Inaugural Year
FY2025-26

MEASURE Q ANNUAL REPORT



Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Wildlife Protection Act

Submitted to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors by the Citizens Oversight Advisory Board

Prepared by the Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience and Department of Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services

I. Introduction

Overview of the Act

Measure Q, the Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Wildlife Protection Act, was approved by local voters in November 2024. The Act established an $87 annual special parcel tax, generating approximately $7 million in annual revenue to confer the following benefits to the people of Santa Cruz County:

- **Water quality and protection** including drought protection, drinking water quality, water supplies and availability;
- **Improvements to watersheds**, and clean beaches and ocean;
- **Wildfire risk reduction** including forest management, creation of defensible spaces, and fire resilience;
- **Wildlife and habitat protectio**n including conservation of native biodiversity, restoring critical habitats and wildlife corridors, and stewarding natural and working lands; and
- **Safe recreation** including developing, restoring, stewarding, or maintaining clean and safe parks, public access facilities, places to play, natural areas, trails, and other programmatic and recreational activities

This report fulfills the requirement under Santa Cruz County Code (SCCC) § 4.65.060(A)(3)(e) for the Citizens Oversight Advisory Board (COAB) to report annually to the Board of Supervisors on the outcomes of projects and programs funded through the Act, and how those funds were used to leverage other public and private investment. The report content is organized around the expenditure categories defined by SCCC § 4.65.040, and described below:

- **Grant Program:** Forty percent of measure revenue is expended through a competitive grant program for eligible projects[1], administered by the County and guided by the five-year Vision Plan document developed by the COAB and approved by the County Board of Supervisors in October 2025. The Act also establishes statutory set-asides for two geographic areas of the county: at least $600,000 for stewardship of San Vicente Redwoods, the county's largest conservation easement, and at least $600,000 for projects serving Pajaro Valley.
- **Direct Allocation Program:** Sixty percent of measure revenue is allocated evenly across the following three programs:
    - *Neighborhood (Cities) Program*: Twenty percent of funds are apportioned on a per capita basis to the four incorporated cities for eligible projects within those cities.
    - *County Program*: Twenty percent of funds are directed to the County, administered by the Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience (OR3) and the

[1] "Eligible projects" are defined in the Act (§ 4.65.010(K)) and include pre-project assistance and feasibility, planning, acquisition, construction, development, improvement, restoration, rehabilitation, maintenance, stewardship, or any combination thereof.

Department of Parks, Open Space, and Cultural Services (Parks) for eligible projects in the unincorporated county.

- *Land Stewardship Partner Program*: Twenty percent of funds are divided evenly between the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County and a nonprofit land stewardship implementation partner for eligible projects on private lands which provide a public benefit. In July 2025, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County was selected as the first land stewardship implementation partner for a five-year period from 2025-2030, after which the COAB may renew this partnership or select a new partner.

Inaugural Year Themes and Reflections

Continuous Process Improvement

FY2025-26 was the first year of Measure Q implementation. The COAB was established, the first Vision Plan was approved, parcel tax revenue was received for the first time and the first competitive grants were awarded. The County, cities and land stewardship partners received their first direct allocations, and their governing bodies approved expenditure plans with planning horizons of one to five years.

This annual report brings the direct allocation recipients' reports together in one place, so recipients can compare approaches to planning, project delivery and reporting. Lessons from the first grant cycle were captured in a formal after-action review (AAR) and are informing the FY2026-27 grant cycle. The Measure Q administrative team will work with direct allocation recipients to improve the reporting template, data collection and the measurement of project outcomes.

Strategic Prioritization and Impact

This report estimates a leverage ratio of $1.85 in outside funding for every $1 of Measure Q funding. Measure Q funds leveraged outside funding in several ways: as local match for federal and state grants, as gap funding combined with competitive grant awards to complete project budgets, and as support for staff who prepare grant applications and plan projects. Capital projects are expensive and often rely on combined funding sources, so a relatively small Measure Q contribution can help secure much larger outside investment.

Many projects need several years of planning before they are ready for implementation funding, and competitive grants require a strong fit between the project and the funding program. Upcoming opportunities include Proposition 4 climate bond funds, distributed through state agencies such as CAL FIRE, the State Coastal Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservation Board, as well as federal programs such as the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Several of these sources already appear as leverage in this report. Partners can prepare by identifying projects that align with the priorities in the Act and the Vision Plan and that match the requirements of these programs. This will take collaboration across both programs, and as implementation systems are established, more staff time can go toward finding planning gaps and pursuing funding opportunities earlier.

Telling the Story of Measure Q

Annual reporting is mandated by the Act but also presents an opportunity share Measure Q's impact with the community. Before-and-after photos, social media video, news coverage, public signage, and improving accessibility of the Measure Q website can extend that reach. Publication of this report is accompanied by an interactive project viewer, available at https://santacruzcountyca.gov/MeasureQ/Projects.aspx.

FY2025-26 By the Numbers

FY2025-26 marked the first year of parcel tax collection for Measure Q. The County collected $7.44 million in parcel tax revenue. After interest earned and start-up and administrative costs (about 7% of revenue), $6.94 million (Table 1) was allocated across the four program areas. Unspent funds remain in each program's account, where they may earn interest that can be reinvested into that program in future years.

Table 1: Measure Q Program Summary, FY2025-26

Program	Code Section	FY2025-26 Allocated Funds	FY2025-26 Projects	Estimated Leverage [2]
Grant Program	§ 4.65.040(B)(1)	$2,740,000	18	$8,098,733
Cities (Neighborhood Program)	§ 4.65.040(B)(2)	$1,402,233	12	$475,819
County Program	§ 4.65.040(B)(3)	$1,400,000	10	$1,579,762
Land Stewardship Partner Program	§ 4.65.040(B)(4)	$1,402,233	14	$2,696,993
Total		**$6,944,466**	**54**	**$12,851,307**

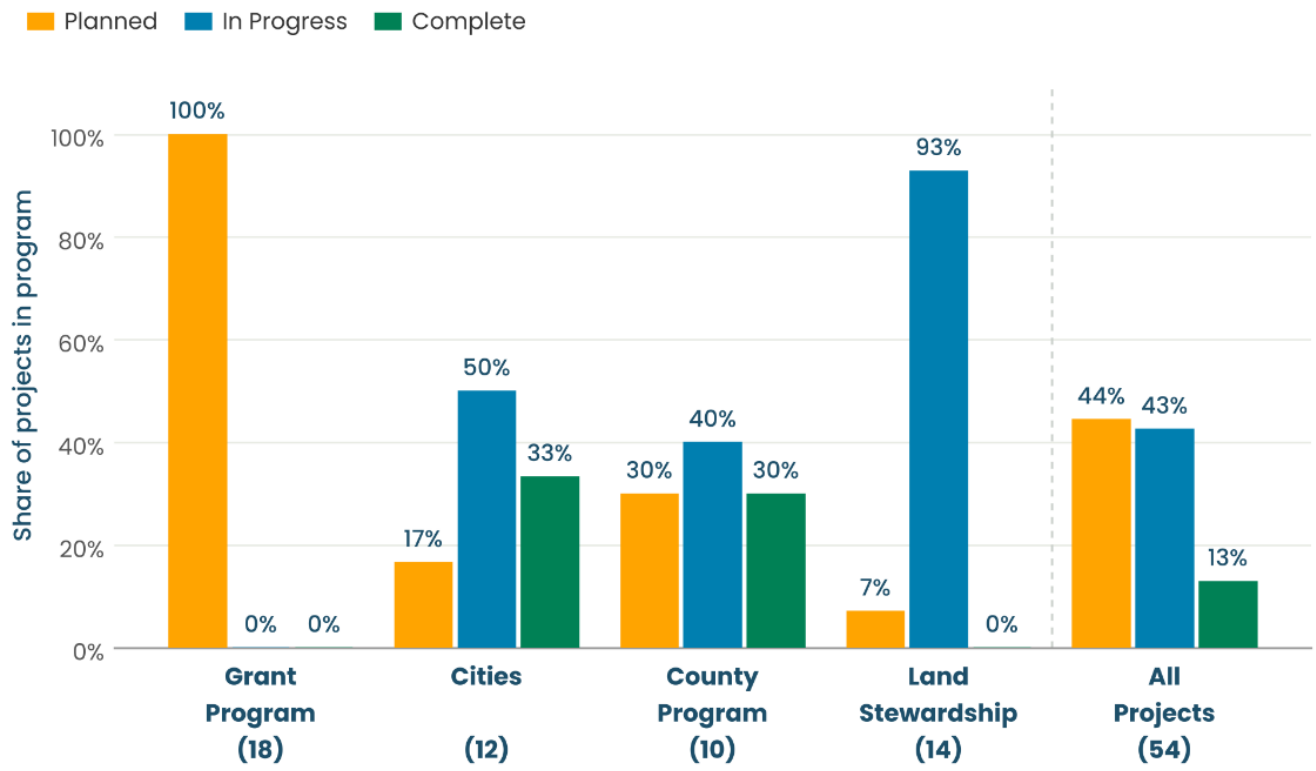
In FY2025-26, Measure Q funded 54 projects and program areas through the Grant Program and Direct Allocation Program (Table 1). These projects drew an estimated $12.85 million in outside funding, or **$1.85 in leverage[2] for every $1 of Measure Q funding.** Many projects are in early stages, and future reports will track spending, outcomes and leverage as they move forward.

Projects by Status

At the end of FY2025-26, 7 of the 54 projects and program areas were complete, 23 were in progress and 24 were planned. All 18 Grant Program projects are listed as planned because grant terms began July 1, 2026, after the reporting period ended. Of the 36 direct allocation projects, most were in progress or complete by year-end. Project details, accomplishments and leverage for each direct allocation recipient are in Attachments A through G.

[2] Estimated leverage is the non-Measure Q funding that grantees and direct allocation recipients reported for their projects. It includes state, federal, local and private funds, and in some cases in-kind contributions. Some projects receive both Measure Q Grant Program and Direct Allocation funds. For these projects, leverage is only counted once under one program area. All figures are estimates and may change in later reporting periods.

Figure 1: FY2025-26 Projects by Status



Status as of June 30, 2026. Number of projects in parentheses. All Grant Program projects are listed as planned because grant terms began July 1, 2026. Percentages show the share of each program's projects in each status. Source: FY2025-26 Direct Allocation Annual Reports (Attachments A-G) and Measure Q Grant Program.

Projects by Thematic Area

The 2025-2030 Measure Q Vision Plan describes six thematic areas, or broad areas of environmental benefit:

- **Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health***
- **Water Resource Management***
- **Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity***
- Wildlife & Habitat Protection
- Coastal Protection & Adaptation
- Agricultural & Working Lands Protection

The first three listed themes – wildfire, water, and parks – are listed as priority thematic areas intended to guide grant funding investment over the five-year lifespan of the Vision Plan. This report groups projects by thematic area to show how Measure Q funding aligns with the Vision Plan across the Grant Program and Direct Allocation Program. Figures reflect the number of projects in each area, not dollar amounts, so project counts do not reflect the size of investment. Many projects address more than one area and are counted in each, so totals add up to greater than 100% (Figure 2).

