



County of Santa Cruz

Health Services Agency – Environmental Health

Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission

(831) 454-2022 TDD/TTY – Call 711 <http://www.scceh.org>



AGENDA

September 3, 2026, 6:30 PM

Agenda Item #	Start Time	End Time	Description
1	6:30	6:40	Call to Order
2			Roll Call
3			Approval of Consent Items: • July Meeting Minutes • 2025 Public Grant Program Status Reports
4			Public Comment for Items Not on The Agenda
5	6:40	6:50	Coastal Watershed Council: 2025 Grant Status Report
6	6:50	7:00	WOLF School: 2025 Grant Status Report
7	7:00	7:30	General Status Update from CDFW Wardens
8	7:30	8:00	2026 Public Grant Program: • Budget Update • Approve Request for Proposals
9	8:00	8:10	Safe Passage Santa Cruz Update
10	8:10	8:30	Staff Reports Commissioner Reports and Announcements
11		8:30	Adjourn

Public Comment

Jane Orbuch – Concern Regarding Drone Disturbance of Nesting Osprey

Items of Interest:

[PR-Help Improve Safety for Wildlife by Reporting Roadkill Observations](#)

[CDFW News | CDFW Seeks Information Related to Southern Resident Killer Whale](#)

[California wetlands are drying up after federal staffing cutbacks](#)

The County of Santa Cruz does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities. This online meeting is available to anyone with a telephone. If you are a person with a disability and require special assistance in order to participate in the meeting, please contact Sean Abbey at (831) 454-2386 or TDD number (454-2123) at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting in order to make arrangements. Persons with disabilities may request a copy of the agenda in an alternative format. As a courtesy to those affected, please attend the meeting smoke and scent free.

Commissioner and Public Participation Information

Commissioners meet in person at the **Solarium Conference Room, 1060 Emeline Avenue**. Members of the public can join in person but are encouraged to join virtually using the link below.

PLEASE NOTE: The meeting room is on the second floor, above the Water Quality Lab entrance. The door must remain locked after hours, but staff will be able to provide access to all attendees as they arrive.

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join: <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/224023273835646?p=099puv0ojotKFqHk02>

Meeting ID: 224 023 273 835 646

Passcode: nu6N2En2

Click the “Click here to join the meeting” link above. If you are asked to join Teams with an application, click on “No thanks” and open in the browser. You should not need to download the application to join the meeting.

Please join the meeting a few minutes BEFORE 6:30 pm so that we can start at 6:30 pm. Staff will open the video conference at 6:25 pm. Cameras are optional for members of the public.

If you have questions, contact Sean Abbey at sean.abbey@santacruzcountyca.gov.

Meeting Roles and Rules:

Jenni Gomez, Chair, will lead the meeting. Chair Gomez will announce each agenda item, identify who will be leading an item and introduce discussion and public comment periods.

Sean Abbey, staff, will assist with roll call, note taking, and tracking who wants to speak. Please allow staff to make notes about any decisions. Sean will monitor email during the meeting.

There will be a public comment period for each item and the Chair will invite the public to participate at the appropriate time.



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Meeting Minutes

July 2, 2026

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – 6:33 pm
2. **ROLL CALL**

District	Commissioner	Status	Commissioner	Status
I	Chris Berry	P	Kevin Butler	R
II	Brian Woodward	E	David Somerton	P
III	Liz Alter	P	Jon Jankovitz	P
IV	Brooke Sampson	R	Daniela Suarez	A
V	Jenni Gomez	P	Joanne Brown	P

P = Present R = Remote E = Excused A = Absent

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- **Motion to Approve Minutes:** Berry, **Second:** Somerton,
 - **Abstain:** Alter, Jankovitz
 - **All Other Ayes:** Minutes approved

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- None

5. **PRESENTATION BY SIERRA RYAN ON CULVERT REPLACEMENT PROJECT PROPOSAL TO**

CDFW: Sierra Ryan, Director of Water Resources, presented on a recent application to the California Dept of Fish and Wildlife Fisheries Restoration Grant Program. The proposed project would be to design replacements for two culverts along Casserly Creek, which currently are the end of accessible stream for salmon. The culverts would be redesigned as open bottom “box” or “arch” culverts, allowing a continuation of natural stream bed under the road. Commissioners asked questions regarding the funding sources and recommended several areas for collaboration. In particular, the commission noted that there is opportunity to work with the Public Works division to identify more culverts the require maintenance and replacing them with ones that require less maintenance during and after large storm events.

6. REQUEST SUGGESTIONS FOR COUNTY PORTION OF MEASURE Q FUNDING: County Staff have been putting together a list of priorities for the County portion of Measure Q funding. Sierra Ryan has already identified wildlife crossings and Pinto Lake improvements as possible priorities. The question to the Commissioners was, what are some other high priority projects that could be impactful, visible, and relatively inexpensive (\$300,000). The Commissioners suggested the following:

- Collaborating with City of Santa Cruz forest health projects
- Replacing high priority failed culverts with open bottom channels. Specifically, three (3) culverts along Lompico Creek were identified.
- Removal of the Boulder Creek Rec dam, which is identified as a fish passage barrier along the San Lorenzo River.
- Commissioners supported improvements to Pinto Lake as it is a highly utilized park and a good project,
- Working with the Stream Wood Program to install large permanent wood installations, with ongoing support for nearby residents.

