual responsibilities. These formalize collaborative relationships that already exist through the Firewise network and agency partnerships. This mobile, multi-site model is inherently different from a fixed-site construction or facility project. No single parcel serves as "the project site" - the entire San Lorenzo Valley is the service area. Site control is established incrementally as operations expand, with each location secured through the appropriate written agreement before equipment arrives. The Association will maintain a documented portfolio of executed agreements available for grant compliance review. All initial site agreements will be executed during Months 1-2, concurrent with equipment procurement, ensuring permitted and accessible burn locations are ready when equipment arrives in Month 3. New agreements will be added continuously throughout the 24-month grant period as the project expands its geographic reach across all SLV communities from Felton to Boulder Creek.

REQUIRED PERMITS

The project requires permits from two primary agencies: the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) for air curtain burner operations, and CAL FIRE for burn permits at each site. CEQA categorical exemptions apply. No permits are required from California Fish and Wildlife, State Water Board, US Fish and Wildlife, city/county construction, or the Coastal Commission. MBARD Air Quality Permit. The Association will submit MBARD's Air Curtain Burner Checklist immediately upon grant award. The

mobile BurnBoss T24 will rotate across burn sites throughout the valley year-round, weather permitting. Because MBARD offers two permitting pathways for air curtain burners - a burn permit under Rule 438 or a stationary source Authority to Construct/Permit to Operate under Rule 200 - the Association will work with MBARD staff during Months 1-3 to determine the appropriate pathway. The Association intends to pursue a permit structure enabling year-round operations rather than restricting the burner to designated burn days. The BurnBoss T24 reduces particulate emissions by up to 98% compared to open burning - the burn-day framework under Rule 438 was designed for uncontrolled open fires producing substantially greater smoke. An equipment-based ATC/PTO with opacity monitoring would maximize operational days while maintaining air quality standards, which is especially important given the San Lorenzo Valley's designation as a Smoke Sensitive Area under Rule 438 Part 9. Under Smoke Sensitive Area restrictions, open burning is limited to 4 burns per day per fire district and 20 total valley-wide - constraints that would severely limit a project designed to process 800+ tons over 24 months. The ATC/PTO pathway positions the BurnBoss as what it is: a controlled combustion device warranting year-round authority, not an open fire subject to burn-day restrictions. MBARD's ATC process includes a 30-day completeness review followed by up to 180-day evaluation, so early filing is critical. The Association will request interim authorization during the review period, targeting first burn by Month 3 with full permitted operations by Month 6.

CARB Portable Equipment Registration. The BurnBoss Tier 4 diesel engine will be registered through CARB's statewide Portable Equipment Registration Program (PERP), providing authorization to operate throughout California without individual air district permits for the engine. The project will comply with applicable requirements under 40 CFR Part 60 including Subpart EEEE for air curtain incinerators burning clean wood waste. EPA removed Title V requirements for these devices effective April 17, 2024.

CAL FIRE Burn Permits. Individual LE-5 burn permits will be obtained for each burn site through CAL FIRE San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit. The Association chairman serves on the Felton Fire Protection District board with direct working relationships with CAL FIRE unit staff, facilitating efficient permit processing and multi-agency coordination for site safety. CEQA. Categorically exempt under Class 4 (14 CCR §15304, minor alterations to land including fuel management within 30-100 feet of structures) and Class 33 (14 CCR §15333, small habitat restoration projects not exceeding 5 acres). A Notice of Exemption will be filed with Santa Cruz County upon award.

PARTNER APPROVALS

The project operates on public roadsides, county lands, and private parcels with owner permission. No land acquisition, permanent easements, or legislative approvals are required. The entire equipment package is mobile and self-contained - it arrives, processes material, and leaves. The following agreements and approvals will be secured: Right-of-Entry Agreements (Private Parcels). The Association will execute written right-of-entry agreements with each private property owner before any work begins on their land. These agreements specify the scope of work, access dates, material to be removed, liability provisions, and site restoration obligations. The Association has existing relationships with property owners throughout the valley through its Firewise community network and will prioritize parcels where owners have already expressed interest in biomass removal. Right-of-entry agreements are standard practice for fuel reduction programs across California and can be executed in days - they are not a barrier to project start.

Santa Cruz County Public Works Coordination (Roadside Operations). Biomass collection and processing along county-maintained roads requires coordination with Santa Cruz County Public Works for traffic control, staging areas, and encroachment permits where applicable. The Association will establish a written coordination agreement with Public Works outlining notification procedures, traffic management requirements, and approved staging locations. The county has strong institutional interest in roadside fuel reduction - accumulated debris along Highway 9, Highway 236, and connecting mountain roads threatens both public safety and county infrastructure. CAL FIRE Operational Coordination. The Association chairman's role as a Felton Fire Protection District board director provides a direct coordination channel with CAL FIRE San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit. A written coordination agreement will formalize the working relationship for burn permit processing, site safety inspections, burn-day notifications, and emergency communication protocols. CAL FIRE staff will provide technical guidance on site selection priorities aligned with the Unit Strategic Fire Plan.

SLV Water District Partnership. A memorandum of understanding with the San Lorenzo Valley Water District will address watershed protection priorities, site access near water district lands and infrastructure, and water supply access for refilling the project's 500-gallon fire suppression trailers. Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District. A coordination agreement with the RCD will provide technical guidance on habitat restoration priorities, invasive species removal protocols, and biochar application best practices for restoration sites.

SLV Firewise Community Network. The San Lorenzo Valley is home to 20 recognized Firewise USA communities - from TangleWood Neighborhood (est. 2020) and Forest Lakes (est. 2021) through the newest additions in North Lompico and Sandhills of Quail Hollow (est. 2025) - spanning Felton, Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, Lompico, and surrounding areas. This network, part of Santa Cruz County's 100+ Firewise communities ranking third nationally, provides the volunteer recruitment pipeline, site identification network, and community trust necessary for efficient operations. These relationships are already active and require no formal agreement to maintain. All agreements will be initiated during Month 1 and executed by Month 2, running concurrently with equipment procurement so that operational sites are permitted and accessible when equipment arrives in Month 3.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

Phase 1: Procurement, Permitting & Training (Months 1-3)

Month 1: Submit MBARD Air Curtain Burner Checklist and initiate permit pathway determination. Register BurnBoss diesel engine through CARB PERP. Begin all equipment procurement - BurnBoss T24, new excavator, F-550 truck, dump trailers, equipment tilt-deck trailer, water trailers. Execute right-of-entry agreements with initial property owners. Establish coordination agreements with CAL FIRE, Santa Cruz County Public Works, and SLV Water District. File CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Month 2: Equipment deliveries begin - F-550 truck, dump trailers, tilt-deck trailer, and water trailers arrive from Northern California dealers (30-60 day lead time). Complete DMV registrations and secure

first-year insurance bundle. Initiate volunteer sawyer recruitment through the valley's 20 Firewise communities. Finalize site assessments for first three burn locations prioritizing WUI parcels and evacuation corridors. Month 3: BurnBoss T24 arrives (45-60 day factory delivery). New excavator delivered with hydraulic thumb and log splitter. Complete Air Burners manufacturer operator certification. Conduct volunteer sawyer training through CAL FIRE/NWCG certification (10-15 volunteers). Host first quarterly community event - project kickoff with live equipment demonstration, fire preparedness education, and bilingual materials. Conduct pilot burn campaign under interim authorization while MBARD permit review continues. Milestone: All equipment operational, operators certified, first biomass processed. Phase 2: Ramp to Full Operations (Months 4-12) Months 4-6: Scale from pilot burns to bi-weekly campaigns at prioritized WUI sites and evacuation routes. Deploy volunteer sawyer crews alongside professional operators for material sizing and staging. Begin biochar collection, screening, and distribution to community gardens and restoration projects. Achieve full MBARD permitted operations by Month 6. Host quarterly community events #2 and #3 rotating across Felton, Ben Lomond, Brookdale, and Boulder Creek. Months 7-12: Maintain bi-weekly operational tempo under year-round ATC/PTO authority. Expand geographic reach to secondary priority sites identified through CAL FIRE coordination and community requests. Complete first annual grant reporting including tonnage processed, volunteer hours, and air quality observations. Host quarterly event #4 with first-year results. Refine operational procedures based on lessons learned. Milestone: 400+ tons processed, 1,000+ volunteer hours, four community events completed. Phase 3: Full Tempo & Sustainability (Months 13-24) Months 13-18: Full operational tempo across all SLV communities. Advanced volunteer development - experienced sawyers begin leading crews with professional oversight. Establish fee-for-service framework for post-grant commercial operations. Pursue supplemental funding from CAL FIRE Fire Prevention Grants, FEMA BRIC, and California Fire Safe Council. Host quarterly events #5 and #6. Months 19-24: Complete final burn campaigns targeting remaining priority parcels. Compile comprehensive grant report documenting 800+ tons processed, 2,000+ volunteer hours contributed. Host final events #7 and #8 with full results presentation and post-grant operational plan. Transition to sustained community operations with trained volunteer workforce, maintained equipment, and diversified funding. Milestone: 800+ tons processed, 2,000+ volunteer hours, eight community events, post-grant operations plan in place.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

Yes

TEAM CAPACITY

The Forest Lakes Neighborhood Firewise & Safety Association brings together operational leadership, agency relationships, and community infrastructure necessary to deliver this project from day one. Project Leadership. Chairman Craig Winter combines 15+ years of product and operations management experience with hands-on technical expertise in complex equipment systems, logistics coordination, and regulatory compliance. He serves as a director on the Felton Fire Protection District board, providing direct working relationships with CAL FIRE San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit, Santa Cruz County Fire, and county emergency management. This dual role - leading the Association while serving on the fire district board - ensures seamless coordination between the biomass processing project and the agencies responsible for fire protection across the San Lorenzo Valley. Winter has managed multi-stakeholder projects involving heavy equipment operations, vendor procurement, regulatory permitting, financial tracking, and community engagement - the exact skill set this project demands. Board Governance. The Association maintains an active board with experience in financial oversight, nonprofit compliance, community organizing, and wildfire preparedness. Board members bring professional backgrounds in project management, engineering, education, and public safety. The board provides fiduciary oversight of grant funds, reviews procurement decisions, approves contractor engagements, and ensures compliance with reporting requirements. Firewise Network & Community Infrastructure. The Association operates within a valley-wide network of 20 recognized Firewise USA communities - part of Santa Cruz County's 100+ Firewise communities ranking third nationally. This network provides immediate access to volunteer recruitment, site identification across every SLV community, established property owner relationships, and trusted communication channels. The Association does not need to build community relationships from scratch - they already exist and are actively maintained. Professional Operators (Contract). Burn operations and heavy equipment work will be performed by licensed, insured contract operators. The excavator operator will hold current certifications for the equipment class. The burn boss will complete Air Burners manufacturer certification specific to the BurnBoss T24. The truck/trailer driver will hold appropriate CDL or commercial endorsements. All operators carry their own liability insurance and workers' compensation. The Association has identified qualified operators in the Santa Cruz Mountains with fuel reduction and vegetation management experience. Volunteer Workforce. The project will train 10-15 volunteer sawyers through CAL FIRE/NWCG certification during Phase 1, creating a skilled community workforce for chainsaw operations, material sizing, and staging. Volunteers operate under professional supervision during burn campaigns and independently during collection operations. The Association's existing volunteer base - built through Firewise events, defensible space workdays, and emergency preparedness activities - provides a proven recruitment pipeline. Agency Partnerships. CAL FIRE San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit provides technical guidance on site prioritization, burn permit processing, and safety oversight. The SLV Water District supports watershed protection and water supply access. The Santa Cruz County RCD provides habitat restoration and invasive species expertise. Santa Cruz County Public Works coordinates roadside access and encroachment permits. These partnerships are active and ongoing - not aspirational.

This project is designed for immediate, reliable execution with minimal risk. Every major variable - equipment availability, operator capacity, permitting pathway, community access, and organizational readiness - has been addressed in advance. Equipment Feasibility. All equipment is purchased new from factory and dealer stock, eliminating procurement uncertainty. The BurnBoss T24 ships factory-assembled in 45-60 days with manufacturer support and operator certification included. The F-550 truck, dump trailers, tilt-deck trailer, and water trailers are available from multiple Northern California dealers within 30-60 days. The new excavator (Cat 308 or Kubota KX080 class) is a common model, typically 30-90 days. All procurement runs in parallel, with the full package operational by Month 3. Factory warranties covering the entire grant period - including the excavator's 2-year/2,000-hour warranty and F-550's 5-year/60,000-mile powertrain warranty - ensure reliability and reduce maintenance costs by approximately \$12,000 compared to used equipment. Operational Feasibility. The BurnBoss T24 is a proven system with hundreds of units operating across the United States for fuel reduction, land clearing, and disaster debris processing. Processing 8 tons per day over 100 burn days to reach 800 tons is well within documented capacity. The self-contained equipment package means the Association controls its own logistics - no contracted lowbed hauler, no rented water truck, no borrowed equipment. When weather and permits align, the system deploys. Permitting Feasibility. Air curtain burners are recognized and permitted technology under both federal (EPA 40 CFR Part 60) and state (CARB PERP) frameworks. MBARD has an established process for permitting these devices - the Association is not asking the district to evaluate novel technology. The permit conversation begins day one with submission of the Air Curtain Burner Checklist. CAL FIRE LE-5 burn permits are routine, and the chairman's fire district board seat provides direct coordination with the issuing agency. Community Feasibility. The San Lorenzo Valley's 20 Firewise communities, part of Santa Cruz County's 100+ ranking third nationally, provide established infrastructure for volunteer recruitment, site identification, and property owner engagement. Demand for no-cost biomass removal far exceeds current capacity - the project fills a gap residents have sought to address since CZU. The Association does not need to create demand or build trust; both already exist. Financial Feasibility. The \$500,000 budget is built from actual dealer quotes and documented market pricing. Equipment costs are verifiable against published manufacturer pricing. Operator day rates reflect current Northern California contract rates. The 5.0% indirect rate is conservative relative to the 15% maximum. No budget line depends on assumptions, matching funds, or cost-sharing that could fail to materialize. Risk Mitigation. The primary risk - MBARD permitting timeline - is mitigated by filing on day one and requesting interim authorization. Equipment delivery risk is mitigated by purchasing new from stocked inventory rather than searching for used units. Operational risk is mitigated by proven technology with manufacturer training and support.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The Association operates within a deep, active network of fire safety, environmental, and community organizations across the San Lorenzo Valley and Santa Cruz County. These are not aspirational partnerships - they are established working relationships built through years of coordinated wildfire preparedness, post-CZU recovery, and ongoing community resilience work. SLV Firewise Community Network. The San Lorenzo Valley is home to 20 recognized Firewise USA communities spanning Felton, Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, Brookdale, Lompico, and surrounding areas - from TangleWood Neighborhood (est. 2020) through the newest additions in North Lompico and Sandhills of Quail Hollow (est. 2025). This network is part of Santa Cruz County's 100+ Firewise communities, ranking third in the nation. These communities provide the project's volunteer recruitment pipeline, site identification network, property owner relationships, and trusted communication channels. When equipment needs to access a neighborhood, the local Firewise community leader makes the introduction. Fire Protection Districts. The Association chairman serves as a director on the Felton Fire Protection District board, providing direct operational coordination for burn permits, site safety, and emergency communication. The Felton, Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, and Scotts Valley fire districts collectively cover the project's service area and will coordinate on site access, safety protocols, and burn notifications. These relationships ensure the project integrates with - rather than operates apart from - the valley's fire protection infrastructure. CAL FIRE San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit. CAL FIRE provides technical guidance on site prioritization aligned with the Unit Strategic Fire Plan, processes LE-5 burn permits for each site, and may provide safety oversight during initial burn campaigns. The chairman's fire district board role creates a direct coordination channel with unit staff for efficient permit processing and multi-agency communication. Fire Safe Council of Santa Cruz County. The all-volunteer Fire Safe Council coordinates the countywide Firewise program, facilitates community education, and connects neighborhoods with resources for fuel reduction. The Council's network amplifies volunteer recruitment and community outreach across the full project service area. Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District. The RCD provides technical expertise on habitat restoration priorities, invasive species identification and removal protocols, and biochar application for restoration sites. Their guidance ensures biomass removal operations simultaneously advance ecological restoration objectives. SLV Long Term Recovery Group. Established after the 2020 CZU fire, the Long Term Recovery Group coordinates ongoing community rebuilding and resilience efforts across the valley. The group's established relationships with displaced and recovering residents help identify priority parcels where hazardous biomass accumulation compounds post-fire vulnerability. Santa Cruz County. County Public Works coordinates roadside access, traffic management, and encroachment permits for operations along Highway 9, Highway 236, and connecting mountain roads. The County's OR3 Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience supports community preparedness initiatives and maintains GIS mapping resources including the Firewise community map. Supervisor Monica Martinez's office has demonstrated direct support for SLV fuel reduction through programs including the no-cost yard waste disposal initiative at the Ben Lomond Transfer Station.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

The project is built on collaboration by design - no single organization can address the San Lorenzo Valley's biomass crisis alone. The Association serves as the operational hub connecting community volunteers, professional operators, agency partners, and local organizations into a coordinated system that moves tons of hazardous material from where it threatens homes to where it is safely processed. Operational Collaboration. Every burn campaign involves multiple partners working in concert. CAL FIRE issues burn permits and provides site safety guidance. Fire protection districts coordinate emergency communication and burn notifications. Santa Cruz County Public Works authorizes roadside access and staging. The SLV Water District provides water supply access for fire suppression trailers. Professional contract operators run heavy equipment while community volunteer sawyers - trained through CAL FIRE/NWCG certification - handle chainsaw work, material staging, and site preparation. This layered approach maximizes throughput while keeping costs manageable. Community Collaboration. The valley's 20 Firewise communities serve as the project's distributed organizing infrastructure. Each Firewise community identifies priority parcels in their neighborhood, recruits volunteers, facilitates property owner introductions, and helps coordinate access. This ground-up model ensures the project responds to actual community needs rather than imposing a top-down treatment plan. Eight quarterly events rotating across Felton, Ben Lomond, Brookdale, and Boulder Creek bring the full network together for education, recruitment, and celebration of shared progress. Knowledge Collaboration. The Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District provides ecological expertise that shapes how biomass is removed - which invasive species to prioritize, how to protect sensitive habitat during operations, where biochar application delivers the greatest restoration benefit. The Fire Safe Council of Santa Cruz County shares best practices from the countywide Firewise network and amplifies outreach beyond the valley. The Long Term Recovery Group connects the project with residents still rebuilding from CZU whose properties carry the heaviest fuel loads. Institutional Collaboration. The chairman's dual role - leading the Association while serving on the Felton Fire Protection District board - embeds this project within the valley's fire protection governance structure. Grant reporting, operational data on tonnage processed and acres treated, and air quality observations will be shared with CAL FIRE, MBARD, and the county to inform future fuel management planning across the region. The project generates data and operational experience that benefits every partner's mission. This collaboration model is self-reinforcing. Every ton processed demonstrates the system works. Every successful burn campaign builds agency confidence. Every community event recruits more volunteers. Every partnership strengthened during the grant period endures beyond it - creating permanent collaborative infrastructure for the valley's long-term wildfire resilience.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

500000

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

0

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

0

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

0

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

5

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

5000

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The \$500,000 request is organized into four categories: equipment acquisition (\$330,000 / 66.0%), operations (\$104,000 / 20.8%), community engagement (\$42,000 / 8.4%), and indirect costs (\$24,000 / 4.8%). Every dollar is tied to specific, verifiable line items based on actual dealer quotes and documented market pricing. Equipment (\$330,000). All equipment is purchased new with full factory warranty, eliminating procurement risk and ensuring reliability throughout the grant period and beyond. The BurnBoss T24 air curtain burner (\$90,000) is the core processing unit. A new 8-10 ton excavator with enclosed cab and 2-year/2,000-hour warranty (\$105,000) loads the burn chamber and processes oversized material using a hydraulic thumb (\$4,000) and log splitter (\$6,000). Two high-wall dump trailers (\$28,000) enable continuous shuttle operations between collection and burn sites. A new Ford F-550 XLT 4WD with 5-year/60,000-mile powertrain warranty (\$72,000) provides the 32,500 lb gooseneck tow rating essential for hauling the excavator on mountain roads. A 10-ton tilt-deck equipment trailer (\$10,000) enables self-contained excavator transport without contracting a lowbed hauler. Two 500-gallon water trailers with pumps (\$7,000) provide CAL FIRE-required fire suppression at each burn site. Delivery, registration, and first-year insurance (\$8,000) complete the package.

This equipment becomes a permanent community asset with 10-15 year useful life, generating ongoing processing capacity at marginal cost long after the grant period ends. Operations (\$104,000). Professional contract operators: excavator operator at \$650/day for 38 days (\$24,700), certified burn boss at \$500/day for 34 days (\$17,000), and CDL truck driver at \$400/day for 18 days (\$7,200) - supplemented by volunteer labor. Equipment operations: fuel and consumables (\$25,000), maintenance during warranty period (\$5,000), Year 2 insurance (\$4,000), operator training (\$4,000), site preparation (\$4,000), and self-haul transport fuel (\$2,000). Volunteer sawyer program: CAL FIRE/NWCG certification training (\$2,000), chainsaw PPE for 10-15 volunteers (\$3,000), and combined biochar distribution, communications, water suppression supplies, and signage (\$6,100). Factory warranties reduce maintenance costs by approximately \$12,000 compared to used equipment. Community Engagement (\$42,000). Part-time project coordinator for scheduling, permitting, and reporting (\$14,000). Eight quarterly community events with live demonstrations, fire preparedness education, and bilingual materials (\$10,000). Outreach materials including print, web, and bilingual content (\$3,000). Permitting and compliance including MBARD, CEQA, and CAL FIRE permits (\$6,000). Monitoring, GPS documentation, and grant reporting (\$3,000). General liability and pollution insurance for 24 months (\$6,000). Indirect Costs (\$24,000). At 5.0% of direct costs, well below the 15% maximum, reflecting the Association's commitment to maximizing on-the-ground impact. Leveraged Resources. Although no match is required, the project leverages approximately \$73,500 in volunteer labor (2,000+ hours at the Independent Sector California rate of \$36.77/hour) for site preparation, material staging, sawyer operations, and community events. Partner agency support from CAL FIRE and local fire districts provides technical guidance and safety oversight at no cost. The trained volunteer sawyer workforce and maintained equipment ensure post-grant sustainability without additional capital investment.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

All major equipment is purchased new with factory warranty coverage spanning the full 24-month grant period. The excavator includes a 2-year/2,000-hour manufacturer warranty. The F-550 includes a 5-year/60,000-mile powertrain warranty. The BurnBoss T24 includes manufacturer support and operator certification training. During the grant period, the \$5,000 maintenance budget covers consumables, fluids, and filters - major repairs are covered by warranty. Year 2 insurance (\$4,000) is budgeted separately. Routine maintenance follows manufacturer-specified intervals: daily pre-operation inspections, scheduled fluid and filter changes, and seasonal deep maintenance. Equipment maintenance logs tracking hours, fuel consumption, and service records will inform long-term capital planning and demonstrate responsible stewardship of community assets. Post-grant sustainability is built into the project model through four revenue and support streams. First, fee-for-service biomass processing for commercial properties, HOAs, and county agencies generates operational revenue to cover fuel, maintenance, and operator costs. Second, the Association will pursue additional grant funding from CAL FIRE Fire Prevention Grants, FEMA BRIC, and California Fire Safe Council programs - using documented throughput data from this project as proof of operational capability. Third, the trained volunteer sawyer workforce (10-15 CAL FIRE/NWCG-certified individuals) provides ongoing labor capacity at no cost, extending operational days beyond what paid operators alone could deliver. Fourth, partnership agreements with fire protection districts and county agencies create collaborative operating arrangements that share resources and reduce costs. The equipment's 10-15 year useful life ensures the community asset far outlasts the grant period. At only the marginal cost of fuel, maintenance, and operators, the BurnBoss system continues processing hundreds of tons of biomass annually - protecting the San Lorenzo Valley's 25,000 residents, watersheds, and forests for a decade or more beyond the initial investment.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

No

REFERENCED PLANS

—

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness, High Fund Leverage, Long Term Stewardship Commitments

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

Exceptional Readiness. This project has zero barriers to immediate start. The Association has 501(c)(3) status, board governance, and financial management in place. All equipment is purchased new from factory and dealer stock with known 30-90 day delivery timelines - no used equipment search, no auction uncertainty, no condition risk. MBARD permitting begins day one with submission of the Air Curtain Burner Checklist. The self-contained equipment package eliminates every third-party dependency: the F-550 and tilt-deck trailer haul the excavator, water trailers provide fire suppression, dump trailers shuttle material. First burn campaign targets Month 3. No other project of this scale can convert grant funds to tons of biomass removed this quickly. High Fund Leverage. The \$500,000 investment generates \$73,500 in leveraged volunteer labor (2,000+ hours at Independent Sector California rate), plus partner agency support from CAL FIRE and local fire districts at no cost. More significantly, 66% of grant funds purchase new equipment with 10-15 year useful life - a decade of ongoing processing capacity from a single capital investment. Post-grant, the Association will pursue CAL FIRE Fire Prevention Grants, FEMA BRIC, and California Fire Safe Council funding using documented throughput as proof of concept, while fee-for-service processing generates

operational revenue. The grant creates infrastructure that attracts future funding rather than consuming it. Long Term Stewardship. The Association commits to maintaining and operating this equipment for its full useful life - 10-15 years minimum. Maintenance logs, operational records, and annual tonnage reporting will document responsible stewardship. The volunteer sawyer program builds a trained workforce that sustains operations independently of grant-funded professional operators. The Association's Firewise USA recognition requires annual renewal demonstrating ongoing fire safety investment - this project becomes the centerpiece of that commitment. Strong Partnerships. The project operates within an active network including the Felton, Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, and Scotts Valley fire protection districts; CAL FIRE San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit; the Fire Safe Council of Santa Cruz County; 20 recognized SLV Firewise communities within the county's 100+ ranking third nationally; the SLV Water District; the Santa Cruz County RCD; the SLV Long Term Recovery Group; and Santa Cruz County Public Works and OR3 Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience. The chairman's fire district board seat embeds this project within the valley's fire protection governance. These are working relationships, not letters of support. Regional Significance. The San Lorenzo Valley biomass crisis is not unique - communities across the Santa Cruz Mountains, San Mateo coast, and broader Central Coast face identical challenges. This project establishes a replicable model: mobile air curtain burning with self-contained equipment, community volunteer integration, and an MBARD permitting pathway other organizations can follow. The project aligns with priorities in the Santa Cruz County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, CAL FIRE's Unit Strategic Fire Plan for San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit, and the County's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. Operational data, permitting documentation, and cost-per-ton metrics will be shared publicly to enable replication across the region.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

SLV-Forest-Health-Hazardous-Fuel-Reduction-Project-Budget.xlsx

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Craig Winter

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Craig Winter, Chairman Forest Lakes Firewise and Safety Association

SIGNATURE DATE

03/04/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 113 Type: Tier 2 Community Impact Grants
Project: Wildfire and Ecology Resilience via Beneficial Fire in Santa Cruz County

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

113

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Wildfire and Ecology Resilience via Beneficial Fire in Santa Cruz County

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

—

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Acres treated

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

108

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Spencer Klinefelter

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Program Coordinator

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

Watsonville, CA, 95076

PARCEL NUMBER

110-271-05

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.93070590602044

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.62441482411631

PROJECT JURISDICTION / CITY

Unincorporated Santa Cruz County

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The Star Creek Ranch is in the hills of the southern Santa Cruz Mountains, east of Watsonville and north of Logan and Aromas. The project will increase wildfire resilience and reduce wildfire risk to these communities and adjacent properties. The project is also proposing to work on two properties, one located north of Davenport (Molino Creek Farm) and the other, 699 Ryder Road, located between Scotts Valley and Felton, off Lockhart Gulch Road. All properties would receive benefit in the form of reduced wildfire risk and enhanced wildlife habitat.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Not applicable

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT

District 4 - Felipe Hernandez

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The project is proposing to work on three properties - one near Davenport and Bonny Doon, one in Scotts Valley, and one east of Watsonville. All three communities, as well as adjacent cities and communities to Scotts Valley, would be served.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

CEQA/NEPA in process

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

The CCPBA has extensive experience obtaining CalFire and Air Quality permits that are required to implement prescribed fires, and anticipate no problems in applying for and receiving the necessary permits prior to any implementation.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	Yes	CalFire and Air Quality Permits	To be received prior to any prescribed burns.

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

3

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

Two properties have CEQA completed, the third is going through the governor's exemption process and is anticipated to be shovel ready by June. However, given that prescribed fire is very weather-dependent, we want to give ourselves at least two years

(ideally three) to accomplish all burns so we have multiple seasons to work with. Permitting is done ahead of time and should not cause any delays to implementation. Minor prep work to ensure burn units are ready is easily achievable.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

399360

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

399360

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$197,340	\$0	\$0	\$197,340
Travel	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Equipment	\$60,000	\$0	\$0	\$60,000
Supplies	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Contractual / Consultants	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$3,000
Indirect Costs	\$30,760	\$0	\$0	\$30,760
Fringe Benefits	\$106,260	\$0	\$0	\$106,260

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

This project is focused on implementing prescribed burns on three "shovel-ready" private properties with high wildfire hazard throughout Santa Cruz County: Star Creek Ranch near Watsonville, Molino Creek Farm near Davenport, and 699 Ryder Road off Lockhart Gulch in Scotts Valley. Requested funding is for implementing burns and direct associated planning and preparation, including chainsaw or machine work to improve control lines and protect cultural resources or other values at risk; burn operation coordination with partners and the CCPBA network; and related organizational costs for overseeing and managing the project. Another component of the proposal is CCPBA assistance for State Parks' prescribed fire program, expanding their capacity and providing opportunities for the public to receive training in prescribed fire operations. Project Goals Enhance county wildfire resilience with beneficial fire in 3 strategic (outlined in the SC CWPP) shaded fuel break regions and high wildfire hazard areas Promote local native ecology health and watershed function Implement at least five prescribed burns on Molino Creek Farm, three at Star Creek Ranch, and Two at 699 Ryder Road over the next three years to reduce wildfire risk and promote ecosystem functioning. Create training and education opportunities around prescribed fire for local partners and the public. Acquire necessary equipment for regional expansion of beneficial fire: Type 6 fire engine Assist State Parks with their efforts to increase pace and scale of beneficial fire Assist landowners with burn planning for future projects Educate and outreach to County residents on the benefits of beneficial fire

PROJECT START DATE

10/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

12/31/2028

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, Agricultural and Work Land Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

This proposal directly supports wildfire risk reduction and forest health plus wildlife and habitat protection, as fire is a natural, keystone process on the landscape across multiple ecosystems on the central coast. The project would reduce fuels in burn units, providing both risk reduction for adjacent and nearby properties, and stimulating local fire-adapted plant and animal species, many of which utilize recently burned areas for habitat or foraging sites. Two of the properties, Molino Creek Farm and 699 Ryder Road, lie adjacent to existing shaded fuel break projects and previous prescribed burns, and implementation would build on work already completed to increase overall resilience for surrounding communities. In addition, two of the properties, Molino Creek Farm and Star Creek Ranch have working agricultural operations onsite or on adjacent properties, and they would therefore be better

protected from wildfires post-implementation. While not a direct goal of this project, research supports the idea that using prescribed fire can improve watershed function and increase groundwater recharge, as fewer plants post-burn allow for better absorption and less water uptake. In addition, as part of this proposal, CCPBA staff would assist and support State Parks' burn program, expanding their capacity to treat forests and grasslands across their properties within the county, thereby supporting recreation opportunities and wildfire resiliency on public lands. Finally, there are opportunities throughout this project, from planning to implementation, to engage private landowners in supporting fire resilience across the county. Neighbors and community members may observe or even participate in burns, gaining hands-on skills and building countywide capacity in using fire as a land management tool. Two of the properties, Star Creek Ranch and Molino Creek Farm, have interest to the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band and Amah Mutsun Land Trust. Project planning will include consultation and involvement of the tribe to align objectives, and implementation may be used as training for tribal members and staff interested in using fire as a stewardship tool.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Wildfire is one of the most significant climate-related threats to the region, as the 2020 CZU fire demonstrates. These burns would continue to build regional capacity for prescribed fire use, and strengthen existing partnerships between the CCPBA, local environmental organizations, CalFire, and the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, which has been involved in previous monitoring work at Molino Creek Farm and Star Creek Ranch. Prescribed burns are inherently multi-beneficial, as they not only reduce fuels but stimulate many different plant species and create ecosystem heterogeneity, which is strongly correlated with overall resiliency and ecosystem health. The burns that the CCPBA runs are also training opportunities for local residents who want to observe or participate, local fire departments, and staff from partner organizations who are interested in using fire as a management tool. With a staff of 3, the CCPBA implements any given burn with 20-40 affiliated volunteers (from our list of a thousand), showing strong community investment. In addition, by facilitating trained volunteers for State Park burns, we are able to increase the pace and scale of public land burning in the county. Burn plans for the three properties have recently been completed via funding from CalFire and the State Coastal Conservancy. By funding implementation of burning, Measure Q will leverage previous State funding. The CCPBA is currently applying for separate state funding for similar projects, and may look for match funding to expand the scope of this project if said funding is secured, increasing the number of total burns, total acreage, and potentially adding additional properties. Additional benefits of the project would be building off of existing, previous burn footprints and other forest health treatments such as shaded fuel breaks and mastication that are being used to enhance defensible space and create strategic fuel breaks across the county.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

This project would provide clear public benefit in the form of reduced wildfire risk, healthier ecosystems, safer Parks, and training opportunities for individuals and groups interested in prescribed fire use. Many people who have been impacted by wildfire say that participating in a prescribed burn helps them understand how fire can be used safely, and increases overall support for prescribed fire and more active land management in general. In terms of readiness, all properties have CEQA completed or are in the process of securing a governor's CEQA exemption, which would mean that all potential burns are shovel-ready, and implementation may begin when conditions allow, as soon as the fall of 2026. This immediate impact from being funded could serve as a good example of a project that aligns well with Measure Q's guiding principles and serve as an example of a project that meets multiple identified goals. The Warranella Road fuel break, part of which runs through the eastern portion of Molino Creek Farm, is identified in the Santa Cruz County CWPP as a high priority area. As is the 699 Ryder Road project area as part of the Lockhart shaded fuel break. Similarly, the eastern border of Star Creek Ranch is identified in the CWPP as a potential strategic fuel break to protect the county from fires started in Santa Clara County, and this project could focus burns in that property on reducing fuels in and alongside the region identified as a high priority, and serve as a jumping off point for future work focused on enhancing wildfire resiliency in south county. All three properties identified, being in the Santa Cruz Mountains, would also qualify as projects under the new Regional Prioritization Plan, which may be a pathway for future funding to build off of this project and expand treatments.

TARGET COMMUNITY

The communities of Watsonville, Scotts Valley, Felton, Bonny Doon and Davenport would all be benefitted by this project, as burns nearby would serve to reduce wildfire risk and provide training opportunities for local residents. In addition, follow-up fire ecology tours and post-burn workshops could reinforce some of the benefits of the project for local residents and stakeholders. If funding allows, more burn plans may be written for private landowners in high priority areas or to build off of already existing treatments. Lastly, the general public who utilize or live near State Parks that will receive CCPBA support on burn days will also be engaged via this project.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

The greatest value from this project is around public safety and health and well-being. The burns would reduce wildfire risk on adjacent properties, and research supports the idea that prescribed burns, while producing smoke, can reduce smoke from wildfires by serving as fuel breaks and limiting wildfire spread. The CCPBA has a network of over 1,000 people - local residents, landowners, students, and land managers - who are able to participate in burns, and receive notice when the PBA announces burns or workshops. This project can build on that network, expanding outreach efforts to Watsonville and adjacent communities who would be benefitting from project implementation at Star Creek Ranch. In addition, the CCPBA staff often provide fire expertise at numerous County events, such as: the Good Fire Fair, the Santa Cruz Mountain Stewardship Network and the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History, and will continue to do so via outreach events, workshops, and trainings. All PBA burns are typically posted to CruzAware and Watch Duty, an app that provides information to the public on wildfires and prescribed fires, and signage is placed along prominent roadways so nearby residents who see smoke know it is a controlled burn and not a wildfire.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

As mentioned previously, prescribed fire is one of the most effective and natural ways to promote landscape heterogeneity, which is strongly related to overall ecosystem health, resilience, wildlife habitat, and biodiversity. Woodland burns also improve groundwater recharge and improve watershed function. Some of the units at Molino Creek Farm and Star Creek Ranch include coastal prairie, a rare and threatened ecosystem known to possess high biodiversity that benefits from frequent fire, both to reduce woody encroachment and to stimulate native grasses and forbs. In addition, prescribed burns, which often burn at medium to low intensity, reduce future wildfire risk and increase climate resiliency, both key goals of Measure Q and many county and city plans, such as Santa Cruz County's CWPP.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

REQUIRED PERMITS

Environmental review is done for two of the three properties included in this proposal. Molino Creek Farm has both an NOE plus a governor's exemption, and 699 Ryder Road has an NOE. The third, Star Creek Ranch, is going through the governor's exemption process and is anticipated to be approved by June 2026. The other permits required are CalFire burn permits and air quality permits, both of which are typically requested and obtained in the weeks and days leading up to the burn, per standard practice in the field of prescribed fire. CalFire permits are obtained via submission of burn plans - which are already written for the three properties - and air quality permits are obtained when atmospheric conditions allow for smoke dispersal and minimal impacts to surrounding communities. As such, these permits cannot be received well ahead of time due to weather forecasting constraints, but CCPBA staff have extensive experience requesting and obtaining permits necessary to conduct prescribed burns. No foreseeable problems are anticipated in requesting and receiving permits.

PARTNER APPROVALS

Approval of all landowners has been obtained via letters of support, and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County has dedicated staff time to supporting project implementation on their property, Star Creek Ranch.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

Implementation could begin as soon as fall of 2026 at Molino Creek Farm, with burns at 699 Ryder Road and Star Creek Ranch likely occurring starting in spring or fall of 2027. A Type 6 fire engine (250 gallon) would be purchased as soon as funding allows, equipment that is critical for safe broadcast burning. Assistance with State Park burns would be on an as needed basis and would

continue for the life of the grant. General public outreach would happen throughout the life of the grant and burn plans would be written for County landowners once applicable sites are identified.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

No

TEAM CAPACITY

CCPBA staff Jared Childress and Spencer Klinefelter have extensive experience planning and conducting prescribed burns across the central coast region and beyond. Both are qualified California Burn Bosses, are capable of obtaining all necessary permits, and managing burn operations from initial site prep through post-burn monitoring and patrol. The proposed project is well within the capacity of the CCPBA to complete.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

All proposed burns included in this proposal are feasible. Burns at Molino Creek Farm would build off of prior burns, expanding defensible space and fuel breaks for the property and its residents, and connect to larger, already identified burn units within San Vicente Redwoods that may be burned in the future to support and expand the existing fuel break along Warranella Road that moves through SVR north to south. Similarly, the proposed burns at 699 Ryder Road would build off of a previous burn conducted in the spring of 2025, all of which connect to an ongoing shaded fuel break project being managed by the Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District. The burns proposed at Star Creek Ranch would be the first conducted on the property, and would be used as training for Land Trust of SC staff, as well as the Amah Mutsun Native Stewardship Corp, and would serve as the beginning of a larger effort to reduce wildfire risk in the southern Santa Cruz Mountains. Star Creek Ranch is also part of the "Juristac Cultural Landscape", an area of critical importance to the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. This proposal would include some of the first large-scale implementation work within that region, and given the CCPBA's longstanding relationship with AMTB, there will be ample opportunities for tribal involvement throughout the project. All proposed burn units are already identified and ground truthed, and are delineated by existing road loops or handline that would need only minimal prep work.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Partners include the landowners of Molino Creek Farm and 699 Ryder Road, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (owners of Star Creek Ranch), and landowners of San Vicente Redwoods (adjacent to Molino Creek Farm). The CCPBA has burned at Molino, Ryder and with LTSCC previously, and has good relationships with the landowners. The PBA is also currently involved with extensive burn planning with SVR and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County on various properties they manage, and has good communication and existing relationships with their staff.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

Landowners for all three properties are willing to assist with unit prep, including scraping roads and improving existing control lines. Land Trust staff will likely assist with implementation on Star Creek Ranch, and use the burns as training opportunities for their stewardship-focused staff.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

399360

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

0

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

0

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

0

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

10

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The budget is built around three CCPBA staff working at 23% time over three years to plan and implement the burns, along with funding for equipment, such as a Type 6 engine which would support all broadcast burns for the duration of the project and permanently expand the CCPBA's capacity to plan and implement more complex and resource-intensive burns in the County and future. Smaller amounts for contractual needs, mileage, and supplies are also built into the full requested amount.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

Prescribed fire is best when combined with other treatments, such as thinning or mastication. Landowners on Molino Creek Farm and 699 Ryder Road already engage in mastication work on their properties, and have expressed interest in repeat burns in the future to maintain lower fuel loads and reduced wildfire risk. Prescribed fire in woodland environments provides fuel reduction benefits for an average of 10-20 years, and it is recommended that followup treatments occur, although no funding has been secured for such treatments given that they may be years out. Star Creek Ranch, being managed by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, has ongoing management activities on the property. This project would serve as the introduction of prescribed fire on this particular property, and may serve as the basis for future, larger-scale implementation of prescribed fire and other treatments there and in the broader Juristac Cultural Landscape.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

Yes

REFERENCED PLANS

[{"name":"Santa Cruz County CWPP","url":"https://www.firesafesantacruz.org/community-wildfire-protection-plan"}, {"name":"San Benito County RPP","url":"Under final review, unpublished"}]

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

It is worth emphasizing the shovel-ready nature of this overall project. With the burn plans already written, environmental review done, and no foreseeable permitting hurdles, implementation can begin as soon as funding is secured and weather conditions align to be able to meet burn objectives. These properties also all include strategically important fuel breaks identified in the Santa Cruz County CWPP, and Star Creek is also referenced in the neighboring San Benito Regional Prioritization Plan as a county-adjacent property that is strategically important for overall wildfire resiliency.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET[Budget & Timeline - Budget \(1\).pdf](#)**ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP**[MeasureQMaps.pdf](#)**ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT**[MeasureQLOS.pdf](#)**ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT**[Budget & Timeline - Timeline.pdf](#)**ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS**[No file uploaded](#)**ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO**[No file uploaded](#)**ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS**[No file uploaded](#)**ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS**[No file uploaded](#)

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Spencer Klinefelter

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Spencer Klinefelter, Program Coordinator

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 121

Type: Tier 2 Pajaro Valley Set-Aside

Project: Pajaro Valley Watershed Stewardship, Habitat Restoration, and Outdoor Access and Equity Project

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

121

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Pajaro Valley Set-Aside

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Pajaro Valley Watershed Stewardship, Habitat Restoration, and Outdoor Access and Equity Project

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

WATSONVILLE WETLANDS WATCH

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Population served

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

65000

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Jonathan Pilch

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Executive Director

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Brooke	Sampson	[REDACTED]
Valerie	Thomas	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

Multiple locations in Watsonville CA: Corralitos Creek Reach 6 (lat. 36.903126, long. -121.782761)

PARCEL NUMBER

Mintie White Elementary (APN 01807106), Pajaro Valley High (APN 01828163)

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.903126

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.782761

PROJECT JURISDICTION / CITY

City of Watsonville, Unincorporated Santa Cruz County

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

Corralitos Creek Reach 6 - Freedom and unincorporated Santa Cruz County District 4; Mintie White Elementary School - City of Watsonville, City Council District 4; Pajaro Valley High School - unincorporated Santa Cruz County District 2

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

City of Watsonville District 4 - Mintie White Elementary School

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT

District 2 - Kimberly De Serpa, District 4 - Felipe Hernandez

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

City of Watsonville District 4 (and County District 4) - Mintie White Elementary School County of Santa Cruz - District 4 - Corralitos Creek County of Santa Cruz - District 2 - Pajaro Valley High School

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Not sure

DAC/SDAC NOTES

Mintie White Elementary School and Corralitos Creek Reach 6 are both located within disadvantaged communities on both the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool and CalEnviro Screen 4.0 indicator maps. Pajaro Valley High School (PVHS) is located within a 1/4 mile outside the disadvantaged communities area on the maps; however, the students served by the school overwhelmingly live within the disadvantaged communities area (east of Highway 1). Sited among the Watsonville Slough System, between West Branch Struve Slough and Harkins Slough, PVHS is included in the Measure Q Pajaro Valley set aside eligible area, per the clause regarding location within 1 mile of priority water bodies.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

CEQA/NEPA completed

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

Each of the proposed projects currently has approved plans and permits, and planning has undergone significant review. Site preparation for proposed restoration work along Corralitos Creek Reach 6 is already underway. We have a community-informed greening plan for Mintie White Elementary School, completed in 2024, which has been approved by the PVUSD and submitted and approved by the CA Department of State Architect, as required for all campus improvements. For the Pajaro Valley High outdoor access project, we hold a conservation easement on 80 acres of Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area bordering the wetlands on which this project will occur and a dedicated funding source for long-term maintenance. Our organization has stewarded and maintained this land for over 20 years. We have established, collaborative, and successful partnerships in place with the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency (Corralitos Creek Reach 6 project partner) and Pajaro Valley Unified School District (both school locations).

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	Yes	Dept of State Architect review (Mintie White)	complete

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

DURATION AMOUNT

months

12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

N/A.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

350000

465550

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$71,550	\$40,550	\$17,662	\$129,762
Fringe Benefits	\$25,758	\$12,574	\$0	\$38,332
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies	\$72,296	\$13,340	\$0	\$85,636
Contractual / Consultants	\$135,400	\$18,000	\$0	\$153,400
Indirect Costs	\$44,996	\$13,424	\$0	\$58,420

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

Our Pajaro Valley Watershed Stewardship, Habitat Restoration, and Outdoor Access and Equity Project will work across three locations in Watsonville to implement riparian habitat restoration, multi-benefit school greening, and wetland trail enhancement and habitat protection. These projects are undertaken in collaboration with Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency and Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) and guided by completed plans. Watsonville Wetlands Watch has 35 years of experience conducting community-centered environmental restoration in the Pajaro Valley. Our project will leverage committed match funding and community volunteer programs and provide hands-on workforce development job training for young adults. Our proposed work supports the priority thematic areas of water resource management, wildlife and habitat protection, and access and equity. Our restoration project at Corralitos Creek will improve water quality, restore wetland and riparian habitat, and foster collaborative environmental solutions in the Pajaro River watershed, addressing Reach 6, an area of high impairment. Our school greening project at Mintie White Elementary School will expand the tree canopy and install green infrastructure to provide access to nature on campus and improve climate adaptation for vulnerable Watsonville residents. Our completed community-informed school greening plan for the campus includes shade tree plantings, concrete removal, stormwater management, native plant gardens, and a mixed fruit tree orchard. Our trail enhancement project at Pajaro Valley High School (PVHS) will increase access within the Watsonville Slough System and enhance nature-based education for students and residents, protecting sensitive habitat and providing an educational, guided trail user experience.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

Our proposed work supports the priority thematic areas of water resource management, wildlife and habitat protection, and access and equity. Our restoration project at Corralitos Creek will improve water quality, groundwater re-charge, restore wetland and riparian habitat, and foster collaborative environmental solutions in the Pajaro River watershed, addressing Reach 6, an area of high impairment, through collaborative implementation of high priority environmental enhancement projects. Proposed work will include installation of native riparian habitat along new in-set floodplain features, being built as a part of the levee set back work associated with the Pajaro River at Watsonville Flood Control Project. This work will increase benefits to disadvantaged and traditionally under-represented community members in environmental conservation projects in Watsonville through community volunteer and high school and college age workforce development programs. Our school greening project at Mintie White Elementary School is part of a broader partnership with PVUSD, and the site was prioritized by PVUSD leadership. The work at the 1929 historic landmark campus will be guided by a community-informed school greening plan completed by our staff with school staff, parents, and students in 2024, under a CAL FIRE Urban & Community Forestry planning grant. The planning process spanned 4 meetings with stakeholders to define site needs, review conceptual plans, hold a community/parent meeting, and review 60% plans to provide final input. Green schoolyard project elements for the campus include: shade tree plantings, concrete removal, stormwater management features, and native plant gardens. We will also plant a mixed fruit tree orchard on campus near the existing school garden to support the PVUSD Expanded Learning Program's Career Technical Education Ag Science Program at the school. These improvements will increase accessibility to nature on the school campuses, enhance shading and cooling for vulnerable students to adapt to extreme heat events, and improve social and emotional health, well-being, and academic achievement. Project elements will provide additional benefits such as carbon sequestration and climate resilience through tree canopy expansion, access to quality green space within urban central Watsonville, enhanced outdoor learning opportunities, and habitat for native plants, pollinators, and wildlife. Our access improvement and habitat protection project at Pajaro Valley High School (PVHS) will improve access to nature within the Watsonville Slough System for students and residents. At 800 acres, the Watsonville Slough System is one of the largest freshwater wetlands on California's Central Coast. It is located at the western end of the Pajaro River watershed near the confluence of the river, wetlands, and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. When PVHS was built within the slough system in the early 2000s, our organization received an 80-acre conservation easement around the campus to protect the Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA). Proposed work will enhance existing foot-trails to improve access for hands-on, outdoor learning such as our community science program Project Tierra, protecting the sensitive habitat area of Hanson Slough. Proposed improvements include installation of bilingual signage and markers and an informational kiosk to provide an educational, guided trail user experience.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Our proposed project aligns with the four project prioritization principles. Multi-benefit (ecological, economic, and social) outcomes across the 3 sites include: watershed enhancement, habitat restoration, groundwater recharge, wildlife and habitat protection, outdoor access and equity for Watsonville students and residents through tree canopy expansion and on-campus green infrastructure improvements, reduced flood risk, and improved public safety along flood-prone Corralitos Creek, the largest tributary of the Pajaro River in Watsonville. Our project brings match funding from a direct grants from the USDA US Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry program, PG&E Foundation, Rose Foundation, and the regional NOAA Monterey Bay Climate Adaptation Action Network (MBCAAN) grant award and collaborative funding of the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency's Corralitos Reach 6 funding. Our project offers significant equity impact by investing in the disadvantaged Watsonville community. Proposed watershed restoration along Corralitos Creek Reach 6 is a component of the first phase of flood-risk reduction protection work for the Pajaro River at Watsonville project, which will reduce the incidence of flooding, enhance watershed functioning and ground-water recharge for an over-drafted groundwater basin, and restore habitat. Mintie White Elementary School, a Title I school located in urban central Watsonville, serves 499 students (93% Latine, 91% low-income, and 64% English language learners). The tree canopy cover of the 6.79-acre campus is only 4.6%, and the ground surface is 43% impervious. Pajaro Valley High School, a Title I school located across Highway 1 from northwestern Watsonville, serves 1,428

students (97% Latine, 91% low-income, and 25-30% English learners). WWW initially opposed the site of PVHS because it is surrounded by environmentally sensitive land and far from the center of its attendance area (across Highway 1 from the urban population center). Through a 1999 negotiation with the California Coastal Commission, the City of Watsonville, and PVUSD, WWW agreed to support the high school site in return for an MOU agreement that ensured that there would be no development of the lands west of Highway 1 for 20 years, and that PVHS would focus on environmental education and include a wetlands resource center at the high school. In developing the Fitz Wetlands Educational Resource Center at PVHS, a joint venture of the City, PVUSD, and WWW, managed by WWW, our organization committed to enhancing students' education while also restoring the wetlands environment. The access enhancement project is a continuation of 20 years of habitat protection, wetlands restoration, and environmental education by WWW at PVHS. Formalized signage and trail markers will improve access to the environmentally sensitive habitat area around the campus, nearby Harkins Slough, and the Watsonville Slough Farm property of the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, for hands-on, environmental education. Our project has high climate resilience value, enhancing flood protection and watershed functioning, restoring and protecting habitat for resident and migratory birds and wildlife (including 23 species that are threatened, endangered, and species of concern), restoring native plant communities that support pollinators and birds, and increasing tree canopy cover and access to shaded recreation space for local students.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Our proposed project aligns with the three secondary prioritization principles. All three project locations offer significant public benefit. The Corralitos Creek Reach 6 work protects residents of surrounding neighborhoods by restoring and enhancing the riparian corridor. Both public school-based projects support PVUSD student health, well-being, and learning. All three project locations will offer increased ecosystem services, including watershed health, floodplain restoration, wetland preservation, enhanced habitat supporting biodiversity, carbon sequestration, stormwater management, and groundwater recharge. The project aligns with Measure Q's goals of long-term resilience, environmental health, and access to open space and focus areas of water quality, habitat protection, and outdoor equity. Our project will demonstrate visible investment in historically underserved and high hazard Pajaro Valley, responsiveness and equity in action, and immediate benefit and impact of public funds.

TARGET COMMUNITY

Our project serves the residents of Watsonville and surrounding unincorporated Pajaro Valley communities. The City of Watsonville is an underserved, working class, and agriculturally-based community with a majority (82%) Latine population and large immigrant community (35%); 16% of residents and 27% of children under 18 years live below the federal poverty line. Residents will benefit significantly from county resources directed toward environmental and community health and well-being. The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool categorizes the neighborhoods along Corralitos Creek as disadvantaged and low-income communities with elevated flood risk (96th percentile). The PVUSD school campuses included in this project are both Title 1 schools, serving predominantly Latine and low-income students: Mintie White Elementary School - 93% Latine, 91% low-income, and 64% English language learners and Pajaro Valley High School - 97% Latine, 91% low-income, and 25-30% English learners. WWW has partnered with the PVUSD for over 20 years on environmental education, school greening, and climate action.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Our projects will benefit Pajaro Valley residents in multiple ways, that provide immediate benefit and support long-term stewardship and resilience and align with the community value areas of public safety, health and well-being, and access to nature. Our riparian corridor restoration work will increase public safety and reduce flooding in neighborhoods along Corralitos Creek. In addition, restoration will enhance water resources by facilitating stormwater management and ground water recharge. Our projects at Mintie White Elementary and Pajaro Valley High School will reduce barriers to outdoor access, facilitate on-campus access to nature, and support physical and mental / emotional health and well-being and hands-on environmental education. Our work will increase native plantings, enhance urban green spaces, and restore wildlife habitat, supporting urban biodiversity. We will support outdoor equity with bilingual signage and programming (environmental education and community science). We will also provide paid workforce development training opportunities for young adults from Pajaro Valley and involve the Watsonville California Conservation Corps team as a core component of implementation of these proposed projects, providing green careers training and workforce pathways for young adults while restoring watershed and riparian health, protecting wildlife and their habitats, expanding the tree canopy, increasing climate resilience, and fostering local environmental stewardship. Workforce development programs will include training of 26 high school students enrolled in WWW's Climate Corps Leadership Institute and Wetland Stewards Program, and 12 college age students participating in WWW's Pajaro Valley Climate Corps College program, in which college students earn hourly wages while gaining hands-on training in watershed restoration and climate adaptation and are

co-enrolled in credit-earning internships at Cabrillo College and other local colleges. These benefits will be provided in the priority geographic areas of the Pajaro River floodplain, the Watsonville wetlands, and urban Watsonville. In addition to workforce development pathways, proposed projects will provide community volunteers with a positive way to contribute to project implementation. Each project will incorporate community volunteer workdays, providing education for community members about the benefits of these projects, through fun and engaging positive community gatherings for Pajaro Valley families. We anticipate hosting 8 community volunteer workdays during project implementation.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

Our project will provide benefits for water quality, habitat, and climate resilience. The Pajaro Valley is home to the third largest remaining freshwater coastal wetlands - six interconnected sloughs over 800 acres - and over a thousand acres of protected open space and public lands preserved for wildlife habitat, as well as countless acres on private lands. These areas support tremendous diversity of native plants and wildlife, including over 270 resident and migratory birds, and 23 native plants and animals that are threatened, endangered, or listed as species of special concern. They reflect a diverse landscape: coastal prairies and grasslands, oak woodlands, wet meadows, wetlands, and riparian corridors. Working with many partners and volunteers, for 35 years, WWW has worked to preserve and restore this unique ecosystem, native plant communities, and habitats, for the benefit of residents, wildlife, and our environment. This watershed has a long history of intensive farming and more recent urban and industrial development, resulting in the loss and fragmentation of important habitat areas and increased polluted storm water run-off. The wetland and riparian systems are listed as highly impaired due to low dissolved-oxygen, pH, turbidity, pathogens, and pesticides. Restoration of native plant communities in the Watsonville Slough System and Pajaro River watershed stabilizes banks, prevents erosion, and reduces turbidity. Restored watersheds and wetlands provide valuable ecosystem services and serve vital ecological functions, naturally filter the water draining to the Monterey Bay, supporting flood control for local residents and surrounding farms, buffering the community from the impacts associated with sea level rise, storing atmospheric carbon to reduce the effects of climate change, and providing diverse habitat areas and greater habitat connectivity along the riparian corridor. Our riparian restoration work along Corralitos Creek will improve water quality and habitat for fish and wildlife throughout the Watsonville Slough System and greater wetlands of the Pajaro Valley. Work will entail planting and establishment of over 6,000 native riparian plants within intentionally lowered terraces of the creek's floodplain, designed to provide habitat diversity, water attenuation, and ground-water re-charge. Approximately 40-50 native plant species will be grown and planted on site to increase native plant diversity and habitat complexity. Native plants will be grown from parent material in the Watsonville Sloughs watershed by community volunteers at our native plant nursery at the Fitz Wetlands Educational Resource Center. The work will benefit threatened and endangered plants, fish, and wildlife species, recharge critically over-drafted groundwater, and enhance water quality. Our on-campus greening and trail enhancement projects will increase native plantings, enhance urban green spaces, and restore and protect wildlife habitat, supporting urban biodiversity and access to nature. Our community outreach efforts inform and engage local residents, in English and Spanish, in stewardship actions to protect and improve water quality, habitat, and biological diversity in the Pajaro Valley.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

Corralitos Creek Reach 6 - all property is owned by the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency. Mintie White Elementary - property is owned by the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, who collaborated on the design of the final adopted plan and submitted the application through the California Division of State Architect. Pajaro Valley High School - property is owned by the City of Watsonville and Pajaro Valley Unified School District. WWW, the City, and school district have an established MOU that governs the use of the adjacent Fitz Wetlands Educational Resource Center. Watsonville Wetlands Watch holds a conservation easement on the property to ensure use of the open space preserve is consistent with all agreements and project development plans.

REQUIRED PERMITS

Permits have been secured for this project and no further permits are required for proposed implementation. Our work is being undertaken in collaboration with the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency (Corralitos Creek Reach 6), Pajaro Valley Unified School District (Mintie White and PVHS), and the City of Watsonville (PVHS). Restoration work along Corralitos Creek is already permitted and underway. CEQA: This project is exempt from CEQA per Assembly Bill 876. NEPA: The project is completely

compliant with NEPA. The relevant NEPA documents are: -Final GRR/EA February 2019 (entire FRM project) -Pajaro Reach 6 Supplemental EA #1 June 2024 (Reach 6 and borrow features, specifically) - 401 Permit (issued May 2025) and BO (issued February 2023). Our project at Mintie White is guided by a community-informed greening plan, completed with stakeholders in 2024 and approved by the California Department of Architects (DSA) in Spring of 2025. The trail improvement projects on the open spaces surrounding Pajaro Valley High School are located on lands where WWW holds a conservation easement on the environmentally sensitive habitat area. Public access to the open space was an allowable condition defined by the Coastal Development Permit for Pajaro Valley High School and the Biological Restoration Plan for the Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas. No additional permits are required for installation of educational and interpretive features.

