

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

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## Whale Tail Grant Recipients

Approved April 15, 2026: 47 projects, listed roughly north to south

**Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, \$49,970**

*Project Title: Day-la Ghii~i~? (What-is-it You-see?): A Taa-laa-waa Mvlh-wan-te (Tolowa Guide) for Reconnecting with the Coast*

*Engaging Communities in: Del Norte County*

A culturally grounded species identification handbook in the Tolowa Dee-ni' language will be created, and offshore educational excursions and land-based stewardship activities will engage Tribal citizens in ecological literacy and community connection to traditional homelands.

**DIY Art / Ink People, \$49,988**

*Project Title: Native American Coastal Ecology S.T.E.A.M. Classroom Kits*

*Engaging Communities in: Humboldt and Del Norte Counties*

A Native Advisory Group will design, pilot, and make available STEAM classroom kits that pair with the new Native American Studies Model Curriculum, hold teacher training sessions for the kits, build a database of Native experts and culture bearers available as classroom speakers in Humboldt and Del Norte County classrooms, and design a best practices guide to intercultural teaching of coastal ecology with accompanying videos.

**Northern California Indian Development Council, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Coastal Foodways and Stewardship Project*

*Engaging Communities in: Humboldt and Del Norte Counties*

Native youth and young adults will engage with four traditional coastal foodways (mussels, eels, surf fish, and salmon) through cultural education seminars, tool and materials workshops, guided harvest workshops and processing and preservation workshops.

**Resources for Indian Student Education, \$47,647**

*Project Title: Native Youth Water Protectors*

*Engaging Communities in: Modoc, Siskiyou, Plumas, and El Dorado Counties*

Youth leaders will develop a handbook to prepare tribal partners to conduct a community Water Festival. Tribal partners including Pit River in Alturas & Paiute in Fort Bidwell, Modoc of Siskiyou County, Maidu of Plumas County, and Miwok of El Dorado County will attend a Water Festival and develop plans to hold their own, and tribal youth and adults will take part in a four-day coastal trip to learn history, ecology, hydrology, and conservation career opportunities.

**Playhouse Arts: Our Space, \$19,875**

*Project Title: Our Space*

*Engaging Communities in: Northern Humboldt County*

Community members who are unhoused or housing insecure will co-create a series of coastal day trips that may include education, foraging, habitat restoration, and art activities. Participants will share their experiences on a local radio program and other media outlets.

**Rios to Rivers, \$47,389**

*Project Title: Paddle Tribal Waters*

*Engaging Communities in: Northern California*

Indigenous youth from Karuk and other Northern California tribes will participate in multi-day paddling and leadership skills trainings, including the impact of dams and dam removals on the health of river and coastal watersheds, and traditional ecological knowledge and cultural preservation practices; program alumni will expand local paddling and community education clubs in Hoopa Valley and Eel River Basin; and a documentary will be finalized of youths' successful first source-to-sea descent of the undammed Klamath River in 2025.

**Eel River Wailaki / Trees Foundation, \$31,030**

*Project Title: Coral Point Traditional Ecological Knowledge Project*

*Engaging Communities in: Southern Humboldt County*

Eel River Wailaki Cultural Educators will develop a Traditional Ecological Knowledge curriculum, provide in-school workshops at Redway Elementary, create a TEK Club at South Fork High School, and lead field trips to Coral Point.

**Native Health in Native Hands, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Tehlaan Chii (Whale Tail)*

*Engaging Communities in: Covelo and Willits in Mendocino County, Loleta and Hoopa in Humboldt County*

The extended Kinest'e Native community will reconnect with ancestral territory and coastal cultural practices at a beach camping event, college-ready young adults will attend a college and career culture camp hosted by Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians, and an environmental careers event will be organized with Cal Poly Humboldt.

**Potter Valley Tribe, \$49,900**

*Project Title: Potter Valley Tribe Youth TEK Project*

*Engaging Communities in: Mendocino County*

Native American youth and community members will explore Mendocino Coast lands and learn about food sovereignty and cultural gathering practices for mushrooms, fish, clam, seaweed, huckleberry, and acorn, through classroom learning and field trips. Youth will enjoy an inter-tribal environmental campout at tidepools and camping at the Klamath Salmon Festival.

**Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians, \$49,741**

*Project Title: Bridges of Heritage: Coastal Education for Native Youth*

*Engaging Communities in: Mendocino County*

Native youth will take day trips to coastal and watershed locations for traditional gathering and to learn about kelp and abalone monitoring and about dam impacts, and overnight trips

to visit other tribes in the Eel River watershed and to the Monterey Bay Aquarium, as well as a multiday coastal camp to learn about stewardship and restoration careers.

