

Final Strategic Business Plan: The Nature Conservancy – Santa Clara River and Coast Project

June 2, 2020



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Left bottom: The Santa Clara River

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Right: Fillmore and the Santa Clara River

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Background

About the Santa Clara River and Coast Project

After nearly 20 years of persistent efforts to protect and restore the ecological and hydrological values of the Santa Clara River and Ormond Beach, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and its partners have made remarkable progress through novel approaches to land protection, restoration, management, partnerships, financing, land use planning and policy, and research and modeling. Given current threats facing the region, there is a need for TNC to continue its efforts and concentrate heavily on habitat restoration to continue to increase the resilience of these riparian and coastal systems in the face of climate change.

The Santa Clara River flows from Acton, California to the Pacific Ocean near Oxnard and adjacent beaches within Ventura County. It is one of last relatively unaltered rivers in southern California, making it a high priority area for conservation. From the estuary to the upper watershed, the Santa Clara River provides a diversity of habitats supporting 18 threatened or endangered species including riparian dependent bird species, terrestrial wildlife, anadromous fish and rare plants. Additionally, coastal habitats at Ormond Beach provide a complex of coastal wetland, dune, and beach habitats recognized as a globally important bird area. Collectively, the Santa Clara River and Coast (SCRC) project area offers numerous opportunities to restore habitat for biodiversity recovery and critical ecosystem services, including floodplain connectivity, instream flows, groundwater recharge, carbon sequestration, wildfire risk reduction and sea level rise adaptation. The area also provides a platform to connect people with nature by offering public access opportunities for severely disadvantaged and frontline communities.

About half the land in the lower watershed is owned by public or private conservancies, including TNC. Since 2001, TNC has purchased 28 properties, a total of 4,156 acres—approximately 21 river miles—on the Santa Clara River, and four properties, a total of 310 acres, at Ormond Beach. TNC has also acquired 551 acres of floodplain easements on the Santa Clara River. Fee and easement lands were acquired with the intent of preventing suburban development while providing floodplain connectivity, replenishing local aquifers, preserving the agricultural livelihood of this region, and assembling large blocks of protected areas for restoration and public access. The fee and easement acquisitions provide landscape connectivity and promote ecosystem health throughout the river basin.

The protection of thousands of acres in this region has positioned TNC to advance habitat restoration efforts at scale. Since 2014, TNC has initiated restoration of approximately 769 acres of riparian and upland habitat along the Santa Clara River and is currently planning an additional 650 acres of restoration with conservation partners at Ormond Beach (Table 1). TNC's restoration intention is to repair hydrologic function and habitat connectivity in areas with high conservation value in order to create long-term habitat integrity, support endangered species' recovery, and provide resilient

ecosystem functionality (floodplain connectivity, instream flows, groundwater recharge, carbon sequestration, wildfire risk reduction and sea level rise adaptation) in the face of a changing climate. Additionally, TNC is committed to providing greater public access at SCRC and is actively scoping suitable properties for increased access where enabling conditions match the public need.

Table 1. Projects where restoration is active or planned on land owned by TNC at SCRC, as of April, 2020.

Project Title	Property	Acres	Habitat	Status	Estimated Term
Hanson Floodplain Restoration	Hanson	238	Riparian & Upland	Active	2014-2020
Caltrans Santa Clara River Restoration Mitigation	Hanson	79	Riparian & Upland	Active	2015-2023
Banman Fire Restoration	Banman	100	Riparian & Upland	Active	2015-2020
Heritage Valley Parks Mitigation	Heritage Valley Parks (Shiells/Sommers)	250	Riparian & Upland	Active	2012-2020
Taylor Riparian Restoration	Taylor	10	Riparian & Upland	Active	2012-2022
Santa Clara River (Santa Paula) Riparian Restoration	USC/Best/Taylor/Hedrick Ranch Nature Area	250	Riparian & Upland	Active	2019-2022
Ormond Beach Restoration and Public Access Plan	Ormond Beach	310	Coastal Wetland	Planned	2022 - Unknown
Total Active		927			
Total Planned		310			
Total		1,237			

In 2016, TNC, the California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC), and the City of Oxnard established a partnership to manage and restore the 650 acres of coastal habitat at Ormond Beach that are currently owned by these three organizations. TNC currently manages the land it owns at Ormond Beach and the Santa Clara River as one holistic unit. Therefore, TNC developed this regional, 10-year Strategic Business Plan as an actionable framework to address priorities at the Santa Clara River and Ormond Beach. As a leader in the region with extensive protection and restoration experience, TNC is committed to building local capacity and working toward the goals and needs of the region. Throughout execution of this plan, TNC will continually reassess its role and goals, and work closely with all its partners.

Problem, Need, and Opportunity

Problem

The natural resources of both the Santa Clara River and the Ormond Beach coastal area are incredibly valuable to Southern California. The 116-mile Santa Clara River is one of the last non-channelized rivers in Southern California with the some of the lowest levels of ecological disturbance, and it currently supports many native and endangered species.^{1,2} Additionally, experts recognize Ormond Beach as a priority coastal wetland restoration opportunity.³ Over the coming decade, however, the demands on the riparian, upland and coastal systems represented at the SCRC are predicted to increase as a host of risk factors magnify in intensity, threatening to degrade ecosystem integrity, interrupt delivery of ecosystem services, and increase the pace of biodiversity loss. Additionally, degradation of the region's ecosystems could impact opportunities for public access to these areas, particularly for disadvantaged and frontline communities, thus weakening efforts to strengthen local stewardship and connections between people and nature. Cumulative natural and anthropogenic factors threatening the region include:

- **Climate-driven changes and disasters:** Climate change is the most critical threat to the region's ecosystems, as it will exacerbate traditional anthropogenic threats to natural resources, such as overuse, degradation, fragmentation, and loss of species and habitat. Climate change is likely to have many associated impacts to ecosystems in the SCRC region, such as increased incidence of drought and flooding, erosion, and an altered fire regime due to dryer and hotter conditions. Additionally, climate change is likely to result in sea level rise, which in combination with groundwater pumping, will also increase instances of saline intrusion into groundwater sources and threaten freshwater resources. Collectively, changes associated with climate change could lead to shifts in riparian and coastal habitat types and species composition, erosion of coastal and riparian habitat, and increased habitat impacts.^{4, 5}
- **Habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation:** Land use conversion of natural and agricultural habitat to developed area is a major threat, particularly given human population growth.⁶ Land use conversion also leads to habitat degradation and fragmentation, threatening connected

¹ Parker, S., Verdone, L., Remson, E. J., Cohen, B. 2016. *Ecological Restoration*, 34 (1): 61-67.

² Stillwater Sciences. 2011. *Santa Clara River Parkway: Strategic Plan for Arundo Treatment and Post-Treatment Revegetation*. Prepared for the California Coastal Conservancy. 38 pgs.

³ ESA, Coastal Restoration Consultants, True Nature Landscape Architects, and Kearns and West. 2019. *Ormond Beach Restoration and Public Access Project. Preliminary Restoration Plan*. March 2019. Prepared for the California State Coastal Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, City of Oxnard.

⁴ Craig, K., Jenniches, S., Johnston, P., Lee, J. 2009. *Re-Imagining Access: ARCS of Experience for the Santa Clara River*. Prepared for the California State Coastal Conservancy. California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

⁵ ESA et al. 2019.

⁶ Southern Wetlands Recovery Project. 2018. *Wetlands on the Edge: The Future of Southern California's Wetlands*. Prepared by the California State Coastal Conservancy, Oakland, CA.

habitat corridors that are critical to many species. Development is also likely to increase surface contaminants from agricultural and industrial pollution.⁷ Additionally, a growing homeless population and active development of homeless encampments in the region is leading to further habitat degradation and pollution, which pose additional risks to natural habitats.

- **Invasive species:** The main invasive species that threatens the region is *Arundo donax* (arundo), an aggressive invasive weed related to bamboo that thrives in riparian areas, propagates and spreads quickly, outcompetes native species, and results in changes to river flow and habitat.⁸ Arundo and other invasive species (e.g., the shot hole borer, a beetle that attacks trees) are compromising the integrity and quality of the region's habitat and ecosystems. For instance, the widespread distribution of arundo in the Santa Clara River is a biological threat to both the riparian system it occupies and the adjacent human communities, as it is both a high user of water and highly flammable. Arundo poses a wildfire risk in that its growth in tall, dense and well-ventilated stands increases the fuel load in riparian habitat and can help fire spread through traditionally less flammable native riparian vegetation.⁹
- **Water:** A suite of water quality and quantity issues, including ground and surface water depletion via groundwater pumping and water diversion for agricultural use place pressure on the region's water resources.¹⁰ The limited surface and groundwater supply in the region are shared by agriculture, industry, neighboring communities and nature. With a changing climate and a growing human population, water resources are under great pressure and need better management. Without a sustainable water source, the agricultural livelihood of the region is at risk, which may affect land use zoning and lead to urbanization in the floodplain. Development and channelization of the Santa Clara River would also constrain the natural hydrology and significantly contribute to downstream flooding, posing a sizeable financial risk for coastal communities.

Need

A suite of coordinated actions by TNC, state and local government, landowners, and other partners are necessary to confront and effectively restore ecosystems and mitigate problems facing the SCRC Project area's land and coastal resources. Core needs, ordered by relevance in relation to TNC's mission, for the area include:

- **Restoration** of land owned by TNC, with a focus on arundo eradication, to help restore ecosystem function and processes, biodiversity, and enhance resilience to climate change.

⁷ Parker et al. 2016.

⁸ Stillwater Sciences 2011.

⁹ Geissow et al. 2011

¹⁰ Southern Wetlands Recovery Project 2018.

- **Public access and engagement** to build community ownership and buy-in. Increased public access would connect the community to the ecological value of the area, resulting in strengthened stewardship and protection. Public engagement to aid in conservation and restoration efforts will educate community members about the region and the threats it faces, the need for conservation and stewardship, the impacts that personal actions can have on habitat and ecosystems, and identifies the perspectives and needs of the community to enhance conservation and community well-being.
- **Land protection** through acquisition or easement of properties that complement and complete TNC's existing conservation holdings to create large, intact, and ecologically important lands representing a suite of ecosystem types.
- **Coordination with local partners** to help achieve collaborative goals and remove duplicative and conflicting efforts is another critical need for the region. Currently, there is a large array of government, non-governmental, and private partners working on various activities in the region. Coordinating efforts among partners will help align conservation and restoration goals and priorities, streamline efforts, leverage human and financial resources, and strengthen political and social support for conservation and restoration efforts.
- **Funding** for operations, restoration, and public access is critical to ensure that TNC and its partners have the financial capacity needed to implement identified restoration and conservation actions.

