



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

PRESS RELEASE

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COUNTY SECURES \$1.5 MILLION GRANT FOR SOQUEL LINEAR PARK

The County of Santa Cruz is pleased to announce a \$1.5 million grant to complete the Soquel Creek Linear Parkway.

The grant from the California River Parkway Grant Program will assist with restoration and access improvements along an urban stretch of Soquel Creek. Once completed, the project will enhance one of the County's most underrated natural resources and provide a nature walk and respite space that connects Soquel Creek with the community, including downtown Soquel, Heart of Soquel Park, Soquel Elementary School and Soquel Lions Park.

"This grant helps achieve a goal set out by Soquel residents to appreciate the environment, improve commerce and make the community safer," Supervisor John Leopold said. "The Parks Department has leveraged our investment to connect the village core of Soquel with countless members of the community as they stroll along beautiful Soquel Creek."

"Being able to restore and enhance natural habitat in the heart of an urban landscape is a rare opportunity," Santa Cruz County Park Director Jeff Gaffney said. "This grant is a validation of the Soquel Linear Park's goals of improving the outdoor experience of all Santa Cruz County residents."

The \$2 million project also includes riparian habitat restoration work, which began in December of 2018 with grant funding from California Conservation Corps Active Transportation Program. Full construction is estimated to begin in late 2019 or early 2020.

The grant is third major State grant to fund the Soquel Creek Linear Park. Previously, California State Parks' Habitat Conservation Fund awarded \$243,608, and the Conservation Corps' ATP awarded \$174,000.



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Partners include the Soquel Union Elementary School District, Capitola Soquel Chamber of Commerce, California Conservation Corps, Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, Tara Redwood and Discovery Schools, and local private and business property owners.

The California River Parkway Program is a competitive grant program first created under the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002. Administered by the California Natural Resources Agency, the program funds public agencies and qualified non-profit organizations to acquire, restore, protect or develop river parkways. The program previously awarded \$500,000 for San Lorenzo River Parkway improvements.

Soquel Creek is a 16-mile river that flows from the Santa Cruz Mountains to the Monterey Bay. The Soquel Linear Park is included in the Soquel Village Plan, originally adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1990. The Soquel Creek watershed provides important habitat for threatened and endangered species, including steelhead.