

WHALE TAIL® GRANTS PROGRAM

ANNUAL REPORT Fiscal Year 2024-2025



Figure 1: Enjoying the Klamath River with *Healing Waters Wilderness Adventures*

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Figure 2: Coastal Watershed Council’s River Stewards program participants smile after caring for the Santa Cruz Riverwalk.

Photos in this report highlight FY 2024/25 WHALE TAIL® Grant projects.

BACKGROUND

The WHALE TAIL® Grants Program started in 1998, after the new WHALE TAIL® License Plate established a funding source for education and stewardship. For the last 27 years, the Coastal Commission's WHALE TAIL® Grants have supported experiential education and stewardship of the California coast and its watersheds, with an emphasis on engaging communities that have less access to such opportunities due to systemic and geographic barriers.

This report presents an overview of recent efforts to advance accessibility and inclusivity for the WHALE TAIL® Grants Program, with a focus on the Fiscal Year 2024/25 grants round, with additional analysis of the Fiscal Year 2023/24 grant cohort's experience after one year of grant management.

This report is an appendix to the Public Education Program's annual report for 2025.



Figure 3: *Oakland International High School* students bike along the coast.

The 2024/25 WHALE TAIL® Grants round was one of the largest in the program's history in terms of funding available and grants awarded. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2021/22 California State budget allocated \$10 million of General Fund local assistance to the Commission for WHALE TAIL® Grants, which must be encumbered by the end of FY 2025. This General Fund allocation has greatly expanded the reach of the grant program. Long-term funding for WHALE TAIL® Grants comes from

WHALE TAIL® License Plate sales and renewal fees, and the Protect Our Coast and Oceans “check box” on the California State tax form, which allows tax filers to contribute directly to support WHALE TAIL® Grants. In total from 1998 to 2025, the WHALE TAIL® program has distributed \$25.5 million to 1,074 grants.

WHALE TAIL® Grants must relate to the coast and ocean and fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Youth education programs
- Programs for educating the general public or adults
- Climate change education and stewardship
- Shoreline cleanup and enhancement programs with community involvement

Entities eligible to receive WHALE TAIL® Grants are non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations, projects of a non-profit fiscal sponsor, schools or districts, Federally Recognized Tribes and other California Native American Tribes as defined by Governor's Executive Order B-10-11, and other government entities. Grant projects must engage audiences in California and can take place anywhere in California.



Figure 4: Participants catch a wave on a Soul Surfer program with *Salted Roots*. Photo credit: Arielle Robles

FISCAL YEAR 2024/25 GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

Commission staff conducted an extensive review of the entire WHALE TAIL® cycle in 2021, including the application and guidelines, how outreach is conducted, the experience for grant applicants in terms of getting needed information and providing feedback, and the internal process for selecting proposals. Staff continued these efforts into FY 2024/25. The ongoing goal is to find new ways to increase accessibility and inclusivity, address unnecessary burdens on applicants, and better align with program goals overall.

Staff sent an anonymous survey to FY 2023/24 grant round applicants for feedback on the application materials and submission process. Of the 219 applicants, 79 completed the survey. These respondents' suggestions, as well as staff experiences and ongoing grantee feedback, provided the basis for revisions to the FY 2024-25 [application](#) and [guidelines](#). Revisions included breaking the scoring criteria into finer point groupings, providing more examples of previously funded projects in the guidelines document, rearranging some of the questions for a more logical order, breaking down multi-part questions into bullet points, creating a simplified document for applicants to type in their responses to the application questions, and emphasizing that applicants can submit the required information in their own formatting and need not use the provided forms if they have any trouble with them.



Figure 5: Grant Union High School students meet a banana slug on a trip with *Sacramento Inspiring Connections Outdoors*

Outreach

Outreach for the FY 2024/25 competitive grants' deadline of November 4, 2024 began in late summer. Much of the promotion was via email, with outreach to hundreds of organizations throughout the state, including the following:

- California Native American Tribes as identified by the Native American Heritage Commission
- American Indian Education Centers
- California schools, from pre-k through adult as identified by California Department of Education
- California public libraries

- Community centers
- After-school/outside-of-school programs
- Service clubs for adults and youth
- Local governments and park districts
- Community colleges in urban and rural regions
- Hundreds of other organizations that work on issues of environmental justice, conservation, outdoor access, and education, collected through staff programs and research, as well as listservs relating to those topics.

The grant announcement was sent to 51,600 subscribers on the Coastal Commission’s email lists and to approximately 1,300 people who subscribed to receive updates specifically about the WHALE TAIL® Grants. Coastal Commission social media accounts were used to promote the grant opportunity and share grant-funded programming successes of current grant-recipients. The WHALE TAIL® Grant is kept updated on the California State Library’s [California Grants Portal](#), a comprehensive online database of California government grant opportunities, reaching those seeking funding who might not otherwise be aware of the California Coastal Commission.



