

35. Approve grant allocations in the total amount of \$18,500 from the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Fish and Game Propagation Fund for four local community projects to enhance fish and wildlife, and take related actions ()



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Health Services Agency

Subject: Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission Grant Allocations Fiscal Year 2024-25

Meeting Date: February 11, 2025

Formal Title: Approve grant allocations in the total amount of \$18,500 from the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Fish and Game Propagation Fund for four local community projects to enhance fish and wildlife, and take related actions

Recommended Actions

1. Approve grant allocations in the total amount of \$18,500 from the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Fish and Game Propagation Fund for four local community projects to enhance fish and wildlife, as recommended by the County of Santa Cruz Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission; and
2. Authorize the Auditor-Controller to disburse the allocations to recipients in the amounts recommended by the County of Santa Cruz Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission.

Executive Summary

The Health Services Agency (HSA) requests Board approval of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 grant allocations of the County of Santa Cruz Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission (Commission) in the amount of \$18,500. The Commission is recommending allocation of funds to four proposals to benefit native fish and wildlife in Santa Cruz County.

Discussion

HSA Environmental Health Division (Environmental Health) provides staff support for the Commission, which makes annual recommendations for expenditures from the Fish and Game Propagation Fund. This fund receives the County's portion of fines, settlements and judgments resulting from violations of the California Fish and Game Code.

The FY 2024-25 budget for this fund approved by the Board included a \$24,000 appropriation for grants to agencies or entities for the purpose of fish and wildlife enhancement or education projects that are consistent with the statutory goals of the fund. Of the \$24,000, \$18,500 will be used on the four projects below and the remaining will be kept in the trust fund. The trust fund will provide the ability to cover urgent events throughout the year, enabling the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission to respond effectively. Additionally, it will help ensure the availability of funding for the following year, as the funds income can vary significantly.

The Commission solicits proposals and makes recommendations to the Board regarding the fund's annual disbursement. For FY 2024-25, eight proposals were received by the Commission and considered over the course of two noticed public meetings held on November 7, 2024, and December 5, 2024. The Commission recommends full allocations for four (4) projects and no allocation for four projects as summarized below. For more information on the selection of approved applications

during the December 5th meeting, please visit the [Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission Meetings](#).

Table 1 Summary of Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission Recommended Grant Allocations FY 2024-25

1.	Branciforte Fish Tracking Project	\$3,000.00
2.	Wildlife Rehabilitation	\$3,000.00
3.	River Stewards	\$5,000.00
4.	Resolving Negative Human-Wildlife Conflicts	\$7,500.00

Funding allocations are recommended for the four proposals based on discussion by the Commission and available funds. The Commission allocation recommendations are as follows:

1. Branciforte Fish Tracking Project

A full allocation of \$3,000 to California Trout to continue operation of a Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tag antenna to count salmonids swimming above the Branciforte Flood Control Channel. This data will provide baseline fish passage levels before barriers in the channel are addressed.

2. Wildlife Rehabilitation

A full allocation of \$3,000 to Native Animal Rescue to care for orphaned, sick and injured wildlife with the goal of releasing healthy animals back into the wild.

3. River Stewards

A full allocation of \$5,000 to Coastal Watershed Council to provide direct benefit to native fish and wildlife habitat along the lower San Lorenzo River through the removal of 1,000 square feet of highly invasive species and seeding of native plant species, while educating 25 unique individuals experiencing homelessness about riparian stewardship.

4. Resolving Negative Santa Cruz County Human-Wildlife Conflicts

A full allocation of \$7,500 to International Bird Rescue to support a small portion of the costs of necessary, expendable clinic and medical supplies, and a small portion of utilities necessary to provide a stable clinic and rehabilitation environment for 300 native, wild, aquatic birds rescued from Santa Cruz County.

Financial Impact

The total cost of these allocations is \$18,500 under account 135420/75231. The Fish and Game Propagation Fund receives the County's portion of fines, settlements and judgements from fish and wildlife violations of the California Fish and Game Code and can only be spent on projects and programs that benefit native fish and wildlife.

Strategic Initiatives

Operational Plan - Sustainable Environment

Submitted By:

Monica Morales

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.