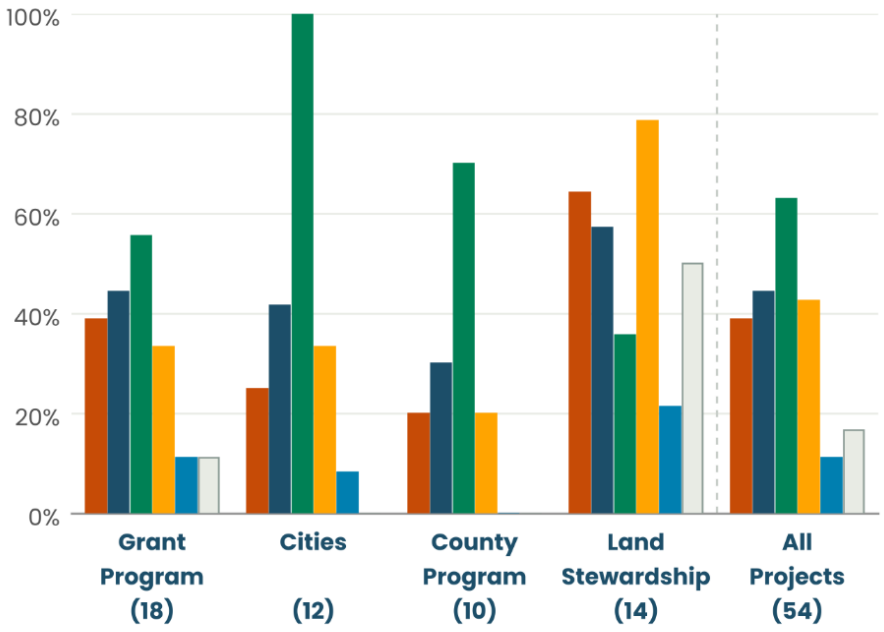
Across all 54 projects, Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity was the most common thematic area, addressed by 34 projects (63%). Water Resource Management (24 projects, 44%), Wildlife & Habitat Protection (23 projects, 43%) and Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health (21 projects,

39%) followed. Fewer projects addressed Agricultural & Working Lands Protection (9 projects, 17%) or Coastal Protection & Adaptation (6 projects, 11%).

The mix of themes differed by program. Every Cities project and 70% of County Program projects addressed Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity. Land Stewardship projects most often addressed Wildlife & Habitat Protection (79%) and Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health (64%). Grant Program projects were spread more evenly across the three priority areas.

Figure 2: FY2025-26 Projects by Thematic Area

Bars and table show the share of each program's projects that address each thematic area.

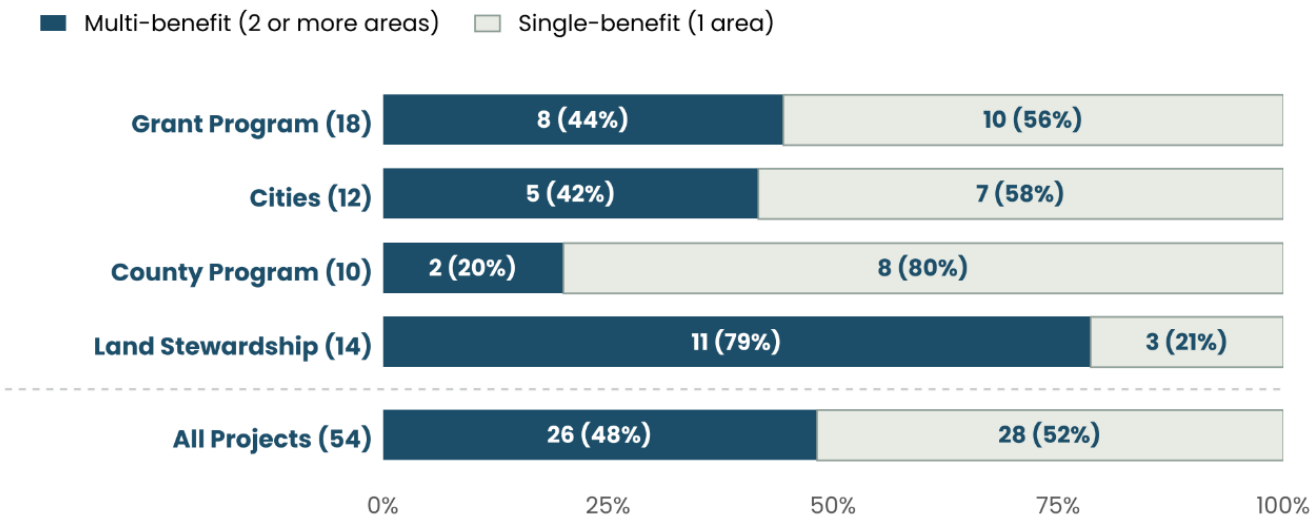


	Grant Program (18)	Cities (12)	County Program (10)	Land Stewardship (14)	All Projects (54)
Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health*	39%	25%	20%	64%	**39%**
Water Resource Management*	44%	42%	30%	57%	**44%**
Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity*	56%	100%	70%	36%	**63%**
Wildlife & Habitat Protection	33%	33%	20%	79%	**43%**
Coastal Protection & Adaptation	11%	8%	0%	21%	**11%**
Agricultural & Working Lands Protection	11%	0%	0%	50%	**17%**

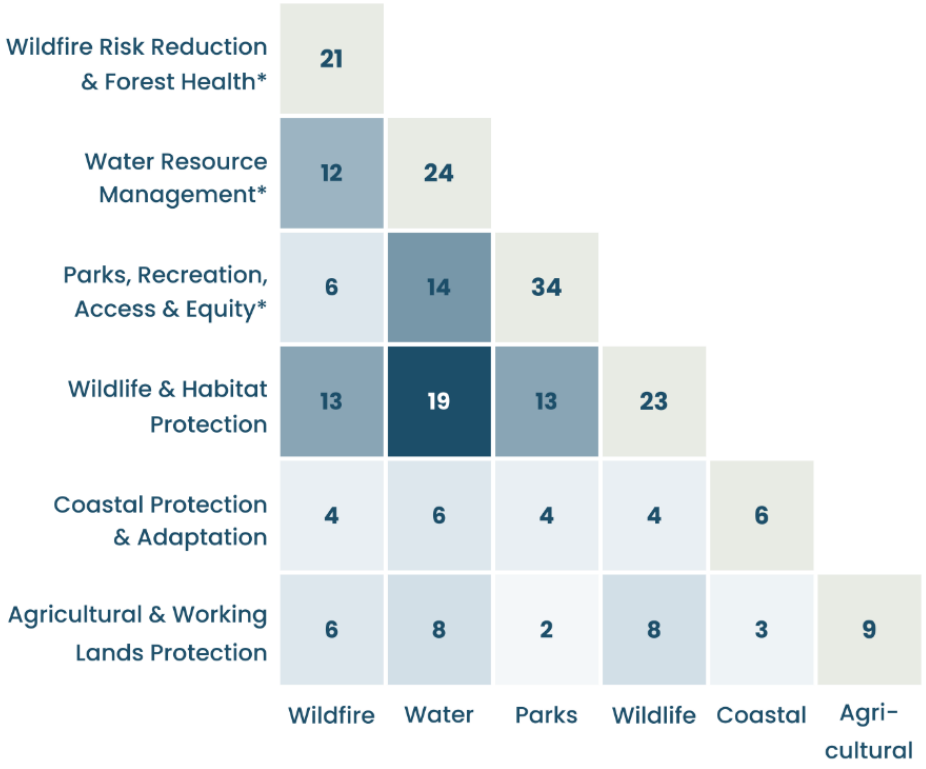
*Vision Plan priority thematic area for Grant Program investment. Number of projects in parentheses.
Percentages show the share of each program's projects that address a thematic area (column percentages).
Projects may address more than one area, so percentages within a program add up to more than 100%.
Source: Measure Q project database, FY2025-26.

Figure 3: Single and Multi-Benefit Theme Projects

A. Projects addressing one or more thematic areas, by program



B. How often thematic areas appear together (all 54 projects)



How to read: Each shaded cell shows the number of projects that address both the row and column thematic areas. Darker cells mean the areas appear together more often. Grey cells on the diagonal show the total projects in each area.

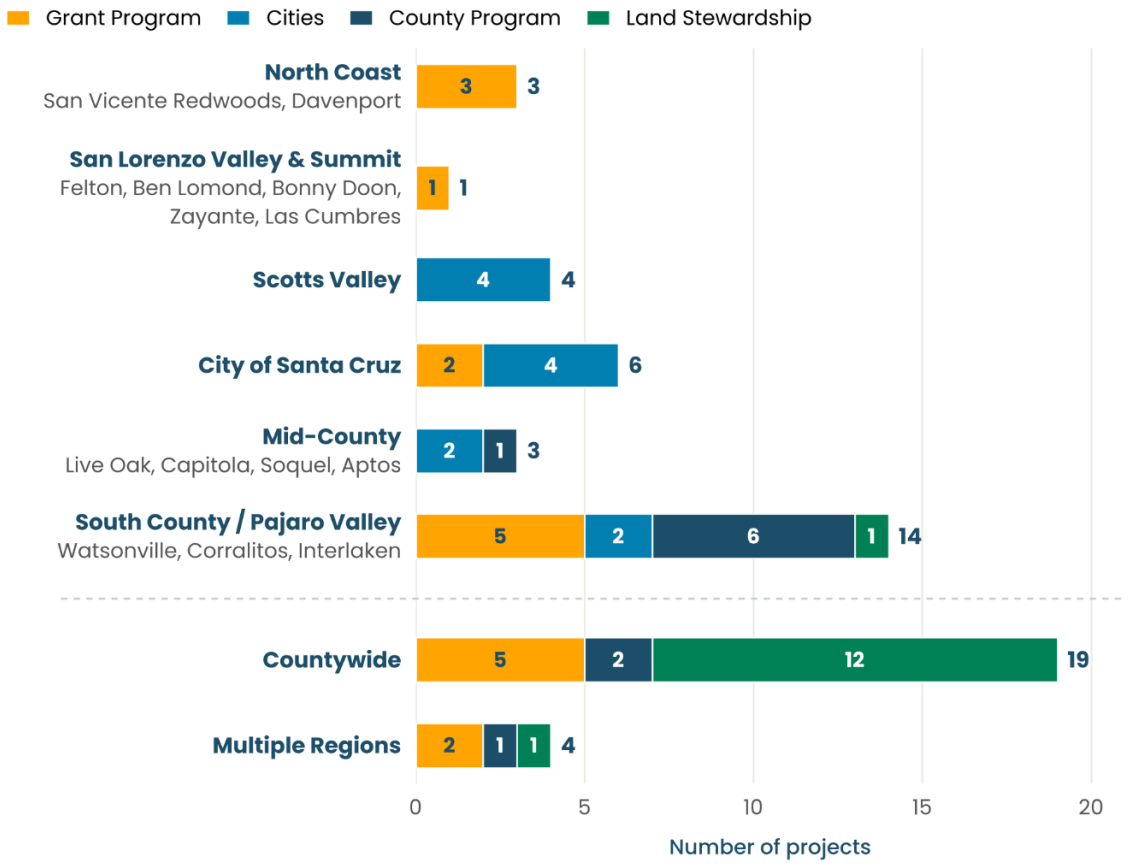
*Vision Plan priority thematic area for Grant Program investment. Number of projects per program in parentheses. Panel A labels show number of projects (share of program). Thematic areas from the 2025-2030 Measure Q Vision Plan. Source: Measure Q project database, FY2025-26.