PARTNER APPROVALS

Needed approvals and agreements at all three project locations are in place. WWW has an MOU in place with PVUSD for shared use of the Fitz Wetlands Educational Resource Center, located on the Pajaro Valley High School Campus and has a close working relationship with staff across PVUSD departments. No additional agreements are required for implementation of the Mintie White school greening project or the Pajaro Valley High School access improvement project. All permissions and agreements have been granted and are in place for the Corralitos Creek Reach 6 project implementation. Project construction began in early 2026 with proposed habitat restoration work planned to occur beginning in the fall of 2026.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

Implementation planning and permitting is complete and early stage implementation measures for all three proposed projects are well underway, enabling these projects to be completed within the one-year timeframe. A detailed project timeline has been provided as an attachment. Key Activities and Project Milestones: July - September 2026 Recruit for workforce development trainees, begin hands-on training for workforce trainees. Corralitos Creek - complete native plant production, begin installation of erosion control materials and weed suppression materials with California Conservation Corps. Mintie White Elementary School Greening - Hold project kickoff meeting with school community, prepare bid document for contracted concrete removal, tree well, and rain garden installation, and underground irrigation connections, PVUSD oversees bidding for contractor, contractor selection. Pajaro Valley High Access - Gather school community input into trail interpretive features, design trail interpretive feature layout and placement, host one educational workshop for school community, October - December 2026 Corralitos Creek - Complete installation of erosion control blankets, biodegradable mulch, and install native trees and understory plants. Host a community volunteer planting event and continue hands-on workforce training. Mintie White Elementary School Greening - Selected contractor removes concrete to create new tree wells, rain garden, and underground irrigation connection. WWW installation of wood chip mulch. Pajaro Valley High Access - Begin installation of wayfinding signage. January - June 2027 Recruit next cohort of workforce trainee program and begin hands-on training. Continue community engagement volunteer days across all projects. Corralitos Creek - Monitor riparian habitat plantings and maintain native plants with irrigation and hand weeding. Mintie White Elementary School Greening - Install shade trees, school fruit tree orchard, and maintain new greening features during community volunteer days. Pajaro Valley High Access - Complete installation of wayfinding signage, trail kiosk, and interpretive signage. Host educational workshop #2 and #3 to engage youth and families on topics related to environmental conservation during community volunteer habitat stewardship events.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

Yes

TEAM CAPACITY

WWW Executive Director Jonathan Pilch directs the work of the staff and manages the organization's partnerships. Mr. Pilch holds a bachelor's degree in geography from the University of California Berkeley and has been with WWW for the past twenty years. Over this time, his work has emphasized working with non-traditional partners to improve conservation outcomes, designing and implementing environmental conservation work, and strategic planning and organizational development. He will oversee the work of this project and serve as the lead in working with partner agencies. WWW's staff team includes a restoration department in which several key staff members will work on this project, including Yesenia Jimenez, Conservation Project Manager, and Arianna Lara, Restoration Program and Nurse Manager, who will provide technical assistance to project partners. Yesenia and Arianna hold their bachelor's degrees in environmental science from UCSC and CSUMB respectively, are native Spanish speakers, and effective communicators and practitioners within the conservation community. The WWW restoration staff also includes ISA certified arborists and a licensed contractor. In addition to our staff, we have paid workforce development trainees and an on-going site placement with the local California Conservation Corps team, which expands our available workforce for labor-intensive restoration projects. Community programs development and public outreach will be managed by Brooke Sampson, WWW's Development & Communications Director, who holds a bachelor's in geography from the University of California Berkeley and a master's in community development from the University of California Davis. She is a Watsonville native and has worked in the

Pajaro Valley non-profit sector for over 20 years. Also supporting this work will be Stephanie Rios, Education Programs director, who holds a bachelor's degree environmental studies from CSUMB and over 10 years of experience leading environmental education and community outreach programs in Watsonville. Both are bilingual in Spanish.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

Our work is being undertaken in collaboration with the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency (Corralitos Creek Reach 6), Pajaro Valley Unified School District (Mintie White and PVHS), and the City of Watsonville (PVHS). All of the proposed restoration and urban greening work is already planned and permitted. Site control is secure, as are long-term funding mechanisms for project maintenance. Watsonville Wetlands Watch staff have been meeting regularly with representatives from the staff of these partnering agencies to advance this work for the past two years. All three project components are ready for implementation and the timing of potential Measure Q funding is ideal to maximize past planning efforts, leverage outside grant funding, and implement high benefit projects in the Pajaro Valley. In addition to project readiness, Watsonville Wetlands Watch staff has a demonstrated track record for project delivery of similar projects and a dedicated and qualified staff with the expertise to manage project implementation and ensure successful outcomes. Our staff has over 20 years of experience managing similar environmental restoration and urban greening projects at this scale. We have completed a diversity of large-scale wetland and riparian restoration projects over this time and recently successfully completed a large-scale school greening project on the Pajaro Middle School campus with similar stormwater, green infrastructure, and tree canopy improvement features. Our staff hold the proper licenses for project implementation and have expertise and qualifications required for this type of work, such as multiple staff members who hold ISA arborist licenses and our organizational landscape contractor's license. We will also be partnering closely with the California Conservation Corps and our own job training program, the Pajaro Valley Climate Corps, to assist with project implementation.

PROJECT PARTNERS

WWW staff, led by Mr. Pilch, will administer the grant funds and implement the proposed work. Project partners include the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency and U.S. Army Corps Engineering with Nature Division (for the work along Corralitos Creek), and the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, Mintie White Elementary School administrators and staff, Pajaro Valley High School administrators and staff, and the City of Watsonville (for the school site projects). These are established and on-going partnerships in environmental restoration and urban / school greening. WWW is a valued collaborator of the City of Watsonville, providing contracted trail maintenance and wetlands and watershed restoration services. Mr. Pilch has collaborated with City staff on the development and adoption of the City's urban greening, urban forestry management, and climate action & adaptation plans. WWW also has over two decades of experience partnering with the PVUSD and PVUSD Expanded Learning and Career and Technical Education programs on school greening, environmental education, and climate action. WWW also holds a more than 20-year partnership with Indigenous community members through the Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council, who will support education work on the Pajaro Valley High School access improvement project. The job training and workforce development components of this project will be managed in partnership with the California Marine Sanctuary Foundation who administers a regional block grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association for Climate Resilience work in the Monterey Bay. Through this project, we have developed strong working relationships with Cabrillo College and Hartnell College to recruit college students in our job training program. Enrollees are hired by Watsonville Wetlands Watch and earn an hourly rate while also co-enrolling in credit earning internship courses at these colleges.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

Founded in 1991 as an all-volunteer organization, Watsonville Wetlands Watch (WWW) was the Pajaro Valley's first environmental non-profit. Our mission is to preserve, restore, and foster appreciation of the wetlands of the Pajaro Valley. We advocate for the preservation of the Watsonville Sloughs and act on behalf of the local environment, envisioning a thriving wetland ecosystem, with the community at the center of its conservation. Our work reflects our core values of community-led environmental stewardship and data driven environmental science. We address the current restoration needs of our wetlands, and we ensure their on-going care and stewardship by educating and engaging students and residents and developing future environmental leaders. Our nature-based, culturally-relevant, and hands-on environmental education and volunteer programs annually serve 6,000 Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) students, getting youth outdoors and inspiring the next generation of leaders, who will address the complex environmental challenges that our community faces. We involve community members from Watsonville and neighboring areas in supporting our restoration efforts. Our habitat restoration programs strengthen the natural resources of our region, cleaning our waterways, improving trails and greenbelts, and laying the foundation of the return of wildlife species whose future survival depends on thoughtful actions taken today. Our annual, bilingual World Wetlands Day restoration and education event engages up to 400 local residents of all ages in wetlands stewardship. We engage community members of all ages in monthly habitat restoration projects around the wetlands and watershed on the 4th Saturdays of the month. We are part of a local coalition, Pitch In Santa Cruz County, to address litter in the watershed through monthly clean-ups and special projects in the Pajaro Valley, undertaken with the Supervisor Hernandez's office, Watsonville Works / Community Action Board, and other local partners. Last year, volunteers gave 6,625 hours with our organization, and we provided 66 paid environmental and climate action internships for Watsonville youth. In 2025, we launched a paid workforce development training program in partnership with local public community colleges and universities, focused on environmental restoration and urban forestry. We collaborate with many partner organizations to achieve our mission, including the City of Watsonville, Pajaro

Valley Unified School District, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S.D.A.-U.S. Forest Service, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection - Urban and Community Forestry Program, Regeneracion Pajaro Valley, Amah Mutsun Land Trust - Native Stewardship Corps, Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council, and Monterey Bay Aquarium.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

350000

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

97888

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

17662

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

115550

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

15

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Please see our detailed budget attachment for budget information for each project site, including labor hour estimates and rates, fringe benefits, itemized supplies costs, and contract labor costs. Project staffing includes Watsonville Wetlands Watch staff and our Pajaro Valley Climate Corps college workforce development interns. Total salary costs associated with project implementation, coordination, oversight of contractors, community engagement, and volunteer coordination are \$112,100.00. Total associated fringe costs are \$38,332.00, which is 34%, and includes the costs of workers compensation insurance, medical costs, and payroll taxes and fees. Material costs vary across the three proposed projects but include a total of \$85,636.00 for items such as native plants, shade trees, erosion control materials, educational and interpretive features, and way finding signage for the Pajaro Valley High Access project, and additional project supplies as noted. Contract labor includes a total of \$153,400.00, primarily for implementation of site work associated with construction of the new tree wells and rain gardens on the Mintie White green infrastructure project and for the California Conservation Corps to support implementation of habitat restoration work on the Corralitos Creek Habitat Restoration Project. A small portion of this funding would go toward local educational partners such as the Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council and Regeneracion Pajaro Valley for community engagement and education directly supporting implementation of these projects. Total proposed project costs are \$465,549.80. Of this, WWW will provide existing committed funds of \$97,888.20 as matching funding from secured grants from the USDA US Forest Service for urban forestry work in the City of Watsonville, PG&E Foundation, Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment, NOAA-funded Climate Resilient Monterey Bay grant for workforce development and job training, and an additional \$17,661.60 as an estimate of in-kind volunteer labor. In kind personnel is an estimated 440 volunteer hours across the three project sites over the 12-month grant period, is valued at \$40.14 per hour (Independent Sector volunteer labor value estimate for California, 2024). Requested Measure Q funding is \$350,000 of the total project cost of \$465,549.80. If funded, Measure Q funds would leverage at least \$115,549.80 of outside match and in-kind funding to successfully complete three significant projects benefiting the Pajaro Valley. Our indirect cost rate is 15%, which includes costs associated liability insurance, non-payroll tax related costs, pro-rated portion of independent financial audit fees, organizational administration and grant management and accounting, and staff oversight throughout the project.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

Each of the proposed projects has a dedicated project partner and landowner who carries the responsibility for long-term maintenance to support sustaining the project benefits. Projects have been designed to be largely self-sustaining and require minimal long-term maintenance. Yet, as with any environmental project, long-term stewardship for these projects is critical. For each of these projects, we have secured dedicated funding for 3 years of maintenance beyond the Measure Q grant term. In addition to these secure grant funds, in order to support our project partners in long-term stewardship efforts, Watsonville Wetlands Watch will continue to engage community volunteers to support this work and continue to fundraise for our staff to support this work. Our organization has a 25 year history of running successful and impactful volunteer programs in the Watsonville

community and raising funds from a variety of sources such as individual community donors, private foundations, and government grants to support long-term stewardship of the natural habitats and green infrastructure in the Pajaro Valley. We are fully committed to each of these projects.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

Yes

REFERENCED PLANS

```
[{"name":"City of Watsonville Plan for Urban Greening (2012)","url":"https://www.watsonville.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10282/Watsonville-Urban-Greening-Plan-2012"}, {"name":"City of Watsonville Plan for Urban Forest Management (2024)","url":"https://publicinput.com/Customer/File/Full/23c63290-15d7-4c00-9c1b-5480dc11012b"}, {"name":"City of Watsonville Plan for Green Infrastructure (2021)","url":"https://www.watsonville.gov/DocumentCenter/View/17982/Watsonville-Green-Infrastructure-Plan?bidId="}, {"name":"City of Watsonville Plan for Climate Action & Adaptation (2021)","url":"https://www.watsonville.gov/DocumentCenter/View/21317/Final-Watsonville-CAAP-with-Appendices_Climate-Action-and-Adaptation-Plan"}, {"name":"City of Watsonville Trails Master plan (2012)","url":"https://hollister2040.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Final-Watsonville-Trails-and-Greenways-Master-Plan.pdf"}, {"name":"City of Watsonville Plan for Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020)","url":"https://www.watsonville.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15463/City-of-Watsonville-Local-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan"}, {"name":"Pajaro River Watershed Resilience plan (Draft 2026)","url":"https://www.rinconconsultants.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/PRWRP_Public_Review_Draft_02_27_2026.pdf"}, {"name":"PVUSD Pajaro Valley High School ESHA Long-term Management Plan (2000)","url":"https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/reports/2000/10/Th7a-10-2000.pdf#:~:text=to%20educate%20children%20in%20the%20Pajaro%20Valley%20Unified%20School&text=weeding%20is%20part%20of%20an%20ongoing%20long%20term%20maintenance%20plan)%20and%20periodic%20monitoring."}]
```

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness, High Fund Leverage, Long Term Stewardship Commitments

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

WWW has years of experience in wetlands and watershed restoration, habitat restoration and protection, native plant propagation and installation, school greening, urban greening, urban forestry, and related environmental education and training. Our multi-site project provides multi-benefits throughout the Pajaro Valley, through watershed enhancement, large-scale habitat restoration, and urban / school greening that improves community access to nature. With established strong partnerships, completed plans, significant staff expertise, and committed funds from multiple foundation and government funders, we are exceptionally ready to produce high impact results for the Pajaro Valley over the 12-month grant period. In addition, our projects are strategically aligned with Measure Q priorities, local and regional environmental and climate plans, as well as statewide open space and environmental stewardship (30 by 30) goals. Having served the Pajaro Valley for 35 years, WWW is committed to long term, community-centered environmental stewardship and climate action that benefits local ecosystems, wildlife, and human residents, advancing equity in the region. We hire locally, train and develop staff from within, and offer paid youth internships and young adult workforce development training to develop the environmental workforce that will serve and lead the Pajaro Valley for decades to come. WWW's Pajaro Valley Climate Corps provides workforce development training opportunities on projects that advance climate adaptation and resilience in the Pajaro Valley. The PV Climate Corps is a job training and hands-on work experience and academic pathway-aligned program that serves young adults, ages 18-24. Program participants work under the direction of WWW staff to implement environmental programs and projects that increase climate resilience, a major component of which is increasing resilience to fluvial flooding, sea level rise, and storm surge in the Pajaro Valley. The PV Climate Corps supports implementation of high priority projects within the Pajaro Valley, while building regional capacity for current and long-term climate adaptation needs. WWW will train and supervise paid trainees from local public colleges and universities to work on the projects described in this application, including invasive plant removal, native plant propagation, and installation of trees and native plants. WWW will also contract with the Watsonville California Conservation Corps for assistance with project implementation, providing green careers training and workforce pathways for young adults while restoring watershed and riparian health, protecting wildlife and their habitats, expanding the tree canopy, and increasing climate resilience. WWW will acknowledge Measure Q funding through multiple channels, including public events for community participation (such as a campus greening event for Mintie White Elementary families), media outreach for project milestones and completion, project site signage, article(s) in the organization newsletter, and social media posts, increasing community awareness of the benefits and impact of Measure Q funding in the Pajaro Valley.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[MeasureQ_Budget_WWW.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

Measure Q Project Map.pdf

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Letter Measure Q WWW Grant 2026_SupervisorHernandez4thDistrict.pdf, Letter Measure Q WWW Grant 2026_PVUSD.pdf, Complete_with_Docusign_Corralito

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

MeasureQ_timeline_WWW.pdf

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

FINAL_PajaroR6_FONSI_SEA2_SIGNED_June2025.pdf

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

Measure Q Organizational Info_WWW.pdf, Referenced Plans URLs_WWW.pdf

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

CCLI Restoration Hope Park.jpg, community science water sampling 1.jpg, community science water sampling 2.jpg, Mintie White school greening outreach.jpg,

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

Measure Q Organizational Info_WWW.docx, CCLI Restoration Hope Park.jpg, community science water sampling 1.jpg, community science water sampling 2.jpg,

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Jonathan Pilch

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Jonathan Pilch, Executive Director

SIGNATURE DATE

03/12/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 123 **Type:** Tier 2 Pajaro Valley Set-Aside
Project: PVUSD Tier 2 Pajaro Valley Set-Aside Grant: Rolling Hills Middle School Track and Field Recreation Access Project

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

123

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Pajaro Valley Set-Aside

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

PVUSD Tier 2 Pajaro Valley Set-Aside Grant: Rolling Hills Middle School Track and Field Recreation Access Project

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

PAJARO VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Population served

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

16,200 people annually

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Sergio Ambriz

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Director, Facilities & Construction

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Andrea	Willy	[REDACTED]
Sergio	Ambriz	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

130 Herman Ave, Watsonville, California, 95076

PARCEL NUMBER

Map Coordinates: 36.924742, -121.785978

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.92474198384400

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.78597765126500

PROJECT JURISDICTION / CITY

City of Watsonville

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

—

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Watsonville City Council, District 3, Maria Orozco

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT

District 2 - Kimberly De Serpa

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Rolling Hills Middle School is nestled in the Watsonville neighborhood just north of Green Valley Road and near Watsonville Community Hospital in the Pajaro Valley region of our County. The neighborhood is quiet, family-friendly, featuring a mix of established single-family homes and, in some areas, senior-oriented communities. This area is noted for convenience to local amenities and proximity to Watsonville Community Hospital, schools and easy access to highway connections for Santa Cruz or Monterey.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Not sure

DAC/SDAC NOTES

CalEnviroScreen score of 60-70

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

Categorically Exempt

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

The RHMS Restroom Project benefits from advanced regulatory preparation and the District's extensive experience managing capital projects within the State's K-12 regulatory framework. The restroom facility will be incorporated into the ongoing RHMS track and field modernization project through a Construction Change Document (CCD) amendment submitted to the Division of the State Architect (DSA). Because the larger project is already advancing through the DSA approval process, integrating the restroom facility through this mechanism provides a streamlined permitting pathway and allows the improvement to be incorporated directly into the active construction schedule. The project site is located on property owned by Pajaro Valley Unified School District and designated for school and recreational use, eliminating the need for land acquisition, zoning changes, or additional land use approvals. The project is also exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as part of the broader campus modernization effort, which further reduces permitting complexity and supports efficient project delivery. PVUSD's Facilities and Construction Department manages a \$315 million voter-approved bond program and has extensive experience coordinating projects with the Division of the State Architect and other regulatory agencies. The District is working in partnership with 19six Architects, a firm with deep expertise in DSA-regulated K-12 construction, to prepare the necessary documentation and integrate the restroom facility into the existing project approvals. This combination of site control, CEQA clearance, DSA coordination, and experienced project management positions the RHMS Restroom Project to move efficiently through final approvals and into construction, supporting the project's status as a shovel-ready early action investment for the Pajaro Valley region of Santa Cruz County.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	No	Division of the State Architect	

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

DURATION AMOUNT

months

12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

The Rolling Hills Middle School Restroom Project is shovel-ready and positioned to move efficiently into construction following approval by the Division of the State Architect (DSA). Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) has advanced design coordination, consultant engagement, and project planning to support a timely DSA submission addressing structural safety, fire/life safety, and accessibility requirements. The project is exempt from CEQA because it is integrated into the existing RHMS campus modernization framework, reducing regulatory complexity and supporting efficient delivery. This readiness allows the project to serve as an Early Action investment for the Pajaro Valley region of Santa Cruz County, delivering visible results for residents within the Watsonville Slough watershed priority geography identified in the Measure Q Vision Plan. A key factor supporting readiness is that the RHMS track and field modernization is already approved and funded through PVUSD's Measure M bond program, representing an estimated \$4.2 million local investment. Because this work is already advancing toward construction, the restroom facility can be incorporated through a Construction Change Document DSA amendment. Measure Q funding will act as a local source of match, leveraging the existing investment at an approximate 8:1 ratio while completing the infrastructure needed to support extended community use. The restroom facility is the final component required to unlock the full community value of the modernization project, enabling safe recreation access and regional youth tournaments serving an estimated 16,200 users annually. Project preparation has included coordination between district facilities staff, architects, and engineering consultants to align design documents with site conditions and regulatory requirements. Potential schedule dependencies may include standard DSA plan review comments requiring clarification or minor revisions. Overall, secured funding, advanced preparation, and a clear regulatory pathway position the RHMS Restroom Project as a low-risk Early Action project capable of delivering timely benefits for Pajaro.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

500000

614555

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Construction	\$478,050	\$114,555	\$0	\$592,605
Indirect Costs	\$21,950	\$0	\$0	\$21,950

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The RHMS Restroom Project is proposed as an Early Action investment through the Measure Q Pajaro Valley Set-Aside to expand equitable recreation access for residents of the Pajaro Valley. Located within the Watsonville Slough watershed (identified as a priority geography under the Measure Q Vision Plan) the project addresses the need for safe and accessible recreation space in a disadvantaged community with limited park acreage and tree canopy. The project will construct a permanent, ADA-compliant restroom building that completes the functionality of a modernized RHMS track and field. While the athletic facility represents a major public investment, the absence of on-site sanitation currently limits its ability to support extended community use. The restroom facility is the final piece needed to unlock the full community benefit of the site, allowing it to function as a

familia-centered recreation hub for students, youth athletes, families, and neighborhood residents. Through an expanded Joint Use Agreement between PVUSD and the City of Watsonville, the RHMS campus will operate as a shared recreation space outside school hours, demonstrating the Vision Plan strategy of opening school campuses as public green spaces. Measure Q funding will leverage an existing \$4.2 million Measure M investment, serving as a local match that enables the facility to support an estimated 16,200 users annually, including youth leagues and regional soccer tournaments. As a shovel-ready project, the RHMS Restroom Project will deliver visible early results for Pajaro Valley residents while strengthening recreation access and shared community infrastructure.

PROJECT START DATE

08/31/2026

PROJECT END DATE

08/31/2007

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

The Rolling Hills Middle School (RHMS) Restroom Project directly advances the Measure Q Vision Plan (2025-2030) priority of Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity by expanding safe recreation opportunities for residents of the Pajaro Valley region of Santa Cruz County. Located within the Watsonville Slough watershed, identified as a priority geography under the Measure Q Act, the project addresses the acute need for equitable recreation infrastructure in a community with limited park acreage and lower tree canopy compared to other parts of the county. The project will construct a permanent, ADA-compliant restroom facility that completes the functionality of the newly modernized RHMS track and field. Through an expanded Joint Use Agreement (JUA) between Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) and the City of Watsonville, the campus will serve as a shared recreation space outside school hours. This approach directly supports the Vision Plan strategy of opening school campuses as public green spaces, providing residents with safe recreation opportunities closer to home. For many Pajaro Valley residents, multimodal access to coastal parks and recreation areas is limited. As a result, neighborhood school campuses play an essential role as safe recreation spaces for the familia, multigenerational groups who gather for youth sports, school events, and community activities. Community engagement with Friends of Watsonville Parks and Community Services, youth sports organizations, and local families has consistently identified the absence of on-site sanitation as the primary barrier preventing extended use of the RHMS facility. Providing restroom infrastructure is therefore the critical final component needed to unlock the full community value of the site, allowing families, athletes, and spectators to comfortably remain on site during practices, games, and regional tournaments. Once completed, the RHMS facility will function as a high-quality, all-weather recreation hub for the Pajaro Valley, supporting youth soccer leagues, school athletics, and an estimated 16,200 annual users, including eight regional youth tournaments that bring families together from across the region. The project also supports Measure Q's emphasis on multi-benefit outcomes and climate resilience. The modernized athletic field incorporates organic cork infill, a climate-smart material that reduces surface temperatures and helps mitigate the Urban Heat Island effect in Watsonville's dense urban neighborhoods. In addition, the site includes green infrastructure and nature-based stormwater management features, such as subsurface drainage and bioretention planters designed to filter runoff before it enters the Watsonville Slough watershed. As a shovel-ready Early Action project, the RHMS Restroom Project leverages an existing \$4.2 million Measure M investment to deliver visible results for Pajaro Valley residents. By completing essential infrastructure that enables safe and inclusive recreation access, the project demonstrates how Measure Q investments can strengthen public health, environmental stewardship, and shared community spaces within priority geographies.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The RHMS Track and Field Restroom Project directly advances the four core prioritization principles established by the Measure Q Vision Plan: Equity Impact, Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding Leveraging, and Climate Resilience Value. By completing the newly modernized Rolling Hills Middle School (RHMS) track and field with permanent restroom infrastructure, the project transforms a school campus into a more complete and accessible recreation resource for residents of the Pajaro Valley region of Santa Cruz County. Equity Impact: Directing resources toward underserved communities is central to the Measure Q mandate. The RHMS campus serves 610 students, the majority from economically disadvantaged households, in a community with documented environmental inequities and limited access to park space. Located within the Watsonville Slough watershed priority

geography, the project expands access to safe recreation space in a neighborhood where park acreage and tree canopy are lower than in other parts of the county. Through an expanded Joint Use Agreement (JUA) between Pajaro Valley Unified School District and the City of Watsonville, the campus will operate as a shared recreation space outside school hours. This shared stewardship model allows students, youth sports leagues, families, and nearby residents to access safe recreation opportunities close to home. Multi-Benefit Outcomes: The project delivers multiple social, health, and environmental benefits. Socially, the addition of permanent restroom infrastructure upgrades a heavily used school recreation facility to support safe, ADA-compliant public access. Community feedback from youth sports leagues and local families consistently identifies on-site sanitation as the deciding factor for the familia when selecting recreation spaces. By removing this barrier, the project enables families to comfortably remain on site for practices, games, and regional tournaments. Environmentally, the project integrates with site improvements designed to protect the Watsonville Slough watershed, demonstrating how recreation infrastructure can support environmental stewardship within a priority geography. Match Funding and Leveraging Potential: Measure Q funding will catalyze broader community investment by serving as a local match to an existing \$4.2 million PVUSD Measure M bond investment supporting the RHMS track and field modernization. The requested \$500,000 Tier 2 grant leverages this investment at an approximate 8:1 ratio, ensuring the facility can fully serve the Pajaro Valley community. Because the larger modernization project is already funded and advancing toward construction, the restroom component can be integrated through a Construction Change Document (CCD) amendment to the Division of the State Architect, positioning the project as shovel-ready. Construction is anticipated to begin in August-September 2026, ensuring Measure Q funds deliver visible early results. Climate Resilience Value: The project incorporates climate-smart and nature-based design strategies. The modernized athletic field utilizes organic cork infill, which reduces surface temperatures and mitigates the Urban Heat Island effect for students, youth athletes, and seniors. The site also includes subsurface drainage and bioretention planters that manage stormwater runoff and filter pollutants before water enters the Watsonville Slough system. Together, these strategies improve watershed health while creating a cooler, safer, and more resilient recreation environment for the Pajaro Valley community.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The Rolling Hills Middle School (RHMS) Track and Field Restroom Project strongly meets the Measure Q Vision Plan's secondary prioritization principles of Public Benefit, Readiness, and Strategic Alignment, while advancing the Pajaro Valley Set-Aside mandate to deliver visible benefits for residents within a priority geography. Public Benefit: The project provides clear and measurable benefit to residents of the Pajaro Valley region of Santa Cruz County, a community with limited park acreage and documented environmental inequities. The newly modernized RHMS track and field represents a major public investment, but the absence of on-site sanitation currently limits its ability to safely support extended recreation use by families, youth sports leagues, and spectators. Constructing a permanent ADA-compliant restroom facility removes this critical barrier and allows the site to fully function as a familia-centered recreation hub serving students, youth athletes, families, and neighborhood residents. Once completed, the facility will support school athletics, youth leagues, community recreation programs, and eight regional youth tournaments annually, creating a welcoming and accessible recreation space close to home. The RHMS recreation complex is expected to serve approximately 16,200 users annually, including students, youth sports participants, and spectators attending regional tournaments and community events. Facility use and effectiveness will be monitored through tournament registrations, City of Watsonville field permit logs, and district facility usage tracking, ensuring the project continues to meet community needs. Readiness: The project is shovel-ready and positioned to deliver Early Action results for Pajaro Valley residents. The core RHMS track and field modernization is already approved and funded through a \$4.2 million local investment from PVUSD's Measure M bond program. Because the larger project is advancing toward construction, the restroom facility can be incorporated through a Construction Change Document (CCD) amendment to the Division of the State Architect (DSA). Integrating the restroom component into the active construction timeline accelerates delivery of the complete recreation facility while maximizing the value of the existing investment. Construction is anticipated to begin in August-September 2026, ensuring Measure Q funds can be deployed quickly and produce visible community benefits. Strategic Alignment: The RHMS Restroom Project advances the Vision Plan priority of Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity by expanding safe recreation infrastructure in the Pajaro Valley region of Santa Cruz County. Located within the Watsonville Slough watershed priority geography, the project also supports environmental stewardship through integrated stormwater management features that protect the slough system. The project demonstrates the Vision Plan strategy of opening school campuses as public green spaces through a Joint Use Agreement (JUA) between PVUSD and the City of Watsonville. This shared stewardship model allows the campus to function as a community recreation space outside school hours while maintaining a safe and well-managed school environment. Together, these elements position the RHMS Restroom Project as a high-impact, shovel-ready investment that expands recreation access, strengthens shared community infrastructure, and delivers visible benefits for Pajaro Valley residents.

TARGET COMMUNITY

The Rolling Hills Middle School (RHMS) Restroom Project serves a broad, multigenerational user base in the Pajaro Valley region of Santa Cruz County, including students, youth sports participants, families, neighborhood residents, and older adults. Located within the Watsonville Slough watershed priority geography, the project expands safe recreation opportunities in a community with limited park acreage and fewer recreation amenities compared to other parts of the county. Through a Joint Use Agreement (JUA)

between Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) and the City of Watsonville, the RHMS campus functions as a shared recreation space outside school hours. This shared stewardship model allows the modernized track and field to serve both the school community and Pajaro Valley residents who rely on nearby recreation spaces for youth sports, family gatherings, and community events. Students and Youth Programs: At the center of the project are the 610 students of Rolling Hills Middle School, the majority of whom come from economically disadvantaged households. For many students, the school campus is the primary place for physical activity, athletics, and participation in the Expanded Learning Program, which operates until 6:00 PM. Completing the track and field facility with restroom infrastructure ensures students have safe, accessible amenities that support daily recreation, school athletics, and after-school programming that promotes health and youth development. The Familia and Youth Sports Leagues: Outside school hours, the RHMS facility becomes a gathering place for the familia - multigenerational groups who attend practices, games, and tournaments together. Parents bring children to youth sports practices, siblings play nearby, and extended family members attend games as spectators. Community feedback from youth leagues, school programs, and residents consistently identifies the absence of on-site sanitation as the primary barrier preventing extended recreation use. The addition of permanent restroom facilities allows families and spectators to remain comfortably on site during practices, weekend games, and regional tournaments. Neighborhood Residents and Older Adults: RHMS sits within a residential Watsonville neighborhood that includes long-time residents and senior households. A fully ADA-compliant restroom facility improves accessibility for older adults and individuals with disabilities who walk to the field to attend events or watch family members participate in sports. Estimated Community Use: Once completed, the improved RHMS recreation facility is expected to support high levels of community use, including: Approximately 16,200 users annually, including students, athletes, families, and spectators; 30 weekends of scheduled recreation programming each year; Eight regional youth soccer tournaments annually, bringing teams and families together from across the Pajaro Valley. Because access to parks and recreation amenities in the Pajaro Valley is limited, shared-use facilities such as RHMS play a critical role in providing safe recreation spaces close to home. By supporting students, the familia, youth sports leagues, and neighborhood residents, the RHMS Restroom Project expands equitable recreation access and strengthens a shared community recreation hub for Pajaro Valley residents.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

The Rolling Hills Middle School (RHMS) Restroom Project delivers significant multi-benefit value for residents of the Pajaro Valley region of Santa Cruz County by improving public safety, supporting community health, and expanding equitable access to recreation. Located within the Watsonville Slough watershed, identified as a priority geography in the Measure Q Vision Plan, the project addresses the need for safe and accessible recreation infrastructure in a community with limited park acreage and fewer recreational amenities than other areas of the county. The project will construct a permanent, ADA-compliant restroom facility that completes the functionality of the newly modernized RHMS track and field. While the athletic field represents a major public investment, the absence of on-site sanitation currently limits the site's ability to support extended community use. Providing restroom infrastructure removes this barrier, allowing the facility to safely accommodate youth sports, family recreation, and community gatherings. Through an expanded Joint Use Agreement (JUA) between Pajaro Valley Unified School District and the City of Watsonville, the RHMS campus will continue to serve as a shared community resource outside school hours. This partnership supports coordinated access and programming while maintaining a safe and well-managed school environment. Community Engagement and Recreation Access: Project planning has been informed by engagement with Friends of Watsonville Parks and Community Services, youth sports organizations, and local families who regularly rely on school recreation facilities. Feedback from these groups consistently identified the absence of restroom facilities as the primary barrier preventing extended use of the RHMS track and field for practices, games, and tournaments. Once completed, the improved facility is expected to support approximately 16,200 users annually, including students, youth athletes, families, and spectators attending community events. The site will host about 30 weekends of organized recreation programming each year, as well as eight regional youth soccer tournaments, drawing teams and families from across the Pajaro Valley. Environmental Stewardship and Climate Resilience: The project also supports environmental stewardship and climate resilience through design features integrated into the broader field modernization. The athletic surface utilizes organic cork infill, which lowers surface temperatures and helps mitigate the Urban Heat Island effect common in Watsonville's dense urban neighborhoods. In addition, the project incorporates green infrastructure and nature-based stormwater management features, including bioretention planters designed to filter runoff before it enters the Watsonville Slough watershed. These improvements help protect water quality while creating a cooler, safer recreation environment. By leveraging PVUSD's \$4.2 million Measure M investment alongside Measure Q funding, the RHMS Restroom Project delivers visible benefits while maximizing public investment. The completed facility will strengthen a shared recreation hub where Pajaro Valley residents can gather, stay active, and connect.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

The RHMS Restroom Project is integrated into a broader campus modernization effort that advances environmental stewardship and climate resilience in the Pajaro Valley region of Santa Cruz County. Located within the Watsonville Slough watershed - identified in the Measure Q Vision Plan as a priority geography - the project demonstrates how recreation infrastructure can also support watershed protection, climate adaptation, and community health.

Water Quality Protection: The site incorporates green infrastructure and nature-based stormwater management strategies that improve water quality before runoff leaves the campus. Subsurface drainage systems and bioretention planters capture and filter stormwater generated by the athletic field and surrounding surfaces. These systems slow runoff, promote natural infiltration, and reduce sediment and pollutant transport to downstream drainage systems. Because the campus sits within the Watsonville Slough watershed, these improvements help protect a sensitive wetland ecosystem that supports regional water quality, flood protection, and wildlife habitat. By improving on-site filtration and reducing pollutant loads entering the watershed, the project contributes to the long-term ecological health and resilience of this important environmental resource.

Habitat and Ecosystem Protection: Although the primary focus of the project is recreation infrastructure, improved stormwater management provides important indirect benefits for surrounding ecosystems. Reducing runoff pollution and moderating peak stormwater flows helps maintain the water quality conditions necessary to support wetland habitats and aquatic species associated with the slough. These improvements are particularly meaningful in the urbanized Pajaro Valley landscape, where development pressures can affect water quality and ecological health. Integrating nature-based stormwater design within the RHMS campus helps reduce impacts from nearby urban land uses while reinforcing responsible environmental stewardship in a developed community setting.

Climate Resilience and Public Health: The modernization project also incorporates climate-responsive design features that improve safety and comfort for residents using the facility. The athletic field utilizes organic cork infill, a material that significantly lowers surface temperatures compared with traditional synthetic turf systems. By reducing heat retention, the field helps mitigate the Urban Heat Island effect common in Watsonville's dense urban neighborhoods. Lower surface temperatures improve conditions for students, youth athletes, families, and older adults participating in outdoor activities, particularly during periods of extreme heat. Combined with stormwater management improvements, these features demonstrate how community recreation projects can deliver multi-benefit outcomes that strengthen both environmental resilience and public health. Together, these strategies illustrate how the RHMS modernization effort aligns with Measure Q goals by protecting priority geographies, improving watershed health, and creating safer recreation spaces for Pajaro Valley residents.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Applicant owns the property for the proposed project

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

REQUIRED PERMITS

The Rolling Hills Middle School (RHMS) Restroom Project will be constructed on an existing public school campus owned by Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) and is therefore subject primarily to review by the California Division of the State Architect (DSA). DSA is the state agency responsible for ensuring that K-12 school facilities meet California standards for structural safety, fire and life safety, and accessibility compliance. Because the restroom facility will be integrated into the broader RHMS track and field modernization project, the required approval will be obtained through a Construction Change Document (CCD) amendment submitted to DSA. Incorporating the restroom facility into the existing project streamlines the permitting pathway and minimizes regulatory risk, allowing the improvement to proceed within the established construction framework for the campus modernization.

Division of the State Architect Review: DSA review will evaluate the project in three primary areas:

Structural Safety: Verification that the restroom building and associated site improvements comply with California seismic and structural design standards.

Fire and Life Safety: Review of building systems, materials, and emergency access provisions to ensure occupant safety.

Accessibility Compliance: Confirmation that the 30' x 32' ADA-compliant restroom facility and accessible paths of travel meet state accessibility requirements. PVUSD is coordinating closely with 19six Architects and engineering consultants experienced in DSA-regulated school construction to prepare the required architectural and engineering documentation.

Permit Preparation: District facilities staff and project consultants are currently assembling the technical materials required for submission, including: Architectural and structural drawings Engineering specifications Accessibility compliance documentation Geotechnical and site information This preparation supports a complete DSA submission and helps ensure an efficient review process.

Estimated Permitting Timeline: DSA Plan Review: Approximately 3 months Construction Documentation Finalization: During the Measure Q grant review period Anticipated Construction Start: August-September 2026

Because the project occurs entirely within an existing district-owned campus, no land acquisition, zoning changes, or external development permits are required. This established regulatory pathway significantly reduces permitting risk and supports timely project delivery. PVUSD's experience managing large capital programs and coordinating DSA approvals further strengthens the project's readiness, ensuring the RHMS Restroom Project can move efficiently from final approvals into construction.

PARTNER APPROVALS

The Rolling Hills Middle School (RHMS) Restroom Project requires several standard approvals and agreements typical for California K-12 school facility improvements. These approvals are well defined and are being coordinated by Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) as part of the broader RHMS track and field modernization effort serving residents of the Pajaro Valley region of Santa Cruz County. Division of the State Architect (DSA) Approval: Primary construction approval will be obtained through the California Division of the State Architect (DSA), the state agency responsible for reviewing public school construction projects. DSA review ensures compliance with state standards for: Structural Safety Fire and Life Safety Accessibility Compliance If Measure Q funding is awarded, PVUSD will submit a Construction Change Document (CCD) amendment to DSA to incorporate the restroom facility into the approved RHMS track and field modernization project. Because the restroom facility is integrated into an existing campus improvement project, this process provides a clear and streamlined pathway for regulatory approval. District and Local Agreements: Implementation of the project will require approval by the PVUSD Board of Trustees, including authorization to accept grant funds and approve associated construction contracts. Because the RHMS facility will support community recreation access, PVUSD will also coordinate with the City of Watsonville through an expanded Joint Use Agreement (JUA). This agreement establishes the framework for community access to school recreation facilities outside school hours and supports coordinated management of the shared recreation space. Measure Q Grant Agreement: If selected for funding, PVUSD will execute a grant agreement with the Measure Q administering agency outlining project scope, reporting requirements, and reimbursement procedures. These approvals and agreements follow established processes for school facility improvements, providing a clear regulatory pathway that supports timely implementation of this Pajaro Valley community recreation investment.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

The Rolling Hills Middle School (RHMS) Restroom Project is positioned to move efficiently through final design, regulatory review, and construction. The project will be implemented alongside the RHMS track and field modernization funded through PVUSD's Measure M bond program, allowing the restroom facility to be incorporated into the broader site improvement schedule and reducing overall construction risk. Spring-Summer 2026: Final Design and Regulatory Review During this phase, PVUSD Facilities staff and 19six Architects will finalize design development documents and submit the restroom facility plans to the California Division of the State Architect (DSA) for review. The DSA process ensures compliance with structural safety, fire and life safety, and accessibility standards required for K-12 school facilities. During this same period, PVUSD will continue coordination with the City of Watsonville regarding updates to the Joint Use Agreement, which establishes the framework for community access to the recreation facility outside school hours. Summer 2026: Construction Documentation and Procurement Following DSA plan review, the project team will finalize construction documents and initiate contractor procurement in accordance with district bidding procedures and state public works requirements. Aligning the restroom facility with the active field modernization project allows the district to streamline procurement and coordinate contractors efficiently. August-September 2026: Construction Start Construction of the 30' x 32' ADA-compliant restroom facility and associated site improvements is anticipated to begin in late summer 2026. Work will be carefully coordinated with ongoing field improvements to minimize disruption to school operations while maintaining construction efficiency. Fall-Winter 2026: Construction Phase Construction activities will include site preparation, foundation and utility installation, building construction, accessible pathways, and integration with the site's drainage and stormwater management systems. Fall 2027: Project Completion and Opening Following final inspections and DSA project closeout, the restroom facility will open for use by students, athletics programs, and the broader community through the district's Joint Use Agreement with the City of Watsonville. This implementation schedule ensures the project can deliver timely and visible benefits for residents of the Pajaro Valley region while maintaining full compliance with California school construction requirements.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

Yes

TEAM CAPACITY

Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) has the organizational capacity, technical expertise, and project management systems necessary to successfully deliver the Rolling Hills Middle School (RHMS) Restroom Project. The District's Facilities and Construction Department oversees planning, design coordination, budgeting, permitting, and construction management for capital improvement projects across district campuses. Over the past decade, the department has successfully implemented numerous campus improvement projects, including three athletic field modernization and turf conversion projects, as well as facility upgrades that support student safety, accessibility, and community use. These projects have provided the District with direct experience managing athletic facility improvements similar to those proposed at RHMS. PVUSD is currently implementing a \$315 million voter-approved bond program, which has strengthened the District's internal project management capacity and established effective working relationships with architects, engineers, contractors, and regulatory agencies. Through this capital program, the District has developed the staffing, oversight procedures, and financial controls needed to deliver projects efficiently while maintaining compliance with state construction requirements. For the RHMS improvements, PVUSD is partnering with 19six

Architects, a firm with extensive experience designing California K-12 facilities and navigating Division of the State Architect (DSA) approvals. The architectural and engineering team is working closely with District facilities staff to coordinate design development, prepare regulatory submissions, and ensure the project integrates smoothly with the ongoing RHMS track and field modernization. The project also benefits from established collaboration with the City of Watsonville through an existing Joint Use Agreement (JUA) that enables community access to school recreation facilities outside school hours. The agreement will be updated to incorporate the restroom facility, supporting continued shared use of the site as a community recreation space. In addition, PVUSD maintains ongoing engagement with Friends of Watsonville Parks and Community Services, whose advocacy and community outreach efforts help ensure that recreation improvements reflect the needs of Pajaro Valley residents. Together, the District's experienced facilities team, professional design partners, and established community partnerships position the RHMS Restroom Project for effective implementation and long-term stewardship.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

The Rolling Hills Middle School (RHMS) Restroom Project is highly feasible and positioned to deliver timely benefits for residents of the Pajaro Valley region of Santa Cruz County. The project benefits from several key factors that reduce implementation risk, including district site ownership, secured local investment, integration with an active capital project, and an established regulatory pathway. A primary element supporting feasibility is full site control by Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD). The RHMS campus is district-owned property, eliminating the need for land acquisition, easements, or third-party property negotiations. Because the restroom facility will be constructed within the existing school campus, the project can proceed efficiently within the regulatory framework governing California K-12 facilities overseen by the Division of the State Architect (DSA). Feasibility is further strengthened by significant secured local funding. The RHMS track and field modernization project is already approved and funded through PVUSD's Measure M bond program, representing approximately \$4.2 million in local public investment. Major site and athletic facility improvements are therefore already advancing toward construction. Measure Q funding will serve as a strategic complement to this investment by completing the essential restroom facility required to support extended recreation use. Integrating the restroom facility into the ongoing modernization effort allows construction to occur concurrently with other planned site improvements. This coordinated approach improves efficiency, reduces mobilization costs, and ensures the completed recreation facility can begin serving the community without delay. The project also benefits from advanced design coordination and experienced project leadership. PVUSD's Facilities and Construction Department manages planning, permitting, and construction oversight for district capital improvements and has extensive experience implementing campus modernization projects. The District is partnering with 19six Architects, a design firm with deep experience delivering California K-12 projects and navigating DSA approval processes. This collaboration ensures the project is prepared for efficient regulatory review and implementation. Construction of the restroom facility is anticipated to begin in August-September 2026, following final approvals and integration into the RHMS modernization schedule. This timeline demonstrates the project's readiness to move promptly into construction once funding is secured. Finally, long-term feasibility and public benefit are supported through the Joint Use Agreement between PVUSD and the City of Watsonville, which allows the RHMS recreation facilities to serve both students and the broader community outside school hours. Together, site control, secured funding, experienced project management, and integration with an active capital project position the RHMS Restroom Project as a low-risk, shovel-ready investment capable of delivering lasting recreation benefits for Pajaro Valley residents.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The Rolling Hills Middle School (RHMS) Restroom Project is supported by a network of public and community partners whose established relationships provide the governance, coordination, and community connection necessary for successful implementation and long-term public benefit in the Pajaro Valley region of Santa Cruz County. Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) serves as the lead implementing agency and project sponsor. The District is responsible for project planning, design coordination, regulatory approvals, procurement, and construction oversight. Because PVUSD owns and manages the RHMS campus, the District can integrate the restroom facility directly into the ongoing RHMS track and field modernization funded through the Measure M bond program, representing approximately \$4.2 million in local capital investment. This integration reflects the District's ongoing relationship with community partners to ensure that school facilities can support both student needs and broader community recreation opportunities. Several partners have provided letters of support demonstrating strong commitment to the project and the shared goal of improving recreation infrastructure in the Pajaro Valley. These include the City of Watsonville, the Rolling Hills Middle School Principal, Friends of Watsonville Parks and Community Services, and local youth athletics organizations that regularly utilize school recreation facilities for practices, games, and tournaments. The City of Watsonville is a key government partner through its long-standing Joint Use Agreement (JUA) with PVUSD. This agreement reflects an established relationship between the District and the City that allows school recreation facilities to serve the broader community outside school hours. As part of the RHMS improvements, the JUA will be updated to include the restroom facility and related amenities, supporting continued shared use of the campus. Community-based partners also maintain strong working relationships with the District around recreation access. Friends of Watsonville Parks and Community Services advocates for improved recreation opportunities across the Pajaro Valley, while local youth athletics teams and leagues regularly rely on school facilities as a venue for youth sports programming. Together, these longstanding relationships among public agencies, school leadership, and community partners help ensure the RHMS Restroom Project is supported by both institutional capacity and community commitment, strengthening shared recreation resources for Pajaro Valley residents.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

Development of the Rolling Hills Middle School (RHMS) Restroom Project has been informed through collaboration with school leadership, local government, community organizations, recreation user groups, and neighborhood residents who rely on school facilities for sports and community activities. This engagement has helped ensure the project reflects local priorities and supports expanded recreation access for residents of the Pajaro Valley region of Santa Cruz County. The Rolling Hills Middle School principal has provided strong support for the project, recognizing the importance of improving campus facilities that serve both students and the surrounding community. RHMS regularly hosts athletics programming, Expanded Learning activities, and community recreation events, making the campus an important gathering place for youth sports and neighborhood use. The City of Watsonville has also been engaged throughout project development due to its partnership with Pajaro Valley Unified School District through a Joint Use Agreement that allows community access to school recreation facilities outside school hours. Coordination with the City has helped ensure the proposed improvements support community recreation programming and align with local priorities for expanding accessible recreation spaces. Community organizations have also contributed important input. Friends of Watsonville Parks and Community Services, which advocates for improved parks and recreation opportunities in the Pajaro Valley, has highlighted the need for infrastructure that allows shared school-community spaces to better support youth sports and neighborhood activities. Local youth athletics teams and sports leagues have similarly provided feedback during project planning. These groups frequently rely on school recreation facilities for practices, games, and tournaments and emphasized that the absence of permanent restroom facilities is a primary barrier limiting extended use of the RHMS track and field. Through collaboration with the school principal, the City of Watsonville, community partners, and recreation user groups, the project has been shaped by those who depend on the facility, helping ensure the improvements respond directly to the needs of Pajaro Valley residents.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

500000

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

114555

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

0

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

114555

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

4.39

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

This project represents a critical expansion of the Rolling Hills Middle School Field Improvements Project, a \$4,252,770 investment funded by Measure M bond proceeds. While the primary Measure M project focuses on essential athletic infrastructure, including the installation of a new turf field, drainage systems, and an asphalt track, this restroom building add-on ensures the site is fully functional and accessible for both students and the broader Watsonville community. The proposed \$592,605.24 restroom building is a specialized 30x32 modular facility designed to meet 2022 CBC and ADA compliance standards. This facility is a vital component of the community's vision for a usable field, which has been long-awaited due to previous funding delays. Key Project Components: Modular Construction & Engineering: The budget covers the procurement of a 30x32 building shell, repurposed and engineered for heavy-duty restroom use, including all site-specific engineering and DSA review. Interior Systems & Durability: The project includes high-durability, ADA-compliant plumbing fixtures, specialized epoxy flooring, and interior wall finishes designed for high-traffic public use. Installation & Site Integration: Costs include the delivery, craning, and final installation of the modular units onto the project site, along with all necessary close-out items. Funding Strategy: This application requests \$500,000 to fund the majority of the restroom project. This request is highly leveraged by the \$4,252,770 Measure M commitment, demonstrating a significant local match. Of the \$500,000 request, \$21,950 is reserved for indirect costs to cover the administrative overhead required to manage this expansion, leaving \$478,050 for direct construction expenses. The remaining restroom costs (\$114,555.24) will be covered by District funds as part of the broader project match.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

The RHMS Restroom Project is designed to deliver long-term community benefit for residents of the Pajaro Valley region of Santa Cruz County through a clear framework for stewardship, equitable public access, and coordinated facility management. Because the restroom facility will be located on the RHMS campus, it will be incorporated into the District's overall campus operations framework and managed in alignment with PVUSD facility standards and site use policies. Integrating the facility within the campus environment ensures the restroom can support both school programming and community recreation activities. Long-term community access will be supported through the Joint Use Agreement (JUA) between PVUSD and the City of Watsonville, which provides the governance structure for shared use of school recreation facilities outside school hours. As part of the RHMS improvements, the existing JUA will be updated to include the restroom facility and associated amenities, allowing the track and field to function as a shared recreation resource while maintaining a safe and well-managed school setting. Through this partnership, PVUSD and the City of Watsonville coordinate community access hours and recreation programming associated with public use of the facility. The updated agreement will outline the roles, responsibilities, and cost considerations related to operation and upkeep of the restroom facility during periods of community use, providing flexibility for both agencies while supporting long-term sustainability. To evaluate the project's effectiveness in expanding recreation access, facility use will be monitored through existing systems, including tournament participation records, City field permit logs documenting use by sports leagues, and district scheduling records for after-hours and weekend access. Together, this governance framework and ongoing monitoring will help ensure the RHMS Restroom Project remains a reliable recreation resource. The project will provide visible, lasting benefits that demonstrate the long-term impact of Measure Q investments in the Pajaro Valley community.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

Yes

REFERENCED PLANS

[{"name":"PVUSD Facility Master Plan 2025 (October 16, 2025); PVUSD Board of Education","url":"https://pvusd.community.diligentoneplatform.com/home/public/document/20162"}, {"name":"Measure M Bond: Facilities Construction Projects Overview (Dec 11, 2025); PVUSD Board of Education","url":"https://pvusd.community.diligentoneplatform.com/document/404dd010-59b9-4120-afa7-000c8ca0895b"}]

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness, High Fund Leverage, Long Term Stewardship Commitments

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

The Rolling Hills Middle School (RHMS) Restroom Project represents a strategic opportunity for Measure Q to deliver visible early results for residents of the Pajaro Valley region of Santa Cruz County while maximizing the impact of existing public investment. Positioned as a shovel-ready enhancement to an already funded athletic modernization project, this investment unlocks the full public benefit of a major recreation facility improvement currently underway in a community with limited park access. Exceptional Readiness and Early Action The restroom facility expands a \$4.2 million track and field modernization funded through Pajaro Valley Unified School District's Measure M bond program. Because the core project is already advancing toward construction, the restroom can be incorporated through a Construction Change Document (CCD) amendment to the Division of the State Architect (DSA). This readiness allows Measure Q funds to produce visible early-action results during the program's initial implementation phase while ensuring the completed facility can immediately serve students and community members. High Leverage of Public Investment This project demonstrates strong financial leverage by using a \$500,000 Measure Q investment to unlock the full value of a \$4.2 million local bond project, representing an approximate 8:1 leverage ratio. Without this final infrastructure component, the modernized athletic facility would lack the sanitation amenities necessary to support extended community use. By completing a relatively modest but essential improvement, Measure Q transforms an existing school modernization into a fully functional community recreation asset. Regional Significance for the Pajaro Valley Once completed, the RHMS recreation complex will serve as one of the few modern, all-weather youth sports facilities in the Pajaro Valley, supporting an estimated 16,200 annual users. The site will host school athletics, youth leagues, community recreation programs, and regional soccer tournaments that bring families together from across the Pajaro Valley. Innovation and Environmental Stewardship The project also demonstrates how recreation infrastructure can advance climate resilience and environmental stewardship. The athletic field incorporates organic cork infill that reduces surface temperatures, helping mitigate the urban heat island effect common in Watsonville's urban neighborhoods. Site improvements also integrate green infrastructure and nature-based stormwater management features that filter runoff before it enters the Watsonville Slough watershed, a priority geography identified in the Measure Q Vision Plan. A Replicable Model for Community Recreation Access Finally, the project illustrates a scalable model for expanding recreation opportunities by leveraging school campuses as shared public spaces through Joint Use Agreements. By completing a critical infrastructure component within an existing modernization project, Measure Q demonstrates how targeted investments can deliver lasting community benefit while strengthening partnerships between schools, local government, and community organizations. Together, these elements position the RHMS Restroom Project as a high-impact, shovel-ready investment capable of delivering visible benefits for Pajaro Valley residents while advancing Measure Q's goals of equity, recreation access, and environmental stewardship.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

FOR PVUSD Measure Q_ RHMS- App (March 2026).xlsx, 30x32 Restroom Building PVUSD RH_ENV Proposal.pdf

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

Rolling Hills MS Track_24-0904.pdf, 22402-01_PVUSD_Rolling Hills_A-201.pdf

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Facility support CCFC.pdf, LOS - PVUSD RHMS PV.pdf, Measure Q #2 sponsorship_letter_FWPCS.pdf, RHMS Principal Letter.pdf, Pajaro Valley United Youth

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Dr. Heather Contreras

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Superintendent of Schools, PVUSD

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 142 **Type:** Tier 2 Community Impact Grants
Project: Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements: Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

142

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements: Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

FRIENDS OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PARKS

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Population served

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

261,000

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Mariah Roberts

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Executive Director

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

Mesa Village County Park

PARCEL NUMBER

APN 05153225

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.96526400000000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.76455900000001

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The proposed project will serve the Pajaro Valley region in southern Santa Cruz County, including the City of Watsonville and nearby unincorporated agricultural communities. Mesa Village County Park sits within a residential neighborhood and serves as an important recreation space for local families, many of whom live in dense housing with limited access to safe outdoor play areas. While the park primarily serves nearby residents, youth programs and summer activities also draw participants from across the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, including students from nearby Amesti Elementary School. Pajaro Valley includes both urbanizing neighborhoods and rural farmland. Many residents work in the local farming and food production economy. The Watsonville Urban area has a population density of more than 8,000 people per square mile. About 70.8% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Census Bureau; Santa Cruz County Population Characteristics Dashboard). The city's median household income is roughly \$63,000, which is lower than the California statewide median (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey). Community demand for parks and recreation in Pajaro Valley is high. At the same time, the area has the lowest park

acreage per capita in Santa Cruz County while also serving the county's highest concentration of children (Santa Cruz County Parks Department). In several South County neighborhoods, residents have access to less than one acre of parkland per 1,000 residents, well below the recommended standard of 3-5 acres per 1,000 residents (Trust for Public Land ParkScore; Santa Cruz County Parks Strategic Plan). The project service area includes Census Tracts 12101, 12102, and 12103, which are designated Disadvantaged Communities and Priority Population areas by the California Air Resources Board through CalEnviroScreen (California Air Resources Board Priority Populations Map). Many households in the surrounding area live in high-density housing with limited access to safe outdoor recreation. As one of the few accessible public spaces nearby, Mesa Village County Park plays an important role in providing opportunities for outdoor play, physical activity, and community gathering for youth and families across Pajaro Valley.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

N/A. Project is located in unincorporated Santa Cruz County and is under the jurisdiction of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors (District 4 - South County / Watsonville area).

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The proposed project will serve residents of the Pajaro Valley in unincorporated South Santa Cruz County. The project is centered on Mesa Village County Park, a County-operated facility located within the Watsonville Urban area. While the park functions primarily as a neighborhood-serving site accessed on foot by nearby families, it also supports youth from across the broader Pajaro Valley through specialized afterschool and summer programs. The surrounding community experiences significant health, economic, and environmental disparities. According to Trust for Public Land's ParkServe data, 27% of residents near the park are physically inactive, higher than the national average of 24%. Approximately 20% of immediate area residents live at or below the federal poverty level. In addition, 95.6% of students at nearby Amesti Elementary School qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, reflecting a high concentration of low-income households. Among summer and afterschool participants, 90% are eligible for MediCal or Housing Authority services. Environmental equity indicators further demonstrate the community's need. CalEnviroScreen ranks the neighborhood in the 70-90th percentile for population vulnerability and the 60-80th percentile for overall environmental burden, reflecting elevated exposure to pollution and climate-related stressors alongside socioeconomic factors such as poverty and limited access to resources that support community health. California Climate Investments also designates the area as Low Income and adjacent to a Disadvantaged Community. Together, these indicators demonstrate that Mesa Village County Park serves a high-need community where strategic investment will advance health equity, expand access to safe recreation, and improve the well-being of children and families facing systemic barriers.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 30 - Dawn Addis

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

SDAC STATUS

No

DAC/SDAC NOTES

The park location qualifies as serving disadvantaged populations based on multiple screening tools. CalEnviroScreen identifies census tracts in the Watsonville/Pajaro Valley area as having high cumulative pollution burden and population vulnerability scores, which places them within the statewide threshold used to designate Disadvantaged Communities (DACs). Under California Climate Investments Priority Populations mapping, the project area is identified as a Low-Income Community and within proximity to a designated Disadvantaged Community. These designations rely on CalEnviroScreen data, which identifies the top 25% of census tracts statewide as disadvantaged due to combined environmental, health, and socioeconomic burdens.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

Negative Declaration

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

This project is being led by County Park Friends, which is applying for funding to support the 'Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play' element of the Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements. County Park Friends has experience supporting major park and playground improvements in partnership with local agencies and community stakeholders, bringing familiarity with coordinating projects that enhance neighborhood park spaces. The project has been developed in close collaboration with Santa

Cruz County Parks, the landowner and governing agency responsible for park operations, permitting, and capital improvements. Based on the current project scope, a building permit is not expected. A grading permit may be required depending on the extent of excavation once final design and site work requirements are determined. Santa Cruz County Parks staff will oversee permit preparation and regulatory coordination, including securing a grading permit if needed. Environmental review is expected to be straightforward, with the project likely qualifying for a Notice of Exemption (NOE) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because the improvements are taking place within an existing park facility. Santa Cruz County Parks regularly manages park improvement projects and has established processes for contractor coordination, compliance review, and inspections to ensure projects move smoothly through any required approvals.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	Yes		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

DURATION AMOUNT

months

10

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements: Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play project is well positioned to move forward with minimal risk of delay. The improvements are included in the approved Mesa Village County Park master plan and reflect several years of community engagement conducted by County Park Friends and Santa Cruz County Parks. The primary dependency is securing the remaining project funding, including Measure Q for the 'Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play' component and complementary grant sources for other components. Once funding is in place, Santa Cruz County Parks will lead procurement and construction. Because this grant operates on a reimbursement basis, the County will cover project expenses upfront and seek reimbursement after eligible costs are incurred. The Parks Department routinely manages public capital projects and reimbursement grants and has established financial and administrative systems to support this process. The 'Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play' component does not require full funding of the other Phase one elements to move forward. It will require additional design development before construction-ready plans are finalized, This work will occur during early project implementation and is expected to move forward alongside procurement planning. Permitting requirements are expected to be minimal. A building permit is not anticipated, although a grading permit may be required depending on final site preparation needs. Environmental review will be confirmed with the County Park Planner, but the project is expected to qualify for a Notice of Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because the work takes place within an existing park and is consistent with the approved master plan. Santa Cruz County Parks maintains full control of the site and has the experience and systems needed to advance the project efficiently once funding is secured.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

279500

399758

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$13,055	\$13,055
Fringe Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$2,611	\$2,611
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$2,750	\$2,750
Contractual / Consultants	\$3,200	\$16,800	\$0	\$20,000
Construction	\$250,891	\$74,109	\$0	\$325,000
Other Direct Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Indirect Costs	\$25,409	\$9,091	\$1,842	\$36,342

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

CPF, in partnership with Santa Cruz County Parks, is seeking funding for the "Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play" component of the Mesa Village Phase 1 Improvements. County Park Friends leads community engagement and fundraising, while Santa Cruz County owns the park and manages design, procurement, and construction. Located just outside Watsonville, Mesa Village County Park is an important neighborhood gathering space for families in the Pajaro Valley, a region with historically limited access to parks and recreation. Over the past five years, County Park Friends and the Young Outdoor Leaders program conducted bilingual outreach and community surveys with residents to identify priorities for park improvements. Expanding and improving the playground consistently emerged as a top priority for nearby families. The project will introduce the Pajaro Valley's first natural play space, doubling the size of the existing playground. Rather than relying solely on traditional manufactured equipment, the design incorporates nature-based play elements such as logs, boulders, and a wooden mountain structure that encourage climbing, exploration, and imaginative play. Discovery tables, herb and pollinator gardens, and landscape-integrated climbing features will support hands-on learning and connections to nature, while native landscaping and additional trees will expand shade and enhance the park environment. Additional Phase 1 improvements include outdoor exercise equipment, shaded picnic areas, and permeable pathways that improve accessibility for park users of all abilities. Together, these improvements will create a welcoming, nature-based play space that supports recreation, environmental learning, and community gathering for families across the Pajaro Valley.