7. UPDATE FROM WILDLIFE CROSSING SUB-COMMITTEE, COMMITTEE CLOSURE: The Bio-blitz project continues to proceed with Chrissie Klinkowski working to recruit volunteer biologists from local naturalist organizations. The biologists would provide data to the iNaturalist Project over a period of roughly 1 year, with results expected by July 2027. In addition, a second project is nearing release for the public to report wildlife killed by vehicle strikes. This project will be called "Safe Passage Santa Cruz" and will be managed by the FWAC iNaturalist account. Staff will work with the commissioners to create a press release that has a QR code linking to the project.

The Wildlife Crossing sub-committee was created as an ad-hoc sub-committee and therefore cannot exceed 6 months in duration. The sub-committee will need to be closed, with the responsibilities for the project divided between Commissioners Brown and Gomez.

- **Motion to Close Wildlife Crossing Sub-committee:** Jankovitz, **Second:** Somerton,
 - **All Ayes:** Sub-committee is closed.

8. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **Staff Reports:**
 - At the May meeting, Commissioner Jankovitz was elected as Vice-chair on the belief he would be continuing the role. That was incorrect and Commissioner Berry was Vice-Chair last year. Staff corrected the record

and confirmed that the vote was still acceptable to the commission. No new vote was agendized for a future meeting.

- Commissioner Berry reported observing an unusually high number of large bullfrog tadpoles in the San Lorenzo River near Highlands Park, prompting concern about the status and spread of bullfrogs in the watershed. Local Biologist Don Alley provided background on historical detections of bullfrogs and tadpoles across the watershed and emphasized that Boulder Creek appears to be a major point of spread. Alley also explained that Bullfrog populations fluctuate with winter severity, with more intense winters often reducing populations.

○ **Commissioner Reports:**

- **Com Berry:** Multiple stream improvement projects are being completed by the City of Santa Cruz, including a San Vincente Creek stream-wood installation, riparian restoration in Scott Creek, and improving passage around the Branciforte dam. The city also contributed to advancing County barrier removal projects.
- **Com Berry:** Noted many riparian violations and requested that staff reach out to CDFW enforcement to be at future meetings. Staff will be including Cpt Schindler in agenda creation process.
- **Com Alter:** An interesting study was released that mapped data from STRAVA, a fitness tracker app, and compared it with Mountain Lion tracking data. The report found that Mountain Lions are actively avoiding trails during times of high use.
- **Com Alter:** One of Com Alters graduate students will be completing her dissertation on vertebrate diversity in Pajaro Lagoon.
- **Com Sampson:** Board of Supervisors approved the Measure Q competitive grant awards in June. The list of awardees are available on the [Measure Q website](#)
- **Com Brown:** Appreciated the CEQA webinar listed in the agenda "Items of Interest", found it very interesting and concerning.

9. ADJOURN. Motion to Adjourn: Jankovitz, **Second:** Alter
All Aye: meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Grant Report to the County of Santa Cruz Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission
Coastal Watershed Council
July 2025-June 2026

Thanks to the support of the County of Santa Cruz Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission, the Coastal Watershed Council (CWC) habitat enhancement volunteer program engaged 355 volunteers, including 19 unique individuals experiencing homelessness, from July 2025 to June 2026, for a total of 894 volunteers hours improving the lower San Lorenzo River ecosystem. Unhoused Santa Cruz residents participated in CWC's River Stewards habitat enhancement program from July to October, followed by a pause to the program which was then restarted in June 2026.

Throughout this period of habitat enhancement, volunteers exceeded our goal to remove 1,000 square feet of highly invasive species by removing 3,109 square feet of Acacia (*Acacia sp.*), Cape Ivy (*Delairea odorata*), Himalayan Blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), and Ice Plant (*Carpobrotus edulis*). Habitat enhancement volunteers also removed 6,775 square feet of less invasive non-native species, including Periwinkle (*Vinca major*), Wild Radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*), Black Mustard (*Rhaphospermum nigrum*), Curly Dock (*Rumex crispus*), Kikuya Grass (*Cenchrus clandestinus*), Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), Italian Thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*), Bull Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), and hybridized Blackberry (*Rubus sp. x Rubus armeniacus*).

In addition, CWC has exceeded our goal of creating 10 native seed plots by creating 12 native seed plots, for a total of 2,066 square feet of area seeded. These plots were seeded with 8 native species, including Coast Tarweed (*Madia sativa*), Oregon Gumplant (*Grindelia stricta*), California Scorpionweed (*Phacelia californica*), Coast Buckwheat (*Erigonum latifolium*), Ruby Chalice Clarkia (*Clarkia rubicunda*), Tall Evening Primrose (*Oenothera elata*), Purple Clarkia (*Clarkia purpurea*), Mugwort (*Artemisia douglasiana*), and Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*). In our seed survivorship surveys, we observed 1,265 native plants emerge within our plots and average 13% coverage throughout each plot. The plots' native plant coverage ranged from 1% to 45% coverage.