Opportunity

As one of the leading organizations addressing the conservation and restoration of the SCRC Project area, there are several opportunities TNC could prioritize to address the problems and needs described above. Key opportunities for TNC to consider pursuing include:

- **Resilient systems:** Ormond Beach and the Santa Clara River are both areas that will be susceptible to climate-related changes and disasters such as drought, flooding, fire, and sea level rise. TNC has an opportunity to work with partners to protect and restore native habitat and design innovative, science-based strategies to build resilient human and natural communities that are able to withstand and recover from climate-driven impacts.
- **Habitat restoration:** To strengthen ecosystem and habitat connectivity, restore hydrologic function, protect endangered species, and help develop more resilient ecosystems, TNC will continue to expand its restoration on existing and any new properties it may acquire. TNC has identified and prioritized opportunities to expand existing restoration projects and will continue to support watershed-wide efforts for arundo eradication. (See *Land Use Priorities* for more detail.)
- **Public access and education:** Greater access to and enjoyment of protected lands in the SCRC region by local disadvantaged and frontline communities continues to be a priority for TNC. We seek to create more meaningful interactions between people and nature that promote the long-

term protection of this environment by those whose lives are intrinsically connected to nature and the ecological services provided by nature. Expanding on TNC’s existing efforts in the region, we will continue to work with partners to grow public access to the Santa Clara River and Ormond Beach. TNC will also continue other efforts in support of public engagement, such as expanding or create passive-use trail systems; and, working with local community groups and schools, develop educational programs, coordinate volunteer events, and provide multilingual communications materials.

- **Sustainable water practices:** There are many opportunities to better understand key water issues, such as mechanisms for improving water quality, restoring hydrology and flow, and restoring depleted groundwater and surface water. TNC will continue to work with partners to conduct research on these issues, identify solutions, and lead implementation of restoration actions to address water quality issues and strengthen sustainability of the region’s water resources.
- **Partnership and collaboration:** Given the large number of potential partners working in the region, TNC has an opportunity to work with existing partners and develop new collaborations to determine a shared vision for the region and identify solutions to key issues, particularly those that require a unified approach, such as homelessness. Partnerships could also provide an opportunity for TNC to leverage partners’ political and social will and help build support to achieve common goals. (See *Partnership Approach* for more detail.)

Vision and Mission

To address the need and opportunity described above, TNC will direct its efforts strategically to achieve a unifying vision and mission for the SCRC region. More specific goals and sub-goals will focus and guide efforts in the region. (See Appendix E for a list of definitions of strategic planning terms.)

Vision

Through work in the SCRC region, TNC will strive toward the following 10-year vision:

The Santa Clara River and Coast Project Area connects people with nature and restores habitat for biodiversity recovery and critical ecosystem services in a changing climate—including efforts surrounding floodplain connectivity, instream flows, groundwater recharge, carbon sequestration, wildfire risk reduction, and sea level rise adaptation.

Mission

To achieve the vision, TNC will implement the following 10-year mission:

Conserve and restore the unique ecosystems of the Santa Clara River and Coast Project Area to build overall climate resilience and connect people with nature by promoting conservation and stewardship.

Theory of Change and Goals

The sections below illustrate how TNC will achieve its vision, mission, and goals for the SCRC region. More specifically, the plan outlines the details of each goal, sub-goals related to the goals, and key measures of performance to assess progress and inform adaptive management of programmatic activities.

Goals

To work toward its vision and achieve its mission, TNC will focus on several goals in the coming 10 years. The goals that guide TNC’s programmatic work in the SCRC region include:

- **Goal 1—Protected and resilient ecosystems:** Expand conserved ecosystems—including securing protection and restoration of priority conservation areas—to create resilient areas for nature and people, and support interconnected, thriving, and restored ecosystems.
- **Goal 2—Accessible open space and engaged communities:** Provide greater public access to the SCRC and develop educational opportunities and programming to promote an active community of stewards—including disadvantaged and frontline communities—in the SCRC Project area.
- **Goal 3—Science-based and innovative solutions:** Continue to implement science-based, innovative, and climate resilience-focused solutions to address the problems and needs of the SCRC area and ensure that the region becomes a model for solutions that TNC and its partners can scale across the county and state.
- **Goal 4—Strengthened management capacity and partnerships:** Strengthen the management capacity of TNC and its partners through greater collaboration to support restoration and protection efforts.
- **Goal 5—Durable long-term funding:** Identify and apply to a diverse array of public and private revenue sources to ensure durable and diverse long-term funding to support project goals.

Theory of Change

It is critically important to address threats to natural systems that sustain biodiversity, reliably deliver important ecosystem service benefits, and are resilient in a changing world. The ecosystems of the SCRC region are under threat from multiple natural and anthropogenic factors, many of which will be exacerbated by climate change. Given that demands on riparian, upland, and coastal ecosystems at the SCRC are increasing—in addition to further ecosystem degradation due to increasing urbanization and population growth—actions are necessary to protect the integrity of the region’s ecosystems and the human and natural communities they support.

Our Theory of Change for the SCRC project area will center on **protecting and restoring** ecosystems, ensuring **public access**, developing and implementing **science-based solutions**, and strengthening **management and partnerships** to support protection and restoration actions. To protect and restore, TNC will focus on prioritized conservation areas (as described in the *Land Use Priorities* section below) where conservation need is greatest and completion of restoration, protection, and public access activities will result in interconnected, resilient blocks of land. Through working to strengthen and leverage existing partnerships, building political will and social capital, engaging communities to develop local stewards, and developing sustainable streams of funding to support its activities, TNC will achieve its vision of connecting people and nature and restoring critical habitat.

Theory of Change by Goal

Complementing the overall Theory of Change, this section provides greater detail on how TNC will advance its goals. The sections below outline and provide frameworks, illustrated as tables, for how TNC will implement the Theory of Change through each of its five goals. The goal frameworks draw connections between each goal, associated sub-goals, and measures of performance that TNC will use internally to evaluate its progress. TNC will draw from the goal frameworks below to build annual work plans that detail the specific projects, objectives, activities, and responsible parties related to each goal.

Goal 1: Protected and resilient ecosystems

As outlined in the *Land Use Priorities* section below, TNC’s efforts under this goal will focus on six prioritized conservation nodes resulting in contiguous blocks of restored habitat that will better withstand pressures associated with climate change and other threats. To ensure the resilience of these protected lands, TNC will adaptively manage land using sound ecological principles. TNC will also acquire or assist others with the acquisition of new properties to complement existing restoration activities. TNC will assess progress toward this goal using several measures, listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Goal 1 Sub-Goals and Measures of Performance

<p>Goal 1—Protected and resilient ecosystems: Expand conserved ecosystems—including securing protection and restoration of priority conservation nodes—to create resilient areas for nature and people, and support inter-connected, thriving, and restored ecosystems.</p>
<p>Measures of Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acres of land protected using fee or easement acquisitions • Acres of land restored
<p>Sub-Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptively manage all properties using ecological management principals • Acquire properties that are necessary to expand existing restoration opportunities and floodplain and coastal habitat connectivity • Implement actions described under <i>Land Use Strategy Priorities</i> section of this plan • Integrate climate change resilience as a cross-cutting theme across all projects

Goal 2: Accessible open space and engaged communities

Natural areas that are accessible to local communities enable community members who are knowledgeable about and value these ecosystems and are more likely to act as environmental stewards. TNC will work with local and community-based organizations to provide greater access, hear and understand community perspectives, and develop educational and interpretative programming for key locations in the SCRC region. The *Land Use Priorities* section outlines specific public access efforts TNC will conduct in each of its priority conservation nodes. Public access programs will be interactive and include multilingual educational materials. TNC will also complete planning, permitting and construction for priority public access projects, including for the Hansen property and Ormond Beach. TNC will measure progress toward this goal using several measures, as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. Goal 2 Sub-Goals and Measures of Performance

<p>Goal 2—Accessible open space and engaged communities: Provide greater public access to the Santa Clara River and Ormond Beach, and develop educational opportunities and programming to promote an active community of stewards—including disadvantaged and frontline communities—in the SCRC project area.</p>
<p>Measures of Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of adult and child visitors per year • # of community groups engaged and partnerships established, including educators and groups representing disadvantaged and frontline communities • # of properties with managed public access
<p>Sub-Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage local groups and community-based organizations to inform the public about co-benefits of activities (e.g., community health, climate adaptation, green infrastructure) • Develop educational and interpretive materials in Spanish and English that highlight the ecological and cultural significance of the SCRC Project area, describes ecological threats (particularly climate change), and explains how TNC’s activities will mitigate and reduce climate change impacts locally • Expand relationships with school districts, health groups, parks department, city and county planning staff, and educators • Support community advocacy groups in education and volunteer activities • Engage partners to develop coordinated approaches for public safety • Integrate climate change resilience as a cross-cutting theme across all projects implemented

Goal 3: Science-based and innovative solutions

Due to TNC’s long-standing commitment in the SCRC region and the diversity of projects underway, the project area is well-positioned to serve as a model for innovative and science-based solutions for a variety of pertinent issues, including efforts surrounding floodplain connectivity, instream flows, groundwater recharge, carbon sequestration, wildfire risk reduction, and sea level rise adaptation. The approaches that TNC pilots and applies in the region will serve as examples for other projects and become a model that TNC and its partners can scale across the county, state and beyond. To help

develop and pilot new scalable approaches, TNC will test innovative restoration and management techniques (e.g., sustainable agriculture, development of new Groundwater Sustainability Plans [GSPs] with innovative groundwater management practices, restoration design and scientific studies to address sea level rise and other threats). TNC will work with partners to design solutions in areas where partners have capabilities that can complement TNC’s strengths, such as solutions to address homelessness and adaptation of techniques for invasive species management. TNC will also work to develop financing mechanisms to ensure sufficient funding to pilot new techniques and methods (see *Goal 5* for more details on financing mechanisms). TNC will measure progress toward this goal using several measures, as outlined in Table 4.