PROJECT START DATE

06/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

04/01/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements: Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play advances three Measure Q thematic areas: Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity; Water Resource Management; and Wildlife and Habitat Protection. Through a partnership between County Park Friends and Santa Cruz County Parks, the project improves park infrastructure while integrating nature-based design strategies that support environmental health and community well-being. Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity: Mesa Village County Park is a neighborhood "walk-to" park serving families in a dense residential area of South Santa Cruz County. Many nearby households live in multifamily housing with limited private outdoor space, making the park an essential place for children and caregivers to gather and recreate. The project will expand the existing playground and introduce the Pajaro Valley's first natural play area, incorporating landscape-based elements that encourage exploration, creativity, and physical activity. Improvements will also increase accessibility and provide seating and gathering areas that support multigenerational use. Water Resource Management: The project incorporates water-conscious landscape design to reduce runoff and support groundwater health. Permeable play surfaces and decomposed granite pathways will replace compacted areas, allowing rainwater to infiltrate into the soil rather than flowing into nearby streets. Native and drought-tolerant landscaping will reduce irrigation

demand and support long-term water conservation in the Pajaro Valley groundwater basin. Wildlife and Habitat Protection: Environmental improvements include native plantings and pollinator-supportive landscaping that enhance biodiversity within the park. These features will provide habitat for birds, butterflies, and beneficial insects while also creating opportunities for environmental learning. By integrating habitat elements within a neighborhood park setting, the project demonstrates how small-scale recreational improvements can contribute to broader ecological health.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements: Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play project advances several Measure Q prioritization principles, including equity impact, multi-benefit outcomes, climate resilience, and financial leveraging. County Park Friends, the nonprofit applicant, has led community engagement for the project in partnership with Santa Cruz County Parks. Over the past five years, CPF conducted bilingual outreach with neighborhood residents and youth participants to identify priorities for improving Mesa Village County Park. Surveys of more than 1800 individuals, in three different survey initiatives, consistently highlighted the need for expanded play space, shade, and opportunities for children to connect with nature. Equity considerations strongly shape the project's location and design. Mesa Village County Park serves a Watsonville area neighborhood where many families rely on public parks as their primary outdoor recreation space. At the nearby Amesti Elementary School, approximately 95% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, reflecting the economic realities facing many families in the surrounding community. Expanding the playground and introducing the Pajaro Valley's first natural play area will help ensure that children in this neighborhood have access to safe, high-quality recreational space close to home. The project also demonstrates strong leveraging potential. CPF has already secured more than \$100,000 in match funding and continues to pursue additional support to expand Phase 1 improvements. Both CPF and Santa Cruz County Parks are contributing significant in-kind staff time for project planning and coordination. Measure Q funding will support the core playground installation with sensory garden elements and expanded tree canopy, while leveraged resources will enhance complementary features such as exercise equipment, shade structures, and basketball court upgrades. In addition to recreation benefits, the project incorporates climate-responsive landscape improvements including expanded tree canopy, native plantings, and permeable surfaces that improve stormwater infiltration. Together, these elements demonstrate how neighborhood park investments can generate multiple community and environmental benefits.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements: Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play project provides clear public benefit, aligns with established regional planning efforts, and demonstrates strong readiness for implementation. Public Benefit: Mesa Village County Park serves families living in a dense residential area of Watsonville where many households lack private outdoor space. For nearby residents, the park functions as an essential gathering place where children and caregivers can safely spend time outdoors. Expanding the playground will increase usable recreation space and introduce nature-based features that support active play, creativity, and outdoor learning. The project also advances equitable access to recreational infrastructure in South Santa Cruz County. Neighborhood-serving parks like Mesa Village play a critical role in supporting physical activity, social connection, and overall well-being for families who rely heavily on public spaces for daily recreation. Strategic Alignment: The project aligns with priorities identified in the Santa Cruz County Parks Strategic Plan, which emphasizes improving neighborhood-serving parks and expanding recreation opportunities in underserved areas of South County. It also supports recommendations from the Pajaro Valley Parks Assessment, which identified Mesa Village County Park as a priority location for improvements based on community feedback. Readiness: The project is well positioned to move forward. A conceptual design has already been developed in collaboration with Santa Cruz County Parks outlining the expanded playground footprint, natural play features, and landscape improvements. If awarded, the project will advance through final design development, contractor procurement, and construction. Playground installation and other work will occur as a single coordinated phase to minimize disruption and allow the park to reopen quickly with a complete and fully functional play area.

TARGET COMMUNITY

Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements: Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play serves the immediate, high-density neighborhood residents and a broader regional network of families who access the site through equity-focused programming. Walkable Access for High-Need Families Mesa Village County Park is the primary recreational anchor for a racially and linguistically diverse community. Survey data confirms the park's role as a daily "backyard" for residents, with 68% of users living within a half-mile and 64% typically accessing the site on foot. This service area is home to a high concentration of low-income and multigenerational households. Economic necessity is underscored by data from the adjacent Amesti Elementary School, where 95.6% of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals (CDE DataQuest, 2024-25). Furthermore, according to U.S.

Census Bureau data, approximately 20% of area residents live at or below the federal poverty level, making free, high-quality public space a non-negotiable requirement for local health. Regional Equity in Action While the park is a neighborhood landmark, it also functions as a critical regional destination for youth across the Pajaro Valley. Through the partnership between CPF and Santa Cruz County Parks, the site hosts afterschool programs and summer camps that attract families from across the Pajaro Valley Unified School District. -Targeted Enrollment: Among these program participants, 90% are eligible for Medi-Cal or Housing Authority services, demonstrating that the park serves as a safe haven for children from various disadvantaged neighborhoods who lack quality facilities in their own immediate vicinity. -Leadership Development: The park is a training ground for the Young Outdoor Leaders program, which recruits teens to engage in environmental stewardship and community advocacy. The project is situated in a community facing cumulative environmental and health stressors. CalEnviroScreen 4.0 ranks the surrounding census tracts in the 70-90th percentile for population vulnerability, reflecting high rates of asthma and cardiovascular issues alongside a 27% physical inactivity rate (TPL ParkServe). The California Climate Investments Priority Populations map further designates the area as Low Income and adjacent to a Disadvantaged Community (DAC). By introducing the region's first Natural Play Area alongside other carefully designed Phase 1 improvements, this project provides meaningful relief to a community facing significant systemic barriers to outdoor access. These improvements transform Mesa Village County Park into a more welcoming, nature-integrated environment that supports safe play, physical activity, and social connection for families throughout the Pajaro Valley. Investing in Mesa Village strengthens an essential neighborhood resource that provides inclusive, accessible recreation for the children and families who rely on it most.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

This project reflects more than five years of community engagement led by County Park Friends, the nonprofit applicant and community partner working with Santa Cruz County Parks. CPF conducted bilingual outreach with neighborhood residents to better understand how Mesa Village County Park could support families and daily recreation. Surveys and neighborhood conversations with more than 120 nearby households helped identify priorities for park improvements. CPF also engaged youth through the Young Outdoor Leaders program, empowering local teens to serve as bilingual ambassadors who helped gather feedback from neighbors. Community input consistently emphasized the need for engaging play opportunities, shaded seating, and features that help children connect with nature. In response, the proposed improvements expand the playground and introduce the Pajaro Valley's first natural play area, incorporating landscape-based elements that encourage climbing, exploration, and imaginative play. Additional seating and gathering areas will support caregivers and multigenerational families who regularly use the park. The project is designed to strengthen neighborhood livability by encouraging consistent and positive use of the park. Expanded play areas and new multigenerational amenities, including exercise equipment and shaded rest areas, will support activity for residents of all ages. Environmental stewardship is also integrated through native and pollinator-supportive landscaping that creates opportunities for environmental learning. Participants in afterschool and summer programs already use the park informally as an outdoor learning space, and these improvements will further support connections between youth and local ecosystems.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements: Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play advances Measure Q environmental priorities by improving water quality, habitat, and climate resilience through nature-based park design. Environmental strategies are incorporated into the project's conceptual landscape plan. Permeable materials such as decomposed granite pathways and mulch groundcover will replace compacted surfaces, allowing rainwater to infiltrate into the soil and reducing stormwater runoff. Native and drought-tolerant landscaping will further reduce irrigation demand while supporting long-term landscape sustainability. The project will also enhance local biodiversity through pollinator-supportive plantings and native vegetation that provide habitat for birds, butterflies, and beneficial insects. Natural play elements, including logs, boulders, and wood structures, will be integrated with planted areas to support both recreational use and ecological function. Additional tree canopy and vegetation will help reduce heat retention and improve comfort for park users during warmer months. By combining recreation improvements with environmentally responsive landscape strategies, the project demonstrates how neighborhood park investments can contribute to broader ecosystem health.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

REQUIRED PERMITS

Permitting requirements for the Mesa Village Playground Expansion and Park Improvements project are expected to be minimal. Because the project occurs within an existing county park and consists of park improvements consistent with current park uses, a building permit is not anticipated. A grading permit may be required depending on the final design and extent of excavation. Environmental review is expected to qualify for a Notice of Exemption (NOE) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Santa Cruz County Parks will coordinate any required permits during the final design phase prior to construction.

PARTNER APPROVALS

The project will be implemented through a partnership with existing MOU between County Park Friends and Santa Cruz County Parks, which owns and manages Mesa Village County Park. Upon funding award, the partners will formalize roles and responsibilities through a project agreement that allows County Park Friends to fund improvements within the County park system while Santa Cruz County Parks oversees design, permitting, and construction management. Because the project occurs entirely on County-owned land, no right-of-entry agreements are required.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

The following timeline reflects anticipated design development and construction for the Mesa Village Playground Expansion and Park Improvements project. Ongoing park maintenance will continue to be managed separately by Santa Cruz County Parks as part of regular park operations. If awarded Measure Q funding in June 2026, the project will begin with final design development and preparation of construction documents. During this phase, Santa Cruz County Parks will refine the conceptual design for the natural play area and landscape improvements and complete any required permitting review. This work is expected to occur June through August 2026. Following design completion, the project will move into contractor procurement using the County's standard public works process. Construction is anticipated to begin in Fall 2026 and will include site preparation, installation of natural play elements, pathways, and landscaping improvements. Construction is expected to occur September 2026 through early 2027, depending on site conditions and permitting requirements. If a grading permit is required, the construction schedule will be coordinated to ensure work occurs under appropriate seasonal conditions. Key milestones include: -June 2026: Project award and initiation -June-August 2026: Final design development -Late Summer/Fall 2026: Contractor procurement -Fall 2026 - Early 2027: Construction and installation -Early 2027: Project completion and park reopening Santa Cruz County Parks will oversee design coordination, permitting (if required), and construction management to ensure the project is completed efficiently.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

Yes

TEAM CAPACITY

County Park Friends is a Santa Cruz County-based nonprofit dedicated to preserving, improving, and expanding access to local parks and open spaces. Through fundraising, community engagement, and program development, CPF works to ensure that parks remain safe, vibrant, and accessible for people of all ages and backgrounds. CPF has a strong track record of delivering high-impact park improvements through public-private partnerships. One notable example is LEO's Haven Inclusive Playground at Chanticleer County Park, the first fully inclusive playground in Santa Cruz County. The project brought together community advocates, private donors, and County Parks to raise millions in private investment and create a space where children of all abilities can play together. Beyond capital improvements, CPF also leads programs that connect residents to parks and outdoor opportunities. These include initiatives such as Young Outdoor Leaders, which engages youth in environmental stewardship and leadership, and All Kids Play Scholarships, which help remove financial barriers to participation in recreation programs. For the Mesa Village project, CPF has served as the primary community engagement and fundraising partner. Over several years, CPF conducted bilingual outreach with neighborhood residents and youth participants to help shape the design and priorities for the park improvements. This outreach ensures that the project reflects the needs of families who rely on Mesa Village Park as a nearby, walkable outdoor space. CPF also brings strong fundraising capacity to the project. The organization has already secured private match funding and continues to leverage philanthropic partnerships to expand amenities and strengthen long-term stewardship of the park. While CPF leads community engagement and fundraising, Santa Cruz County Parks provides technical

oversight as the park owner and managing agency. County staff will oversee design review, permitting, and construction management to ensure the project meets all regulatory and operational standards. This partnership model, combining CPF's community leadership with the County's infrastructure capacity, has successfully supported park improvements throughout Santa Cruz County. By placing County Park Friends in a leading role, the Mesa Village project benefits from an organization deeply rooted in the community and experienced in mobilizing resources to deliver meaningful park improvements.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

This project is feasible due to completed planning, a defined conceptual design, and established implementation capacity. The project was identified through the Pajaro Valley Parks Assessment, which evaluated park conditions and community needs across the region and identified Mesa Village County Park as a priority location for improvements. This assessment provides a clear foundation for the proposed upgrades and confirms the park's importance as a neighborhood recreation resource. A conceptual design has been developed that outlines the primary project components, including a natural play area integrated with landscape features, pollinator-supportive planting areas, decomposed granite pathways, mulch ground surfaces, and wood play elements. These features are designed to work with the existing park environment while improving recreational opportunities and environmental function. The conceptual plan provides sufficient detail to guide the next phase of design development and cost refinement. The project benefits from clear implementation roles and experienced oversight. Santa Cruz County Parks has established processes for advancing park improvement projects, including design coordination, contractor procurement, and construction management. This operational capacity ensures that the project can move efficiently from design development into construction. The improvements are located within an existing county park and are consistent with the park's current use as a neighborhood recreation space. Because the project builds on existing park infrastructure and previously identified planning priorities, it can advance through final design and construction without significant technical or logistical barriers. With a defined project concept, institutional capacity to implement the work, and a clear planning foundation, the project is well positioned to move forward once funding is secured.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements: Expanding Equitable Access to Nature and Play project is supported through a partnership between County Park Friends, Santa Cruz County Parks, Watsonville Wetlands Watch, and the Santa Cruz County District 4 Supervisor's Office. County Park Friends is the nonprofit applicant and community partner supporting improvements within the Santa Cruz County park system. CPF leads community engagement, fundraising, and coordination to help advance park projects that reflect neighborhood priorities. Santa Cruz County Parks owns and manages Mesa Village County Park and will oversee project implementation. The department will guide final design development, coordinate any required permitting, manage contractor procurement, and oversee construction to ensure the improvements integrate with ongoing park operations. Watsonville Wetlands Watch contributes expertise in environmental stewardship and community outreach within the Pajaro Valley, supporting education and awareness related to habitat and watershed health. The District 4 Supervisor's Office provides regional leadership and community coordination, supporting efforts that expand recreational access and improve park infrastructure for South County residents.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

The Mesa Village Playground Expansion reflects coordinated collaboration among nonprofit organizations, local government, and community stakeholders working to improve neighborhood access to parks and nature. County Park Friends and Santa Cruz County Parks maintain an established partnership through which CPF helps secure funding and engage residents, while the County provides technical oversight and manages project implementation. Watsonville Wetlands Watch supports environmental outreach and education connected to the park's habitat improvements. The District 4 Supervisor's Office helps facilitate regional coordination and community advocacy to ensure park improvements reflect local priorities. Through ongoing communication and shared commitment to improving public spaces, these partners work together to advance park improvements that strengthen recreation access, environmental stewardship, and community well-being in the Pajaro Valley.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

279500

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

100000

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

20258

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

120258

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

10

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The total cost of the Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements project is \$399,758. County Park Friends is requesting \$279,500 in Measure Q funding to support the Playground and Tree Canopy Expansion component, which represents the core investment in nature-based play infrastructure and environmental improvements at Mesa Village County Park. The remaining project costs are supported through \$100,000 in committed cash match and \$20,258 in in-kind contributions, demonstrating strong leveraging of Measure Q resources and partnership with Santa Cruz County Parks. Measure Q funds will primarily support construction and installation of the natural play area and associated landscape improvements, including approximately \$250,891 in construction costs for site preparation, installation of natural play elements such as logs, boulders, and wooden play structures, and integration of landscape-based features within the expanded playground area. These improvements will introduce the Pajaro Valley's first natural play environment while expanding tree canopy and shade. A portion of Measure Q funding will also support contractual and consulting services, \$3,200, required to advance the conceptual design into construction-ready plans and ensure safe implementation of the play and landscape features. The \$20,258 in-kind contributions support additional project costs. County Park Friends will provide \$15,666 in staff time for project coordination and community engagement, along with \$2,750, which was donated by Watsonville Wetlands Watch, to cover the cost of the tree canopy planting. The \$100,000 match contribution from County Supervisorial District 4 Measure K funds will directly support the project by covering a portion of the remaining construction costs necessary for project completion. While Measure Q funds the Playground and Tree Canopy Expansion, additional Phase 1 improvements, including exercise equipment, family gathering shade structures, and basketball court resurfacing, are supported through separate funding sources. This layered funding approach ensures that Measure Q investment catalyzes broader park improvements while maintaining a clear scope for the requested funds.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

Mesa Village County Park is an established facility within the Santa Cruz County Parks system, with dedicated staff and an existing annual operating budget for maintenance and repairs. Through the partnership guiding this project, County Park Friends (CPF) serves as the nonprofit catalyst for capital improvements and community engagement, while Santa Cruz County Parks retains long-term ownership and responsibility for maintaining the park's physical infrastructure. Upon completion of the Phase 1 improvements, new play elements, shade structures, and landscaping will be incorporated into the County's existing maintenance schedule. The project prioritizes durable, nature-based materials such as logs, boulders, and drought-tolerant native plantings that reduce long-term repair needs and support cost-effective upkeep. These design choices allow the improvements to fit within the County's established operational framework while ensuring the playground remains safe, resilient, and functional under heavy neighborhood use. Beyond maintaining the physical assets, CPF will continue serving as the community engagement lead to ensure the park remains an active neighborhood resource. Through its established partnerships and volunteer network, CPF will coordinate programming with local youth organizations and afterschool providers to utilize the park's natural play features and "living classroom" elements for environmental learning. CPF will also organize volunteer park workdays and continue fostering the sense of community ownership built during the multi-year engagement process, encouraging residents to remain involved in caring for and activating the space. Together, this public-private stewardship model ensures both the long-term maintenance of park infrastructure and the ongoing community activation of the site. By pairing County maintenance capacity with CPF's community programming and volunteer engagement, the Mesa Village Park Phase 1 Improvements will remain a safe, welcoming, and nature-connected gathering space for Pajaro Valley families for years to come.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

Yes

REFERENCED PLANS

—

BONUS CATEGORIES

Long Term Stewardship Commitments

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

The Mesa Village Playground Expansion demonstrates how neighborhood parks can integrate recreation, environmental stewardship, and community well-being through thoughtful design. The project introduces the Pajaro Valley's first natural play area, using elements such as logs, boulders, native plantings, and sensory landscapes to create a play environment that encourages physical activity, creativity, and early connections to nature. This approach moves beyond traditional manufactured playgrounds by incorporating natural materials and low-impact design strategies that provide both recreational and ecological benefits. Located within a highly visible neighborhood park that serves as a daily gathering place for families, the project also complements other nearby investments in safe recreation and park access. Improvements at Mesa Village will work alongside the Green Valley Pathway Project, which is enhancing safe pedestrian and bicycle access to the park, and the planned skate park at Pinto Lake County Park across the street. Together, these projects are strengthening a network of recreational amenities that better serve youth and families in the Pajaro Valley. The design strategies used at Mesa Village also offer strong potential for replication in other parks throughout Santa Cruz County. Natural play features, native landscaping, pollinator-supportive plantings, and durable, low-maintenance materials can be adapted to parks of different sizes and budgets. As an implementation of an approved park master plan, the project demonstrates how nature-based play and environmental improvements can be incorporated into existing parks without requiring extensive infrastructure or long-term operational costs. Lessons learned through the design process, community engagement, and implementation will help inform future park improvements across the region. By demonstrating practical approaches to nature-based recreation in a neighborhood park setting, Mesa Village can serve as a model for future Measure Q investments that aim to expand access to high-quality outdoor spaces while supporting environmental sustainability.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Measure Q Detailed Budget - Expanding Equitable Access to Nature & Play.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[Mesa Natural Play Area Elements.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[City of Watsonville LOS CPF Mesa.pdf](#), [Land Trust SCC LOS CPF Mesa.pdf](#), [Sup DeSarpa LOS CPF Mesa.pdf](#), [Sup Hernandez LOS CPF Mesa.pdf](#), [WWW_Mesa.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

[Mesa Village Gantt Chart \(1\).pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[Engage, Build, Connect- Introducing County Park Friends.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Mariah Roberts

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Mariah Roberts, Executive Director

SIGNATURE DATE

03/12/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 145 **Type:** Tier 2 Community Impact Grants
Project: Expanding Community Safety and Access at Evergreen Cemetery

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

145

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Expanding Community Safety and Access at Evergreen Cemetery

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

—

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Outreach population

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

100000

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Ginger Porcella

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Executive Director

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

██████████

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

████████████████████

PROJECT LOCATION

261 Evergreen St, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.98108700000000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.03484870000000

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

Evergreen Cemetery lies to the west of Downtown Santa Cruz, adjacent to Harvey West Park.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

District 5

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

This project will take place in Evergreen Cemetery, to the west of Downtown Santa Cruz.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

The MAH worked closely with the County of Santa Cruz to install the new ADA-compliant pathway and accessible parking lot for Evergreen Cemetery to ensure that it did not disrupt any remains, as well as the on-site information kiosk with solar panel lighting. The MAH retains the full archives and burial records for those interred at Evergreen and would not disrupt any land adjacent to known burials.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
City/County Construction Permits	Yes	will work directly with the county approvals for any permanent structures that will be installed in	pending
Other	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

1

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

The MAH is prepared to commence work upon approval of the grant award. We would start with any necessary approvals and permitting, and submit specs for any permanent or semi-permanent structures, including park benches, increased signage/didactics, a safety railing leading up to the Chinese monument, and a small redwood stage that would be used for community gatherings and public/educational events. The MAH has a long history of successfully stewarding the maintenance of the grounds and ongoing projects at Evergreen.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

373642

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

511392

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$78,400	\$50,000	\$52,000	\$180,400
Fringe Benefits	\$7,840	\$0	\$0	\$7,840
Equipment	\$5,940	\$0	\$0	\$5,940
Supplies	\$21,000	\$2,500	\$0	\$23,500
Contractual / Consultants	\$50,500	\$23,250	\$0	\$73,750
Construction	\$114,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$124,000
Other Direct Costs	\$47,500	\$0	\$0	\$47,500
Indirect Costs	\$48,462	\$0	\$0	\$48,462

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

Personnel Executive Director - 20% of time Director of Operations/Facilities - 20% of time Education Manager - 20% of time 1 Public Programs Coordinator - 10% of time 4 Evergreen Artists-in-Residence Fringe Benefits 7840 Equipment eco-friendly push lawnmower (2) 700 eco friendly leaf blower 200 new rakes (5), shovels (5), shears (5) 390 high lumens outdoor projector 2700 24' outdoor inflatable projector screen 250 full portable outdoor PA/sound system 700 upgraded on-site storage 1000 Supplies 5 new plaques 20000 film permits 1000 Contractual/Consultants Arborist/Tree Removal Services 25000 surveyor and feasibility study 15000 "munch bunch" goats/invasive species removal \$500 cadaver dogs at \$25/hour 10000 Construction Steel Safety Railing Install - 100' 5000 8 new benches 4000 sustainably harvested 100 sq. ft. redwood platform 15000 trail creation - linking Evergreen trails to Harvey West Trails 90000 Other CEQA Compliance 3500 Permitting 2500 Programming Art Classes 3000 QingMing Festival 5000 Memorial Day Celebration 5000 Evergreen Block Party 5000 Dia de los Muertos 10000 Veterans Day 5000 Educational Curricula for Student Field Trips 3500 Marketing Marketing/Signage 5000 Indirect Costs 48462

PROJECT START DATE

PROJECT END DATE

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

This request strongly advances Measure Q Vision Plan priorities in the areas of parks/recreation/access/equity, wildfire risk reduction/habitat protection. The ultimate goal is to seamlessly connect the hiking trails of Evergreen Cemetery with Harvey West Park, creating more opportunities for safety, contemplation, and recreation, while activating and maintaining the site as a space of recreation, informal learning, and community access. All the while, the MAH will be mindful of wildfire resilience and overall site maintenance via tree and invasive species removal through our continued work with arborists and "munch bunch" goats. As part of this project, the MAH will hire 400 goats to clear dried brush from the 6-acre Evergreen Cemetery. Using goats to clear fire fuel debris is an environmentally-sound way to reduce the risk of wildfires in this area. Adjacent to public parkland and private residences, Evergreen Cemetery has been designated by fire officials as a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI): an area where forests and natural open spaces overlap with neighborhoods and businesses, making them highly vulnerable to wildfires. Hiring goat herds to "master-clear" these types of landscapes is an increasingly popular fire mitigation strategy. Goats are ideal fire-preventers for two reasons: they can navigate steep hillsides and they tend to eat more flammable non-native grasses and leave native plants alone. Evergreen is also a site of meaningful community recreation and public access. The MAH will construct a small 10x10 sustainably-harvested stage that can be used for free by nonprofits looking to host events. The MAH will use this for its ongoing field trips, art classes, public programs, and performances. The MAH is designing an outdoor film series for Evergreen similar to that in Hollywood Cemetery in LA that will bring people to gather in this historic space. We also aim to expand our current artist-in-residence program at Evergreen Cemetery (only the 4th in the country), historic tours, and erect expanded signage for five important figures buried at evergreen cemetery. Evergreen has long been a place to mourn, and the MAH now uses it as a site of celebration, from our annual QingMing Festival, to Memorial Day, Veteran's Day, and Dia de los Muertos. The MAH has been making a concerted effort in collaboration with donors and volunteers to continue improving the grounds and programs at

Evergreen. We have strong community partnerships and a cadre of dedicated volunteers that work each work to care for the space, amounting to more than 1,560 hours of volunteer labor each year. We work closely with Senderos, the local veterans community, scout troops, and Chinese community leaders to create meaningful and engaging programs by and for the communities we serve. Further, we are able to leverage County funding to help offset costs and match funds for the grant. The MAH holds important regional significance as the final resting place of many early pioneers to Santa Cruz, including London Nelson, the Arcan Family, Bell Dormer, William Blackburn, Lorenzo Asisaria and more. We want to ensure that generations to come can safely enjoy Evergreen.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The MAH's stewardship and maintenance of Evergreen Cemetery has multi-benefit outcomes, including equity impact, matching funds and leveraging partnerships, and addressing climate resilience. All of the MAH's programs and community initiatives are co-created with partners, using an equity lens. We are committed to representing many voices, removing barriers to participation, and creating environments where people feel welcomed, respected and valued. We believe that meaningful cultural work is built through partnerships - by working with others in ways that are respectful, reciprocal, and rooted in trust. Our two largest community celebrations at Evergreen - QingMing Festival (in collaboration with the Resource Center for Nonviolence) and Dia de los Muertos (in collaboration with Senderos) are reflective of this. Moreover, each Friday is "Volunteer Day" at Evergreen Cemetery, where dedicated community members, many of them donors to this project, help clear brush, mow the grass, and clean and repair tombstones, walkways, and fencing. There is an "Evergreen Cemetery Committee" that meets monthly to set priorities and initiatives for Evergreen, and the local Firewise group has helped provide matching funds for invasive species removal. Further, the City Arborist continues to be supportive in helping identify and remove bay trees. Perhaps most importantly, the MAH houses the full Evergreen Cemetery archives, which is well kept and in the process of being fully-digitized and accessible to the community. We bring school field trips to Evergreen weekly, host a monthly poetry series, and work to bring awareness to those buried at Evergreen. Evergreen is an active site of celebration, gathering, and community-building, yet there is so much more that can be done. Situated adjacent to Harvey West Park, Evergreen is a historic gem that can be explored through multiple walking trails. Through this work, we hope to seamlessly integrate Evergreen into the hiking trail system at Harvey West, and provide more seating throughout the cemetery for reflection, contemplation, and respite. Moreover, a safety rail leading up to the Chinese monument in Evergreen will be much needed, as the steep staircase leading up the trail is uneven and poses a tripping hazard. This, alongside a dedicated platform for performances, readings, and art classes, will truly make Evergreen the public jewel that many early Santa Cruz pioneers envisioned that site to be.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Evergreen Cemetery as it currently stands offers immense community benefit; but with support from Measure Q can do so much more. Every program that is offered at Evergreen Cemetery is completely free of charge. The variety of ways that individuals can interact with the space is immense - as a site of formal or informal learning via field trips or self-guided tours, as a site to celebrate cultural events, a space to create, or as a space to enjoy the work others have created. Moreover, Evergreen has such a deep, rich history, as the final resting spot of the majority of the early founders of Santa Cruz, as well as one of the most important historical Ohlone figures. Because of the MAH's partnerships, financial and in-kind support, and deep experience stewarding the space, we are well-positioned and ready to open the next chapter in Evergreen's History. From an overgrown, poorly managed cemetery, to a gleaming, safe gem of a public space - we have come a long way. By providing more seating and linking the trails to Harvey West, Evergreen will truly become the park and public space that many of us knew it could be. Moreover, this project is not only strategically aligned with the priorities of Measure Q, but with the MAH's own strategic priorities: fostering creativity and curiosity; furthering diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging; spreading empathy, kindness and joy; acting with leadership and integrity; and partnerships rooted in co-creation, collaboration, and credibility.

TARGET COMMUNITY

Cemeteries are often thought of only as burial grounds, but many function as valuable shared civic spaces that provide recreation, green space, and community connection. Around the world, historic and modern cemeteries serve as quiet, accessible landscapes that benefit the public in multiple ways. Many cemeteries act as urban parks - especially where open space is limited. Many cemeteries offer walking and jogging paths, birdwatching and nature observation, photography and art, and opportunities for quiet reflection and meditation. Evergreen Cemetery already provides immense community benefit via recreation and access to public spaces. Our free community events such as QingMing Festival and Dia de los Muertos are already beloved cultural events. Through Measure Q we can expand our offerings and provide a safe stage/platform for performances, as well as free, monthly outdoor film screenings. We already offer weekly field trips and tours, a monthly poetry series, and recently launched our

artist-in-residence program at Evergreen that includes community picnics, a yearly block party, and performance art events. We want to deepen our impact by increasing signage, seating, safety and accessibility at the park and creating space for different communities to come together, even the potential for weddings and other important celebrations. Moreover, Evergreen preserves local history, architecture, and genealogy. Evergreen provides opportunities to interact with historic monuments and sculpture via the tombstones and mausoleums, self-guided or led heritage tours, school field trips, and genealogy research in the Evergreen archives. Evergreen draws visitors not only for recreation but for cultural tourism and historical education. The space functions as an outdoor museum and extension of the MAH, a living archive of community history, and a space for intergenerational storytelling. While Evergreen offers much of what one would expect at a public park, it also offers a low-noise environment, ideal for grief processing, mindfulness, solitary walks, and contemplation. While there is no one community or group that the MAH/Evergreen serve, we do distinguish those that access Evergreen into various groups: Cultural Stewards (legacy-minded donors and Evergreen volunteers); Community Connectors (equity and action-oriented locals); Curious Learners (families and K-12 educators); Social Explorers (young adults, creatives, tourists); and Culture Bearers/Storyholders (MAH cultural partners - Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, Diversity Center, Senderos, Resource Center for Nonviolence, etc.).

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Evergreen provides community value in all the stated areas. This proposal focuses on public safety by installing a handrailing adjacent to the staircase leading to the Chinese monument in Evergreen. Public safety also includes social stability. Cemeteries provide spaces for grief processing, reduce psychological stress during loss, and offer memorial sites that support community healing. Studies show that stable grieving processes can indirectly reduce conflict, trauma-related behavior, and social disruption. Evergreen also has immense historical value, serving as a long-term archives. Evergreen Cemetery already provides a unique way for visitors to access nature. Through this proposal we want to deepen this experience by seamlessly linking the hiking trails at Evergreen Cemetery to Harvey West Park. Evergreen provides access to nature in several meaningful ways - ecologically, socially, and psychologically, functioning as quiet green spaces within Santa Cruz, offering both environmental and human benefits. Evergreen serves as a protected green space, wildlife habitat, and peaceful landscape - acting as an informal urban sanctuary where ecological preservation and human reflection meet. Through this initiative we aim to expand access to recreation at Evergreen. Through facility and equipment upgrades, we will provide unique opportunities for people to connect art and ecology in Evergreen, via theatre, music, literary readings and outdoor film screenings. We aim to expand our structured recreational or educational activities including guided history tours, festivals, wellness classes, and art activities. Through adding new infrastructure such as seating and small tables, people will be able to more comfortably gather, eat, read, write, play chess, etc. Evergreen Cemetery functions as peaceful green space. Its natural scenery, trees, and quiet surroundings lower stress hormones, reduce anxiety, and encourage reflection and mindfulness. Our extensive trails encourage walking and light exercise, fresh air exposure, and quality time outdoors, all of which promote cardiovascular health, mobility, and mood. Lastly, Evergreen Cemetery plays a powerful role in strengthening community identity and enhancing livability as an important cultural landscape, public space, and historical archive. Evergreen is truly the living archive of the story of Santa Cruz, preserving the legacies of Santa Cruz founders, politicians, veterans, immigrants, and everyday citizens. Evergreen reflects Santa Cruz's unique migration pattern, cultural and religious diversity, economic history, military service, and epidemics and major events such as the Spanish flu. By maintaining and interpreting Evergreen through increased signage, guided tours, school programs, and expanded access to recreation, it will reinforce Santa Cruz's shared identity and intergenerational connection. Perhaps most importantly, through this work, we will be able to locate the grave of Lorenzo Asisaria, an important Indigenous Ohlone man and outspoken eyewitness to Mission Santa Cruz life. While records show he is buried at Evergreen, his exact location has never been identified. Through this work we will not only locate his grave but erect a marker/tombstone and signage appropriate for one of the most notable figures buried at Evergreen.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

Many cemeteries such as Evergreen function as biodiversity pockets. Evergreen offers varieties of mature trees and native plantings, pollinator habitats, stormwater absorption, carbon sequestration, and wildlife habitats & biodiversity. Because Evergreen is protected from development, its old trees providing nesting sites for birds endemic to Santa Cruz. We do not use pesticides at Evergreen and all of our work is eco-friendly, ensuring that insects and pollinators thrive. Its undisturbed land hosts several California native plant species. Vegetated cemeteries such as Evergreen function similarly to parks. Grass, trees, and shrubs slow rainwater runoff, its soil absorbs and filters pollutants, and the microorganisms in the soil break down contaminants. This process reduces the amount of polluted stormwater entering Santa Cruz's waterways. When water soaks into cemetery soil, it replenishes underground aquifers and moves through layers of soil that naturally filter contaminants. Habitat protection at Evergreen equals cleaner water. Old, historic cemeteries like Evergreen contain mature trees over 100 years old, native shrubs and wildflowers, and plenty of dead wood, important for insects and fungi. These features provide important nesting sites for birds, shelter for

mammals, pollinator resources, and soil health support. We do not use chemical pesticides, which allows bees, butterflies, and other pollinators to thrive. Lastly, Evergreen is an important site of climate resilience. Trees and soils in cemeteries store carbon in biomass, sequester carbon in soil, and provide long-term green cover. Evergreen contains extensive tree cover and functions ecologically like a managed woodland, improving long-term ecosystem sustainability and supporting food webs. However, climate resilience isn't just environmental, its social as well. Cemeteries like Evergreen provide quiet green refuge during climate stress, cultural continuity, gathering spaces, and multiple mental health benefits. They are places of collective memory and reflection, strengthening the community bonds of Santa Cruz.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

REQUIRED PERMITS

As the first course of action, the MAH will obtain the necessary permits for ground disturbance and capital/site improvements. Most importantly, when linking the existing hiking trails seamlessly with the hiking trails at Harvey West Park, ensuring that proper surveying has been completed to commence work. While the MAH has the full archives for Evergreen including the cemetery plots for those buried there, it is important to check to see if there were undocumented individuals buried in the immediate areas surrounding Evergreen.

PARTNER APPROVALS

We would first need to have an MOU with the County to commence work, and have permit sign-off for the installation of the safety railing and new park benches. We would need permits for tree removal and surveying.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

July-December 2026 - work directly with the County and submit all plans and permits for construction work; work with Santa Cruz Mountains Trails Stewardship & Parks & Rec on mapping proposed new hiking trails; bring cadaver dogs to Evergreen to locate Lorenzo Asisaria; January-February 2027 - install all new benches and railing to Chinese monument (to open on QingMing 2027); install temporary fencing for goats March 2027 - "munch bunch goats" arrive for six weeks to stop spread of invasive species April-May 2027 - hiking trails completed in collaboration with Harvey West; new signage for noted individuals installed; new stage/platform installed and equipment purchased; press launch for expanded Evergreen access, trails and programming June 2027 - public opening launch ceremony with community partners

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

Yes

TEAM CAPACITY

The MAH has a dedicated and experienced team able to deliver the proposed project within the timeline and budget, ensuring that all due diligence and proper permitting and surveying has been secured. The lead for this project is Kevin Coullahan, Director of Operations and Facilities for the MAH. He was the lead on initially bringing the goats to Evergreen in collaboration with Firewise, and was the lead on the design and construction of the recent ADA-accessible pathway and parking at Evergreen. He also oversees the Evergreen Cemetery Committee, as well as the community of volunteers who work tirelessly each Friday to care for the land and the people interred there. The primary administrator on the Project is MAH Executive Director Ginger Porcella. Porcella has more than 20 years' experience overseeing large grants, budgets and capital projects. All contractors for the project will be licensed and approved by the County of Santa Cruz.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

The MAH manages Evergreen Cemetery on behalf of the County of Santa Cruz. We have a written contract that allows us to conduct necessary maintenance and safety/accessibility projects at Evergreen.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The MAH has numerous project partners and relationships to support this project. Firewise will help match funds for the "munch bunch goats" to help clear invasive species as well as help with tree removal. The Evergreen Cemetery Committee convenes bimonthly and advises on capital improvements to the site, and will be working closely on this project. We also work closely with Parks & Rec to present a number of important cultural celebrations at Evergreen and throughout the county, and we will be working closely with them to identify, create, and manage the linked hiking trails. Amongst the strong cadre of volunteers that help maintain the site are a number who will be matching funds to this project. Lastly, for our ongoing programming at Evergreen, we work closely with the Department of Education, Senderos, the local veterans community, scout troops, and community members such as George Ow and the Resource Center for Nonviolence to present our annual QingMing Festival. We also work closely with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band on the care and maintenance of the Kincentricity Garden at MAH, alongside other initiatives such as the tribal relearning program.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

The mission of the MAH is to build community, connection, and belonging through sharing the art and history of Santa Cruz. One of our core values is Co-Creation, Collaboration, and Credibility; we believe meaningful cultural work is built through partnership, by working with others in ways that are respectful, reciprocal and rooted in trust. The MAH and Evergreen play a vital role in shaping Santa Cruz's sense of place rooted in the lived experience, landscapes, and stories of Santa Cruz County. Through locally-relevant content, the MAH reflects the region's character while helping residents and visitors understand that makes Santa Cruz distinct - using place itself as a meaningful part of the visitor experience. In particular, Evergreen Cemetery provides a contemplative setting for programs and interpretation that engage themes of memory, community, and continuity. As both a historic landscape and active public space, it deepens the MAH's connection to the county's cultural and emotional geography. The MAH and Evergreen are a place for many voices and many stories, each contributing in distinct ways to a shared sense of belonging. Most of the MAH's exhibitions and programs are created in collaboration with a wide range of community partners - making space for new ideas and helping amplify our missions to new and unexpected audiences. Unlike museums built around a single curatorial voice, the MAH believes that many voices, lived experiences, and perspectives strengthen our culture and deepen public understanding. Working alongside organizations such as The Diversity Center, Senderos, and Housing Matters allows the MAH to engage directly with the issues shaping life in Santa Cruz today. This work often extends beyond the museum and into Evergreen and the greater community itself, where some of our most meaningful cultural exchange takes place. In practice, co-creation at the MAH means exhibitions and programs are developed with partners as collaborators, not subjects, honoring lived experience and multiple viewpoints; partnerships help extend the reach of all organizations involved by connecting our shared work to one another's audiences; many co-created programs take place beyond the museum, recognizing that culture lives where people gather, learn, and organize; collaborative work fosters conversation, fresh perspectives, and more contemporary, responsive content; and most importantly, by drawing on insight from both the museum and our cultural partners, the MAH is able to achieve outcomes greater than any single organization could on its own. Together, this approach reflects the MAH's belief that culture is strongest when it is made together - and that shared authorship leads to deeper connection, understanding, and impact.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

373642

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

85750

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

52000

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

137750

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

15

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Personnel Executive Director - 20% of time Director of Operations/Facilities - 20% of time Education Manager - 20% of time 1 Public Programs Coordinator - 10% of time 4 Evergreen Artists-in-Residence Fringe Benefits 7840 Equipment eco-friendly push lawnmower (2) 700 eco friendly leaf blower 200 new rakes (5), shovels (5), shears (5) 390 high lumens outdoor projector 2700 24' outdoor inflatable projector screen 250 full portable outdoor PA/sound system 700 upgraded on-site storage 1000 Supplies 5 new plaques 20000 film permits 1000 Contractual/Consultants Arborist/Tree Removal Services 25000 surveyor and feasibility study 15000 "munch bunch" goats/invasive species removal \$500 cadaver dog services 10000 Construction Steel Safety Railing Install - 100' 5000 8 new benches 4000 sustainably harvested 100 sq. ft. redwood platform 15000 trail creation - linking Evergreen trails to Harvey West Trails 90000 Other CEQA Compliance 3500 Permitting 2500 Programming Art Classes 3000 QingMing Festival 5000 Memorial Day Celebration 5000 Evergreen Block Party 5000 Dia de los Muertos 10000 Veterans Day 5000 Educational Curricula for Student Field Trips 3500 Marketing Marketing/Signage 5000 Indirect Costs 48462

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

The MAH maintains the site through a strong group of volunteers who work each Friday at the site. We also receive support from individual donors and the County of Santa Cruz to help maintain Evergreen Cemetery.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

No

REFERENCED PLANS

—

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness, High Fund Leverage, Long Term Stewardship Commitments

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

Given the MAH has been successfully stewarding the site for decades, including ongoing maintenance and capital projects, we feel ready to commence work. Plans for the linked trails, outdoor stage, and expanded art classes have been ready to commence since 2024, funds permitting. With a new Executive Director in place at the MAH with a dedicated focus on maintaining Evergreen and providing expanded awareness and programming to the site, alongside our strong community partners that champion our work, we know that this initiative will be successfully received and supported in the form of positive press, matching funds, and increased attendance to Evergreen. The MAH acts as the long terms stewards of Evergreen, and will work closely with Parks & Rec to maintain the trail system. Perhaps most importantly, Evergreen Cemetery is regionally significant for several reasons tied to local history, culture, and community identity. Established in 1858, it is one of the oldest public cemeteries in the state of California. It reflects Santa Cruz's expansion during and after the California Gold Rush era, when settlers from across the US and world came to the region. Evergreen serves as an open-air historical archive. Walking through the graves offers insight into Santa Cruz's demographic, economic, and cultural evolution from the 1850s until now. Evergreen includes sections dedicated to different communities, including Civil War veterans, Freemasons, and Chinese immigrants - each telling a part of local and national history. The Chinese section in particular memorialized early Chinese immigrants who worked in fishing, railroads, and agriculture at a time of widespread discrimination (the Chinese Exclusion era), making it a significant testament to Santa Cruz's multicultural past. Evergreen is the focus of many historic preservation efforts that connect residents to Santa Cruz's roots and underscore the importance of conserving local heritage. In essence, Evergreen Cemetery is significant regionally as a living memorial to the people and stories that build Santa Cruz County.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET*No file uploaded***ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP***No file uploaded***ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT***No file uploaded***ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT***No file uploaded***ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS***No file uploaded*

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

Measure Q Budget.xlsx, MAH_2025 Annual Report.pdf, Plot Maps for book by Traci Bliss.pdf, 261 Evergreen B20-0492 - Submission Plan Set.pdf, Historical En

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Ginger Porcella

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Ginger Porcella, Executive Director

SIGNATURE DATE

03/05/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 172 **Type:** Tier 2 Community Impact Grants
Project: San Lorenzo Flood Control System - Debris Boom Project

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

172

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

San Lorenzo Flood Control System - Debris Boom Project

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

CITY OF SANTA CRUZ

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

reduce need for mechanical breaches of lagoon mouth. Mechanical and illegal breaches place people a

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

75% reduction in mechanical breaches

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Kevin Crossley

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Asst Director Public Works

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Ryan	Haley	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

1156 E Cliff Dr, Santa Cruz, CA, 95062

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.96420802244991

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.01214255409253

PROJECT JURISDICTION / CITY

City of Santa Cruz

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

—

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Santa Cruz City Council District 4: Scott Newsome

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT

District 3 - Justin Cummings

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Project is located at the mouth of the San Lorenzo River at the South East corner of Main Beach in the City of Santa Cruz.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

No

SDAC STATUS

No

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

CEQA/NEPA completed

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

City has active permits previously issued to construct flood control culvert, permits will cover installation of debris boom system to enhance operations

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	Yes		
State Water Control Resources Board	Yes		
US Fish and Wildlife	Yes		
City/County Construction Permits	Yes		
Coastal Commission	Yes		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

Project was planned for construction in Spring 2026. Bids were received in February 2026. Due to funding limitations, work is delayed indefinitely. If supplemental funding is obtained, project construction could start in spring 2027. Estimated construction duration is 2-3 months.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

300000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

396000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$16,000	\$0	\$16,000
Contractual / Consultants	\$0	\$80,000	\$0	\$80,000
Construction	\$300,000	\$0	\$0	\$300,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The San Lorenzo River seasonally shoals (closes) at its mouth, creating safety and environmental challenges for the adjacent neighborhood, beach, businesses, and nearby infrastructure. In 2025, a flood control culvert was constructed to reduce uncontrolled breaches and improve water quality for endangered fisheries. The project installed a dual-pipe drainage system designed to convey river water through the seasonal sandbar and discharge it to the ocean. This system reduces the need for mechanical breaching of the lagoon while improving water quality by removing high-salinity water from the lowest portion of the lagoon. By reducing the frequency of mechanical breaching, the project has proven to provide multiple benefits, including protection of public and private property, enhanced habitat conditions for endangered species such as tidewater goby and steelhead, and increased safety for recreational beach users. After the culvert became operational, an issue was identified with the specialized intake structures. These intakes are designed to allow continuous flow into the culvert while preventing fish from being harmed or impinged. However, because the screens have a fine mesh size, debris such as grass, small sticks, and trash can accumulate on the screens and reduce flow capacity. To address this issue, the City has designed a seasonal floating debris boom (Project) that will be installed around the intakes. The boom will intercept floating debris before it reaches the screens, helping keep the intake structures clear and ensuring the culvert system operates at full capacity during the summer months.

PROJECT START DATE

04/01/2027

PROJECT END DATE

06/01/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 2 Application**THEMATIC AREAS**

Water Resource Management, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

A central objective of the Measure Q Vision is the protection and restoration of natural ecosystems and wildlife habitat. The lagoon at the mouth of the San Lorenzo River provides important seasonal habitat for several sensitive species, including juvenile steelhead and the federally protected northern tidewater goby. Historically, emergency mechanical breaching of the lagoon has been required to prevent flooding of nearby neighborhoods and infrastructure. These breaching events rapidly drain the lagoon and can strand or flush aquatic species to the ocean, causing significant ecological disruption. By allowing controlled, gradual drainage of lagoon waters, the culvert system stabilizes lagoon water levels and reduces the need for mechanical breaching, thereby protecting sensitive habitat and improving ecological conditions for native fish and wildlife. The project also advances the Measure Q Vision's emphasis on improving water quality and protecting coastal watersheds. When the river mouth remains closed for extended periods, stagnant lagoon conditions can degrade water quality and affect both habitat and recreational use of the beach. The culvert system allows continuous circulation and controlled discharge of lagoon water, improving flushing and reducing the risk of poor water quality conditions that can impact both marine ecosystems and beach users. Another key element of the Measure Q Vision is protecting public access to natural spaces and ensuring safe recreational opportunities. Main Beach and the surrounding coastal area attract over a million visitors each year and serve as one of the most heavily used public recreation areas in the county. When the lagoon expands across the beach or breaches suddenly, it can create dangerous currents and limit emergency access to portions of the beach. By maintaining more consistent lagoon water levels and reducing

the likelihood of sudden breaches, the project improves safety for beach visitors and helps maintain reliable public access to this important coastal recreation area. Finally, the project supports Measure Q goals related to protecting communities and public infrastructure from environmental hazards. Seasonal lagoon flooding has historically impacted nearby neighborhoods, downtown basements, and public infrastructure such as roads and utilities. Stabilizing lagoon water levels reduces the likelihood of flooding events while allowing the lagoon to continue functioning as an important natural habitat feature.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Measure Q also prioritizes climate resilience and sustainable management of coastal and river environments. The San Lorenzo River mouth is a highly dynamic system influenced by coastal sediment transport, wave climate, and seasonal river flows. As sea level rise and changing storm patterns continue to influence coastal processes, managing lagoon water levels in a predictable and environmentally sensitive way becomes increasingly important. The culvert-based management system provides a long-term, adaptive approach that reduces flood risk to nearby neighborhoods and infrastructure while maintaining ecological function in the lagoon.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The project directly improves public safety and access, and is ready to start construction.

TARGET COMMUNITY

Primary Target Community are the 1,000,000 visitors to Main Beach each year, the adjoining neighborhoods of Beach Flats, and Lower Ocean St affected by high groundwater in the summer.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

The project --Protects endangered steelhead and gobies and the public from dangerous uncontrolled/illegal breaches, --Improves water quality by removing saline water from the bottom of the lagoon, --Enhances public safety and recreational access by preventing the lagoon mouth from flooding Main beach --Reduces damage to private property caused by excessive high groundwater levels.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

The project --Protects endangered steelhead and gobies and the public from dangerous uncontrolled/illegal breaches, --Improves water quality by removing saline water from the bottom of the lagoon, --Enhances public safety and recreational access by preventing the lagoon mouth from flooding Main beach --Reduces damage to private property caused by excessive high groundwater levels.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Applicant owns the property for the proposed project

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

REQUIRED PERMITS

Four regulatory agencies have issued permits for the project - the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Coastal Commission, the Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Army Corps of Engineers. These agencies are partners in this project, expressed their collective desire to see the project implemented and requested the City to pursue new grant funds sufficient to fund the project. All permits required for construction, operations and maintenance of this system have been issued by the above-noted agencies and are in good standing.

PARTNER APPROVALS

all agreements and permits are in hand

TIMELINE MILESTONES

Project would re-bid in winter 2026 with target of spring 2027 for installation of the debris boom.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

Yes

TEAM CAPACITY

The project would be managed by the City of Santa Cruz public works department, which has numerous engineers and project managers who can deliver the project. Those same staff have a proven track record delivering complex projects in highly regulated locations such as the river mouth, the Santa Cruz Harbor, and West Cliff Dr.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

The proposed debris boom project would be installed onto the existing culvert structure, which is situated on easements obtained for the culvert construction and operations.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Strong Partnerships: Starting in 2013 the City developed a cohesive and science-based approach to managing the lagoon's water level without the frequent need for mechanical breaching. The IMP was developed by the City in partnership with the regulatory agencies who have interest in and regulatory authority over the lagoon, the river, the surrounding beach area, and the habitat provided by the lagoon. Those agencies are the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the California Coastal Commission, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

The Project requires active engagement and collaboration with numerous regulatory agencies, the Seaside Company (Beach Boardwalk) and City of Santa Cruz Marine Safety Division.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

300000

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

96000

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

0

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

96000

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

—

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

City has already funded design phase of the debris boom project-those costs are known. The Construction costs include purchase and installation of the debris boom. Estimated construction costs are based on actual bids received, therefore construction costs are well understood based on results from contractors. Construction costs include costs to hire biologists to monitor installation of new system.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

Ongoing maintenance and operations costs for the culvert and proposed debris boom are covered in City operating budgets.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

Yes

REFERENCED PLANS

[{"name":"Main Cowell Beach Management Plan","url":"https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/reports/2025/3/W15d/W15d-3-2025-exhibits.pdf"}, {"name":"San Lorenzo River Interim Management Program","url":"https://www.santacruzca.gov/Government/City-Departments/Community-Development/Curre nt-Planning/Environmental-ReviewCEQA/Projects/San-Lorenzo-River-Lagoon-Interim-Management-Report"}, {"name":"2030 City Climate Action Plan","url":"https://www.santacruzca.gov/files/assets/city/v/1/cmo/documents/climate/climate-action-plan-2030.pdf"}, {"name":"NOAA Fisheries Coho Recovery Plan","url":"https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/dam-migration/final_final_volume_ii_8_29_12.pdf"}]

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness, High Fund Leverage, Long Term Stewardship Commitments

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

Strong Partnerships: Starting in 2013 the City developed a cohesive and science-based approach to managing the lagoon's water level without the frequent need for mechanical breaching. The IMP was developed by the City in partnership with the regulatory agencies who have interest in and regulatory authority over the lagoon, the river, the surrounding beach area, and the habitat provided by the lagoon. Those agencies are the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the California Coastal Commission, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board. Readiness: The project is designed, permitted, and ready to start construction, subject to obtaining construction funding.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[City of Santa Cruz Measure Q Grant-Appendix A Budget Worksheet 3.26.26.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[Plans_SanLorenzoDebris Boom_2025-0705.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[SLR Culvert Letters of Support.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

[Addendum to Adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration, SLR Interim Management Program, March 2019.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[1.jpg](#), [73.jpg](#), [74.jpg](#), [75.jpg](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS
No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Kevin Crossley

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Kevin Crossley - Assistant Director Public Works

SIGNATURE DATE

03/11/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 174 Type: Tier 2 Community Impact Grants
Project: Rural Lands Assistance Program Pilot

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

174

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Rural Lands Assistance Program Pilot

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF SANTA CRUZ CTY.