Figure 6: An intern with the *Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy* shares their project at a farmer’s market.

On September 12, 2024, staff led a webinar for prospective grant applicants to walk through the application process. This pre-application webinar has been a practice since 2017. The presentation assumed no prior knowledge and included substantial time for participants to ask questions. The video, presentation slides, and presenter script were posted on the WHALE TAIL® Grants webpage. 131 people attended the webinar and the presentation video was viewed 225 times.

The WHALE TAIL® Grants [webpage](#) includes a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section with responses to common questions about the grant program and application process, and prospective applicants are encouraged via the webpage and other grant outreach to contact staff directly to ask questions. Throughout September, October, and up until the deadline on November 4, 2024, Public Education staff were available for and engaged in frequent conversations with prospective grant applicants, explaining the grant priorities, clarifying application questions, and guiding them through the process. During this time, staff conducted 85 consultations with 80 different organizations, by phone, email, and video conference. Of these 80 organizations, 50 followed through to submit a grant proposal, 14 of which were funded. This is a funding rate of 28% compared to an 18% rate of funding in the total pool of applicants.

Staff received 299 grant proposals for the FY 2024/25 WHALE TAIL® Grants cycle, the highest number of proposals ever received. As in the previous year, applicants were invited to complete an anonymous survey on their application experience. **Out of 100 responses, 97% agreed or strongly agreed that the application questions were clear and easy to understand, and 98% agreed or strongly agreed that the submission process was clear and easy to do.** Many respondents praised the application process and the support provided to applicants.

Suggestions for improvement were incorporated into the FY 2025/26 cycle, such as:

- changing and reorganizing layouts for readability
- adding more detailed language for clarity
- rearranging application questions to better reflect the flow of the scoring criteria

“The...guidelines were very clear as well as the form and budget calculator. The Whale [Tail] Team felt approachable and the whole thing was as enjoyable as writing a grant can be. Or more so!”

“Overall, I find the Whale Tail application process to be one of the most flexible and clearly delineated grant programs to which our organization applies.”



Figure 7: Save California Salmon with Orleans Elementary during a trip to Wedding Rock.

Were the APPLICATION QUESTIONS clear and easy to understand?

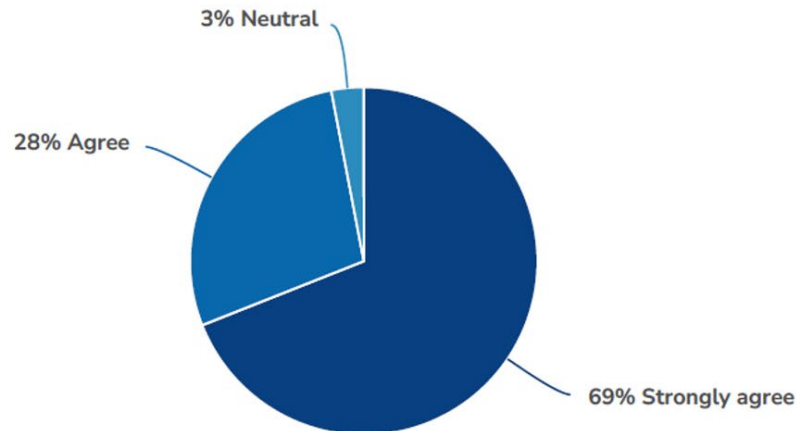


Figure 8: 69% strongly agree application questions were clear and easy to understand, 28% agree, 3% are neutral.

Was the process for SUBMITTING your proposal clear and easy to do?

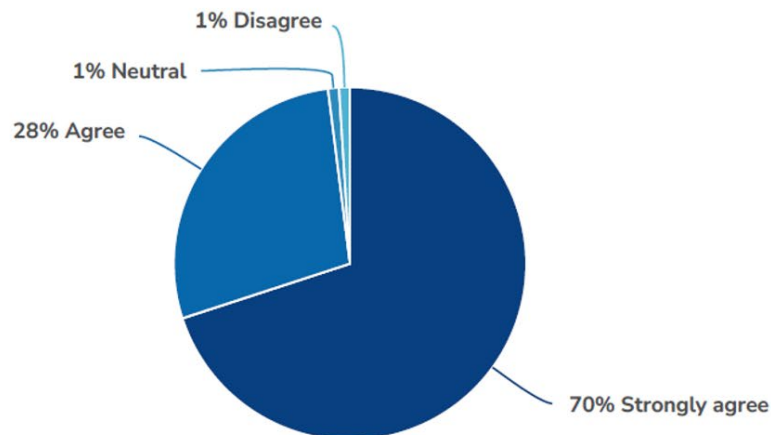


Figure 9: 70% strongly agree the submission process was clear and easy, 28% agree, 1% neutral, and 1% disagree.