**Alliance for Felix Cove / Movement Strategy Center, \$45,784**

*Project Title: Tamal liwa Indigenous Youth Kayak Program*

*Engaging Communities in: Marin, Sonoma, Solano, Contra Costa, Alameda, and Mendocino Counties*

California Indian youth will take day trips and overnight kayak camping trips on Tomales Bay, learning bay navigation, wildlife identification, geology, and how to make toy tule canoes, duck decoys, cordage, and fire using a bow drill fire.

**EGE Foundation, \$50,000**

*Project Title: EGE Out! Environmental Education Program*

*Engaging Communities in: Sacramento*

Weekly after-school learning sessions and four weekend family coastal camp experiences will allow youth to explore their curiosities and career options in coastal and environmental science topics.

**Amah Mutsun Land Trust, \$49,996**

*Project Title: Coastal Cultural Learning for AMLT Youth Stewardship Programs*

*Engaging Communities: Statewide, especially Central Valley*

Amah Mutsun Tribal Band families will participate in a five-day Coastal Stewardship Summer Camp, with Native Stewardship Corpsmembers taking on a mentoring role for young campers and interns.

**Atomic Hands, \$48,520**

*Project Title: Signs of the Sea: Connecting Citizen Science Across Communities through American Sign Language (ASL)*

*Engaging Communities in: Fairfield in Solano County*

Scientifically accurate and linguistically accessible ASL-based instructional materials will be developed and piloted for a classroom community science program investigating thiamine deficiency in California salmonid populations, in collaboration with California Department of Fish and Wildlife and UC Davis.

**Mycelium Youth Network, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Youth Belonging to Coastal Histories and Futures*

*Engaging Communities in: Oakland and San Francisco*

High school youth will engage in a ten-month climate classroom education series and internship program, including field visits and education on wetlands and estuarine ecosystems, with a focus on Traditional Ecological Knowledge to foster coastal stewardship.

**YMCA of Greater San Francisco, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Waves of Wisdom: Intergenerational Coastal Stewards*

*Engaging Communities in: San Francisco*

Youth from Bayview Hunters Point and older adults from the Mission will share coastal ecology and nature-based learning experiences as part of 14-week cohorts, including nature walks, birdwatching, beach cleanups, habitat restoration, and art and storytelling activities.

**California Field School / Santa Cruz Hub for Sustainable Living, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Bike the Coast: A Bicycle Journey Through California's Coastal Ecosystems*  
*Engaging Communities in: Oakland*

High school students will complete 4-day educational bike camping trips from Guerneville to San Francisco, exploring coastal ecosystems as they learn about ecological and cultural history.

**Bayview Community Concerned Citizens, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Bayview to the Bay: Intergenerational Coastal Literacy, Stewardship, and Healing*  
*Engaging Communities in: San Francisco*

Bayview–Hunters Point youth and elders will participate in a 6-month intergenerational marine education and stewardship program, with learning sessions, coastal trips, beach cleanups, journaling and healing circles, and a youth leadership track culminating in a Coastal Justice Zine, plus a reusable coastal curriculum and debris survey toolkit.

**Muwekma Ohlone Preservation Foundation, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Oochamin 'Ooyakma Youth Campout: A Muwekma Ohlone & Stanford University Partnership for Land and Marine Stewardship*  
*Engaging Communities in: San Francisco Bay Area*

Tribal community members will enjoy two-night campouts at Jasper Ridge and coastal sites for cultural activities, Chochochenyo language learning, traditional cooking, and watershed education.

**Waterford Junior High School, \$17,445**

*Project Title: From Source to Sea: Tuolumne Watershed Education for Waterford Jr. High Students*  
*Engaging Communities in: Waterford in Stanislaus County*

Junior high students will trace the Tuolumne River from snowpack to ocean on field trips to Yosemite Valley, Don Pedro Dam, and Monterey, while examining environmental impacts, watershed health, and the role of water in agriculture and power generation.

**Healing Waters Wilderness Adventures, \$19,370**

*Project Title: Immigrant Youth Wilderness Leadership Development and Empowerment*  
*Engaging Communities in: San Bruno in San Mateo County*

Recent immigrant students will participate in a week-long science education and leadership development camp on the Klamath River and California coast. At the end of the camp, students will be offered the opportunity to train as river guides. Other students will participate in a one-day sea kayaking trip in Tomales Bay.

**Coastal Watershed Council, \$50,000**

*Project Title: River Stewards*

*Engaging Communities in: Santa Cruz*

People experiencing homelessness will engage in weekly environmental education and stewardship along the lower San Lorenzo River, emphasizing plant and wildlife identification, habitat health, and restoration.

**Black Surf Santa Cruz, \$41,422**

*Project Title: Black Surf Santa Cruz*

*Engaging Communities in: Santa Cruz County*

BIPOC community members will gain confidence, skills, and knowledge of ocean safety, coastal ecosystems, and marine stewardship through multi-week ocean education programs, single-day surf lessons, and Juneteenth "Liberation Paddle Outs" with equipment and instruction provided.