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

Community Projects

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

15

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Matt Abernathy

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Program Manager

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

Porter St, Soquel, CA 95073, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.98783100000000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.95738230000001

PROJECT JURISDICTION / CITY

Multiple jurisdictions / Countywide

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The Rural Lands Assistance Program is intended to serve rural areas throughout Santa Cruz County, with this pilot focusing on unincorporated communities and towns located in the wildland urban interface (WUI). Projects include community driven projects, including those led by road associations, Firewise groups, and working collaboratively to improve forest health and wildfire resilience.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Not applicable. Countywide.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT

District 1 - Manu Koenig, District 2 - Kimberly De Serpa, District 3 - Justin Cummings, District 4 - Felipe Hernandez, District 5 - Monica Martinez

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

This initial pilot of the Rural Lands Assistance Program will serve residents countywide, with targeted outreach and technical assistance for landowners in high risk WUI areas throughout the County unincorporated areas and towns. All five Supervisorial Districts are included.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

—

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

RCD staff have experience navigating CEQA, programmatic environmental compliance pathways, County permit processes, and other applicable state, federal, and local regulatory requirements for a large suite of p wildfire resilience projects. This includes developing project descriptions, preparing do and coordinating with agency staff to ensure projects meet environmental and regulatory standards. For this pilot, the program will focus on assisting landowners on parcels where a Notice of Exemption (NOE) is anticipated to provide sufficient environmental compliance coverage, and the RCD will utilize this grant to complete the CEQA NOE. As the program expands in future phases, we intend to broaden our support to include more complex environmental compliance needs and additional permitting pathways to serve a wider range of project types and landownerships.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA		
State Water Control Resources Board	NA		
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA		
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

2

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

The RCD will use a portion of its internal Measure Q allocation to begin developing the framework for the technical and financial assistance program in advance of this grant period. This early work includes utilizing processes from the other cost-share and technical assistance programs the RCD offers, ensuring that the design of the application process, the eligible practices, and guidance materials for landowners are appropriate and easy to use. While these tasks are administrative in form, they directly support landowners by establishing an accessible pathway for them to receive technical assistance and implement wildfire resilience and forest health projects. We anticipate having this foundational framework completed by the end of the current fiscal year. Measure Q Grant funding, combined with leveraging a portion of the RCD's Measure Q allocation and additional state and federal grants that are intended to be secured, will support community outreach and landowner engagement throughout 2026, with a proposed formal program launch in early 2027. During this time, RCD staff will provide technical assistance to help landowners understand program requirements, evaluate site conditions, and determine appropriate practices. Once applications open, staff will conduct site visits, confirm eligibility, and work in partnership with participating landowners to develop site specific plans and reimbursement agreements. Informed by the RCD's technical expertise, the program will establish a clear, seasonally appropriate implementation window that supports both effective treatment and protection of environmental resources. Vegetation management and forest health work is expected to occur by fall 2027, and only when conditions allow treatments to be conducted responsibly and with minimal ecological impact. Overall, the program is designed to minimize delays by completing foundational technical assistance work early, supporting landowners throughout the planning process, and rolling out implementation in a coordinated, seasonal window.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

342140

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

492140

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$76,435	\$0	\$0	\$76,435
Fringe Benefits	\$20,179	\$0	\$0	\$20,179
Travel	\$648	\$0	\$0	\$648
Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Contractual / Consultants	\$26,400	\$0	\$0	\$26,400
Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Indirect Costs	\$68,428	\$0	\$0	\$68,428
Other Direct Costs	\$150,050	\$150,000	\$0	\$300,050

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County (RCD) is developing a rural-resiliency program to help private landowners address a range of natural-resource needs, including forest health, wildfire preparedness, erosion control, water management, habitat improvement, and broader land stewardship goals. The long-term vision is a countywide program offering both technical and financial incentives to support conservation practices across diverse landscapes. This proposal seeks funding to pilot one component of the larger program: wildfire-resilience and forest-health projects for landowners in rural and wildland-urban interface (WUI) communities. These areas face some of the highest wildfire risks in the county, and many landowners need support navigating requirements, selecting effective practices, and affording implementation. The pilot is designed to make these steps clear and accessible. Work will be carried out by participating landowners, neighborhoods, and community groups, keeping implementation locally led while the RCD provides planning and technical support. Using a portion of its internal Measure Q allocation, the RCD will begin building the broader program structure in 2026 - developing an application process, defining eligible practices, and preparing landowner guidance. This work draws on existing RCD programs and partnerships. This grant will fund outreach and preparation for a full pilot launch in early 2027. Landowners will then be able to apply, receive on site assistance, and access cost share incentives. The pilot will operate on a reimbursement basis, with approximately 50% of costs reimbursed once work is verified. This effort will establish the foundation for a long-term rural-resiliency program.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2028

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

The RCD is developing a long term Rural Lands Assistance Program to help landowners stewardship practices that improve forest health, wildfire resilience, watershed function, and overall landscape vitality. Although this Program is a new, unified initiative, it is built on RCD's long history of delivering technical assistance and administering cost-share and incentive programs for private landowners. What is new is the integration of these services into a single, accessible program framework designed to leverage local dollars to support coordinated, community-scale land management projects. This program is intentionally holistic, combining technical assistance, neighborhood incentives to advance rural resilience in ways that deliver clear and durable public benefits. This approach aligns strongly with Measure Q's vision of supporting community safety, improving ecological function, and across Santa Cruz County. While the pilot focuses on wildfire-resilience and forest health practices, it represents the first implementation track within a long term program that will ultimately support a broad range of natural resource stewardship needs. The pilot focuses on a targeted subset of vegetation management practices that address one of the county's most urgent priorities: fuel load reduction to reduce wildfire risk and improve community safety. Co of high severity wildfire, improve ingress and egress for residents and first responders landscapes, advancing key Measure Q themes related to public safety, hazard mitigation. A major strength of the pilot is its emphasis on neighborhood scale coordination. Many occur where private parcels, shared roads, and community spaces intersect. These area requirements and lack a clear regulatory or financial mechanism for treatment. As a result, they remain some of the most vulnerable parts of the landscape. This pilot directly addresses that gap by providing c assistance, RCD prepared project plans, and treatment specifications that ensure consi supports Measure Q priorities for equitable access to resources, technical assistance for underserved areas, and projects that benefit entire communities. The pilot also aligns with Measure Q's interest in efficient, environmentally responsible implementation. By focusing initially on practices that qualify for CEQA NOE, the program can move quickly while avoiding environmental impacts and remaining within seasonal wildlife avoidance windows. This creates timely project readiness and establishes a permitting foundation for future phases of the broader program. As the broader Rural Lands Assistance Program matures, the RCD intends to expand eligible practices to include additional forest health stormwater management improvements, habitat stewardship, and other conservation acti by increasingly robust permitting pathways and program infrastructure, will allow the program to evolve into a durable, countywide platform for rural resilience. Overall, the pilot advances Measure Q's vision by meeting immediate community safety needs, improving ecological health, supporting watershed function, and establishing the foundation for a long term, scalable stewardship program across rural Santa Cruz County.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The Rural Lands Assistance Program is fundamentally designed around empowering our landowners to manage and steward their lands, by providing technical and financial assistance that achieve multi benefit outcomes advances community safety, ecological health, and long term stewardship simultaneously focuses initial funds on the wildfire resilience and forest health pilot, and these treatment co benefits, such as improving forest structure, reducing competition-related stress on fire that can degrade soil, water quality, and habitat. The pilot focuses on vegetation management practices, including roadside and egress corridor vegetation thinning, ladder fuel thinning, and understory clearing, wildfire resilience benefits. These practices reduce the likelihood of high severity fire, emergency response access, and protect homes and infrastructure. The structure and p funded treatment provides multiple, interconnected public benefits. A key element of m emphasis on neighborhood and community scale coordination. Many of the highest prio and shared access routes intersect. By supporting groups such as road associations, Firewise communities, and clusters of

adjacent landowners, the pilot enables strategic treatments that benefit whole neighborhoods. This directly enhances community cohesion, improves landscape scale continuity of treatments, and supports equitable access to organize or fund this work independently. The program's technical assistance further provides site evaluations, ecological guidance, treatment specifications, and planning support to ensure projects protect sensitive resources, avoid wildlife impacts, and follow best management practices. This support ensures higher quality ecological outcomes than piecemeal or uncoordinated treatments. Although vegetation work, it is intentionally designed as the first phase of a broader program that will eventually support additional practices with wider landscape benefits, such as erosion control, riparian protection, water management, and stewardship. The pilot builds the foundational outreach pathways, permitting structures, and neighborhood partnerships needed to expand into these broader multi benefit resource areas. By prioritizing work that enhances conditions, supports community-scale coordination, and creates a foundation for long-term rural resilience, the pilot embodies Measure Q's emphasis on projects that deliver overlapping, durable public benefits. This approach ensures that each dollar invested supports not only the immediate goal of reducing wildfire risk, but also the long-term vitality of rural communities, watersheds, and landscapes across Santa Cruz County.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The proposed pilot phase of the Rural Lands Assistance Program reflects strong Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, and Readiness by addressing urgent community needs while laying the groundwork for a long-term rural resiliency framework. At its core, the pilot delivers meaningful public benefit by reducing wildfire risk in areas where entire neighborhoods remain vulnerable to fastmoving fire. Proposed fuel load reduction treatments are designed to improve evacuation safety, enhance access for first responders, and protect homes and infrastructure across shared landscapes. Because much of this work occurs along private roads and community spaces that serve multiple households, the benefits are collective and extend well beyond any individual property. The program's technical assistance further ensures ecological co-benefits, guiding treatments that improve forest structure, reduce the likelihood of high severity fire, and promote healthier, more resilient ecosystems. The pilot also demonstrates strong strategic alignment with countywide and regional priorities. Its focus on hazardous fuel-reduction and improvement of ingress/egress corridors supports the goals of the Santa Cruz County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, aligns with Firewise community priorities, complements local fire district risk reduction strategies, and was reviewed and prioritized as part of the Santa Cruz Mountains Regional Priority Plan (which is expected to be published April, 2026). It also advances Measure Q Vision Plan objectives by directly addressing climate related hazards, strengthening community resiliency, and supporting equitable access to high quality technical assistance for rural residents. Moreover, the pilot aligns statewide priorities for wildfire preparedness and climate adaptation by enabling landowners to complete vegetation management work that might otherwise be financially or logistically out of reach. The program is equally strong in its readiness. As previously mentioned, the RCD has a robust history of developing and administering technical and financial assistance programs, with decades of demonstrated success both through organizational administration, as well as the technical capacity to deliver key aspects of this program. Additionally, the RCD has committed a portion of its internal Measure Q resources to begin developing the program infrastructure ahead of this competitive grant. This early work includes crafting application materials, defining eligible practices, outlining treatment specifications, and building the systems that will support landowners throughout the planning and implementation process. Because this foundational work will be completed before the grant period begins, the pilot can move quickly into outreach and application intake in early 2027. The pilot's focus on vegetation management practices that qualify for CEQA-NOE ensure that permitting pathways are straightforward and predictable, reducing the risk of regulatory delays. With established technical assistance workflows, seasonal vegetation management windows, and clear implementation milestones, the program is positioned to complete on the groundwork in fall 2027 and finalize reimbursements before the grant period ends in June 2028. Together, these elements reflect a project that is well aligned with community and county priorities, positioned to deliver meaningful and wide-reaching public benefits, and designed with a clear and achievable path to implementation. The pilot will demonstrate a scalable model that supports long term stewardship and rural resilience across Santa Cruz County.

TARGET COMMUNITY

The Rural Lands Assistance Program pilot is designed to serve rural landowners, neighborhoods, and community groups in high risk wildland urban interface (WUI) areas of Santa Cruz County. The pilot directly provides pathways to technical assistance, project planning, and cost share funding for priority beneficiaries include individual rural landowners whose properties contain hazardous fuel loads, unmanaged understory, and whose treatment activities would provide clear public and community benefit. The program supports these landowners with site specific guidance, environmental eligibility review, and professionally developed treatment plans that align their vegetation management goals with broader community safety and ecological objectives. Neighborhood scale groups - such as road associations, informal clusters of adjacent landowners, and Firewise communities - represent another key user group. These areas often fall outside formal defensible space requirements yet play a critical role in overall fire preparedness by strengthening the resilience of shared landscapes. The pilot supports these groups by helping coordinate multi parcel projects, establishing consistent treatment practices, and providing access to cost share incentives that enable effective collective action. Underserved

rural communities are also a priority, which the RCD will identify and evaluate specific phase. This assessment will help determine where support is most needed, what barriers exist, and how resources can be directed most equitably and effectively. As part of this work, the RCD will explore options for targeted outreach, and alignment with other assistance programs the RCD offers. This approach ensures the program's equity strategies are data driven, responsive, and grounded in actual community needs rather than a one-size-fits-all feature of the pilot is its flexibility in implementation: landowners may either complete the work themselves or hire a licensed contractor, depending on their capacity, skills, and project scope. Only invoiceable, eligible services will be reimbursed by the RCD. This structure maintains equity and affordability while ensuring that publicly funded work meets program standards and verification requirements. Beyond direct project benefits, the program strengthens community resilience and stewardship culture by fostering collaboration among neighbors, increasing understanding of fuel reduction and maintenance planning. Through outreach, education, and technical assistance, the RCD helps landowners build confidence and capacity to continue managing their lands effectively beyond the pilot period. Overall, the Rural Lands Assistance Program pilot is intentionally structured to support the people and places at greatest risk - rural residents, WUI neighborhoods, and community scale partners - while advancing the broader public benefits of wildfire resilience, community health, and safer communities across Santa Cruz County.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

The Rural Lands Assistance Program is designed to serve rural residents, neighborhoods, and community groups across unincorporated Santa Cruz County, particularly those living in wildland urban interface (WUI) areas where wildfire risk is highest. These communities include a diverse mix of long-term residents, working families, road associations, small rural neighborhoods, and Firewise or other community led stewardship groups. Many of these groups face shared challenges, such as high costs of vegetation management work, the need to coordinate across multiple parcels, and a lack of technical expertise to determine what treatments are most appropriate for their lands, that make it difficult to complete effective wildfire resilience projects without structured support. The primary community value advanced by this pilot is public safety. Many residents in the WUI rely on narrow private roads and shared access routes that are highly vulnerable to wildfire and can become dangerous during emergencies. By supporting roadside brushing, egress corridor improvements, ladder fuel reduction, and other vegetation management practices, the program enhances safe evacuation, improves access for first responders, and reduces the likelihood of fastmoving, high severity wildfire. These improvements benefit not just individual landowners, but entire neighborhoods and communities connected by shared infrastructure. In addition to safety, the program supports community identity and livability by strengthening neighborhood scale cooperation and shared stewardship. Rural communities in Santa Cruz County often have a strong sense of place and a tradition of working together to solve local challenges. The program reinforces this identity by helping neighbors collaborate on treatments along shared roads, community spaces, and multiparcel corridors, areas that commonly fall between individual responsibility and public agency authority. Through RCD led technical assistance, site evaluations, and treatment planning, residents receive consistent guidance that enables them to carry out projects that reflect local values and priorities. By placing implementation in the hands of landowners and neighborhoods, the program reinforces a long term culture of shared stewardship across rural Santa Cruz County. By making vegetation management work more accessible and coordinated, the pilot helps maintain the safety, functionality, and long-term livability of rural communities. Improved forest structure, clearer access routes, and reduced wildfire risk all contribute to maintaining the character of these communities, protecting the landscapes residents rely on, and supporting the continuity of daily life in rural areas. These collective benefits foster resilience not only in the physical landscape, but also in the social fabric of the neighborhoods the program serves. Overall, this pilot is designed for the unique needs of rural Santa Cruz County communities who face high wildfire risk but lack the resources or technical support to address it on their own. By prioritizing public safety and reinforcing community level identity and livability, the program provides meaningful, long-term value to the residents it serves and lays the groundwork for a broader rural resiliency program in future phases.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

Although this pilot phase is centered on wildfire resilience and public safety vegetation management, the program also creates meaningful environmental benefits that support climate resilience and healthier habitat conditions across rural Santa Cruz County. The selected treatments (roadside brushing, ladder fuel reduction, and light thinning) reduce fuel loads, increase spacing between vegetation layers, and lower fuel continuity. These actions support more resilient forest conditions that can better withstand drought stress, insects, and disease, all of which are intensifying under a changing climate. By reducing the likelihood of high severity wildfire, the program reduces carbon losses in standing vegetation and prevents the large, rapid carbon losses associated with catastrophic fire events. Together, these outcomes enhance the climate resilience of the surrounding landscape. The pilot also supports improved habitat quality.

High severity wildfire can eliminate understory structure, remove canopy cover, and sever conditions. By reducing fuel continuity and promoting lower severity fire behavior, the many species depend on. RCD provided technical assistance will ensure that prescription large native trees, and maintain structural diversity where appropriate, and that landowners understand both treatment methods and long term maintenance expectations. This approach improves overall forest health, increases light availability for native understory species, and reduces the risk of habitat fragmentation caused by large scale lands form a substantial portion of the habitat mosaic, these improvements contribute to resilience. The project also contributes to water quality protection by reducing the likelihood of major erosion, sedimentation, and runoff that impact local creeks and downstream habitats. By maintaining healthier vegetative cover and reducing the intensity of potential fires, the project helps protect watershed function and reduces stress on aquatic ecosystems. Because all treatments are paired with RCD led technical assistance, the positive outcomes are achieved through ecologically responsible methods. The pilot will build the permitting, planning, and operational foundation needed for future phases that will include an even broader suite of environmental benefits. The program supports both immediate environmental benefits and the long term ecological

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

Participation in the Rural Lands Assistance Program is entirely voluntary, and all implementation will be carried out directly by participating landowners or community groups. The RCD will obtain site control through a standard Landowner Participation Agreement, which grants permission for RCD staff and technical consultants to access the property for site visits, develop project plans and specifications, and verify completed work prior to reimbursement. For multiple parcels, those along private roads, the RCD will also secure written authorization from all relevant property owners or road associations to ensure that access permissions and responsibilities are clearly established. This approach maintains the RCD's role as a non regulatory, trusted partner while ensuring that all work is conducted with explicit landowner consent in alignment with project plans developed through the technical assistance process.

REQUIRED PERMITS

The pilot phase focuses on vegetation management practices that qualify for CEQA Notwithstanding Circumstances (NOC) projects, no additional permits or discretionary approvals are anticipated beyond confirming CEQA-NOE eligibility and documenting the exemption. All participating landowners will be required to follow RCD guidance designed to avoid sensitive resources and comply with applicable regulations. The RCD will prepare and file the CEQA-NOE with these grant funds.

PARTNER APPROVALS

The RCD works with voluntary landowners to participate in resource management projects through a Landowner Participation Agreement for all participants in the cost share program. This agreement outlines the terms, permissions, reimbursement terms, and the landowner's responsibilities for implementing and maintaining practices according to RCD guidance and environmental compliance requirements.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

The Rural Lands Assistance Program will be developed and delivered through a phased approach that ensures readiness, clear program structure, and timely implementation within the Measure Q grant period. The RCD has already committed a portion of internal Measure Q resources to begin foundational program development during 2026. This early effort includes creating the application framework, defining eligible practices, developing treatment specifications, and workflows that will guide landowners from initial inquiry through reimbursement. This preparatory work will position the pilot to launch efficiently once competitive grant funds become available. By late 2026, the RCD will have completed the foundation for the broader Rural Lands Assistance Program initiative and tailor the treatment activities and guidance for the proposed pilot wildfire resilience and forest health projects. During this period, the RCD will also initiate outreach to potential partners of the upcoming program, especially within high risk wildland urban interface (WUI) areas. Outreach partners such as road associations and Firewise groups. Outreach during this stage will focus on explaining program goals, describing eligible practices, and preparing landowners for the application process. The pilot program is expected to formally open to landowner applications in early 2027. Once applications are received, RCD staff and consulting Registered Professional Forester (RPF) will conduct site visits, verify CEQA NOE eligibility, and work with landowners to develop and implement treatment plans.

plans and reimbursement agreements. This technical assistance phase is integral to the treatments reflect best practices, protect ecological resources, and meet both the program's as well as the landowner's vegetation management goals. If demand exceeds available funding, RCD staff will coordinate a review process to evaluate, rank, and select projects for financial assistance. Selection will be based on transparent eligibility and priority ranking criteria, which will be finalized during program development in early 2027. Funding will be allocated fairly and that the highest priority, highest benefit projects proceed. Following program development, vegetation-management work is anticipated in fall 2027, when environmental conditions and wildlife-avoidance guidance are most favorable. Treatment implementation will be carried out either by landowners themselves or by licensed contractors hired directly by the landowner, consistent with program requirements. The RCD will maintain close communication with participating landowners to ensure treatments meet program specifications and that any required approvals - such as landowner participation agreements or road association permissions - are in place before work begins. The program will be implemented on a cost-share basis. The RCD will reimburse invoiced, eligible services, at an anticipated rate of approximately 50% of total project cost following verification by RCD staff. Most reimbursements are expected to be completed by the end of 2027, with final payments completed by June 2028, the end of the grant term. Throughout the project, the RCD will document lessons learned, refine workflows, and outcomes. By sequencing the work in these phases - pre development, technical assistance, priority review, implementation, and reimbursement - the program will deliver on its goal of building a scalable framework for long term rural stewardship across Santa Cruz County.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

Yes

TEAM CAPACITY

The RCD has technical expertise, programmatic experience, and organizational capacity necessary to deliver the Rural Lands Assistance Program. With decades of experience implementing conservation, forest health, and watershed management programs as well as administering technical and financial assistance programs - the RCD is well equipped to coordinate outreach, provide landowner support, prepare project plans, and oversee high quality implementation across multiple landownerships. The pilot builds on these strengths by formalizing and integrating the RCD's technical assistance and cost share functions into a single, streamlined program that supports landowners from planning through implementation and reimbursement. The RCD's technical team includes staff trained in forestry, fuels management, environmental science, watershed health, habitat protection, and conservation project management. Staff regularly conduct site assessments, develop vegetation management plans, and provide landowners with guidance that balances public safety goals with ecological best practices. The pilot aligns with the proposed pilot's focus on community-scale fuel load reduction. The RCD also has substantial experience navigating CEQA, programmatic environmental compliance frameworks, and local permitting pathways. Staff routinely determine CEQA NOE eligibility, prepare project descriptions, and coordinate with partner agencies. Because the pilot is intentionally scoped to practices that qualify for NOE, the RCD's existing experience ensures an efficient and predictable compliance process. The RCD also has proven capacity to administering large-scale programs including the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEET), Rural Roads program, and chipping program. These programs require staff to manage applications, conduct site evaluations, facilitate technical advisory committees for fair and transparent project review, prioritization, and selection, verify compliance, coordinate with contractors, track reimbursements, and ensure accurate and timely reporting, and timely reimbursement to participating landowners. These same administrative and technical skills are directly transferable to the Rural Lands Assistance Program and demonstrate that the RCD has the systems and experience to manage a cost share program at scale. Community engagement is an integral part of the program. The RCD works regularly with rural residents and communities to plan and implement shared stewardship projects. Staff are skilled at facilitating communication, coordinating multi parcel work, and supporting landowner goals. This collaborative approach is essential for the pilot's emphasis on community-scale fuel load reduction. Operationally, the RCD maintains robust systems for project management, fiscal oversight, and reimbursement processing. These systems have been developed and refined through years of implementing grants and conservation programs across diverse landscapes and communities. A portion of the RCD's internal Measure Q allocation is currently supporting early program development so that application materials, treatment specifications, and technical assistance processes are in place for the pilot period. Importantly, this Measure Q grant will support and expand RCD capacity to continue offering technical assistance throughout project rollout. Collectively, the RCD's technical skills, cost share administration, and established fiscal management and operational systems provide a strong foundation to implement this pilot effectively.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

The proposed pilot phase of the Rural Lands Assistance Program is highly feasible due to its intentional design, clear scope, early development work, and alignment with practices that can be implemented efficiently and within predictable operational windows. The RCD has structured the pilot around a focused set of vegetation management practices.

ladder fuel reduction, and light understory thinning) that are well understood, straightforward as effective fuel reduction and wildfire resilience strategies. With clear guidance, seasonal access, and enabling timely project readiness. Feasibility is further supported by the RCD's use of internal Measure Q allocations to build the program's foundational infrastructure prior to the competitive grant period. This early work includes materials, treatment specifications, environmental compliance workflows, and technical assistance. The program can be rolled out with the promise of funding projects, reducing administrative lead time and providing a clear pathway for participation. Once applications open in early 2027, the RCD will provide direct technical assistance to all participating landowners. This approach ensures that treatments are designed correctly, comply with environmental requirements, and meet program standards. The RCD's established experience with similar cost share and reimbursement systems allows it to efficiently manage application intake, site visits, project planning and selection, contractor coordination, verification, and reimbursement. The timeline for on the ground implementation has been structured around seasonal vegetation management windows. Treatments are expected to occur in fall 2027, a period with favorable weather, access, and ecological conditions. Because the program focuses on private road corridor areas - not highly constrained or complex project sites - implementation logistics are straightforward and compatible with available contractor capacity. Financial feasibility is strengthened by the cost share reimbursement system that allows landowners while ensuring that public funds leverage private contributions for broader community benefit. RCD reimbursement systems are already in place and have been tested through previous grant funded programs. The program has been processed efficiently and with proper documentation. The program is designed to complete implementation and issue the majority of reimbursements by the end of 2027, with final closeout by June 2028, well within the Measure Q performance period. The pilot's feasibility also benefits from strong community interest. Rural residents and neighborhood groups have expressed clear demand for assistance in treating roadside fuels and improving evacuation routes. By filling this gap through organized technical assistance and cost share support, the RCD is advancing a program that is not only feasible but also aligns with the program's defined scope, early preparation, technical rigor, administrative capacity, and alignment with community demand to ensure that the proposed pilot can be delivered efficiently, effectively, and on schedule.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The RCD will work closely with a range of established partners that play complementary roles in wildfire resilience, rural land stewardship, and neighborhood scale coordination. Key partners include the Fire Safe Council, Fire Safe Council of Santa Cruz County, and South Skyline Fire Safe Council, as well as Firewise communities and their neighborhood leaders, local fire districts, road associations, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and qualified consulting foresters and resource specialists. These entities each bring valuable insight and capacity to the project. The Fire Safe Councils and Firewise leaders offer strong on the ground connections with rural communities and landowners who are ready to coordinate fuels reduction work. Local fire districts provide knowledge of local constraints, high risk areas, and priority corridors for ingress/egress improvements. Road associations are key in coordinating multi parcel or shared infrastructure treatments and for maintaining long term road corridor stewardship. NRCS is an important partner in supporting long term natural resource management goals on private lands. The RCD has a long history of collaborating with NRCS to deliver conservation planning, technical assistance, and cost-share programs that promote soil health, habitat protection, water management, and forest resilience. Consulting RPFs will support field assessments and contribute to the development of project plans, environmental best practices, and contractor specifications. These relationships reinforce the RCD's role as a non regulatory, neutral, and trusted technical advisor to help reach diverse neighborhoods, maintain strong community engagement, and ensure that technical recommendations reflect both ecological and public safety considerations. Together, these partners strengthen the program's community driven fuels reduction projects with meaningful public benefit.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

Collaboration will be central to both the pilot and the long term Rural Lands Assistance phase. During the pilot phase, the RCD will convene partner check ins and technical consultations with the Fire Safe Council, road associations, local fire districts, and the NRCS, and technical advisors, such as RPFs. These discussions will inform treatment type selection, environmental guardrails, public safety prioritization, outreach materials, and project selection process. Throughout the application and project development stages, the program, share outreach materials, and support the coordination needed for multi parcel projects. Local fire districts may help review potential project sites, particularly those near key evacuation routes. During implementation, the work itself will be carried out by landowners, neighbors, and community groups, with the support of their selected contractor(s), consistent with the program's design to empower residents to take action on their own lands. The role of partner organizations during this phase is to facilitate communication within their own communities and neighbors, help align community-scale projects, and ensure that all participating landowners follow RCD-prepared project plans and treatment specifications. This community-driven implementation model reinforces the stewardship ethic at the heart of the program and ensures that work reflects local values and long-term responsibility for maintaining treated areas. Beyond the pilot, these relationships will continue to support long term maintenance, neighborhood level stewardship, and community readiness. The collaborative framework positions the program to scale effectively over time, expanding to include a broader suite of natural resource stewardship activities envisioned for the full Rural Lands Assistance phase.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

342140

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

150000

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

0

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

150000

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

15

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

A. Salaries and Wages Total \$ 76,435.00 Personnel costs support RCD staff time required to administer and implement the pilot phase of the Rural Lands Assistance Program. Staff will provide program coordination, technical assistance, site visits, development of project plans and treatment specifications, community outreach, grant administration, and administration of rebates. These roles are essential for a pilot that emphasizes landowner empowerment, stewardship guidance, and high quality ecological planning. B. Employee Benefits Total \$ 20,179.00 Fringe benefits are calculated at standard organizational rates and include health insurance, retirement contributions, and accrued leave. C. Travel Total \$ 648.00 Travel costs cover mileage reimbursement for staff conducting site visits, community outreach meetings, and postimplementation verification. Because the pilot program serves dispersed rural areas, reliable travel capacity is essential for providing hands on technical assistance to participating landowners. Mileage will be billed at current IRS rate. D. Contractual / Consultants - \$26,400.00 Consultant costs support Registered Professional Foresters needed to conduct field assessments, refine treatment recommendations, and ensure that each project aligns with environmental requirements and ecological best practices. These specialists are critical to delivering high quality technical assistance that empowers landowners to implement safe, effective, and environmentally responsible treatments. E. Other Direct Costs - \$150,050.00 This category captures the cost share reimbursement funds that will go directly to landowners implementing eligible vegetation management practices. These funds incentivize landowners to take an active role in caring for their land and engaging their neighbors in coordinated fuel reduction projects. Reimbursements will be tied to completed work verified through pre and post treatment documentation and adherence to RCD prepared project specifications, ensuring integrity and stewardship focused outcomes. It is anticipated that funds will support up to 15 community-scale projects, each up to \$10,000.00. Which are anticipated to be matched by the landowner or community up to 50% of the total project cost. Grant: 15 projects x \$10,000.00 = \$150,000.00 Match: 15 projects x \$10,000.00 = \$150,000.00 As well as covering the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) filing fee (\$50.00). F. Indirect Costs - \$68,428.00 The indirect costs used in the calculation of the RCDs indirect cost rate may include but are not limited to expenses associated with rent, utilities, office supplies, legal services, and annual audits. It also includes personnel costs for overseeing fiscal and personnel management and guiding overall development and implementation of RCDSCC programs and projects. All costs included in this proposal are properly allocable on the basis of a beneficial or causal relationship between the expenses incurred and the agreements to which they are allocated in accordance with applicable requirements. Further, the same costs that have been treated as indirect costs have not been claimed as direct costs. Indirect 20.00% of \$ 342,140.00 (total award) = \$ 68,428.00 Total Budget Request: \$342,140.00 Total Project Cost: \$492,140.00 This budget supports a pilot that combines technical assistance, ecological planning, and financial incentives to build long term stewardship capacity among Santa Cruz County landowners.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

The Rural Lands Assistance Program is designed to promote long term stewardship of the land. To understand their maintenance responsibilities and have the tools needed to sustain the land. While this pilot is focused only on the initial treatment of the project areas, the program requires that all applicants commit to actively maintaining their treated areas as a condition of participation and future eligibility. As part of the provided technical assistance process, each funded project will receive an RCD prepared maintenance plan for each treatment type. This plan will accompany the project plan and specifications and will outline recommended retreatment intervals, vegetation management practices appropriate to local conditions, and any relevant seasonal restrictions, such as wildlife timing restrictions or soil moisture limitations. The purpose of this plan is to ensure that the land is maintained in a healthy state and that the benefits of the pilot are sustained over the long term.

actionable roadmap for sustaining wildfire resilience and forest health benefits over time. Long term program success. Participants will be expected to carry out maintenance on a maintenance plan and their own land management goals. In future rounds, eligibility for landowner's ability to demonstrate that they have maintained previously funded work. This expectation reinforces responsible stewardship and ensures that public investments remain effective over the long term. This approach supports ongoing stewardship by ensuring that landowners remain active participants in maintaining safer, healthier landscapes over time.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

Yes

REFERENCED PLANS

[[{"name":"Santa Cruz County San Mateo County COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN ","url":"https://countyfire.santacruzcountyca.gov/Portals/36/sccfire/FireResources/CWPP-Santa-Cruz-San-Mateo-2022-update.pdf"}]]

BONUS CATEGORIES

—

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

—

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Budget Template_2026 - Measure Q COAB Competitive_FY27 FH Cost Sha.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[Measure Q Teir 2 Application_174_RCDSCC-Rual Lands Assistance Program_Letters of Support.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

[No file uploaded](#)

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Matthew Abernathy

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Matthew Abernathy, Program Manager

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 176 **Type:** Tier 2 San Vicente Redwoods Set-Aside
Project: San Vicente Redwoods - Botanical Resource Management Planning

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

176

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 San Vicente Redwoods Set-Aside

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

San Vicente Redwoods - Botanical Resource Management Planning

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Peninsula Open Space Trust

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

progress on document completion

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

—

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Lauren Korth

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Institutional Engagement Officer

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Season	Korchin	[REDACTED]
Melina	Mahood	[REDACTED]
Joanna	Devers	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

Please refer to APN numbers for parcels at San Vicente Redwoods to be covered by this Project

PARCEL NUMBER

058-011-01, 058-011-10, 058-011-11, 058-022-04, 062-101-01, 063-011-01, 063-011-09, 063-031-02, 063-

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

37.05886278117288

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.18227520681225

PROJECT JURISDICTION / CITY

Unincorporated Santa Cruz County

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

For this inaugural year of Measure Q funding, Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), in collaboration with conservation partners Sempervirens Fund (Sempervirens) and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC), seeks support for three distinct, interconnected projects at the San Vicente Redwoods property (SVR), submitted as separate but related proposals. Spanning 8,852 acres, SVR is a regionally significant property located just over the ridgeline from the San Lorenzo Valley in unincorporated Santa Cruz County. The property extends from the upper reaches of Cotoni Coast Dairies near Davenport up to Empire Grade Road just north of the Bonny Doon community. SVR provides habitat for a variety of rare, threatened, and endangered plants and animals. SVR encompasses substantial portions of four coastal watersheds: Laguna Creek, Scott Creek, Molino Creek, and San Vicente Creek. SVR falls within the more than 86,500-acre 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire burn perimeter. Conservation efforts at SVR directly serve the neighboring communities of Bonny Doon, Davenport, Boulder Creek, Felton, and Pescadero, and offer benefits to all residents in and surrounding the Santa Cruz Mountains. Measure Q funding will support efforts to minimize catastrophic wildfire threats, improve road access, enhance biological diversity, enhance public access experiences, and safeguard local drinking water. POST and Sempervirens acquired and took co-ownership of SVR in 2011, Save the Redwoods League (the League) holds a conservation easement protecting the property in perpetuity, and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC) manages public access (SVR Conservation Partners). Details about each SVR partner and our 10+ year partnership managing SVR can be found in other sections of this application. Collectively, the SVR Conservation Partners identified three priority projects for the coming year that work towards common goals of protecting neighboring communities, enhancing public access, and building climate resilience, co-developing three distinct applications for each project. The San Vicente Redwoods - Botanical Resource Management Planning will cover the entirety of the SVR property. The project will synthesize and verify pre-existing survey data from 2024 regarding invasive and rare botanicals throughout SVR. The plan will establish goals and prioritization to guide future invasive plant management and protection of sensitive and rare plants and habitats. Invasive plants can cause ecological changes that impact both plant and animal communities. This is often due to landscape transformations that reduce the adaptability and competitiveness of more desired native species. Such transformations can be caused by invasive plants' excessive use of resources and their ability to disperse, establish, and spread without human assistance or disturbance, making them problematic in natural environments. Economically, invasive species can damage animal and human health, increase the threat of fire or flooding, disrupt recreational activities, or lower land value. This plan will direct harmful invasive plant management by guiding areas and plants to prioritize and recommending several techniques to not only control the invasive species, but also to protect sensitive and rare plants and habitats. If funds remain after the development of the plan, they will be used for implementation.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Not Applicable

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT

District 3 - Justin Cummings

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The San Vicente Redwoods property is privately owned by the Peninsula Open Space Trust and Sempervirens Fund. The benefits of climate resilience work done on the property directly serve the safety of those living in the neighboring unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County and communities in close proximity - such as Bonny Doon, Davenport, and San Lorenzo Valley towns like Boulder Creek and Felton, in addition to benefits for residents throughout the County that are impacted when catastrophic wildfires break out in the region. Public access improvements on the property serve the entire county and beyond, as visitors from anywhere can utilize the sites' public trails.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

As Sempervirens' proposed work during the grant period is only for planning purposes, no permits are necessary.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA		
State Water Control Resources Board	NA		
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA		
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

DURATION AMOUNT

months12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

Sempervirens has experience carrying out similar botanical resource management planning (and implementation) on several properties, including most recently on the YMCA Camp Jones Gulch, completed in 2024. Sempervirens Fund (and partners) conducted baseline botanical surveys on the SVR property in 2023, following the CZU fire, though conditions have evolved. Based on these experiences, Sempervirens foresees the following dependencies and possible delays: • Identifying a qualified contractor with availability - Depending on contractor availability, Sempervirens may work with prior contractors or seek out a new professional with familiarity with the Santa Cruz Mountains, appropriate expertise in invasive and rare/sensitive species management, and capacity and availability. Sempervirens has begun outreach to contractors to secure availability. • Required seasonality - To determine an optimal botanical resource management plan, the contractor will need to conduct at least three seasonally-based surveys (spring, summer, fall). Sempervirens will complete at least an advanced draft plan, with the final to be completed in summer 2027. Deliverables expected during the grant period are described below. We are entering the June 2026 - May 2027 dates above as the project start and end dates, in case of weather or other unexpected delays.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

7500075000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Contractual / Consultants	\$75,000	\$0	\$0	\$75,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

Sempervirens has collaborated with SVR Conservation Partners to identify critical and pressing conservation needs for the property. In response, Sempervirens will lead the effort to develop a Botanical Resource Management Plan for the property. Sempervirens will: 1) work with a contracting consultant to assess the current condition of invasive as well as rare and sensitive plants and plant communities on the property, relying on surveys from 2023 as a starting point from which additional surveys will be conducted. Based on data gathered, the plan will: 2) direct management of harmful invasives on the property, plants which decrease biodiversity and can be fuel during a wildfire, and 3) guide the prioritization of botanical stewardship to protect rare and sensitive species. If funding remains after the plan development, Sempervirens may use any surplus to strategically monitor resources or manage high priority invasive plant populations to optimize management outcomes.

PROJECT START DATE

06/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

05/31/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Wildlife and Habitat Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

By mapping critical stewardship needs and prioritizing implementation steps, the Botanical Resource Management Planning Project will ultimately benefit water resource management, wildfire risk reduction and forest health, as invasive plants can cause problematic ecological changes. Invasives can lead to landscape transformations that reduce the adaptability and competitiveness of more desired native species. These transformations are often caused by invasive plants' excessive use of resources. Water Resource Management - SVR includes the headwaters of both San Vicente and Scott Creek. This planning process will seek to mitigate invasives, which are not naturally adapted to the local habitat and do not compete in the same way native plant species do. These invasive species can take up disproportionate nutrients and water resources, limiting the resources for native species. Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health - The proposed planning will seek to decrease vegetation that exacerbates wildfire risk, such as annual invasives like harding grass, which can accumulate a thick, flammable thatch layer. The planning will also seek to protect and strengthen forest habitat, identifying and planning to protect "core areas" with sensitive and rare plants. The plan will also guide further work in areas where the conservation partnership has already invested in managing known problematic invasives, including French broom and Old Man's Beard, Clematis vitalba. The plan will factor in the possibility/likelihood of future prescribed fire as a tool to manage invasive plants and minimize wildfire risk. Wildlife and Habitat Protection - The proposed plan will prioritize specific invasive plant occurrences for management based on ecosystem conservation values. The plan will outline steps to guide habitat protection and restoration efforts in order to re-establish natural community structures and species composition, to suppress invasive plants and promote native biodiversity, including rare and sensitive plants and plant communities. By suppressing and managing these invasive plants, we will be ready to implement efforts to provide space and resources for native plants to thrive.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project is one of three projects taking place on the property with Measure Q funds this grant cycle. Other projects applying for funding this year are the San Vicente Redwoods Public Access Improvement Project and the San Vicente Redwoods Botanical Resource Management Planning Project. Taken together, these projects serve to deliver multi-benefit outcomes, offer match funding and leveraging potential, and enhance climate resilience. As a whole, the three projects will deliver broad economic, social, and environmental benefits by expanding recreational access, protecting drinking water supplies, conserving biodiversity, enhancing wildfire preparedness, and reducing wildfire hazards. The Public Access Improvement Project enhances safe, reliable, and enjoyable recreation by mitigating moderate-risk trees and improving trail tread and conditions on the existing trails. The San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project will improve creek and tributary crossings to reduce erosion and sedimentation into San Vicente Creek, which provides drinking water to the community of Davenport. This Project also includes road improvements along critical ridgeline corridors that support shaded fuel breaks and maintain access for land management activities and emergency response entities such as CAL FIRE. The San Vicente Redwoods Botanical Resource Management Planning Project will strengthen redwood forest health, safeguard critical water resources, and reduce wildfire fuel loads across the property. This Project supports preparation for the direct management of invasive plant species that diminish biodiversity, compete for limited water resources, and can increase wildfire risk by creating ladder fuels or dense understory growth. The plan will establish priorities for botanical stewardship and recommend effective strategies to control invasive species, such as French broom, while protecting rare and sensitive plants and plant communities. Additionally, it will provide the necessary prioritization schema and treatment recommendations that will be critical to securing additional grant funding for the implementation of the outlined work. Additionally, projects at San Vicente Redwoods demonstrate strong leveraging potential. Measure Q funds for the San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project are aligned with a \$1,350,000 CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant supporting shaded fuel break installation along the same ridgeline road network improved through the creek crossing project, and \$80,000 invested by POST in securing necessary permits for the fuel break and roadwork projects. By strengthening road infrastructure and watershed protections, local funds enhance and extend the impact of significant state investment in wildfire prevention. Finally, these projects have significant climate resilience value. Road improvements will reduce stormwater impacts

during increasingly intense rainfall events, shaded fuel breaks will help reduce wildfire intensity and establish boundaries for future prescribed burns, and invasive species management will reduce ladder fuels and water competition

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Strategic Alignment - The proposed Botanical Management Planning project aligns directly with Measure Q Thematic Focus Areas, including: Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, and Wildlife and Habitat Protection. Further, as described elsewhere, the project will have benefits in line with both the California Department of Fish and Wildlife State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), and the CA Native Plant Society Rare Plant Ranking. Readiness - The project will be ready to go by the time grant funds are available based on Sempervirens' past baseline surveys, current contractor outreach, and experience conducting similar projects on nearby properties.

TARGET COMMUNITY

The San Vicente Redwoods Public Access Improvement Project will benefit a diverse group of trail users and community members who rely on the property for recreational purposes. Primary users include hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians who regularly use the trail system. The largest user group is nearby residents in the rural Santa Cruz Mountains, particularly in Bonny Doon, Boulder Creek, and Felton. SVR trails also serve visitors from the broader Santa Cruz region, as well as occasional users from the greater Bay Area and Central Coast region. In addition to recreational users, student researchers from the University of California Santa Cruz utilize the property and the Phase 1 trails to conduct field research. Improvements supported by this Project will enhance the overall trail experience by reducing potential hazard risk trees, improving trail tread, controlling erosion to enhance user experience, and enabling more reliable trail access throughout the rainy season. These benefits will also support LTSCC staff who frequently monitor and steward the trail system by reducing maintenance burdens, improving operational efficiency, and helping ensure safe and sustainable management of the property for public use. SVR is immediately adjacent to Bonny Doon, in close proximity to Davenport, and adjacent to heavily forested areas that border Ben Lomond and Boulder Creek. Together, these communities contain over 6,000 households. The shaded fuel breaks and associated roadwork projects of the San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project offer the best option to protect neighboring communities by slowing the spread of fire, providing safe dry season access for fire and emergency responders, and creating locations where backburns can be lit to reduce fuels and stop wildfire spread. Additionally, creeks within the San Vicente Watershed provide the primary and backup water supply for the City of Davenport, which includes two water intakes and miles of pipes to transfer water. Proposed erosion and sediment control work will protect water quality throughout the San Vicente Watershed, which includes the drinking water source for Davenport. The San Vicente Redwoods - Botanical Resource Management Planning will cover the entirety of the SVR property. The project will synthesize and verify pre-existing survey data from 2024 regarding invasive and rare botanicals throughout SVR. The plan will establish goals and prioritization to guide future invasive plant management and protection of sensitive and rare plants and habitats. The planning process and subsequent implementation will benefit all who access the property by contributing to the health of the watershed and to fire mitigation risk. Further, the eventual active management of invasives may contribute to a reduction in the spread of invasives to neighboring properties.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Access to nature

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Public Safety - As part of a broader property effort to install shaded fuel breaks and upgrade roads and road crossings for access, the San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project offers significant public safety benefits through forest management intended to contain wildfire, access to areas critical for addressing emergency wildfire threats, dry weather access, and land management activities. The Botanical Resource Management Planning Project will also decrease vegetation that exacerbates wildfire risk, such as annual invasives, which can accumulate a thick, flammable thatch layer. The plan will also factor in the possibility/likelihood of future prescribed fire as a tool to manage invasive plants and minimize wildfire risk. These benefits are wide-ranging and could include all residents within the surrounding Santa Cruz Mountains and beyond. Access to nature / Access to recreation - The San Vicente Redwoods Public Access Improvement Project will foster more reliable and enjoyable access to nature and access to recreation on a widely used trail system in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Hazard tree mitigation and trail tread improvement will mitigate potential risks to visitors and enhance overall trail conditions. This Project will help ensure that hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians can use the trail safely and access the trails more reliably, especially in the rainy season when downed trees and flooded trail portions are more common. As the trail system is heavily used by nearby residents in Bonny Doon, Boulder Creek, and Felton, maintaining these trails supports community members continuing to enjoy the outdoor recreation opportunities at the property and encourages connection with the redwood forest landscape through the interpretive signage that educates visitors about the redwood ecosystem and the recovery of San Vicente Redwoods following the

CZU Lightning Complex Fire.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

Creating this Botanical Resource Management Plan addressing invasives and rare and sensitive plants will allow Sempervirens to strategically and efficiently steward the property toward key aligned environmental outcomes: Water quality - Planning will help Sempervirens to mitigate invasives threatening waterways. SVR includes the headwaters of San Vicente and Scott Creek. This planning process will identify invasives not naturally adapted to the local habitat and therefore not competing in the same way as natives. These invasives can choke waterways and deplete oxygen, degrading water quality, and limiting the resources for naturally adapted natives. Habitat & Climate Resilience - The proposed planning will create management priorities centered on protecting habitats and promoting climate resilience. San Vicente Redwoods is home to large swaths of redwoods. These include the property's 912-acre Preservation Reserve containing old-growth redwoods, 3,951 acres of previously logged forest, and 3,669 acres of currently working forest. The property also supports extensive stands of stately oaks and mixed hardwoods, which provide important habitat for thousands of insect and bird species and are known for their fire resistance. SVR's matrix of habitats provides structural complexity, diverse food resources, and ecotones that promote high species richness. These habitats are associated with multiple species identified by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). Among them are endangered, threatened and/or species of special concern and sensitive species, such as the federally threatened and CDFW species of special concern steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*), federally and state endangered Central California Coast coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), federally threatened California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), state threatened mountain lion (*Puma concolor*), Anderson's manzanita (*Arctostaphylos andersonii*) which is endemic to the Santa Cruz Mountains and has a CA rare plant rank of 1B.2, and several CDFW species of special concern, including California giant salamander (*Dicamptodon ensatus*). Baseline SVR surveys document rare plants on SVR, which Sempervirens will work to protect through the proposed planning, listed by: Common Name, Scientific Name, CA Native Plant Society Rare Plant Ranking and Ranking Description: • Santa Cruz Mountains pussypaws (*Calyptridium parryi* var. *hesseae*). Rank 1B.1. Rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; seriously endangered (high degree of threat). • Santa Cruz microseris (*Stebbinsoseris decipiens*). Rank 1B.2. Rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; fairly endangered (moderate degree of threat). • Point Reyes horkelia (*Horkelia marinensis*). Rank 1B.2. Rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; fairly endangered (moderate degree of threat). • Chaparral ragwort (*Senecio aphanactis*). Rank 2B.2. Rare, threatened, or endangered in California but more common elsewhere; fairly endangered in California. This plan will support forest health by guiding strategic management of detrimental invasives, which can create ladder fuels that elevate the fire risk, damage the canopy cover and change the amount of light entering the forest floor. If funding allows, Sempervirens may begin strategically implementing portions of the work planned.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant owns the property for the proposed project

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

REQUIRED PERMITS

No permits are required for the proposed planning work.

PARTNER APPROVALS

Not Applicable

TIMELINE MILESTONES

Sempervirens anticipates the following timeline for the proposed San Vicente Redwoods Botanical Resource Management Planning Project: • Spring 2026 - Contractor selection (prior to start of grant period) • Summer 2026 - Begin inventory and mapping of invasive Plants and sensitive and rare plants based on prior surveys. Monthly check-ins with the contractor. Perform surveys (as needed) • Fall 2026 - Perform surveys (as needed), draft portions of the plan • Winter 2027 - Perform surveys (as needed), draft portions of the plan • Spring 2027 - Perform surveys, develop draft plan and draft maps/GIS • Summer 2027 - Final Plan and

Final GIS Significant milestones will include the three seasonal surveys and the draft plan with draft maps/GIS, all of which will be completed during the grant period. The completion of the final plan may fall outside of the grant period.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

Yes

TEAM CAPACITY

Sempervirens is well-qualified to carry out the proposed Project, including partnering with the designated consultant to establish project goals, conducting all aspects of project oversight and eventually translating the planning document into implementation (beyond the grant period). The Project will be led by Sempervirens' Natural Resource Manager: Beatrix Jiménez-Helsley has served as a Natural Resource Manager at Sempervirens Fund since September 2021, and prior to that served as a Land Stewardship Associate since November 2018. In her current role, she leads restoration and maintenance projects on Sempervirens Fund's San Vicente Redwoods and Filice Ranch properties. Work involves site monitoring, planning, and managing restoration projects, organizing workdays, implementing invasive weed removal, and performing biological surveys (i.e. marbled murrelet, corvids, noxious weeds). She has managed the development of property stewardship plans and several invasive plant management projects, as well as invasive animal management. From 2020-2022, she served on the Steering Committee for the Santa Cruz County Weed Management Area (WMA), in which they developed a Strategic Plan for the WMA. Prior to Sempervirens, she served as a biologist at an environmental consulting firm, where she worked throughout California performing plant and wildlife surveys, habitat restoration, construction oversight, and environmental compliance. Beatrix will be responsible for the Project, with guidance from Sempervirens' Director of Stewardship, David Cowman. David joined Sempervirens Fund in 2024 as Director of Land Stewardship. He is a California Registered Professional Forester with a decade of experience in natural resource management in the Santa Cruz Mountains. David has led large-scale restoration and wildfire resiliency projects throughout the region in collaboration with both private and public partners. Before joining Sempervirens, he served as District Forester at the San Mateo Resource Conservation District and worked for five years in the Natural Resource Management program at the Santa Cruz District of California State Parks. David holds a Master of Science degree from San José State University, where his research focused on the effects of prescribed fire on old-growth coast redwood ecosystems in Big Basin Redwoods State Park. He also holds a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies from UC Santa Cruz. At Sempervirens Fund, David leads the land stewardship program, overseeing restoration and management across Sempervirens' properties and conservation easements.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

Sempervirens Fund's proposal is quite feasible. Along with its Conservation Partners, Sempervirens owns the San Vicente Redwoods property. Sempervirens has experience working with consultants to conduct Botanical Resource Management Planning on other properties owned and stewarded by the organization. Sempervirens understands the timeframe required to complete the Project and therefore has a realistic expectation that the Project will have a draft plan by the end of the 12-month grant period.

PROJECT PARTNERS

With support from State Agencies and private fundraising, POST and Sempervirens acquired the San Vicente Redwoods property in 2011. POST and Sempervirens joined the League and LTSCC to form a partnership focused on conserving SVR. The SVR Conservation Partners co-created and adopted a Conservation Vision, a Conservation Plan, recorded a conservation easement held by the League over the property (2014), and approved a management plan based on the Conservation Plan to guide property management actions at SVR. The 2020 CZU Lightning Complex fire brought tremendous change to the landscape within SVR. Before the fire, 30 acres of SVR had been treated using prescribed and cultural burns, and more than 15 miles of shaded fuel breaks had been created. The prescribed burn areas weathered the blaze much better than the adjacent untreated parts of the property. More recent restoration progress came on September 21, 2021, when an obsolete dam was removed from Mill Creek, reopening habitat for endangered Coho salmon and other species for the first time in more than 100 years. The SVR Conservation Partners have worked diligently to assess post-fire conditions and adapt management strategies to address critical threats within the property. The partners work with the property manager and Registered Professional Forester, Hamey Woods, to provide forestry management expertise, oversee property operations, liaise with the community, and monitor site conditions. The SVR Conservation Partners have a demonstrated history of working with several collaborators throughout the region to meet various objectives, such as the Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District, CAL FIRE, Bonny Doon Fire Safe Council, Swanton Ranch, Cotoni-Coast Dairies, Big Creek Lumber, the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, biological consultants and researchers, and numerous local grading and forestry contractors. POST protects open space on the Peninsula and in the South Bay for the benefit of all. Since 1977, POST has preserved over 97,000 acres of open space in San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties. These protected lands include permanent open space, farms, and parks. As a co-owner of SVR, POST plays an active role in fuel management across the property. Founded in 1900, Sempervirens is California's first land trust, and helped found three California

State Parks. Sempervirens protects and permanently preserves redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) forests, wildlife habitat, watersheds, and other important natural and scenic features of the Santa Cruz Mountains and encourages public appreciation and enjoyment of this environment. As co-owner, Sempervirens plays an active role in managing stewardship activities throughout the property. Since 1978, the LTSCC has worked to protect, steward, and connect people to natural and working lands in the region, conserving over 19,000 acres of land to date. At SVR, the LTSCC serves as the Public Access Manager. One of the nation's longest-running conservation organizations, Save the Redwoods League has been protecting and restoring redwood forests since 1918. The League has connected generations of visitors with the beauty and serenity of the redwood forest. The League holds a permanent conservation easement on the property and leads forestry restoration projects at SVR.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

For over 10 years, the SVR Conservation Partners have convened regularly to manage the property and achieve co-developed conservation goals and outcomes. SVR is a living laboratory of forest management, ecosystem restoration, sustainable timber harvest, and current and future public access. The SVR Conservation Partners actively assess current site conditions to prioritize and implement projects that address imminent threats, align with the Conservation Vision for the property, and maximize the use of limited resources available to manage this large wildlands property. The SVR Conservation Partners have focused on revising management of the property to focus on post-fire recovery, building future wildfire resilience, creating safe public access experience for visitors of all capabilities, improving adaptivity to climate change, and active stewardship to enhance the site's biological diversity. Together the SVR Conservation Partners have completed and are in the process of completing numerous projects on the property including: removal of a dam in Mill Creek to free sediment and water flow critical for endangered Coho salmon and steelhead trout spawning habitat; creating 10-miles of shaded fuel breaks along Warrenella Road to increase wildfire resilience, create an all-season emergency access road, and provide essential access for firefighters; constructing a parking lot and seven miles of public access trails for access to nature and recreation in Santa Cruz County; and restoration of hundreds of acres of forest to reduce ladder fuels and catalyze the development of old growth conditions in the forest. The SVR Conservation Partners participate in multiple regional networks to enhance stewardship of our region. They are members of the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network (SCMSN), a collaboration of twenty-five organizations engaged in land stewardship in the Santa Cruz Mountains of California. The mission of the SCMSN is to help cultivate a resilient, vibrant region where human and natural systems thrive for generations to come. Additionally, they are part of a more recently formed organization called the Monterey Bay Climate Adaptation Action Network, (MBCAAN), a network of 30+ partners across the Monterey Bay region taking collective action to prepare communities, ecosystems, and economies for the impacts of climate change.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

75000

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

0

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

0

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

0

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

—

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Sempervirens has budgeted \$75,000 for consulting costs for this project, based on available funding. Sempervirens only seeks direct costs for this project. Internally, Sempervirens will contribute project management time from its Natural Resource Manager and other staff, and indirect costs estimated at approximately \$10,000, which are not included in the project budget.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

With stewardship of properties throughout the Santa Cruz Mountains, Sempervirens is knowledgeable about and experienced in the ongoing maintenance and monitoring of forest habitats to minimize invasive species and promote natural ecosystems. Sempervirens anticipates ongoing annual monitoring/surveying of the SVR property for invasives, with ongoing treatment efforts as needed. This is part of Sempervirens ongoing investment in and commitment to the SVR Conservation Partnership. The proposed plan will equip Sempervirens to pursue implementation funding for botanical stewardship from public and private funding sources.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

Yes

REFERENCED PLANS

—

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

This is connected to our overall San Vicente Redwoods Set-Aside through the San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project. Please see the "Secondary Prioritization Principle Narrative" section on that application (ID: 89) for more details about the CWPP.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Measure Q SVF Budget.pdf](#), [Measure Q POST Combined SVR Partner Budget.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[San-Vicente-Land-Uses-Map-10-22-21-1200x927.jpg](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[Botanical Plan Photos \(1\).jpg](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

[No file uploaded](#)

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Lauren Korth

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Lauren Korth, Institutional Engagement Officer

SIGNATURE DATE

03/12/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 204 **Type:** Tier 2 Pajaro Valley Set-Aside
Project: FoodWhat: A Justice-Rooted Homebase in the Pajaro Valley for Youth Empowerment, Belonging, & Land Stewardship

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

204

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Pajaro Valley Set-Aside

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

FoodWhat: A Justice-Rooted Homebase in the Pajaro Valley for Youth Empowerment, Belonging, & Land Stewardship

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

—

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

FoodWhat Incorporated

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Acres treated

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

5.25

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Sara French

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Development Manager

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

██████████

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

██████████

PROJECT LOCATION

96 Wheelock Rd, Watsonville, CA 95076, USA

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.97568580000000

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.76618300000000

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The Homebase site is located in Watsonville, past the Watsonville City line, in unincorporated Santa Cruz County. While the site location is rural, most of the youth served in core FoodWhat programming reside within the City of Watsonville. The majority of youth-led community-serving projects, such as our low-income Farmstand in partnership with PVUSD, take place within the City of Watsonville. FoodWhat also rents land in North County at the UCSC Farm to serve as a program site where Santa Cruz youth are predominantly served.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Not applicable

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

FoodWhat is a countywide organization, serving youth and community members predominantly from the City of Watsonville and surrounding unincorporated areas, and also from the City of Santa Cruz and surrounding areas. In Watsonville, FoodWhat serves youth coming from the following high schools: Pajaro Valley, Watsonville, Renaissance, New School, Sequoia HS, Escuela Quetzal, and Freedom School. Aptos HS and Delta HS youth are served at the Watsonville site and students from Costanoa HS and a range of small COE Alternative Education sites in Santa Cruz are served at the Santa Cruz location. FoodWhat's new Homebase, once fully operational, will serve youth, alumni (young adults), community members, and partners, largely from Watsonville where the space is located, but open to all youth and community from across the County.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

FoodWhat used home addresses of youth participants in our 2025 core program to determine how many of our program participants live in DACs. We identified each participant's census tract, then cross-referenced each census tract against California's office DAC/SDAC definitions using two sources: CalEnviroScreen 4.0 designated DAC/SDAC tracts, and California Energy Commission's statewide DAC/LIC composite map. This analysis showed: - 70 participants reside within Watsonville, and all are in DAC-designated census tracts. - 14 participants live in surrounding areas including Aptos, Freedom, Soquel, Royal Oaks, and Santa Cruz. Each of these 14 participants also resides in census tracts identified as either Low-Income or DAC using California Energy Commission and CalEnviroScreen datasets. Therefore, 100% of the 2025 youth participants (84 of 84) met the criteria of residing in a DAC.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

FoodWhat has signed a contract with a local design and architecture firm, Designing Justice + Designing Spaces (DJDS) to guide us through the development of a holistic site plan for our new Homebase project. Part of the DJDS scope of work includes conducting a planning code, zoning, and land use review, to later inform design parameters and future permit preparation. DJDS is a full-service architecture and real estate social enterprise established in 2016. Collectively, their team has decades of experience on a wide variety of project types and scales with successful permitting and approval processes in a variety of jurisdictions, including: City of Oakland Building & Planning Departments; City of San Francisco Building, Planning & Fire Departments, Mayor's Office of Disability and Office of Community Development; City of Los Angeles Building Department; Division of the State Architect. They are currently working with a client in the City of Santa Cruz so they are very familiar with our area's permitting process.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	Not sure		
State Water Control Resources Board	Not sure		
US Fish and Wildlife	Not sure		
City/County Construction Permits	Yes		
Coastal Commission	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

1

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

This project is implementation-ready and does not have any anticipated delays or dependencies. FoodWhat completed a thorough due diligence process prior to purchasing the Homebase property. This included meeting with the Santa Cruz County planning department to ensure that our intended use of the property was consistent with the permissible uses associated with the site's zoning designation. We also assessed the integrity of the septic system, the quality and outflow of the wells, and the health and integrity of the soils for farming. The land is suitable for our agricultural production and the zoning regulations allow for the many potential youth empowerment/community access program and infrastructure components. The principal design components of Phase 1 of this longer-term project will be strongly led by our contracted design team (DJDS). FoodWhat has promoted an already existing staff into the Project Manager role to liaise between FoodWhat staff and the design team, and to facilitate timely and effective collaboration between the two teams. A cadence of regular meetings has already been established to keep the project moving forward on the agreed upon timeline. The Phase 1 agricultural components of this project will be managed by our staff Land Steward and well informed by a cadre of agricultural consultants and experts, many already engaged. Established partnerships and consultants will support the ecological stewardship and organic and regenerative farming work described in this proposal. These relationships include the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, Amah Mutsun Land Trust, Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, Pajaro Valley Irrigation, and past and present agricultural extension agents, among others.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

383021

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

691217

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$133,900	\$0	\$160,537	\$294,437
Fringe Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$51,000	\$51,000
Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Contractual / Consultants	\$241,621	\$0	\$6,500	\$248,121
Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other Direct Costs	\$7,500	\$0	\$0	\$7,500
Indirect Costs	\$0	\$0	\$90,159	\$90,159

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

FoodWhat is a youth empowerment and food justice organization that serves youth struggling with the legacy of injustice, poverty, and racism. FoodWhat is a safe space where youth build relationships with land, food, and each other in ways that cultivate their empowerment and well-being. Through organic farming, nourishing meals, environmental connectedness and loving community, youth grow as stewards of their food system, community, and natural environment. After 20 years of meaningful impact, FoodWhat purchased land in Fall 2025. FoodWhat is now embarking on a holistic site planning process to transform 5.25 acres of former private property in Watsonville into a community resource of open space and belonging, where organic and regenerative agriculture go hand-in-hand with ecological restoration and youth empowerment. The Homebase Project is predicted as a 3-year endeavor. Phase 1 (2026/2027) focuses on two major initiatives: preparing the land agriculturally to welcome youth/community in Spring 2027; and partnering with a design firm to lead a 10-month community engagement/holistic site planning process, resulting in a Conceptual Site Plan that establishes a community-informed vision for the property's development, incorporates regenerative and climate-resilient design principles, serves as a roadmap for development, and catalyzes further Homebase project investment. Measure Q funding will generate multiple environmental and community benefits by creating new, culturally relevant open-space access while advancing environmental stewardship in the Pajaro Valley for generations to come, at the same time protecting water quality, restoring wildlife habitat, improving soil health, and strengthening climate resilience within the Pajaro River watershed.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, Agricultural and Work Land Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

FoodWhat is creating meaningful, equitable, culturally relevant access to open space in Watsonville, at a property recently purchased by FoodWhat and referred to as "Homebase." After a 4-year search, using criteria identified during an extensive strategic planning process and informed by county youth, FoodWhat secured a 5.25-acre piece of land that is easily accessible by public transportation, and also has the feeling of an outdoor sanctuary. This site will serve as the home for FoodWhat's intensive eight-month youth empowerment program, where marginalized youth use organic agriculture, nourishing food, and loving community as vehicles to grow on their own terms and in lasting ways. In addition to the approximately 100 high-school-aged youth who engage in FoodWhat's core programming each year, this site will also serve as a resource for hundreds more each year, including youth participants' friends and families, alumni, and scores of local community partners. This project creates a space that historically underserved youth and community members have always rightfully deserved. To ensure Homebase reflects community priorities, FoodWhat is taking a phased and thoughtful approach to development, beginning with a 10-month, community-engaged, site planning process. FoodWhat has contracted with Designing Justice + Designing Spaces (DJDS), a local firm specializing in designing for social change, to lead this process that will capture and refine the vision for Homebase. FoodWhat's Homebase will meet the needs of the community, because it will be co-designed by the community. Our ownership of this property now permanently preserves this land. In the design and planning of the overall site, our approach as land stewards is rooted in, and will include projects toward, protecting water resources, improving wildlife habitat, sustainable agriculture, and strengthening climate resilience. Currently, the property contains very little native plant diversity. FoodWhat plans to install approximately 500 feet of native plant hedgerows and establish native plant windbreaks along property fencelines. During the grant period, we will determine the precise size and location of these plantings, with installation planned for this upcoming fall and winter. These efforts will increase biodiversity and improve habitat for native wildlife. FoodWhat's commitment to organic and regenerative agriculture contributes to responsible water resource management in the Pajaro River watershed. Grant funds will support contracting with Pajaro Valley Irrigation to install an irrigation system designed to minimize water waste and reduce erosion. DJDS will also introduce the feasibility of grey water recycling into the overall site design. A surveyor will assess site contours to inform water retention planning. The installation of native windbreaks and hedgerows will help improve water filtration into the soil and reduce water runoff. Finally, our farming approach prevents harmful chemicals from entering the watershed through our farming activities. Through organic and regenerative agriculture practices, FoodWhat will protect soil health and strengthen environmental sustainability. Youth and community members will not only benefit from the healthy food and environment at the site, but will also gain education and hands-on experience with a model of agriculture and land stewardship rooted in environmental health, climate responsibility, equitable access, and community care.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Homebase provides multi-benefit outcomes by opening up 5.25 acres of land in Watsonville for youth and community access, while conducting planning and development work in this Phase 1 that protects water quality, creates wildlife habitat, enhances agricultural soils, ensures long-term sustainability, and supports climate resilience. This project is supported by other funds and offers significant leveraging potential. During the grant period, FoodWhat will complete holistic site planning, establish agricultural infrastructure, begin habitat restoration, and launch the first program year at the new site - officially opening the Homebase property to youth participants and community members. Measure Q funds will support this whole-site planning and agricultural readiness, including initial habitat restoration. Complementary funding from government sources, foundations, and private donors is already greatly secured to support youth programming, additional staff costs, and community access activities during the same period. Use of Measure Q funds toward the site design process will produce a comprehensive development roadmap that integrates financial analysis, sustainability strategies, and community-informed design. This document will guide current agricultural readiness and future implementation phases, serving as a key fundraising tool to catalyze additional public and private investment in the Homebase project. The project also delivers significant equity benefits. FoodWhat is an after-school and summer program serving struggling yet resilient youth in Santa Cruz County who are navigating the long-term impacts of systemic

racism, economic inequality, and intergenerational poverty. These young people suffer disproportionately from poverty, diminished educational success, housing insecurity, food insecurity, compromised health, trauma, mental health challenges, foster system involvement, and criminal justice system involvement. Young Trans people as well as others who identify themselves along the LGBTQIA+ spectrum also feature significantly within FoodWhat's participant population each year. FoodWhat's recruitment model relies on partnerships with area school districts, most notably with the Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) and the County Office of Education (COE). FoodWhat prioritizes serving "Tier 2" and "Tier 3" students who are identified as struggling, often marginalized, students receiving ongoing, additional socio-emotional support. FoodWhat also serves COE Alternative Education high school students in an effort to connect them with highly supportive educational models that meet their unique needs. To ensure our program is accessible to students from historically underserved communities, we work to remove socio-economic and other external barriers that have traditionally limited youth participation in these types of programs. FoodWhat youth are well paid and earn school credit, and also receive transportation support when needed. Finally, environmental stewardship at Homebase will advance climate resilience. Organic and regenerative agriculture practices and habitat restoration will improve soil health, increase water retention, support biodiversity, and reduce runoff into the Pajaro River watershed. Capital projects at the site will be designed using regenerative and climate-resilient principles, ensuring the property serves as a long-term model for sustainability and community-centered climate adaptation.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Homebase will benefit the public as a new outdoor and recreation space in Watsonville for youth and community to access and co-create belonging, engaging their minds, bodies and spirits in ways that resonate most while connecting deeply with each other and to the land. The project will also produce several positive environmental outcomes, including increased habitat for wildlife, protected water quality, improved soils, and increased access to fresh, healthy food for Pajaro Valley community members. This project is strategically aligned, and contributes well to the S.C. County Code. Current zoning for this site is A-Agriculture, intended to support farm operations on agricultural land which contribute to open space and/or rural character and may constitute a productive natural resource. FoodWhat's work also aligns with Community Health Needs Assessments conducted by local hospitals, especially in the areas of supporting behavioral health, economic security, and addressing food insecurity. FoodWhat has completed 5 years of groundwork necessary to launch this project. In 2021, with Packard Foundation support, we completed a strategic planning process creating the vision for a permanent FoodWhat home and community space, Homebase. In 2022, we completed a financial readiness study with Community Vision Capital and Consulting. In 2023 we began our land search in consultation with the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County to help identify potential sites. From 2023-2025 we continued the land search while lining up some of our most significant donors in anticipation of a capital campaign, including receiving initial investment. In Fall 2025, we identified and purchased land that would serve as the fertile ground from which the Homebase vision could grow. Following purchase, we immediately began working with an agricultural consultant, Jim Leap, toward the prep and design of the agricultural parts of this project - well and irrigation infrastructure installation, soil and fertility building, farm layout, crop planning. We also connected with various additional farm-related partners such as the RCD, Pajaro Valley Irrigation, Center for Agroecology, and others to enlist their technical expertise. Simultaneously we launched a search and succeeded in identifying and contracting with a design firm this past February, to guide this thoughtful, strategic, and community-informed process for the Homebase vision. Designing Justice + Designing Spaces, an architectural firm specializing in designing for social change, is now leading this robust and iterative engagement process to capture and refine the vision for Homebase. DJDS will also conduct building and site analysis; complete planning and zoning code review; research the historical significance of the site; and conduct sustainability planning. Using insights from this 10-month process, DJDS will help complete Phase 1 of the Homebase Project by producing a final Conceptual Site Plan that outlines a strategic development approach and comprehensive vision for the property, based on this staff-, youth-, partner- and community-informed process. This plan, to be completed in late Fall 2026, will include cost estimation for construction/implementation at a rough order of magnitude. That will lead to Phase 2 of this project - architectural drawings, permitting, and construction - to begin later in 2027.

