

Santa Cruz Integrated Regional Water Management

Project: Atkinson Lane Integrated Flood Management and Watershed Restoration Project
Grantee: Regional Water Management Foundation
Lead: City of Watsonville Public Works Department
Location: City of Watsonville – Watsonville Sloughs
Funders: California Department of Water Resources (Prop. 1 Integrated Regional Water Management Implementation Grant Program); Santa Cruz County
Amount: \$545,000 (DWR Grant); \$0 (local matching funds waived for economically disadvantaged communities)
Year: 2023-2027
Status: Proposition 1 Round 2 Implementation Grant Awarded May 2023

Purpose: The City of Watsonville (City) will work with Watsonville Wetlands Watch to implement stormwater and flood management features in the Watsonville Sloughs system to reduce flood hazards in the adjacent neighborhood. The project will also restore and enhance native habitat within the Watsonville Sloughs system (Atkinson wetland), as well as engage and educate local community volunteers and school-aged groups about the importance of wetlands.

Issues Addressed: Flood risk reduction, watershed habitat restoration and community engagement.

Summary: The Atkinson Lane Integrated Flood Management and Watershed Restoration Project is a flood risk reduction and watershed habitat restoration project located on the eastern boundary of the City of Watsonville, an economically disadvantaged community. Project activities include design and implementation of best management practices to reduce sediment inputs into the Atkinson wetland, thereby implementing integrated flood control measures and providing flood risk reduction benefits for the surrounding and downstream residential and commercial areas (approximately 391 acres) within the City. Concurrent with this work, the project will restore and enhance native habitat within the, approximately 8-acre, Atkinson wetland complex. Local community volunteers and school-aged groups will be engaged to help with restoration activities.

The City of Watsonville will implement this project in partnership with Watsonville Wetlands Watch (WWW). WWW, a local community based non-profit organization, will support the following activities:

- Grant administration and project reporting.
- Contract management of project design and permitting.
- Community engagement in project design.
- Coordination of restoration and education events.

Results: The project will provide flood risk reduction benefits to 391 acres of downstream catchment located in a residential and commercial area. The Atkinson wetland complex habitat restoration work will benefit multiple state and federally listed wildlife species (e.g., western pond turtle, California red-legged frog, northern harrier, golden eagle, white tailed kite, and steelhead trout) in the surrounding Watsonville Sloughs and nearby Salsipuedes and Corralitos creeks. The project will engage local youth and neighborhood volunteers to participate in the habitat restoration process and community science water quality monitoring activities.