Table 4. Goal 3 Sub-Goals and Measures of Performance

<p>Goal 3— Science-based and innovative solutions: Continue to implement science-based, innovative, and resiliency-focused solutions to address the problems and needs of the SCRC region and ensure that the region becomes a model for solutions that TNC and its partners can scale across the county and state.</p>
<p>Measures of Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of new partnerships formed for innovative solutions • # of pilot projects tested
<p>Sub-Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce natural disaster risk (e.g., wildfires and flooding) to local communities • Demonstrate benefit of protecting potential future habitat and areas appropriate for restoring to natural state following development (i.e. Ormond Beach Generating Station [or OBGS] power plant) • Contribute to development and implementation of GSPs and associated actions that protect groundwater dependent ecosystems (e.g., water market efforts, nature-based groundwater recharge initiatives) • Establish partnership networks to identify emerging threats for invasive species and pilot techniques for their management • Improve cost-effectiveness of restoration • Develop innovative partnerships to address homelessness and associated point-source contamination • Pilot and implement innovative restoration design to address sea level rise and other climate-related threats • Identify and develop innovative finance mechanisms to help implement solutions (see <i>Goal 5</i> for additional details) • Integrate climate change resilience as a cross-cutting theme across all projects

Goal 4: Strengthened management capacity and partnerships

Strong collaboration with partners is a fundamental element of TNC’s work in the SCRC region. In acknowledgement of the crucial role of partnerships for achieving its goals, TNC will engage existing and new partners through a variety of mechanisms. TNC will engage partners actively in a variety of land use activities, and work with partners to build the political will, social capital and funding needed to achieve its goals. TNC will encourage a mutual exchange of knowledge, technical skills, and expertise with our

partners. Finally, TNC will conduct periodic assessments of partner capacity to inform opportunities for cooperative management on existing properties and to expand cooperative relationships with potential future long-term owners (see *Partnership* for further details, as well as Appendix F, which articulates TNC’s due diligence standards for transferring real estate to nonprofit partners). TNC will measure progress toward this goal using several measures, as outlined in Table 5.

Table 5. Goal 4 Sub-Goals and Measures of Performance

Goal 4— Strengthened management capacity and partnerships: Strengthen management capacity of TNC and partners to support land use activities.
Measures of Performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of partnerships in each priority area (e.g., public access, restoration, acquisition, stewardship, monitoring)
Sub-Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with partners in acquisition, restoration, public access, stewardship, and monitoring • Promote mutual exchange of knowledge and expertise, as well as technical assistance, between TNC and partners • Engage existing MOU partners through Ormond Beach Science Advisory Committee • Conduct periodic assessments of feasibility of disposition or partner management, to identify circumstances where a particular property may be better owned or managed by a partner • Integrate climate change resilience as a cross-cutting theme across all projects implemented

Goal 5: Durable long-term funding

Long-term financing is necessary to ensure that TNC has the human and financial capacity to achieve its goals in the SCRC Project area, particularly the restoration and public access priorities outlined in the subsequent *Land Use Priorities* section. To ensure funding is available to support its efforts, TNC will work to cultivate a variety of public and private financing options. For instance, using and managing a funder database (see Appendix D) will assist TNC with the development of relationships with new funders to apply for a variety of public and private grant opportunities. If opportunities arise and in collaboration with partners, TNC will also explore new revenue strategies, such as climate resilience bonds, local agriculture-based income streams, and ballot initiatives to support conservation-oriented funding mechanisms. As a final method to complete its financing portfolio, TNC will grow existing endowments and maintain income generated through agricultural leases as feasible given restoration activities that will result in decreases in lease income. TNC will measure progress toward this goal using several measures, as outlined in Table 6.

Table 6. Goal 5 Sub-Goals and Measures of Performance

Goal 5— Durable long-term funding: Identify and develop diverse sources of revenue to ensure durable, long-term funding to support SCRC Project goals and activities.	
Measures of Performance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of long-term funding need for ongoing management • \$/year transferred to endowment • \$ raised • # of grants and \$ applied for • % success rate for grants • \$ of funds raised from new foundations 	
Sub-Goals	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow existing natural resource management endowments to provide increased funding for maintenance • Expand existing Department of Defense endowment • Use SCRC project as a platform to test innovative financing mechanisms • Raise restoration and public access funds through public and private funding mechanisms • Develop effective communications materials and a portfolio of demonstration projects for donor outreach • Effectively manage leases and lease income 	

Land Use Priorities

The previous *Theory of Change* section of this plan described the overarching goals TNC will focus on related to ecosystem protection, restoration, public access, science-based solutions, partnerships, and durable long-term funding. Through a detailed planning process, TNC identified its land protection, restoration and public access priorities at the Santa Clara River and Ormond Beach for 2020 to 2030. This prioritization will focus TNC’s resources where the conservation need is greatest. It will also enable TNC to complete land protection and restoration in resilient blocks, in addition to guiding collaboration with partners regarding opportunities on TNC’s and neighboring lands, helping structure fundraising and permitting activities, and providing opportunities for greater public input in the planning and implementation processes. In conducting this planning process, TNC considered current and historical ecological conditions, intended outcomes, enabling factors, and ongoing efforts by TNC and its partners. The sections below summarize the identified priorities, in addition to providing details on the restoration and public access priorities for each of the selected conservation nodes.

Summary of Conservation Nodes for Protection and Restoration

Acquisition and restoration prioritization efforts by TNC have highlighted the benefits of acquiring large contiguous blocks of riparian habitat to avoid habitat loss and associated losses in biodiversity, while

planning for and implementing large riparian restoration projects.^{11,12} Studies have shown that large wetland restoration projects have faster rates of biological, hydrological, and biochemical recovery, and to be more self-sustaining over time than smaller projects.¹³ This method of prioritization is referred to as a “conservation nodes” approach.

Following this process, TNC identified five conservation nodes along the Santa Clara River and one at Ormond Beach (Figure 1). Each node on the Santa Clara River corresponds spatially with historically important habitat with high ecological value and several nodes are in places that were perennially wet and supported large swaths of riparian forest in the past.¹⁴ The conservation nodes concept has guided TNC’s protection and restoration work in this geography. Specifically, after many years of acquisition in partnership with the SCC and other funders, TNC further refined previous planning efforts by evaluating 68 of the highest priority properties in the lower watershed to prioritize large contiguous areas (nodes) for restoration and additional acquisitions following the conservation nodes approach. The nodes analysis considered various factors for each high priority property, including total acreage, acres of riparian habitat, acres of unique habitat, restoration potential, and restoration intensity for each property and assigned a score per property and average score per node.¹⁵ The results of the conservation nodes analysis created the framework for restoration planning by TNC through 2019, including a prioritized list of parcels for acquisition within each of the conservation nodes on the Santa Clara River.

The Land Use Priorities presented here builds upon the conservation nodes analysis by incorporating additional relevant factors, including the current protected status of properties (by TNC or other conservation partners), the restoration status of each property (by TNC or others), and the adjacency of properties to current restoration projects. This evaluation resulted in a specific prioritization and sequencing of restoration, acquisition and public access planning for high priority properties within the nodes, which is described in the detailed maps and tables below.

¹¹ Parker, S.S., E.J. Remson and L.N. Verdone. 2014. Restoring Conservation Nodes to Enhance Biodiversity and Ecosystem Function along the Santa Clara River. *Ecological Restoration* 32:6–8.

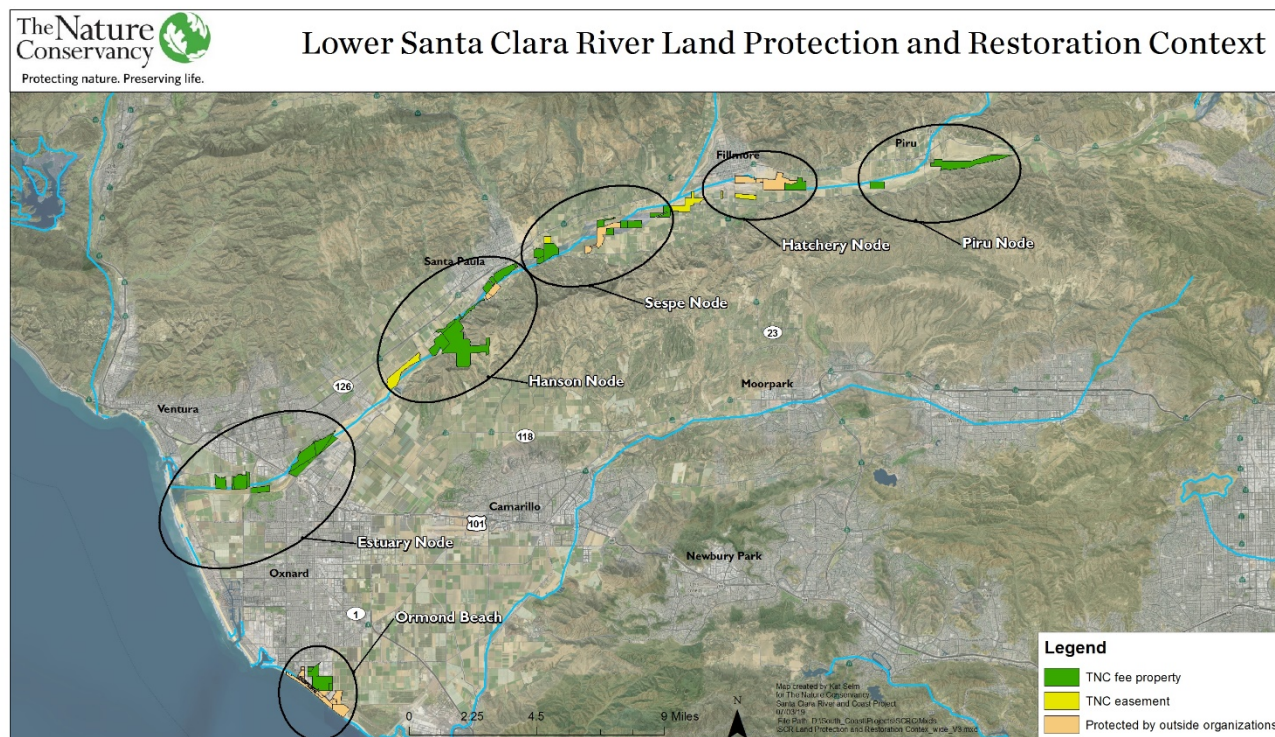
¹² Parker, S.S., E.J. Remson, L.N. Verdone, and B.S. Cohen. 2016. Prioritizing Riparian Conservation: A Methodology Developed for the Santa Clara River, California

¹³ Moreno-Mateos 2012

¹⁴ Parker et al. 2014

¹⁵ Parker et al. 2016

Figure 1. Conservation Nodes at the Lower Santa Clara River and Ormond Beach



Conservation Node Details

The sections below provide more details regarding each prioritized conservation area (node) in the Santa Clara River and Ormond Beach, including the Estuary Node, Hanson Node, Sespe Node, Hatchery Node, Piru Node, and Ormond Node.