TARGET COMMUNITY

With two decades of history, there are now 20 years of FoodWhat alumni, their families, and their friends, and thousands of local community members who have accessed youth-grown produce sourced from the FoodWhat Farm, plus a constellation of local government and community partners, all of whom will have access to this site, in ways that will be co-designed through the 10-month community engagement process described in this proposal. FoodWhat understands deeply the need for co-designed spaces of belonging and culturally relevant access to nature for Pajaro Valley community members. We know that just because people have access to nature or community places of gathering, does not mean those places are comfortable or will serve community needs. The Pajaro Valley has unique proximity to essential natural and community resources, however, due to systems of oppression and extraction, many community members, and especially young people, cannot actually access, or do not have a connection with, these resources. Youth in general share that they often spend significant time inside on social media, which can negatively affect their mental health. FoodWhat alumni have expressed a desire for a place to bring their friends and families, where they can spend time together in nature and grow, harvest, and enjoy healthy foods. And our community partners have shared that they would like more places for gathering and holding community events. FoodWhat's Homebase will be a place

that meets the needs of the community, because it will be co-designed by the community. To best understand the unique youth population FoodWhat serves, the following is our 2025 demographic survey detailing: 88% of participants identify as Latine and 83% live in Watsonville, the most economically disadvantaged area in our County. The majority of youth participants are low-income (95%); 21% experience food insecurity; 28% experience housing insecurity. Many FoodWhat youth have compromised mental health and have experienced previous trauma. 45% come from farmworker families. FoodWhat youth face additional barriers, including disability (12%), involvement with the criminal justice (11%) and foster care (11%) systems, and diminished educational success (43% have been suspended or expelled from school). 15% identify as LGBTQIA+. FoodWhat serves struggling yet resilient youth in Santa Cruz County who are navigating the long-term impacts of systemic racism, economic inequality, and intergenerational poverty. With the recent natural disasters that the Pajaro Valley community has experienced, this Homebase site is poised to become a key resource for climate resilience while also providing a community space for centering, celebration, and wellness. Homebase will be a place of stability - a needed sanctuary and resource for youth empowerment and community wellness for generations to come.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

FoodWhat intentionally creates meaningful space where young people define and cultivate their empowerment, liberation, health, and well-being. Our programs provide co-created safe space for health-building opportunities to youth who face systemic barriers based on race, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or geography. By serving youth in the Pajaro Valley - the area of Santa Cruz County with the highest rates of poverty, food insecurity, and poor health outcomes - FoodWhat advances health equity where it is needed most. FoodWhat directly contributes to increased well-being by addressing physical, mental and emotional health through growing, cooking, eating, and distributing nourishing food together while building community. At the end of our 2025 program year, 100% of FoodWhat youth reported they were eating more healthy food, and 85% shared their mental health had improved from being outside and on the farm. In terms of empowerment, 96% of youth shared that being in FoodWhat made them feel they had the power to create positive change in their lives, and 96% reported increased self-confidence. In 2025, FoodWhat youth distributed 8,528 lbs of fresh, healthy food through our Affordable Farm Stand, food donations, and Family Produce Boxes, extending health and well-being benefits out to the greater community. Homebase will allow us to expand these programs. FoodWhat youth will experience daily access to nature during on-farm programming on Homebase. In 2025, 100% of youth reported they were enjoying the outdoors more as a result of their time at FoodWhat, and 92% said they felt more connected to the land. FoodWhat's Homebase offers expansive views of the surrounding hills, mature trees, and the atmosphere of a nature retreat. During strategic planning, these open-space qualities were identified as essential attributes for the Homebase property search. This place will serve as a long-term community access point to nature. Notably, FoodWhat youth will not just access nature on the property; they will build sustained relationships with it over eight months of hands-on engagement with soil, fresh air, wildlife, and plants, at a site intentionally designed to meet their needs. Homebase will also offer access to recreation, with members of the FoodWhat community invited to use the land as a place of outdoor gathering, where they can come for a picnic, bring their friends or families, spend the day, harvest food, and enjoy the curative impacts of being on the land. Finally, the FoodWhat farm will support healing and strengthening community identity - especially for young people. Despite the Pajaro Valley's strong agricultural economy, Watsonville is designated a food desert under USDA standards, and 21% of FoodWhat youth in 2025 identified as food insecure. Although 45% of FoodWhat youth come from farmworker families who help grow food for the region and beyond, many cannot access the same fresh food they harvest. Homebase offers an alternative model - of dignity, access, and community stewardship. At FoodWhat, youth actively shape their local food system, cultivate their empowerment, and begin to see themselves as agents of change within their community.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

FoodWhat's commitment to organic and regenerative agriculture will contribute to improved water quality within the Pajaro River watershed. Through the regenerative farming practices employed on the farm - including cover cropping, compost application, soil-building and disease-preventative crop rotations, low-till soil preparation methods, informed site contouring, and chemical-free cultivation - FoodWhat will increase soil organic matter, strengthen soil structure, and support long-term agricultural productivity. These practices protect local waterways from agricultural runoff while contributing to climate resilience through improved water retention and carbon storage. FoodWhat is also committed to serving as informed and responsible environmental stewards of this land in perpetuity. Part of the design process for Homebase includes contracting with the Amah Mutsun Land Trust (AMLT) to conduct an integrated cultural resource survey on the property, as well as do research into the cultural context of the land in relation to surrounding known Indigenous cultural features and other historic landmarks. Findings from this work will inform long-term stewardship and restoration strategies that protect and enhance both cultural and ecological resources. FoodWhat will also consult with the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC) to plan for restoration of a riparian section of the property. Additionally, from planting native plants, important habitat will be created for birds, pollinators, and other native wildlife while

strengthening ecological connectivity along the riparian corridor. Additional native plantings throughout the property - including hedgerows, windbreaks, and habitat plantings identified during the site planning process - will further increase biodiversity and improve ecosystem function. These native plant corridors will provide critical habitat and movement pathways for pollinators, birds, and beneficial insects while increasing native plant diversity on the site. They will also stabilize soils, reduce wind erosion, improve water infiltration, and enhance carbon sequestration. FoodWhat's organic and regenerative agriculture practices and habitat restoration actions will all contribute to climate resiliency. In addition, the capital improvements for the site will be designed using resilient and regenerative design principles as informed by our design contractors who have expertise in sustainable and climate-resilient design. Throughout the design process, DJDS will facilitate conversations that help FoodWhat establish clear sustainability goals for the property's overall development. FoodWhat is also actively seeking partners and consultants with specialized expertise in the latest climate resiliency knowledge to advise on best practices for construction, programming, and community engagement throughout our site design process. Beyond the direct environmental benefits, the Homebase site will serve as a living demonstration of climate-resilient and environmental land stewardship. Youth in FoodWhat programming will engage in organic agriculture, habitat restoration and hands-on stewardship activities, and other visitors and users of the site will be able to learn about these components as well. Further, FoodWhat youth will not only have the opportunity to learn about and participate in environmental stewardship, they will also build a sense of identity as environmental stewards themselves through repeated, meaningful, culturally relevant engagements on the land.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant owns the property for the proposed project

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

REQUIRED PERMITS

This proposal encompasses Phase 1 of our Homebase development project, which will include extensive design planning for capital and site improvements, plus establishing initial agricultural infrastructure like irrigation, and initiating native habitat plantings. It will not include any work for which permits are required. During the planning process, DJDS will conduct a thorough review and analysis of the local planning and zoning code at the site. This will include meeting with the City's planning department and other relevant parties to evaluate land use options, clearly understand all requirements (such as set back distances), and review all previous plans and proposals in the area. There will be follow up meetings with the planning department to determine whether the subsequent phase development actions identified during the community engagement process will be considered Categorically Exempt from CEQA or not. The current zoning for this site is A-Agriculture, which is intended to support farm operations on agricultural land which contribute to open space and/or rural character and may constitute a productive natural resource. The intended use of the property is consistent with the permissible uses associated with the site's zoning designation. We know that future phases of this project will require permits from the County Planning Department, Fire Department, Department of Environmental Health, and the Building Department. DJDS will pursue these permits on behalf of FoodWhat in the next phase of this project - implementation of the whole site plan - which includes detailed architectural design and construction. As shared previously, DJDS is a full-service design, architecture, and real estate social enterprise, based in our region. Collectively, their team has decades of experience on a wide variety of project types and scales with successful permitting and approval processes.

PARTNER APPROVALS

There are no approvals or agreements needed to complete this project, as FoodWhat owns the property outright.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

The Homebase Project is predicted to be a 3-year endeavor with three phases. There are two major initiatives we will be focusing on in Phase 1 during the 2026/2027 grant period: 1) Prepare the land agriculturally to welcome youth/community into the space for programs in Spring of 2027; and, 2) Engage in a robust design process including significant community engagement yielding a comprehensive whole site plan (programmatic and infrastructure) for Homebase. The major milestones for these initiatives as set forth in this grant application would be the following: 1) The agricultural land is prepared in time for youth programming beginning in March of 2027. This preparation includes the installation of the necessary irrigation system, procurement of all farm materials, and the initial farmland preparation (cover crop, bed layout establishment, and soil amendment). Further milestones include the hiring of a Facilities Manager as new necessary staffing. Activities would also include current Land Steward staff time in planning and implementation of the agricultural land initiative. Note: there are many other related activities for agricultural production that will concurrently be established that are not part of this Measure Q grant proposal but will also be met in this timeframe and will

not in any way encumber the grant deliverables or milestones. 2) At the conclusion of the 10-month design process, DJDS will deliver a finalized Conceptual Site Plan in November of 2026. Activities culminating in this major milestone over this timeframe will be initiated as follows: I - Predesign | Due Diligence and Data Collection -Planning Code and Zoning, Land Use Review -Building & Site Analysis -Sustainability Assessment -Precedent/Historic/Cultural Research & Experience Sharing II - Community Engagement, Visioning and Analysis -Creative Community Engagement (5 Visioning + 2 Designing + 2 Feedback Sessions) -Coding, Analyzing and Storytelling -Sustainability Planning III - Integration and Concept Design -Holistic Site Planning -Creative Community Engagement (2 Feedback Sessions on final draft concept) IV - Concept Design | Iteration and Finalization -Presentation of Final Conceptual Site Plan (November 2026) This Conceptual Site Plan will include cost estimation for construction/implementation at a rough order of magnitude. That will lead to Phase 2 of this project - architectural drawings, permitting, and construction - to begin later in 2027 - with a predicted duration of 2 years to completion. 3) Youth programming will launch on the site in March 2027. One full season (Spring) would be run in this grant period, and there would be the opportunity for data collection on this inaugural user group on Homebase.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

Yes

TEAM CAPACITY

FoodWhat is now in its 20th year of operation and is understood in the Pajaro Valley and across the County as an established, trusted, and highly impactful organization. In 2018, FoodWhat was the subject of a five-year external research study that found the organization has an immense impact on youth wellbeing, identity formation, agency building, and place-based learning. This affirmed the strength of FoodWhat's model, which centers experiential learning rooted in youth's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual connections to the environment, their community, and themselves. This holistic approach is a key contributor to FoodWhat's lasting impact, with the majority of alumni reporting that their experience with the program profoundly shaped their lives. FoodWhat has spent several years diligently building the team needed to bring the Homebase vision to reality. In 2023, FoodWhat restructured and added program staffing to bolster capacity and prepare for growth. In 2024, we invested heavily in our internal capacity and systems in advance of our Homebase Project, hiring an Organizational Manager and a Development Manager. In 2025, we strengthened our Board of Directors and created a new Director of Resources and Relationships position to expand fundraising and partnership development. 2026 will see the hiring of a Facilities and Maintenance Manager for operations at the new Homebase property. In sum, over the past few years we have significantly invested in ensuring internal infrastructure, staff capacity and organizational development are strong, sustainable, and ready for this project. Additionally, FoodWhat has soundly met its fundraising goals and obligations for each of the past 20 years. All of our program staff who work directly with the youth are people of color, all speak Spanish, and four of six are Latine. Staff reflect the cultural backgrounds, neighborhoods, socioeconomic experiences, and identities of the youth we serve. This shared lived experience strengthens relationships and ensures that our programs remain effective and culturally relevant. FoodWhat's team also brings strong technical expertise. Several staff members have extensive organic farming experience, including training through the UC Santa Cruz Center for Agroecology. FoodWhat's Board of Directors includes local farmers, land managers, and experienced advocates for children, immigrants, and community rights. The organization maintains strong financial and administrative systems and has successfully managed government grants of similar size and complexity as Measure Q. FoodWhat also holds strong partnerships with community organizations and technical experts, providing a broad network of support for the successful implementation of the Homebase project.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

FoodWhat has the organizational capacity, partnerships, and planning foundation necessary to successfully implement this project. The proposed project site has already been purchased as of Fall 2025; this, coupled with our 20 years of programmatic and community engagement experience, our strong organizational capacity, and our established network of technical and community partners, lend a very high degree of feasibility to this project. FoodWhat completed a thorough due diligence process prior to purchasing the Homebase property. This included meeting with the Santa Cruz County planning department to ensure that our intended use of the property was consistent with the permissible uses associated with the site's zoning designation. We also assessed the integrity of the septic system, the quality and outflow of the wells, and the health and integrity of the soils for farming. Part of the reason why this land was chosen was for its direct southern exposure that will support our agricultural production potential. We know the land is farmable and that it can contain our intended youth empowerment and community access programming. This project includes the engagement of our already identified and contracted design team of experts. The holistic site design is currently underway. FoodWhat has promoted an internal staff member into the project manager role to liaise between FoodWhat staff and the design team and to facilitate timely and effective collaboration between the two teams. A cadence of regular meetings has already been established to keep the project moving forward on the agreed upon timeline. FoodWhat has also already established the partnerships and contacts that will support the ecological stewardship and organic and regenerative farming work described in this proposal. This includes relationships with the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, Amah

Mutsun Land Trust, Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, Pajaro Valley Irrigation, and agricultural consultants and extension agents, among others. FoodWhat has nearly 20 years of experience as a community serving nonprofit delivering our youth empowerment programming, with our impact affirmed by an external research study, as well as two decades of anonymous post-program surveys that consistently show strong youth outcomes in the areas of deep relationships with healthy food, economic security through paid whole-person job training, socioemotional health, environmental connectedness, and personal empowerment. FoodWhat also has the organizational and staff capacity to carry out the proposed project after years of intentional investment and planning for this moment of expanded community engagement. Finally, FoodWhat has experience successfully securing and managing government grants of similar sizes from the California Natural Resources Department and the California Volunteers Youth Service Corps program.

PROJECT PARTNERS

In the advancement of Phase 1 of the Homebase Project there are two sets of primary project partners: those supporting the agricultural and ecological land-based goals, and those leading and participating in the 10-month design process. For the agricultural and ecological parts of the project, some partners are new relationships and some are long-standing FoodWhat partners or collaborators. Jim Leap - primary sustainable and organic agricultural consultant. As shared earlier, Jim has been partnering with FoodWhat since late last Fall, after the Homebase land purchase. Jim was the UCSC Farm Manager for twenty-one years, from 1990 to 2010, then continued teaching/mentoring under the USDA Beginning Farmer/Rancher program. Jim is currently farming while serving as a sustainable ag educator and small-scale organic ag advisor. Jim has been familiar with FoodWhat, offering mentorship and technical support since our inception in 2007, and now serves as our primary ag consultant on this project. There are a number of other experts and resources that we are currently building relationships with to inform and guide the natural resources goals of this project. Two primary examples include the Resource Conservation District on hedgerows, compost, and water conservation, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service on soil science. We are actively working on creating further partnerships or consultations on IPM (integrated pest management) and habitat conservation and diversity. We have consulted with Gary Peixoto at Pajaro Valley Irrigation on early potential iterations of the irrigation installation; reached out to the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency to connect on hydrology consultation; and contracted with Michael Bridgette at Bridgette Land Surveying to produce a comprehensive land survey. Our Board President is Tony Serrano, President and General Manager of JAS Family Farms Organics, and has been consulting on all aspects of this project, particularly the agricultural and sustainability components. Another FoodWhat Board Member, Brendan Quirk, is the Land Protection Manager at the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and was previously part of their Stewardship and Access departments. Brendan has been consulting on the initial land acquisition and now offers support on natural resource management, project planning and management, and conservation strategies. Darryl Wong, Director of the Center of Agroecology at UCSC, has been a longstanding FoodWhat partner who serves as a connector to relevant research, best practices, faculty, funding opportunities, farmers, and technical advising, on this project. FoodWhat is contracting with the Amah Mutsun Land Trust (AMLT) to conduct an integrated cultural resource survey on the property, as well as to do research into the cultural context of the land in relation to surrounding known Indigenous cultural features and other historic landmarks. Findings from this work will inform long-term stewardship and restoration strategies that protect and enhance both cultural and ecological resources. FoodWhat is also actively seeking partners and consultants with specialized expertise in the latest climate resiliency knowledge to advise on best practices for construction, programming, and community engagement throughout our site design process.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

FoodWhat has contracted with Designing Justice + Designing Spaces (DJDS), a Bay Area firm specializing in designing for social change, to lead and collaborate on this iterative community engagement process that will capture and refine the vision for Homebase. Their team has decades of experience on a wide variety of project types and scales. DJDS will lead this 10-month process of community engagement and holistic site planning, resulting in a final site plan that establishes a community-informed vision for the property's development. The plan will incorporate regenerative and climate-resilient design principles, include financial and implementation analysis, serve as a roadmap for development, and catalyze further investment in FoodWhat's Homebase project. This Conceptual Homebase Whole Site Plan will be finalized in November of 2026. There is a wide range of folks who will be invited into these community engagement sessions. They include FoodWhat staff and Board, current FoodWhat youth participants and recent alums, older FoodWhat alums, longstanding FoodWhat ambassadors, organizational partners from across many sectors, politicians, community members and other individuals. Also, because this project is so intersectional, there is a unique opportunity for FoodWhat to not only increase and deepen our partnerships and collaborations, there is also great opportunity to cross-pollinate partnerships and collaborations that don't normally surface. This is due to Homebase's weaving of youth empowerment, land stewardship, ecological sustainability, restoration, climate resilience, and community wellness. FoodWhat is adept at holistic and intersectional collaboration.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

383021

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

0

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

308196

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

308196

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

—

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

FoodWhat is respectfully requesting \$383,021 in Measure Q funding, of total project costs of \$691,217, toward the Phase 1 goals of this Homebase Project as proposed here. The Homebase Project is predicted as a 3-year endeavor. Phase 1 (2026/2027) focuses on two major initiatives: preparing the land agriculturally to welcome youth/community in Spring 2027; and partnering with our identified and contracted design firm, DJDS, to lead a 10-month community engagement/holistic site planning process, resulting in a Conceptual Site Plan that establishes a community-informed vision for the property's development, incorporates regenerative and climate-resilient design principles, serves as a roadmap for development, and catalyzes further Homebase project investment. From our initial financial readiness planning, and conversations with DJDS, and based on the aspirations informing the final Conceptual Site Plan, the multiple phase Homebase project's estimated cost is between \$7.5M and \$9M. We have already had great success in raising an initial \$2M in privately fundraised capital, \$1.5M of which was spent within this Phase 1 to secure the site (Homebase land purchase). The main budget items in this proposal include: Staff time to effectively meet project goals and timelines -50% of Co-Executive Director of Strategy's time is utilized on the overall management and execution of the Homebase project including both agricultural and design initiative work -25% of Co-Executive Director of Program's time utilized on Program Planning toward the Spring 2027 goal of welcoming of youth/community onto the site -25% of Operations and Special Projects staff time spent on Project Managing Phase 1 -30% of Land Stewards time is spent getting the agricultural component of this project up and running by Spring 2027 -100% of Facilities and Maintenance Manager time will go toward this project, once hired. Full contracted cost for scope of work, due upon completion, for Designing Justice + Designing Spaces, as the essential lead on the 10-month design engagement Irrigation system installed by Parajo Valley Irrigation Bridgette Land Surveying for completion of a comprehensive land survey Necessary equipment costs (tractor, implements, irrigation supplies) for agricultural readiness; and Youth stipends and participant food for the design engagement sessions. There are no permitting costs associated with this proposal. Our request is intentionally below the maximum allowable award to remain flexible within the Measure Q funding framework. While total Homebase project costs exceed the amount requested in this application, additional funding sources, including other grants and fundraising, will support full implementation. This approach ensures the project can move forward even if a final Measure Q award amount differs from the request. The included Contractor/Consultant line items are essential to achieving the proposed outcomes on the proposed timeline. While over 50% of Personnel costs are supported by other funding sources, FoodWhat would engage in a conversation about those Personnel costs included for funding in this request if required.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

FoodWhat's intention since the initial strategic planning leading to this Homebase project has always been to create a community resource that will last for generations to come. Now as owners and stewards of the property, we take seriously that our stewardship commitments are made in perpetuity. In the Homebase financial readiness work completed with Community Vision Capital and Consulting in 2022, one of the outcomes was to establish a significant maintenance fund to ensure long-term property maintenance and upkeep. While funding for maintenance has not yet been secured, our planning process will produce a long-term maintenance and operations plan, complete with costs, which our development team will weave into both our future capital campaign as well as our annual development plans. We are investing in a new dedicated staff position - Homebase Facilities and Maintenance Manager - in 2026, who will be responsible for ensuring that the site remains safe, accessible, and well maintained. As part of our planning process, DJDS will supply FoodWhat with a maintenance guide for the Homebase property, which will include a monthly operations checklist, annual budget template, and emergency response plan, providing a framework for long-term operations and maintenance. FoodWhat will sustain ecological benefits achieved during this project through ongoing annual maintenance of the land, which will include, among other practices, weed management, seasonal mowing, cover cropping the production fields to maintain soil fertility and structure, and ensuring that water runoff meets our ecological priorities, as well as maintaining the equipment and tools we'll use to steward the land.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

No

REFERENCED PLANS

—

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness, High Fund Leverage, Long Term Stewardship Commitments

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

This project demonstrates exceptional readiness, with necessary groundwork completed to allow further implementation to begin as soon as a grant agreement is signed. FoodWhat owns the property for the proposed project and does not rely on additional permitting, land acquisition, or partnership agreements to get started. The contract with the design firm that will produce the Conceptual Site Plan is signed, and the initial stages of our work together has begun. FoodWhat is already in conversations with key partners about how they will contribute technical expertise to the agricultural and ecological restoration components of the project. The FoodWhat team and organizational systems needed to carry out this project successfully are in place. This project exhibits high fund leverage, with 45% of the total project costs already secured via privately fundraised capital. Additionally, FoodWhat is not including indirect costs in the Measure Q funding request, in order to use Measure Q in the most efficient way possible. FoodWhat is committed to a long-term stewardship approach that will ensure the environmental improvements and community access created through this project are maintained and strengthened over time. The Homebase project is a goal FoodWhat has been working toward for years, and the intention behind land ownership has always been to create a community resource that will last for decades and generations to come. The strong primary partnerships needed to successfully meet the goals of this Phase 1 are already in place and established, and additional potential partners and collaborators have been predominantly identified. In terms of regional significance, the Homebase project is well positioned to serve as a model for developing community spaces of belonging that facilitate education, youth empowerment, connection to land, ecological benefits, and climate resilience. Santa Cruz County youth and community members who visit and participate in programs at the site not only have the opportunity to learn about and participate in environmental stewardship, but they will also build a sense of identity as environmental stewards themselves through repeated, meaningful, culturally relevant engagements on the land. These are experiences and avenues of empowerment they will take with them into their own homes, businesses, parcels of land, etc., as we have seen FoodWhat alumni apply their experiences at FoodWhat to diverse aspects of their lives. FoodWhat is also a core member and longtime leader in Rooted in Community (RIC), a regional and national network of organizations cultivating youth leadership in food, land and climate justice. FoodWhat has been, and will continue to be, a model and inspiration for other RIC sites and local nonprofits interested in the intersection of sustainable agriculture, environmental stewardship, community and individual well-being, justice and youth empowerment.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Measure Q Tier 2 Budget_FoodWhat.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[2026FoodWhatMeasQ \(1\).pdf](#), [AMLT letter of support for Food What \(1\).pdf](#), [FoodWhat - Measure Q 2026 - PVPISA LoS.pdf](#), [FoodWhat - Measure Q 2026 - PVPISA LoS.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[Organizational Information_FoodWhat.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[Copy of IMG_6353.jpg](#), [FoodWhat_!.png](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Sara French

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Sara French, Development Manager

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 212

Type: Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

Project: Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Project Feasibility Study & College Lake Borrow Study

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

212

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Project Feasibility Study & College Lake Borrow Study

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

PAJARO REGIONAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT AGENCY

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

The Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study will identify a suitable design for new setback lev

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Forrest Revere

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Environmental Program Manager

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Mark	Strudley	[REDACTED]
Roxanne	Grillo	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

1 Lee Rd, Watsonville, CA, 95076

PARCEL NUMBER

Multiple parcels, please refer to submitted supplemental maps

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.88446814617166

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.77321777343775

PROJECT JURISDICTION / CITY

Unincorporated Santa Cruz County, Multiple jurisdictions / Countywide

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

This grant cycle, PRFMA is seeking funding for two projects within South County. The first project is located at College Lake which is in the unincorporated Santa Cruz County and outside of the Urban Service Boundary. The second project is located on the lower Pajaro River from Highway 1 to the river mouth / Pacific Ocean near Pajaro Dunes and is also considered unincorporated Santa Cruz County. Both of these areas are primarily agricultural use with neighboring critical facilities/infrastructure and adjacent open space/parks.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Not Applicable, multiple locations as referenced in above physical location description

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT

District 2 - Kimberly De Serpa, District 4 - Felipe Hernandez

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Both of these project areas are adjacent to primarily agricultural use lands with critical facilities/infrastructure within the immediate area (Pajaro Valley Water College Lake Intake and Weir, Highway 152, Holohan/College Rd, and City of Watsonville Wastewater Treatment Plant). The Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Project Feasibility Study will serve the greater south county by improving flood risk from Highway 1 to the river mouth, the community upstream is directly benefited by this project with an expanded hydraulic corridor for flood flow conveyance and ecological improvements. The College Lake Borrow Study project will serve to benefit the greater community that is also served by PV Water as it will provide the potential for increased freshwater storage and ecological enhancements while also improving flood risk potential through the use of suitable soils for new setback levees within the lower Pajaro River watershed.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Yes

DAC/SDAC NOTES

For the College Lake project area, it is mapped as a Minority Area (Geoid2: 6087122500) per SC County GIS - Gen'l Plan Disadvantaged Communities. CalEnviroScreen 4.0 %: 53. Identified as Disadvantaged per US CEQ Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. For the Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study grant match request, project area is mapped as severely disadvantaged per OEHHA (State of CA) census tract 6053010101, severely disadvantaged community. Population 5,024, CalEnviroScreen 4.0 % Score 80.64. Tract 6087122300. CalEnviroScreen 4.0 %: 69.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

CEQA/NEPA in process

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

PRFMA is well experienced with permits (local, state, and federal) due to the ongoing USACE Pajaro River at Watsonville Project, Pajaro River-Salsipuedes Creek Habitat Restoration Project, Stream Maintenance Plan development, and other Capital Improvement projects. We understand the uncertainty in review timelines with some of the respective regulatory agencies and typically engage very early with our partners for project coordination and feedback. PRFMA has strong relationships with these respective regulatory agencies and continues to communicate with the appropriate staff on various items, as needed. We will process our CEQA exemption upon a notice for award of Measure Q funds. The projects that are seeking 2025-26 Measure Q funding are shovel ready projects that will build off other ongoing projects currently in design & construction with the Agency.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	Yes		Pending Grant Award, would pursue acquiring immediately
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

DURATION AMOUNT

quarters

5

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

PRFMA has two projects that are both shovel ready, pending Measure Q funding. The Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Project Feasibility Study is currently undergoing a consultant selection process and PRFMA anticipates awarding the contract to perform this feasibility study at its next Board meeting, April 2026. The feasibility study is a grant match and must be completed by end of Q1 2027. The College Lake Borrow Study already has a consultant prepared to conduct the necessary geotechnical investigations and prepare a report but all work is dependent upon Measure Q grant funding as the agency is requesting the local match through Measure Q. Work would be completed within the timeframe of the project, which will run through Q1 of 2027.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

390000

390000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$50,000
Contractual / Consultants	\$340,000	\$0	\$0	\$340,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency (PRFMA) requests Measure Q Tier 2 - Community Impact Grant funding to support two critical projects that will reduce flood risk, improve ecosystem health, and support groundwater sustainability in South County: (1) the Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Project Feasibility Study - Grant Match and Staff Participation (\$280,000) and (2) the College Lake Geotechnical Borrow Study (\$110,000). All proposed work will occur within South County and address urgent flood risk and water quality challenges facing this community and region. Communities in the lower Pajaro River watershed are protected by levees constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in 1949 that currently provide only eight-year flood protection, among the lowest levels for a federal flood control system in California. The Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study will address a critical gap in the federally funded Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project by evaluating flood resilience improvements downstream of State Route 1 to the Pacific Ocean. This reach faces river flooding, sea level rise, tsunami risk, and seismic hazards, and includes vital infrastructure such as the Watsonville Wastewater Treatment Facility. The College Lake Borrow Study will evaluate whether locally sourced soils can support levee construction for the Pajaro River-Salsipuedes Creek Confluence Restoration Project. If viable, this effort would reduce project costs and emissions, expand water storage at College Lake, improve habitat, and strengthen regional flood protection through coordinated local resource management.

PROJECT START DATE

PROJECT END DATE

06/01/2026

03/24/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, Coastal Protection and Adaptation, Agricultural and Work Land Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

The Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study and College Lake Borrow Study align closely with the priorities outlined in the Santa Cruz County Measure Q Vision Plan. As climate-driven natural hazards continue to intensify, there is a shared regional goal to implement resilient and sustainable projects that protect communities and natural resources for future generations. The projects proposed by the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency (PRFMA) support this goal by evaluating alternative setback levees along the lower Pajaro River - from Highway 1 to the river mouth near Pajaro Dunes - and identifying locally available borrow material to construct necessary new levees within the watershed. These projects will provide immediate benefits to the South County community by improving flood resilience and evaluating levee improvements designed to convey a 100-year flood event. Existing levees along the lower Pajaro River currently provide protection equivalent to approximately an 8-year flood event. In addition to improved flood protection, the proposed setback levees will expand the river corridor, create new floodplain and riparian habitat, and support groundwater recharge within the Pajaro Valley Groundwater Basin. Consistent with the Measure Q Vision Plan, these projects address the program's four core project prioritization principles. First, they provide multi-benefit outcomes, including improved flood protection, expanded floodplain habitat for species restoration, and enhanced water quality and groundwater recharge potential through Engineering with Nature principles. Second, they demonstrate strong match funding and leveraging potential, including a FEMA BRIC grant supporting the Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study and a NOAA Habitat Restoration grant supporting work near the Pajaro River-Salsipuedes Creek confluence. Third, they address equity impacts by focusing investments in South County, a historically underserved and disadvantaged community that has experienced repeated flooding events and faces elevated environmental burdens as identified in CalEnviroScreen 4.0. Finally, the projects advance climate resilience by evaluating flood management infrastructure capable of accommodating larger flood events and changing hydrologic conditions. Improved flood protection along the lower Pajaro River will also help protect critical community infrastructure, including the Watsonville Wastewater Treatment Plant, which serves approximately 60,000 residents, and key transportation corridors such as Highway 1 and West Beach Road. These routes provide essential regional access to coastal areas and public open space for South County residents. The projects will also expand habitat opportunities within the watershed, benefiting species such as tidewater goby, steelhead, California red-legged frog, western pond turtle, nesting songbirds, raptors, and pollinators. By integrating Engineering with Nature principles, PRFMA aims to develop sustainable riverine environments that support long-term ecological health with minimal maintenance requirements. Finally, these improvements will help protect the highly productive agricultural lands of the Pajaro Valley. The region is one of the most productive agricultural areas in the nation, with annual revenues exceeding \$1 billion and producing approximately 80% of the nation's strawberries. Strengthening flood protection along the Pajaro River will help safeguard these vital farmlands and the communities that depend on them.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The existing levees protecting communities in the lower Pajaro River watershed were constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in 1949 and have not been significantly improved since their original construction. Today, these levees provide only an eight-year level of flood protection - among the lowest levels of protection of any federal flood control system in California. In addition, the levees do not meet modern engineering standards for design, size, or structural integrity. Poor soil composition further reduces levee stability and increases the likelihood of future failures. Flood risk in the region has been well documented for decades. The first major levee breach occurred in 1955, and a federal project to address the deficiencies was authorized in 1966. However, nearly six decades passed without sufficient federal investment to implement improvements. During that time, the Pajaro Valley experienced flooding in eight different water years, leaving communities and the regional economy vulnerable to repeated damage. Some of the most severe flooding events occurred in 1995 and again in March 2023, when levee breaches upstream of California State Route 1 inundated the entire Town of Pajaro. The 1995 flood resulted in two fatalities, flooded more than 3,300 acres of prime agricultural land, caused nearly \$100 million in damages, and displaced thousands of residents. In 2023, flooding forced the evacuation of approximately 1,700 people and required more than 100 emergency rescues. Total damages from the 2023 event have not yet been fully quantified but are expected to significantly exceed those from 1995. Flooding in the Pajaro Valley also threatens one of the most productive agricultural regions in the nation. The Watsonville-Salinas agricultural area produces more strawberries than any other region in California, and California accounts for nearly 80 percent of the nation's strawberry production. These farms rely heavily on groundwater resources and stable flood management infrastructure. In response, USACE initiated the Pajaro River at Watsonville Flood Risk Management Project, which will construct

setback levees, floodwalls, and habitat enhancements to provide 100-year flood protection to the City of Watsonville and the Town of Pajaro. However, these improvements are limited to areas upstream of State Route 1 and will address only about half of the original 26-mile levee system. Without improvements to the State Route 1 bridge and downstream levees, the project could create a hydraulic bottleneck that increases flood elevations downstream, highlighting the need for complementary investments throughout the lower Pajaro River system.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study and College Lake Borrow Study projects meet all of the secondary prioritization principles as detailed in the Measure Q Vision 5-year plan. These projects have direct, and indirect, public benefit, strategic alignment, and readiness. The Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study will address a critical gap in the levee system that is not being improved as part of the US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) Pajaro River at Watsonville Project. While the upstream areas of the Pajaro River, and tributaries, are being improved with new setback levees the lower section of this river system from Highway 1 to the river mouth (Pajaro Dunes) is not being improved. As such, the PRFMA is pursuing this feasibility study as part of a BRIC grant (leveraging grant match funds) to improve this section of the river system. Without the Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Project, a hydraulic choke point at Highway 1 may increase flood risk for the downstream section within the identified project area. Relatively recent flooding events in the region have highlighted the need for critical investments in the watershed and this project will address one of those critical needs. At the same time, through the widening of the existing river corridor with new setback levees, the project will identify areas for increased habitat which will result in improved ecological benefits for this environmentally diverse area. Completion of this feasibility study by Q1 of 2027 will then allow PRFMA to pursue necessary design & construction grants to advance this project. As part of the College Lake Borrow Study, there is the potential to use the borrow material (soil) for constructing new setback levees at the Pajaro River & Salsipuedes Creek (Confluence) which will result in approximately 30 acres of new habitat and floodplain area being added into the lower Pajaro River watershed. This additional acreage will provide both ecological benefits and improved hydraulic capacity within the river corridor which will result in improved flood risk protection for the greater watershed. The Pajaro River & Salsipuedes Creek Habitat Restoration project is funded by a separate NOAA grant and PRFMA will leverage Measure Q funds to source local borrow material for these new setback levees. This project is aligned with many referenced local, regional, and state plans as detailed in the Option Bonus section of this application. That includes the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and California Water Plan Update 2023.

TARGET COMMUNITY

The Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study and the College Lake Borrow Study are intended to benefit the greater South County community in southern Santa Cruz County, including residents, agricultural producers, businesses, and visitors. These studies support long-term regional priorities related to groundwater sustainability, flood risk reduction, habitat enhancement, and climate resilience, which are essential for maintaining the environmental and economic viability of the region. For the Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study, the primary target community includes the agricultural community along the lower Pajaro River corridor, residents living within and adjacent to the project area, and the approximately 60,000 residents and businesses served by the Watsonville Wastewater Treatment Plant. Additional beneficiaries include visitors to Palm Beach State Park and the Pajaro Dunes coastal area, including many lower-income residents from the City of Watsonville who rely on these public coastal resources for recreation. For the College Lake Borrow Study, the target community includes the regional agricultural sector and residents in South County communities such as the City of Watsonville, the community of Pajaro, and surrounding unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County. Visitors and recreational users of the South County area would also benefit from improved flood resilience and ecosystem health. Significant portions of South County Santa Cruz County are designated as Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) and Severely Disadvantaged Communities (SDACs). These communities face disproportionate flood risks, groundwater challenges, and climate vulnerabilities. By advancing studies that inform flood protection, groundwater sustainability, and habitat restoration, the proposed work aligns with regional equity priorities and the goals of the Measure Q program to support projects that provide meaningful benefits to disadvantaged populations.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

The Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study and College Lake Borrow Study will improve flood resilience for South County communities within the lower Pajaro River watershed through the evaluation and development of setback levees that expand the river corridor, increase flood flow capacity, and restore natural floodplain function. These improvements are particularly important for the Pajaro Valley, which has experienced multiple significant flooding events in recent decades that have impacted residents, businesses, and agricultural lands. By increasing the capacity of the river system and restoring portions of the floodplain, these projects will help reduce flood risk to surrounding communities while also enhancing environmental and open space values along

the river corridor. Beyond flood protection, expanding the river corridor and restoring riparian habitat can create opportunities to enhance community value areas by improving the natural landscape, supporting wildlife habitat, and providing potential future opportunities for passive recreation and environmental stewardship. Increasing the resilience of the river system also helps protect critical community assets, including housing, transportation corridors, and agricultural operations that are central to the regional economy. Community outreach and engagement remain integral components of the Agency's project development process. As the Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study progresses, the Agency will host community workshops and stakeholder meetings to share project information, gather local knowledge, and incorporate community feedback into project alternatives. Similarly, the College Lake Borrow Study will help inform future outreach efforts associated with the NOAA-funded Pajaro River-Salsipuedes Creek Habitat Restoration Project at the river confluence. The Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency recognizes the importance of meaningful community engagement and values the input of local residents, landowners, and partner organizations. Continued collaboration with the community will help ensure that future project designs reflect local priorities while advancing flood protection, environmental restoration, and long-term resilience for South County.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

The Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Project Feasibility Study and College Lake Borrow Study will advance water quality improvements, habitat restoration, and climate resilience within the lower Pajaro River watershed. As noted in the metrics section of this application, several environmental performance metrics can be attributed to these projects; however, final quantitative outcomes will be refined during subsequent engineering and design phases. The Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study will evaluate potential setback levee alignments along the lower Pajaro River, creating opportunities to reconnect the river to its historic floodplain. Expanding the floodplain will provide space for new riparian and floodplain habitat while improving natural floodwater storage and conveyance. These enhancements also support groundwater recharge and may help reduce saltwater intrusion within the Pajaro Valley groundwater basin. Through the application of Engineering with Nature principles, the project will also evaluate the incorporation of secondary low-flow channels and multi-benefit habitat features that improve ecological function while maintaining flood management capacity. These habitat improvements will support sensitive and special-status species known to occur in the watershed, including the California red-legged frog and western pond turtle. Expanded riparian corridors and restored floodplain areas will also provide important foraging and nesting habitat for raptors and a variety of migratory and resident bird species, while enhancing overall ecosystem connectivity along the lower Pajaro River corridor. Similarly, the College Lake Borrow Study will evaluate opportunities to beneficially reuse soils from the College Lake area to support the construction of new setback levees in critical locations along the lower Pajaro River system. Identifying and repurposing suitable borrow material will help implement levee improvements while minimizing the need for imported fill. Soil removal from the College Lake area may also improve groundwater recharge potential within the local watershed, creating additional hydrologic benefits for the Pajaro Valley groundwater basin. The preferred use of this borrow material would support construction of new setback levees near the Pajaro River and Salsipuedes Creek confluence. These improvements have the potential to create approximately 30 acres of new floodplain and riparian habitat adjacent to the City of Watsonville and the Town of Pajaro - areas that are otherwise heavily urbanized and have limited opportunities for habitat expansion. Restoring floodplain connectivity in this location would provide valuable habitat for sensitive species while also improving floodplain function and riverine processes. Expanding the river corridor through setback levees and floodplain restoration will provide the space necessary to accommodate climate-driven hydrologic changes, including more frequent and intense storm events associated with atmospheric rivers. By increasing floodplain capacity and restoring natural river processes, these projects will enhance ecological resilience, improve flood flow conveyance, and support long-term environmental health within the Pajaro River watershed.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Applicant owns the property for the proposed project, Applicant has a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

REQUIRED PERMITS

The College Lake Geotechnical Investigation will not trigger any significant, or adverse impacts, and will request a Categorical Exemption for the geotechnical soil investigations under Categorical Exemption Class 6 (Information Collection - Section 15306). If soils from College Lake prove to be viable for use in the Confluence Project, permitting for the Confluence Project will be handled

through a separate funding and regulatory authority outside of Measure Q. AB 876 State permitting exemptions will apply to the Confluence Project. The Bridge to Bay feasibility study will not trigger any impacts or CEQA review thus no CEQA documentation is necessary at this time for the project, or as part of the Measure Q guidelines. A Notice of Exemption can be filed under Section 15262 as a Statutory Exemption - Feasibility and Planning Studies. Implementation of the Bridge to Bay Project is ultimately exempt from CEQA under AB 876.

PARTNER APPROVALS

The Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency has a strong standing relationship with Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency and has been in early communication regarding the College Lake Borrow Study. Access would be authorized under existing land rights and easements within this area to conduct the geotechnical investigation. For the Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study no approvals or agreements are necessary to accomplish this project.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

Both of these projects are "shovel" ready projects that are ready to be implemented should they be identified as Measure Q awardees. Both projects would likely be completed by the end of Q1 2027. Supplemental project timeline has been submitted for further clarification and detail.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

Yes

TEAM CAPACITY

The Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency is a nimble and well-experienced agency that is successfully implementing several other similar projects within the lower Pajaro River watershed. Sufficient timeline and budget has been incorporated into these applications to accommodate Agency staff time. The Agency is well-equipped to properly manage grant funds and comply with necessary reporting and other requirements. The Agency recognizes the urgency of these projects and continues to prioritize its mission which is to implement projects that reduce flood risk from the lower Pajaro River and its tributaries.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

The Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study and College Lake Borrow Study represent early-phase planning and technical investigation efforts that are feasible to implement within the proposed schedule and will support future flood risk reduction projects in the lower Pajaro River watershed. These efforts build on decades of planning and recent federal investment to address long-standing flood vulnerabilities in South County. The existing levee system along the lower Pajaro River was constructed by USACE in 1949 and currently provides only an approximately eight-year level of flood protection. This limited capacity has contributed to repeated flooding in the Pajaro Valley, including major levee breaches in 1995 and 2023 that inundated the Town of Pajaro and displaced thousands of residents. While the federal Pajaro River at Watsonville Flood Risk Management Project will construct setback levees upstream of State Route 1 to provide 100-year flood protection to Watsonville and Pajaro, the federal project does not address the bridge crossing or levees downstream of State Route 1. The Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study will evaluate alternatives to address these remaining flood risks and ensure that improvements upstream are not constrained by downstream hydraulic limitations. Both proposed efforts qualify for streamlined environmental review because they consist of feasibility-level analysis and information gathering. The College Lake Geotechnical Investigation will request a Categorical Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Class 6 (Information Collection - Section 15306) for geotechnical soil investigations. If soils from the College Lake area are determined to be suitable for use in the Pajaro River-Salsipuedes Creek Confluence Project, permitting and environmental review for that project will occur separately under other funding and regulatory authorities. Implementation of the Confluence Project is expected to qualify for state permitting exemptions under Assembly Bill 876. Similarly, the Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study qualifies for a CEQA Statutory Exemption for feasibility and planning studies pursuant to Section 15262. No environmental impacts will occur as a result of the feasibility study itself. Future project implementation associated with the Bridge to Bay study is anticipated to qualify for CEQA streamlining under AB 876. The Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency maintains a strong working relationship with the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency and has already initiated early coordination regarding the College Lake Borrow Study. Access for the geotechnical investigation will be authorized through existing land rights and easements within the study area. No additional approvals or agreements are required to complete the Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study. Both projects are ready to proceed upon award of Measure Q funding and are expected to be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2027. The Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency has extensive experience implementing flood risk reduction and habitat restoration projects in the lower Pajaro River watershed and has the staff capacity and financial management systems necessary to successfully administer grant funds and complete the proposed work. These studies represent critical steps toward implementing long-term

flood resilience solutions for South County communities.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency maintains College Lake as part of the College Lake Integrated Resources Management Plan and holds a combination of easements and land rights within the project area for the College Lake Borrow Study. They will be a contributor to the overall project, providing input and resources through previously completed studies for the project area. The Land Trust Santa Cruz County owns and maintains farmland better known as Beach Ranch which is adjacent to the Pajaro River Bay to Bridge Feasibility Study project area. They continue to be a partner and will be closely involved at critical stages in the feasibility study with the anticipation being able to leverage mutual goals for the adjacent lands. City of Watsonville owns and operates the Wastewater Treatment Plant which is adjacent to the Pajaro River Bay to Bridge Feasibility Study project area. They will be a contributing partner in this project. The County of Santa Cruz and Pajaro Storm Drain Maintenance District (PSDMD) manages the Pajaro River Lagoon Breaching Program and the West Beach Road drainage ditch, which all coalesce with the Pajaro River and Watsonville Slough system. PSDMD is also spearheading an ecosystem restoration project on the lower Watsonville Slough under an Army Corps Continuing Authorities Program authorization. PRFMA's Bridge to Bay Project will interface with PSDMD's operations and objectives in the lowermost portion of the watershed through long-standing partnership and member-agency relationship as part of the PRFMA JPA. The Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency (PRFMA) has longstanding relationships with all of these partners both on a professional and personal level. PRFMA is a relatively new agency, created in 2021, however the relationships with these partners extends back decades. There is a very long history and partnership between these partners. They are routinely engaged on other neighboring projects being managed by PRFMA as well.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

The Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency (PRFMA) will closely collaborate with several partners on the Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study to effectively plan for and leverage opportunities that result in successful projects for this area. One of those partners is the Land Trust Santa Cruz County who are the relatively new landowners of Beach Ranch (near Pajaro Dunes). Land Trust Santa Cruz County is pursuing similar restoration efforts near the river mouth and PRFMA has already been in close communication with this partner to evaluate the opportunities for new setback levees and habitat restoration potential in this region. Similarly, PRFMA will continue to collaborate with the City of Watsonville who manage the Watsonville Wastewater Treatment Plant (serving approximately 60,000 people). Because the wastewater treatment plant is in close proximity to the project area, careful consideration shall be given to protect this critical infrastructure. Additionally, PRFMA continues to collaborate with CalTrans and AMBAG on the BIRDs project which is evaluating the need to raise Highway 1 which was impacted most recently by the 2023 storms where flood flows began to undermine the overcrossing. The PRFMA will coordinate overall project management with PV Water being an integral partner for the success of the College Lake Borrow Study. PV Water will provide PRFMA with access to the lands so that a geotechnical investigation can be completed. Findings from the field work will inform PRFMA of the potential to use the College Lake area soils for constructing necessary new setback levees along the lower watershed. Borrow sourcing would not impact PV Water operations as the area is managed by a newly constructed weir that maintain necessary water levels within the area. Repurposing of soils in this area provides the potential for improved groundwater recharge and freshwater storage at College Lake by deepening portions of the lands. There is a significant amount of collaboration between respective agencies within this portion of the watershed and PRFMA is committed to continuing those partnerships as these projects progress.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

390000

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

0

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

0

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

0

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

0

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Santa Cruz County, on behalf of PRFMA, applied for a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant in federal fiscal year 2021. The federal grant funds were awarded and obligated in 2024, with Santa Cruz County acting as a sponsor subrecipient for PRFMA, and PRFMA acting as a secondary subrecipient responsible for all Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study implementation and grant management activities. Since the application and original project budget was submitted in 2021, feasibility study costs have risen significantly due to inflation and other market conditions. Because PRFMA's annual revenue stream is statutorily purposed for operations and maintenance, any funding for capital improvement project planning and implementation must be funded by outside grants. As a result, PRFMA is seeking grant funds to cover the local cost share for the FEMA BRIC grant as well as funds to pay for staff time to participate and support the Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility Study. This feasibility study will focus on identifying solutions to reduce flood risks from State Route 1 to the Pacific Ocean, protecting surrounding communities, prime agricultural lands, and critical infrastructure. The overall objective of this Project is to conduct a feasibility study that will fulfill the requirements of the BRIC grant and result in an evaluated array of alternatives with at least one that can move forward. This feasibility study will provide data to support grant funding applications for the future design, permitting, and construction phases of the project. In addition to the gap in levee improvements being supported by USACE downstream of Highway 1, there are additional gaps on the Santa Cruz County side of the Pajaro River system upstream of its confluence with Salspuedes Creek and including the lowermost portions of the left bank (eastern) side of Salspuedes Creek itself. To respond to this need, PRFMA is also pursuing another complimentary project called the Pajaro River-Salspuedes Creek Confluence Restoration Project, which seeks to setback portions of the existing levee system in the confluence area and reconnect an approximately 30-acre area of floodplain with the river system. This project's feasibility, design, and construction is mostly funded by the NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Adaptation Grant Program and a State Department of Conservation Multi-benefit Land Repurposing Grant. However, the main cost driver for the setback levees in this project is the sourcing of appropriate and clean fill material that must meet USACE levee fill specifications. While the above-mentioned grants will allow PRFMA to make serious headway in implementing this project, recent market conditions have made levee fill material incredibly expensive such that existing grants will not fully satisfy this component of the project budget. As such, the College Lake Borrow Study will complete a geotechnical investigation of the project area performing both hollow-stem auger borings (approximately 20 ft in depth) and test pits (approximately 10 ft in depth) to obtain a report that will be used to evaluate the potential opportunities to repurpose soils for new setback levees.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

The PRFMA is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the lower Pajaro River levees and is currently embarking on the development of its first Stream Maintenance Plan which will support ongoing maintenance needs within this system. The Agency's annual revenue stream is statutorily purposed for operations and maintenance and Engineering with Nature design principles shall be incorporated into these projects to reduce overall annual maintenance cost obligations. The Agency conducts routine maintenance and these improvements will not create an additional financial burden on the Agency.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

Yes

REFERENCED PLANS

[{"name":"Pajaro River Watershed Resiliency Plan ","url":"https://www.pvwater.org/prwrp"}, {"name":" Santa Cruz Emergency Operation Plan","url":"santacruzcountyca.gov/Portals/0/County/OR3/pdfs/SCC_EOP-Base Plan_091224_Approved.pdf"}, {"name":"2014 Santa Cruz County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan","url":"https://www.santacruzirwmp.org/plan-update-2014"}, {"name":"2019 Pajaro River Watershed Integrated Regional Water Management Plan","url":"https://www.pvwater.org/images/about-pvwma/assets/irwm/_Pajaro_IRWM_Plan_Update_2019_v03-24-20_compiled-web.pdf"}, {"name":"2020 California Adaptation Planning Guide","url":"https://www.caloes.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/Hazard-Mitigation/Documents/CA-Adaptation-Planning-Guide-FINAL-June-2020-Accessible.pdf"}, {"name":"2021 Santa Cruz County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan","url":"https://cdi.santacruzcountyca.gov/Planning/PolicyPlanning/LocalHazardMitigationPlan.aspx"}, {"name":"2021 Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy","url":"https://resources.ca.gov/-/media/CNRA-Website/Files/Initiatives/Expanding-Nature-Based-Solutions/FINAL_DesignDraft_NWL_100821_508-opt.pdf"}, {"name":"2022 Santa Cruz County Climate Action and Adaptation Plan","url":"https://www.santacruzcountyca.gov/Portals/0/County/OR3/CAAP/2022%20Climate%20Action%20and%20Adaptation%20Plan%20(CAAP).pdf"}, {"name":"2022 Pathways to 30x30 California","url":"https://www.californianature.ca.gov/"}, {"name":"2023 California Water Plan Update","url":"https://water.ca.gov/Programs/California-Water-Plan/Update-2023"}, {"name":"PRFMA's Strategic Plan","url":"https://www.prfma.org/strategicplan"}, {"name":"Pajaro Valley MLRP","url":"https://www.pvwater.org/pajaro-valley-mlrp"}]

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness, High Fund Leverage, Long Term Stewardship Commitments

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

The Pajaro Valley has been historically underserved. The existing levees, built in 1949 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, currently provide a level of protection equal to an approximately 8-year flood event and have not been significantly improved since they were constructed. In the 1950s the region faced two significant flooding events, after which the levee system was identified in the mid-1960s as requiring upgrades. However, the project did not make significant headway until recently when the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency (PRFMA) was formed to manage flood risk along both sides of the river, which forms the county boundary between Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. Congressional funding was subsequently obligated to improve the aging infrastructure through the Pajaro River at Watsonville Project, which will construct a combination of setback levees and floodwalls to reduce flood risk along the lower Pajaro River and its tributaries. While this federal investment represents a major step forward, the project does not address the full extent of improvements needed throughout the levee system. At the local, state, and federal levels there is broad recognition of the need to modernize the Pajaro River flood management system, and it has taken years of partnership and advocacy to begin advancing these investments in South County. The projects for which PRFMA is seeking Measure Q funding will help fill critical gaps in the levee system where no dedicated funding source currently exists. These projects will follow Engineering With Nature principles that integrate flood risk reduction with ecological restoration, focusing on solutions that enhance habitat, improve water quality, and support long-term environmental resilience. Improvements will focus on critical remaining components of the river system, including the confluence of the Pajaro River and Salsipuedes Creek and the river mouth near Pajaro Dunes - areas that are increasingly vulnerable to climate-driven impacts such as sea level rise, atmospheric rivers, and saltwater intrusion. The Pajaro Valley is a recognized disadvantaged community with limited open space, constrained coastal access, and a long history of flooding that has disproportionately affected farmworkers and low-income residents. By addressing key vulnerabilities in the flood management system, these projects will not only reduce flood risk but also protect homes, agricultural lands, transportation corridors, and critical habitat. Measure Q funding represents a vital opportunity to advance equitable climate resilience investments in South County while leveraging the substantial state and federal funding already committed to the Pajaro River system. Together, these projects will strengthen regional flood protection, restore ecological function along the river corridor, and ensure that the communities of the Pajaro Valley receive the level of protection and environmental investment they have long needed and deserve.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Measure Q - Budget.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[Measure Q - Project Site Map.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[2026-03-12-Measure.Q-LoS_PRFMA PV Water.pdf, Ltr of Support Measure Q Grant - SC Farm Bureau.pdf, PRFMA_MQ2026_LOS_RCDSCC_signed.pdf, WW](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

[Measure Q - Timeline.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

[Measure Q - CEQA Environmental Documentation.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[Measure Q - Organizational Information.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

[No file uploaded](#)

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Forrest Revere

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Forrest Revere, Environmental Program Manager

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 228

Type: Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

Project: Watsonville Fire Training Center Pavement Replacement & Water Reclamation System Feasibility Study

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

228

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Watsonville Fire Training Center Pavement Replacement & Water Reclamation System Feasibility Study

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

City of Watsonville

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

Completed of feasibility study and conceptual design

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

1 Completed feasibility study

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Tamara Vides

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

City Manager

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Corey	Schaefer	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

Airport Blvd, Watsonville, California, 95076

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.92176160957700

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.79863771973100

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

—

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Council District 3-Maria Orozco

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The proposed project will serve the City of Watsonville at the Watsonville Fire Department Training Center, supporting firefighter training activities and public safety programs that benefit Watsonville residents and the surrounding community.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

Used both the State's CalEnviroScreen (65-81 percentile) and the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (listed as Yes-This tract is considered disadvantaged because it meets more than 1 burden threshold AND the associated socioeconomic threshold.)