**Bird School Project, \$48,349**

*Project Title: Bilingual Birding With Families: From Neighborhoods to the Elkhorn Slough*

*Engaging Communities in: Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties*

Community members will enjoy bilingual neighborhood bird walks, guided family boat trips on Elkhorn Slough, and hands-on learning tools that support bird identification and understanding of coastal ecosystems.

**Seventh Generation Rising, \$48,000**

*Project Title: Coastal Healing & Stewardship: An Indigenous-Led Enrichment Program for CCC Youth*

*Engaging Communities in: Central Coast: Santa Cruz, Monterey, and nearby counties*

In partnership with Elkhorn Slough Foundation, Carmel Band of Rumsen Indians, and Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos, California Conservation Corpsmembers will experience coastal immersion days along with talking circles and workshops that combine estuary and coastal science, restoration, and culturally grounded wellness practices.

**Monterey Waterkeeper, \$28,519**

*Project Title: Central Coast Water Leaders: A River-to-Sea Community Stewardship Initiative*

*Engaging Communities in: Salinas and Castroville*

Youth and community members will engage in coastal education and watershed stewardship, including Elkhorn Slough field trips for middle schoolers, weekly creek clean-ups with high school and community volunteers, and river restoration activities with youth and families.

**Sanger Unified School District, \$25,000**

*Project Title: Central Valley to Catalina: Opening STEM Pathways through Marine Science*

*Engaging Communities in: Sanger in Fresno County*

Eighth graders will learn marine science and attend a three-day residential program on Catalina Island, followed by each participating student planning a related education session and presenting to multiple younger grade classes.

**Camp Ocean Pines, \$24,491**

*Project Title: Expanding Coastal Access for Homeless and Incarcerated Participants*  
*Engaging Communities in: San Luis Obispo County*

Families experiencing homelessness will enjoy a weekend overnight camp at Camp Ocean Pines; fun, educational programs will be delivered to residents of emergency shelters; and students in a juvenile hall program will learn about marine ecology and visit local tidepools.

**Momoy Arts & Education Circle, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Tomol Crew Training for Northern Chumash*  
*Engaging Communities in: San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties*

Chumash community members will receive intensive instruction and practice in tomol handling and traditional tomol protocols in classroom and coastal locations, construct their own wood oars, and graduate as Tomol Maritime Culture Ambassadors.

**Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Chumash Waters Ways: A Tribal Community Marine Stewardship Program*  
*Engaging Communities in: Santa Barbara County*

Santa Ynez Chumash families will enjoy a bi-monthly marine stewardship and education program, with classroom sessions and field trips to coastal sites, marine research facilities, and natural reserves, with topics including traditional ecological knowledge, safe harvesting, species identification, and environmental monitoring.

**Ventura Land Trust, \$25,544**

*Project Title: Nature By Design: Engagement with California's Coast for Inland Elementary Students*  
*Engaging Communities in: Santa Paula in Ventura County*

Elementary students will each take part in three field trips to coastal and inland watershed locations throughout Ventura County, with hands-on, group, and reflective activities exploring food webs, watersheds, erosion, stewardship, and climate science.

**Oxnard Performing Arts Center Corporation, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Creative Tides: Artist Residencies for Environmental Action + Connection*  
*Engaging Communities in: Oxnard and Port Hueneme*

Three, four-month Artist-in-Residencies will engage the community in artist-led workshops and events focused on local coastal environments, culminating in free public arts presentations highlighting the relationship between people, culture, and coastal and marine health.

**Queer Surf / Green Cities Fund, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Project Ocean Access*  
*Engaging Communities in: Los Angeles County*

Surf lessons and overnight camp programs will increase access to ocean recreation and coastal stewardship for low-income QTBIPOC adults.

**Para Los Niños, \$21,941**

*Project Title: Ripples to Waves: Youth Activism through Media*

*Engaging Communities in: Los Angeles*

Fifth graders will take six field trips over the school year to learn about the connection between the LA River and the ocean, and record their observations through audio, video, and photography to create short conservation-centered media productions.

**Ready Study Go, \$9,659**

*Project Title: Connecting Underserved Students to California's Coastal Waterways Through Inclusive, Hands-On Learning*

*Engaging Communities in: Southeast Los Angeles County*

Over six months, elementary and middle school students in a neurodivergent after-school program will work with high school mentors to raise and release fish through "Trout in the Classroom," learn about marine and estuary ecosystems, and enjoy four field trips throughout the watershed.

**Culture Club South Bay, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Restoring Youth Access to the Coastline*

*Engaging Communities in: Los Angeles, Inglewood, and Anaheim*

During field days at the beach, youth will gain comfort in the ocean environment while enjoying surfing and beach volleyball, Bruce's Beach cultural history, guided reflection and photography, and marine science lessons.