Measure Q projects often deliver more than one type of benefit. A multi-benefit project addresses two or more thematic areas, such as a restoration project that improves both water quality and habitat. In FY2025-26, 26 of 54 projects (48%) addressed more than one thematic area. The share varied by program, from 20% of County Program projects to 79% of Land Stewardship projects. Figure 3, Panel B shows which thematic areas most often appear together. The most common pairings were Water Resource Management with Wildlife & Habitat Protection (19 projects) and Water Resource Management with Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity (14 projects).

Projects by Geographic Area Served

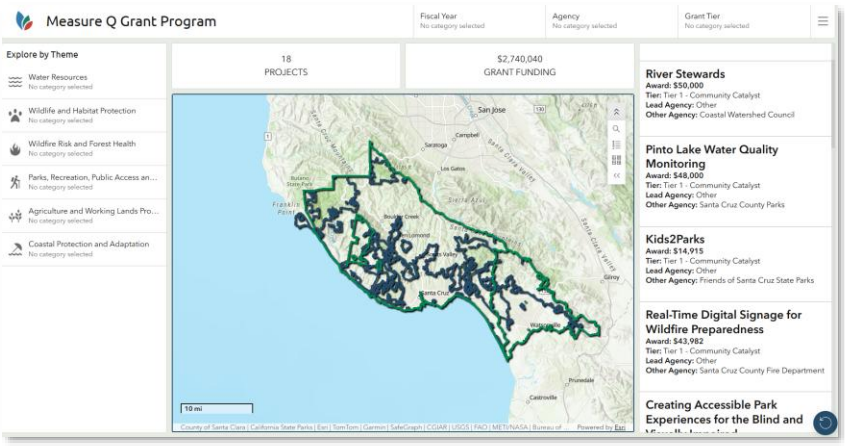
Measure Q projects serve communities across Santa Cruz County (Figure 4). Of the 54 projects, 19 provide countywide or programmatic benefit, such as countywide technical assistance, outreach and cost share programs. Another 4 have sites in more than one region. Of the 31 projects in a single region, South County / Pajaro Valley had the most, with 14. Project counts do not reflect the size of investment in each region.

Figure 4: FY2025-26 Projects by Geographic Area Served



Each project counted once. Regions ordered north to south. Multiple Regions includes projects with sites in two or more specific regions. Source: Measure Q project database, FY2025-26.

As an accompaniment to this annual report, an interactive ArcGIS dashboard maps Grant Program and Direct Allocation projects and lets users explore Measure Q investment by location, program, thematic area and status. The dashboard is available at https://santacruzcountyca.gov/MeasureQ/Projects.aspx.



II. Measure Q Competitive Grant Program: The Inaugural Award Year

The Measure Q Grant Program allocates 40 percent of annual tax proceeds, approximately $2.74 million in FY2025-26, to competitive grants for eligible public agencies, nonprofits, and tribes. The program is structured in two tiers: Tier 1 Community Catalyst grants ($5,000 to $50,000) for smaller stewardship, education, and planning projects, and Tier 2 Community Impact grants ($50,000 to $500,000) for larger, multi-benefit projects. All awards must align with the Measure Q Vision Plan, the five-year document that translates the Act's goals into priority actions and geographies.

In its inaugural FY25-26 cycle, the program received 53 applications requesting a combined $8.9 million in funding against $2.74 million in available funding, a demand ratio of approximately 3:1. The Board of Supervisors approved 18 grants totaling $2.74 million on June 9, 2026. Awards included projects satisfying the statutory set-asides for the San Vicente Redwoods area (minimum $600,000) and the Pajaro Valley (minimum $600,000).

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Tier 1 Community Catalyst Awards (7 projects, $266,897)

- Coastal Watershed Council, River Stewards ($50,000)
- Santa Cruz County Parks, Pinto Lake Water Quality Monitoring ($48,000)

- Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks, Kids2Parks ($14,915)
- Santa Cruz County Fire Department, Real-Time Digital Signage for Wildfire Preparedness ($43,982)
- Black Surf Santa Cruz Inc, Expanding Coastal Access, Ocean Safety, and Surf Education ($50,000)
- Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Creating Accessible Park Experiences for the Blind and Visually Impaired ($50,000)
- South Skyline Firesafe Council, Las Cumbres Shaded Fuel Break Project ($10,000)

Tier 2 Community Impact Awards (11 projects, $2,473,103)

San Vicente Redwoods Set-Aside ($600,000)

- Peninsula Open Space Trust, SVR Targeted Stream Crossing Repairs to Protect Water Quality ($425,000)
- Peninsula Open Space Trust, SVR Botanical Resource Management Planning ($75,000)
- Peninsula Open Space Trust, SVR Public Access Improvement Project ($100,000)

Pajaro Valley Set-Aside ($804,500)

- Watsonville Wetlands Watch, Pajaro Valley Watershed Stewardship, Habitat Restoration and Outdoor Access and Equity Project ($300,000)
- City of Watsonville, Watsonville City Plaza Revitalization Project ($275,000)
- Friends of Santa Cruz County Parks, Mesa Village Park Phase 1: Equitable Access to Nature and Play ($229,500)

General Competitive Pool ([$1,068,603])

- Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency, Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Feasibility and College Lake Borrow Study ($150,000)
- City of Santa Cruz, San Lorenzo Flood Control System Debris Boom Project ($100,000)
- Long Term Recovery Group of Santa Cruz County, Resilience-Ready SCC: Zone-0 Equity and Workforce Initiative ($308,266)
- Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, Rural Lands Assistance Program Pilot ($270,337)
- Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association, Wildfire and Ecology Resilience via Beneficial Fire ($240,000)

FY 2025-26 reflects awards made rather than outcomes achieved, with performance periods beginning in FY2026-27. As projects progress, future annual reports will include project outcomes and estimated leverage generated by the grant program.

Following the inaugural cycle, staff conducted an After-Action Review (AAR) to evaluate the grant process and identify improvements. Its findings are informing revisions to the grant guidelines for the FY 2026-27 cycle, which are scheduled to return to the Board of Supervisors in November 2026.

III. Direct Allocation Program

Sixty percent of annual tax proceeds are distributed directly under § 4.65.040(B)(2) – (B)(4), split evenly across three program areas: incorporated cities, the County, and the Land Stewardship Partner Program. Individual direct allocation reports for each recipient agency are included as separate attachments to this report; see the Attachments section at the end of this report for a full list.

County Program (§ 4.65.040(B)(3))

Twenty percent of annual revenues are allocated to the County for eligible projects in unincorporated areas of the county. Of the County's direct allocation, approximately $900,000 supports projects recommended by staff through an internal prioritization process guided by Vision Plan themes. The Board of Supervisors approved these FY 2025-26 expenditures in October 2025. The remaining $500,000 is reserved for Board discretionary projects, divided evenly among the five supervisorial districts. Board discretionary projects are ongoing, and uncommitted balances carry over to the next year. This report includes committed Board discretionary projects as well as the three staff-recommended projects.

Together, County projects drew an estimated $1,579,762 in outside funding, including FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds, Measure K, and Park Impact Fees. See **Attachment A, County of Santa Cruz.**

Cities Program (§ 4.65.040(B)(2))

Twenty percent of annual revenues are allocated to the four incorporated cities on a per capita basis, with a minimum of $200,000 per city. Each city council approves its own expenditure plan, with planning horizons ranging from 1 to 5 years. City uses of Measure Q funds in the first year of implementation range from supplemental parks and maintenance staffing to capital investment to multi-benefit project planning and implementation. Outside funding sources include CAL FIRE grants, the State's Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program, and a City municipal bond.

Together, city projects drew an estimated $475,819 in outside funding through two CAL FIRE grants to the City of Santa Cruz. The Watsonville City Plaza Revitalization Project is the single largest source of leverage associated with Measure Q in FY 2025-26. Phase 2 construction in downtown Watsonville is supported by an estimated $6.85 million in outside funding: $3.35 million from the State's Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program and $3.5 million from a City of Watsonville municipal bond. The project received a $275,000 Measure Q grant through the FY 2025-26 Pajaro Valley set-aside, and the City's five-year direct allocation plan provides gap funding for construction. To avoid counting it twice, this leverage is reported under the Grant Program.

See Attachment B, City of Capitola; Attachment C, City of Santa Cruz; Attachment D, City of Scotts Valley; and Attachment E, City of Watsonville.

Land Stewardship Partner Program (§ 4.65.040(B)(4))

Twenty percent of annual revenues are split evenly between the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County (RCDSCC) and the land stewardship implementation partner, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, per § 4.65.050(D). The RCDSCC Board approved an 18-month expenditure plan in February 2026. The Land Trust Board approves strategic priorities, and staff use them to plan expenditures.

Together, Land Stewardship Partner projects drew an estimated $2,696,993 in outside funding and in-kind support. Sources include the State Coastal Conservancy, California Natural Resources Agency (Proposition 68), USDA Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant, Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency, Land Trust donations, and landowner in-kind contributions. RCD also used Measure Q-funded staff time to secure $961,858 in new grants for future work, including the Valencia Shaded Fuel Break and Lower Scott Creek restoration planning.

See Attachment F, Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County; and Attachment G, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County.

Attachments

The following individual FY2025-26 Direct Allocation reports are attached to this report:

Attachment A: County of Santa Cruz FY2025-26 Direct Allocation Report

Attachment B: City of Capitola FY2025-26 Direct Allocation Report

Attachment C: City of Santa Cruz FY2025-26 Direct Allocation Report

Attachment D: City of Scotts Valley FY2025-26 Direct Allocation Report

Attachment E: City of Watsonville FY2025-26 Direct Allocation Report

Attachment F: Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County FY2025-26 Direct Allocation Report

Attachment G: Land Trust of Santa Cruz County FY2025-26 Direct Allocation Report

MEASURE Q

FY 2025–26 Direct Allocation Annual Report

Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Wildlife Protection Act



Water quality sampling at Freedom Lake in Corralitos.

Attachment A: County of Santa Cruz

Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience | Santa Cruz County Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services
Report period: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

County of Santa Cruz

Organization Type	County
Prepared By	Clare Peabody, Measure Q Analyst
FY25-26 Total Allocation Received	$1,402,233
Board / Council Approval	Yes, 25-2423, approved 10/21/2025. *(Note: $900,000 in programming was approved by the Board per staff recommendation, with remaining $500,000 split evenly between the 5 Supervisor offices for discretionary projects.)*
Outside Funds Leveraged	$1,579,762 (Local $590,000 | Federal $989,762)
Total Projects	10
Projects by Status	In Progress: 4 Planned: 3 Complete: 3

Project Detail – County General Allocation Pool

Freedom Lake Restoration and Increased Access Park Project

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Water Resources Management; Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity; Wildlife & Habitat Protection

Location: 3101 Freedom Blvd, Watsonville; Corralitos, serving the greater Watsonville area

What's Funded: Ecological restoration of Freedom Lake (Pajaro Valley), including invasive aquatic vegetation removal, stormwater management improvements, riparian/floodplain restoration, and safe public access enhancements, in partnership with Watsonville Wetlands Watch and the California Conservation Corps.

