

Wildlife Conservation Board Funds Stream Flow Enhancement Projects

MARCH 22, 2018

At a March 22 meeting, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approved approximately \$33.1 million in grants for 22 projects to enhance stream flows to benefit fish and wildlife habitat throughout California. The Legislature appropriated funding for these projects as authorized by the Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1). A total of \$200 million was allocated to the WCB for projects that enhance stream flow.

A total of \$38.4 million—including \$5 million designated for scoping and scientific projects—was allocated to the WCB for expenditure in Fiscal Year 2017/18 for the California Stream Flow Enhancement Program. Projects were chosen through a competitive grant process, judged by the WCB, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the State Water Resources Control Board. Guided by the California Water Action Plan, funding is focused on projects that will lead to direct and measurable enhancements to the amount, timing and/or quality of water for anadromous fish; special status, threatened, endangered or at-risk species; or to provide resilience to climate change.

Funded projects include:

- A \$4.8 million grant to The Wildlands Conservancy for a project to enhance stream flow on Russ Creek by reestablishing channel alignment to provide continuous summer base flows suitable for fish passage. The project is located on the southern portion of the Eel River Estuary Preserve in Humboldt County, approximately four miles west of Ferndale.
- A \$693,408 grant to the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District for the purpose of dedicating a portion of the District's diversion water rights to instream flow use that will benefit fish and wildlife by increasing habitat for salmonids and special status species in the Mad River. The project is located on the main-stem Mad River in the Mad River Watershed with releases coming from Matthews Dam at Ruth Reservoir, approximately 48 miles southeast of Eureka and 53 miles southwest of Redding.
- A \$726,374 grant to Mendocino County Resource Conservation District for a cooperative project with Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to reduce summer diversions and improve dry season stream flows for the benefit of Coho salmon and steelhead trout. The Navarro River watershed is located approximately 20 miles south of Fort Bragg.
- A \$5 million grant to the Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency for a cooperative project with the Department of Water Resources and CDFW, to improve roughly 7,500 linear feet of existing channels to connect isolated ponds. This will provide fish refuge and eliminate potential stranding. This project's design was funded by the Stream Flow Enhancement Program in 2016. The project site is within the Sacramento River watershed and is less than one mile southwest of the town of Oroville, on the east side of the Feather River.
- \$609,970 grant to the University of California Regents for a cooperative project with the University of Nevada, Reno and the Desert Research Institute, to expand monitoring,

scientific studies and modeling in the Tahoe-Truckee Basin. The results will guide watershed-scale forest thinning strategies that enhance stream flow within an area that provides critical habitat for threatened species. The project is located in the central Sierra Nevada mountain range, primarily on National Forest lands in the Lake Tahoe Basin and Tahoe National Forest.

- A \$851,806 grant to the Sonoma Resource Conservation District for a cooperative project with the Coast Ridge Community Forest and 29 landowners, to install rainwater harvesting tanks and enter into agreements to refrain from diverting stream flow during dry seasons. The project area consists of 29 properties within the coastal Gualala River, Russian Gulch and Austin Creek watersheds, which discharge to the Pacific Ocean approximately 40 miles northwest of Santa Rosa.
- **A \$5.3 million grant to the Alameda County Water District for a cooperative project with the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, California Natural Resources Agency, State Coastal Conservancy and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to modify flow releases in Alameda Creek and construct two concrete fish ladders around existing fish passage barriers. This will provide salmonids access to high value habitat upstream of the project location, approximately 17 miles north of San Jose and 22 miles southeast of Oakland.**
- A \$3.9 million grant to The Nature Conservancy for a cooperative project with U.C. Santa Barbara and the Santa Clara River Watershed Conservancy to remove approximately 250 acres of the invasive giant reed (*Arundo donax*), which will save approximately 2,000 acre-feet of water annually for the Santa Clara River. The project is located in unincorporated Ventura County approximately two miles east of the city of Santa Paula and three miles west of the city of Fillmore, along the Santa Clara River.

Details about the [California Stream Flow Enhancement Program](#) are available on the WCB website.