Community volunteers install native seeds (left). Santa Cruz Warriors volunteers remove highly invasive Ice Plant (*Carpobrotus edulis*) (right).



**Final Report to Santa Cruz County Fish and Wildlife Advisory
Commission for its grant:
*Resolving Human-Wildlife Conflicts in Santa Cruz County***

August 21, 2026

Original Funding Requests and Project Description

International Bird Rescue was awarded a \$7500 grant on 1/13/26 from the Santa Cruz County Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission and the Board of Supervisors for the purpose of offsetting a small portion of the necessary costs of essential clinic and medical supplies, medicine, food, and utilities to provide stable clinic and rehabilitation environments for birds admitted from Santa Cruz County to our San Francisco Bay-Delta Wildlife Center. As the following report demonstrates, grant funds were expended for this purpose.

Program Results

As the "referral hospital" for over a dozen Northern California Counties, we annually treat ~1,750 of the most challenging cases that are beyond the capacity or skills of other regional wildlife centers and clinics, and receive hundreds of birds from other local rescues and rehabilitation centers and from the general public for treatment at our Wildlife Center, including from Native Animal Rescue of Santa Cruz County. We typically received ~300 birds annually from Santa Cruz County (second only to Los Angeles County). Locations of rescue include Santa Cruz, Aptos, Capitola, Watsonville, Pajaro Dunes, Davenport, Ben Lomond, and Soquel. The patients we treat are critical to riparian conservation. They are the living, natural, native resources that habitat conservation and other activities seeks to support. Our research shows that rehabilitated animals achieve successful, long-term outcomes, including (but not limited to) completing average life expectancies, producing and rearing offspring, and serving as nutrition for other animals. Each of these outcomes is an important component of a healthy, balanced ecosystem.

In our last, complete fiscal year (FY25: 10/1/24-9/30/25), we admitted 2,950 wild, native, aquatic birds for care (1,769 in Northern California, and 1,181 in Southern California), on par with historical averages. The average length of time in care for all patients during this reporting period was 22 days (which is a 10% increase from 19.67 days the prior year). Patients represent 94 unique species, including:

- **Federally and State-listed Endangered species** California Least Tern
- **Federally Threatened species** Western Snowy Plover
- **IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Endangered Species** Ashy Storm-Petrel
- **IUCN Near-Threatened species** Elegant Tern
- **"Birds of Conservation Concern"** in our Bird Conservation Regions of "Coastal California" and "California Current:" Black-vented Shearwater, Brandt's Cormorant, Burrowing Owl, Clark's Grebe, Western Grebe, Guadalupe Murrelet, California Gull, Heermann's Gull, Western Gull, Laysan Albatross, Black-footed Albatross, and Willet

During this same period, Santa Cruz County intakes totaled 280 patients. The average length of care for these Santa Cruz County patients was 22.75 days.

In our current FY26-to date (10/1/25-7/31/26), Santa Cruz County intakes total 167 patients, including 39 Brown Pelicans. The average length of care for these 167 patients is 19 days.

Notable media includes: **Santa Cruz Local:** <https://santacruzlocal.org/2026/01/03/santa-cruz-county-remains-a-hotspot-for-fishing-related-bird-injuries/>

Financial Report:

Santa Cruz County Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission Grant funds supported essential clinic and medical supplies, medicine, food, and utilities to provide stable clinic and rehabilitation environments for birds admitted from Santa Cruz County to our San Francisco Bay-Delta Wildlife Center. No funds were used for personnel or capital expenses. Grant funds supported the following receipts and invoices:

Number	Transaction date	Name	Description	Account Name	Amount	Grant Supported
1	02/06/2026	Liva Aquaria	bloodworm and brine shrimp	7641 Animal Food	\$615.03	\$615.03
2	01/15/2026	Midwest Veterinary Supply, Inc.	medical supplies	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$698.42	\$698.42
3	01/20/2026	Airgas USA	medical oxygen	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$266.59	\$266.59
4	01/31/2026	Airgas USA	medical oxygen	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$103.98	\$103.98
5	02/02/2026	Midwest Veterinary Supply, Inc.	medical supplies	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$663.53	\$663.53
6	02/03/2026	Vitality	aquacel ag	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$323.59	\$323.59
7	02/13/2026	CVS	covid and flu test for clinic staff	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$22.93	\$22.93
8	02/18/2026	Midwest Veterinary Supply, Inc.	medical supplies	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$157.06	\$157.06
9	02/18/2026	Midwest Veterinary Supply, Inc.	medical supplies	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$643.37	\$643.37
10	01/22/2026	Chewy	scratch	7641 Animal Food	\$119.19	\$119.19
11	03/05/2026	Wedgewood Pharmacy	medicine	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$188.58	\$188.58
12	03/05/2026	Wedgewood Pharmacy	medicine	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$241.42	\$241.42
13	03/10/2026	Midwest Veterinary Supply, Inc.	medical supplies	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$670.51	\$670.51
14	03/11/2026	Midwest Veterinary Supply, Inc.	medical supplies	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$136.91	\$136.91