Leverage: This is a continuation of work initiated in 2024-25 funded with D2 Discretionary Funds.

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
Measure K	Local	$100,000
Single Cup Funds	Local	$10,000
Contingency Funds	Local	$40,000

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Work to date includes drone photography, upstream invasive species removal and riparian restoration, installation of a stream monitoring gage, inlet and outlet channel surveys, ongoing water quality sampling, and bathymetric analysis of lake geometry and storage capacity. This information has been compiled into a draft Restoration Alternatives Analysis, which will identify a preferred restoration strategy and support future permitting, design, and phased implementation at Freedom Lake. County staff are coordinating with the California State Coastal Conservancy and Wildlife Conservation Board to position the selected strategy for grant funding and long-term implementation.

Wildfire Risk Reduction / Evacuation Route Roadside Vegetation Trimming Program

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health

Location: Bear Creek Rd, China Grade Rd, E Zayante Rd, Eureka Canyon Rd, Graham Hill Rd, Highland Way, Soquel San Jose Rd, Upper E Zayante Rd

What's Funded: Roadside fuel reduction along 52 miles of key wildfire evacuation routes countywide, fulfilling the County's local match requirement under the 2026 FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Project.

Leverage:

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
FEMA HMGP	Federal	$989,762
Measure K	Local	$250,000

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Contract award pending (August 2026), with work anticipated to begin in fall 2026 in alignment with seasonal work window requirements.

Corralitos Creek Hydrologic Forecasting Model

Status: Complete | **Themes:** Water Resources Management

Location: Corralitos Creek watershed

What's Funded: Development of a hydrologic forecasting model translating National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) NOAA precipitation forecasts into streamflow forecasts for Corralitos Creek, with a real-time data dashboard, to support flood preparedness and evacuation planning. Benefits residential neighborhoods of the unincorporated county around the intersection of E Lake Ave / Hwy 152 and Holohan / College Rd which are subject to repeated flooding, often with major forecast uncertainty and short notice times.

Leverage: None reported.

FY25-26 Accomplishments: County OR3 and stormwater staff have begun testing the final decision support tool delivered by the contractor, with the tool expected to be operational for use in the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) by winter 2026–27 storm season.

Project Detail – Board of Supervisors Discretionary Projects

Winkle Park Improvements [D1]

Status: Planned | **Themes:** Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity

Location: Live Oak

What's Funded: Complete playground replacement; park is currently closed due to damaged equipment.

Leverage: None reported. Additional funding anticipated in FY2026-27 to fulfill project budget necessary to complete full playground replacement.

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Securing additional funding to move forward complete playground replacement, leverage will be reported during next annual reporting cycle.

South County Aquatics and Community Center Feasibility Study [D2]

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity

Location: Serving the greater Watsonville area

What's Funded: Feasibility study for a South County Aquatics and Multi-Use Community Center.

Leverage: $60,000

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
City of Watsonville	Local	$60,000

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Study initiated March 2026; in progress.

Gap Funding for Pinto Lake County Park Water Monitoring [D2]

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Water Resources Management; Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity; Wildlife & Habitat Protection

Location: 757 Green Valley Rd, Watsonville

What's Funded: Water quality monitoring and tributary assessment at Pinto Lake to address recurring harmful algal blooms and support the State Water Board's Pinto Lake Nutrient TMDL, awarded competitive Measure Q Tier 1 grant funding with a match from Supervisor De Serpa's D2 allocation.

Leverage:

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
Measure Q FY25-26 Grant Program – Tier 1	Local	*$48,000 (not counted towards overall leverage)*
EPA 319(h) grant application (pending)	Federal	*Pending*

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Total project budget of $128,000 secured through combined local funding sources, including the Measure Q FY2025-26 competitive grant pool (Tier 1). Field mobilization and monitoring initiated in summer 2026.

Mesa Village Youth Soccer Field Site Preparation [D4]

Status: Complete | **Themes:** Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity

Location: 790 Green Valley Rd, Watsonville

What's Funded: Site preparation to convert an underutilized lawn area at Mesa Village County Park into a youth soccer field, funded by Supervisor Hernandez's D4 allocation.

Leverage: This is part of Mesa Village Improvements Project supported by Impact Fees, Measure K, and fundraising efforts by Friends of County Parks (see leverage summary for this project below Gap Funding for Mesa Village Nature Play Area).

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Site preparation work completed including picnic table relocation, concrete path demolition, and turf restoration.

Gap Funding for Mesa Village Nature Play Area [D4]

Status: Planned | **Themes:** Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity

Location: 790 Green Valley Rd, Watsonville

What's Funded: D4 discretionary funds closed the gap in the Friends of Santa Cruz County Parks' Tier 2 grant application to construct a natural play area at Mesa Village Park, which was awarded below full request. The final installation will include new play structure elements in the existing park made from natural materials.

Leverage: This is part of Mesa Village Improvements Project supported by Impact Fees, Measure K, and fundraising efforts by Friends of County Parks

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
Measure Q FY25-26 Grant Program – Tier 2 (County Park Friends)	Local	$229,500 *(not counted towards overall leverage)*
Measure K	Local	$100,000

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Engagement and planning with County Park Friends; anticipated project completion date of 2028.

Valle del Pájaro Outreach [D4]

Status: Complete | **Themes:** Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity

Location: 188 Whiting Road, Watsonville

What's Funded: Community workshops and mailers, in partnership with County Parks Friends, to gather public input for the Valle del Pájaro Master Plan, funded by Supervisor Hernandez's D4 allocation.

Leverage: This is part of the Master Plan Development work supported by Measure K, Park Impact Fees, and a contribution from Land Trust of Santa Cruz.

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
County Park Friends Outreach Support	Contribution and Donations	$30,000

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Two community workshops held (March and May 2026) with bilingual (English/Spanish) mailer outreach. Outreach supports development of a Master Plan for the newest south county park, Valle Del Pájaro.

Gap Funding for FY2025-26 Measure Q Tier 2 Grant: Resilience-Ready SCC: Zone-0 Equity and Workforce Initiative [D5]

Status: Planned | **Themes:** Wildfire Risk reduction & Forest Health

Location: Countywide

What's Funded: Through last-day budget direction, the District 5 Supervisor committed $90,000 in discretionary funds to close the gap between the Long Term Recovery Group's reduced Tier 2 award and its original request for the Zone-0 Equity & Workforce Initiative, a county-wide wildfire safety program providing free clearing of the 0–5 foot ember-resistant zone around homes of vulnerable residents in the Wildland-Urban Interface.

Leverage: $308,266

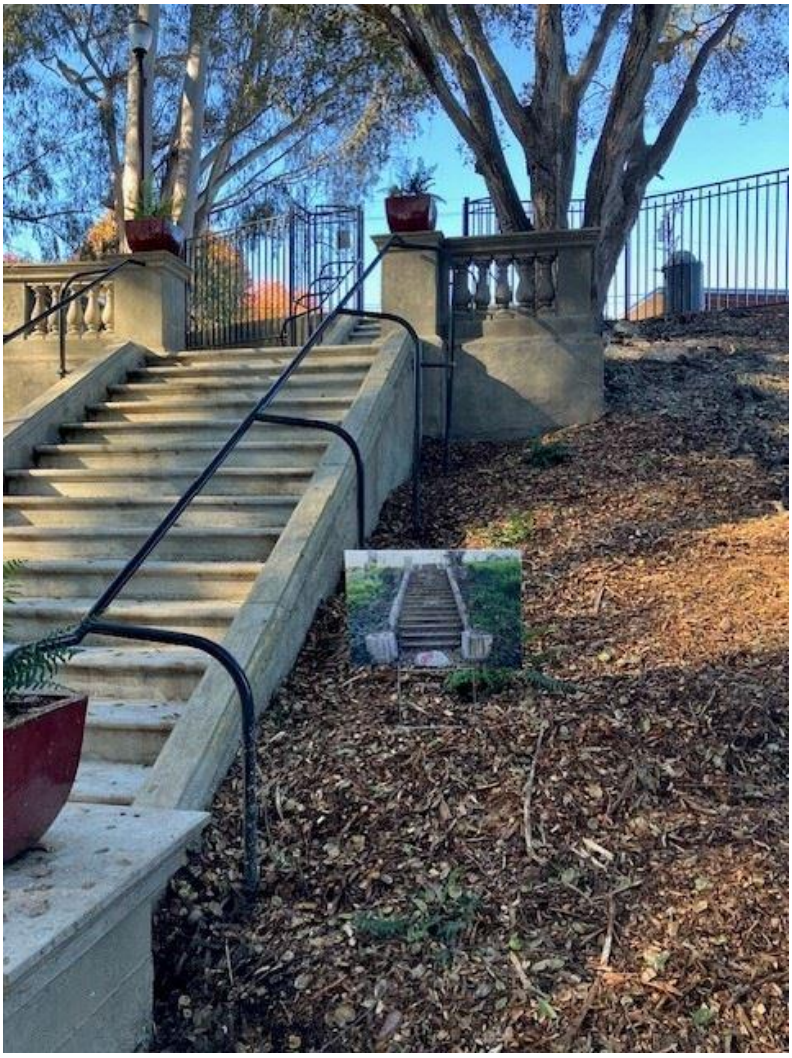
Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
Measure Q FY25-26 Grant Program – Tier 2	Local	$308,266 *(not counted towards overall leverage)*

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Grant award agreement in process. Anticipated project completion date of 2028.

MEASURE Q

FY 2025–26 Direct Allocation Annual Report

Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Wildlife Protection Act



The Park at Rispin Mansion, opened December 2025

Attachment B: City of Capitola

Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience | Santa Cruz County Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services
Report period: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

City of Capitola

Organization Type	City
Prepared By	Jim Malberg, Administrative Services Director
FY25-26 Total Allocation Received	$200,000
Board / Council Approval	City Council approved expenditures as a part of the FY25-26 budget.
Outside Funds Leveraged	None reported
Total Projects	2
Projects by Status	In Progress: 2

Project Detail

Two New Maintenance Workers

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity

Location: City of Capitola

What's Funded: Hired two new parks maintenance workers, the first increase to the parks crew in over 20 years. In FY 2025-26 the City opened an additional park, with the Park at Rispin Mansion opening to the public, plus an expected increase in use at the Jade Street Park complex due to the Community Center renovation and Treasure Cove Playground project (a $4M public-private partnership), creating need for additional staffing support.

Leverage: None reported; however, permanent increase in staffing and maintenance capacity will support the City in an increase in facility use associated with a >$4M investment in the Treasure Cove Playground project and Community Center renovation.

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Two positions hired and onboarded; new park facility, The Park at Rispin Mansion, opened to the public in December 2025.

Parks Maintenance

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity

Location: City of Capitola

What's Funded: General maintenance of parks and open space.

Leverage: None reported

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Funds utilized for ongoing parks and open space maintenance.