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

The City of Watsonville has extensive experience managing permitting and environmental review processes for public infrastructure projects. While permits are not required for the feasibility study phase, the study will identify potential environmental review and permitting requirements that may apply to a future design and construction phase.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA		
State Water Control Resources Board	NA		
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA		
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

Upon receipt of grant funds, the City Council will formally accept the award and authorize staff to initiate the consultant procurement in accordance with the City of Watsonville Purchasing Policy. Staff will prepare and release a Request for Proposals (RFP) to select a qualified consultant to complete the feasibility study. Project initiation is dependent on completion of the City's procurement and contracting process, including proposal review, consultant selection, and contract approval. Once a consultant is under contract, the feasibility study is expected to be complete within 3-4 months. The study will evaluate the feasibility of replacing asphalt surfaces on the training center grounds with concrete and assess the potential installation of a water reclamation storage system at the Fire Department Training site. The study will develop conceptual design options, identify potential

environmental review requirements, and prepare planning-level cost estimates. Completion of the study will provide the technical analysis and cost information needed to advance the specific improvements evaluated in the study into final design, funding acquisition, and eventual construction.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

100000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

100000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Contractual / Consultants	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$100,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The City of Watsonville Fire Department (WFD) seeks funding to conduct a feasibility study evaluating infrastructure improvements at the Watsonville Fire Department Training Center. The study will assess the replacement of aging asphalt training surfaces with concrete and evaluate the installation of a water reclamation storage system designed to capture and reuse water used during fire training activities. The feasibility study will evaluate the existing site conditions, develop conceptual design options, identify potential environmental review requirements, and prepare planning-level cost estimates. Replacing asphalt with concrete will improve the durability, safety and functionality of the training grounds while evaluating opportunities to improve stormwater management and reduce runoff impacts. The study will also evaluate the feasibility of capturing and storing water used during training exercises for reuse, supporting more efficient water use and reducing demand on potable water supplies. The Watsonville Fire Department Training Center serves as a regional training resource supporting WFD personnel as well as partner fire agencies throughout Santa Cruz County. The facility also supports community programs such as the WFD Summer Youth Academy, providing training and career exposure opportunities for local youth. Watsonville has a population of 51,320, a median household income of \$78,393, and approximately 14.7% of residents living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau); investing in this feasibility study will advance shovel-ready public safety infrastructure that ensures equitable emergency response capabilities, supports workforce development opportunities, and promotes responsible water resource management that benefit the Watsonville community.

PROJECT START DATE

07/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/30/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

This project supports Measure Q's Water Resource Management priority by advancing planning for infrastructure improvements that enhance on-site stormwater management and water reuse at the Watsonville Fire Department (WFD) Training Center. The proposed feasibility study will evaluate replacing aging asphalt training surfaces with concrete and installing a water reclamation storage system to capture and reuse water generated during fire training exercises. The WFD Training Center serves as a critical public safety training hub, used by multiple agencies for mandated firefighter training, the Santa Cruz County Regional Fire Academy, and community programs such as the WFD Summer Youth Academy. These activities require significant water use as part of essential hands-on training evolutions, making the evaluation of water capture and reuse strategies a key component of sustainable facility planning. The study will assess existing site conditions, identify potential environmental review requirements, develop conceptual design options, and prepare planning-level cost estimates. It will quantify the approximate impervious surface area of the training grounds, estimate the potential stormwater runoff capture, and evaluate the volume of training water that could be reclaimed for reuse, providing measurable data to guide implementation. By evaluating strategies to improve on-site water efficiency, the project aligns with Measure Q objectives to improve stormwater systems, protect local water quality, and reduce potable water demand. While the project is planning focused, the feasibility study will provide shovel-ready recommendations to enable future construction of water efficient infrastructure. The study also considers operational benefits, including supplemental water availability for responding agencies during emergencies given the facility's proximity to moderate to very high fire hazard severity zones. The WFD Training Center also supports career exposure and workforce development opportunities for youth from the Watsonville community. Watsonville has a population of 51,320, a median household income of \$78,383, and approximately

14.7% of residents living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau). Investing in this feasibility study advances equitable public safety infrastructure, promotes responsible water resource management, and reduces operations costs through water reuse. In summary, this feasibility study integrates on-site water resource management, public safety training, and community equity into a single planning effort. It produces measurable, site-specific data to guide implementation of resilient, water-efficient infrastructure that benefits the Fire department, program participants, and the Watsonville community, while directly advancing Measure Q water resource management priorities and supporting climate resilience.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The City of Watsonville Fire Department (WFD) proposes a feasibility study at the Watsonville Fire Department Training Center to plan critical infrastructure improvements that deliver multi-benefit outcomes, including replacement of aging asphalt training surfaces with concrete and installation of a water reclamation storage system. This planning project advances Measure Q priorities by integrating operational efficiency, water resource management, climate resilience, public safety, and community equity into a single project. The study will evaluate the existing site conditions, develop conceptual designs, identify environmental review needs and prepare planning-level cost estimates. It will quantify the training center's impervious surface area, evaluate stormwater runoff capture potential, and evaluate water reuse opportunities from training activities. This study will produce actionable, site-specific data to guide infrastructure investments that simultaneously improve facility durability, reduce potable water demand, enhance operational efficiency, and ensure critical training continues even under drought or water supply constraints. This multi-benefit approach also supports community programs such as the WFD Summer Youth Academy which provides career exposure and workforce development opportunities for local youth. The study ensures that these programs continue to operate efficiently and safely while infrastructure improvements promote broader sustainability goals. The project also demonstrates match funding and leveraging potential. The feasibility study will generate shovel-ready plans, cost estimates, and design concepts that position the City to pursue future construction funding through Measure Q funds, federal and state grants, and local capital resources. By producing actionable planning outputs that support multiple benefits, the study maximizes the return on future investment. Climate resilience is enhanced by evaluating water-efficient design infrastructure and reuse strategies that reduce potable water demand and mitigate localized drainage impacts. The facility's location near moderate to very high fire hazard severity zones underscore the importance of resilient training infrastructure that can function under emergency conditions, supporting both WFD and regional public safety partners. In summary, this feasibility study prioritizes multi-benefit outcomes by producing planning level solutions that simultaneously enhance public safety, operational efficiency, water resource management, and climate resilience. The study positions Watsonville to implement infrastructure improvements that maximize tangible benefits for the Fire Department, program participants, and the community, while directly advancing Measure Q priorities.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The City of Watsonville (City) proposes a feasibility study at the Watsonville Fire Department (WFD) Training Center to evaluate infrastructure improvements, including replacement of aging asphalt training surfaces with concrete and installation of a water reclamation storage system. This study aligns directly with Measure Q secondary prioritization principles by providing clear public benefit through actionable planning information and demonstrating strong readiness for future implementation. Although no construction will occur at this stage, the study generates tangible value for the Watsonville community by producing data and technical analysis that informs future infrastructure decisions. The feasibility study will evaluate opportunities to better manage water generated during firefighter training activities while identifying infrastructure improvements that support responsible water use and climate resilience, consistent with Measure Q water resource management priorities. The study will identify feasible options, estimate costs, and evaluate water capture and reuse opportunities, enabling the City to make informed decisions about resource allocation. By providing clear, evidence-based recommendations, the study supports improved planning for the training center, water efficiency, and operational efficiency. These outputs create visible community benefit by ensuring that subsequent investments are targeted, cost-effective, and aligned with community needs, particularly for youth and underserved residents. The feasibility study demonstrates strong readiness. It can begin immediately upon funding and will produce conceptual designs, planning-level cost estimates, and technical documentation that establish a foundation for future implementation. These deliverables position the City to efficiently pursue funding from Measure Q, federal or state grants, or local resources. By advancing planning now, the project builds a long-term pipeline for infrastructure improvements that can be implemented quickly once additional funding is secured, positioning the City for timely action. The study's location near moderate to very high fire hazard severity zones highlight the importance of preparing resilient infrastructure solutions that support future emergency response operations. By emphasizing public benefit through informed planning and project readiness, this study ensures that subsequent infrastructure investments will be effective, efficient, and responsive to community priorities. In summary, this feasibility study delivers public benefit in the form of actionable planning information and demonstrates strong readiness for implementation, enabling the City to advance critical infrastructure projects efficiently and with clear evidence-based guidance,

fully supporting Measure Q secondary prioritization principles.

TARGET COMMUNITY

The proposed feasibility study at the Watsonville Fire Department (WFD) Training Center will provide meaningful benefits to the Watsonville community by supporting informed planning for infrastructure that promotes water conservation, operational sustainability, and resilient public safety training. The study aligns with the goals of Measure Q prioritizing local water resources, improving environmental health, and strengthening community resilience for Watsonville residents. The WFD Training center is a key public safety resource that supports firefighter training, the Santa Cruz Regional Fire Academy, and community programs such as the WFD Summer Youth Academy. These programs provide education, hands-on learning opportunities and career exposure for Watsonville youth while helping maintain a well-trained emergency response workforce. By evaluating options to improve the durability of training surfaces and capture and reuse water used during training exercises, the study will generate technical information that helps ensure these programs can continue operating efficiently and sustainably. The Santa Cruz County Measure Q Vision Plan emphasizes investments that protect water quality and conserve local water supplies. The feasibility study supports these goals by evaluating strategies to capture runoff and reclaim water used during training evolutions for reuse. The analysis will identify potential opportunities to reduce potable water demand and improve water efficiency at the site. Although no construction will occur during this phase, the study will provide data and recommendations that allow the City of Watsonville (City) to plan future improvements that protect local water resources and promote responsible water management. The project also supports Measure Q's emphasis on equitable community benefit. Measure Q prioritizes projects that improve environmental conditions and community resilience while ensuring that resources benefit residents across Santa Cruz County. Watsonville has a population of 51,320, with approximately 14.7% of residents living in poverty. Planning efforts that support safe training facilities, water efficiency, and youth workforce programs contribute to long-term community wellbeing by ensuring that essential public safety services and educational opportunities remain accessible to Watsonville residents. By producing site-specific data, conceptual design options, and planning level cost estimates, this feasibility study will help the City identify practical solutions that align with the Measure Q Vision Plan's goals of environmental stewardship, climate resilience, and community benefit. The study provides the Watsonville community with the information needed to pursue future infrastructure investments that protect local water resources, support public safety training, and strengthen community resilience for years to come.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

The proposed feasibility study at the Watsonville Fire Department (WFD) Training Center provides clear community value by supporting planning efforts that strengthen firefighter training and emergency response capability for the Watsonville community. Reliable, safe training facilities are essential for ensuring firefighters are prepared to respond effectively to emergencies and protect residents, businesses, and critical infrastructure. The WFD Training center is a key public safety resource used for mandated firefighter training, the Santa Cruz Regional Fire Academy, and community programs such as the WFD Summer Youth Academy. These programs help ensure firefighters maintain the skills necessary to safely respond to medical calls, structure fires, vehicle incidents, rescues and other emergencies within and around the City of Watsonville (City). Realistic firefighter training requires flowing large volumes of water, including master stream training evolutions exceeding 1,000 gallons per minute and firefighter handlines flowing 250-500 gallons per minute, often for extended periods during the Santa Cruz Regional Fire Academy and hands-on training exercises. Safe and durable training environments also reduce training related risks and allow firefighters to practice essential skills under realistic conditions. The proposed feasibility study will evaluate replacing aging asphalt training surfaces with more durable concrete and assess the feasibility of installing a water reclamation storage system that could capture and reuse water used during training exercises. While this project phase focuses on planning rather than construction, the study will produce technical analysis, conceptual design options, and planning-level cost estimates that will guide future infrastructure improvements at the facility. These planning outcomes provide important public safety value by helping the City identify effective and sustainable solutions that support long-term firefighter training needs. Evaluating improvements to the durability, safety, and water efficiency of the training grounds ensures that future investments are well informed and aligned with community needs. Maintaining functional and resilient training infrastructure directly supports the Fire Department's ability to prepare personnel for real-world emergency response. The training center also supports programs that engage Watsonville residents, including the Summer Youth Academy, which provides career exposure and workforce development opportunities for local youth. Programs hosted at the training center help introduce Watsonville youth to careers in public safety and encourage community engagement with emergency services. By producing actionable planning information and infrastructure recommendations, this feasibility study will help the City prepare for future improvements that strengthen firefighters training, support community programs, and enhance the WFD's ability to protect the Watsonville community.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

The proposed feasibility study supports environmental priorities identified in the Santa Cruz County Measure Q Vision Plan by evaluating opportunities to improve water quality and strengthen climate resilience through improved stormwater and water resource management at the Watsonville Fire Department (WFD) Training Center. The study will assess existing site conditions, quantify impervious surfaces areas, and evaluate the potential to capture and better manage stormwater runoff from the facility's training grounds. Firefighter training exercises require significant water use to safely simulate emergency response conditions. Master stream training evolutions can flow more than 1,000 gallons per minute, while firefighter handlines typically flow 250-500 gallons per minute depending on hose size. During extended training events and the 17-week Santa Cruz Regional Fire Academy, these training lines may operate for several hours a day. Currently, water used during these training evolutions flow directly across the training grounds and into the storm drain system. The feasibility study will evaluate opportunities to capture, store, and potentially reuse water generated during these high-flow training activities while also assessing options to replace aging asphalt surfaces with more durable materials and improved stormwater management features. Identifying opportunities to capture runoff and reuse water generated during training can help reduce potential impacts to local waterways while promoting more responsible water use. By developing conceptual designs and planning-level cost estimates, the study will provide the technical foundation needed to pursue future improvements that enhance water quality, support sustainable water management practices, and strengthen long-term environmental resilience within the Watsonville community.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant owns the property for the proposed project

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

REQUIRED PERMITS

The proposed project is a feasibility study and planning effort that will assess existing site conditions at the Watsonville Fire Department Training Center, identify environmental review requirements, develop conceptual designs, and produce planning-level cost estimates for potential future improvements. The study will also quantify impervious surface areas, evaluate stormwater runoff capture potential, and assess opportunities to reclaim and reuse water generated during firefighter training activities. The project consists entirely of planning and analytical work, no construction, grading, excavation, or physical site disturbance will occur during the study phase. As a result, no regulatory permits are expected to be required to complete the feasibility study. The work will primarily involve site observation, data analysis, conceptual engineering evaluation, and development of planning level recommendations. Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), planning studies that do not result in a physical change to the environment are typically exempt from environmental review under the "Common Sense Exemption," as they do not have the potential to cause a significant environmental impact. A key purpose of the feasibility study is to identify and document the environmental review and permitting requirements that would apply to future project implementation. The study will evaluate regulatory considerations related to stormwater management, water capture and reuse systems, and potential site improvements. This analysis will help determine the appropriate environmental review pathway under CEQA and identify any permits that may be required during a future design and construction phase. Potential future permits could include stormwater or water quality permits associated with runoff management and water reuse systems, as well as any local approvals required for facility improvements. Agencies that may have jurisdiction over future implementation could include the California Regional Water Quality Control Board and other relevant state or local agencies responsible for water resource management and environmental protection. These requirements will be identified and evaluated as part of the feasibility study to ensure that any project phase is designed with regulatory compliance in mind. Because the feasibility study itself does not require permits and can be initiated immediately upon funding, the project demonstrates strong readiness and feasibility. The study will produce technical information, conceptual design options, and regulatory pathway needed to advance the project efficiently to future environmental review, design, and potential implementation phases.

PARTNER APPROVALS

The proposed project is a feasibility study that will evaluate potential infrastructure improvements at the Watsonville Fire Department (WFD) Training Center, including replacement of aging asphalt training services and the feasibility of installing a water reclamation storage system to capture and reuse water used during firefighter training activities. Because the project consists solely of planning and analysis, no construction or site disturbance will occur during this phase. To initiate the project, the primary approval required is acceptance of grant funding by the Watsonville City Council. Following acceptance of the grant, the City of Watsonville (City) will follow established municipal procurement procedures to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) and select a qualified consultant to conduct the feasibility study. This process will be conducted in accordance with City purchasing policies and standard contracting procedures. The study will be conducted at the WFD Training Center, which is owned and operated by the

City. Because the City controls the project site, no property acquisition, easements, or land use agreements are required for completion of the feasibility study. No interagency agreements are required to conduct the planning work itself. While no formal approvals or regulatory agreements are required to complete the study, the feasibility analysis will identify environmental review requirements, regulatory considerations, and potential permits that may be necessary for future design and construction phase. The study will evaluate applicable state and local requirements and outline the steps needed to advance the project into environmental review and permitting, if the City elects to pursue the implementation. Because the project site is City owned and the study does not involve construction or site disturbance, the project can proceed immediately upon grant award and City Council acceptance of funds. This streamlined approval process demonstrates strong project readiness and feasibility and allows the study to be completed within the proposed project timeline.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

The proposed feasibility study will begin on July 1, 2026, and conclude on June 30, 2027. The project timeline incorporates the City of Watsonville (City) procurement process, including the development and issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP), consultant selection, and contract execution, followed by completion of the technical feasibility study. July-September 2026: PROJECT INITIATION AND RFP DEVELOPMENT- At the start of the project, Watsonville Fire Department (WFD) staff will coordinate with City administrative staff to finalize the scope of work and prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) in accordance with City purchasing policies. The RFP will outline the project objectives, required technical expertise, and deliverables for the feasibility study. October-November 2026: ADVERTISEMENT AND CONSULTANT SELECTION- The RFP will be publicly advertised to qualified engineering and planning firms. Proposals will be received and evaluated by City staff based on qualifications, experience, and proposed approach. Following evaluation, the City will select a consultant and initiate the contracting process, including preparation of the professional services agreement and required approvals. December 2026: CONTRACT EXECUTION AND PROJECT KICKOFF- Once the consultant agreement is finalized and executed, the project team will conduct a kickoff meeting to confirm the project schedule, scope of work, and data requirements. The consultant will begin coordination with WFD and City staff to gather background information and existing site data. January-March 2027: SITE ASSESSMENT AND TECHNICAL ANALYSIS- During this phase, the consultant team will evaluate existing conditions at the Watsonville Fire Department Training Center. Work will include mapping impervious surfaces, reviewing drainage conditions, evaluating stormwater runoff capture potential, and assessing opportunities to reclaim and reuse water used during firefighter training activities. The consultant will also identify potential environmental review and regulatory requirements for future project implementation. February 2027: GRANT REPORTING: WFD will submit the Mid-Year reports and COAB Annual Update. April 2027: CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT AND DRAFT FEASIBILITY STUDY- Based on the technical analysis, the consultant will develop conceptual improvement options and prepare planning-level cost estimates. A draft feasibility study report will be prepared summarizing findings, conceptual alternatives, regulatory considerations, and recommended next steps. May 2027: FINAL FEASIBILITY STUDY REPORT AND PROJECT COMPLETION WFD and City staff will review the draft report and provide feedback. The consultant will finalize the feasibility study and deliver the final report by June 30, 2027, providing the City with technical documentation, conceptual design options, and cost estimates needed to guide future design, environmental review, and potential implementation.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

No

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

No

TEAM CAPACITY

The City of Watsonville (City) has the staff capacity and organizational experience necessary to successfully manage and complete the proposed feasibility study. The project will be led by the Watsonville Fire Department (WFD), with support from key City departments that routinely manage infrastructure planning, engineering analysis, procurement, and financial administration. WFD staff will oversee the project and serve as the primary point of coordination with the selected consultant team. WFD staff are familiar with the operational needs of the training center and will provide subject matter expertise related to firefighter training activities, facility operations, and water use associated with training exercises. Their involvement will ensure the feasibility study accurately reflects operational requirements and identifies practical solutions that support long-term training needs. The project will also be supported by the City Public Works Department. A Public Works Project Manager will assist with day-to-day project coordination, schedule tracking, and consultant oversight to ensure the project remains on schedule within scope. A Public Works Principal Engineer will provide technical review of engineering concepts, stormwater management considerations, and conceptual design alternatives developed during the feasibility analysis. The Public Works Water Division Manager will provide expertise related to water use, water supply considerations, and potential water reclamation or reuse opportunities associated with firefighter training activities. Administrative and procurement support will be led by WFD administrative staff, who will be responsible for preparing and processing the Request for Proposals (RFP), coordinating consultant selection, and managing contract documentation in accordance with City procurement procedures. WFD administrative staff will also serve as the primary lead for grant administration, including financial tracking, reporting, and compliance with grant requirements. The City Clerk's Office and

Finance Department will provide additional support and oversight to ensure procurement, contracting, and financial management activities align with City policies and grant requirements. Together, this multidisciplinary team provides strong organizational capacity to manage the project from procurement to through completion of the feasibility study. The combination of operational knowledge from the Fire Department, technical expertise from Public Works staff, and administrative support from WFD, the City Clerk and Finance teams ensures the City has the expertise and the resources necessary to successfully deliver the study and position the project for future implementation.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

The proposed feasibility study is highly feasible because the project will occur on property owned and operated by the City of Watsonville (City). The Watsonville Fire Department (WFD) Training Center is a City owned facility that is currently used for firefighter training and related community programs. Because the City already owns and manages the site, no land acquisition, easements, or property access agreements are required to complete the feasibility study. This allows the project to proceed without property-related constraints or delays. The study itself is designed to evaluate potential infrastructure improvements at the training center, including replacement of aging asphalt training surfaces and the feasibility of installing a water reclamation storage system to capture and reuse water used during firefighter training activities. The feasibility study will assess existing site conditions, quantify impervious surface areas, evaluate stormwater runoff capture potential, and analyze opportunities to reclaim and reuse water generated during training operations. The study will also develop conceptual design alternatives and planning-level cost estimates to support informed decision making. Because the project consists solely of planning and analysis activities, no construction or site disturbance will occur during the study phase. As a result, the project can be implemented without regulatory permitting or environmental review. The feasibility study will instead identify environmental review requirements and regulatory considerations that may apply to a future design and construction phase. Conducting the study on a City owned site allows project staff and consultants to access the training facility as needed to complete site evaluations and data collection. Existing operational knowledge from WFD staff, combined with technical support from the City's Public Works Department, provides the information and institutional knowledge needed to complete the feasibility analysis effectively. This study will ultimately produce site specific data, conceptual design options, and planning-level cost estimates that will guide the City in determining whether and how to pursue future infrastructure improvements at the training center. By evaluating options in advance of design and construction, the project ensures that any future investment is based on sound technical analysis and aligned with operational, environmental, and community priorities.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The proposed feasibility study will be led by the City of Watsonville (City) through the Watsonville Fire Department (WFD), with internal support from the City's Public Works, administrative, and finance teams. Because this phase of the project focuses solely on planning and analysis, no external partners are required to complete the study. The WFD Training Center is regularly used by multiple local fire agencies for training activities and regional academy programs, creating established relationships between WFD and neighboring departments. While these agencies are not formal partners in the feasibility study phase, they benefit from the training facility and may be potential partners in future project phases. If the feasibility study identifies viable infrastructure improvements and the City advances the project to design and construction, regional fire agencies may be interested in supporting implementation through financial contributions or participation in joint grant funding opportunities. These collaborative relationships may help strengthen future funding applications by demonstrating the broader regional public safety value of the training center.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

Although the proposed project is limited to a feasibility study and does not require formal external partners, the Watsonville Fire Department (WFD) maintains strong working relationships with local fire agencies that utilize the WFD Training Center for training activities and academy programs. These collaborative relationships support the regional sharing of training resources and help ensure firefighters serving Watsonville and surrounding communities have access to necessary training facilities. During the feasibility study phase, collaboration will occur primarily within the City. WFD will coordinate closely with the City's Public Works Department, including Engineering and Water Division staff, to evaluate infrastructure conditions, stormwater management opportunities, and potential water reuse strategies. Administrative coordination will also occur between WFD, the City Clerk's office, and the Finance Department to support procurement, contracting, and grant administration activities. While the study itself does not require external collaboration agreements, the project supports a facility that is regularly used by multiple agencies for firefighter training and academy programs. WFD will continue to maintain communication with those regional partners regarding the training center and potential future improvements. If the feasibility study identifies viable infrastructure improvements and the project advances to a design or construction phase, these relationships may provide opportunities for collaboration in securing funding or supporting implementation. Through both internal coordination and ongoing relationships with regional fire service partners, the project reflects a collaborative approach to maintaining and planning for infrastructure that supports firefighter training and public safety preparedness.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

100000

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

0

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

0

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

0

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

—

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Although the proposed project is limited to a feasibility study and does not require formal external partners, the Watsonville Fire Department (WFD) maintains strong working relationships with local fire agencies that utilize the WFD Training Center for training activities and academy programs. These collaborative relationships support the regional sharing of training resources and help ensure firefighters serving Watsonville and surrounding communities have access to necessary training facilities. During the feasibility study phase, collaboration will occur primarily within the City. WFD will coordinate closely with the City's Public Works Department, including Engineering and Water Division staff, to evaluate infrastructure conditions, stormwater management opportunities, and potential water reuse strategies. Administrative coordination will also occur between WFD, the City Clerk's office, and the Finance Department to support procurement, contracting, and grant administration activities. While the study itself does not require external collaboration agreements, the project supports a facility that is regularly used by multiple agencies for firefighter training and academy programs. WFD will continue to maintain communication with those regional partners regarding the training center and potential future improvements. If the feasibility study identifies viable infrastructure improvements and the project advances to a design or construction phase, these relationships may provide opportunities for collaboration in securing funding or supporting implementation. Through both internal coordination and ongoing relationships with regional fire service partners, the project reflects a collaborative approach to maintaining and planning for infrastructure that supports firefighter training and public safety preparedness.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

The feasibility study will provide planning-level data, conceptual designs, and cost estimates to guide future infrastructure improvements at the Watsonville Fire Department (WFD) Training Center. These recommendations will support sustainable operations and maintenance while maximizing long-term benefits for the facility, the community, and regional public safety. This study will evaluate strategies to improve the durability of training surfaces and the potential for a water reclamation system to capture and reuse water from training activities. Conceptual designs will include operational and maintenance considerations to minimize long-term upkeep and ensure safe, reliable use during firefighter training. Future implementation of improvements would include defined maintenance schedules and monitoring of infrastructure performance. Concrete surfaces would be inspected periodically for safety and durability, and the water reclamation system would be monitored for storage, filtration, and water quality. Early identification of these requirements ensures future improvements are cost effective and long-lasting. The training center serves multiple regional fire agencies and community programs such as the Youth Academy. Maintaining reliable, sustainable infrastructure supports public safety operations, program continuity, and responsible water use. Coordinated oversight by WFD staff with Public Works support will ensure the facility continues to provide measurable benefits over the long term.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

No

REFERENCED PLANS

—

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness, Long Term Stewardship Commitments

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

The Watsonville Fire Department (WFD) Training Center is an established public safety facility that supports mandated firefighter training, the Santa Cruz County Regional Fire Academy, and community programs such as the WFD Youth Academy. Because the facility is owned and operated by the City of Watsonville (City) and is already actively used for training, the proposed feasibility study can begin immediately upon funding. The project requires no land acquisition, sign access agreements, or regulatory permits, demonstrating a high level of readiness and the ability to complete the study within the proposed project timeline. Firefighter training operations regularly involve high-flow water use with master stream training evolutions exceeding 1,000 gallons per minute and firefighter handlines flowing 250-500 gallons per minute on extended training exercises. During the 17-week Santa Cruz Regional Fire Academy, these training evolutions may operate for several hours per day, with water currently draining directly into the storm drain system. The feasibility study will evaluate opportunities to capture and reuse water generated during these training activities while also assessing improvements to the facility's training surfaces and stormwater management systems. The WFD Training Center serves as a regional resource used by multiple local fire agencies for training exercises and academy programs. Because the facility supports firefighters who respond throughout Watsonville and surrounding areas, improvements to the training center have broader regional significance for emergency preparedness and wildfire response capability. The feasibility study will generate site-specific data, conceptual designs, and planning-level cost estimates that position the City to pursue future implementation funding through regional, state, and federal programs. As the long-term owner and operator of the facility, the City of Watsonville is committed to maintaining and stewarding improvements identified through the study to ensure lasting public safety, workforce development, and water resource benefits for the Watsonville community.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Letter of Support from CTL.pdf

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

Organizational Information - City of Watsonville.docx

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Rosa Meyer

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Rosa Meyer, Administrative Analyst

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 239 **Type:** Tier 2 Community Impact Grants
Project: Santa Cruz Community Seed Strategy

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

239

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Santa Cruz Community Seed Strategy

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CA

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

Community members successfully producing seed for the program

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

50, ideally to increase every year of the program

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Lucy Ferneyhough

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Associate Director, Native Plant Program Project Manager

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Brett	Hall	[REDACTED]
Brett	Hall	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

Arboretum Rd, Santa Cruz, CA, 95064

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.98294029552493

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.06087569350302

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

—

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

—

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The project will be centered at the Arboretum, with connections to project participants across the county.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

Permitting needs for this project will be limited to land access and collections permissions from such entities as State Parks, Land Trust Santa Cruz County, Bureau of Land Management, City of Santa Cruz, County of Santa Cruz. Arboretum staff have extensive experience navigating these permitting processes and have held permits from several of these entities in preceding years.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	Yes	Arboretum holds a 2081(a) permit for state listed threatened and endangered species.	Active
State Water Control Resources Board	NA		
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA		
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

years

DURATION AMOUNT

1

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

The Arboretum is ready to deploy this project, which can continue after the grant period.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

143457

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

143457

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$81,697	\$0	\$0	\$81,697
Fringe Benefits	\$38,492	\$0	\$0	\$38,492
Supplies	\$4,556	\$0	\$0	\$4,556
Indirect Costs	\$18,712	\$0	\$0	\$18,712

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The Santa Cruz Community Seed Strategy (Strategy) is Santa Cruz County's response to the National and California Seed Strategies, which describe the critical shortage of source-identified native seed for restoration—a bottleneck in achieving the restoration needed across our landscapes to fight the biodiversity crisis. Restoration of our degraded habitats requires native seed in quality and quantity that does not currently exist, meaning that ecological consultants, restoration firms and land managers are not able to do the work needed. The Arboretum proposes a community program to engage stakeholders in seed increase and habitat restoration across the county, creating wildlife corridors through our neighborhoods and producing ready seed that can be directed to local habitat restoration projects immediately, which often have limited timelines associated with funding restrictions that preclude collection of appropriate seed as they become seasonally available. The Strategy begins with seed collection from habitats by skilled collectors. The UC Santa Cruz Arboretum's volunteer base form an existing community to pilot this project, participating in propagation workshops to start these seeds, going home with local species to plant in their home gardens. The volunteers augment the habitats in their neighborhoods with native plant species, learn to collect and clean seed in further workshops, and return the increased seed to the arboretum's seed bank the following season. In this scalable program, neighborhood habitat corridors are developed over time, local seed stores grow, and the community becomes empowered with the knowledge and skillsets to fight the global biodiversity crisis at home.

PROJECT START DATE

06/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/01/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, Coastal Protection and Adaptation, Agricultural and Work Land Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

The strategy contributes to all thematic areas, because increasing native plant populations provides numerous benefits. Doug Tallamy, an entomologist from the University of Delaware, has shown in his research focusing on insect-host plant specialization that not only do most bird species rear their young on insects, primarily caterpillars, but because they forage near the nest, if no native plants are nearby, birds do not have the biomass of insects required to reproduce themselves, meaning that without native plants in our neighborhoods, we won't have birds in our neighborhoods. In addition, more animal species than one might think rely on insect biomass for a large portion of their diet. Native plants form the base of food webs because of insect-host plant specialization, wherein insects have an evolutionary relationship with plants such that each insect is adapted to the plant chemical defenses of as little as a single genus of plants. Non native species are not coevolved with the insects we have here, and do not contribute to the biomass of insects needed to feed wildlife- they don't provide food for insects, and create ecological deserts. Planting a diversity of native plant species in a garden contributes to a diversity of insects, increasing the chances that enough biomass will be available for the animals that need it—ecosystem diversity yields ecosystem stability. Shrinking the base of that food pyramid has consequences for secondary consumers and predators, and ultimately ecosystems and humanity writ large. We are facing a global decline in insect populations, which according to one meta analysis, amounts to 45% in 40 years, and in a 2017 German study, 75% in 27 years. Tallamy argues that land conversion is at the heart of this, and with upwards of 60% of the contiguous USA held in private hands, home owners can impact the insect and biodiversity crises by planting at least 70% of their yard in native plants. The Strategy seeks to provide materials and skills to the community to address this aspect of the problem, resulting in improved habitats and habitat connectivity for wildlife. In addition, community members will produce seed that will support improved habitat in our wild or working lands and other areas that are the focus of restoration efforts. Habitat restoration in urban and semi-urban areas with deep rooted native species improves soil structure and water retention, increasing water infiltration where impermeable pavement often limits it, allowing for improved groundwater recharge. Forest health is improved in two ways, both by increasing habitat and diversity but also by making seed available for restoration, for example after fire. Access

and equity will be addressed by providing workshops on site at the Arboretum but also at other locations throughout the county-Arboretum staff will bring materials to the communities that will use them, and provide training to any and all interested parties.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Vast areas of habitat need to be restored for human and ecological resilience to climate change, and the Strategy supports this goal by providing materials (plants, seeds) and skills (sowing, planting, identifying plants, processing seeds) to individuals across the county's landscapes to restore their own local habitats and reproduce these materials by orders of magnitude to supply seed for more community members to participate in subsequent years, and for restoration technicians to use in wild and working lands. Increasing available habitat and seed both support resilience to climate change. The Arboretum has been building capacity over the past several years, building up onsite infrastructure of our seed bank and seed viability testing facilities, nursery facilities and human capital. Using state funding provided by the Biodiversity Initiative, we have been able to fund additional freezer space for the seed bank, a germination chamber, and a steam generator, used to pasteurize soil and clean pots to prevent the spread of plant pathogens. We were also able to increase the size of our nursery with funds from an Institute for Museum and Library Services seed increase study for rare species. These improvements have set us up to launch the Strategy right away, and will allow us to be flexible as future needs and restoration situations arise. Additionally, safeguarding seed produced by the Strategy will position the Arboretum to be community partners in future restoration projects, either through the provision of seed or by using the seed to produce plants. The Strategy decentralizes the means of habitat improvement, distributing the means of addressing global problems to individuals and communities. In doing so, it will empower people from diverse groups to make a meaningful impact in the places where they live.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The Arboretum has been building capacity in native plant and seed production for many years. We operate a seed bank dedicated to the local flora of the region and the long-term conservation of rare species from across the state that is an approved seed bank for California Plant Rescue rare species collections by the Center for Plant Conservation (CPC). The seed bank comprises over 3,400 accessions from more than 850 California native plant taxa. The UCSC Arboretum also holds a 2081(a) permit with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife authorizing the import, export, take, or possession of state listed and rare plant species for scientific, educational, or management purposes. Our staff has extensive experience identifying, and collecting native plants, successfully acquiring collection permits from various land managers across the state, including local, state and federal, and teaching the public about native plants. We have led plant identification workshops for beginners and more experienced learners, including the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band and Land Trust, and have taught students and volunteers propagation and seed banking methods. We are actively working towards Accreditation to Improve Restoration (AIR) Certification by improving sanitation in our nurseries. We recently acquired a steam generator for soil pasteurization and pot/container sanitation, and are implementing best practices to ensure that plants produced at the arboretum do not contain harmful pathogens. We have many volunteers and student workers and interns at the Arboretum who are excited to help us pilot the Strategy in its infancy, and become leaders in the deployment of the strategy in future years, allowing more members of the community to become involved. Community members will learn horticultural skills, plant and seed identification, and improve the habitat quality of their own gardens and planting sites. The community will be recognized as important stakeholders, a critical piece of restoring habitat and building capacity. In so many ways the public benefits from the Strategy. The Strategy is aligned with measure Q goals and broader initiatives to make source-identified native seed more available for restoration, as outlined in the California and National Seed Strategies.

TARGET COMMUNITY

The Arboretum has an existing community in our volunteer base, individuals who are ready and excited to make a difference in the world and their neighborhoods, and have a foundation of horticultural skills to make the first year of the Strategy a success. The Arboretum will have an outreach campaign to increase participation in communities that aren't already part of our network. While the Strategy focuses on homeowners, renters can also participate if allowed at home, or, if not, in public spaces or at the Arboretum itself, where we will be implementing seed increase plantings as well. Arboretum staff is experienced in coordinating with other organizations and can support community members utilizing these resources to improve habitat in public spaces like road medians or parks.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

The Strategy provides immense community value including health and well-being, access to nature, recreation opportunities and community identity and livability. In a world where we all feel weighed down by global problems that feel insoluble, alienated from the natural world and atomized from each other in our individual lives, this program provides a great opportunity to bring the community together to achieve meaningful goals. The Strategy seeks to distribute the means of habitat improvement to its most critical stakeholders, the public, demystifying the process of restoration by literally bringing it home. Recognizing that if each person takes care of their little piece, with a small investment of time and effort, at scale, that's how major change happens. People are looking for purpose, for ways to engage, ways to help, ways to make a difference and the Strategy is a perfect outlet to channel these needs. Gardening gets people outside, engaged in something that feels productive, making visible changes to the environment that they inhabit every day. Learning about native plants in the garden is an accessible way to learn about the habitats around us, and feel connected to the earth as a human organism living alongside all the other organisms. This sense of shared connection, when experienced in community with others also learning to garden, to really see plants, and understand what they need in the garden, is so powerful in improving wellbeing.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

The Strategy improves water quality and habitat as described in the thematic areas narrative section, and improves climate resilience in several ways as well. It will strengthen our capacity to restore and sustain healthy ecosystems that can better withstand climate-driven stressors like heat and drought by augmenting the available seed for locally adapted restoration materials. Significantly, it does this through increasing the amount of available habitat across neighborhoods where the seed will be created, distributing the risk of habitat loss by climate disasters, and thereby increasing the likelihood that recovery will be possible. This increase in available habitat will provide distributed refugia for wildlife when localized climate impacts do inevitably occur. In addition, it will create advocates for the environment by bringing the public in as stakeholders of environmental health and providing educational outlets and materials surrounding ecology and the importance of native plants and habitat preservation.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

Yes

SITE CONTROL

Applicant owns the property for the proposed project, Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

Participants add native plants to their own gardens if they choose to participate.

REQUIRED PERMITS

The Strategy will require collection permits from local wild lands to supply the seed for distribution to participants. Lands targeted for seed collection will likely include State Parks, Santa Cruz County Parks, City of Santa Cruz, San Vicente Redwoods, Santa Clara County Parks (Mount Madonna), Land Trust Santa Cruz County, Bureau of Land Management, and Swanton Pacific Ranch (Cal Poly San Luis Obispo). All of these entities have existing relationships with the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum. All of these entities have previously granted collection or research permits to the Arboretum.

PARTNER APPROVALS

Other than the collection permits as described above, none.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

March - June 2026: -reach out to restoration technicians and managers to determine needs -plant species selection -site selection - where to collect, and which neighborhoods connect with which collection sites -collection permit acquisition -identify first cohort of participants -make collections of early species June - September 2026: -design and implement community outreach for additional participants -continue seed collection -design workshop materials: information sheets about the program, plant species and horticulture -informational meeting for participants -creation of community facebook page to allow for participants to

communicate October - December 2026 -host the first workshops for seed propagation; sow extra pots for participants who join later or who can't grow seedlings at home, or for additional seed increase in arboretum gardens; distribute seed. January - April 2027 -participants plant in their gardens -host workshops for plant care and seed harvest; distribute protocols and envelopes for collection April - June 2027 -participant care and maintenance of plants, seed collection -host workshops for seed processing and packaging -participant debrief -design and implement outreach materials for next season's cohort June - September 2027 -participant seed collection continues -seed collection for new species to add to the program for subsequent years -identifying volunteer leadership from first cohort -additional feedback/informational meetings

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

Yes

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

No

TEAM CAPACITY

The UCSC Arboretum Native Plant Program staff has extensive experience with seed collection, native plant horticulture, and seed processing, with a history of developing the living and seed bank collections at the Arboretum over a period of 60 years. In addition, during that period, it has relied on the work of students and volunteers to help with this work. We have a track record of bringing in novices to horticulture, ecology, and nursery care and transforming them into competent practitioners and dedicated, lifelong enthusiasts who go on to do great things in their careers. Arboretum staff have also hosted plant identification workshops and hikes with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band and Land Trust, as well as for the California Native Plant Society and Santa Cruz Mountain Trail Stewardship. Arboretum staff also has experience managing complex projects, including a multimillion dollar vegetation sampling project for the CDFW across 8 million acres, a rare plant seed banking program that has resulted securing in over one million seeds from over 200 rare, never before seed banked species, and a seed increase study with 9 rare taxa that will produce protocols for curating small seed collections in botanical gardens.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

Barriers to start and be successful with the project are very low. We have existing facilities, experience, and a network in place. We need dedicated staff time to launch this project.

PROJECT PARTNERS

As described above, the Strategy relies on the participation of an important stakeholder group-our community. We will also be drawing on other groups to understand needs, including species and quantities that are desired from ecological restoration firms, and consultants, land managers, and land trusts in the broader Santa Cruz region. In the early stages of the project, we will make contact with these practitioners to understand what they see as the highest priority species to include in their projects and where projects in the county are occurring to understand the habitats involved.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

The strategy would position the Arboretum to be a future collaborator with the ecological restoration firms, and consultants, land managers, and land trusts in the broader Santa Cruz region mentioned above. Seed stored at the Arboretum as a result of this project would be available for restoration projects. We could either produce plants for out-planting in habitat, or use the seed to produce plants to produce even more seed, or both.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

143457

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

0

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

0

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

0

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

15

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The only real cost to the project is covering staff time to produce workshop informational materials, and other materials like soil, envelopes, tape, and containers which we can clean and reuse for future years.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

This grant would cover the pilot year of a project designed to be an iterative annual endeavour. Community members can return to workshop materials year after year. Providing workshops will have a cost and our hope is that the project will help the Arboretum with fundraising, increasing membership and attracting new donors. We will continue to seek funding to fund our programs, as we do with all Arboretum operations.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

No

REFERENCED PLANS

—

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness, High Fund Leverage, Long Term Stewardship Commitments

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

—

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET[Measure Q budget.xlsx](#)**ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP**[No file uploaded](#)**ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT**[No file uploaded](#)**ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT**[No file uploaded](#)**ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS**[No file uploaded](#)**ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO**[No file uploaded](#)**ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS**[No file uploaded](#)**ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS**[No file uploaded](#)**CERTIFICATION**

I certify

SIGNATURE

Lucy Ferneyhough

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Lucy Ferneyhough, Associate Director, Native Plant Program Project Manager

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 245 **Type:** Tier 2 Community Impact Grants
Project: Sol Y Tierra: Climate Justice Learning Series and Climate Adaptation Work Crews

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

245

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Sol Y Tierra: Climate Justice Learning Series and Climate Adaptation Work Crews

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc.

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

Outreach Population; Education population

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

100; 60

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

MariaElena De La Garza

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

CEO

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Celine	Kuklowsky	[REDACTED]
Paz	Padilla	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

406 Main St, Suite 207, Watsonville, California, 95076

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.91064676591700

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.75683888688501

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

Sol y Tierra serves multiple jurisdictions across Santa Cruz County. Participants are drawn from the Pajaro Valley and Watsonville (City of Watsonville), the Davenport and North Coast communities (Unincorporated Santa Cruz County), and residents experiencing homelessness through CAB's Hope Village Tiny Homes community. While programming is delivered locally across these communities, the project actively brings participants to public lands throughout the broader region-including Cotoni-Coast

Dairies National Monument, Wilder Ranch, Natural Bridges, Henry Cowell Redwood State Park, and Big Basin-connecting urban and rural farmworker and low-income residents to parks and open spaces they have historically had limited access to. Environmental work crews will engage in coastal and wetland restoration projects along the lower Pajaro River, extending the program's geographic reach and ecological impact across the county.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Not applicable

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

Sol y Tierra will serve multiple locations across Santa Cruz County. Climate Justice Learning Sessions will be held in Pajaro Valley and Davenport. Park excursions will bring 100 participants to public lands across the county, including Cotoni-Coast Dairies National Monument, Wilder Ranch, Natural Bridges, Henry Cowell Redwood State Park, and Big Basin. Adaptation and Resilience Work Crews will contribute to active UCSC-led ecological research projects along the Santa Cruz coast and the lower Pajaro River. These sites span the county's most climate-vulnerable landscapes and the communities that depend on them.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Yes

DAC/SDAC NOTES

Watsonville and Pajaro Valley census tracts score in the top percentiles on CalEnviroScreen 4.0 due to concentrated indicators including pesticide exposure, poverty, housing burden, and pollution burden. Davenport/North Coast unincorporated area also serves low-income farmworker and rural residents. CAI Enviro screen and climate and economic justice screening tool Tract information Number: 06087110300; 06087110400; 06087122500; 06087110700; 06087110600. Additionally, this program focuses on severely disadvantaged communities including the unhoused residents and undocumented farmworkers of Pajaro, Watsonville and Davenport, many of whom make 250% below poverty rate. 45% of households CAB serves and that this program will recruit to earn \$20,000 or less (CAB Action Plan Survey).

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

N/A

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA		
State Water Control Resources Board	NA	CA	CA
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA	Los Angeles	CA
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

Sol y Tierra is positioned to commence immediately upon award. A formal partnership agreement is already in place between CAB Santa Cruz and UCSC's Center for Coastal Climate Resilience (CCCR). CAB brings deep expertise in outreach, workforce development, and leadership pathways for farmworking, unsheltered, and immigrant communities across the Pajaro Valley and Davenport. CCCR brings cutting-edge climate science rooted in this region, and CAB's partnership with UC Santa Cruz extends over 30 years with long-standing commitments to this work. Sol y Tierra builds directly on a completed 2024-2025 initiative that trained environmental promotores and CERT-certified emergency responders in the Pajaro Valley. The curriculum is designed and ready to adapt for this cohort, and the UCSC postdoctoral researcher who co-created it will continue on this project, ensuring scientific continuity and community trust from day one. The team leading Sol y Tierra brings exceptional depth. Dr. Patrick Barnard, Research Director of UCSC's Center for Coastal Climate Resilience, brings decades of expertise in coastal hazards, climate adaptation, and environmental justice, with over 150 peer-reviewed publications and a record of advising federal, state, and local governments. CEO MariaElena De La Garza brings over 35 years of nonprofit leadership rooted in equity and community voice and born and raised in Watsonville, with deep ties to the communities Sol y Tierra serves. Operations Manager Lizette Ponce brings over 15 years of community organizing experience, with specific expertise in outreach and program coordination at the Davenport Resource Service Center. CAB's existing infrastructure is fully in place from day one: the Davenport Resource Service Center anchors north coast outreach, Watsonville Works brings a proven workforce track record, and Casa de la Cultura provides established community partnerships. The primary dependency is hiring three new staff, anticipated within two months of award, with full implementation underway in summer 2026.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

509000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

614800

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$231,660	\$0	\$6,000	\$237,660
Fringe Benefits	\$67,182	\$0	\$0	\$67,182
Travel	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$10,000
Equipment	\$5,016	\$0	\$0	\$5,016
Supplies	\$12,000	\$0	\$0	\$12,000
Contractual / Consultants	\$85,000	\$0	\$92,000	\$177,000
Other Direct Costs	\$31,751	\$0	\$7,800	\$39,551
Indirect Costs	\$66,391	\$0	\$0	\$66,391

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County (CAB), in partnership with UCSC's Center for Coastal Climate Resilience (CCCR), will co-design and implement Sol y Tierra, a program building climate knowledge, leadership, and workforce opportunities for Santa Cruz County's most climate-impacted communities. Building on a successful 2024-2025 pilot in Pajaro Valley, Sol y Tierra expands this work across three interconnected components. First, Sol y Tierra will connect 100 community members to the region's public parks and lands through culturally adapted family excursions. Despite living steps away from national monuments, farmworker families, unsheltered residents, and low-income communities face persistent financial, linguistic, and cultural barriers to accessing them. These excursions cover entrance fees, food, and transportation, while building environmental connection, wellbeing, and belonging. They also serve as our primary recruitment strategy for our program, grounded in the principle that community wellbeing is the first step to community engagement. Second, CAB and CCCR will facilitate a Climate Justice Learning Series, training 60 climate and environmental advocates from farmworker families, unsheltered community members, and Pajaro Valley and Davenport residents. Through six culturally adapted modules in Spanish and Mixteco, participants will learn about local climate impacts, emergency preparedness, and advocacy, and receive stipends and pathways to CERT certification. Third, Sol y Tierra will establish Adaptation and Resilience Work Crews, placing 25 stipended community members as direct contributors to

active UCSC-led climate research-including tidal wetland restoration, and watershed projects. Participants work alongside scientists, earning critical off-season income while building job skills and pathways into environmental careers.

PROJECT START DATE

06/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

06/01/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, Coastal Protection and Adaptation

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley sit at the convergence of extraordinary ecological richness and urgent climate vulnerability. Farmworker communities-particularly Spanish and Mixteco-speaking residents in the Pajaro Valley and Davenport-face compounding stressors including wildfire smoke, extreme heat, groundwater depletion, flooding, and coastal erosion. These threats do not affect all residents equally. Sol y Tierra is designed to bring those most impacted into climate resilience solutions across multiple Measure Q thematic areas. Our approach is client-centered: our cohort will choose three UCSC research projects to engage with. Final projects will be determined during the grant period from among the following active areas: Water Resource Management: The Pajaro Valley's agricultural communities depend on an over-drafted aquifer and face recurring flood risk. CCCR researchers are actively working on groundwater recharge, floodplain and tidal wetland restoration, and coastal flooding hazards. Sol y Tierra's Climate Justice Learning Series will build foundational understanding of local water systems, while Work Crew participants contribute directly to active restoration projects, including the Resilient Pajaro Estuary project, which is acquiring agricultural land in the lower Pajaro River to restore tidal wetland habitat beginning in 2028. Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health: CCCR researchers developed a 3-D air monitoring network delivering real-time, localized wildfire smoke data to farmworker communities via bilingual tools in partnership with CAB. During the 2024-2025 cohort, farmworkers worked alongside scientists to install monitors in their own backyards, building firsthand knowledge of air quality and health safety. Sol y Tierra deepens this work by connecting wildfire risk to evacuation preparedness and defensible space, with pathways to CERT certification through Community Bridges. A core program goal is to train one environmental leader per Rancho CAB serves, building a lasting network of community emergency responders. Wildlife and Habitat Protection and Coastal Protection and Adaptation: Work Crew participants will contribute to active UCSC research projects spanning habitat monitoring, carbon sequestration, and coastal resilience. By training and deploying community members as research contributors, Sol y Tierra simultaneously advances scientific goals and builds a diverse, locally rooted environmental workforce equipped to sustain this work long-term. Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity: CAB will coordinate four culturally responsive nature outings for 100 participants-including farmworker families, youth, and unhoused community members-many of whom have never visited local parks despite living steps away. Parks include Cotoni-Coast Dairies National Monument, Big Basin, Wilder Ranch, Henry Cowell Redwood State Park, and Natural Bridges. These experiences build environmental literacy, support mental and physical wellbeing, and foster a sense of belonging in the natural spaces Measure Q is committed to protecting. Across all thematic areas, Sol y Tierra lays groundwork that extends beyond a single grant cycle: trained emergency leaders in every Rancho, a locally rooted environmental workforce, and communities with the knowledge and networks to advocate for their own resilience for years to come.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Equity Impact: Davenport and the Pajaro Valley sit at the center of Santa Cruz County's climate crisis and inequity. Predominantly low-income Latino and Indigenous migrant communities, many of them undocumented farmworkers, bear the greatest exposure to climate risk while receiving the least investment in their resilience. UCSC research documents the toll: extreme heat causes heat stroke and fatigue among workers in triple-digit temperatures; wildfire smoke leaves over 66% of surveyed farmworkers with persistent respiratory symptoms; flooding generates anxiety, depression, and lost wages. Many face these hazards without health insurance, forced to work through dangerous conditions. Sol y Tierra is built on the conviction that communities most impacted by climate change must be central to the solutions-not solely as recipients of information, but as trained leaders, researchers, and advocates. All programming is delivered in Spanish and Mixteco, removing language as a barrier. Rooted in a reciprocal community-university partnership, climate knowledge flows in both directions: UCSC brings research expertise, community

members bring lived experience and local trust, carrying that knowledge into their communities. The 2024-2025 pilot produced over 30 trained promotores who continue connecting farmworkers to health resources and climate tools across the region. Sol y Tierra builds on that foundation. This approach also addresses concrete economic inequity. Stipends provide critical financial support: Learning Series participants earn \$600, plus \$100 per restoration project, a lifeline for the 45% of CAB-surveyed households earning \$20,000 or less. The program engages 60 participants-25 Pajaro Valley residents, 25 Davenport residents, and 10 unhoused residents-with prior cohort graduates invited to join the Work Crew, deepening investment in those already on a leadership pathway. Through four culturally responsive park excursions, Sol y Tierra addresses a quieter inequity: families living steps from world-famous parks, including Cotoni-Coast Dairies National Monument-less than a mile from CAB's Davenport center-and who have never had the means or sense of belonging to visit. For farmworker parents working relentless hours, these outings offer something rarely available: leisure, family connection, and time on the land they steward. Multi-Benefit Outcomes: Every component of Sol y Tierra generates simultaneous ecological, social, and economic benefits. The Climate Justice Learning Series builds climate literacy, emergency preparedness, and advocacy capacity among frontline residents. Work Crew participants contribute to active UCSC-led projects spanning habitat restoration, wetland conservation, and flood management and chosen by the cohort, ensuring genuine investment. Park excursions build environmental connection and family wellbeing. These outcomes reinforce one another, as demonstrated by the 2024-2025 cohort, whose members built emergency phone trees, pursued CERT certification, and formed a mutual support network that continues today. Climate Resilience Value: Sol y Tierra is grounded in UCSC's applied research on the region's most pressing climate risks: groundwater depletion, wildfire smoke, flooding, and extreme heat. Prior CAB-CCCR collaboration produced a 3-D air quality monitoring network and a bilingual farmworker health app deployed statewide. Sol y Tierra extends this work by ensuring climate knowledge and ecological expertise are held within the communities that need them most, building the sustainable human infrastructure that lasting resilience requires.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Public Benefit: Sol y Tierra delivers clear public benefit across improved safety, healthier ecosystems, and better recreation. First, Sol y Tierra builds a permanent, community-rooted emergency response network. The 2023 Pajaro River breach made clear that when official alert systems fail, trusted community networks save lives. Sol y Tierra builds on that lesson, training 60 residents in climate preparedness, with CERT pathways and a trained leader in every Rancho CAB serves. These 60 participants join 32 promotores from the 2024-2025 cohort, forming a connected, activated network across Pajaro, Davenport, and our unhoused community, ready to respond to wildfires, floods, and extreme heat. Second, Sol y Tierra's Work Crews turn community members into active stewards of the region's ecosystems. UCSC scientists are on the front lines of Santa Cruz County's most urgent environmental challenges, restoring tidal wetlands, managing flood risk, monitoring habitat, and advancing carbon sequestration. Sol y Tierra places 25 stipended participants alongside those scientists as genuine contributors, building community buy-in for work that depends on locally rooted investment. Participants gain skills, income, and a stake in the health of places they call home. Third, Sol y Tierra addresses a well-documented recreation equity gap. Research shows that Latino and BIPOC communities are underrepresented in park visitation, deterred by financial barriers, absent Spanish-language materials, and a sense that these spaces were not designed for them. Santa Cruz County's Parks Strategic Plan (2023) identifies South County-with the county's highest concentration of Latino residents-as a priority area for expanded access. Sol y Tierra responds by covering entrance fees, meals, and transportation, designing excursions in Spanish around family activities and nature exploration, creating belonging in spaces that have long felt inaccessible. Two outings at program launch build trust and serve as the entry point into our education and work crew series. Strategic Alignment: Sol y Tierra deepens existing partnerships. At its core is a nearly 30-year CAB-UCSC relationship, formalized through UCSC's dedicated Postdoctoral Fellow in Climate Justice and Community Engagement and embedded within UCSC's \$1.99 million California Climate Action Grant, partnering faculty with 10 community organizations to equip frontline communities with climate tools. Sol y Tierra translates that research infrastructure into community-held knowledge and action, directly advancing California's 2022 Climate Adaptation Strategy, Santa Cruz County's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, and the Monterey Bay Regional Climate Action Plan, which call for centering climate-impacted communities in locally rooted adaptation planning. Readiness: CAB is a well-established organization with 60 years of service in Santa Cruz County, serving 12,000 residents annually with the fiscal infrastructure, program management capacity, and community trust required to administer this grant effectively. UCSC will contribute an embedded postdoctoral researcher alongside in-kind scientific mentorship and research infrastructure, reflecting its deep rooted relationship with CAB. The 2024-2025 pilot trained and certified 32 promotores using curriculum that will be used in this program, led by staff and partners from the previous cohort. With partnerships active, infrastructure in place, and a clear hiring plan, Sol y Tierra is well-positioned for immediate implementation upon award.