15	03/12/2026	Santa Cruz Biotech	Excede	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$563.44	\$563.44
16	03/19/2026	McKesson Medical Surgical	medical supplies	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$1,356.19	\$1,356.19
17	03/24/2026	Midwest Veterinary Supply, Inc.	medical supplies	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$415.05	\$415.05
18	03/29/2026	Amazon	face shields	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$43.32	\$43.32
19	02/02/2026	Midwest Veterinary Supply, Inc.	medical supplies	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$67.40	\$67.40
20	02/03/2026	Midwest Veterinary Supply, Inc.	medical supplies	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$32.11	\$32.11
21	03/09/2026	Midwest Veterinary Supply, Inc.	medical supplies	7642 Medicine/ Medical Supplies	\$68.08	\$68.08
22	01/20/2026	Safeway	bleach	7643 Clinic Supplies	\$15.15	\$15.15
23	01/22/2026	Amazon	baby monitor	7643 Clinic Supplies	\$39.00	\$39.00
24	01/26/2026	Target	humidifier	7643 Clinic Supplies	\$43.34	\$43.34
25	03/24/2026	TJ Maxx	honey for rehab	7643 Clinic Supplies	\$14.99	\$5.81
				TOTALS	\$7,509.18	\$7,500.00

Contact:

International Bird Rescue
4369 Cordelia Rd.
Fairfield, CA 94534

Phil Kohlmetz, Grants Coordinator
E: grants@birdrescue.org
P: 707-207-0380 x100 or 707-704-0350



August 14, 2026

FWAC 2025 Grant Status Report

Marine Life Studies has made significant progress toward completing the educational display funded through this grant; however, several portions of the project have taken longer than originally anticipated due to circumstances outside of our control.

The customized trailer was finally completed and received in March 2026. Completion of the trailer was delayed primarily because of tariffs and shortages and availability of materials needed by the manufacturer. These supply-chain issues affected both the cost and timing of the specialized materials required for the trailer. Because this was a customized unit rather than a standard off-the-lot trailer, the manufacturer could not simply substitute materials without ensuring that the finished trailer would meet the specifications required for transporting and displaying the educational exhibit and specimens safely.

With the trailer now in hand, we have been able to move forward with the next major component of the project: fabrication of the customized metal support stand and platform for the authentic minke whale skull and mandibles. We are currently working with Sanctuary Stainless for this specialized fabrication of the custom stand. The minke whale skull and mandibles are extremely large, heavy, and irreplaceable educational specimens. The support structure therefore needs to be specifically engineered and fabricated to safely hold the skull and mandibles while also allowing them to be appropriately positioned for public viewing and educational interpretation. The design must account for the size, weight, balance, protection, and long-term stability of the specimens, as well as the requirements of using the display as part of a mobile educational exhibit. Once the final design, fabrication cost, and installation requirements are determined, we will be able to proceed with mounting the skull and mandibles and arranging the other specimens within the trailer.

The educational signage has intentionally not yet been produced because the final placement and mounting of the minke whale skull, mandibles, and other specimens must be established first. The size, location, orientation, and viewing angles of the mounted specimens will determine the amount of available wall and display space and where interpretive panels can be placed most effectively. Producing signage before the physical exhibit layout is finalized could result in signage that does not fit properly or that would need to be redesigned and reprinted.

Once the customized stand and platform have been fabricated and the specimens are mounted in their final locations, Marine Life Studies will finalize the educational content and signage to complement the completed exhibit. This will allow us to design the interpretive materials around the actual specimens and create a more cohesive, professional, and engaging educational experience for students and members of the public.

Although the project has experienced delays, the overall scope and educational purpose of the grant remain unchanged. The customized trailer has now been received, the specialized mounting system for the authentic minke whale skull and mandibles is moving forward, and the educational signage will follow once the physical exhibit configuration has been finalized. Marine Life Studies remains committed to completing the project carefully and appropriately so that these valuable specimens can be safely preserved and used as a long-term educational resource for the community.

Here are some photos of the customized trailer in front of our Monterey Bay Whale and Ocean Center in Moss Landing.



Marine Life Studies is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations and gifts are tax deductible. EIN #27-0318674
Phone: 831.901.3833 • Email: info@marinelifestudies.org • Website: www.marinelifestudies.org • Mailing Address: P.O. Box 163, Moss Landing, CA 95039
Monterey Bay Whale and Ocean Center includes Benefit Gift Shop and Conference Center • 8142 Moss Landing Rd. • Moss Landing, CA 95039

Grant Update: Ambassador Animal Enrichment Native Animal Rescue

Funding from the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission supported Native Animal Rescue's preparations to provide appropriate lifelong care, specialized equipment, and enrichment for a non-releasable American Kestrel being considered for our education program.