MEASURE Q

FY 2025–26 Direct Allocation Annual Report

Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Wildlife Protection Act



Pogonip Open Space

Attachment C: City of Santa Cruz

Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience | Santa Cruz County Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services
Report period: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

City of Santa Cruz

Organization Type	City
Prepared By	Mike Godsy, Parks Superintendent
FY25-26 Total Allocation Received	$546,074
Board / Council Approval	Yes, 9/9/25
Outside Funds Leveraged	$475,819 | State
Total Projects	4
Projects by Status	In Progress: 4

Project Detail

Brookwood Drive Roadway, Drainage, Tree Work, Erosion Control & Fire Road Access Improvements

Status: In Progress **|** **Themes:** Water Resources Management; Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity; Wildlife & Habitat Protection

Location: Brookwood Drive / DeLaveaga open space access corridor

What's Funded:

Measure Q funding supports a coordinated series of roadway, drainage, erosion control, vegetation management, and tree safety improvements along Brookwood Drive within DeLaveaga Park. The project is focused on improving roadway stability, managing stormwater runoff, reducing erosion and sediment movement, addressing hazardous trees and vegetation, and maintaining reliable access for emergency response and park operations.

Brookwood Drive provides an important connection through the DeLaveaga open space area and serves as a critical fire and emergency access route. The corridor supports Fire Department access, Parks and Recreation maintenance operations, emergency response, wildfire prevention work, and public access. It also provides an important emergency path of travel for nearby residential areas.

Leverage: None reported.

FY25-26 Accomplishments:

During FY25-26, the City advanced planning, coordination, field assessment, and initial implementation of the Brookwood Drive improvement project. Parks and Recreation staff worked with City departments, contractors, and technical partners to identify priority drainage failures, erosion areas, roadway deficiencies, hazardous trees, vegetation clearance needs, and locations where emergency access required improvement.

Initial work included critical roadway and fire access improvements, vegetation clearance, tree work, erosion control, and improvements to the direction and management of stormwater runoff. Work was prioritized to maintain safe and dependable access for emergency vehicles, fire prevention activities, park maintenance equipment, and the public.

The project also supports long-term protection of the surrounding open space by reducing uncontrolled runoff, limiting erosion and sediment movement, protecting roadway edges, and improving drainage performance during winter storms. These improvements strengthen emergency preparedness while helping protect adjacent habitat and natural resources.

The project began in April 2026 and is anticipated to be completed in October 2026. Remaining work will include additional drainage and erosion control improvements, roadway stabilization, vegetation management, tree safety work, and continued improvements to critical fire and emergency access routes along Brookwood Drive and within the surrounding DeLaveaga open space area.

Assistant Urban Forester – Urban Forestry Capacity and Baseline Inventory

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health; Water Resources Management; Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity; Wildlife & Habitat Protection

Location: Citywide urban forestry areas, open space edges, and stormwater benefit areas

What's Funded:

Measure Q funding supports an Assistant Urban Forester position to expand the City's urban forestry capacity and provide dedicated support for tree inventory, mapping, planting, maintenance planning, and wildfire vegetation management. The position works across City parks, streets, open space edges, and other priority areas where trees provide public safety, environmental, stormwater, habitat, and community benefits.

The Assistant Urban Forester will help establish and maintain a more complete baseline inventory of the City's trees, including location, species, size, condition, maintenance needs, and potential risks. This information will support long-term planning, help staff prioritize tree work, improve emergency response and maintenance coordination, and guide future planting and canopy management efforts.

The position also supports wildfire risk reduction and forest health work by assisting with vegetation assessments, tree inspections, project planning, contractor coordination, and implementation of priority work along open space edges and emergency access areas.

Leverage: None reported.

FY25-26 Accomplishments:

During FY25-26, the City successfully completed recruitment for the Assistant Urban Forester position. The addition of this position has increased staff capacity within the Urban Forestry team and provides dedicated support for citywide tree management, inventory development, planting coordination, and wildfire vegetation management.

Initial work has focused on developing the City's baseline tree inventory and mapping system, reviewing existing tree data, identifying information gaps, and establishing a consistent process for documenting tree locations, conditions, maintenance needs, and priority work. The Assistant Urban Forester has also begun supporting field inspections, tree planting activities, contractor coordination, and planning for tree and vegetation management projects.

The inventory and mapping work will continue through the next reporting period and will provide the City with a stronger foundation for prioritizing maintenance, tracking tree health and canopy conditions, identifying potential hazards, planning future planting, supporting stormwater and habitat goals, and coordinating wildfire risk reduction work across City-managed properties.

Park Maintenance Worker – Open Space Operations Capacity

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health; Water Resources Management; Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity; Wildlife & Habitat Protection; Coastal Protection & Adaptation

Location: Pogonip, DeLaveaga, Moore Creek, and other City-managed open space areas

What's Funded:

Measure Q funding supports one Park Maintenance Worker position dedicated to expanding the City's capacity to maintain and protect its open space system. The position will support work throughout Pogonip, DeLaveaga, Moore Creek, and other City-managed open space areas.

The Park Maintenance Worker will provide additional staffing for day-to-day trail maintenance, fire road upkeep, drainage improvements, erosion control, vegetation management, habitat protection, and maintenance of public and emergency access routes. This added capacity will allow the City to respond more consistently to routine maintenance needs while also supporting larger Measure Q projects and priorities.

The position will help address seasonal vegetation growth, storm-related damage, drainage failures, trail repairs, hazardous conditions, illegal dumping, and other maintenance needs that affect public access, environmental resources, wildfire preparedness, and the long-term condition of the City's open space areas.

Leverage: None reported.

FY25-26 Accomplishments:

During FY25-26, the City successfully completed recruitment and onboarding for the new Park Maintenance Worker position. The addition of this position has expanded the Open Space team's capacity to address routine maintenance needs and support larger Measure Q priorities across Pogonip, DeLaveaga, Moore Creek, and other City-managed open space areas.

Initial work has focused on trail and fire road maintenance, vegetation clearance, drainage and erosion control, emergency access improvements, habitat protection, and maintenance of heavily used public access areas. The position is also helping the City respond more consistently to seasonal vegetation growth, storm-related impacts, drainage concerns, illegal dumping, and other ongoing maintenance needs.

This additional staffing provides greater capacity to complete both day-to-day open space maintenance and larger Measure Q-funded projects while supporting safer, more reliable access for the public, maintenance crews, and emergency responders.

Wildfire Resiliency and Forest Health Grant Planning

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health; Water Resources Management; Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity; Wildlife & Habitat Protection

Location: Pogonip, DeLaveaga, and Moore Creek open space areas including forested areas, fire roads, watershed lands, and other priority locations for resilience and forest health work.

What's Funded:

Measure Q funding supports wildfire resiliency and forest health planning across the City's open space system. This work includes grant development, field assessments, mapping, environmental review, treatment prioritization, project coordination, and development of implementation strategies for future vegetation management and forest health projects.

Planning efforts are focused on Pogonip, DeLaveaga, and Moore Creek, where the City manages large forested areas, important watershed lands, fire roads, trails, emergency access routes, and areas adjacent to residential neighborhoods. The work is intended to identify and prioritize projects that reduce wildfire risk, improve forest health, protect habitat and water resources, maintain emergency access, and strengthen the long-term resilience of City-managed open spaces.

Leverage: $475,819

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
CalFire Wildfire Prevention Grant	State	$265,819
CalFire Forest Health Grant	State	$210,000

FY25-26 Accomplishments:

During FY25-26, the City advanced wildfire resiliency and forest health planning across three priority open space areas: Pogonip, DeLaveaga, and Moore Creek. Staff worked with the Fire Department, Public Works, technical consultants, and other project partners to review site conditions, identify priority treatment areas, assess fire road and emergency access needs, and develop vegetation management and forest health projects.

Planning included field review, mapping, development of treatment priorities, coordination of environmental review requirements, and identification of projects that could be advanced through state grant funding. Priority work includes vegetation management, forest thinning, hazardous tree work, fire road access, erosion and drainage improvements, habitat protection, and maintenance of defensible areas near adjacent neighborhoods and critical infrastructure.

The City secured $475,819 in leveraged CalFire grant funding, including $265,819 through the Wildfire Prevention Grant Program and $210,000 through the Forest Health Grant Program. Field work associated with the Wildfire Prevention Grant began the week of July 27, 2026. This initial work represents the start of a larger, multi-year implementation effort that will include future procurement of contracted forest crews to complete priority vegetation management, forest health, and wildfire risk reduction work through 2027.

Planning, environmental coordination, mapping, and treatment prioritization will continue as the City prepares additional work areas and contract packages for implementation.

MEASURE Q

FY 2025–26 Direct Allocation Annual Report

Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Wildlife Protection Act



Skypark repairs, City of Scotts Valley

Attachment D: City of Scotts Valley

Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience | Santa Cruz County Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services
Report period: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

City of Scotts Valley

Organization Type	City
FY25-26 Total Allocation Received	$200,000
Board / Council Approval	Measure Q expenditures adopted by City Council during the FY25-26 budget process.
Outside Funds Leveraged	None reported
Total Projects	4
Projects by Status	In Progress: 0 | Complete: 4

Project Detail

Parks Buildings Roofing

Status: Complete | **Themes:** Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity

Location: Central Scotts Valley, Skypark neighborhood

What's Funded: Replacement of the aging roof on the Parks Building to protect the facility from water intrusion, extend the useful life of the building, and reduce future maintenance costs. The project helps ensure the building remains safe and functional for City staff, park operations, and recreation programs that support the community.

Leverage: None reported.

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Completed installation of a new roof, improving the building's long-term durability and weather resistance while helping preserve a key facility that supports park maintenance and recreation services.

Siltanen Gazebo

Status: Complete | **Themes:** Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity

Location: 127 Vine Hill Road, Scotts Valley; Siltanen Park and surrounding neighborhoods

What's Funded: Repairs to the picnic area gazebo at Siltanen Park, restoring a well-used community gathering space and improving its safety, structural integrity, and appearance for residents and park visitors.

Leverage: None reported.

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Completed all planned gazebo repairs in March 2026, extending the life of the structure and improving the functionality of the picnic and BBQ area for family gatherings, community events, and everyday park use.

Glenwood Retaining Wall Culvert

Status: Complete | **Themes:** Water Resources Management; Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity

Location: 127 Vine Hill School Road, Scotts Valley; Siltanen Park and Glenwood East Preserve areas

What's Funded: Repaired a failing retaining wall culvert to stabilize the surrounding infrastructure and improve stormwater drainage. The project directs runoff to appropriate drainage facilities, helping protect nearby park infrastructure and reducing erosion and localized flooding.

Leverage: None reported.

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Completed repairs in November 2025, strengthening the retaining wall, improving drainage performance, reducing localized flooding, and lowering the likelihood of future maintenance costs. The project also provides environmental benefits by improving stormwater management and protecting downstream water quality.

Parks Related Support

Status: Completed | **Themes:** Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity

Location: All park locations in Scotts Valley

What's Funded: Ongoing maintenance and operational support for City parks, park buildings, and landscaped public spaces, including facility repairs, landscape maintenance, playground upkeep, irrigation repairs, event support, graffiti removal, litter collection, and improvements that enhance park safety, cleanliness, and accessibility.

Leverage: None reported.