Selection Criteria and Accepted Proposals

Out of the 299 proposals requesting a total of \$11.4 million, there were 53 proposals approved for funding, totaling \$1,749,305. Selection criteria included educational and environmental impact, engagement of communities that have historically received fewer marine education and stewardship opportunities, and value of the project to the community being engaged. The scoring criteria is included in [Appendix A](#). Organizations were notified in February 2025 and all grant agreements were signed by June 15, 2025. With a maximum grant of \$50,000 and a small grants category of \$25,000 or less, 43.4% of recommended grants were small grants. Approximately 14,486 direct participants are anticipated in the implementation of the 53 projects. Brief descriptions of the 53 grant projects are in [Appendix B](#).

FY 2024/2025 GRANTEES AT A GLANCE

Total number of grants: 53

Participants directly engaged (anticipated): 14,486

Projects by County

Some grant projects engage communities in one county, some in more than one county. Below lists the number of projects engaging communities in each county (or region, when there is dispersed outreach for a project).

- Statewide - 1
- Northern California - 1
- Alameda County – 7
- Contra Costa County - 5
- Del Norte County – 1
- Glenn County - 1
- Humboldt County – 3
- Kern County – 1
- Los Angeles County – 10
- Madera County – 2
- Marin County – 1
- Mendocino County - 2
- Monterey County – 3
- Napa County – 1
- Riverside County - 1
- Sacramento County – 2
- San Benito County – 1
- San Diego County – 7
- San Francisco County - 4
- San Luis Obispo County - 3
- San Mateo County - 3
- Santa Barbara County - 1
- Santa Cruz County – 1
- Shasta County – 1
- Siskiyou County – 2
- Solano County – 1
- Sonoma County – 3
- Trinity County – 1
- Tulare County – 2
- Ventura County – 2



Figure 10: Projects will engage communities in counties shaded in blue. 1 statewide project and 1 Northern California region project are not included in this map.

Projects engaging Inland Communities: 15

Projects engaging a Designated Rural Region: 13

Types of Grantee Organizations

- Local Education Agency (school, district, county office of education) - 6
- College/University - 1
- Government entity - 2
- Nonprofit 501(c)(3) – 44
 - Project of a nonprofit fiscal sponsor - 7

Size of nonprofits funded, based on annual organizational budget:

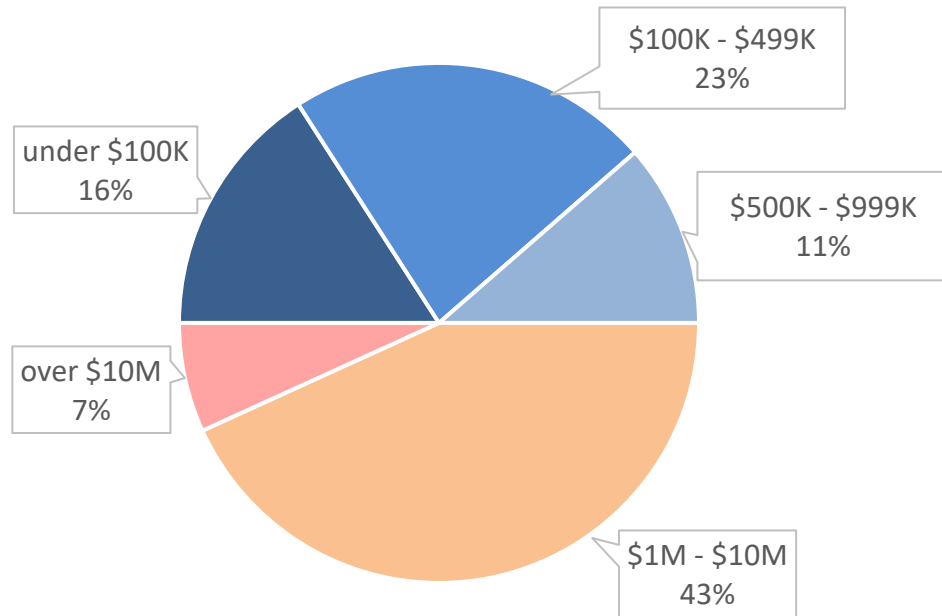


Figure 11: 16% under \$100K, 23% \$100K–\$499K, 11% \$500K–\$999K, 43% \$1M–\$10M, 7% over \$10M

GRANT MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Advancing accessibility and supporting grantees is a priority in the ongoing administration of the approved WHALE TAIL® Grants. The following section discusses efforts made by staff during the grant cycle to support grantees, from providing many opportunities to ask questions, to reducing reporting burdens and offering capacity building trainings.

New Grantee Orientation Meetings

Two introductory online meetings were held in April 2024 for new grant recipients to go over the contracting process, invoicing procedures, and reporting, as well as to reinforce a relationship that welcomes questions and fosters ongoing communication in both directions.