Estuary Node

The Estuary Node is the Pacific coastal terminus of Santa Clara River and extends over 6 miles (10 km) east, past Highway 101. Historically, this section of the river was one of the broadest and most flood prone, supporting dense riparian forest as much as two miles wide. The Estuary Node also supports wetland and lake features; coastal marsh; dunes and coastal dependent bird species. Threats facing this node and the Santa Clara River Estuary include incompatible urban development and increased hardening of riverbanks for flood protection, climate change impacts, altered hydrologic regime, altered fire regime, invasive species, point and non-point source pollution and invasive species. The Estuary Node analysis included an evaluation of 16 parcels (2,152 acres), of which TNC currently owns 10 (892 acres) (Table 7, Figure 2). These 10 properties fall within three Property Groups based on their adjacency, which are described below as Camp/Lanai, Strathmore and McGrath. The main priorities within the Estuary node include:

- **Restoration:** Opportunities exist to enhance riparian forest habitat through the removal of invasive species (e.g. arundo), which will improve habitat quality and diversity for riparian dependent bird species, increase instream flows, and reduce fire risks. Actions to restore or expand the extent of floodplain and riparian forest habitats, however, will generally require land conversion (e.g., retiring of lands in agricultural production, removal or setback of existing levees and requiring significant feasibility studies to evaluate benefits and risks). Results of existing studies¹⁶ emphasize the need to seek opportunities for restoring the largest floodplain area possible and suggest that acquiring adjacent floodplain properties and setting back contiguous levees could be an effective means of minimizing flood risk. The timeline in Table 7 outlines a feasibility and planning phase that will consider the potential for restoration of the properties within the Estuary Node following an integrated levee setback study for flood risk management on the Lower Santa Clara River.

- **Public Access:** Due to the extensive land conversion needed to transform many TNC-owned properties from active farms to native riparian habitat, public access opportunities provided over the next decade will hinge on compatibility with existing land uses. For instance, although the Camp Property Group is not within a disadvantaged community and the nearby neighborhoods on both north and south banks of the Santa Clara River meet park planning standards, the City of Ventura has plans for trail connections near these properties. Additionally, the City of Oxnard also has planned a proposed bike path on the south bank levee (SCR-1), closest to Westbrook and Caron. TNC can facilitate and support these efforts by making properties available for public access; however, because trails are proposed across multiple ownerships, these efforts are contingent on partner leadership to secure access, funding, planning, construction and management. Similarly, the McGrath Property Group is within a disadvantaged community census block group; however, this area is surrounded by mostly agriculture and general industrial zoning. The City of Ventura’s 2011 Bicycle Master Plan includes recommended bike path alignment through these properties on the North Bank of the Santa Clara River, with connections to the North Bank Trail. However, future public access at the McGrath Property Group is not likely to occur until restoration is complete if levee removal is required.

¹⁶ State of California Coastal Conservancy. *The Santa Clara River Parkway Levee Setback Assessment of the Lower Santa Clara River - Implications for Flood Risk Management and Ecological Benefit*

Table 7. Proposed Sequencing of Restoration and Public Access Activities at Estuary Node. Note that actual completion of tasks is contingent upon needed acquisitions, grant funding availability and permitting.

Watershed Node	Property Group	Goal	Task	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
Estuary															
Camp*, Lanai*, Caron Unitrust*, Westbrook															
	Restoration		Restoration Planning						RP	RP	RP	RP	RP	RP	
			Permitting										PE	PE	PE
	Public Access		Interim Restoration Actions					IR	IR	IR	IR				
			Public Access Planning	PAP	PAP	PAP	PAP	PAP							
			Permitting					PE	PE						
			Public Access Construction								PAC	PAC			
			Public Access Management								PAM	PAM	PAM	PAM	
Stathmore, White															
	Restoration		Restoration Planning						RP	RP	RP	RP	RP	RP	
			Permitting										PE	PE	PE
McGrath*, Totlcom I*, Totlcom II*, Teyton/Circle															
	Restoration		Restoration Planning						RP	RP	RP	RP	RP	RP	
			Permitting										PE	PE	PE
			Interim Restoration Actions					IR	IR	IR	IR				



Figure 2. Restoration Priorities and Potential Public Access Opportunities at Estuary Node.

Hanson Node

The Hanson Node is delimited by the confluence of the Santa Clara River with Santa Paula Creek to the east and the Freeman Diversion (United Water Conservation District) to the west. The Hanson node provides an important link for the movement of terrestrial wildlife due to the property's proximity to the Santa Susana Mountains and as a juncture within the Ventura County Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridor overlay zone between the Santa Monica Mountains and the Los Padres National Forest. The Hanson Node is comprised of 12 properties (1,801 acres), of which TNC owns five in fee (1,260 acres) (Figure 3). The Hanson Node includes the largest contiguous area under TNC ownership within the watershed (Hanson/Villanueva), as well the most significant investment for planning and implementation of restoration and public access infrastructure within the floodplain (Table 1; Table 8). Threats to properties in this node include the loss or degradation of riparian forest habitats, reduction of instream flows, increased fire frequency in riparian habitats, and incompatible urban development. Multi-benefit projects that include removal of arundo could also provide flood protection, reduced fire risk, and groundwater recharge benefits to nearby communities. Priorities within this node include:

- **Restoration:** The *Hanson-Villanueva Habitat Restoration, Enhancement and Creation Plan*¹⁷ is the first of several large restoration projects implemented by TNC at the Santa Clara River. This 317-acre gravel mine reclamation has created new wetland habitat, and restored upland and riparian areas through removal of arundo and other invasive plant species. This project continues to expand eastward toward the Banman Property Group (Figure 3), where TNC is currently undertaking a 100-acre post-fire restoration project, initiated in 2015. This project, initiated immediately following a 100-acre fire event, served as a demonstration of protocols described in the *Santa Clara River Parkway, Strategic Plan for Arundo Treatment and Post Treatment Revegetation*.¹⁸ A second phase of restoration will be initiated on the remaining 125 acres of the Banman properties in 2021 to remove arundo and invasive vegetation from the main river channel and areas outside the prior burn scar. Opportunities to leverage restoration efforts on adjacent lands between the two Property Groups will be explored by encouraging adjacent property owners to perform or facilitate TNC-led restoration activities, or to seek funding.
- **Public access:** The closest city center to TNC parcels in the Hanson Node is the City of Santa Paula. Santa Paula contains disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged census block groups, a

¹⁷ Newfields 2012

¹⁸ Stillwater Sciences. 2011. Santa Clara River Parkway, Levee Setback Assessment for the lower Santa Clara River, Ventura County, California; Implications for Flood Risk Management and Ecological Benefit. Prepared for the California Coastal Conservancy, Oakland, California.

majority Spanish speaking and low-income population, with the highest percentages of diabetes and obesity in Ventura County. Many Santa Paula neighborhoods are sorely lacking park access of any kind. Although farther from the city center than the Prairie Pacific property (where parking and visitor amenities are not available due to private ownership), TNC’s Hanson and Villanueva properties are ideal for both hiking trails and visitor enhancements. Rural enough that there are fewer concerns about vagrancy and vandalism, and large enough to accommodate school groups, parking, educational materials and a bathroom, this site fills a vital need in the community. The construction of hiking trails could connect Prairie Pacific and City of Santa Paula with Hanson and Villanueva to create a nearly 4.5 mile stretch of the Santa Clara River Parkway. In 2015, an award-winning visitor amenities plan for the Hanson property was commissioned by TNC. In 2020, TNC was awarded funding to implement this project and began pursuing the necessary permits with local, state and federal agencies. Upon receipt of sufficient grant funding and the requisite permits, the project will be implemented. Maintenance and management of public amenities at the Hanson property will be handled by a local partner on an ongoing basis.

Table 8. Proposed Sequencing of Restoration and Public Access Activities at Hanson Node. (Note that actual completion of tasks is contingent upon needed acquisitions, grant funding availability and permitting.)

Watershed Node	Property Group	Goal	Task	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
Hanson															
	Hanson*, Villanueva*, Bunn-Birrell	Restoration	Active Restoration	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR						
			Long-term Management Planning					LTP	LTP						
			Maintenance							M	M	M	M	M	M
		Public Access	Public Access Planning	PAP			PAP	PAP							
			Permitting	PE						PE					
			Public Access Construction	PAC	PAC	PAC				PAC	PAC				
			Public Access Management			PAM	PAM	PAM	PAM	PAM	PAM	PAM	PAM	PAM	
Prairie Pacific*, City of Santa Paula															
		Restoration	Active Restoration	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR						
			Restoration Planning	RP											
			Permitting	PE											
			Long-term Management Planning					LTP	LTP						
			Maintenance							M	M	M	M	M	
		Public Access	Public Access Planning						PAP	PAP					
			Permitting									PE			
			Public Access Construction										PAC		
			Public Access Management									PAM	PAM	PAM	

