

Santa Cruz Integrated Regional Water Management

Project: Countywide Sediment Reduction from Developed Parcels and Rural Roads
Grantee: Regional Water Management Foundation
Lead: Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County (RCD)
Location: San Lorenzo River Watershed
Funders: California Department of Water Resources (Prop. 1 Integrated Regional Water Management Implementation Grant Program); Santa Cruz County
Amount: \$823,237 (DWR Grant); \$855,100 (local matching funds)
Year: 2021-2025
Status: Prop. 1 Round 1 Implementation Grant Awarded June 27, 2020

Purpose:

The Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County will implement approximately fifteen (15) best management practices (BMPs) and Low Impact Development (LID) design features at multiple project locations along rural roads, stream banks and/or developed properties to reduce sediment loads in impaired waterbodies including the San Lorenzo River and other watersheds. The project will provide technical and cost-share assistance to incentivize voluntary implementation of BMPs and LIDs on public and private property in the San Lorenzo River Watershed (SLRW) and other watersheds.



Figure 1A Rock dissipator and erosion control. Native duff covers all bare soil and erosion control seed has started to germinate.

Issues Addressed:

This project addresses regional surface and groundwater quality by targeting two types of sediment loads: 1) chronic loads derived from unsurfaced roads and runoff directed onto bare soil, and 2) episodic loads from culvert washouts and concentrated drainage induced streambank failures. Many of the BMPs used will also reduce peak flows during storm events thereby reducing instream erosion.

Summary:



Figure 2: The slope was laid back to match the natural slope while supporting the road. Two log structures create habitat and protect the infrastructure during large storm events. Over 200 plants will be installed in Spring 2024.

Prior planning efforts indicate that improved maintenance of existing rural roads is one of the most effective means of reducing sedimentation and persistent turbidity in the San Lorenzo River Watershed. The RCD will recruit landowners through public education workshops and one-on-one site visits. Projects will be reviewed and approved by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), based on criteria determined by the TAC. The TAC will ensure the selection of projects that provide new and expanded benefits, not those that are part of routine

operations and maintenance for the landowner. Types of approved practices include upgrading culverts; road outsloping to disperse runoff; installation of velocity dissipaters at drainage outlets; road surface improvements; and swales. Bank improvements of eroding streams will take a preventative approach and

may include redirecting runoff, vegetation protection and enhancement, and structural augmentation.

Results: The primary benefit of this project is to reduce sediments by approximately 400 tons/year.