During her time with us, we purchased two pairs of falconry gloves in different sizes, a transport carrier, a bow perch and scale, and appropriately fitted anklets and jesses. Grant funding also helped provide approximately eight months of food. These purchases allowed us to safely handle, transport, monitor, and care for the kestrel while we evaluated her long-term suitability as an ambassador animal.

Unfortunately, she continued to experience problems at her amputation site and developed a lesion near her beak. She was examined by Dr. Deng of Exotic Pet Clinic. Following this evaluation, it was determined that her medical condition and prognosis would prevent her from having the healthy, comfortable life required of an ambassador animal. In May, the difficult but humane decision was made to euthanize her.

Although we were unable to achieve our original goal of incorporating this kestrel into our educational presentations, the funding ensured that she received specialized equipment, appropriate nutrition, veterinary evaluation, and attentive care during her time with Native Animal Rescue. Her welfare remained our foremost consideration throughout the project. The durable equipment purchased with the grant will continue to support the safe handling, assessment, and care of appropriate raptor patients and potential ambassador animals in the future.

Native Animal Rescue is deeply grateful to the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission for supporting this effort and for helping us provide the kestrel with the highest standard of care possible.

Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission Grant Report

WOLF School Student Salamander Study

WOLF School gratefully acknowledges the support of the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission for the Student Salamander Study at Camp Monte Toyon. This grant supported improvements to our long-standing salamander monitoring program, which has engaged students in authentic scientific research and environmental stewardship since 1998.

Use of Grant Funds

Grant funds were utilized to support the objectives outlined in the original proposal.

Budget Item	Grant Funds Expended
Obtain, Cut, and Replace Wooden Salamander Cover Boards	\$500
Buy & Place Cover Boards Labeling survey Flags for Salamander Sites	\$50
Staff Wages for Updating Survey Sites and Reviewing Protocols	\$900
Staff Training on Salamander Monitoring Protocols	\$2,760
Total Grant Funds Expended	\$4210

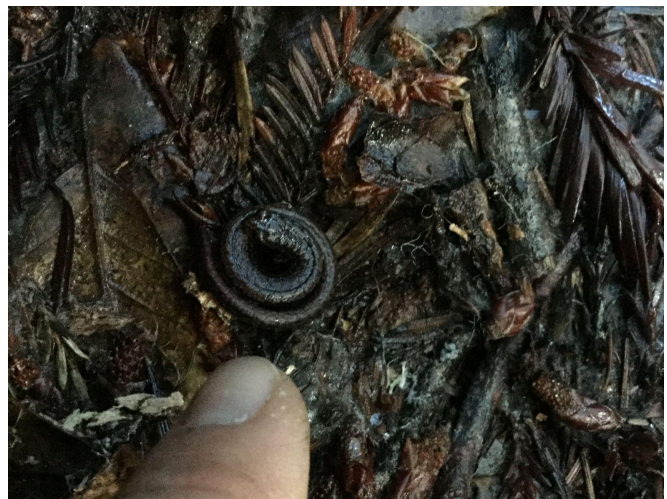
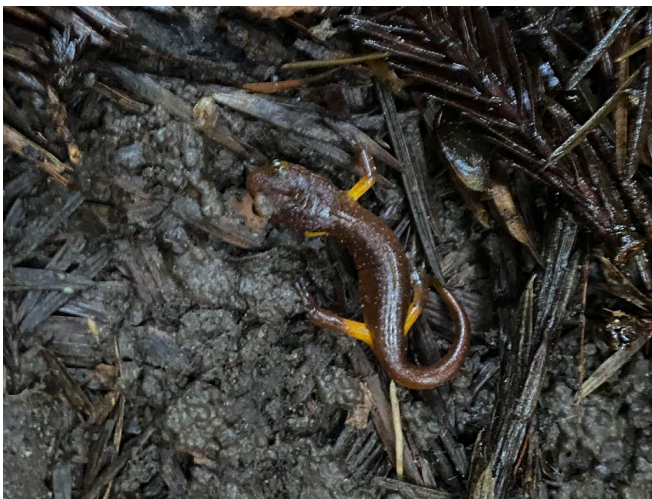
Matching contributions provided by WOLF School totaled approximately \$2,710 and included staff time, project coordination, curriculum updates, site maintenance, and educator training.

Project accomplishments include cutting and replacing cover boards, relocating 19 boards, installing 37 new survey markers, updating monitoring protocols, and training 23 staff members to deliver the study activity with their students. These improvements enhanced the quality and consistency of salamander monitoring, while ensuring students continue to participate in meaningful field-based scientific investigations when they visit Camp Monte Toyon in Aptos.

From January to May, students from approximately 30 schools participated in salamander monitoring activities and assisted in assembling information and data for the Monte Toyon data project. This included training students, staff, neighbors, and volunteers about local amphibian species, forest ecosystem health, and conservation, while collecting the study's scientific data. Monitoring efforts during this time included 28 actual surveys and documented 24 *Ensatina* Salamanders, 50 Slender Salamanders, 2 Arboreal Salamanders, and 1 Giant Salamander, along with observations of other forest organisms.