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Measure Q funding supported the ongoing maintenance and operation of Scotts Valley's parks and recreational facilities throughout the year. Work included routine landscape maintenance, irrigation and facility repairs, playground and park amenity upkeep, preparation for community events, graffiti removal, and general maintenance needed to keep parks safe, clean, and welcoming. These efforts helped preserve public assets, improve the visitor experience, and ensure parks remained accessible and available for residents and community activities year-round.

MEASURE Q

FY 2025–26 Direct Allocation Annual Report

Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Wildlife Protection Act



Watsonville City Plaza

Attachment E: City of Watsonville

Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience | Santa Cruz County Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services
Report period: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

City of Watsonville

Organization Type	City
Prepared By	Nick Calubaquib, Deputy City Manager & Parks Director
FY25-26 Total Allocation Received	$456,160
Board / Council Approval	City Council approval of Measure Q FY20 25-26 expenditures was delayed until FY2026-27 awaiting a determination of the status of "Local Taxpayer Protection Act to Save Prop. 13" on the November 2026 state ballot. Since this was removed from the state ballot measure list as of 6/25, staff prepared a five-year expenditure plan approved by City Council on 9/8/26, item 13a.
Outside Funds Leveraged	$6,849,595 (Local & State; leverage for City Plaza reported through City of Watsonville's Tier 2 grant award)
Total Projects	2
Projects by Status	Planned: 2

Project Detail

Gap Funding for City Plaza

Status: Planned | **Themes:** Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity

Location: Downtown Watsonville

What's Funded: Gap funding for Watsonville City Plaza Phase 2 construction, addressing budget shortfall if the project is awarded at below the requested $600,000 level through the Measure Q FY25-26 grant program.

Leverage: $7,124,595.

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
Measure Q – Competitive Tier 2 Grant Award FY25-26 (County of Santa Cruz)	Local	$275,000 *(not counted towards overall leverage)*
Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program (State of California)	State	$3,349,595 *(leverage reported through grant program)*
City Municipal Bond (City of Watsonville)	Local	$3,500,000 *(leverage reported through grant program)*

FY25-26 Accomplishments: None; expenditure plan approved in FY2026-27 directing two years of funding. Outcomes will be reported in subsequent reporting years.

Parks Maintenance Workers

Status: Planned | **Themes:** Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity

Location: City-wide parks and open spaces

What's Funded: Additional Park Maintenance Worker positions that were eliminated over the past few years that are needed with the reopening of Ramsay Park. Measure Q funding to support two (2) fulltime Park Maintenance Worker Is and two (2) 960-hour seasonal Park Maintenance Aides.

Leverage: None reported.

FY25-26 Accomplishments: None; expenditure plan approved in FY2026-27 directing two years of funding. Outcomes will be reported in subsequent reporting years.

MEASURE Q

FY 2025–26 Direct Allocation Annual Report

Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Wildlife Protection Act



Attachment F: Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County

Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience | Santa Cruz County Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services
Report period: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County

Organization Type	Special District
Prepared By	Lisa Lurie, Executive Director
FY25-26 Total Allocation Received	$701,116
Board / Council Approval	Yes, approved 2/11/2026.
Outside Funds Leveraged	Funds leveraged by Measure Q and spent this year: **$968,156** Additional grant funds secured: **$961,858**
Total Projects	9
Projects by Status	In Progress: 9 | Planned: 1

Primary Conservation Services (crossing program areas)

Responding to Requests for Assistance

Status: In Progress **|** **Themes:** Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health; Water Resources Management; Wildlife & Habitat Protection; Agricultural & Working Lands Protection

Location: Countywide

What's Funded: One-on-one technical assistance to community members seeking guidance on natural resources conservation actions they can take on their own properties or farms.

Leverage:

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
Santa Cruz County Environmental Health (EH)	Local/In-Kind	$5,000

FY25-26 Accomplishments

The RCDSCC provides landowners with practical, no-cost technical assistance to address common challenges such as erosion, drainage problems, road maintenance, wildfire risk, forest health, and stream stewardship. Through site visits, planning assistance, educational resources, and, when available, funding opportunities, we help residents identify solutions that protect their property while improving the health and resilience of the surrounding landscape. For many landowners, these services are a starting point for taking action on their own properties or accessing additional financial assistance for project implementation. Past surveys indicate that approximately 20-25% of participants go on to implement one or more recommended stewardship practices. Together, these efforts help improve watershed health, wildfire resilience, and community safety throughout Santa Cruz County.

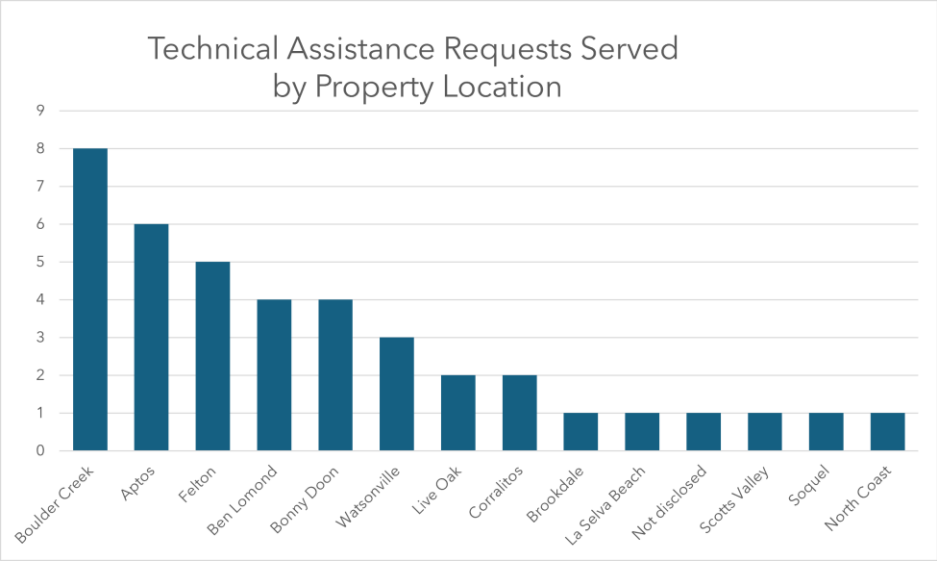
The RCDSCC also provides technical assistance to agricultural producers on topics related to land and water stewardship including stormwater management, on-farm pollinator habitat development, and irrigation and nutrient management. These services help growers improve water conservation, protect water quality, enhance habitat for beneficial insects, and increase the long-term resilience and sustainability of agricultural operations throughout Santa Cruz County.

Measure Q funding plays a vital role in sustaining these services by providing flexible, reliable funding for initial technical assistance visits and for landowner needs that fall outside the scope of other grant programs. This stable source of local funding allows the RCDSCC to provide consistent, responsive assistance at the direct request of community members who need it. This funding is also highly leveraged, helping connect landowners with a variety of state, federal, and local funding programs that provide additional technical and financial resources for implementation. In 2025-26, Measure Q support helped expand staff capacity to meet growing community demand for technical assistance, creating opportunities to further increase service delivery in the coming year. These initial consultations are

often the first step in building relationships with landowners and connecting them to longer-term stewardship and restoration opportunities.

During the reporting period, the RCDSCC provided technical assistance to **39 landowners** across all sections of the County. Of those, 14 have received on-site technical recommendations from experts at the RCDSCC and partner consultants in their area of need with 8 more scheduled for the next reporting period. All others received assistance via phone and email including utilizing our on-line reference library or instructional videos/recorded workshops.





Outreach and Communications

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health; Water Resources Management; Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity; Wildlife & Habitat Protection

Location: Countywide

What's Funded: RCDSCC communication and outreach activities to improve community awareness of natural resources and best practices for stewarding land, water, and habitat; communications plan development and youth mentorship.

Leverage: None reported.

FY25-26 Accomplishments:

The RCDSCC presented and tabled at the **State of the San Lorenzo River Symposium** focused on watershed health, regional investment in conservation, species recovery, emerging threats to forests, and general protection efforts for the San Lorenzo River. We talked with attendees about our various water quality, stream care and wildfire resilience programs and services.

The RCDSCC hosted an outreach table at **Earth Day Santa Cruz**, a family-friendly event that brings together residents, schools, businesses, and community organizations to promote environmental stewardship and sustainability. Staff engaged attendees on topics including stream stewardship, wildfire resilience, ecological road management, drainage and erosion issues, endangered species, and sustainable agriculture, while sharing information about RCDSCC programs and resources available to local landowners and residents.

Attended **Together Conference 2026**, hosted by TOGETHER Bay Area, and staffed an outreach table focused on natural resource conservation and partnership development. The event provided valuable opportunities to connect with regional organizations, share information about RCDSCC programs, and strengthen collaborative relationships.

RCDSCC staff mentored an **Eagle Scout who completed a community service project** at Pinto Lake City Park in partnership with the City of Watsonville. The Scout designed and developed an educational sign highlighting the safety risks associated with water quality impacts at Pinto Lake, and her troop constructed a permanent kiosk to display the information.

Staff drafted a **Request for Proposal for the development of an RCDSCC Communications Plan**. The plan will enhance the RCDSCC's ability to communicate natural resource conservation issues, programs, and technical assistance opportunities to landowners, residents, and community partners. By improving public awareness and engagement, the plan will support greater participation in conservation projects and practices that protect local watersheds, soils, wildlife habitat, agricultural lands, and other natural resources throughout Santa Cruz County. The winning consultant is expected to begin work in September with a rollout of the completed plan in early 2027.

RCDSCC staff **wrote and distributed press releases and outreach materials** to local media outlets and community organizations regarding RCDSCC managed wildfire resilience projects. These communications helped keep residents informed about activities occurring in their neighborhoods and increased awareness of efforts to improve community safety, reduce wildfire risk, and protect natural resources.

Fund Development and Grant Writing

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health; Water Resources Management; Wildlife & Habitat Protection; Agricultural & Working Lands Protection

Location: Countywide

What's Funded: RCDSCC staff and consultant grant writers will bring additional state, federal, and private funding into our community to expand the impact of Measure Q funds across program areas.

Leverage: None reported; awarded grants are leveraged across various RCD program areas supported by Measure Q.

FY25-26 Accomplishments:

The RCDSCC developed concept and full proposals to state, federal and local competitive grants to fund projects across our various program areas. The table below is a summary of full proposals submitted during the reporting period.

Full proposal submittal status as of 6/30/2026

RCDSCC program	Project Description	Fund Source Type (federal, state, local)	Amount	Status
Watershed Restoration	**Lower Scott Creek at Swanton Pacific Ranch Restoration Project Planning**	**Local**	**$190,000**	**Awarded**
Forest Health and Wildfire Resiliency	**Valencia Shaded Fuel Break**	**State**	**$771,858**	**Awarded**
Forest Health and Wildfire Resiliency	Community-scale fuel reduction	State	$949,958	Denied
Forest Health and Wildfire Resiliency	Last Chance Road Phase 2 Shaded Fuel Break	State	$260,000	Waiting Decision
Stewardship in Agriculture	Open-source technology for irrigation efficiency	federal	$1,050,000	Waiting Decision
Total Awarded			**$961,858**	

Coordination, Collaboration, and Project Development

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health; Wildlife & Habitat Protection; Agricultural & Working Lands Protection

Location: Countywide

What's Funded: RCDSCC staff will lead, convene, facilitate, and/or participate in collaboration and coordination efforts to build relationships and understanding and develop projects that cross property lines, jurisdictions, or interest groups. Examples include the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network, Pajaro Compass, Integrated Watershed Restoration Program, Regional Priority Plan, Regional Conservation Investment Strategy, Weed Management Area, Regional Soil Hubs, watershed coordination (ex. Pinto Lake, Pajaro, Pogonip, Molino, Soquel Creek), etc. The RCDSCC will coordinate with the other named entities funded through Measure Q to maximize our collective impact.