TARGET COMMUNITY

Sol y Tierra targets Santa Cruz County's most economically and climatically vulnerable residents: farmworker families, Spanish and Mixteco-speaking immigrant community members, and unsheltered individuals. These groups face overlapping hardships that make them especially vulnerable to the growing impacts of climate change. The communities this program serves are concentrated in Pajaro and Davenport, two of the county's most under-resourced areas. Pajaro is an unincorporated community where the majority of residents are undocumented Latino and Indigenous migrants working in agriculture, an occupational group

with acute exposure to climate-related health and economic risks. CAB's 2025 community needs assessment found that 44% of clients report annual household incomes below \$20,000, 68% struggle to pay rent in the most expensive rental market in the nation—where a wage of \$77.96 per hour is required to afford a two-bedroom home—and 53% experience food insecurity. In Watsonville, unemployment reached 15.9% in January 2025, nearly three times the state average, and 61% of respondents reported direct climate impacts including reduced work, job loss, and worsening working conditions. These economic vulnerabilities are inseparable from climate vulnerability. Pajaro residents who already struggle to meet basic needs including food, healthcare, and housing, have the least capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from climate disasters. UCSC research documents the physical toll: farmworkers labor in triple-digit heat facing heat stroke and chronic fatigue; over 66% report respiratory symptoms from wildfire smoke exposure; flooding brings anxiety, depression, and lost wages on top of already precarious finances. Many work through hazardous conditions without health insurance, unable to afford to stop. These are not abstract risks. They are daily realities for the families Sol y Tierra serves. This was made devastatingly clear during the March 2023 Pajaro River levee failure, when official systems failed to reach monolingual Spanish and Mixteco-speaking farmworkers and unhoused residents. Many never received evacuation orders. It was CAB's grassroots networks that reached people and helped them to safety. Even as residents try to engage in longer-term climate planning, they face structural barriers: limited time, limited resources, and processes built around government mechanisms and terminology that are unfamiliar and inaccessible to most Pajaro residents. Sol y Tierra is designed to address these barriers directly, engaging 60 participants across Pajaro Valley, Davenport, and CAB's Tiny Homes village, with stipends and flexible scheduling designed to accommodate the demanding and unpredictable nature of agricultural work. This project builds the human infrastructure needed for resilience, while building an educated cohort of leaders informed and knowledgeable about regional climate issues. CAB is the region's community action agency, with 60 years of experience eliminating poverty through advocacy and essential services. Recognized as a trusted messenger by the California Governor's office, CAB has distributed over \$14 million in economic relief, provided free immigration legal services since 1987, and participated in statewide and national immigrant advocacy coalitions. Sol y Tierra is the next expression of a six-decade commitment to the leadership, livelihoods, and long-term resilience of the people it serves.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Public Safety: CAB has a demonstrated record as a frontline safety resource for Santa Cruz County's most excluded communities, from the CZU Lightning Complex Fire in 2020, to COVID-19 multilingual emergency response, to the 2023 Pajaro River breach, where CAB served as designated service provider across three jurisdictions, resulting in 34 Tiny Homes placed for displaced residents. CAB maintains active partnerships with fire agencies, law enforcement, and the newly established Sheriff's presence in Davenport, reducing emergency response times for a community previously 30 minutes from the nearest unit. These partnerships extend to COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disaster), VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), and the Santa Cruz County Long Term Recovery Group. Sol y Tierra strengthens this web by embedding emergency preparedness into the Learning Series and building toward a trained emergency leader in each of the 11 Ranchos CAB serves. **Health and Well-being:** For farmworker communities, climate change arrives as a health emergency long before it arrives as a policy conversation. Sol y Tierra meets people where that reality lives—in the daily decisions about whether to work through smoke or heat because the rent is due. The Climate Justice Learning Series delivers six culturally adapted modules in Spanish and Mixteco covering local climate impacts, emergency preparedness, workplace rights, and community advocacy. Participants leave with practical, life-protecting knowledge, including how to recognize heat illness, respond to dangerous air quality, navigate emergency systems, and advocate for safer conditions. Sol y Tierra sits at the forefront of an emerging movement to expand the traditional promotores model into the broader landscape of climate change. Participants are placed on a pathway toward promotores certification should they choose to pursue it, contributing to a growing cadre of climate promotores emerging across California, including in neighboring Monterey County. **Access to Nature, Recreation, Community Identity, and Outreach:** Sol y Tierra's park excursions are both an equity intervention and the program's primary recruitment strategy. CAB's decades of community work reflect a clear understanding: meaningful engagement begins with investment in community wellbeing. These excursions advance the access and equity priorities of Measure Q while offering families something they rarely have access to: rest, leisure, and time together in nature, with all costs covered. Participants arrive at the Climate Justice Learning Series having already been welcomed and cared for, and is the foundation for all the work that follows. Outreach is conducted through CAB's deeply rooted community touchpoints: weekly meals and programming at the Davenport Resource Service Center, Watsonville Works work crews and Tiny Homes case management for unhoused residents, and Casa de la Cultura field outreach and community events for Pajaro Valley families. All outreach and events will be conducted in Spanish and Mixteco. Graduates of the 2024-2025 cohort serve as peer connectors. CAB has been deeply rooted in these communities, at the levee, in the fields, at the food distribution, for decades and will use all its outreach infrastructure to support this program.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

This program generates direct, measurable environmental benefits across habitat, water quality, and climate resilience by embedding community members as active contributors to UCSC's Center for Coastal Climate Resilience—a research enterprise that has already secured \$15 million in public and philanthropic funding, acquired 264 acres for restoration, restored 65 acres of estuarine marsh, and deployed 30 air quality monitors across the Pajaro Valley region. Sol y Tierra plugs directly into that infrastructure. Habitat: The Adaptation and Resilience Work Crews will place 25 stipended participants alongside UCSC climate scientists on up to three active restoration projects chosen by the cohort from a portfolio of live research opportunities. Projects they may contribute to include Dr. Patrick Barnard's assessment of flood and erosion reduction benefits of wetland restoration at the mouth of the Pajaro River, conducted in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and the Santa Cruz County Land Trust. This project has already nearly doubled existing estuarine marsh habitat and is developing first-of-its-kind rolling restoration easements. It also represents a model for cooperative partnerships that protect farmland while enabling tidal marsh expansion across potentially 400 acres regionally. Work Crew participants will contribute hands-on labor to this effort, while simultaneously building the community workforce that will support the Land Trust's Resilient Pajaro Estuary project, which anticipates full tidal wetland restoration beginning in 2028. Environmental impact will be tracked through wetland acreage restored, habitat monitoring outputs, and carbon sequestration outcomes, which directly inform California Air Resources Board policy through UCSC's coastal wetlands carbon dynamics research. Water Quality: The Pajaro Valley's over-drafted aquifer and flood-prone river systems face urgent and compounding pressures. Work Crew participants may contribute to UCSC's levee setback project, which is reshaping 15 miles of Pajaro River levees to optimize flood control and ecosystem function following the 2023 breach. They may also support Recharge Net Metering (ReNeM), a groundwater recharge program transitioning to full operation under the Resource Conservation District, with an initial goal of 1,000 acre-feet per year of infiltration benefit across the Pajaro Valley. Climate Resilience: Every project in UCSC's Pajaro Valley portfolio prioritizes multi-benefit outcomes including flood buffers that also restore habitat, wetlands that sequester carbon while protecting coastlines, levee redesigns that improve both safety and ecosystem function. Sol y Tierra's Work Crews contribute labor to that portfolio while CAB tracks community-level environmental outputs: restoration hours contributed, debris and waste removed, and cleanup indicators along the Pajaro levee corridor - building on CAB's established track record of environmental clean-up and data collection in partnership with Santa Cruz County Supervisor Felipe Hernandez. The 2023 Pajaro River breach made clear that environmental resilience and community resilience are inseparable. Sol y Tierra builds on that lesson by ensuring that the communities most exposed to climate risk are not bystanders to the science working to address it, but trained, compensated, and active contributors to restoration work that will shape this region for generations.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

Program activities for Sol y Tierra take place across three types of sites, each with existing site control arrangements. CAB-operated facilities, including the Davenport Resource Service Center and Watsonville Works, are owned or leased by CAB and require no additional site agreements for program delivery. Ecological restoration and research activities conducted through the Adaptation and Resilience Work Crews will take place on sites where UCSC's Center for Coastal Climate Resilience and/or its partners already hold the necessary research agreements, permits, and landowner authorizations. Sol y Tierra participants will be embedded in these existing UCSC-led projects as stipended crew members, operating under UCSC's existing site control arrangements. Nature access programming will take place at established public parks and lands, including state and national parks such as Cotoni-Coast Dairies National Monument, Wilder Ranch, Natural Bridges, Henry Cowell Redwood State Park, and Big Basin. All are publicly accessible and require no site control agreements for facilitated group visits.

REQUIRED PERMITS

This project does not include ground disturbance, capital improvements, or site modifications. The project consists entirely of community programming. All physical restoration work is conducted under existing research permits and project authorizations held by UCSC and its partners, including The Nature Conservancy and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County. No additional permitting is required for CAB to implement this program.

PARTNER APPROVALS

Sol y Tierra does not require external site approvals or right-of-entry agreements. All program components are delivered through CAB's existing internal infrastructure—including the Davenport Resource Service Center and Watsonville Works—which are established CAB programs operating within CAB's organizational authority. The primary formal agreement governing this project is the partnership between CAB and UCSC's Center for Coastal Climate Resilience, which is already in place. This agreement covers the collaborative delivery of the Climate Justice Learning Series, postdoctoral researcher engagement, and community

member participation in UCSC-led ecological research projects. Nature access programming will take place at existing public parks and lands, including state and national parks, which are open to the public and require no special access agreements for facilitated group visits. No additional MOUs, right-of-entry agreements, or institutional approvals are anticipated at this time.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

Sol y Tierra will be implemented over a 12-month period (June 2026-June 2027) in four phases. Task 1: Recruitment, Hiring, and Preparation (June-October 2026) CAB will hire three new staff positions: a Sol y Tierra Coordinator and Program Specialist at the Davenport Resource Service Center, and a Program Specialist at Watsonville Works. Concurrent with hiring, CAB will launch recruitment through family park excursions to Cotoni-Coast Dairies National Monument, Wilder Ranch, Natural Bridges, Henry Cowell Redwood State Park, and Big Basin. At least two excursions will be held in the opening months as the primary entry point into the program, with four total excursions across the program year connecting 100 community members from Pajaro Valley, Davenport, and the Unsheltered Community to public lands. Session topics for Learning Series, materials, and speakers will be finalized, dates confirmed, and an orientation held to welcome the confirmed cohort of 60 participants. The full program team will complete UCSC climate resilience training in preparation for program delivery. Task 2: Climate Justice Learning Series (September-December 2026) Culturally adapted Climate Justice Sessions will be held in Spanish and Mixteco on regular occurrences decided by members across Pajaro Valley, the Davenport Resource Service Center, and Watsonville Works. Participants will engage in workshops, group discussions, skill-building activities, guest speakers, and ongoing mentorship from UCSC researchers and CAB staff. All participants will earn incentives for their engagement. Nature excursions continue during this phase for participants and families. The phase concludes with graduation ceremonies honoring accomplishments across the cohort. A first progress report will be submitted by Month 6. Cohort (60 participants): 25 from Pajaro Valley, 25 from Davenport, 10 from unhoused community Task 3: Adaptation and Resilience Work Crews (December 2026-April 2027) Open to Learning Series graduates and previous cohort graduates, 25 stipended participants will contribute hands-on labor to up to three UCSC-led ecological restoration and environmental stewardship projects, selected by the cohort from a portfolio of active research opportunities in the Pajaro Valley region. UCSC researchers will provide scientific mentorship and structured work time throughout. Stipends provide critical off-season income alongside job skills and environmental career pathway support. Task 4 - Wrap-Up and Reporting (May - June 2027) The program closes with a final celebration event recognizing participant accomplishments. Outcomes will be documented across all program components: pre- and post-surveys measuring participant gains in climate knowledge, emergency preparedness, and confidence to advocate; work crew hours and ecological restoration outputs assessed in collaboration with UCSC researchers; and nature access experiences delivered across the program year. CAB and UCSC will conduct a lessons-learned review to inform future program development. The final report will be submitted by June 2027. Program-Wide Outcome Targets: 100 community members connected to parks and public lands through 4 nature excursions; 60 participants recruited to the Climate Justice Learning Series; 80% graduate Climate Justice trainings; 80% demonstrate increased climate knowledge; 100% report feeling more prepared for an emergency; 75% engage in work crew experiences; 3 UCSC-led ecological restoration projects worked on

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

No

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

No

TEAM CAPACITY

CAB Santa Cruz and UCSC's Center for Coastal Climate Resilience (CCCR) bring complementary and proven capacity to deliver Sol y Tierra. Sol y Tierra grows directly out of a 30 year relationship between CAB and UCSC, advancing food justice, climate justice, economic justice, and more across the Pajaro Valley and the Santa Cruz coast. UCSC's Center for Coastal Climate Resilience was established five years ago with CAB as a founding community partner, embedding community engagement as a core research principle from its inception. That partnership has since produced measurable outcomes: the Campo-Sano bilingual health app; a 30-monitor air quality network delivering real-time wildfire smoke data across the Pajaro Valley; and the Climate Justice Learning Series, co-developed with farmworker communities and Sol y Tierra's direct predecessor. This project represents the next phase, scaling what has already been proven. MariaElena De La Garza brings more than 35 years of nonprofit leadership rooted in equity, immigrant rights, and community voice. Born and raised in Watsonville, she has spent her career expanding opportunity for the farmworker and immigrant families Sol y Tierra serves. Under her leadership, CAB has grown into the region's primary community anchor serving 12,000 residents annually, distributing over \$14 million in economic relief, and earning recognition from the California Governor's office as a trusted community messenger. A TEDxSantaCruz speaker and advocate for Latina leadership, MariaElena provides the organizational vision and cross-sector relationships that make a program of this scope possible. Lizette Ponce brings over 15 years of experience as a community organizer working directly with low-income families, unhoused residents, youth, and seniors. As Program Coordinator at the Davenport Resource Service Center, she built food distribution, senior and youth services, and benefit navigation that became central to Davenport community life. Lizette's relationships in Davenport, across the Ranchos, and throughout CAB's networks form the foundation of Sol y Tierra's outreach and retention strategy. Dr. Patrick Barnard is one of the nation's leading experts in coastal hazards, climate adaptation, and

environmental justice. With more than 150 peer-reviewed publications and as an advisor to the White House, Congress, and state and local governments, Dr. Barnard leads a research center backed by a \$1.99 million California Climate Action Grant, engaging 18 faculty and more than 40 community partners-institutional weight that elevates Sol y Tierra's contributions to regional and statewide climate policy. Dr. Sydney Madsen co-developed and co-taught the 2024-2025 Climate Justice Learning Series alongside CAB and will continue through Sol y Tierra, bringing curriculum continuity, established community trust, and a proven ability to make climate science accessible to Spanish- and Mixteco-speaking farmworker communities. Casa de la Cultura brings deep organizing relationships with farmworker and Indigenous residents across the Pajaro Valley, strengthened through joint crisis response following the 2023 levee breach, and is essential to Sol y Tierra's recruitment and outreach. Together, these organizations and individuals bring the trust, expertise, and track record to ensure Sol y Tierra will succeed and have enduring results.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

Sol y Tierra is built on a foundation of established partnerships, proven program models, and existing community infrastructure that position it for timely and effective implementation. The hardest work of building trust, designing curriculum, and demonstrating impact is already done. Following the 2023 Pajaro River levee failure, CAB and Casa de la Cultura partnered in sustained community recovery, coordinating economic relief and facilitating monthly stakeholder meetings. CAB led development of the Tiny Homes village that has since rehoused 34 displaced residents with intensive case management toward stable, long-term housing. These relationships with farmworker families, unhoused residents, and regional organizations remain active and form the community backbone of this project. CAB has operated in both the Pajaro Valley and Davenport for decades and requires no ramp-up time to establish presence or trust. The Climate Justice Learning Series model has already been piloted and proven. CAB and UCSC delivered the inaugural series in 2024-2025, training and certifying 32 Spanish- and Mixteco-speaking farmworkers as environmental promotores through UCSC's Global and Community Health program. Graduates supported the installation of community air quality monitors, educated fellow farmworkers on wildfire smoke and heat-related health hazards, and emerged as community advocates equipped to engage in local and regional climate policy—a meaningful outcome in communities that are rarely represented in those conversations. Sol y Tierra builds directly on this foundation. Dr. Sydney Madsen's existing curriculum will be adapted for expanded cohorts, significantly reducing design time and enabling rapid launch, and graduates of the previous cohort will be invited back as peer leaders and Work Crew participants, accelerating onboarding and strengthening continuity across program years. UCSC's CCCR brings established research infrastructure requiring no new institutional groundwork. Outreach and recruitment are fully operational: CAB's promotores network, the Davenport Resource Service Center, Watsonville Works, and Casa de la Cultura all maintain active relationships across the full target cohort. All outreach materials are available in Spanish and Mixteco. CAB already has access to a van for participant travel to field sites, removing a logistical barrier that would otherwise require procurement lead time. CAB's capacity to manage public investment is well established, including \$500,000 in federal CARES Act emergency funds, over \$14 million in total economic relief distributed to community members, and multi-jurisdictional partnerships with Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties and the City of Watsonville. This track record of fiscal responsibility provides strong evidence of CAB's ability to administer this grant with accountability and impact. The primary remaining step is hiring three new staff positions, anticipated to take approximately two months. CAB will reach into their existing network of members and promotores in priority for the hires. All other elements including partners, curriculum, outreach channels, research agreements, and community relationships are in place. Sol y Tierra is ready to move.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Sol y Tierra is anchored by a CAB-UCSC partnership nearly three decades in the making, one that predates this grant and reflects a level of institutional trust rarely achieved between a university and a community organization. UCSC sits on CAB's governance board, participates in advisory committees, and has engaged with CAB across labor studies, food justice, climate science, and leadership development. UCSC's first activist-in-residence was one of CAB's Davenport directors, a detail that speaks to the depth and authenticity of this relationship. Through CCCR, that partnership has produced tangible, community-tested results: the Campo-Sano bilingual health application now deployed statewide, a 3-D air quality monitoring network serving farmworker communities across the Watsonville and Pajaro region, and contributions to California's 5th Climate Change Assessment. CAB promotores have received formal accreditation through UCSC's Global and Community Health program, and joint research has directly informed state and local climate policy. Most recently, Dr. Sydney Madsen co-developed and co-taught the 2024-2025 Climate Justice Learning Series with CAB, Sol y Tierra's direct predecessor, embedding herself within CAB's community programs in a model of collaborative practice this project will continue. Her ongoing role ensures Sol y Tierra benefits from two years of relationship-building, curriculum refinement, and community trust that no new hire could replicate. CCCR, under the leadership of Research Director Dr. Patrick Barnard, will contribute research oversight and scientific leadership - anchoring the collaboration at an institutional level and ensuring findings are positioned for peer-reviewed publication and policy impact. UCSC will contribute \$92,000 toward Dr. Barnard's salary as in-kind support, reflecting meaningful institutional co-investment in this program's success. Beyond the CAB-CCCR anchor, Sol y Tierra draws on a network of regional partners whose relationships were built through shared work, not assembled for a grant application. Casa de la Cultura has been a core organizing partner since the 2023 levee breach, co-leading outreach with Pajaro Valley's Spanish- and Mixteco-speaking residents and hosting sessions as part of the 2024-2025 pilot. Watsonville Works provides the direct operational model for Sol y Tierra's environmental work crews, with a proven methodology for recruiting and supporting unhoused residents in structured, compensated work. The Davenport Resource Service Center anchors north coast programming with outreach infrastructure, emergency services, food programs, and immigration support already embedded in the community. Ecological restoration work will take place within active UCSC-led

projects in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and the Santa Cruz County Land Trust, both engaged in wetland restoration and flood management along the lower Pajaro River and with specific site assignments to be confirmed with CCCR during the grant period. Community Bridges will serve as the referral partner for CERT emergency preparedness certification. This partner network spans community organizing, climate science, workforce development, ecological restoration, and emergency preparedness. It has been built over decades and is ready to deliver.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

Sol y Tierra is a deeply integrated collaboration between CAB Santa Cruz and UCSC's Center for Coastal Climate Resilience (CCCR), with active roles for a network of community partners whose relationships and infrastructure make this program possible. CAB serves as the lead implementing organization, responsible for overall program coordination, participant recruitment and support, financial administration, and community outreach. The program operates under the executive oversight of CEO MariaElena De La Garza, whose 35 years of nonprofit leadership and deep ties to the Pajaro Valley ensure Sol y Tierra remains accountable to the communities it serves. Interim Operations Manager Lizette Ponce will oversee and lead the project, supported by three newly hired staff - a Program Coordinator and Program Specialist at the Davenport Resource Service Center, and a Program Specialist at Watsonville Works - who will manage day-to-day program delivery across both sites. Outreach will be conducted through CAB's existing food programs, immigration services, and community events, all in Spanish and Mixteco. Watsonville Works will recruit and support 10 unhoused participants from the Hope Village Tiny Homes community - residents displaced by the 2023 Pajaro River breach now on pathways to stable housing - using its proven model of structured work crews with wraparound support including meals, stipends, and integrated learning. Casa de la Cultura will lead outreach and recruitment for Pajaro Valley participants, drawing on deep organizing relationships with Spanish- and Mixteco-speaking farmworker families and serving as a trusted cultural bridge for Indigenous-language speakers. Community Bridges will serve as the referral pathway for participants pursuing CERT emergency preparedness certification. UCSC's CCCR will provide two researchers central to Sol y Tierra's scientific and programmatic delivery. Dr. Sydney Madsen will serve as liaison between the university and CAB, co-leading curriculum delivery and connecting Work Crew participants to active ecological research projects. Dr. Patrick Barnard, Research Director of CCCR, will provide research oversight and scientific leadership. Together, they will study and document the outcomes of this community-science collaboration, with findings intended for peer-reviewed publication - building the evidence base for the climate promotores model and supporting its replication beyond this grant cycle. UCSC will contribute \$92,000 in in-kind support, reflecting its deep institutional commitment to this partnership. Sol y Tierra's calendar is structured around the rhythms of agricultural work, with all programming scheduled during the off-season when farmworker participants have both the availability and financial need for stipended engagement - a design decision that reflects a genuine understanding of the communities this program serves. Together, these partners bring community trust, scientific expertise, workforce development experience, and cultural competency woven into a single, coherent program.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

509000

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

0

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

105800

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

105800

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

15

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Sol y Tierra requests \$509,000 in Measure Q funding to support a comprehensive 12-month program delivering climate education, workforce development, ecological restoration, and nature access programming across Santa Cruz County. An additional \$105,800 in in-kind contributions-\$92,000 from UCSC and \$13,800 from CAB's existing programs-brings the total project cost to \$614,800. Personnel and Fringe Benefits - \$304,842 Personnel represents the largest portion of the budget, reflecting the staffing

required to deliver a multi-site, bilingual program. Lizette Ponce, Interim Operations Manager, will provide organizational oversight and project leadership at 1.0 FTE. Three new positions will be hired specifically for Sol y Tierra: a Sol y Tierra Program Coordinator at 1.0 FTE and 1.75 FTE Program Specialists - one based at the Davenport Resource Service Center and one at Watsonville Works supporting Work Crew operations. All positions will be recruited from within CAB's existing community networks to ensure cultural competency and trusted relationships. Personnel costs total \$231,660, with \$6,000 in in-kind personnel support contributed by CAB's existing programs. Fringe benefits are budgeted at \$67,182, reflecting CAB's standard benefits rate of approximately 29%. Travel - \$10,000 Travel costs cover vehicle fuel, staff mileage reimbursement, and transportation for participants attending park excursions and work crew sites across Santa Cruz County. This includes four family nature excursions to Cotoni-Coast Dairies National Monument, Wilder Ranch, Natural Bridges, Henry Cowell Redwood State Park, and Big Basin, as well as regular crew transportation to UCSC-led ecological restoration project sites in the Pajaro Valley. Equipment - \$5,016 Equipment costs cover project-specific technology and general office supply for new staff, including laptops and work phones, and essential office materials necessary for program coordination, bilingual outreach, field documentation, and administrative tasks across two program sites. Supplies - \$12,000 Supplies cover program materials, crew necessities, field equipment, project supplies, and field trip tickets supporting Learning Series sessions, nature excursions, and Work Crew activities across the program year. Contractual / Consultants - \$177,000 CAB will subcontract with UCSC for two researchers central to Sol y Tierra's scientific and programmatic delivery. Dr. Sydney Madsen, postdoctoral fellow and co-developer of the 2024-2025 Climate Justice Learning Series, is budgeted at \$85,000 in requested Measure Q funds, covering her co-leadership of curriculum delivery, scientific mentorship, and coordination between UCSC research teams and CAB. Dr. Patrick Barnard, Research Director of UCSC's Center for Coastal Climate Resilience, contributes \$92,000 in research oversight and scientific leadership as UCSC in-kind support - a meaningful investment reflecting the depth of the CAB-UCSC partnership. Other Direct Costs - \$49,550.85 This covers liability insurance, telephone and online services, employee recruitment, client assistance, and participant incentives including graduation stipends for Learning Series completers and work crew stipends for participants. An additional \$7,800 in in-kind support from CAB's existing programs is reflected in this category. Indirect Costs - \$66,39.31 Indirect costs are calculated at 15% of direct costs, consistent with CAB's established indirect cost rate, covering organizational administrative overhead that supports program delivery.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

Sol y Tierra is strategically timed. The Pajaro Valley is on the cusp of a significant wave of ecological restoration investment, and this program is building the community workforce needed to participate in it. The lower Pajaro River estuary is the focus of major restoration activity in the coming years. The Nature Conservancy and the Santa Cruz County Land Trust are actively acquiring and leasing agricultural land for wetland restoration, with large-scale tidal restoration anticipated to begin in 2027-2028. Levee reconstruction and flood management improvements are also underway along the lower Pajaro River, representing substantial public investment in the region's ecological resilience. These projects will require sustained community labor, local knowledge, and environmental expertise, which is exactly what Sol y Tierra is building. Sol y Tierra meets participants where they are and opens doors to where they can go. Participants gain hands-on ecological field experience, deepened climate literacy, and direct connections to the scientists and land managers leading restoration work in their region. Those who wish to pursue formal credentialing-whether through UCSC's promotores certification pathway or CERT emergency preparedness training-will have the relationships, knowledge, and referrals to do so. This approach creates a locally rooted workforce pipeline drawn from the communities most impacted by climate change, one positioned to plug into restoration opportunities as they come online and to access the broader green jobs economy emerging across California. The CAB-UCSC partnership that anchors Sol y Tierra is itself a long-term asset, with both organizations committed to seeking additional funding to sustain and expand this work. UCSC's research documentation of this model will also support replication and policy adoption at the state level, extending Sol y Tierra's reach well beyond the Pajaro Valley. Sol y Tierra is the foundation; the restoration investments coming to this region are the opportunity.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

No

REFERENCED PLANS

—

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness, High Fund Leverage

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

Exceptional Readiness: Sol y Tierra demonstrates an exceptional level of implementation readiness. A complete pilot cycle was delivered in 2024-2025, producing 32 UCSC-certified environmental promotores and a fully developed, community-tested curriculum in Spanish and Mixteco. Partnerships are active, community relationships are established, and pilot graduates will be engaged as peer leaders and Work Crew participants. CAB's operational infrastructure - including the Davenport Resource

Service Center, Watsonville Works, and its promotores network - provides an immediate foundation for recruitment, outreach, and participant support, requiring no procurement, site negotiation, or new institutional agreements prior to launch. The sole remaining dependency is hiring three new staff positions, a process CAB is prepared to initiate immediately upon award. High Fund Leverage: This grant is meaningfully leveraged by confirmed institutional co-investment. UCSC is contributing approximately \$92,000 in personnel as in-kind support, reflecting genuine institutional stake in this program's success. An additional \$20,000 in philanthropic donations secured through the Davenport Resource Service Center further extends the program's resource base. CAB also contributes in-kind assets including a fully developed bilingual curriculum, an operational promotores network, existing outreach infrastructure, and a program van - together significantly extending the reach and impact of every public dollar invested. Strong Partnerships: The collaboration anchoring Sol y Tierra reflects nearly three decades of sustained institutional relationship between CAB and UCSC, spanning labor studies, food justice, farmworker health, climate science, and community leadership. CCCR researchers have been embedded within CAB's community programs - including Dr. Sydney Madsen's two-year co-development of the 2024-2025 Learning Series. Sol y Tierra also benefits from the scientific leadership of Dr. Patrick Barnard, Research Director of CCCR, whose work on coastal hazards, climate adaptation, and environmental justice is precisely the science this grant is designed to advance. At the helm of CAB is CEO MariaElena De La Garza, a Watsonville native with more than 35 years of nonprofit leadership devoted to strengthening pathways out of poverty while honoring the cultural richness of the communities CAB serves. Her leadership - grounded in cultural humility and the belief that community voice must shape community solutions - is the organizational foundation from which Sol y Tierra grows. The broader partner network, including Casa de la Cultura, The Nature Conservancy, the Santa Cruz County Land Trust, and Community Bridges, brings additional depth and reach to program delivery. Regional Significance: The Pajaro Valley is among California's most extensively documented climate vulnerability zones, and Sol y Tierra is designed to operate at both its ecological and human dimensions. Sol y Tierra is embedded within UCSC's \$1.99 million California Climate Action Grant and directly advances California's 2022 Climate Adaptation Strategy, Santa Cruz County's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, and the Monterey Bay Regional Climate Action Plan. Under Dr. Barnard's leadership, CCCR brings decades of peer-reviewed research and direct engagement with federal, state, and local climate policy - ensuring Sol y Tierra's community science is connected to the highest levels of the field. At a moment of significant public investment in coastal restoration, this program ensures the

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[APPENDIX A BUDGET WORKSHEET SOL Y TIERRA.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[FINAL LOS SOL Y TIERRA.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

[sol_y_tierra_gantt.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[Appendix E – Organizational Information Template & Application Checklist.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[Final CAB Proudly Pajaro photos.jpg](#), [Proudly Pajaro Pic 2.jpg](#), [Proudly Pajaro Pic 3.jpg](#), [Proudly Pajaro Pic 7.jpg](#), [1000047999.jpg](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

MariaElena De La Garza

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

MariaElena De La Garza

SIGNATURE DATE

03/12/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 251 **Type:** Tier 2 San Vicente Redwoods Set-Aside
Project: San Vicente Redwoods - Public Access Improvement Project

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

251

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 San Vicente Redwoods Set-Aside

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

San Vicente Redwoods - Public Access Improvement Project

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Peninsula Open Space Trust

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

—

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Other

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

Trees and Trail Segments

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

—

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Lauren Korth

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Institutional Engagement Officer

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Melina	Mahood	[REDACTED]
Eric	Lombardo	[REDACTED]
Season	Korchin	[REDACTED]
Joanna	Devers	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

Please refer to APN numbers below for parcels at San Vicente Redwoods to be covered by this Project

PARCEL NUMBER

08001142, 08001139

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

37.11659974151225

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.15552859570063

PROJECT JURISDICTION / CITY

Unincorporated Santa Cruz County

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

For this inaugural year of Measure Q funding, Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), in collaboration with conservation partners Sempervirens Fund (Sempervirens) and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC), seeks support for three distinct, interconnected projects at the San Vicente Redwoods property (SVR), submitted as separate but related proposals. Spanning 8,852 acres, SVR is a regionally significant property located just over the ridgeline from the San Lorenzo Valley in unincorporated Santa Cruz County. The property extends from the upper reaches of Cotoni Coast Dairies near Davenport up to Empire Grade Road just north of the Bonny Doon community. SVR provides habitat for a variety of rare, threatened, and endangered plants and animals. SVR encompasses substantial portions of four coastal watersheds: Laguna Creek, Scott Creek, Molino Creek, and San Vicente Creek. SVR falls within the more than 86,500-acre 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire burn perimeter. Conservation efforts at SVR directly serve the neighboring communities of Bonny Doon, Davenport, Boulder Creek, Felton, and Pescadero, and offer benefits to all residents in and surrounding the Santa Cruz Mountains. Measure Q funding will support efforts to minimize catastrophic wildfire threats, improve road access, enhance biological diversity, enhance public access experiences, and safeguard local drinking water. POST and Sempervirens acquired and took co-ownership of SVR in 2011, Save the Redwoods League (the League) holds a conservation easement protecting the property in perpetuity, and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC) manages public access (SVR Conservation Partners). Details about each SVR partner and our 10+ year partnership managing SVR can be found in other sections of this application. Collectively, the SVR Conservation Partners identified three priority projects for the coming year that work towards common goals of protecting neighboring communities, enhancing public access, and building climate resilience, co-developing three distinct applications for each project. The San Vicente Redwoods Public Access Improvement Project serves residents and visitors throughout Santa Cruz County and the greater Central Coast region. Completion of Phase 1 of the San Vicente Redwoods trail system in 2022 created approximately 7.5 miles of new public trails for hikers, cyclists, and equestrians. This provided regionally significant recreational opportunities in a largely rural landscape within the Santa Cruz Mountains, and expanded outdoor recreation access for visitors and residents across Santa Cruz County and nearby areas. Maintaining safe, reliable, year-round access to this trail system is essential for continuing to serve the region. As such, the Public Access Improvement Project will mitigate post-wildfire potential hazards, improve trail tread conditions, and implement erosion control measures to protect the trail system and ensure a high-quality, safe public access experience.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

No applicable

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT

District 3 - Justin Cummings

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

The San Vicente Redwoods property is privately owned by the Peninsula Open Space Trust and Sempervirens Fund. The benefits of climate resilience work done on the property directly serve the safety of those living in the neighboring unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County and communities in close proximity - such as Bonny Doon, Davenport, and San Lorenzo Valley towns like Boulder Creek and Felton, in addition to benefits for residents throughout the County that are impacted when catastrophic wildfires break out in the region. Public access improvements on the property serve the entire county and beyond, as visitors from anywhere can utilize the sites' public trails.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

DAC STATUS

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

Not applicable for this application.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	No		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

As described further in the Vision Plan Secondary Prioritization Principle narrative, this Project is fully shovel-ready, with the primary remaining dependency being funding to initiate contractor selection for implementation. A comprehensive Tree Risk Assessment was completed in 2025 by a certified arborist, identifying 25 moderate-risk assessment areas along Phase 1 trails at SVR, clearly defining the scope of hazard tree mitigation. A targeted and prioritized mitigation list has been finalized, and at least 20 of these trees will be treated through this Project. No additional environmental analysis or feasibility studies are required prior to implementation. Similarly, trail tread segments requiring rehabilitation have been identified through ongoing staff monitoring trail conditions throughout the year. Areas exhibiting rutting, unstable surfaces, or drainage deficiencies are accessible and ready for repair immediately upon selection of a contractor. We are entering the June 2026 - May 2027 dates above as the project start and end dates, in case of weather or other unexpected delays.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

100000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

100000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Contractual / Consultants	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$100,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

The San Vicente Redwoods Public Access Improvement Project (Project) is a comprehensive effort and investment to ensure the 7.5-mile public trail system remains durable, accessible, and welcoming for the public over time. The Project will be led by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC) and will enhance the experience for hikers, bikers, and equestrians at San Vicente Redwoods (SVR) by strengthening year-round public access and mitigating the risk of future safety hazards. The proposed Project includes mitigating at least 20 moderate-risk trees identified during a 2025 Tree Risk Assessment and completing trail tread improvements to address erosion and ensure trail longevity.

PROJECT START DATE

06/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

05/31/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

LTSCC and its partners opened 7.5 miles of trails at SVR to the public in 2022, providing new, extensive public access for hikers, cyclists, and equestrians. Maintaining safe, reliable, and year-round access to this trail system is essential to serving Santa Cruz County residents and visitors. This Project advances the Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity priorities outlined in the Vision Plan by enhancing the overall public access experience at SVR through the mitigation of moderate-risk trees and trail tread improvements to address erosion and ensure long-term durability of trails for all user groups. While the SVR trail system is currently safe and frequently monitored by LTSCC staff, the impacts of the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire continue to create management challenges. The 2020 wildfire burned through the property, leaving large swaths of dead and fire damaged trees in its path. Before trail installation, dead and otherwise hazardous trees within or adjacent to the trail corridor were removed; however, since that time, significant numbers of trees have continued declining and posing new threats. In response, LTSCC commissioned a Tree Risk Assessment in 2025 to identify any potentially at-risk trees that were not removed at the time of the property's original opening. This assessment identified zero high risk trees and 25 moderate-risk assessment areas across Phase 1 trails, particularly near areas with higher visitor occupancy. A "moderate risk" rating indicates that a tree has visible structural concerns and a measurable likelihood of failure within the next year, but does not present an immediate hazard, and is recommended for proactive management to maintain safe and reliable public access. This Project seeks to preemptively mitigate at least 20 of these moderate-risk trees, aiding in the reduction of safety risks to visitors and supporting reliable trail operations, especially during winter storms when fallen trees can disrupt timely reopening. In addition to mitigating moderate-risk trees, intensive rainfall, particularly during the first winter after opening when more than 63 inches of rain were recorded, combined with increasing visitor use has contributed to tread wear in certain trail segments. Some trail areas now show rutting, unstable rocky surfaces, and water pooling after storm events. If left unaddressed, these conditions can reduce user ease and lead to widening of trails as visitors navigate around problem areas, accelerating erosion and long-term degradation. The proposed trail improvements will rehabilitate disturbed tread and restore proper drainage to stabilize these segments. By addressing emerging issues early, the Project will preserve trail durability, reduce maintenance burdens, and maintain a high-quality recreational experience. These improvements will help ensure that SVR's trail system remains safe, functional, and welcoming, supporting reliable public access for the diverse community of users who depend on it throughout the year.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project is one of three projects taking place on the property with Measure Q funds this grant cycle. Other projects applying for funding this year are the San Vicente Redwoods Public Access Improvement Project and the San Vicente Redwoods Botanical Resource Management Planning Project. Taken together, these projects serve to deliver multi-benefit outcomes, offer match funding and leveraging potential, and enhance climate resilience. As a whole, the three projects will deliver broad economic, social, and environmental benefits by expanding recreational access, protecting drinking water supplies, conserving biodiversity, enhancing wildfire preparedness, and reducing wildfire hazards. The Public Access Improvement Project enhances safe, reliable, and enjoyable recreation by mitigating moderate-risk trees and improving trail tread and conditions on the existing trails. The San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project will improve creek and tributary crossings to reduce erosion and sedimentation into San Vicente Creek, which provides drinking water to the community of Davenport. This Project also includes road improvements along critical ridgeline corridors that support shaded fuel breaks and maintain access for land management activities and emergency response entities such as CAL FIRE. The San Vicente Redwoods Botanical Resource Management Planning Project will strengthen redwood forest health, safeguard critical water resources, and reduce wildfire fuel loads across the property. This Project supports preparation for the direct management of invasive plant species that diminish biodiversity, compete for limited water resources, and can increase wildfire risk by creating ladder fuels or dense understory growth. The plan will establish priorities for botanical stewardship and recommend effective strategies to control invasive species, such as French broom, while protecting rare and sensitive plants and plant communities. Additionally, it will provide the necessary prioritization schema and treatment recommendations that will be critical to securing additional grant funding for the implementation of the outlined work. Additionally, projects at San Vicente Redwoods demonstrate strong leveraging potential. Measure Q funds for the San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project are aligned with a \$1,350,000 CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant supporting shaded fuel break installation along the same ridgeline road network improved through the creek crossing project, and \$80,000 invested by POST in securing necessary permits for the fuel break and roadwork projects. By strengthening road

infrastructure and watershed protections, local funds enhance and extend the impact of significant state investment in wildfire prevention. Finally, these projects have significant climate resilience value. Road improvements will reduce stormwater impacts during increasingly intense rainfall events, shaded fuel breaks will help reduce wildfire intensity and establish boundaries for future prescribed burns, and invasive species management will reduce ladder fuels and water competition while supporting native forest recovery following the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

The Public Access Improvement Project is shovel-ready, with the remaining need being funding to initiate contractor procurement and complete implementation. The 2025 Tree Risk Assessment clearly identified 25 prioritized trees that will be used to develop the scope of work for the contract. LTSCC has previously managed similar hazard tree mitigation efforts and has established internal protocols for successful completion of the task. Upon award, LTSCC will engage with a qualified and licensed contractor (or contractors) to complete the work within the proposed 12-month timeline. Trail tread rehabilitation segments have also been identified based on staff monitoring and storm damage observations, allowing improvements to proceed immediately following contractor selection. Because the areas of concern are known and accessible, no additional study or planning phase is required prior to implementation. Upon completion, the public benefit of this Project will be immediate and tangible. Reliable, sustainable, and safe access to nature is integral to community health and wellbeing. San Vicente Redwoods provides 7.5 miles of multi-use trails that support physical activity and connection to open space at no cost to visitors. Proactively addressing potentially hazard trees and vulnerable trail segments reduces safety risks, minimizes weather-related closures, and preserves consistent access throughout the year. By investing in preventive maintenance and risk mitigation now, the Project protects the safety of visitors, staff, and contractors, as well as the long-term integrity of public recreational infrastructure. Ultimately, this Project will ensure that this significant community asset remains accessible and welcoming to Santa Cruz County residents and visitors alike.

TARGET COMMUNITY

The San Vicente Redwoods Public Access Improvement Project will benefit a diverse group of trail users and community members who rely on the property for recreational purposes. Primary users include hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians who regularly use the trail system. The largest user group is nearby residents in the rural Santa Cruz Mountains, particularly in Bonny Doon, Boulder Creek, and Felton. SVR trails also serve visitors from the broader Santa Cruz region, as well as occasional users from the greater Bay Area and Central Coast region. In addition to recreational users, student researchers from the University of California Santa Cruz utilize the property and the Phase 1 trails to conduct field research. Improvements supported by this Project will enhance the overall trail experience by reducing potential hazard risk trees, improving trail tread, controlling erosion to enhance user experience, and enabling more reliable trail access throughout the rainy season. These benefits will also support LTSCC staff who frequently monitor and steward the trail system by reducing maintenance burdens, improving operational efficiency, and helping ensure safe and sustainable management of the property for public use. SVR is immediately adjacent to Bonny Doon, in close proximity to Davenport, and adjacent to heavily forested areas that border Ben Lomond and Boulder Creek. Together, these communities contain over 6,000 households. The shaded fuel breaks and associated roadwork projects of the San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project offer the best option to protect neighboring communities by slowing the spread of fire, providing safe dry season access for fire and emergency responders, and creating locations where backburns can be lit to reduce fuels and stop wildfire spread. Additionally, creeks within the San Vicente Watershed provide the primary and backup water supply for the City of Davenport, which includes two water intakes and miles of pipes to transfer water. Proposed erosion and sediment control work will protect water quality throughout the San Vicente Watershed, which includes the drinking water source for Davenport. The San Vicente Redwoods - Botanical Resource Management Planning will cover the entirety of the SVR property. The project will synthesize and verify pre-existing survey data from 2024 regarding invasive and rare botanicals throughout SVR. The plan will establish goals and prioritization to guide future invasive plant management and protection of sensitive and rare plants and habitats. The planning process and subsequent implementation will benefit all who access the property by contributing to the health of the watershed and to fire mitigation risk. Further, the eventual active management of invasives may contribute to a reduction in the spread of invasives to neighboring properties.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Access to nature

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Public Safety - As part of a broader property effort to install shaded fuel breaks and upgrade roads and road crossings for access, the San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project offers significant public safety benefits through forest management intended to contain wildfire, access to areas critical for addressing emergency wildfire threats, dry weather access, and land management activities. The Botanical Resource Management Planning Project will also decrease

vegetation that exacerbates wildfire risk, such as annual invasives, which can accumulate a thick, flammable thatch layer. The plan will also factor in the possibility/likelihood of future prescribed fire as a tool to manage invasive plants and minimize wildfire risk. These benefits are wide-ranging and could include all residents within the surrounding Santa Cruz Mountains and beyond. Access to nature / Access to recreation - The San Vicente Redwoods Public Access Improvement Project will foster more reliable and enjoyable access to nature and access to recreation on a widely used trail system in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Hazard tree mitigation and trail tread improvement will mitigate potential risks to visitors and enhance overall trail conditions. This Project will help ensure that hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians can use the trail safely and access the trails more reliably, especially in the rainy season when downed trees and flooded trail portions are more common. As the trail system is heavily used by nearby residents in Bonny Doon, Boulder Creek, and Felton, maintaining these trails supports community members continuing to enjoy the outdoor recreation opportunities at the property and encourages connection with the redwood forest landscape through the interpretive signage that educates visitors about the redwood ecosystem and the recovery of San Vicente Redwoods following the CZU Lightning Complex Fire.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

SVR is a vast and ecologically important property, containing redwood forest, including old-growth stands, previously logged forest, and a working forest that supports sustainable timber harvesting and forestry jobs. The property provides necessary habitat for regionally significant wildlife, including marbled murrelet, pumas, peregrine falcons, and other sensitive species. As such, conservation and protection of the economically and ecologically critical natural resources is paramount. The San Vicente Redwoods Public Access Improvement Project is one of three complementary proposals submitted this year by the managing partner organizations at San Vicente Redwoods. Together with the Botanical Resource Management Planning Project and the Targeted Stream Crossing Repairs to Protect Water Quality Project, these efforts will generate meaningful improvements to water quality, habitat conditions, and climate resilience across the property. The Public Access Improvement Project focuses on improving trail tread and mitigating the risk of hazard trees to enhance visitor safety and usability. While the Project primarily supports safe public access, it also provides ancillary environmental benefits. Trail tread improvements reduce the likelihood that visitors will widen trails when flooding or muddy conditions block the path, thereby minimizing damage to surrounding vegetation and reducing disturbance to adjacent habitat.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant owns the property for the proposed project

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

—

REQUIRED PERMITS

No permits are required. The trail system was already properly permitted and built in 2022, and no ground disturbance or earthmoving is proposed as part of this Project for either the at-risk tree mitigation or the trail tread improvements. Forestry operations removing dead, dying, or diseased trees at less than 10 percent of the average volume per acre can proceed without a Timber Harvest Plan (THP). A notice submitted to CAL FIRE with evidence that this forestry operation is eligible for the exemption may be required, but this is not a permit. LTSCC will ensure that any required notice to CAL FIRE is complete prior to forestry operations to mitigate the risk of hazard trees.

PARTNER APPROVALS

A "Contractor Services Agreement" will be required to delineate the hazard tree mitigation work to be completed by the contractor. There is an existing management agreement with the SVR landowners (POST, Semperviren's Fund, and Save the Redwoods League) that enables the LTSCC to assign access and right-of-entry to SVR to contractors performing work. No further agreements or approvals are expected to be needed for this Project.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

Project implementation will begin immediately upon funds being awarded. Project scoping will take place in the first few months of the Project, and it is expected to be done within two months. A contractor will be selected through the appropriate procurement

process. Once selected, staff will work with the contractor to finalize the work plan and execute a contract. Once a contractor is hired, the Project timeline will follow the contractor's availability to complete work. During the dry season with no unanticipated disruptions, the Project team expects the tree risk mitigation and trail tread work will take approximately three months. Depending on when the grant funding is awarded, it is possible that the work will be completed during the wet season, which may take a period of six months, depending on storms that require stop work orders. For example, if grant funding is awarded in July and a contractor is identified by September, work would take place during October through March. If tree work is scheduled to occur any time between February and September, a nesting bird survey will be conducted in advance as a best management practice to avoid impacts on breeding birds and ensure compliance with California Fish and Game Code. For mitigation of at-risk trees, a major milestone for the project itself involves physically marking moderate-risk trees identified for mitigation and completing GIS mapping of both the targeted trees and the designated trail improvement segments. This preparatory work will ensure that all treatment areas are clearly defined and documented prior to construction activities. Successful completion of the project will include treatment of at least 20 of such trees. Trail tread improvements are anticipated to occur simultaneously with the hazard tree mitigation and ideally when soil moisture remains sufficient to support effective trail work. Depending on contractor availability and the timing of funding, work could begin as early as May, but more likely in the fall if grant agreements are not entered into until the summer. Successful completion of this work will include improving at least 2 sections of trail with enhanced drainage features and stabilized tread. Upon completion of all Project components, staff will conduct a final inspection to confirm that work has been completed in accordance with project specifications and standards.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

No

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

No

TEAM CAPACITY

The team responsible for Project completion and oversight at LTSCC includes Heather Ekstrom, Public Access Manager; Steve Glasscock, Land Stewardship Manager; and Matt Timmer, Land Stewardship Director. All three of these staff have experience working on and contracting out similar tree mitigation and trail tread improvements in the past, including at SVR. While no guarantees can be made for who will be hired, previous contractor Santa Cruz Mountains Trail Stewardship (SCMTS) supported the design of the SVR trail system and completed the subsequent build out. SCMTS also has significant experience supporting tree risk mitigation initiatives in places like Big Basin Redwoods State Park after the CZU Lightning Complex wildfire. Other contractors with similar expertise will also be considered. Overall, the professional staff and contractor team will be prepared and will bring substantial experience to complete the Project professionally and effectively.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

This Project is highly feasible given the 2025 Tree Risk Assessment already completed and the depth of in-house expertise available to support implementation. LTSCC has an arborist on staff and several experienced project managers and field staff, including Heather Ekstrom, who managed portions of the 2022 SVR trail build-out, and Matt Timmer and Steve Glasscock, who supported prior tree risk mitigation efforts before trail construction and opening. This collective experience ensures that the project's scope, safety requirements, and contracting and logistical considerations are well understood going into the Project. The feasibility of the Project is further supported by longstanding partnerships. LTSCC has worked with the other SVR partners for over a decade, and potential contractors such as SCMTS have worked on this property and these specific trails for many years, ensuring alignment in stewardship goals and trail standards. The organization also has established relationships with a wider pool of qualified contractors, including firms such as Holmes Logging, providing flexibility and reliability in securing experienced crews. All together, existing assessments, skilled staff, proven processes, and trusted partners make this Project both practical and ready for successful implementation.

PROJECT PARTNERS

With support from State Agencies and private fundraising, POST and Sempervirens acquired the San Vicente Redwoods property in 2011. POST and Sempervirens joined the League and LTSCC to form a partnership focused on conserving SVR. The SVR Conservation Partners co-created and adopted a Conservation Vision, a Conservation Plan, recorded a conservation easement held by the League over the property (2014), and approved a management plan based on the Conservation Plan to guide property management actions at SVR. The 2020 CZU Lightning Complex fire brought tremendous change to the landscape within SVR. Before the fire, 30 acres of SVR had been treated using prescribed and cultural burns, and more than 15 miles of shaded fuel breaks had been created. The prescribed burn areas weathered the blaze much better than the adjacent untreated parts of the property. More recent restoration progress came on September 21, 2021, when an obsolete dam was removed from Mill Creek, reopening habitat for endangered Coho salmon and other species for the first time in more than 100 years. The SVR Conservation Partners have worked diligently to assess post-fire conditions and adapt management strategies to address critical threats within the property. The partners work with the property manager and Registered Professional Forester, Hamey Woods, to provide

forestry management expertise, oversee property operations, liaise with the community, and monitor site conditions. The SVR Conservation Partners have a demonstrated history of working with several collaborators throughout the region to meet various objectives, such as the Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District, CAL FIRE, Bonny Doon Fire Safe Council, Swanton Ranch, Cotoni-Coast Dairies, Big Creek Lumber, the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, biological consultants and researchers, and numerous local grading and forestry contractors. POST protects open space on the Peninsula and in the South Bay for the benefit of all. Since 1977, POST has preserved over 97,000 acres of open space in San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties. These protected lands include permanent open space, farms, and parks. As a co-owner of SVR, POST plays an active role in fuel management across the property. Founded in 1900, Sempervirens is California's first land trust, and helped found three California State Parks. Sempervirens protects and permanently preserves redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) forests, wildlife habitat, watersheds, and other important natural and scenic features of the Santa Cruz Mountains and encourages public appreciation and enjoyment of this environment. As co-owner, Sempervirens plays an active role in managing stewardship activities throughout the property. Since 1978, the LTSCC has worked to protect, steward, and connect people to natural and working lands in the region, conserving over 19,000 acres of land to date. At SVR, the LTSCC serves as the Public Access Manager. One of the nation's longest-running conservation organizations, Save the Redwoods League has been protecting and restoring redwood forests since 1918. The League has connected generations of visitors with the beauty and serenity of the redwood forest. The League holds a permanent conservation easement on the property and leads forestry restoration projects at SVR.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

For over 10 years, the SVR Conservation Partners have convened regularly to manage the property and achieve co-developed conservation goals and outcomes. SVR is a living laboratory of forest management, ecosystem restoration, sustainable timber harvest, and current and future public access. The SVR Conservation Partners actively assess current site conditions to prioritize and implement projects that address imminent threats, align with the Conservation Vision for the property, and maximize the use of limited resources available to manage this large wildlands property. The SVR Conservation Partners have focused on revising management of the property to focus on post-fire recovery, building future wildfire resilience, creating safe public access experience for visitors of all capabilities, improving adaptivity to climate change, and active stewardship to enhance the site's biological diversity. Together the SVR Conservation Partners have completed and are in the process of completing numerous projects on the property including: removal of a dam in Mill Creek to free sediment and water flow critical for endangered Coho salmon and steelhead trout spawning habitat; creating 10-miles of shaded fuel breaks along Warrenella Road to increase wildfire resilience, create an all-season emergency access road, and provide essential access for firefighters; constructing a parking lot and seven miles of public access trails for access to nature and recreation in Santa Cruz County; and restoration of hundreds of acres of forest to reduce ladder fuels and catalyze the development of old growth conditions in the forest. The SVR Conservation Partners participate in multiple regional networks to enhance stewardship of our region. They are members of the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network (SCMSN), a collaboration of twenty-five organizations engaged in land stewardship in the Santa Cruz Mountains of California. The mission of the SCMSN is to help cultivate a resilient, vibrant region where human and natural systems thrive for generations to come. Additionally, they are part of a more recently formed organization called the Monterey Bay Climate Adaptation Action Network, (MBCAAN), a network of 30+ partners across the Monterey Bay region taking collective action to prepare communities, ecosystems, and economies for the impacts of climate change.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

100000

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

0

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

0

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

0

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

—

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, in coordination with POST and Sempervirens Fund, requests \$100,000 to complete the San Vicente Redwoods Public Access Improvements Project. Of the request funded, \$60,000 will be directed to hiring contractors to complete the mitigation of moderate-risk hazard trees, treating at least 20 of trees with such designation. The remaining \$40,000 will be delegated to hiring contractors to complete the trail improvements to treat at least two degraded and eroded portions of trails that pose a difficulty to users and impact the use of the trails year-round. The LTSCC does not request indirect, nor will it be funding staff time through this cycle of Measure Q funding.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

As the Public Access Manager in the San Vicente Redwoods Conservation Partnership, LTSCC remains deeply committed to providing a safe and high-quality experience for all visitors. LTSCC maintains an active, ongoing stewardship program that includes routine monitoring and subsequent maintenance of trail conditions and potential hazards across the 7.5-mile public trail system at San Vicente Redwoods. Following major weather events that include significant rainfall and sustained high winds, additional trail monitoring is conducted to identify emerging hazards, erosion concerns, or downed trees that may impact visitor safety or trail durability. This kind of sustained maintenance of the trail system is supported through LTSCC's annual operating budget, ensuring continued maintenance of the trail system beyond the grant term. Mitigating risk of hazard trees and rehabilitating segments of trail are components of a long-term maintenance strategy designed to protect public safety. By addressing moderate-risk trees and early-stage erosion proactively, LTSCC reduces the likelihood of emergency closures, more costly repairs, and long-term degradation of trails and the surrounding habitat.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

Yes

REFERENCED PLANS

—

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

This is connected to our overall San Vicente Redwoods Set-Aside through the San Vicente Redwoods Targeted Road Improvements to Protect Water Quality Project. Please see the "Secondary Prioritization Principle Narrative" section on that application (ID: 89) for more details about the CWPP.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Measure Q POST Combined SVR Partner Budget.pdf](#), [Measure Q Land Trust Budget.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[SVR Phase 1 Trail Map.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[Land Trust Photos.jpg](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

[No file uploaded](#)

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Lauren Korth

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Lauren Korth, Institutional Engagement Officer

SIGNATURE DATE

03/12/2026

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 255 **Type:** Tier 2 Community Impact Grants
Project: Extended Cover Cropping for Water Conservation in Pajaro Valley (tier 2)

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

255

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

Extended Cover Cropping for Water Conservation in Pajaro Valley (tier 2)

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Sustainable Conservation

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

Sustainable Conservation

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Acres treated

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

Acre-Feet of Water Saved

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

155

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Elliot Grant

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Senior Project Manager

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Thais	Arjo	[REDACTED]
Sacha	Lozano	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

2425 Porter St, Suite 19, Soquel, California, 95073

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.98417688579500

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-121.95781613791300

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

Commercial Farmland in unincorporated parts of southern Santa Cruz County around the city of Watsonville

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Not Applicable

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

On farmland in the Pajaro Valley and coastal farming areas

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 29 - Robert Rivas

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

Yes

DAC STATUS

Yes

SDAC STATUS

Yes

DAC/SDAC NOTES

The areas of the project are listed as both a DAC and SDAC. CalEnviroScreen and the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool indicates DAC, while the CA Climate Bond Prop 4 map shows SDAC for parts of the project scope as well. Link to Prop 4 Climate Bond DAC and SDAC mapping:
<https://canature.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layers=b5dfb59aa812418287a92180e70ef653?>

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

Not Applicable

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	NA		
State Water Control Resources Board	NA		
US Fish and Wildlife	NA		
City/County Construction Permits	NA		
Coastal Commission	NA		
Other	NA		

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

18

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

This project does not require any permitting and is ready to begin upon award. Partner growers have been identified to ensure project readiness.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

196207

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

274145

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

This project will examine extended cover cropping on temporarily fallowed farmland and demonstrate its efficacy as a strategy for reducing groundwater and/or reclaimed water demand in the Pajaro Valley. Developing innovative strategies to support growers in reducing water demand and curbing groundwater pumping is critical for addressing aquifer overdraft, seawater intrusion, and is timely to maintain compliance with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Cover crops on temporary fallow land are an underutilized opportunity, in part because of assumptions about high water use and/or the opportunity cost of forgoing high-value crops. Sustainable Conservation and RCD of Santa Cruz County (RCDSCC) will build upon a Covered Fallow Plan and economic analysis for the Pajaro Valley led by the RCD in 2018. The project will provide technical assistance and cost-share for cover crop implementation, assess water use by cover crops compared to common cash crops on the central coast, and collect information on operational costs to update and ground-truth assumptions from the 2018 economic study. The project will include a Community Needs Assessment involving workshops and interviews with farmers, ag industry, policy makers, and water managers to inform what cover cropping strategies, incentives, and funding mechanisms would most effectively increase practice adoption and support local groundwater sustainability. This will inform the development of an updated case study on the practice of extended rotational cover cropping and its potential basin-wide impact on water conservation, build the foundation to develop economic incentives, and lay the ground for a program to scale this practice.

PROJECT START DATE

06/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

12/31/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Submitted

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Agricultural and Work Land Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

Evaluating and advancing the potential role for a year- round sequence of cover crops as a strategy to reduce agricultural water demand aligns with the ambitions laid forth in the Agricultural and Working Lands Protection, and the Water Resource Management sections of the Measure Q vision plan. The abilities of cover cropping to reduce soil erosion, protect water quality, augment soil organic matter (and associated benefits), and contribute to agricultural productivity are relatively well understood. Their potential contribution to water conservation has received less attention but given the exaggerated cycle of drought and flood redefining California's agricultural context, understanding the role cover crops can play to moderate demand for irrigation could present a transformative opportunity for agriculture and community water needs in the region. Further action is needed to realize the full potential that an longer) and broader adoption of cover cropping can have in terms of water savings and climate resilience on the ag production systems of Santa Cruz County. Supporting growers to cover crop additional acreage and for longer periods each year can offset present and future groundwater pumping and reduce reclaimed water demand. Additionally, prolonged cover cropping allows parcels to rest and recover, contributing to the reduction of applied synthetic inputs while increasing the productivity and sustainability of our working lands. Additionally, cover cropping for longer periods provides habitat for pollinators, can help alleviate soilborne pathogen pressure, and serves a key role in integrated pest management. The team seeks to demonstrate and compare the water use and operating costs of cover crops sequenced across a calendar year against marketable crop production cycles. Though there has been extensive CA-based research on a wide variety of cover cropping applications and management strategies, a key data gap on the coast is how cover crop water use during the peak growing season compares to common marketable crops in the region. Prior research has mostly examined winter cover crops, which are rain-fed and typically have low water demands. A comparison during the warm/dry season will provide a more complete picture of the potential water savings if deployed at a regional scale. This data is critical to growing regional adoption of cover cropping and complementary to other programs incentivizing sustainable practices like the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program (MLRP), the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), and the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP).