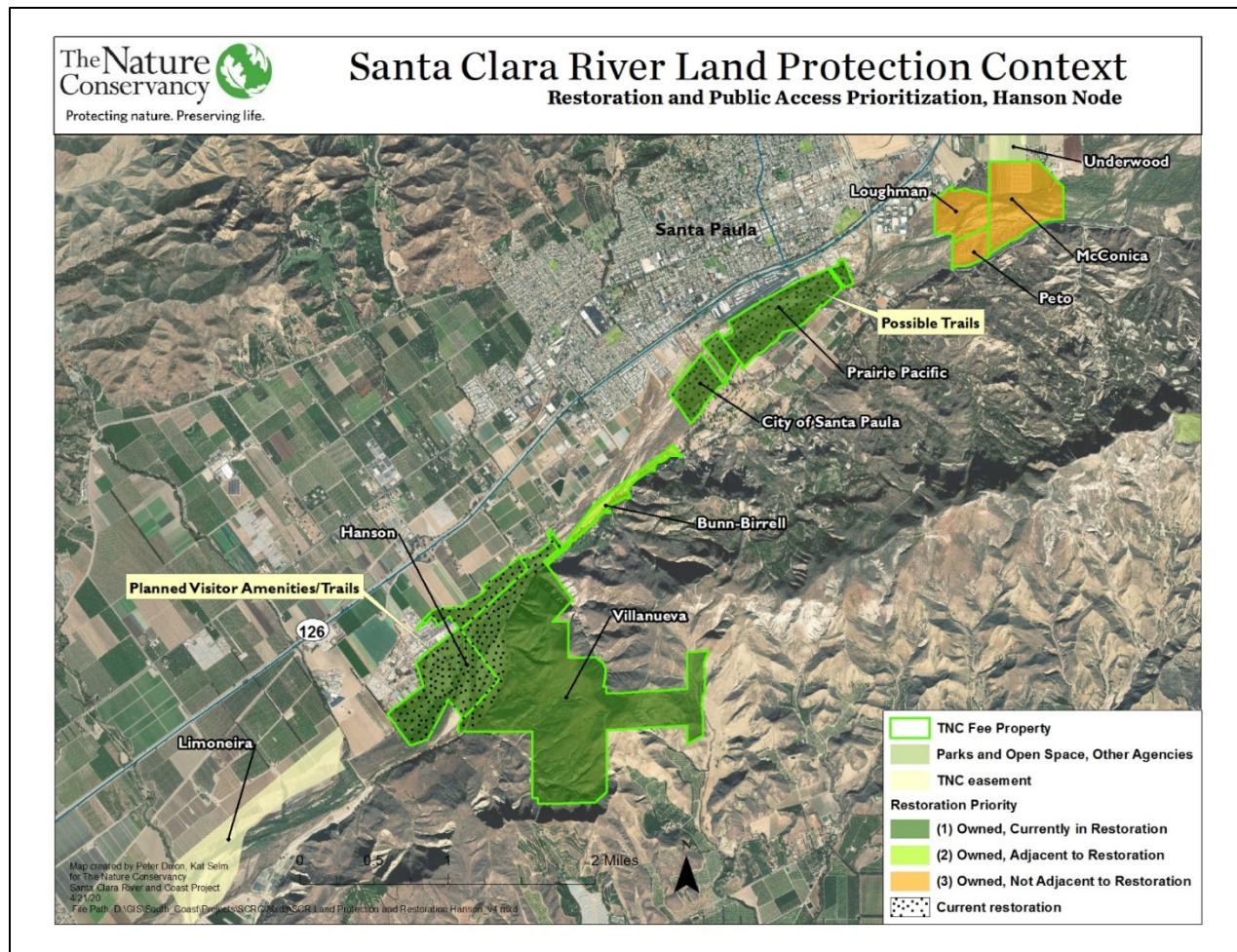


Figure 3. Restoration Priorities and Potential Public Access Opportunities at Hanson Node.

Seспе Node

The Seспе Node occupies the reach of the Santa Clara River east of Santa Paula Creek and west of the confluence with Seспе Creek. The Seспе Node is characterized as the broadest reach within the watershed with the most significant extent of intact cottonwood-willow forest and wetland features. This node has been a focus of collaborative conservation and restoration efforts with numerous partners to enhance riparian forest habitat for biodiversity recovery and critical ecosystem services. The Seспе Node allows for the movement of terrestrial wildlife within the Ventura County Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridor overlay zone between the Santa Monica Mountains and the Los Padres National Forest where sightings of bobcat and mountain lions are frequent. The Seспе Node is comprised of 20 parcels (2,242 acres), of which TNC owns eight in fee-title (555 acres) and two floodplain easements (337 acres) (Figure 4). The TNC parcels can be grouped by their adjacency into two Property Groups (Table 9).

Additionally, several large unprotected parcels in the Sespe Node are ranked as critical to restoration resilience and have been identified as among the most important parcels for conservation on the Santa Clara River in numerous analyses. The conservation of these parcels remains a high priority, through either fee or easement acquisitions. Main priorities for the Sespe node include:

- **Restoration:** Since 2012, TNC and its partners have performed restoration in this node, including the Underwood/Brucker property restoration (~30 acres), Taylor property restoration (10 acres), HRNA restoration projects (~86 acres), and the Hedrick Ranch Property restoration projects (~75 acres). These multi-benefit projects have focused on the removal of arundo, with goals of improving riparian habitat diversity and extent, and increasing instream flows. In 2019, TNC initiated a 250-acre riparian improvement project that expands on prior efforts, with a focus on removing arundo and other invasive vegetation from HRNA, Taylor, USC and Best properties; this project will continue through 2026 and be expanded to include the AC Growers property. Additionally, the properties identified as Peto, Loughman and McConica represent a large, contiguous area (~246 acres) with high habitat value and intact willow-cottonwood woodland with high potential for riparian habitat improvement. Subject to the availability of grant funds, restoration activities are scheduled to begin by 2026 following project planning and permitting. Conservation of adjacent lands identified in the prioritization analysis would also create access for restoration activities and would facilitate restoration resilience within this Property Group. Finally, the Aflalo property has numerous constraints—including an agricultural operation and a low density of nonnative vegetation—that must be carefully evaluated prior to identifying a suitable restoration timeline.
- **Public Access:** Public access opportunities within the Sespe Node, located midway between Santa Paula and Fillmore, are very limited. Properties are all riparian, bordered by agriculture, and support little of the dry upland habitat ideal for low impact hiking and access. The majority of TNC’s ownership in this node is in the regulatory floodway and contains dense riparian vegetation. Furthermore, location and legal access rights constrain public access in many cases. With one possible exception, TNC will not develop public access in this area and all public access projects are contingent on the availability of grant funding and permitting. The nearby HRNA currently has controlled public access for school groups. If the Friends of the Santa Clara River (FSCR) develop trails for the HRNA that could connect to trails on TNC owned lands in the Best Property Group, TNC and FSCR may develop new trails on TNC land to integrate with and support a broader public access network.

Table 9. Proposed Sequencing of Restoration and Public Access Activities at Sespe Node. (Note that actual completion of tasks is contingent upon needed acquisitions, grant funding availability and permitting.)

Watershed Node	Property Group	Goal	Task	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
Sespe															
Best, Taylor*, USC*, AC Growers*, Afalo*															
		Restoration	Active Restoration	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR					
			Restoration Planning			RP									
			Permitting			PE									
			Long-term Management Planning						LTP	LTP					
			Maintenance						M	M	M	M	M	M	M
Peto*, Loughman*, McConica*															
		Restoration	Restoration Planning					RP	RP						
			Permitting						PE						
			Active Restoration							AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR
			Long-term Management Planning									LTP	LTP		
		Public Access	Public Access Planning											PAP	

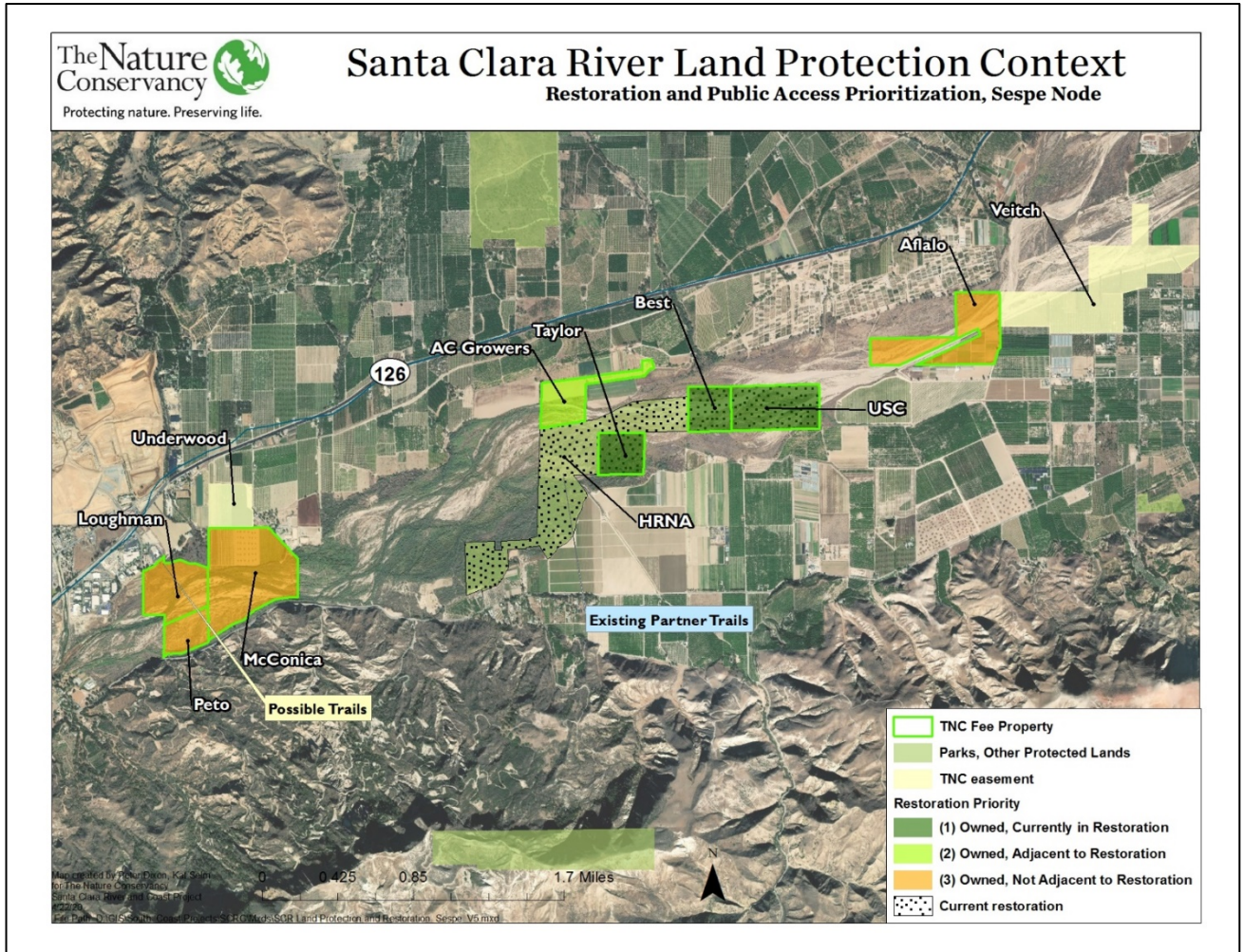


Figure 4. Restoration Priorities and Potential Public Access Opportunities at Sespe Node.