The project successfully met its goals of assisting gain more knowledge of local species and forest health through improving our salamander monitoring project's infrastructure and protocols, supporting long-term ecological data collection about the Monte Toyon area of Aptos, and providing hands-on environmental education opportunities. The updated study sites and well trained staff will continue to monitor the Monte Toyon study areas and teach ongoing groups of youth about stewardship, forest health, how to approach work in science, and will contribute to ongoing amphibian monitoring efforts.

WOLF School greatly appreciates the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission's investment in supporting the WOLF School at Monte Toyon Salamander Study and in wildlife conservation and environmental education in general. The improvements made because of this grant will continue to support student learning and local forest stewardship for years to come.



From: [Jane Orbuch](#)
To: [Sean Abbey](#)
Subject: Ospreys
Date: Sunday, July 19, 2026 12:30:39 PM
Attachments: [Pasted Graphic 2.png](#)
[becky-071526-2.png](#)

******CAUTION:** This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Howdy Sean,

Hope all is well with you and family.

Was reading Bratton on line today and Becky. Steinbrunner talked about PGE disturbance to nesting ospreys. See story below.

Do you know anything about this?

Did know you were on Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission-cool!

Thanks,

Jane Orbuch
Bird Club Conservation Officer and resident

PG&E UPGRADES AT GREEN VALLEY SUBSTATION REQUIRED NO ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW.
<https://brattononline.com>

PG&E plans to do major upgrades at the substation near 90 Minto Road in Watsonville that will increase the amount of power flowing into and out of our County. The work includes replacing many utility poles with larger ones, and increasing the capacity of the Green Valley Substation itself to handle greater loads.

According to Mr. Mike Medeiros, VP of Project Development for Transmission Infrastructure and Substations for PG&E, the upgrades are necessary because power demands are expected to double in the next 10 years. Other infrastructure work is also happening in the San Jose area, and are tied into the Green Valley Substation work. That project includes adding new large towers, and required environmental review.

However, because all this work in Watsonville is considered an “upgrade” of existing infrastructure, it required no environmental review.

Several wooden poles along Minto Road were replaced with much larger ones. Because Minto Road is so narrow and the new poles so large, PG&E had to lower them in to the site via helicopter. Reportedly, PG&E also used drones to observe the work site.

What about the active Osprey nest with three chicks located on top of the cell tower within the substation? Local residents were horrified to watch the frantic birds trying to protect the young in their nest as the drones and helicopters were buzzing about. Residents were extremely worried about the safety of the Ospreys.

The Osprey is fully protected under both the federal Migratory Bird Act and state laws Section 3503 and 3503.5 of the California Fish and Game Code.

The Osprey is listed as a "Species of Special Concern" and therefore merits close monitoring by CDFW.

Contact California Dept. of Wildlife Enforcement to ask if PG&E requested any biologists to observe the impacts of the intense aircraft activity on the active Osprey nest at the Green Valley Substation work last month? Will the Dept. of Wildlife monitor other Green Valley Substation upgrade work?

Santa Cruz area enforcement:

Wesley Stokes <wesley.stokes@wildlife.ca.gov>

Marilyn Culpepper <marilyn.culpepper@wildlife.ca.gov>

State Chief and Deputy Chief of Enforcement:

Nathaniel Arnold <nathaniel.arnold@wildlife.ca.gov>

Erica Manes <erica.manes@wildlife.ca.gov>

715 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

Mailing: P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

(916) 445-0411

Also, write to the Santa Cruz County Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission and ask that they investigate the issue:

Sean Abbey<sean.abbey@santacruzcountyca.gov>





County of Santa Cruz

Health Services Agency – Environmental Health

Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission

(831) 454-2022 TDD/TTY – Call 711 <http://www.sccceh.org>



Public Grants Program Fiscal Year 2025–26 Summary

September 3, 2026

At the March FWAC Meeting, commissioners voted to pause the Public Grants Program (PGP) for 2026 but approved a budget of \$10,000 for emergency requests. Following two years of negative revenue, Fiscal Year (FY) 2025–26 appeared likely to have exceptionally low revenue, which would have reduced the Grant Trust Fund (Fund) to below \$15,000. However, between March and the end of June, six (6) settlements were deposited in the Fund, which resulted in a significantly positive revenue year.

