

ASSISTING LANDOWNERS IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY THROUGH THE PERMITTING PROCESS FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY BENEFICIAL PROJECTS

The Santa Cruz Countywide Partners in Restoration Permit Coordination Program



Imagine you are a landowner in Santa Cruz County who is interested in restoring the steelhead creek running through your property. You would like to stabilize the streambank, which is consuming your backyard, and remove a thick patch of *Arundo donax* (see photo below) that has colonized a large section of the creek and is crowding out your favorite tree. You have the money and you're ready to go, but...



What about the permits?

California Department of Fish and Game: 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement
 National Marine Fisheries Service: Authorization under the Endangered Species Act
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Nationwide Permit
 Regional Water Quality Control Board: 401 Water Quality Certification
 County of Santa Cruz: Riparian Exception, Technical Report Review, Environmental Review (per the California Environmental Quality Act)

Don't worry – there's help! The U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District (RCD), and our environmental non-profit partner, Sustainable Conservation, have developed a countywide permit coordination program for environmentally beneficial projects on private lands in Santa Cruz County. Under this Program, which was funded by the California Coastal Conservancy, NRCS, and Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County, landowners interested in doing voluntary, environmentally beneficial conservation projects work with the NRCS and RCD to determine if their projects qualify for inclusion under the Program. If they do, they need only work closely with the NRCS and RCD to design a project that meets the requirements of the regulatory agencies rather than going out and getting the permits on their own.

Types of Projects Covered by the Santa Cruz Countywide Permit Coordination Program

The following are brief descriptions of the types of projects that may qualify for coverage under the Santa Cruz Countywide Permit Coordination Program. Note that in some cases, these types of projects may not require permits. Only projects that require permits would be carried out under the Program.

Access Roads (Improvement)

Improve an *existing road* used for moving livestock, produce, and equipment; and to provide access for proper, property management while controlling runoff to prevent erosion and maintain or improve water quality.

Critical Area Planting

Planting vegetation such as trees, shrubs, vines, grasses, or legumes on highly erodible or critically eroding areas (does not include tree planting mainly for wood products).

Diversion

A channel constructed across the slope generally with a supporting ridge on the lower side to slow and redirect surface flow. This practice does not result in a change in volume of flow, or flow reduction in surface waters and does not involve the diversion of water from a waterway or a redirection of flow to a new watershed.

Filter Strip

A strip or area of vegetation for trapping sediment, organic matter, and other pollutants from runoff and wastewater.

Fish Stream Improvement

Improving a stream channel to create new fish habitat or to enhance an existing habitat by providing shade, controlling sediment, and restoring pool and riffle stream characteristics.

Grade Stabilization Structure

A structure built into a gully to control the grade and prevent head cutting in natural or artificial channels.

Grassed Waterway

A natural or constructed channel that is shaped or graded to required dimensions and velocities, and established to suitable vegetation for the stable conveyance of runoff. This practice may reduce the erosion in a concentrated flow area, such as a gully.

Pipeline

Use of a pipeline for conveying water from a source of supply to points of its use, or to shift livestock to constructed water sources and away from streams and lakes. This practice is designed to reduce bank erosion, sediment yield, and manure entering watercourses.

Restoration and Management of Declining Habitats

Restoration of land or aquatic habitats degraded by human activity; provide habitat for rare and declining wildlife species by restoring and conserving native plant communities; increase native plant community diversity; management of unique or declining native habitats.

Sediment Basins (With or without water control)

Basins constructed to collect and store debris or sediment. This practice may also involve designing the sediment basin to control water volumes leaving a site and releasing the water at a natural flow rate.

Stream Bank Protection

Using vegetation or structures to stabilize and protect banks of streams, lakes, or estuaries against scour and erosion.

Stream Channel Stabilization

Stabilizing the channel of a stream with suitable structures in stream channels undergoing damaging aggradation or degradation that cannot be reasonably controlled with upstream practices

Structure for Water Control

A structure in an irrigation, drainage, or other water management system, including streams and gullies, that conveys water, controls the direction or rate of flow, or maintains a desired water surface elevation.

Underground Outlets

A conduit installed beneath the surface of the ground to collect surface water and convey it to a suitable outlet.



Coordinating the Permitting Process

The regulatory agencies that have signed on to this “one-stop regulatory shopping” for Santa Cruz County include: the County of Santa Cruz, California Coastal Commission, California Department of Fish and Game, Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries. Development of the Program was funded primarily by the California Coastal Conservancy with additional funding from the NRCS and the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County.

How to Participate in the Program

Contact the local NRCS field office in Capitola and Santa Cruz County RCD to find out if your project might be covered by the Program. The NRCS and/or RCD can ensure your project meets the conditions of the regulatory approvals issued for the Program. In addition to simplifying the permit process, assistance is available for project design, technical assistance, and information on applicable cost-sharing programs.

How the Permit Coordination Program Works for Landowners



No individual permit applications needed!

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