

Climate Resilience Regional Challenge

PROJECT SUMMARIES

REGIONAL ADAPTATION FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE OF MONTEREY BAY COASTAL COMMUNITIES

Project Lead: California Marine Sanctuary Foundation

Funding Amount: \$71,100,000

SUMMARY

This project addresses the highest priority climate risks for California’s Monterey Bay region—flooding and wildfires—by implementing four integrated adaptation strategies. A comprehensive workforce development component is included to improve the region’s ability to address future challenges.

Each strategy uses nature-based approaches to strengthen ecosystems and make human communities more resilient. Indigenous knowledge is central to the wildfire adaptation strategies, and cultural practices are part of wetland restoration implementation. The workforce development initiative emphasizes recruitment from disadvantaged communities to expand the team of regional adaptation experts.

DETAILS

This project will be accomplished through the following adaptation strategies.

Regional Collaboration and Capacity Building

The centerpiece of this effort is the Monterey Bay Climate Adaptation Action Network, to be initiated with this grant. The network is envisioned as the hub for the region’s climate adaptation efforts, particularly collective planning and coordination. A major focus is supporting representation by tribes and disadvantaged communities. Membership is inclusive; all project partners will participate, including universities, community-based organizations, nonprofits, research institutions, and all levels of government.

Flood Risk Reduction

This strategy implements a complementary suite of nature-based solutions that strengthen shorelines and restore and expand floodplains and salt marshes to provide accommodation



space for flood waters that would otherwise damage homes and infrastructure. The results are reduced flood risk, better coastal access, and more resilient communities.

Wildfire Risk Reduction

This strategy will reduce the extreme risk posed by the large, high-intensity wildfires that are becoming increasingly common. Multiple complementary projects will generate a large-scale, positive impact across a wide range of communities and habitats. The goal is to reduce wildfire risk to the 120,000-plus residents who live in coastal watersheds classified as having a “high” or “very high” risk for wildfire.

Workforce Development

To develop the skilled workforce needed to plan, lead, and implement climate resilience actions, educational partners will train young adults, college students, and professionals in a variety of skills related to climate adaptation. This ambitious training effort will be led by an integrated workforce development team consisting of local and state colleges and universities and community-based non-profits specializing in wetlands restoration.

ABOUT THE CLIMATE RESILIENCE REGIONAL CHALLENGE

In 2022, Congress appropriated approximately \$575 million, through the *Inflation Reduction Act*, to be competitively awarded for projects that help coastal communities become more resilient as they face increasing threats from extreme weather and climate change. This historic, transformative effort is known as the *Climate Resilience Regional Challenge*.

To learn more about the program and the funded projects, visit the website. coast.noaa.gov/funding/ira/resilience-challenge/