Fiscal Year	Expenditures and Revenue	Reserve Fund Total
Start of 2025–26		\$30,470
	2025 PGP Grant allocations	- \$20,000
	CDFW Fines	+ \$2,178
	Interest on the Fund	+ \$733
	Settlement – 20CV00152, Payment 2	+ \$10,000
	Settlement – 20CV00918	+ \$10,000
	Settlement – 22CV02179	+ \$3,000
	Settlement – 23CV01791	+ \$1,000
	Settlement – 23CV00644	+ \$800
	Settlement – 20CV00152, Payment 1	+ \$5,000
	Settlement – 19200925	+ \$5,000
End of 2025–26		\$48,181

In response to this unnecessary pause, staff are proposing four recommendations:

1. **Remove the pause for the 2026 PGP** and request proposals for a total of \$10,000.
2. Always budget \$25,000 when the Fund balance exceeds \$50,000
3. Always budget \$20,000 if the Fund balance would not drop below \$5,000.
4. At each September meeting, Commissioners will receive a previous FY summary report. Should the Grant Trust Fund balance be low, Commissioners could vote to issue less funding than originally budgeted.



County of Santa Cruz

Health Services Agency – Environmental Health



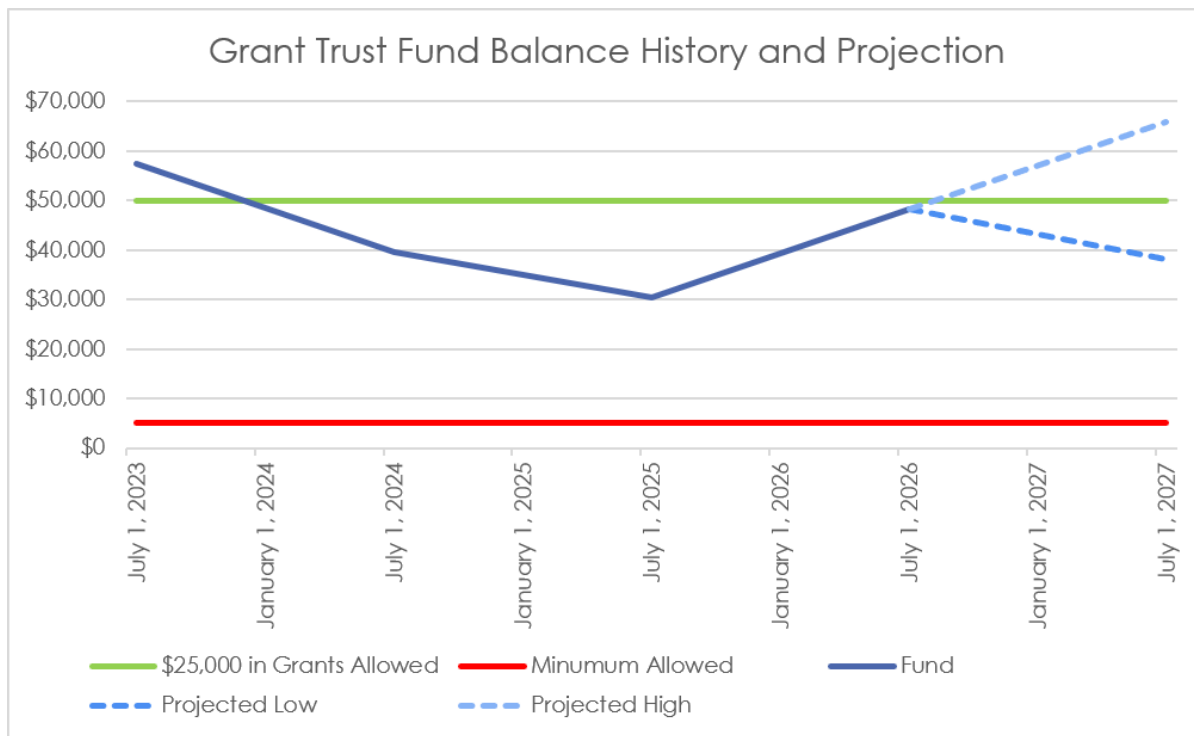
Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission

(831) 454-2022 TDD/TTY – Call 711 <http://www.sccceh.org>

For FY 2026–27, the Fund starts with \$48,181 and will have \$10,000 available for the 2026 Grants, should commissioners vote to end the pause. Being below the \$50,000 cut off, the budget for 2027 Grants will be automatically set at \$20,000.

Should no revenue be collected in FY 2026–27, the Fund would be reduced to \$38,181. Should the Fund receive revenues equal to FY 2025–26, the best of the last three (3) FYs, then the fund would increase to \$65,892.

These projections, and the historical Fund balances, are shown in the graph below.





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2026-27 NOTICE OF AVAILABLE GRANT FUNDING

The Santa Cruz County Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission (FWAC) is soliciting applications for its Public Grants Program. Grants are funded by fines and settlements collected for violations of California Fish and Game laws within Santa Cruz County. There is a **total of \$10,000 available** for this year's grants program. All requested amounts will be considered.

FUNDING PRIORITIES:

- Benefits native fish and wildlife and habitat.
- Education programs for school age children related to fish and wildlife
- Scientific research conducted by qualified individuals (*requires CDFW approval*)
- Support of California Fish and Wildlife related law enforcement.

SELECTION CRITERIA: The highest consideration will be given to projects which:

- Are highly rated by Commissioner Score Sheet metrics (Appendix 1)
- Complies with [Fish and Game Code 13103](#) (Appendix 2)
- Proposals may include funding for labor costs.