Progress Reporting

Staff offers grantees the option to submit progress reports as a conversation rather than as a written document. In addition to a check-in on compliance with grant scope and timeline, these conversations are an opportunity to work through any challenges, share successes, and ask for assistance if needed. The Grant Manager files their notes from the conversation. A written submission is required for final grant reports.

“Providing an opportunity to submit mid-year reports virtually/verbally...made it way more meaningful for us to be able to talk about what we have been up to regarding the grant.”

Capacity Building Trainings and Coaching

Through a targeted grant to [Justice Outside](#), the Coastal Commission funded capacity building trainings for the FY 2024/25 WHALE TAIL® Grant recipients. Trainings have been available to each cohort of grant recipients since FY 2017/18. Justice Outside conducted a brief survey of the grantees’ interests and needs and offered three, 3-hour online workshops (Foundational Courses) and two, 90-minute online group discussions (Learning Labs) based on the responses. The following training topics were offered:

- Equity centered curriculum and program development (Foundational Course & Learning Lab)
- Program evaluation and impact assessment (Foundational Course)
- Justice Centered Marketing & Communications (Foundational Course)
- Ethical and Human Centered Storytelling (Learning Lab)

Stipends were distributed to the grantees that participated in these optional trainings. Twenty-five grantee organizations participated in at least one of the training sessions.

“I felt the community in the session was very inclusive and supportive. The information was new to me and kept me engaged, giving me a lot to bring back to my organization.”

Grantee Networking Event

A pilot grantee networking event was organized on October 9, 2024, to provide a space for organizations to learn from and connect with each other. Grant recipients from FY 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 were invited, with 55 individuals participating. Because of the positive feedback from the pilot event, another networking event is planned for November 13, 2025. As of October 8, 2025, 34 people have registered for the event, which will have breakout sessions based on participant interest.



Figure 12: Participants gather for fun, community, and connection at *Black Surfers Collective's* Pan-African Beach Day.

SURVEY OF GRANT MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE – FY 2023/2024

One year after their grants were issued, FY 2023/24 grantees were surveyed for feedback and suggestions for improvement. There were 44 respondents total. Of the 34 who were involved in the contract preparation and signing process, 94% said that support they received during contract initiation was clear. 86% said that support they received for invoicing and reporting was clear; and 98% said that over the course of their grant their Grant Manager was very available to them. In response to invoicing and reporting feedback, staff created additional resources, including Excel versions of the invoice template, a template for documenting participant stipends, and a list of progress report questions. Staff will continue to refine and improve the resources available for grantees based on ongoing feedback.

“[Staff were] extremely helpful and responsive. Applying for government grants can be intimidating for small grassroots organizations, and you all have made the whole process very easy for us to apply and invoice without it affecting our operations...You all have perfected the process to include every organization both big and small.”

“The clear communication and quick responses have been extremely helpful... I also appreciate that our grant managers are able to answer questions regarding our specific grant quickly and with an understanding of our specific grant’s purpose and goals.”

CONCLUSION

A key element of the WHALE TAIL® Grants program is a focus on reaching communities that face barriers accessing marine education and stewardship opportunities. Each year, staff systematically review grant processes and implement improvements to further this goal. Recent changes include modifications to the application materials and selection criteria, increased outreach, and development of more resources and methods of support for grant recipients. These changes, and the generous General Fund allocation in FY 2021, have supported implementation of more accessible coastal and marine education programs and increased the grant program's reach and impact throughout California.

Looking forward to the FY 2025/26 grant cycle, an overarching goal remains to remove barriers and create a program that is accessible and welcoming to a wide range of entities, including those without deep organizational resources or prior experience with government grants. The [California Ocean Protection Council](#) has generously approved \$2 million in funding for the FY 2025/26 grant cycle. This includes approximately \$1,000,000 for a dedicated Tribal Set-Aside and approximately \$1,000,000 for general pool grants to support projects that expand coastal access, education, cultural practices, stewardship, and resilience. The WHALE TAIL® Grants program will also offer an advance payment option to non-profit and tribal grantees for the first time, which has been long requested from grantees. Coastal Commission staff are committed to continually improving the program and are honored to manage the WHALE TAIL® Grants Program for the people of California.