Hatchery Node

The Hatchery Node extends roughly from the confluence with the Sespe Creek east to the City of Fillmore and the Fillmore Fish Hatchery operated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). This reach historically supported a large area of riparian forest and scrub communities and associated riparian dependent focal bird species such as Least Bell's vireo, southwest willow flycatcher, and yellow-billed cuckoo, among other species of concern. However, recent monitoring has observed a precipitous decline in riparian vegetation due, in part, to the combined effects of groundwater extraction and episodic drought. The Hatchery Node is critical for wildlife passage and an important link in the Ventura County Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridor overlay zone due to its proximity to the Los Padres National Forest and Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge. The Hatchery Node includes 12 properties (773 acres), of which TNC owns one property in fee-title (139 acres), and two easements (81 acres) (Table 10, Figure 5). The CDFW, which owns and operates the Fillmore Fish Hatchery, recently acquired the Beserra property (~305 acres). Additional properties within the node are privately owned and are included in current or future mitigation, including the 105-acres Roth property, where mitigation for the Heritage Valley Parks Specific Plan is ongoing. TNC may be the eventual beneficiary of these lands. Threats to the ecosystems and conservation targets within this node include invasive species and groundwater depletion that contribute to habitat type-conversion of riparian forest to non-native scrub. Incompatible urban development is also a threat where there may be increased demand for hardened flood protection structures as adjacent communities grow. Opportunities for restoration are bolstered by the efforts of the State of California and partners to convert water intensive agricultural lands (watercress) to riparian forest. Priorities within this node include:

- **Restoration:** At the TNC-owned Shiells/Sommers property and the privately-owned HVP & Fillmore properties (238 acres), restoration was recently completed by external partners using mitigation funds derived from the HVP development. Additionally, partners have led invasive species management and native plant restoration projects at the Fillmore Fish Hatchery (10 acres) and on the Fillmore School District Farm (13.25 acres). Current restoration at the CDFW (formerly Beserra) property is focused on removal of arundo and other invasive vegetation on 175 acres. A planning effort led by University of California, Santa Barbara, SCRC, TNC and CDFW will establish a restoration and public access plan for the state-owned properties that includes the conversion of agricultural lands to riparian habitat and visitor access on the state-owned properties. TNC will evaluate restoration maintenance obligations associated with mitigation on the Shiells/Sommers property. The Shiells/Sommers mitigation project and the CDFW restoration can be expanded upon to create a large contiguous area of restored riparian habitat within this node. The partner-led restoration projects within the Hatchery Node represent an opportunity for TNC to support but not directly manage large-scale restoration on the Santa Clara River. Planning restoration in coordination with State of California and other stakeholders will allow for greater habitat and hydrologic functionality of restored areas to achieve greater resilience of restoration investments.

- **Public Access:** The Shiells/Sommers property has a relatively maintained and navigable trail system used by researchers and restoration practitioners. This property is in Fillmore but just outside the city’s sphere of influence and has no nearby publicly accessible parks or trails. Land use near the property is all agricultural excluding the Fillmore Fish Hatchery, which is 0.3 miles downstream. Most of this property is in the regulatory floodway; however, this is a rather dry reach of the Santa Clara River and can support a riparian trail system without yearly inundation. There is no publicly accessible road to the property. TNC currently holds access easements through the adjacent Sommers property. The recent acquisition by CDFW may facilitate public access by providing suitable entry and exit points. The prospect of public access at this location will be largely dependent upon the priorities of our partners and any implementation would be partner-led. Additionally, all public access projects will be contingent on the availability of grant funding and permitting.

Table 10. Proposed Sequencing of Restoration, Acquisition and Public Access Activities at Hatchery Node. (Note that actual completion of tasks is contingent upon needed acquisitions, grant funding availability and permitting.)

Watershed Node	Property Group	Goal	Task	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Hatchery														
	Shiells/Sommers (HVP)													
		Restoration	Long-term Management Planning	LTP	LTP									
			Maintenance			M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M

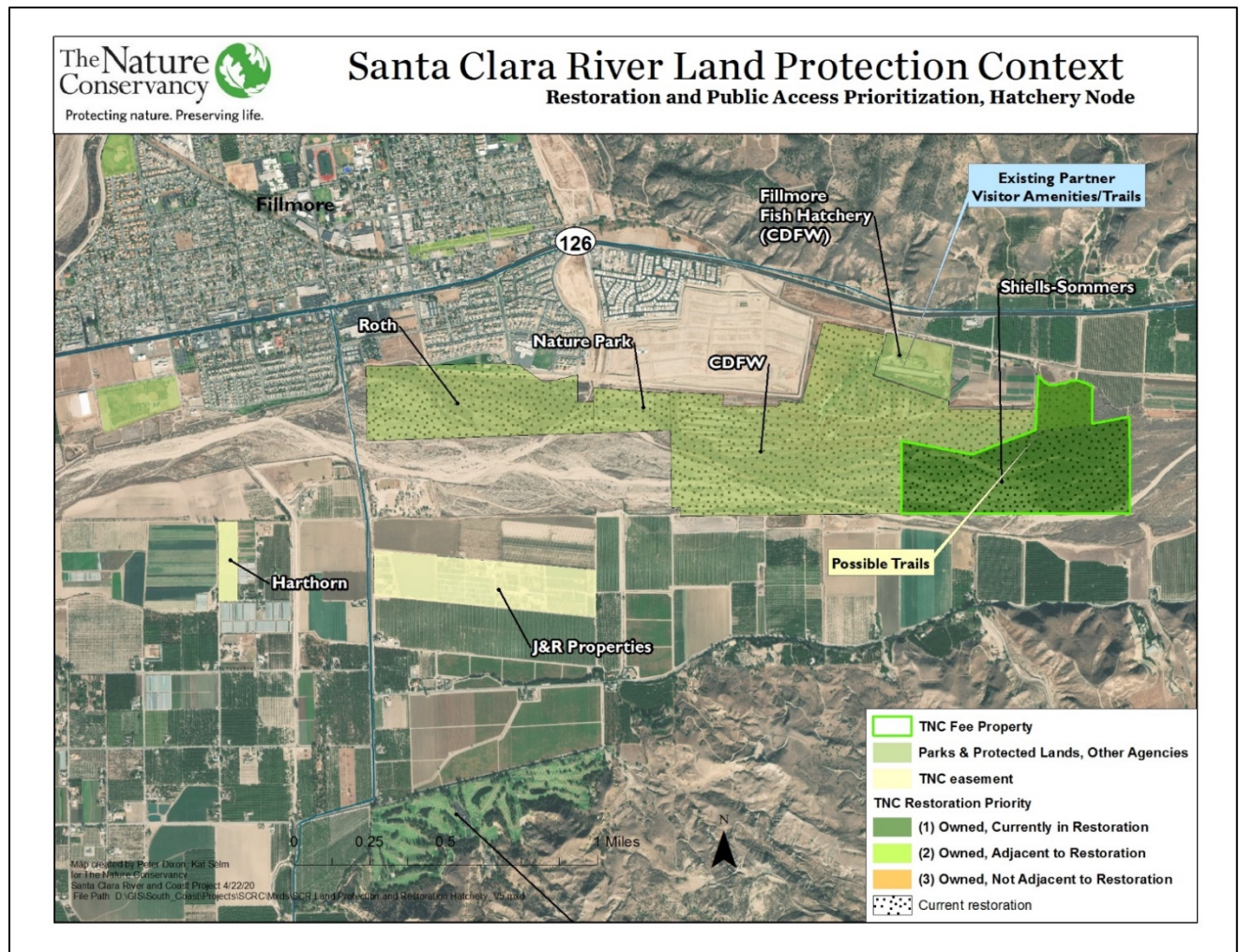


Figure 5. Restoration Priorities and Potential Public Access Opportunities at Hatchery Node.

Piru Node

The Piru Node occupies a relatively dry reach of the Santa Clara River that spans the junctions of Hopper Creek and Piru Creek. The node is notable for its connection to these tributaries and important for wildlife passage. Hopper Canyon extends north into the Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge, which is bordered by the Los Padres National Forest and Sespe Condor Sanctuary. Piru Creek and portions of Hopper Canyon are within the Ventura County Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridor overlay zone. The floodplain within the Piru Node is generally free of levees and flood protection structures, and lands adjacent to the Santa Clara River are mostly in agriculture. Due in part to a lower depth to groundwater, the Piru Node has lower densities of invasive species such as arundo, but likewise has more limited distribution of target habitats for restoration, such as riparian forest. The Piru Node is

comprised of 13 parcels (1,951 acres). The two TNC fee-owned properties, Lagomarsino (82 acres) and Vulcan (381 acres), are discontinuous and are not adjacent to other conserved lands (Table 11, Figure 6). Priorities within this node include:

- **Restoration:** Restoration benefits and resiliency are currently limited in the Piru Node due to the lack of protected properties adjacent to the Lagomarsino and Vulcan parcels. Restoration within this node, however, is expected have relatively lower costs of implementation. The Vulcan property is one of the larger TNC-owned tracts where restoration could occur with minimal constraints and would provide significant benefits. However, until a neighboring property can be conserved or restored, the potential benefits and sustainability of restoration would be limited and TNC has no plans to perform any restoration here over the next decade.

- **Public Access:** The Vulcan and Lagomarsino properties are within the Piru community, which is under the County of Ventura’s sphere of influence. The Vulcan property is within a disadvantaged community, approximately 18 miles west of the City of Santa Clarita, and nearby neighborhoods do not meet park planning standards. The nearest recreation and public access spaces are the Piru Trail to the north and the Rancho Camulos Museum. The Vulcan property supports a small organic farming operation and is surrounded by other agricultural lands. The agricultural portion of the property sits on a flat terrace above the river at the confluence of Piru Creek and the Santa Clara River, although it is still within the regulatory floodway and has a high chance of flooding. The SCC owns a 4-mile trail easement over neighboring lands directly to the east of Vulcan. Development of a trail system by SCC could create a unique opportunity to expand access to Vulcan and provide a contiguous trail system for nearly 7 miles along the Santa Clara River. The Lagomarsino property is entirely in the river bottom with no access to a public road. This property would be more conducive for public access with the acquisition of adjacent lands.