SCORING PROCESS: Each proposal will be scored by all commissioners. Commissioner scores will then be averaged, and the proposals will be ranked by the average points scored. Starting with the highest ranked proposals, the commission will decide to fully fund, partially fund or not fund each proposal.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

1. Individuals, organizations, and agencies can apply using the application forms on this webpage: [Fish & Wildlife Advisory Commission \(scceh.org\)](http://www.scceh.org). Please note, individuals should have an affiliation with an organization to receive funding.
2. Additional documentation can be included with the application forms; however, the document length should be kept to 8 pages or less. We encourage concise grant proposals, but budget information is required.
3. Application forms must be received by Friday, October 23, 2026, as an electronic file to FWAC@santacruzcountyca.gov. Hardcopy applications will be accepted, but electronic applications are preferred.
4. Grant applications will be reviewed by the FWAC at their November 5, 2026, meeting. The meeting will be at 6:30pm and applicants are encouraged to attend and summarize their proposal in a short presentation (not to exceed 5 minutes in length).
5. Final selection is scheduled for the December 3, 2026, FWAC meeting

Appendix 1:
Commissioner Score Sheet

PROPOSAL		TOTAL SCORE	
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Annual Work Plan Goal: Habitat Restoration 3 points

Proposal's primary goal is related to riparian conservation	3 points	
There are proposal components related to riparian conservation	1-2 point	
Proposal does not address riparian conservation	0 points	
SCORE 1		

Benefits native species and habitats through a project, education, or enforcement: 12 points

Proposal provides a clear benefit to native species and habitats through a project, education, or enforcement	8-12 points	
Proposal provides some benefit to native species and habitats	4-7 points	
Proposal provides limited benefit to native species and habitats	1-3 points	
Proposal does not benefit native species or habitats	0 points	
SCORE 2		

Cost Effectiveness: 3 points

Proposal is a good value and provides a good cost/benefit ratio	3 points	
Proposal provides moderate cost/benefit ratio	1-2 point	
Proposal has a high cost for the benefits and/or does not have funding for the complete project secured:	0 points	
SCORE 3		

Benefit to the Santa Cruz Community: 2 points

Proposal will benefit a Santa Cruz County community or habitat	1-2 point	
Proposal will not benefit a Santa Cruz County community or habitat	0 points	
SCORE 4		

Expected Project Success: 3 points

Applicant has a record of successful projects, or a new applicant presents a solid foundation for success	3 points	
Applicant has a mixed record for success on past projects or a new applicant does not provide evidence for potential success	1-2 point	
Applicant has had multiple unsuccessful projects or has failed to provide an update on the past year's project	0 points	
SCORE 5		

Appendix 2:
FISH AND GAME CODE: SECTION 13103

Expenditures from the fish and wildlife propagation fund of any county may be made only for the following purposes:

- a) Public education relating to the scientific principles of fish and wildlife conservation, consisting of supervised formal instruction carried out pursuant to a planned curriculum and aids to education such as literature, audio and video recordings, training models, and nature study facilities.
- b) Temporary emergency treatment and care of injured or orphaned wildlife.
- c) Temporary treatment and care of wildlife confiscated by the department as evidence.
- d) Breeding, raising, purchasing, or releasing fish or wildlife which are to be released upon approval of the department pursuant to Sections [6400](#) and [6401](#) onto land or into waters of local, state, or federal agencies or onto land or into waters open to the public.
- e) Improvement of fish and wildlife habitat, including, but not limited to, construction of fish screens, weirs, and ladders; drainage or other watershed improvements; gravel and rock removal or placement; construction of irrigation and water distribution systems; earthwork and grading; fencing; planting trees and other vegetation management; and removal of barriers to the migration of fish and wildlife.
- f) Construction, maintenance, and operation of public hatchery facilities.
- g) Purchase and maintain materials, supplies, or equipment for either the department's ownership and use or the department's use in the normal performance of the department's responsibilities.
- h) Predator control actions for the benefit of fish or wildlife following certification in writing by the department that the proposed actions will significantly benefit a particular wildlife species.
- i) Scientific fish and wildlife research conducted by institutions of higher learning, qualified researchers, or governmental agencies, if approved by the department.
- j) Reasonable administrative costs, excluding the costs of audits required by [Section 13104](#), for secretarial service, travel, and postage by the county fish and wildlife commission when authorized by the county board of supervisors. For purposes of this subdivision, "reasonable cost" means an amount which does not exceed 3 percent of the average amount received by the fund during the previous three-year period, or three thousand dollars (\$3,000) annually, whichever is greater, excluding any funds carried over from a previous fiscal year.
- k) Contributions to a secret witness program for the purpose of facilitating enforcement of this code and regulations adopted pursuant to this code.
- l) Costs incurred by the district attorney or city attorney in investigating and prosecuting civil and criminal actions for violations of this code, as approved by the department.
- m) Other expenditures, approved by the department, for the purpose of protecting, conserving, propagating, and preserving fish and wildlife.