Figure 13: Oceanside middle school students head to the waves with *Un Mar de Colores*

Appendix A: FY 2024/2025 Whale Tail® Grant Scoring Criteria

CRITERIA FOR SELECTING GRANT RECIPIENTS

Scoring Criteria	Points
Educational Impact and/or Environmental Improvement	25
Audience	15
Project Concept • Purpose (10 points) • Relevant and Creative (10 points) • Continuing, Building Capacity, or Creating Tools for Others (5 points) • Reasonable Cost (5 points)	30
Proposal Content and Project Implementation • Organization and Staffing (10 points) • Project Clarity, Feasibility, and Completeness (15 points) • Tracking and Assessment (5 points)	30
Total Points Possible	100

Appendix B: Whale Tail® Grant Awards for FY 2024/2025

1. American Canyon Community & Parks Foundation, \$49,917

Project Title: Stream to Sea: Napa Watershed Education Initiative

Engaging Communities in: American Canyon, Napa County

Napa Valley Unified School District elementary students will engage in a watershed education program with in-class learning and field trips to the local wetlands for nature study and ecological restoration. An EV shuttle will be purchased to enhance trail access for disabled students.

2. Audubon California, \$48,286

Project Title: Coastal Leadership Program

Engaging Communities in: Los Angeles County

A cohort of students and early professionals will engage in a 6-month education and leadership program including field trips to coastal sites, guest speakers in coastal and marine careers, and a capstone project.

3. Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians / Committees for Land, Air, Water and Species, \$32,480

Project Title: Ikmen – Waves of Connection: Deepening our Relationship with Ocean, Community and Homeland

Engaging Communities in: Santa Barbara and Goleta

Coastal place-based, culturally responsive programming for Barbareño Chumash community members will include Chumash storytelling, traditional food practices, cultural history sharing, sacred site visits, and tule boat making and racing.

4. BIPOC Support Foundation, \$48,940

Project Title: From Your Neighborhood to the Coast: "Voices of Change"

Engaging Communities in: Escondido and San Marcos

An 8-week summer program will engage middle and high school students in hands-on environmental education, coastal field trips, and media production as they collaborate with professional mentors and local artists to create environmental art installations and a documentary about local environmental issues.

5. Black Surfers Collective, \$34,900

Project Title: Surf to Stewardship: Connecting Communities with the Coast

Engaging Communities in: Los Angeles

Youth will enjoy free surf lessons incorporating environmental education, Pan African Beach Days will take place twice monthly during summer and early fall, and Nick Gabaldón Day in Santa Monica will honor one of California's first known Black surfers.

6. BORP Adaptive Sports & Recreation, \$19,800

Project Title: Adaptive Kayaking Environmental Day Trips

Engaging Communities in: Alameda and Contra Costa Counties

Six kayak day trips, including on-the-water environmental education about natural and cultural history, will engage people with disabilities.

7. California Indian Museum and Cultural Center, \$50,000

Project Title: Tribal Youth Ambassadors: Being with Bears on the Coast

Engaging Communities in: Sonoma County

Tribal Culture Bearers and a wildlife ecologist will educate Native American youth about black bears in coastal and riparian zones, and the intersection of first foods and bear foods, through hands-on ecological stewardship and cultural arts activities, field trips, and a camping trip.

8. Center for ArtEsteem, \$50,000

Project Title: Waterways Exploration from the Mountains to the Coast

Engaging Communities in: East and West Oakland

A six-month program will engage 7th-12th grade youth in experiential education about protecting California's waterways and coastal and ocean ecosystems through classroom lessons and a week-long trip from the foothills to the Pacific Ocean, while connecting with Indigenous land stewards and water protectors.

9. Central Coast Aquarium, \$6,049

Project Title: Sea2School

Engaging Communities in: Nipomo

A new program will provide 6th grade students with four in-class lessons on ocean literacy and environmental stewardship and a field trip to Hazard Canyon Reef in Monaña de Oro State Park for exploration and biodiversity data collection.

10. City of Redding, \$50,000

Project Title: From Land to Sea: The Pathways of our Water

Engaging Communities in: Redding

The City's Martin Luther King Jr. Center will host a six-week summer camp to engage elementary-age youth in the interconnectedness of the Sacramento River and the Pacific Ocean through an art curriculum and weekly field trips.

11. Coastal Watershed Council, \$50,000

Project Title: River Stewards Program

Engaging Communities in: Santa Cruz

People experiencing homelessness will be offered weekly environmental education, stewardship opportunities, and services via a partnership with Downtown Streets Team. Training will emphasize plant and wildlife identification, stewardship principles related to habitat, and plant care as team members remove debris and invasive species, plant new native species, weed, water, and engage in other activities along the San Lorenzo River.

12. Crossing the Channel for Cause, \$20,000

Project Title: Santa Paula to the Sea

Engaging Communities in: Santa Paula

Middle grade classes will learn about the biodiversity and stewardship of the Santa Barbara Channel through a trip to Santa Cruz Island, a harbor cleanup, monitoring of sandy beach habitats, on-campus

weather and trash surveys, a student bike repair program, and community outreach campaigns during a year-long program.

13. Earth Team, \$49,742

Project Title: Blue Ocean Internship 2025: Balancing Health & Wealth of the Ocean

Engaging Communities in: San Pablo, Richmond, Oakland

High school students will take part in a year-long ocean health project, including plastic pollution data collection, multiple field trips, campus awareness campaigns, and learning about the Coastal Act and how to participate in Coastal Commission hearings via public comment.