Leverage: Reported on a program-specific basis.

FY25-26 Accomplishments:

With support from Measure Q, during FY25-26 RCDSCC staff participated in various collaborative efforts leading to project identification and development, including:

Participating in meetings of the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network to identify and prioritize regional forest health and wildfire resilience projects and to discuss regional issues and needs like exploring solutions for biomass utilization.

Coordinating with County staff and City of Watsonville staff on strategies for addressing water quality issues in the Pinto Lake watershed. These discussions supported the County's Measure Q competitive grant proposal for tributary monitoring of the lake, and the development of future state funding proposal concepts for a holistic watershed approach to improving water quality.

Leading coordination of the North Central Coast Regional Ag and Climate Hub and building ag industry partnerships to advance climate change resilience and mitigation on farms. The North Central Coast Regional Ag and Climate Hub developed partnerships and secured funding to advance implementation of a regional compost cost-share program for agricultural lands. RCDSCC staff has led the coordination and implementation of this program in Santa Cruz County, supporting growers and ag landowners in improving soil health and augmenting soil water holding capacity through compost application and one on one consultations. This collaborative also helped shape and develop the block grant proposal for the State Water and Energy Efficiency Program (SWEEP) to bring cost share assistance to growers in the region for water and energy saving projects.

Building partnerships with food systems partners such as Grey Bears to assess needs and potential RCDSCC program development around local food system resilience.

Program Specific Priority Projects

Watershed Restoration

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Water Resources Management; Wildlife & Habitat Protection; Agricultural & Working Lands Protection

Location: Countywide

What's Funded: Countywide conservation technical assistance, grant writing, partnership coordination, project development plus development of a Conservation Plan for Anna Jean Cummings Park with County Parks.

Leverage:

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
County Parks (Caltrans mitigation dollars)	Local / in-kind	**$60,000**

FY25-26 Accomplishments:

Watershed Restoration program activities funded through Measure Q this FY focused on fund development (summarized above) and developing a Conservation Plan for Anna Jean Cummings County Park.

The RCDSCC worked with Santa Cruz County Parks (Parks) to develop a **draft conservation plan for Anna Jean Cummings Park** in Soquel that will provide decision-making tools and management actions related to the park's natural resources. The plan includes information on existing conditions, natural resource concerns, and opportunities for creating, restoring, and enhancing the soil, water, plant, and wildlife resources on the property and where they intersect with the surrounding ecological systems. Designed to serve as a model for future conservation planning efforts at other County parks, the project was supported through a combination of Measure Q funding and Caltrans mitigation funding leveraged by County Parks.

Forest Health

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health; Wildlife & Habitat Protection

Location: Countywide; specific project implementation focus in Larkin Valley area

What's Funded: Countywide forest health and wildfire resilience technical assistance, grant writing, partnership coordination, project development, Development of a South County oak woodland restoration program, a local cost-share program for forest health and wildfire resilience on private lands, and a low-cost project maintenance fund.

Leverage:

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
DOC/Coastal Conservancy Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program	State	$120,000
CARCD: NRCS Forestry TA	Federal	$12,842
Total		**$132,842**

FY25-26 Accomplishments:

South County Oak Woodland Restoration Program

RCDSCC used Measure Q dollars to leverage and extend work initiated with Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program funding provided through a State Coastal Conservancy block grant. The earlier investment provided consultant support to develop the South County Oak Woodland Restoration Program and complete environmental compliance, including final California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation. The program focuses on removing flammable, invasive blue gum eucalyptus in the Larkin Valley–Aptos Hills area of Santa Cruz County and restoring treated sites to endemic San Andreas oak woodland and other native habitat. Completion of the planning and environmental compliance phase has created a strong foundation for future implementation. The RCDSCC's Measure Q allocation provides ongoing local capacity that can support continued program refinement, development of programmatic tools

and processes, advancement of the landowner cost-share framework, and pursuit of implementation funding opportunities. Through this approach, RCDSCC is leveraging the significant investment made through Coastal Conservancy funding to position the program for future launch and long-term success. Measure Q resources help ensure that the planning work completed to date remains actionable and that the program is well-prepared to attract future implementation funding.

Rural Living Cost-share Program

RCDSCC used Measure Q dollars to advance development of the Rural Living Cost-share Program, a reimbursement-based framework intended to help communities implement projects that improve wildfire resilience and natural resource stewardship. Measure Q supported the staff capacity needed to define the program structure, identify eligible activities, and develop an approach for reimbursing community-scale work. Potential activities include fuel load reduction, forest health improvements, invasive plant removal, private rural road improvements that support water quality and emergency access, erosion and drainage around homes, and other eligible best conservation practices. Further refinement of the programmatic elements are needed, such as the application portal, but RCDSCC staff will continue to build out these components.

RCDSCC also leveraged Measure Q's local grant program to secure a Tier II Measure Q grant for a Community-Scale Fuel Load Reduction Pilot. The pilot will put elements of the broader cost-share framework into practice by providing participating neighborhoods with direct RCDSCC assistance to design beneficial community-scale projects. Communities will then implement approved work and receive reimbursement based on predetermined treatment rates. During the remainder of 2026, RCDSCC will use Measure Q resources to complete the pilot framework, establish participation and reimbursement procedures, and prepare outreach materials, with a program announcement targeted for January 2027. Together, these investments are moving the Rural Living Cost-share Program from a community-supported concept toward program delivery.

Maintenance Fund

RCDSCC established a Small Maintenance Fund using Measure Q dollars to address time-sensitive needs that can arise after large vegetation removal and restoration projects. During the critical period following implementation, projects may require rapid follow-up to control invasive plant regrowth, support irrigation, or install supplemental erosion-control measures. Although no funds were expended during the first year, Measure Q provided a dedicated funding mechanism and allowed RCDSCC staff to assess completed and ongoing projects, identify likely maintenance needs, and prioritize projects that may require support later this fall.

Stewardship in Agriculture

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Water Resources Management; Wildlife & Habitat Protection; Agricultural & Working Lands Protection

Location: Countywide, emphasis on Pajaro Valley and North Coast growers

What's Funded: Countywide ag stewardship technical assistance, grant writing, partnership coordination, project development, Cover Crop Program, and irrigation/nutrient management technical assistance for growers, prioritizing underserved growers.

Leverage:

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency	Local	$366,184
UCSC USDA-NIFA AFRI	Federal	$18,735
Total		**$384,919**

FY25-26 Accomplishments:

Measure Q funding supported the continued delivery of the RCDSCC's Cover Crop and Irrigation/Nutrient Management programs for growers throughout Santa Cruz County. These programs assist both conventional and organic producers in improving water conservation, stormwater management, and overall water quality, helping to strengthen the long-term sustainability and resilience of local agricultural operations.

By leveraging local funding from the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency and federal funding from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, the RCDSCC was able to assist **14 growers** with cover crop seed cost-share assistance and technical support and another **33 growers** with irrigation and nutrient management technical assistance.

Program development:

RCDSCC staff initiated the hiring process for a new Water Resources and Managed Aquifer Recharge Project Manager. This position will support groundwater sustainability and resilience in the Pajaro Valley.

Community Engagement & Resilience

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health; Water Resources Management; Coastal Protection & Adaptation

Location: Countywide; chipping program serves the wildland-urban interface

What's Funded: Community resilience staff capacity, the no-cost chipping program for defensible space, and rural resident workshops on winter and wildfire preparedness, drainage, and living near sensitive habitat.

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant	Federal	$124,185
Coastal Conservancy Forest Health	State	$14,151
County of Santa Cruz OR3 2025 Chipping Funds	Local	$17,148
In-kind Match from the participating landowners	Local	$229,911
Total		**$385,395**

FY25-26 Accomplishments:

Continued no-cost chipping program delivery. Measure Q funds provided critical bridge funding support to continue delivery of this program when federal funding was paused. Developed Community Resilience program specialist position at the RCDSCC, recruited and hired new staff member to fill this role (start date July 2026).

Community Resilience staff capacity

Measure Q enabled the RCDSCC to recruit for, and now partially fund, a new staff position – a "Forest Health and Community Resiliency Program Specialist" to lead delivery of community-based wildfire preparedness and prevention programs, provide technical assistance to landowners to plan, develop, and implement large and small scale projects that facilitate wildfire resiliency, forest health, and improved watershed function. During FY5-26 and with funding support from Measure Q the RCDSCC developed the position and completed recruitment. The new hire will begin in July 2026.

Chipping Program Services

For more than 15 years, the RCDSCC has provided community chipping services when funding has been available. While these programs have been highly valued by residents as an incentive to reduce wildfire risk, their availability has been intermittent due to funding limitations, resulting in periodic service gaps and restricting the number of households that could be served each year.

During the 2025-26 fiscal year, building off our past work and successes of our Spring No-Cost Chipping and Summer/Fall Neighborhood Chipping Reimbursement offers and collaborations, the RCDSCC was able to make steps toward building a more consistent and stable program for the future.

Through measure Q and other leveraged funds, **502 households** participated in chipping services.

Measure Q funds were used to:

Build chipping program staff capacity. Measure Q funds were used for the recruitment of a new dedicated staff (see Community Resilience Staff Capacity above) person, which will allow the RCDSCC to coordinate and manage the program, pursue additional grant funding, and provide local match often required for competitive grant opportunities. This increased organizational capacity will improve our ability to secure external funding for chipping services, expand

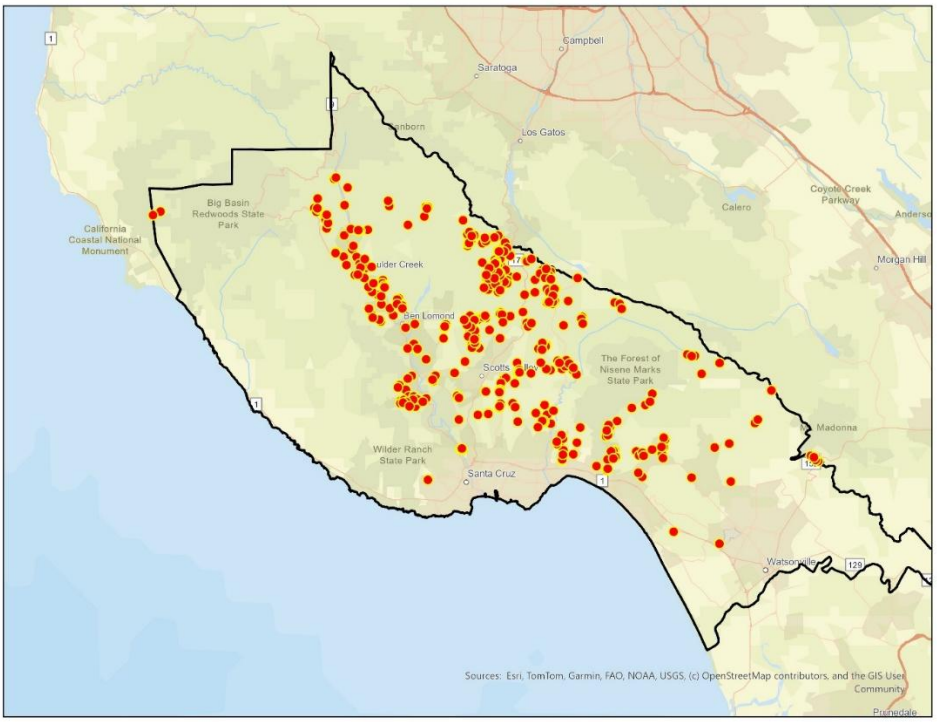
service delivery, and ensure that residents have reliable access to chipping services as part of broader wildfire risk reduction efforts.