Table 11. Proposed Sequencing of Restoration and Public Access Activities at Piru Node. (Note that actual completion of tasks is contingent upon needed acquisitions, grant funding availability and permitting.)

Watershed Node	Property Group	Goal	Task	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Piru	Lagomarsino, Vulcan	Public Access	Public Access Planning									PAP	PAP	PAP
			Permitting											PE

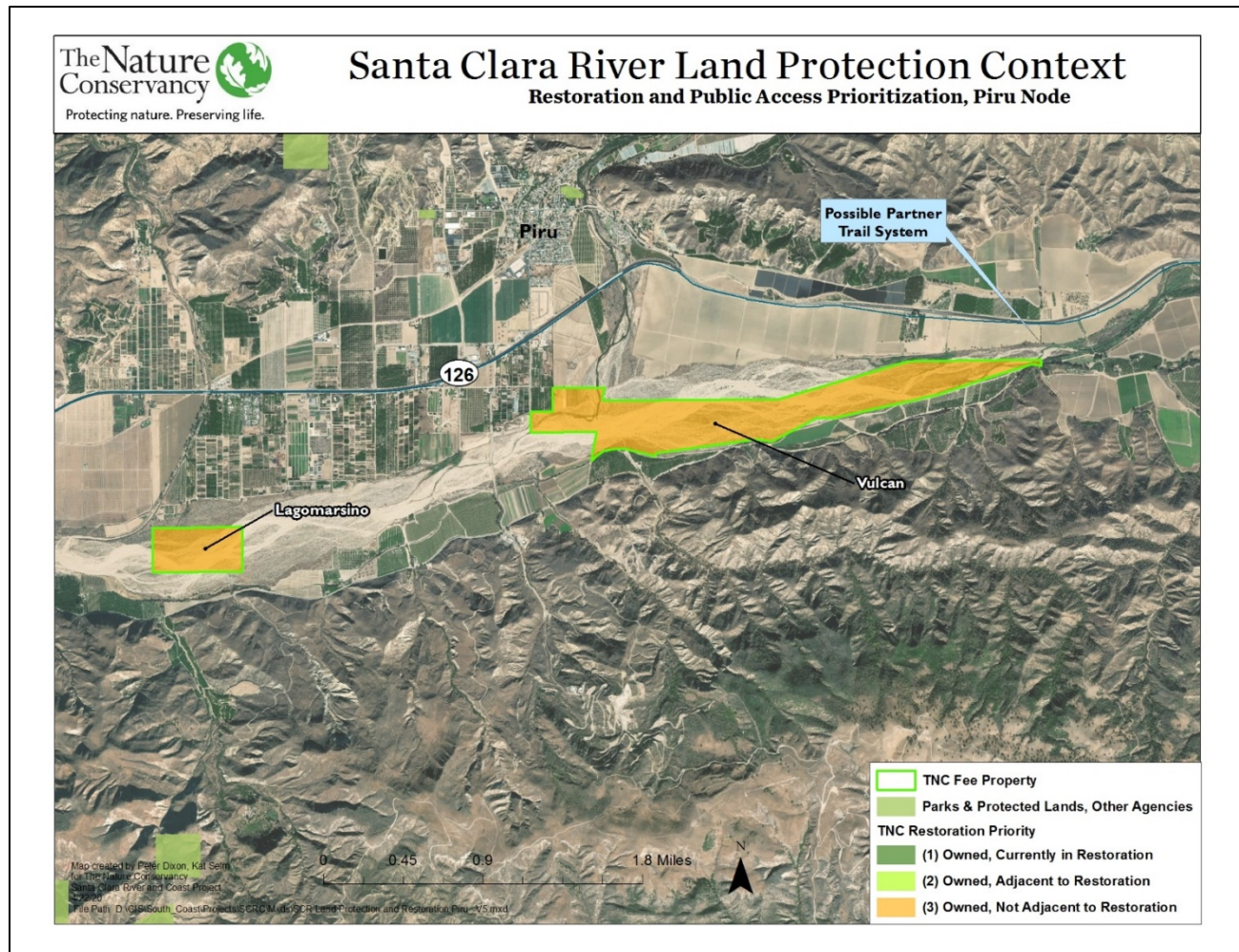


Figure 6. Restoration Priorities and Potential Public Access Opportunities at Piru Node.

Ormond Node

Ormond Beach is located on the coastal edge of the Oxnard Plain within the City of Oxnard, bordered by the City of Port Hueneme to the north and Naval Base Ventura County, Point Mugu to the south. Historically, this region had a dynamic complex of coastal wetlands that were intermittently connected to rivers and the ocean. The land comprises beach, dune, wetlands, and agricultural lands with several rare and threatened habitat types. The area is also home to 25 special status wildlife species and five special status plant species. Of particular interest are seven federal or state threatened and endangered species. Conservation targets include rare habitats such as dunes and coastal marsh; coastal dependent focal bird species (e.g., California least tern and western snowy plover); grassland dependent focal bird species; rare plants, including salt marsh birds-beak; aquatic vertebrates, including tidewater goby; terrestrial vertebrates, including legless lizard; and, at least four special status invertebrates. Restoring

Ormond Beach also provides the benefit of protecting the community of Oxnard from the threat of sea level rise and coastal flooding due to climate change. Threats to biodiversity of the area and ecosystem function include altered hydrologic regime and geomorphology, incompatible urban development, climate change, incompatible recreation, homeless encampments, industrial pollution, and invasive species. TNC's priorities at the Ormond node include:

- **Restoration:** At Ormond Beach, TNC is working closely with SCC and the City of Oxnard to plan the restoration of 650 acres of wetland habitat to a condition that supports healthy wildlife communities and natural systems that provide a buffer against the impacts of climate change, while also providing public access opportunities. By restoring properties at Ormond Beach, TNC is co-leading a multi-benefit demonstration project that will restore habitat for endangered and migratory species, enhance public access to coastal wetlands, and show how natural habitats can provide cost-effective flood and coastal protection for surrounding communities. To date, TNC, SCC and the City of Oxnard have acquired approximately 650 acres for which restoration and public access is being actively planned. The goals for restoration, as determined by the project partners, seek to balance restoration and public access in a way that preserves, enhances and restores natural habitats and processes that support a dynamic and self-sustaining ecosystem at Ormond Beach, while enhancing opportunities for compatible public access, education, and recreation. A preliminary restoration plan representing 30 percent design has been presented to the public and stakeholders and will be finalized in early 2020. The planning, permitting and implementation of restoration and public access amenities will occur in parallel as described in the timeline below (Table 12, Figure 7).
- **Public Access:** To develop the scope for public access amenities, TNC has collaborated with the Ormond Beach Task Force, which is comprised of nearly 70 community members, elected officials, nonprofit organizations, local educators, universities, local businesses, and federal, state, and local government agencies. Through a partnership with a local community-based environmental justice organization, TNC supported door-to-door outreach in three languages to residents of South Oxnard, a predominantly immigrant community closest to the beach. The results informed the design development of the Ormond Beach Restoration and Public Access Plan. The public access features proposed seek to maintain and enhance existing habitat value and integrity, while providing safe access to nature. Multi-use trails are generally routed around the perimeter of the site and away from important bird nesting areas. Final plan development and environmental review will require additional period for public comment and the Project Partners will be conducting outreach throughout the project planning phase identified in the timeline below.

Table 12. Proposed Sequencing of Restoration and Public Access Activities at Ormond Node. (Note that actual completion of tasks is contingent upon needed acquisitions, grant funding availability and permitting.)

Watershed Node	Property Group	Goal	Task	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
Ormond Beach															
Ormond Beach*, City of Oxnard, Gordon, MWD 2															
	Restoration		Restoration Planning	RP	RP	RP	RP								
			Permitting	PE	PE	PE	PE								
			Interim Restoration Actions		IR	IR	IR								
			Active Restoration						AR	AR	AR	AR	AR		
			Long-term Management Planning				LTP	LTP	LTP	LTP					
	Public Access		Maintenance												M
			Public Access Planning		PAP	PAP	PAP	PAP							
			Permitting		PE	PE	PE	PE							
			Public Access Construction						PAC	PAC	PAC	PAC			
			Public Access Management										PAM	PAM	PAM