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Climate Resilience Value

Multi-benefit outcomes: A year-round sequence of cover crops can provide multiple benefits, both on and around farmlands, including: bolstering soil health and increasing soil water holding capacity; providing pollinator and beneficial insect habitat throughout the year; reducing soil-borne pathogens by breaking the common cycle of cash crops and reducing the need to fumigate; and protecting drinking water and water resources both in terms of quality and quantity. During the rainy season cover crops can prevent soil erosion and reduce nitrate discharge to surface and groundwater. Farming on the central coast leave high amounts of residual nitrogen on the ground right before the winter rains, and cover crops can reclaim and recycle the excess nitrogen, keeping it safely locked in their tissue and making it available to subsequent crops after the rains. Preventing nitrogen from entering surface water will support healthier fisheries and freshwater ecosystems. Mitigating losses to groundwater helps protect rural drinking water. Climate Resiliency: Increasing cover crops can bolster climate resiliency. Climate models predict shorter, more intense rainy seasons with flashier floods, punctuated by prolonged droughts. Cover cropping is a climate resiliency tool because: 1) it can mitigate flooding by reducing storm runoff and increasing soil water infiltration 2) it augments soil water holding capacity which can help farms better withstand drought, and 3) rotational covered fallowing reduces demand on limited water resources. This project seeks to develop a program to increase adoption and acreage of extended cover cropping, making the Pajaro Valley more climate resilient. Match funding and Leveraging Potential: There are opportunities to support growers with reducing water demand through the Department of Conservation's Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program (MLRP). The Pajaro region is a block grantee, and most of the MLRP projects in Pajaro have been focused on permanent infrastructure or restoration. While those projects are critical to reaching sustainability, there is a need to develop viable agricultural solutions that supports the diversity of small, socially disadvantaged, and farmland renters within the MLRP framework. California's Prop 4 funding has allocated 200 million to the MLRP program, with plans to roll out to regions like Pajaro over the coming years. With the information gathered to quantify and demonstrate the reduction in water use and economic impact from a cover crop fallowing strategy, this project will show how incentivized cover crops can be a viable tool to reduce pumping, and shape the framework for anew MLRP program that supports extended cover cropping, land resting, and reducing water use. Other regions in California, like the East Turlock Subbasin have pursued this strategy of utilizing yearlong cover crops in temporary (~3y) rotational fallowing and have been approved for funding under MLRP. The project team would like to evaluate this type of tool for the Pajaro valley and the broader central coast to demonstrate how [we could leverage efforts like MLRP, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies management actions, and others achieve tangible climate and water benefits in the [Central Coast region through expanded use of cover crops.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

Public Benefit: The project will provide direct benefits to both the participating growers and the broader agricultural community while providing indirect benefits to neighboring communities. The partner growers will include small and diversified operations, as well as lessees. The partner growers will benefit from improved soil health, nitrogen cycling, preserved topsoil, and reduced run-off as well as deeper insight into the effects of their management decisions. The cost share program will extend to 150 acres across Pajaro Valley, benefitting not only the participating growers but their neighboring communities as well. The broader agricultural community in Santa Cruz County stands to benefit from informing the design of a cover crop incentive that could pave the way for a more sustainable future for both agriculturalists and their neighboring communities in the Pajaro Valley. Increased cover crop adoption from more effective incentives will also enhance the climate resiliency of the Pajaro Valley, given the flood mitigation properties of cover cropping at scale. Strategic Alignment: This project is aligned with multiple local, county, and state priorities and goals. At the state level, it's been estimated that large acreages of land (500,000-1 million acres) will necessarily go out of production or be repurposed to meet SGMA goals in critically overdraft regions. In these regions, incentivized temporary rotational fallowing is one strategy being employed to keep land in production while reducing groundwater pumping demands. In this study, we will use field collected data, interviews with growers, and other information sources to develop realistic scaled scenarios - based on different levels of farmer participation, acreage adoption, and environmental conditions - to illustrate how temporary (~1 year) fallowing with minimally irrigated cover crops could help reduce groundwater demands while providing benefits to farms, communities, and the environment. The 2021 Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy Priority A: "Croplands" identifies the adoption of climate smart agricultural practices, including cover crops, as a method to increase "climate resiliency, soil water retention, improved water" (pg. 34). The Strategy also explicitly includes the priority to "Repurpose cropland retired or fallowed due to lack of water supply for environmental cultural and societal benefits... capturing floodwater...(pg. 34); capturing the project focus of both fallowing and cover cropping. The 2022 30x30 plan also includes a framework for mitigating and building resilience to climate change through conserving and managing lands using soil health practices (pg. 17). At the county level, both the SCC Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) and 2021 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan contain references to the RCDSCC as a critical partner to mitigate climate change through natural and working lands tactics, calling out flooding, drought, and soil health. The IRWMP lists multiple RCDSCC initiatives, including project #30 "farm soil management for water conservation" (pg. 3). The 2019 Pajaro River Watershed Integrated Regional Water Management Plan includes RCDSCC as a project partner that works in soil erosion control and discusses that on-farm best management practices, which would include cover crops, are an important tactic to enhance soil health and conserve water.

TARGET COMMUNITY

The primary audience and beneficiaries of this project are the agricultural water users, industry, and water managers of Santa Cruz County. Growers will benefit from trial compensation and the various environmental and agronomic benefits of cover cropping. Agricultural industry will benefit from the pursuit of more sustainable strategies to ensure healthy farming communities and sustained production in the Pajaro Valley. Water managers will benefit by gaining insight into how cover crops can be deployed as a water demand management strategy to offset pumping as the climate continues to stress California's resources. In addition to the agricultural stakeholder beneficiaries, communities living in proximity to agriculture and those dependent on the Pajaro watershed will also benefit from this project in the longer term. If our analysis and stakeholder engagement leads to an adoption of cover crops in the local MLRP program, the community at large will benefit from on-farm climate impact reduction, such as flood risk mitigation and a less burdened aquifer due to increased soil water infiltration and reduced groundwater pumping.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Health and well-being, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

Outreach will be robust through the Community Needs Assessment, aiming to reach 60 key stakeholders consisting of farmers, water managers, policy makers, NGOs, and local government. The team will host 3 workshops, 1 in Spanish, and 2 in English at various times of the week and seasons to ensure strong engagement from the agricultural community. The team will also conduct 1:1 interviews with key stakeholders at PVWMA, the County of Santa Cruz, CA Department of Conservation, Farm Businesses, and other farmers. The team will also establish a core group of individuals to help direct the engagement. Once the project nears completion, all of the participants will be updated with the lessons-learned, case studies, and next steps for future engagement. This pilot contributes to community value by engaging the community to assess local needs and inform the design of cover cropping incentive programs in Santa Cruz County and across the Central Coast Region. This project seeks to generate insights to inform the design of future cover cropping incentive programs by conducting field trials and grower interviews to produce a case study. Interviews provide essential insights for assessing community needs and increasing practice adoption among growers. Clarifying the barriers that limit grower adoption and understanding the most effective approaches to incentivizing sustainable practices will engage the community to inform future program design. Increased adoption of cover cropping resulting from the outcomes of this project contributes to community value through the various ecological benefits offered by cover crops. Improved groundwater and surface water quality is a benefit of cover cropping which is pertinent for communities adjacent to agriculture. Increasing the acreage over which cover crops are deployed in Santa Cruz County as a result of this project would expand the scale of water quality protections offered by cover cropping. Improved infiltration and water-holding capacity from wider adoption of cover crops would also mitigate the harm of flash flooding caused by climate change.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

This project will pilot the use of year-round cover cropping on temporarily fallowed active farmland and demonstrate its efficacy as a strategy to reduce groundwater and/or reclaimed water demand in the Pajaro Valley. Winter cover crops have multiple demonstrated on-farm benefits related to soil health, water infiltration and holding capacity, erosion control, nutrient recycling, pollinators, and water quality protection. On the other hand, cover cropping on additional acreage during the warm production season remains an underutilized opportunity for water conservation. Temporarily replacing a small acreage of cash crops with cover crops during extended fallow periods on a rotational basis each year can reduce irrigation water demand and offset present and future groundwater pumping. For this to work, it is critical to understand cover crop water use throughout the year, as well as costs associated with cover crop management, and opportunity cost of not planting a cash crop. The potential environmental outcomes resulting from this project are extensive. Cover crops are known to enhance water quality, improve nutrient cycling, improve soil structure, reduce erosion, increase infiltration, increase water holding capacity, and contribute to the productivity and sustainability of working lands. Implementing cover crops across the 5 trial sites will bring such benefits to the operators of each participating farm. The novel aspect of this trial is to examine how long-term cover cropping affects water budgets at a regional scale. The data collected through this project will inform the design of cover cropping incentive programs to increase practice adoption going forward. Increased adoption of cover cropping resulting from the outcomes of this project will bolster the climate resilience of Pajaro Valley by mitigating flooding risk and offsetting groundwater pumping. In addition to the demonstration, the RCDSCC will also manage a winter cover cropping cost share and technical assistance program to support growers with cover cropping on 150 acres of farmland in the Pajaro valley. This program supports adoption and management of a practice that has demonstrated multiple environmental and wildlife benefits on agricultural lands.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Applicant does not have a written agreement with the landowner to conduct the project on their land, Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

Growers for the demonstration have been identified and are ready to partner for the demonstration, however no contracts have been signed.

REQUIRED PERMITS

There are no permits required for any element of the project. The implementation of cover crops, installation of flow meters, and interviews on active farmland do not warrant any permits from local, state or federal agencies. Both the RCD and Sustainable Conservation have extensive experience with public funding to support farmers with cover cropping, and there has never been a need for permitting these past successful projects.

PARTNER APPROVALS

The RCDSCC will use their land access agreement template to secure farmer's permission to install flow meters, collect water use data from their crops, and participate in the technical assistance activities. In addition, Sustainable Conservation will utilize a Landowner/Tenant Agreement with the grower partners which will outline each party's project responsibilities and the terms of compensation.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

June to October 2026, the team will initiate the project with contracts, and teams will confirm the 5 growers for the demonstration sites and ensure the growers are aware of the scope and willing to share information on water use and costs. RCDSCC will install the needed equipment on the demonstrations. RCDSCC will solicit a broader range of farmers for a winter cover crop cost share and technical assistance (TA) program. A workshop and interviews will begin for the Community Needs Assessment. Milestones will be 5 signed contracts for grower participation in the demonstration, 1 workshop held, and interviews. November 2026 to April 2027 will be the demonstration of the long season winter cover crop. RCD staff will support the demonstrations with TA for establishment and termination of the winter cover crop, collect data on water use on the cash crops and cover crop from the equipment and well use data. Sustainable Conservation will monitor Evapotranspiration (ET) remotely through OpenET's FARMS tool. Economic information will be collected on costs to the growers associated with the winter cover crop (labor, seed, water bill, fuel, rent). RCDSCC will lead the wider, con-current winter cover cropping cost share program. Milestones will be: demonstration data collected from the first rotation of cover crops, completion of RCD's program to support 150 acres of winter cover crops for the broader farming community, and progress on the Community Needs Assessment, with a second workshop in Spanish, and interviews to farmers, water managers, policy makers, and local government. May to August 2027 will be the demonstration of the summer cover crop. RCDSCC will provide the same technical assistance to the grower, while both teams will collect respective information on the summer cover crop. Team leads will compile learnings into a summary of interview findings. The case study will begin on the demonstration sites, and the final community workshop will be held. Milestones include demonstration sites data on a summer cover crop, and the completion of information gathering portion of the Community Need's Assessment, with interviews and workshops finished, having gained insights from 60 stakeholders. September to December 2027 will be the demonstration of the short season fall cover crop. RCD and Sustainable Conservation staff will collect the same key information on the sites and TA support. The case study for the demonstration of a year sequence of cover crops will be completed, and the team will model a few scenarios to show the potential impact of this strategy on a basin scale. The team will compile the learnings from the community needs assessment into a summary of findings and follow up with a core group of individuals interested in the practice. The team will now focus on producing a robust assessment of potential long term funding mechanisms like MLRP, water bill rebates, tax incentives, or GSA policies. Milestones include a case study based on demonstrations, key findings from the Community Needs Assessment, recommendations for long-term programmatic funding for the practice, and the completion of the project.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

No

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

No

Sustainable Conservation is a California-based non-profit organization specializing in advancing the collaborative stewardship of the state's resources. Sustainable Conservation staff hold expertise in agroecology, sustainable economics, hydrology, agronomy, restoration permitting, data analysis, grant administration, graphic design, and science communication. The organization has done extensive work understand the role cover cropping can play in balancing regional water budgets as GSA allocations as SGMA came into effect in the San Joaquin Valley. This learning process resulted in a series of convenings, the findings of which are published in the "Cover Cropping in the SGMA Era" white paper. Additionally, the East Turlock GSA has cited the white paper as evidence to grant growers in their jurisdiction partial water credit for rainfall if a cover crop is planted. On the central coast, Sustainable Conservation's involvement in Santa Cruz County has centered around the water quality advantages of cover cropping, primarily the mitigation of nitrate leaching to groundwater. The organization played a key role in building the case and advocating for a cover cropping incentive during the design of Ag Order 4.0 in 2021. Since 2023, The Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, The Resource Conservation District of Monterey County and Sustainable Conservation have partnered to receive and distribute CDFA FREP funding through a cover crop seed cost share program. Furthermore, Sustainable Conservation has a specialized Grants and Contracts Administrator with dedicated capacity and significant experience managing public grants. The RCDSCC has a long track record and an extensive network of working relationships with small and large producers, agricultural industry, and several public and private partner agencies on the central coast of California, and particularly the Pajaro Valley, to help advance sustainable agriculture practices, climate change mitigation and preparedness, and conservation of soil and water resources in both organic and conventional farming systems. Since 2016, RCDSCC has been PV Water's main partner leading implementation of the Pajaro Valley Water Conservation Program, which is a key component of the basin management plan. In 2018 the RCDSCC, working with stakeholders of the Pajaro Valley Community Water Dialogue (CWD), facilitated the development of a Covered Fallow Plan (<https://www.communitywaterdialogue.org/covered-fallow-plan>), which this project will build upon to incentivize covered fallow rotations to conserve water and achieve co-benefits for sustaining agriculture in the Pajaro Valley. The plan responded to landowner and grower interest in exploring rotational fallowing as one of many actions for conserving water, and it was informed by an economic analysis (Highland Economics, 2017) that assessed private and public benefits and costs under different cover cropping and cash crop replacement scenarios. According to the study, a rotational covered fallow program can offer a cost-effective strategy to support sustainable groundwater use. This proposed project will build upon and benefit from the work and partnerships that SusCon and RCDSCC have developed over many years.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

Site control is made feasible by written agreements between the applicant and the landowners of the trial sites. RCD Santa Cruz will leverage its network of working relationships with growers in the Pajaro Valley, and will use their Land access agreement template to secure farmer's permission to install flow meters, collect water use data from their crops, and participate in the technical assistance activities. In addition, Sustainable Conservation will utilize a Landowner/Tenant Agreement Contract with the grower partners to initiate compensation payments, and receive the cover crop seeds. Participating growers will be compensated to incentivize attentive and consistent management of their cover cropped acreage. The needs assessment portion of the project is made feasible by leaning on the pre-existing networks of Sustainable Conservation and RCD Santa Cruz. Though it is not strictly required, the needs assessment portion may require written agreements between parties for the sake of grower privacy around financial matters. Successful grant administration, contracting, and reporting are made feasible thanks to the dedicated capacity of Sustainable Conservation's Grants and Contracts Administrator and strong Finance team. Sustainable Conservation has successfully implemented many publicly funded grants including federal, state, and regional funding.

PROJECT PARTNERS

In a narrative, list project personnel, and title off SC website: Elliot Grant, Central Coast Senior Project Manager Modibo Keita, Central Coast Project Associate Kristen Murphy, Project Manager; Soil Health + Water Environmental Data Analyst Shayan Kaveh, Science Communications Manager Thaïs Arjo, Grants and Contracts Administrator Project personnel from Sustainable Conservation are as follows; Central Coast Project Manager, Central Coast Project Associate, Soil Health + Water Project Manager, Environmental Data Analyst, Science Communications Manager, Grants and Contracts Administrator. The Senior Central Coast Project Manager will serve as PI for this grant if awarded. The other project personnel from Sustainable Conservation will track grower information and process the data collected through the trials, provide support for the needs assessment and develop the case study for distribution. Project personnel from the RCD of Santa Cruz County are as follows; Ag Stewardship Senior Program Manager, Ag Program Specialist, Finance Director and Operations Manager. RCD project personnel will confirm participating growers, install flowmeters on participating ranches, provide technical assistance to participating growers, and collect water use data. RCD project personnel will also support the needs assessment and development of the case study. The partnership between Sustainable Conservation and the RCD of Santa Cruz County began through work on programmatic permitting for environmental restoration projects culminating in what is now the Santa Cruz County Partners in Restoration Permit Coordination Program. The partnership has continued through work to address water quality issues affecting communities on the coast. In 2018, the 2 organizations partnered with the RCD of Monterey County and FarmLink for a grower loan rebate program conditioned by demonstrated reduction in water use and fertilizer application. Since 2023, Sustainable Conservation and the RCD of Santa Cruz County have partnered with the RCD of Monterey County to receive and distribute CDFA FREP funding through a cover crop seed cost share program. Additionally, both organizations played a key role in building the case and advocating for a cover cropping incentive during the design of Ag Order 4.0 in 2021.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

The project will build upon the 2018 covered fallow plan and economic analysis by measuring water consumption in a yearlong cover crop rotation compared to cash crops (using flowmeters, evapotranspiration data, and the OpenET FARMS Tool) and collecting on-farm data from farmers and stakeholders to update the 2018 economic study and better understand water conservation opportunities and operational constraints. The goal is to chart the course for developing effective incentives that can drive broad adoption, and ideally integrate the practice into the Pajaro Valley's Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) as another tool to reduce water use in dry years, similar to the Department of Water Resources' Land Flex Program tool or the East Turlock GSA's incentivizing fallowing with vegetative cover program. The collaboration and division of responsibilities between Sustainable Conservation and the RCD of Santa Cruz County for this project will follow the dynamics of their ongoing partnerships. Sustainable Conservation will lead the grant administration, contracting, fund distribution, data processing, and the development and distribution of the case study. RCD Santa Cruz will be responsible for the on the ground elements of project implementation (e.g. flowmeter installation), technical assistance for cover crop management, connecting to growers, and administration of the cover crop seed cost share program. The key project areas where both teams share equal responsibility are data collection, community needs assessment, and developing the foundation for future incentive schemes. For data collection, Sustainable Conservation will be responsible for collecting water use data through the OpenET FARMS tool while RCD Santa Cruz will be responsible for collecting water use data from flowmeters and well data. For the needs assessment, both teams will conduct grower interviews, host workshops, and convene the core working groups. The project will deliver 5 outcomes: 1) a pilot on yearlong cover crop vs. cash crop water use, 2) a case study on costs, benefits, and management considerations of the practice, 3) a technical assistance and cost-share program to support grower adoption and management of cover crops in the Pajaro Valley, 4) a community needs assessment involving small group workshops and individual interviews to gather input from growers, ag industry and other stakeholders to gauge interest and expand impact, 5) a summary of incentive ideas (i.e. seed cost share, water bill rebate, rent reduction, tax credit, others) and development pathways with concrete next steps to develop of a covered fallow incentive program.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

196207

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

0

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

77938

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

77938

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

15

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

We are requesting grant funds totaling \$196,207 with a committed match contribution totaling \$77,938. Grant funds will support personnel time, travel, contractual support from RCDSCC, grower compensation, workshop costs, and indirect costs. Matching funds will be provided through staff time, equipment, and cover crop seeds from RCDSCC, along with additional support from Sustainable Conservation staff. Personnel: funding is requested for Elliot Grant, Senior Central Coast Project Manager (15% FTE), Modibo Keita, Central Coast Project Manager (15% FTE), Kristen Murphy, Soil Health + Water Project Manager (3% FTE), Environmental Data Analyst (3% FTE), and Thais Arjo, Grants and Contracts Administrator. Elliot will lead the project, including grower engagement, coordination with the RCD, conducting interviews, collecting economic data, and contributing to the development of the case study. Modibo will support project implementation and data analysis, including compiling and analyzing irrigation and water use, and creating the case study on the demonstration. Kristen will assist with Spanish language interviews, help plan and facilitate the workshops, and contribute to the case study. The Environmental Data Analyst will review water use and cost data and evaluate potential impacts of extended cover cropping practices at a basin scale. Thais will provide financial and administrative oversight for the project, including budgeting, invoicing, contracting, and compliance with grant requirements. Personnel costs include fringe benefits calculated at 40% of salaries per Sustainable Conservation's fringe benefit policy. Travel: funds will support staff travel to participating farms for project implementation, data collection, grower interviews, and workshops.

Elliot will travel to project sites approximately 10 times for data collection, interviews and workshops (estimated 45 miles roundtrip at the IRS 2026 rate of \$.725/mile.) Modibo will travel from San Francisco to support interviews, workshops, and project meetings. Travel includes three nights of lodging (\$200/night), rental car (\$100/day) and meals (\$50/day). Kristen will travel from Merced for interviews and workshops. Travel includes six nights of lodging (\$200/night), mileage reimbursement (\$.725/mile) and meals (\$50/day). Contractual/Consultants: RCDSCC will support project implementation, monitoring, and data collection. RCD staff will recruit and coordinate participating growers, co-lead grower interviews, install and maintain flow meters, collect irrigation and well data, provide technical assistance, and help estimate cover crop establishment costs. Contractual costs include RCD personnel time, travel for field visits, and indirect costs. Other Direct Costs: growers will receive \$1,500 each to support participation in the project and help offset labor, fuel, and water costs associated with maintaining a sequence of cover crops on an acre for a year. Other direct cost is food for workshop attendees. Indirect Costs: we request 15% for indirect costs to help support administrative expenses necessary to manage this project. Matching Contribution: RCDSCC will provide in-kind match of additional staff time, equipment (installation and maintenance of flow meters), indirect costs, and cover crop seed to support cover crop establishment. Sustainable Conservation will contribute additional staff time from our Science Communications Manager as an in-kind match to support the development of the case study and translation of project findings into clear and actionable insights.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

To sustain the benefits of this project beyond the grant period, the data collected will be used to inform the design of cover cropping incentive programs going forward. The motivating principle behind this project is to improve the design of cover cropping incentive schemes and develop concrete pathways for long-term funding mechanisms to accelerate and expand practice adoption. The insights gathered through this project are critical to increasing adoption of cover cropping and complementary to other programs incentivizing sustainable practices like the Multi-Benefit Land Re-Purposing Program (MLRP), the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), and the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP). Given these aims, the most considerable benefits of this project are unlikely to be fully realized within the 18 month grant period. Entities to which the project's findings will be presented include the PVWMA, the Central Coast Regional Quality Control Board, and the Salinas Valley Basin GSA.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

No

REFERENCED PLANS

—

BONUS CATEGORIES

—

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

The bonus categories most relevant to this project are Strong Partnerships and Regional Significance. The project is a continuation of the long-time partnership between Sustainable Conservation and RCD of Santa Cruz County. The partnership between Sustainable Conservation and the RCD of Santa Cruz County began through work on programmatic permitting for environmental restoration projects culminating in what is now the Santa Cruz County Partners in Restoration Permit Coordination Program. The two organizations have since partnered to address water quality issues affecting communities on the coast. In 2018, Sustainable Conservation and RCD Santa Cruz partnered with the RCD of Monterey County and FarmLink for a grower loan rebate program conditioned by demonstrated reduction in water use and fertilizer application. Since 2023, Sustainable Conservation and the RCD of Santa Cruz County have partnered with the RCD of Monterey County to receive and distribute CDFA FREP funding through a cover crop seed cost share program. Additionally, both organizations worked closely together to build the case and advocate for a cover cropping incentive during the design of Ag Order 4.0 in 2021. This project is an opportunity to leverage this close working relationship to unlock the potential of cover cropping as a transformative practice for the region. The regional significance of this project will come from understanding how extended cover cropping affects the regional water balance and integrating the team's findings into future regulatory schemes to refine cover cropping incentives. Exploring innovative strategies to support growers with reducing water demand and curbing groundwater pumping will address aquifer overdraft, seawater intrusion, and is timely to maintain compliance with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Adoption of cover crops in the Central Coast region faces unique barriers compared to the other ag production regions of California, given the unique constraints of growers on the coast. The insights gathered through this project are critical to addressing the barriers limiting regional adoption of cover crops and complimentary to regulatory programs incentivizing sustainable practices like the Multi-Benefit Land Re-Purposing Program (MLRP) and the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP).

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[Sustainable Conservation Tier 1 - budget spreadsheet.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

LOS for SusCon_2026 Measure Q grant_T2.pdf

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

Sustainable Conservation's PV Set-aside Timeline.docx

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

No file uploaded

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

No file uploaded

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Elliot D Grant

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Elliot Grant, Senior Project Manager

SIGNATURE DATE

11/07/1997

MEASURE Q GRANT APPLICATION

Record ID: 259 **Type:** Tier 2 Community Impact Grants
Project: EcoFrontiers Docuseries: Capturing Measure Q in Action - Tracking Funded Projects, Measurable Outcomes, and Participatory Community Action

1. Project Overview

APPLICATION RECORD ID

259

PROJECT TYPE

Tier 2 Community Impact Grants

PROJECT TITLE (MAX 30 WORDS)

EcoFrontiers Docuseries: Capturing Measure Q in Action - Tracking Funded Projects, Measurable Outcomes, and Participatory Community Action

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

United Service Agency, Inc.

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION – OTHER (IF NOT LISTED)

United Service Agency, Inc.

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS METRIC

Outreach population

EFFECTIVENESS METRIC – OTHER

—

ESTIMATED EFFECTIVENESS VALUE

10,000-20,000 individuals reached (cumulative), including during and after the 12-month project period

PRIMARY CONTACT NAME

Katelyn Laird

PRIMARY CONTACT TITLE

Producer

PRIMARY CONTACT PHONE

[REDACTED]

PRIMARY CONTACT EMAIL

[REDACTED]

First Name	Last Name	Email
Sierra	Laird	[REDACTED]

PROJECT LOCATION

305 Soquel Ave, Santa Cruz, CA, 95062

PARCEL NUMBER

—

PROJECT LATITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

36.97437839907300

PROJECT LONGITUDE (14 DECIMAL PLACES)

-122.02117008251200

DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES, JURISDICTIONS, REGIONS SERVED

The proposed project serves multiple jurisdictions and both urban and rural communities across Santa Cruz County. Episodes will feature projects in incorporated cities (e.g., Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Capitola, Scotts Valley) as well as unincorporated areas (including mountain and coastal communities), with an emphasis on regions tied to Measure Q priorities, including South County/Pajaro Valley and the forested North County/San Vicente Redwoods, as access and grantee participation allow.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Multiple districts served by project; reports will include which districts are served per episode of the series.

WHERE IN CITY OR COUNTY PROJECT WILL SERVE

EcoFrontiers will serve Santa Cruz County countywide, documenting Measure Q-funded projects wherever they occur across the County and making episodes publicly accessible online (with partner hosting as available). EcoFrontiers will serve residents across multiple geographies, with a focus on countywide priorities including watershed health, wildfire resilience, habitat protection, and parks/access.

CA STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AD 28 - Gail Pellerin

IN DEFINED DAC/SDAC?

No

CA STATE SENATE DISTRICT

SD 17 - John Laird

DAC STATUS

—

SDAC STATUS

—

DAC/SDAC NOTES

—

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION STATUS

No CEQA/NEPA work initiated

PERMIT PREPARATIONS / DOCUMENTATION

We have extensive experience navigating film permitting and insurance requirements for public lands and government-managed sites in California. Most recently, we obtained filming permits for Columbia State Historic Park and the California State Railroad Museum and coordinated logistics and compliance through the appropriate agencies. We have worked with the Northern California Film Commission/film offices on permitting guidance, timelines, and site requirements. As a result, we are familiar with typical permitting steps (site rules and restrictions, insurance/COI, location agreements, and scheduling), and we can move efficiently from planning to permitted production as locations and featured projects are confirmed.

Agency	Response	Comment	Status
California Fish and Wildlife	No		
State Water Control Resources Board	No		
US Fish and Wildlife	No		
City/County Construction Permits	No		
Coastal Commission	No		
Other	Not sure	Santa Cruz County film permits may be required.	Not applied

PROJECT DURATION UNIT

months

DURATION AMOUNT

12

CAN START UPON AWARD?

Yes

PROJECT READINESS DELAYS (MAX 300 WORDS)

Our project is designed to begin immediately upon grant award and agreement execution. We are ready to start work as soon as funds are available and other grant recipients are chosen. The primary dependencies relate to coordination and access with featured Measure Q projects. Because our docuseries will follow funded projects, final episode selection, filming schedules, and site access are dependent on: (1) the County's grant award timeline and final list of funded projects; (2) each grantee's readiness to participate (availability for interviews, milestone timing); and (3) any site-specific requirements for filming on public lands or restricted project areas (e.g., safety briefings, access windows, or permits if required). Weather and seasonal field conditions may also affect filming windows for certain outdoor sites. To minimize delays, we will use a rolling production model and standardized episode template. We can begin immediately with pre-production activities that do not require field access (project list coordination, interview scheduling, story outlines, release templates, accessibility workflows, bilingual caption/subtitle pipeline, and distribution planning). We will also prioritize early filming with projects that have clear access and timelines, while scheduling more complex locations later in the grant term. Film insurance can be ready within 3-5 business days of specific film shoot policy initiation, while permitting can take up to 30 days (although in our experience is often granted sooner). Overall, while our timeline depends on award timing and grantee/site availability, we have built in flexibility to ensure deliverables remain on track and completed within the 12-month term.

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)

80000

TOTAL PROJECT COST (USD)

80000

Category	Measure Q Funds	Match (Cash)	In-Kind	Total
Personnel	\$54,000	\$0	\$0	\$54,000
Travel	\$750	\$0	\$0	\$750
Equipment	\$14,000	\$0	\$0	\$14,000
Supplies	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$3,000
Contractual / Consultants	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,000
Other Direct Costs	\$2,250	\$0	\$0	\$2,250
Indirect Costs	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (250 WORDS)

EcoFrontiers is a short-form docuseries that provides community education, engagement, and accountability by spotlighting Measure Q-funded projects. Across eight ~10-minute episodes, we will follow funded projects (or closely related project clusters) to document what each project is, why it matters locally, how implementation is progressing, and what measurable outcomes are being achieved. If access to enough Measure Q-funded projects is logistically limited, we will pivot select episodes to spotlight other Santa Cruz County conservation and resilience organizations aligned with Measure Q goals to complete the slate. The series helps Santa Cruz County residents understand where Measure Q investments are going and how they support watershed health and water quality, wildfire resilience and forest health, habitat protection, and parks/access improvements. Each episode will translate technical work into accessible storytelling and conclude with clear "how to participate" pathways (volunteer opportunities, partner resources, and practical actions residents can take immediately), so that increased awareness leads to increased community involvement. Episodes will be accessible on YouTube, partner hosting, available on county websites, and/or packaged as educational modules for classrooms and community learning settings. To expand reach, we will promote the series and the Measure Q program through library/classroom visits and partner-hosted screenings as opportunities arise. All episodes will include bilingual outreach: English and Spanish captions, and bilingual promotional materials to support equitable access. Our production approach is intentionally efficient: a two-person core team will deliver production and post in-house using a standardized episode template and rolling release schedule throughout the 12-month project period.

PROJECT START DATE

06/01/2026

PROJECT END DATE

05/31/2027

APPLICATION STATUS

Evaluation in process

2. Tier 2 Application

THEMATIC AREAS

Water Resource Management, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health, Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, Coastal Protection and Adaptation, Agricultural and Working Land Protection

THEMATIC AREAS NARRATIVE

EcoFrontiers: Measure Q in Action aligns strongly with Measure Q's Vision Plan priorities by increasing public understanding of - and participation in - projects that advance the County's core climate resilience, natural resource protection, and equitable access goals. The series will primarily document Measure Q-funded projects during the inaugural grant cycle, translating technical project work into accessible storytelling while connecting residents to concrete ways to get involved. Water Resource Management: Episodes will highlight any relevant projects that protect drinking water supplies and improve watershed health, including initiatives focused on groundwater recharge, erosion control, stormwater improvements, wetland and riparian restoration, and nature-based flood protection. By documenting implementation progress and outcomes, the series supports public awareness and stewardship behaviors that contribute to water quality and long-term water reliability. Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health: The series will feature any efforts such as hazardous fuels reduction, shaded fuel breaks, defensible space, and forest health work that reduce wildfire risk - particularly where projects protect communities, evacuation corridors, and critical natural resources. Episodes will also clarify why forest stewardship is directly tied to community safety, and to water and habitat protection. The series will provide useful transparency and public awareness about conservation efforts to improve fire safety and resilience in Santa Cruz County, which would be especially valuable for reassuring local communities in the wake of the CZU fires. Parks, Recreation, Access, and Equity: EcoFrontiers will elevate projects that maintain or expand safe, equitable access to parks, trails, beaches, and open spaces - especially where access improvements benefit communities that have historically faced barriers to nature and recreation. Public-facing "how to participate" pathways will direct residents to volunteer opportunities and partner resources that support ongoing stewardship and shared use. Wildlife and Habitat Protection: Episodes may cover habitat restoration, wildlife corridors, invasive species reduction, wetland recovery, and related projects that improve biodiversity and ecosystem function. By making project goals and outcomes understandable to the public, the series supports broader community buy-in for long-term habitat protection. Coastal Protection and Adaptation: The series will connect any relevant coastal adaptation and resilience projects to day-to-day community experiences, highlighting nature-based strategies that reduce erosion, protect estuaries, improve coastal water quality, and address sea level rise impacts. Agricultural and Working Land Protection: EcoFrontiers will also reflect any relevant projects that strengthen ecosystem services on working lands through soil health, water conservation, erosion reduction, and climate-risk reduction practices - showing how stewardship on privately managed landscapes can deliver public benefits.

PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Multi-Benefit Outcomes, Match Funding and Leveraging Potential, Equity Impact, Climate Resilience Value

PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

EcoFrontiers is designed to align with Measure Q's prioritization principles by selecting episode subjects and engagement strategies that maximize multi-benefit outcomes, strengthen equity and accessibility, support climate resilience, and help the public understand how local investments can leverage additional participation and resources over time. Multi-Benefit Outcomes: We will prioritize featuring Measure Q projects that deliver multiple community and environmental benefits simultaneously - for example, watershed and floodplain restoration that improves water quality while enhancing habitat and public access; forest health projects that reduce wildfire risk while protecting drinking water sources and biodiversity; and parks/trails improvements that increase recreation access while supporting stewardship and environmental education. Each episode will explicitly connect project actions to these interrelated benefits so residents can understand the full value of the investment and how it contributes to long-term resilience. Match Funding and Leveraging Potential: While this project is not structured around formal match commitments, EcoFrontiers functions as a leverage tool by increasing public awareness and participation in funded work. Clear, repeated "how to participate" pathways can help featured organizations recruit volunteers, increase turnout for stewardship events and public meetings, and improve visibility of successful approaches - strengthening the competitiveness and scalability of future funding efforts. When feasible, episodes will also highlight how projects fit into broader regional planning frameworks and complementary programs, helping residents and partners understand how Measure Q investments can catalyze additional resources and coordination over time. Equity Impact: Equity is embedded through both content selection and access strategy. The series will prioritize telling stories that are relevant to communities most affected by climate impacts (for example, flooding, water quality, wildfire risk, changing weather and temperatures), and to communities that have historically faced barriers to nature access and environmental decision-making (specifically, South County, which consistently receives fewer resources and less attention than the rest of Santa Cruz County). All episodes will include English and Spanish captions/subtitles, and all outreach materials will be produced bilingually to support equitable access. Distribution will prioritize low-barrier, community-based channels - such as libraries, classrooms, and publicly accessible platforms - so information is not limited to audiences already engaged online. Climate Resilience Value: The series directly supports climate resilience by spotlighting projects that reduce wildfire risk, improve watershed function, protect coastal and estuarine systems, and restore habitats that buffer communities against extreme weather. By documenting implementation progress and measurable outcomes, and translating them into accessible narratives, EcoFrontiers strengthens public trust in solutions and builds sustained community participation - an essential component of long-term resilience and stewardship. This prioritization framework ensures the series supports Measure Q's goals not only by documenting funded work, but by helping residents understand, engage with, and contribute to the lasting benefits those projects

are designed to deliver.

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Public Benefit, Strategic Alignment, Readiness

SECONDARY PRIORITIZATION NARRATIVE

EcoFrontiers is intentionally designed to advance the grant program's secondary prioritization principles by providing timely, accessible documentation of funded work and translating it into clear community value and participation pathways. **Public Benefit:** The project delivers immediate public benefit by helping Santa Cruz County residents understand what Measure Q is funding, why those projects matter locally, and how progress will be measured over time. Each episode will connect project activities to tangible community outcomes - such as improved water quality, reduced wildfire risk, safer and more equitable park access, coastal resilience, and habitat protection - so the public can see and understand the benefits of these investments. Episodes will also include actionable "how to participate" segments, directing residents to relevant partner resources, volunteer opportunities, and practical behaviors that support long-term stewardship and resilience. **Strategic Alignment:** EcoFrontiers supports strategic alignment by focusing content on Measure Q-funded projects and explicitly connecting those projects to the County's stated priority themes, geographies, and resilience outcomes. Where appropriate and feasible, episodes will reference how projects fit within broader local and regional strategies (such as overall watershed, wildfire resilience, and habitat conservation efforts, and equitable access goals). This approach helps residents and stakeholders understand how Measure Q investments work together across jurisdictions and landscapes, reinforcing coordinated action rather than isolated efforts. **Readiness:** Our team is prepared to begin work immediately upon grant award and agreement execution. We have over a decade of filmmaking experience and maintain an established production and post-production workflow that enables efficient delivery with a small team. We also have demonstrated permitting and compliance experience for filming on public lands and government-managed sites, including recent film permits obtained for Columbia State Historic Park and the California State Railroad Museum, and coordination with regional film offices. In addition, we already own the majority of required production equipment and can quickly procure remaining run-and-gun field gear necessary for outdoor documentation. Two letters of support from significant members of the Santa Cruz County conservation and social justice community further demonstrate community validation and administrative capacity. Together, these secondary principles strengthen the project's credibility and feasibility: EcoFrontiers is structured to deliver clear public benefit, align with Measure Q's strategic priorities, and execute efficiently within the 12-month project period while supporting transparent, public-facing reporting throughout the inaugural year.

TARGET COMMUNITY

EcoFrontiers is designed to serve Santa Cruz County residents countywide, with broad accessibility for diverse user groups and targeted relevance for communities most affected by climate and environmental risks. Primary user groups include: General residents and households seeking clear, practical information about local water, wildfire, habitat, coastal, and access projects and how to participate in solutions. Communities exposed to elevated risk from flooding, water quality impacts, wildfire, and extreme weather - particularly residents in areas where these risks are most acute and where resilience investments have immediate public safety and health implications. Youth, students, educators, and families who benefit from short, classroom-usable educational modules that connect local ecology and stewardship to real-world projects and civic participation. Park and beach users, including people who rely on public open space for recreation and well-being, and who benefit from improved access, trail and facility upgrades, and safer outdoor experiences. Underserved and historically under-resourced communities, including residents facing barriers to nature access, environmental information, and participation. To support equitable access, all episodes will include English and Spanish captions/subtitles, and all promotional materials will be produced bilingually. Wherever possible, the series and associated outreach will adhere to ADA accessibility standards and pay special attention to ensuring that events are accessible to individuals with disabilities. Volunteers and community stewards looking for concrete pathways to contribute time and effort to local projects (such as stewardship days, restoration activities, educational events, and partner programs). Partner organizations and project implementers (including Measure Q grantees), who can use the series as a public education tool to explain their work, share progress, and increase community participation and trust (as well as to potentially increase their chances of obtaining future funding). The project supports community value areas including public safety (wildfire and flood resilience awareness), health and well-being (cleaner environments and nature access), access to nature and recreation opportunities (parks, beaches, trails), access to recreation (equity and mobility considerations), and community identity/livability by celebrating Santa Cruz County's landscapes and stewardship culture while making local solutions visible and accessible.

COMMUNITY VALUE AREAS

Public safety, Health and well-being, Access to nature, Recreation opportunities, Community identity or livability

COMMUNITY VALUE NARRATIVE

EcoFrontiers delivers community value by helping residents understand, trust, and participate in local resilience and stewardship work. By documenting Measure Q-funded projects and translating them into accessible stories, the series strengthens public awareness of how investments improve everyday quality of life - safer communities, healthier environments, and more equitable

access to nature and recreation. Public safety: Episodes will clarify how wildfire risk reduction, forest health, and watershed/flood protection projects reduce real risks to communities, infrastructure, and evacuation routes. By showing progress and outcomes over time, the series supports preparedness and community engagement in risk-reduction efforts. Health and well-being: Clean water, clean beaches, reduced pollution, and healthy ecosystems support physical and mental well-being. In addition, improved access to parks and open space strengthens community health through recreation, outdoor learning, and connection to nature. Access to nature and recreation opportunities: The series will highlight projects that protect and improve parks, trails, beaches, and public access facilities, while explaining why equitable access matters and how residents can support stewardship that keeps these spaces safe, clean, and resilient. Community identity and livability: EcoFrontiers reinforces local pride and shared stewardship by spotlighting Santa Cruz County places and the people working to protect them. The solutions-first approach intentionally avoids doom-and-gloom framing; instead, it builds optimism and motivation by showing what is working and how residents can be part of it. Outreach and engagement strategy: Distribution will be primarily digital (via YouTube and partner hosting as available), supported by bilingual promotional materials. To reach audiences beyond online channels, we will pursue community touchpoints, such as library and classroom visits, community learning settings, and partner-hosted screening opportunities as they arise. Each episode will end with a clear "how to participate" segment, directing viewers to volunteer opportunities, partner resources, and practical actions, so that education leads directly to measurable engagement and long-term stewardship.

PROJECT IMPROVES

Water Quality, Habitat, Climate Resilience

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

EcoFrontiers is designed to strengthen environmental outcomes by supporting - and accelerating public participation in - projects that directly improve water quality, habitat, and climate resilience across Santa Cruz County. While our deliverables are communications-based, the series is intentionally structured as an impact multiplier: it increases visibility, builds public trust, and converts awareness into measurable community participation that supports on-the-ground work. Water Quality: Many Measure Q projects will likely work to improve water quality through watershed restoration and various other conservation efforts. Our series will support these efforts by documenting project goals, implementation steps, and measurable outputs in a clear and accessible format. Each episode will identify the "why" and "how" of the work (for example, sediment reduction, improved drainage, healthier riparian corridors) and connect viewers to specific actions that protect local water bodies - such as volunteer stewardship opportunities, local programs, and practical behaviors that reduce pollution and runoff. By helping residents understand how water quality improvements are achieved, the series increases community buy-in and participation that can help projects succeed and persist over time. Habitat: Habitat protection and restoration outcomes rely on sustained stewardship and community support. EcoFrontiers will highlight any projects that restore wetlands and riparian areas, improve habitat quality, protect wildlife corridors, reduce invasive species, and strengthen biodiversity. Episodes will emphasize measurable indicators reported by project implementers (such as habitat area restored, species recovery milestones, invasive removal efforts, and connectivity improvements) and will translate those outcomes into public-facing participation pathways. By spotlighting the people doing the work and the benefits achieved, the series helps normalize stewardship as a shared community responsibility, and encourages ongoing volunteerism and public support for habitat-protective practices. Climate Resilience: The series will support any climate resilience projects by making resilience actions visible and understandable - such as projects that reduce risk from wildfire, flooding, drought, and coastal impacts. EcoFrontiers will connect these projects to concrete community benefits (public safety, water reliability, and ecosystem stability) and provide "what you can do next" actions that increase participation in resilience initiatives. Across all three outcome areas, our core support strategy is consistent: document progress and outcomes, translate technical work into accessible public education, and direct residents to partner-specific participation opportunities. This approach strengthens the effectiveness and longevity of Measure Q projects by expanding community engagement, stewardship capacity, and sustained public support for measurable environmental improvements.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

No

SITE CONTROL

Other

SITE CONTROL (OTHER)

Because the project is media production, filming will occur at multiple sites and filming permissions will be granted automatically or obtained per film location.

REQUIRED PERMITS

Required permits only include the afore-mentioned film permits, which may be required for some film locations, but likely will not be required for filming on or in field or urban settings over which the episode subjects have ownership or permission to be present.

PARTNER APPROVALS

Filming agreements between / permission from Measure Q grantees and chosen project representatives / interview subjects - otherwise no known formal approvals or agreements needed.

TIMELINE MILESTONES

Project Period: June 1, 2026 - May 31, 2027 (12 months). EcoFrontiers will be completed in two phases: (1) pre-production and filming in the first six months, and (2) post-production, release, promotion, and community outreach in the second six months. Phase 1: Pre-Production + Production (Months 1-6 | June-November 2026) Month 1 (June 2026): Project launch + planning Confirm Measure Q-funded project list, episode priorities, and filming targets (including, as feasible, Pajaro Valley and San Vicente Redwoods priority geographies). Finalize fiscal sponsor workflow (invoicing, documentation, reporting cadence). Develop standardized episode template (graphics package, bilingual captions/subtitles pipeline, release checklist). Months 1-2 (June-July 2026): Pre-production + scheduling Outreach to grantees and partners; secure filming permissions and schedule interviews/site visits. Draft episode outlines, interview questions, and "how to participate" action pathways for each episode. Create tracking plan (platform analytics, partner links/QR codes, screening/classroom attendance as available). Months 2-6 (July-November 2026): Field production Film interviews and b-roll for all eight episodes (batched by geography where possible to maximize efficiency). Capture supplementary visuals (parks/trails/coastal/watershed/working lands context shots) and any needed aerial b-roll as permitted and appropriate. Maintain production logs, releases, and media management; begin assembling selects/rough story maps to ensure coverage is complete. Milestone by end of Month 6: All principal filming completed; interview and b-roll archive organized; episode outlines locked; post-production plan finalized. Phase 2: Post-Production + Release + Outreach (Months 7-12 | December 2026-May 2027) Months 7-10 (Dec 2026-March 2027): Post-production Edit all eight episodes to final cut; complete sound, color, graphics, and final finishing. Produce English and Spanish captions/subtitles for every episode; finalize bilingual promotional materials and partner "action sheets." Months 9-12 (Feb-May 2027): Release + promotion + community outreach Release the series on a consistent schedule (e.g., weekly or biweekly) across publicly accessible platforms (including YouTube and/or partner hosting as available). Conduct ongoing promotion and engagement through partner channels and community touchpoints such as library and classroom visits, community learning settings, and partner-hosted screening opportunities as they arise. Track reach and engagement metrics; collect grantee-shared outcome updates where available to support reporting. Month 12 (May 2027): Reporting + closeout Compile final outcomes summary and deliverables package; submit final report and documentation required for grant closeout.

REQUIRES MAINTENANCE

No

MAINTENANCE FUNDING IDENTIFIED

No

TEAM CAPACITY

EcoFrontiers will be delivered by a highly efficient two-person core production team with over 10 years of professional filmmaking experience, supported by a fiscal sponsor with demonstrated capacity to receive, administer, and report on grant funds. Our team has produced both narrative and documentary-style content and is equipped to manage the full pipeline - research, interviewing, field production, editing, sound, graphics, captions/subtitles, and distribution materials - without relying on a large external crew. This approach maximizes cost-effectiveness while maintaining consistent quality and schedule reliability. We have deep local knowledge and relationships relevant to the subject matter, including recent contact with Santa Cruz County scientists, conservation professionals, and environmental experts. This network supports timely access to credible interview subjects and helps ensure accurate, community-relevant storytelling. We also have demonstrated operational readiness: we already own most necessary production and post-production equipment and can quickly purchase supplemental run-and-gun field gear needed for outdoor documentation. We have prior experience navigating filming logistics, insurance, and permitting for government-managed sites. This background reduces schedule risk for location-based filming. Administrative and community readiness is further demonstrated through letters of support and an established production plan.

FEASIBILITY NARRATIVE

The project is feasible within the 12-month term because it uses a standardized, repeatable production model designed for variable access conditions while maintaining firm deliverables. The core feasibility strengths are: (1) a proven two-person production/post workflow; (2) a rolling production schedule that distributes workload across the year; and (3) built-in contingency planning for grantee access and outdoor filming constraints. The primary dependency is coordination with Measure Q-funded

projects and site access. To mitigate this, we will begin immediately with pre-production tasks that do not require field access (project selection, scheduling, outlines, graphics templates, bilingual caption/subtitle workflow). We will batch filming by geography where possible to reduce travel time and maximize production efficiency. We will also prioritize early episodes with projects that can confirm access quickly, while scheduling more complex or seasonal locations later in the term. If a sufficient number of funded projects are unable to participate due to scheduling, safety restrictions, or site constraints, we will pivot select episodes to other Santa Cruz County conservation and resilience organizations whose work strongly aligns with Measure Q priorities. This ensures the full eight-episode slate can be delivered on schedule while still advancing Measure Q goals and public education outcomes. Most work will be completed in-house (research, filming, editing, captions/subtitles, bilingual promotional materials), with limited contractor use only as needed (for example, final audio polish). Because we own most core equipment and have an established production pipeline, the project can maintain consistent output without waiting on external vendors. Feasibility is reinforced by clear deliverables (8 episodes, bilingual accessibility, outreach materials, and reporting) and a metrics plan that relies on trackable indicators (platform analytics, partner distribution, and attendance at library/classroom touchpoints when available). Together, these elements make the scope realistic, controllable, and achievable within the grant term.

PROJECT PARTNERS

EcoFrontiers will be implemented through a partnership model designed to support accurate documentation, broad public access, and meaningful community participation. The project's formal applicant/fiscal sponsor is United Services Agency (USA), a 501(c)(3), which will receive and administer grant funds, manage payments/contracting, and oversee required reporting and compliance. USA has prior experience serving as a fiscal sponsor for community programs and provides the administrative capacity needed to support a successful Tier 2 project. Content partnerships will be centered on Measure Q-funded project implementers (public agencies, nonprofits, and Tribes as applicable) who agree to participate as featured subjects. These participating grantees will serve as primary project partners by providing interview access, site context, and project outcome information (such as milestones and measurable outputs). Because the series is focused on the inaugural grant cycle, the final list of featured partners will be determined after award decisions and grantee availability are confirmed. We will prioritize including projects that align with Measure Q's thematic priorities and, where feasible, projects located in priority geographies such as Pajaro Valley/South County and the San Vicente Redwoods/forested North County. We also have established relationships and have had recent conversations with local scientists, conservation experts, and environmental professionals within Santa Cruz County, which supports timely access to credible subject matter expertise, and strengthens the accuracy and relevance of episode content. In addition, we have initial community distribution relationships that can expand reach beyond online audiences, including a partnership connection with the local library system, and interest from educators and community learning settings for classroom-appropriate modules.

COLLABORATION SUMMARY

Collaboration is integrated into the project workflow to ensure factual accuracy, respectful representation of partner work, and effective community engagement. Our collaboration approach includes three primary components: (1) coordination with featured project implementers; (2) distribution collaboration through partner and community channels; and (3) reporting collaboration to support transparency and accountability. 1) Coordination with featured project implementers: For each episode, we will coordinate with the participating Measure Q-funded project partner to schedule interviews and site filming, identify the most relevant milestones to document, and confirm the most appropriate public-facing participation pathways (such as volunteer opportunities, public meetings, stewardship events, and educational resources). We will use a consistent episode template so partners know what to expect and so viewers receive reliable, comparable information across episodes. To support accuracy, partners will be offered a brief factual review window focused on verifying project names, locations, timelines, and measurable outputs (not editorial control), ensuring the series remains both accurate and transparent. 2) Distribution collaboration: The series will be released publicly (via YouTube and/or partner hosting as available) and supported through partner sharing. For each episode, we will provide a lightweight "partner toolkit" including bilingual promotional assets, a short episode summary, key links/QR codes, and the "how to participate" actions featured in the episode. We will also pursue community touchpoints - such as library and classroom visits and partner-hosted screenings - as opportunities arise, coordinating with local institutions to expand access beyond online audiences. 3) Reporting collaboration: We will track series-level engagement metrics (reach, views, and participation pathways, where trackable) and, where partners are willing and able, incorporate partner-shared project outcome updates to help the public understand progress over time. This strengthens Measure Q's transparency goals by making project work visible and understandable while supporting grantees' communication efforts. This collaboration model is designed to be low-burden for partners, high-value for the public, and feasible within the 12-month project period.

GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED (USD)

80000

MATCHING FUNDS CASH (USD)

0

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (USD)

0

TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES (USD)

0

INDIRECT COST RATE (%)

5

MAINTENANCE COSTS (USD)

0

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The proposed budget of \$80,000 is designed to maximize direct project delivery and public benefit through a highly cost-effective production model. EcoFrontiers will be produced by a two-person core team completing the majority of work in-house - research, scheduling, field production, editing, sound, graphics, bilingual captions/subtitles, and bilingual outreach materials - reducing reliance on external vendors and ensuring schedule reliability within the 12-month grant term. This \$80,000 budget is intentionally lean by film industry standards and reflects a highly cost-effective, in-house production model; comparable documentary series budgets are typically significantly higher due to larger crews, outsourced post-production, and equipment rentals. By completing most production and post-production internally and purchasing only essential field gear, we are able to deliver a professional eight-episode series at a conservative, reasonable cost. Personnel is the primary cost driver because this project's deliverables are labor-intensive and time-sensitive. The core team will manage the full production pipeline and reporting workflow while maintaining consistent quality and a standardized episode template across eight ~10-minute episodes. This approach concentrates funds on direct work product (completed episodes, outreach assets, and reporting deliverables) rather than on high overhead or large crew staffing. Equipment costs support a one-time purchase of essential run-and-gun field production gear (camera/audio/stabilization/power/data) required to document Measure Q projects across diverse outdoor settings throughout Santa Cruz County. Purchasing this kit is more cost-effective than repeated rentals over multiple filming days and ensures timely access to equipment as project schedules and field conditions change. All equipment purchases are directly tied to the eligible project scope and will be tracked according to fiscal sponsor and grant requirements. Supplies, travel, and other direct costs cover necessary production expenses such as insurance and permits as required, local transportation for field filming, production consumables, on-set meals/hydration for filming days, transcription as needed, and required certifications for safe and compliant field operations (e.g., drone pilot certification for aerial b-roll where permitted). These costs are modest and focused on enabling efficient fieldwork. Contractual/consultant costs are limited and reserved primarily as schedule-risk contingency (such as final audio polish or translation review if needed), reflecting the team's capability to complete most post-production in-house. Indirect costs are budgeted at up to 5% per fiscal sponsor policy to cover grant administration, financial tracking, and compliance; the sponsor may waive or reduce this fee, in which case the amount would be reallocated to direct project costs with sponsor approval. While no formal match is proposed, the project will leverage non-monetary support where available, including partner distribution channels and low-cost community access points (libraries/classrooms/partner-hosted screenings as opportunities arise), to expand reach beyond online audiences without increasing project overhead.

SUSTAINED BENEFITS PLAN

EcoFrontiers is designed to deliver sustained public benefits without ongoing physical maintenance requirements. Because the primary deliverables are completed media assets, the series will remain publicly accessible beyond the grant term through common online platforms (YouTube, etc.) and/or partner hosting as available. This evergreen availability allows episodes to continue generating public awareness and engagement indefinitely, including for residents who discover Measure Q-funded work after the inaugural year. To support long-term usefulness, episodes will be produced in a modular format that remains relevant over time: clear project context, progress documentation, measurable outcomes, and actionable "how to participate" pathways. All episodes will include English and Spanish captions/subtitles, and outreach materials will be bilingual, improving long-term accessibility and reusability for community learning settings. The series can also be packaged as educational modules suitable for classrooms, libraries, and community programs, and embedded on County, government, nonprofit, and partner websites to support ongoing public education and stewardship. Monitoring during the grant term will include basic performance indicators such as reach/engagement metrics and partner distribution where available. While the project does not require a dedicated maintenance budget, the content's long lifespan supports continued impact at no additional cost. If Season 1 is successful and demonstrates measurable public value, EcoFrontiers can be scaled through future seasons or periodic updates that continue following Measure Q projects, highlight additional funded work, and document longer-term outcomes - further strengthening transparency, public trust, and sustained community participation in stewardship and resilience efforts.

REFERENCED IN PLAN

No

REFERENCED PLANS

—

BONUS CATEGORIES

Exceptional Readiness, High Fund Leverage, Long Term Stewardship Commitments

OPTIONAL BONUS NARRATIVE

EcoFrontiers advances all bonus categories by combining strong readiness with a highly visible, scalable approach to public accountability and engagement during Measure Q's inaugural grant cycle. The project demonstrates exceptional readiness and can begin immediately upon award and agreement execution. Our two-person core team has over 10 years of filmmaking experience and an established production/post-production workflow that enables efficient delivery on a fixed timeline. We already own most required production and post-production equipment and software, and can quickly purchase supplemental gear. We also have demonstrated experience navigating filming logistics, insurance, and permitting for public lands and government-managed sites, reducing schedule risk for location-based filming. Letters of support further reinforce readiness and administrative capacity. While not a traditional match-funded project, EcoFrontiers leverages Measure Q dollars by amplifying the impact of funded work. By making projects legible and compelling to the public - what is happening, why it matters, and what outcomes are being achieved - the series increases community participation, volunteer engagement, and public trust. The visibility created through a high-quality, bilingual docuseries can also strengthen future funding competitiveness by demonstrating success, building partnerships, and communicating measurable outcomes in a widely accessible format. The deliverables have a long shelf life that support long-term stewardship commitments: episodes remain publicly accessible online and/or through partner hosting, allowing benefits to continue beyond the grant term without additional maintenance costs. The modular format also supports classroom and community-learning use, extending stewardship education over time. If the inaugural season demonstrates public value, the format can support future seasons that continue tracking longer-term outcomes of Measure Q investments. The project is built around strong partnerships in the form of collaboration with Measure Q-funded project implementers across the County, and is supported by an experienced 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor providing administrative oversight. Our relationships with local scientists and conservation experts support credible storytelling and accurate representation, while community channels (such as library/classroom touchpoints, as opportunities arise) expand access beyond online audiences. This project is designed to support the Measure Q program implementation as a countywide resilience investment with implications for public safety, watershed health, wildfire risk reduction, habitat protection, coastal adaptation, and equitable access to parks and open space. By documenting funded projects and translating technical work into clear public benefit and participation pathways, EcoFrontiers supports countywide learning, transparency, and community engagement - helping Santa Cruz County residents see, understand, and support the region's collective response to climate and environmental challenges.

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET

[EcoFrontiers_Measure Q Detailed Budget - ecofrontiers_measure_q_detailed_budget_5pct_indirect.csv.p](#)

ATTACHMENT: SITE MAP

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[EcoFrontiers_USA_Letter of Support.pdf, Ecofrontiers_Croll_Letter of Support.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: TIMELINE/GANTT

[EcoFrontiers_Measure Q Gantt Timeline - Gantt.pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCS

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ORG INFO

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: PHOTOS

[No file uploaded](#)

ATTACHMENT: ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

[No file uploaded](#)

CERTIFICATION

I certify

SIGNATURE

Katelyn Laird

SIGNER NAME & TITLE

Katelyn Laird, Producer

SIGNATURE DATE

03/13/2026