**San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians Gabrieleno/Tongva, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Gabrieleno/Tongva Cultural Marine Stewardship on Catalina*

*Engaging Communities in: Los Angeles and Orange Counties*

Gabrieleno/Tongva tribal members will connect to ancestral coastal and marine heritage through workshops and facilitated trips to Catalina Island, with topics including coastal history, seafaring, language, basketry, ethnobotany, habitat restoration and other stewardship skills.

**DiverSeaFy, \$40,100**

*Project Title: DiverSeaFying Diving 26-28*

*Engaging Communities in: Los Angeles and San Diego Counties*

High school youth will learn about the local marine ecosystem and environmental stewardship as they achieve PADI Open Water Scuba certification.

**Perris Elementary School, \$10,951**

*Project Title: Perris Grizzlies Explore our Watershed*

*Engaging Communities in: Perris in Riverside County*

Sixth graders will learn about their watershed through after-school activities and trips to local waterways and the coast, and create a mural about the ocean for permanent display on campus.

**Pechanga Band of Indians, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Youth Environmental & Coastal Education Project*

*Engaging Communities in: Pechanga Indian Reservation and Temecula in Riverside County*

Pechanga high school students will take a three-day trip to Catalina Island to gain hands-on experience in restoration, water conservation, and coastal ecology, followed by using these newly acquired skills to guide Tribal elementary students in restoration and preservation efforts along Pechanga Creek and its tributaries.

**County of Orange, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Classroom to the Sea Coastal Erosion Education Program*

*Engaging Communities in: Anaheim and Santa Ana*

A middle school environmental engineering curriculum will be co-designed with teachers and students in partnership with OC Department of Education and UC Irvine, blending classroom investigation with a hands-on field trip to analyze coastal erosion and its impacts on ecosystems and infrastructure.

**Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation-Belardes / Payómkawichum Kaámalam, \$49,800**

*Project Title: Payómkawichum Water Stories: Revitalizing Cultural Knowledge from Springs to the Sea*

*Engaging Communities in: Orange County*

Through field visits, interviews with Tribal Elders, and archival materials of culturally significant waterways and coastal areas, tribal youth and young adults will develop a Payómkawichum Cultural Waterways Map, along with educational materials for classroom and community use that connect cultural teachings with contemporary coastal stewardship themes. Participants will learn digital archiving, project organization, and environmental storytelling.

**CSU San Marcos, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Sovereign Shores*

*Engaging Communities in: San Diego and Riverside Counties*

The California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center will engage youth and young adults from Tribal Nations across San Diego and Riverside Counties in cultural workshops on ethnobotany, foodways, shoreline language and place names, and take field trips to Tribal coastal homelands, including cultural activities and surf sessions. At least one curriculum-aligned digital module featuring short youth films, storywork, and other content will be produced.

**Pala Band of Mission Indians, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Pala Cultural Stewardship from the San Luis Rey Watershed to the Pacific Coast*

*Engaging Communities in: Pala Reservation in San Diego County*

Pala Band youth will experience a coastal field trip to learn about marine ecology, food sovereignty, coastal stewardship, and marine policies, followed by a presentation to the Tribal Council; community members will engage in history and ecology workshops on the

San Luis Rey watershed, restore riparian habitat, and learn about career pathways; and the Pala Environmental Department will create an educational coloring book for local elementary students.

**Botanical Community Development Initiatives, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Reaching Roots: San Luis Rey River-to-Sea Youth & Elders Watershed Series  
Engaging Communities in: Oceanside and North San Diego County*

In partnership with the San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians, intergenerational learning and stewardship experiences will engage youth in the San Luis Rey watershed from Palomar Mountain to the ocean with ethnobotany and traditional ecological knowledge alongside watershed science, structured reflection, and a shared celebration of learning and connection.

**San Diego River Park Foundation, \$49,569**

*Project Title: From the Source to Sea: Connecting Kumeyaay Youth through Ecological Journeys and Traditional Ethnobotany, following the San Diego River to the Pacific Ocean  
Engaging Communities in: Lakeside in San Diego County*

In partnership with the Barona Band of Mission Indians, grantee will deliver a two-year cultural and environmental STEM program for 3rd and 7th grade Kumeyaay youth on the San Diego River watershed, including field trips, whale watching, and classroom lessons, and installation of interpretive signage at a local park.

**Paddle for Peace, \$50,000**

*Project Title: Diversify the Coast  
Engaging Communities in: City Heights, Lemon Grove, Spring Valley, National City, Southeast San Diego*

A five-week program of classroom sessions and field trip will connect marine science learning with hands-on coastal and conservation experiences, including tidepooling, beach cleanup, and art-based reflection activities.