14. Eel River Watershed Improvement Group, \$7,789

Project Title: Creek Days Environmental Education Fair

Engaging Communities in: Humboldt County

A multiday environmental education fair will host over 300 students with redwood tours, educational booths on coastal watersheds and redwood forest habitats, and an ecological restoration project.

15. EGE Foundation, \$16,300

Project Title: EGE Out! Natural Resource Education Program

Engaging Communities in: Oak Park and Del Paso Heights in Sacramento County

A weekly afterschool program will engage students over three months as they explore STEAM careers, coastal and marine habitats, nonpoint source pollution, and coastal stewardship, including field trips to the beach, the Delta, and a local sustainable farm.

16. Elkhorn Slough Foundation, \$46,313

Project Title: Water Stories: Building Connections with Elkhorn Slough through Natural Dyes and Intergenerational Interviews

Engaging Communities in: Las Lomas, Seaside, and Arvin

Fourth and fifth graders from Las Lomas, undergraduate environmental science students from CSU Monterey Bay, and elder members of an Arvin art collective will contribute to this project to collect and communicate intergenerational “water stories” through interviews, art exhibits, and natural textile dyes, and an investigation of the response of natural dye colors to local water pollutants.

17. EmpowHer Institute, \$46,308

Project Title: Social Justice STEAM Camp

Engaging Communities in: Los Angeles County

A five-week, two-session summer program for girls of color will include coding projects focused on climate justice, community resilience, and environmental stewardship, a week on Catalina Island, and opportunities to gain PADI Scuba diving and ASA 101 Keelboat Sailing certifications.

18. Five Keys Schools and Programs, \$39,695

Project Title: Five Keys' Coastal Connections

Engaging Communities in: San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles County

Transition-aged and adult high school students will learn about marine science in a new curriculum unit, and participate in six interpretive and stewardship events such as beach exploration, aquarium visits, and naturalist-led walks.

19. Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, \$49,765

Project Title: Linking Individuals to Their Natural Communities

Engaging Communities in: San Francisco Bay Area

High school students will take part in a six-week leadership, service learning, and career development program about habitat restoration, environmental justice, and coastal exploration including kayaking and camping trips.

20. Groundwork San Diego-Chollas Creek, \$49,379

Project Title: Southeastern San Diego Coastal Explorers Camp

Engaging Communities in: Southeast San Diego

A coastal exploration day camp for elementary age youth will include field trips to an aquarium, estuaries, bays, and the coast to learn about oceanography, biodiversity, climate, and stewardship, while also taking part in fishing, kayaking, swimming, and boogie boarding.

21. Healing Waters Wilderness Adventures, \$12,441

Project Title: Immigrant Youth Wilderness Leadership Development & Empowerment

Engaging Communities in: San Bruno

High school English language learners will participate in a week-long watershed science and leadership development camp as they raft the Klamath River, leading to opportunities to train as river guides for future camps.

22. Latino Outdoors, \$8,800

Project Title: Connecting Latinos to Whales

Engaging Communities in: Wilmington, Los Angeles, San Diego

Community members will enjoy an English/Spanish whale watching boat tour experience.

23. Literacy for Environmental Justice, \$49,823

Project Title: Coast & Climate Eco-Adventures Program

Engaging Communities in: San Francisco

Youth will take part in outdoor field lessons on coastal ecology, coastal climate impacts, and climate adaptation strategies; will work to build climate-resilient Bayfront habitats at Candlestick Point State Recreation Area; and will connect with the marine environment through kayaking and fishing. Two shoreline cleanups will engage the local community.

24. Living Coast Discovery Center, \$20,000

Project Title: Coastal Climate Champions

Engaging Communities in: San Diego County

Middle school students will learn about climate science and stewardship with a focus on the San Diego region, will restore habitat at San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge, and communicate what they've learned to the rest of their school community.

25. Los Courage Camps, \$19,890

Project Title: Los Courage Summer Camps

Engaging Communities in: Los Angeles

Free summer surf camps will provide recreation, ocean education, and environmental stewardship for Los Angeles youth.

26. Monarch School Project, \$50,000

Project Title: Outdoor Equity Program for Unhoused Youth

Engaging Communities in: Barrio Logan in San Diego

Activities such as swim lessons, surfing, tidepooling, and fishing will be part of an environmental stewardship and ocean education curriculum engaging unhoused youth during a 12-month program.

27. Morro Coast Audubon Society, \$19,808

Project Title: Fostering Environmental Awareness Through High School Education and Research

Engaging Communities in: Nipomo and Paso Robles

High school students will experience at least 10 classroom sessions on coastal and marine ecosystems, go on at least 4 field trips to coastal sites, collect and sort debris from local beaches, and receive college application support.