During the transition to a dedicated chipping program position, the RCDSCC leveraged Coastal Conservancy Forest Health funds to maintain the staff capacity required for program administration, including intake, scheduling, contractor coordination, partner communication, and troubleshooting.

Chipping Services: In 2026, for the first time, the RCDSCC did not need to limit the number of eligible households participating in the chipping program. Through the Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 chipping programs, the RCDSCC directly served a total of 445 households. Chipping contractor costs were funded primarily through a competitive USDA Community Wildfire Defense Grant awarded to the RCDSCC, with additional support from the County of Santa Cruz OR3 department and Measure Q funding.

The RCDSCC also provided pass-through funding to cover 60% of chipping contractor costs for an additional 57 households in Bonny Doon through its longstanding collaboration with the Bonny Doon Fire Safe Council, which operates a robust chipping program for residents in their coverage area.

Beyond program funding, residents contribute substantial in-kind support by conducting the vegetation removal, material preparation, and neighborhood coordination necessary for chipping events. These community contributions were valued at an estimated **$229,911** in 2025-26, reflecting a significant local investment in wildfire resilience.



Map of households served in the 2026 Spring No-cost Chipping Program.

Impact Evaluation, Reporting, and Administration

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health; Water Resources Management; Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity; Wildlife & Habitat Protection; Agricultural & Working Lands Protection; Coastal Protection & Adaptation

Location: Countywide

What's Funded: Organizational efficiency tools, impact metric tracking and annual reporting, and administration of the RCDSCC's Measure Q allocation.

Leverage: None reported.

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Set up systems for managing Measure Q direct allocation funds, Initiated exploration of contact management and reporting tools. RCDSCC staff and board developed and approved an 18 month Measure Q Expenditure Plan. As part of our annual work planning, RCDSCC staff identified priority projects and programs for Measure Q funding for this and future years. This project list will be reviewed and updated regularly.

Contingency and Disaster Response

Status: Planned | **Themes:** Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health; Water Resources Management; Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity; Wildlife & Habitat Protection; Agricultural & Working Lands Protection; Coastal Protection & Adaptation

Location: Countywide

What's Funded: A contingency fund for existing projects, future large project needs, and retain as emergency deployment for post-disaster technical assistance capacity.

Leverage: None reported.

FY25-26 Accomplishments: None. Funds held for future contingencies and disaster response needs.

MEASURE Q

FY 2025–26 Direct Allocation Annual Report

Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Wildlife Protection Act



Watsonville Slough Farm

Attachment G: Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience | Santa Cruz County Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services
Report period: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

Organization Type	Nonprofit 501(c)(3)
Prepared By	Sarah Newkirk, Executive Director
FY25-26 Total Allocation Received	$701,116.71
Board / Council Approval	Board approves strategic priorities which inform staff expenditure planning.
Outside Funds Leveraged	$1,728,837 (Private, Local, State, Federal)
Total Projects	4
Projects by Status	In Progress: 4

Project Detail

Recreational Trail Establishment, Improvement, and Maintenance

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity

Location: Multiple Land Trust and partner properties countywide; example site: Glenwood Open Space Preserve

What's Funded: New trail development, infrastructure improvements, ongoing maintenance, and accessibility enhancements across Land Trust properties, including trail maintenance, erosion control, and signage at Glenwood Open Space Preserve.

Leverage:

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
Glenwood Open Space Trails Management	City of Scotts Valley / Land Trust Donations	$36,807
San Vicente Redwoods Trails Management	Land Trust Donations	$278,566

FY25-26 Accomplishments:

The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County demonstrated a comprehensive, adaptive, and community-engaged approach to recreational trail improvement and maintenance. Activities were distributed across multiple properties, with a focus on safety, accessibility, ecological stewardship, and public enjoyment.

Trail Improvement and Upgrades

- **Vegetation Management:** Regular mowing, brushing, and clearing of encroaching vegetation and downed trees were conducted across properties to maintain safe and accessible trails.
- **Infrastructure Enhancements:** Upgrades included installation of ADA-accessible picnic tables, new signage, interpretive signs, and improvements to trailheads and access points (e.g., Antonelli Pond, San Vicente Redwoods).
- **Erosion and Drainage:** Erosion control measures, such as grading, installation of drainage features, and repairs to trail surfaces, were implemented to address storm impacts and improve trail durability.
- **Interpretive and Educational Features:** Development of bilingual interpretive signage, audio trails, and educational tours enhanced visitor experience and community connection to the land.

Trail Maintenance and Safety

- **Routine Patrols and Monitoring:** Staff and volunteers conducted regular patrols, annual monitoring, and maintenance workdays to identify and address trail hazards, remove trash, and ensure compliance with safety standards.

- **Hazard Mitigation:** Tree risk assessments and removal of hazardous limbs or trees were prioritized, especially after storms or wind advisories (notably at San Vicente Redwoods and Glenwood Open Space Preserve).
- **Volunteer Engagement:** National Trails Day events, community clean-ups, and volunteer workdays played a role in maintaining and improving trail systems.

Active and Collaborative Approach

- **Partnerships:** Collaboration with local agencies, nonprofits, and community groups ensured that trail projects met both conservation and recreational goals.

Endangered Species Recovery and Habitat Stewardship

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Wildlife & Habitat Protection

Location: Multiple properties countywide; example sites: weelili onyemak and Little Glen Preserves, upper Soquel Creek watershed

What's Funded: Habitat restoration, monitoring, and species recovery work for endangered species including the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander: breeding pond maintenance, upland habitat management, invasive species control, and population monitoring.

Leverage:

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
Santa Cruz Long-Toed Salamander Monitoring and Habitat Management	Land Trust Donations / Local	$62,665
Scotts Valley Spineflower Reintroduction	Developer Mitigation Funds / Local	$11,422

FY25-26 Accomplishments: The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County implemented a comprehensive, science-based, and collaborative approach to endangered species recovery and habitat stewardship. Activities were distributed across multiple properties and species, with a focus on adaptive management, research, and community engagement to ensure long-term conservation success.

Habitat Stewardship

- **Invasive Species Management:** Across all properties, staff and contractors removed invasive plants and implemented weed management plans, especially in sensitive habitats like the Santa Cruz Sandhills
- **Hydrology and Pond Management:** At weelili onyenmak and other properties, ponds were managed to maintain suitable breeding conditions for endangered amphibians.
- **Grazing and Grassland Management:** Targeted grazing was used as a tool for habitat enhancement, rare plant conservation, and invasive species control.
- **Annual and Seasonal Monitoring:** Regular monitoring of rare species populations and habitat conditions was conducted across properties. Surveys and habitat management were carried out at Sandhills properties for endangered invertebrates.

Restoration Planning, collaboration and Education

- **Restoration Planning and Collaboration:** The Land Trust led or participated in multi-agency restoration planning efforts involving state and federal agencies, academic partners, and local organizations.
- **Volunteer Involvement:** Volunteers participated in monitoring, restoration workdays, and educational events (e.g., National Trails Day, nest box monitoring, bird walks).
- **Interpretive Signage and Outreach:** Bilingual interpretive signs, tours, and community events increased public awareness of endangered species and habitat stewardship efforts.

Expanding Public Access to Open Space

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Parks, Recreation, Access & Equity

Location: Watsonville Slough Farm, north Watsonville

What's Funded: Planning and infrastructure (parking, signage, amenities) to expand equitable public access to nature at Watsonville Slough Farm, plus community engagement and maintenance.

Leverage:

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
California State Coastal Conservancy / Prop 84 planning grant California Natural Resources Agency / Prop 68 Green Infrastructure Grant	State	$629,900
Land Trust Donations	Local	$562,089

FY25-26 Accomplishments: Throughout the year, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County planned extensively for the Watsonville Slough Farm Community Harvest Project. This new community space will include accessible public trails and educational programs. Trail system and program planning and development involved multiple stakeholders and local organizations to ensure accessibility, sustainability, and community relevance.

Vegetation Management and Fire Risk Reduction

Status: In Progress | **Themes:** Wildfire Risk Reduction & Forest Health, Wildlife & Habitat Protection

Location: Multiple properties, primarily the Santa Cruz Sandhills (Bonny Doon, Ben Lomond, Felton, Scotts Valley, Zayante)

What's Funded: Vegetation and brush thinning, prescribed grazing, and native plant restoration to reduce wildfire fuel loads across Land Trust preserves, focused on the Santa Cruz Sandhills ecosystem.

Leverage:

Program / Fund	Source Type	Amount
Endemic Sandhills Habitat Management	Land Trust Donations	$64,064
Byrne Forest Management	Home Rental Income	$83,324

FY25-26 Accomplishments: The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County implemented a comprehensive, adaptive, and collaborative approach to vegetation management and fire risk reduction. Activities were distributed across multiple properties, with a focus on reducing wildfire risk, maintaining safe access, restoring native habitats, and engaging partners and the community in fire-safe stewardship.

Vegetation Management Practices

- **Road and Access Routine Maintenance:** Regular mowing, brushing and maintenance of roads, driveways, and access points (e.g., grading, clearing, erosion control) ensured emergency vehicle access and reduced fire hazards.
- **Tree and Limb Clearing:** Staff and contractors regularly cleared downed trees and hazardous limbs from trails and roads, especially after storms or wind advisories.
- **Chipping and Mastication:** Chipping of woody debris and mastication of dense vegetation were used to reduce fuel loads and improve access.
- **Shaded Fuel Breaks:** The Land Trust worked with partners to implement shaded fuel breaks in coordination with the Resource Conservation District and Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association.

Fire Risk Reduction Planning

- **Prescribed Burn Planning:** Collaborative planning for prescribed burns took place at Star Creek Ranch, Sandhills properties, and weelili onyenmak, involving partners such as CAL FIRE and the Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association. Burn plans were developed to restore native habitats and reduce wildfire risk.
- **Eucalyptus and Hazardous Tree Removal:** Targeted removal of fire-prone species like eucalyptus was planned at weelili onyenmak and other properties with grant support and in partnership with local agencies.

Monitoring, Collaboration, and Adaptive Management

- **Annual and Seasonal Monitoring:** Staff conducted regular patrols and monitoring to assess vegetation conditions, fuel loads, and fire risk, adjusting management actions as needed.

- **Partnerships:** Collaboration with CAL FIRE, Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association