



Media Release

Central Coast Ecological Preserve Wins National Award *State Water Board Funding Commitment Turns Effort into Reality*

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The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) recently received a Coastal America Award as part of a partnership of government and non-profit agencies that worked on acquiring and restoring 490 acres of wetland near Watsonville.

The award was one of just six awarded nationwide this year by the Coastal America Partnership – a national effort with participation by the Office of the President.

The Water Board is part of the Middle Watsonville Slough Partnership that has worked for the past three years to acquire 490 acres in the slough area and start several restoration projects. The projects (see Watsonville Wetlands Watch at <http://www.watsonvilleslough.org/>) were designed to improve water quality and habitats for endangered or sensitive species such as the red-legged frog and the Santa Cruz tarplant, and to help native and migratory birds. Other members of the partnership include Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, Watsonville Wetlands Watch, The Nature Conservancy, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County.

Acquiring the wetland area has been a goal of some local community groups for 20 years. The Water Board's Division of Financial Assistance contributed \$300,000 for the projects that were the subject of the award, and is providing an additional \$4.2 million (in Proposition 50 Irrigated Regional Waste Management funds) for other watershed restoration projects in the Santa Cruz watershed.

"These are the kinds of partnerships that allow groups to accomplish much more than they might have acting as individual organizations," State Water Board Executive Director Tom Howard said. "The State Water Board actively encourages such broad partnerships to improve water quality throughout the state."

The Coastal America Awards Program recognizes outstanding collaborative projects and excellence in leadership for protecting, preserving and restoring the nation's coastal resources.

The Coastal America Partnership includes a variety of federal, state and local governments, including the Office of the President, as well as private organizations working to preserve coastal areas.





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Laura McLean, a supervisor in the Division of Financial Assistance, accepted the award on behalf of the State Water Board at a meeting on Feb. 8 in Monterey.

For more information in this grant program please visit:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/irwmgp/index.shtm

For specifics on this grant application resulting in this award, please visit:

https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/Public_Interface/PublicProposalDetails.aspx?Pin=10045&PropId=10045