28. Mujeres de la Tierra, \$20,000

Project Title: Vamos a la Playa

Engaging Communities in: Los Angeles

Families will receive education on water health and stewardship and enjoy a beach field trip.

29. North Fork Elementary School / Chawanakee Unified School District, \$17,900

Project Title: The Watershed Life Cycle

Engaging Communities in: North Fork and Bass Lake in Madera County

Seventh and eighth grade students will learn about watersheds, participate in a cleanup of Bass Lake, and attend a multi-night academic field trip to Catalina Island, followed by a student-led educational assembly for the rest of the school.

30. Oakland International High School / Oakland Public Education Fund, \$30,252

Project Title: Oakland Newcomer Immigrant Youth Coastal Exploration, Belonging, and Stewardship Program

Engaging Communities in: Oakland

High school students will take part in hands-on coastal ecology and fieldwork through coastal field trips, coastal camping trips, coastal cleanups, and community-wide outdoor education and community-building events, as well as through classwork that integrates language learning and ecology.

31. Pacific Islander Community Partnership – Bay Area, \$49,700

Project Title: Pacific Ocean Guardians Climate Justice Program

Engaging Communities in: San Francisco Bay Area

A six-month educational initiative for youth will focus on climate justice, sea-level rise, and ocean conservation, with hands-on workshops, coastal site visits, beach clean-ups, seafaring navigation and protection history of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, culminating in a youth-led Pacific Ocean Guardians Climate Justice Summit.

32. Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, \$20,000

Project Title: Student Naturalist Program for LAUSD Schools

Engaging Communities in: Los Angeles County

Third graders will take part in an in-depth coastal conservation education program in the classroom, culminating in a field trip to White Point Nature Preserve and Cabrillo Beach.

33. Point Molate Alliance / Blue Frontier, \$48,145

Project Title: Richmond Youth Leadership Program

Engaging Communities in: Richmond

Youth will be empowered to take leadership roles in coastal public education and park planning about East Bay Regional Park District's newest park, Point Molate, through workshops on topics including Ohlone history, eelgrass ecology, sea level rise and nature-based solutions, community science projects, public speaking and media training, as part of a six-week summer program.

34. Project Avary, \$50,000

Project Title: Equity, Access & Empowerment for Children with Incarcerated Parents

Engaging Communities in: Northern California

Children of incarcerated parents will enjoy weeklong residential camp at Point Reyes, overnight coastal retreats, and day programs that include activities such as surfing, kayaking, fishing, and tidepooling, with two Family Unity Days and an annual Family Camp on the coast.

35. Queer Surf / Green Cities Fund, \$50,000

Project Title: Project Ocean Access

Engaging Communities in: Los Angeles County

Scholarships will increase accessibility for low-income adults to single-day and overnight surf lessons and beach programs designed for sustained ocean belonging and connection.

36. Reef Check Foundation, \$49,806

Project Title: Dive into Science for North Coast Tribes

Engaging Communities in: Mendocino and Sonoma Counties

Northcoast region tribal members, ages 16 and above, will receive Open Water, Advanced, and Rescue SCUBA training and become eligible to be Reef Check Citizen Scientist Divers as they explore Traditional Ecological Knowledge, ancestral ties to the ocean, and MPA monitoring and management.

37. River Jim Learning Solutions, \$19,204

Project Title: Mountains to the Sea

Engaging Communities in: Willows in Glenn County

Middle school students will explore rivers and reservoirs during canoe and camping trips as they learn about the the Sacramento River watershed and their interconnectivity with the Pacific Ocean.

38. Sacramento - Inspiring Connections Outdoors / Sierra Club Foundation, \$20,000

Project Title: Three-Day Adventures at the Coast for Underserved Sacramento Youth

Engaging Communities in: Sacramento County

Youth and young adults will enjoy three-day outings at a coastal hostel, with exploration of marine habitats, hikes in coastal forests, and coastal wildlife observation.

39. Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples / Social and Environmental Entrepreneurs Inc., \$49,444

Project Title: Indigenous Youth Environmental Justice Program

Engaging Communities in: Riverside and Los Angeles

Indigenous youth will take part in workshops on coastal emergency preparedness; visit Chumash, Tongva, and Acjachemen lands for traditional games, Indigenous stories about marine life, and coastal stewardship discussions; screen films that explore Indigenous perspectives on marine issues; host beach cleanups and an Earth Day celebration; tour local MPAs; and take part in a six-week environmental education camp as part of this year-round program.

40. Salinas Community Science Workshop / Community Initiatives, \$10,278

Project Title: Salinas Students as Teachers of Our Shores

Engaging Communities in: Salinas

Middle school youth will take part in an overnight camping trip to Sunset State Beach and learn together about the physics, biology, chemistry and geology of the shore. This leadership group will then serve as guides and teachers for a day trip to the beach for families and other youth.

