

Climate Resilient Monterey Bay



SANTA CRUZ CITY PARKS FLOOD MITIGATION AND HABITAT ENHANCEMENT

SUMMARY

The City of Santa Cruz is restoring and improving two key park areas along the San Lorenzo River — Jessie Street Marsh and San Lorenzo Park's Riverlands. These projects will expand wetlands, reduce local flood risks, and create new places for people to connect with nature. At Jessie Street Marsh, the City will remove contaminated soil, expand wetland areas, and build an ADA-accessible interpretive trail that connects the Lower Ocean neighborhood to the regional trail system. The area will feature native plantings, educational signs, and improved water quality. At San Lorenzo Park, the City will enhance the natural floodplain by adding multi-use lawns, walking trails, and habitat areas that support birds, pollinators, and other wildlife. Together, these efforts will make the parks safer, healthier, and more enjoyable for residents and visitors.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The main goal of these projects is to improve both community safety and the health of the environment. The work will bring back natural wetland and river habitats, help absorb and slow floodwaters, and create open, accessible spaces for everyone to enjoy. The projects also focus on community engagement and environmental justice by ensuring that nearby residents—especially those in historically underserved neighborhoods—have a voice in shaping the designs and receive lasting benefits from the improvements. Another key goal is to create long-term plans for monitoring and maintaining the restored areas so they stay healthy and resilient well beyond completion.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The City is guiding this work through several connected phases that will continue through June 2029. The first phase focuses on community engagement, with consultants helping to lead outreach, provide translation services, and offer stipends for community representatives. Design teams are developing detailed restoration and trail plans and conducting studies to understand how water moves through the area during storms. The environmental review and permitting process will ensure that the work meets all safety and conservation standards. Once designs and permits are complete, the City will hire contractors to begin construction and habitat restoration.

ADAPTATION STRATEGY

Flood Risk Reduction



PARTNERS



[City of Santa Cruz](https://www.santacruzca.gov/)



This work is part of Climate Resilient Monterey Bay (CRMB), an initiative through the California Marine Sanctuary Foundation. CRMB is Federally funded as part of the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge through the Inflation Reduction Act and administered by the Office for Coastal Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



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This will include remediating contaminated fill at Jessie Street Marsh, reshaping wetland edges, planting native vegetation, and building new accessible trails and recreation spaces at both sites. As construction wraps up, the City will finalize monitoring, operations, and maintenance plans and build partnerships with local groups to support long-term care of the restored areas. By June 2029, the Jessie Street Marsh and San Lorenzo Riverlands projects will be fully complete, providing lasting flood protection, habitat improvements, and safe public spaces for the Santa Cruz community.

ADAPTATION STRATEGY

Flood Risk Reduction



PARTNERS



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