41. Salmon River Restoration Council, \$49,969

Project Title: Headwaters to Ocean Program

Engaging Communities in: Somes Bar & Orleans

Mid-Klamath region youth will explore the connection between the Klamath River and the coast through in-class lessons and a three-day coastal camping trip where they will learn from Yurok Tribal members and Cal Poly Humboldt Marine Lab naturalists, and will then present their learning at a watershed education fair in their community.

42. Salted Roots / Social Good Fund, \$49,723

Project Title: Soul Surfer Community Surf and Environmental Stewardship Programs

Engaging Communities in: Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, and San Mateo Counties

Youth and community members will develop ocean and surfing skills through a four-week summer camp and through community program days throughout the year. Other community events will focus on environmental stewardship with tidepooling, beach cleanups, and ecological restoration.

43. San Diego Children and Nature, \$37,018

Project Title: Promoting Coastal Health by Engaging Teachers in Watershed Exploration

Engaging Communities in: San Diego County

Over a period of nine months, a cohort of formal educators will visit and explore six local ecosystems, with a focus on ocean, climate, and watersheds, by directly engaging in science practices to increase environmental literacy and improve outdoor teaching techniques.

44. Save California Salmon, \$20,000

Project Title: North Coast Tribal Youth Environmental Education Program

Engaging Communities in: Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Siskiyou, and Trinity Counties

Northcoast tribal community members will enjoy an Indigenous Science camp at Sue-Meg State Park, Yurok Tribal members will enjoy a traditional Canoe Camp, and Northcoast schools will take part in field trips focused on dam removal impacts, estuaries, and tidepools.

45. Sweetwater Spectrum, \$3,678

Project Title: Sweetwater Spectrum Ecology Club

Engaging Communities in: Sonoma

Residents of an independent living community for autistic adults will take part in a series of environmental learning workshops with watershed art projects and film screenings, organize beach and creek cleanups, and enjoy educational hikes, nature observation, and other outdoor recreation activities.

46. Telesis Academy of Science and Math, \$5,100

Project Title: Aqua Adventures

Engaging Communities in: West Covina

TK-8th grade students and their families will experience the ocean through a family engagement night featuring hands-on activities, interactive demonstrations, and experiments related to marine biology, water conservation, and human impact on the California coast.

47. Un Mar De Colores, \$45,748

Project Title: Oceanside Ocean Stewards After School Program

Engaging Communities in: Oceanside

An 18-week, three-days-a-week afterschool program for middle school students will provide ocean-based environmental education and surf therapy experiences along with an introduction to multiple environmental career pathways and academic tutoring.

48. University Corporation at Monterey Bay, \$20,000

Project Title: Immersive VR Dive Curriculum for At-Risk Youth: Investing in Future Ocean Stewards

Engaging Communities in: Monterey and San Benito Counties

An immersive virtual reality dive curriculum and community science program studying the local offshore environment will engage youth in juvenile detention centers and court schools.

49. Valley Children's Hospital of Valley Children's Healthcare, \$20,000

Project Title: Diving Into Discovery: Marine Education and Stewardship for Foster Youth

Engaging Communities in: Tulare County

Youth in the foster care system and their Court Appointed Special Advocates will learn about the ocean through marine-themed crafts, lessons, and a virtual reality dive followed by a visit to Monterey Bay Aquarium and Pacific Grove tidepools.

50. Ventura County Resource Conservation District, \$49,165

Project Title: Ag Family Summer Program

Engaging Communities in: Oxnard and El Rio

Youth and parents from fieldworker households will enjoy field trips to Santa Cruz Island, Ventura Harbor, local tide pools, and beaches, fostering coastal stewardship and knowledge of coastal career paths.

51. Wild Wonder Foundation, \$14,750

Project Title: Watershed: Learning That Flows From Nature

Engaging Communities in: Plumas County

Sixth graders will take a four-day trip from the mountains to the Pacific, following the path of water through the watershed. A documentary film will document the trip and profile Plumas County Unified School District's exemplary environmental education program.

52. Woodlake Unified School District, \$33,000

Project Title: From the Central Valley to California's Shores: Woodlake Channel Islands Restoration and Education Project

Engaging Communities in: Woodlake in Tulare County

High school students will take a five-day trip to the Channel Islands to learn about coastal watersheds and conservation, conduct habitat restoration, and enjoy tidepooling, snorkeling, and kayaking.

53. YES Nature to Neighborhoods, \$20,000

Project Title: Coastal Conservation Corps Educational Activities

Engaging Communities in: Richmond

Teens will plan and implement two bioblitz events in Richmond for youth, adults, and families to investigate coastal ecosystems and learn about the species that inhabit them, leading to conservation efforts to protect the local shoreline.