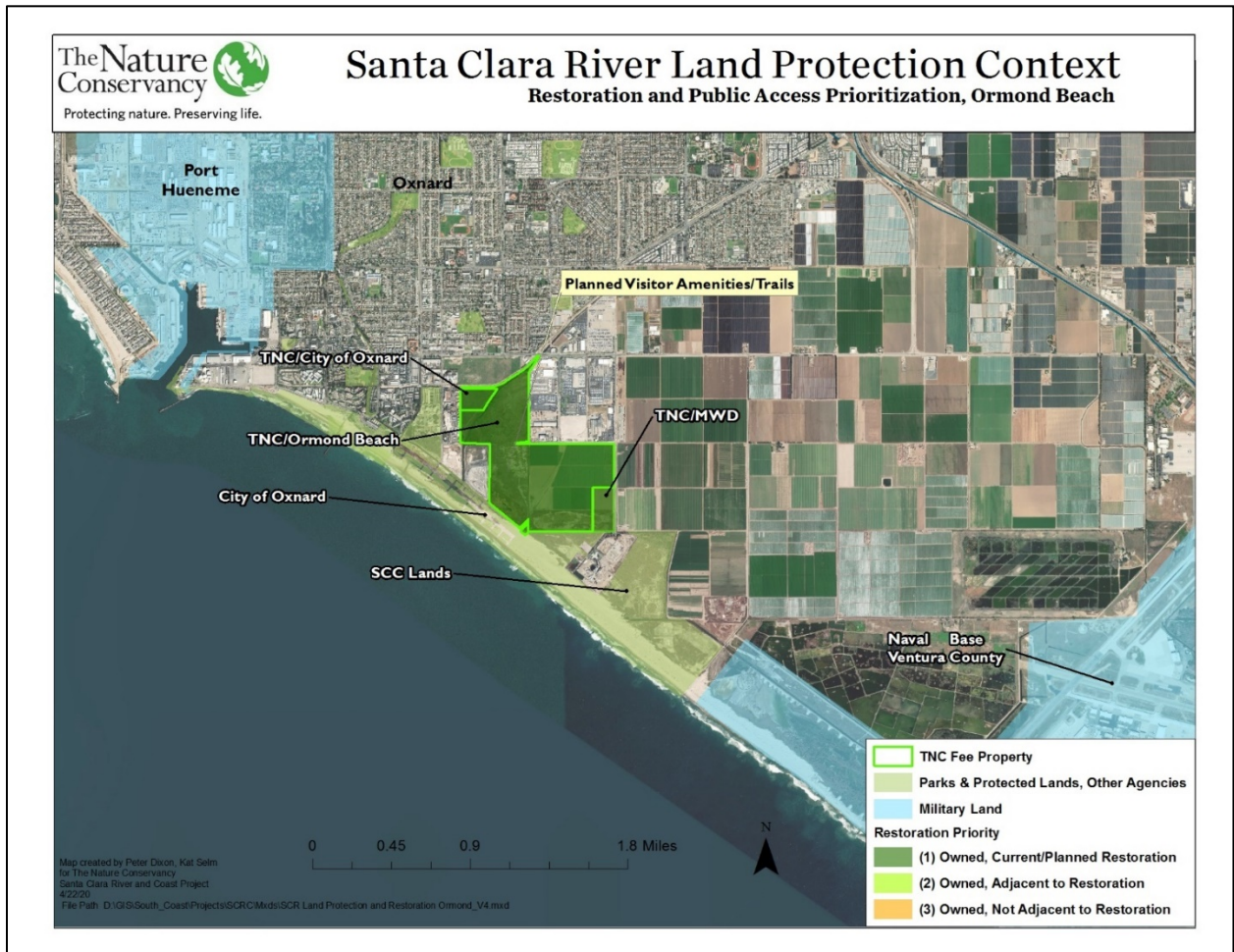


Figure 7. Restoration Priorities and Potential Public Access Opportunities at Ormond Node.

Partnership Approach

Partnership Philosophy

As detailed throughout this plan, the scale of SCRC Project is large, complex, and beyond the capacity and expertise of what TNC can undertake on its own. Project partners, therefore, will be critical to project implementation and provide an important asset to complement TNC's capabilities and assist in achieving the goals of the SCRC Project. TNC will collaborate with local partners to strengthen capacity and build unified vision for the SCRC project. Specifically, through collaborative partnerships, TNC and its partners will focus on expanding habitat restoration, building community outreach and engagement, strengthening scientific research, and implementing public access efforts.

Partnership Criteria

Given that effective and productive partnerships can require significant investment of resources, TNC will need to take a strategic approach to identify and prioritize partnerships to pursue. We will use the following criteria, framed as questions to ask about potential partners, to assess both existing and future partners.

- Is there alignment with SCRC vision, mission, and goals, and is the partner integral to fulfilling the core mission for the SCRC project?
- Does the partner's work relate to multiple goals that TNC will work to achieve under the SCRC Project?
- Is there alignment on programmatic topics or activities and the geographic locations where partners are conducting work?
- Does the partner's expertise and capacity complement that of TNC and add in specific expertise (e.g., scientific knowledge related to the area) that TNC does not have?
- Will the partner help generate increased political will and support in the community and from other partners regarding the need for conservation and restoration activities in the SCRC Project area?
- Is the partner able to share knowledge and expertise with TNC and others to help build the capacity of other organizations in the region to undertake conservation and restoration activities?
- Will the partner work with TNC and other organizations to help inspire, educate, and train the next generation of local leaders in the SCRC Project area?

Partnership Priorities and Potential New Partners

TNC has several existing partners (see Box 1) and, in the coming years, will consider new partnerships where they could add value, such as increasing scientific knowledge of the SCRC region, improving

understanding of the needs and opportunities for disadvantaged communities and public access, and facilitating land acquisitions. TNC will consider prioritizing the following key areas to engage existing and potential new partnerships:

- **Land acquisition and protection:** TNC continue to work with existing and identify new partners that are able to acquire new lands through fee title or conservation easements in areas within or adjacent to TNC’s priority nodes (see *Land Use Priorities* section above), as well as engage in restoration of these lands. These partners could also include organizations with the ability to undertake activities related to restoring developed lands to their natural state (e.g., the power plant and/or Halaco sites).
- **Land management and enforcement:** Specifically, TNC will consider pursuing partnerships that can advance local land management, improve and enforce property access (e.g., public access restrictions and rules), and increase land acquisitions. This may include collaborative partnerships with local agencies and community-based organizations, who TNC can work with to help build local capacity for long-term management.
- **Restoration planning and implementation:** As restoration requires significant personnel and financial resources, it is critical that TNC continue to identify potential alignment with current and potential new partners on the restoration planning and implementation efforts in the SCRC region, including restoring biodiversity, reducing invasive species, and improving the surrounding habitat. This may include engaging local Ventura County residents, universities, public agencies, and local environmental groups.
- **Public access planning, implementation, and management:** To secure community buy-in and interest in public access in the SCRC Project area, TNC will continue to explore potential partnerships with community-based organizations to

Box 1. Existing Stakeholder Committees

TNC is part of many existing stakeholder committees that exist for coordinating activities in the SCRC region. In forming new committees related to the SCRC project, TNC will work to avoid repetition and streamline partner engagement. Committees include:

- Cowbird Working Group
- Fillmore and Piru Pumpers Association
- Fillmore, Piru, Mound, and Santa Clara Valley East Groundwater Sustainability Agencies
- Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency
- Invasive Weed Taskforce
- OBRAP Science Advisory Committee
- Ormond Beach Taskforce
- Polyphagous Shothole Borer Working Group
- Santa Clara River Recreation, Education, and Outreach Working Group
- Santa Clara River Steelhead Coalition
- Santa Clara River Watershed Committee
- Santa Paula Pumpers Association
- Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project Update – Wetland Advisory Group
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service *Actinemys pallida* Working Group
- Ventura County Piru Stormwater Capture Project Special Study Stakeholder Group
- Ventura County Weed Management Area
- Watersheds Coalition Ventura County Steering Committee
- Wildlife Linkage Implementation Alliance

better understand the needs and opportunities for public access and build engagements with disadvantaged and underrepresented communities. TNC will also work with public agencies and the local community to plan, develop, and implement public access strategies, including providing well-designated access locations and resources for the local community (e.g., cycling and hiking paths and beach access, parking, educational signage).

- **Education and outreach:** Through collaborative partnerships, TNC will engage with the local community to educate and increase public awareness of the value of the SCRC region, and to provide greater environmental justice and equity for frontline communities. This will help create a sense of stewardship for the region and its ecosystems. In addition, TNC and its partners will explore opportunities to improve the sustainability and aid conservation efforts of TNC's working lands through sharing of best practices, tools, and guides with land tenants.
- **Political will and support:** TNC and its partners will prioritize engaging and partnering with local communities directly to generate support for and build political will for new conservation and restoration activities in the region. Partnership with community groups, local communities, and other nonprofit partners will help leverage existing support and relationships and help build an active community of stewards and decision-makers who support the conservation and management of the SCRC Project area.
- **Science and innovative techniques and methods:** TNC will continue to partner with local universities and environmental groups to conduct scientific research in the SCRC region and develop innovative restoration techniques and methods. In addition, TNC will work with local partners to augment their scientific capacity to successfully restore increasing percentage of SCRC acreage.
- **Community economic development and homelessness:** TNC will explore opportunities to engage with public agencies and community-based organizations to reduce homelessness and ensure responsible urban development and building of sustainable local economies.

Table 13 identifies the four programmatic goals for the SCRC Project, which are areas where TNC has some capacity, but would benefit from more. The table also list organizations that TNC believes have relevant expertise that could potentially help fill in gaps.

Table 13. Potential Implementing Partners to Engage (*denotes existing partners)

Areas of Expertise						
Land management and enforcement	Restoration planning and implementation	Public access planning, implementation, and management	Education and outreach	Political will and support	Science and innovative techniques and methods	Community economic development and homelessness
Goal 1 – Protected and resilient ecosystems						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural landowners* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural landowners* • California State University Channel Islands • CA Coastal Conservancy* • State Parks • Local land trusts • Local stakeholder working groups (e.g., invasive weed taskforce, agriculture commission) • Ventura Resource Conservation District • CalTrout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CA Coastal Commission* • State Parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audubon Society • Ventura Community College • FSCR • Santa Clara River Conservancy • Ventura Land Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sierra Club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities 	
Goal 2 – Accessible ecosystems and engaged communities						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law enforcement • Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naval base* • Port of Hueneme • Public Works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CA Coastal Conservancy* • Local citizens • Community advocacy/neighborhood groups and associations (e.g. Saviers Road Design Team) • Local youth groups • Local government* • Public Works • State Parks • Local land trusts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Coast Alliance United for A Sustainable Economy (CAUSE)* • Local churches • Mixteco/Indígena Community Organizing Project (MICOP)* • Public schools K-12 • USFWS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAUSE* • MICOP* • Sierra Club • FSCR • County and city government 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Oxnard* • Emergency services • Law enforcement • Ventura County Continuum of Care • Ventura County Planning department

Areas of Expertise						
Land management and enforcement	Restoration planning and implementation	Public access planning, implementation, and management	Education and outreach	Political will and support	Science and innovative techniques and methods	Community economic development and homelessness
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merito Foundation • Santa Clara River Conservancy • Ventura Land Trust 			
Goal 3 – Science-based and innovative solutions						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CA Coastal Commission* • City of Oxnard* • Farm bureau* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CA Coastal Conservancy* • Santa Clara River Conservancy • State Parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CA Coastal Commission* • State Parks • National Parks Service • Land trusts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audubon Society • CAUSE* • City of Oxnard* • LA County • MICOP* • Ventura County Watershed Coalition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MICOP* • Sierra Club • Ventura County Watershed Coalition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audubon Society • Agricultural landowners* • Dept. of Water Resources • Ventura Land Trust* • Watershed Protection District 	
Goal 4 – Strengthened management capacity and partnerships						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CA Coastal Commission* • Santa Clara River Conservancy* • Ventura Land Trust* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CA Coastal Commission* • Santa Clara River Conservancy* • Ventura Land Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CA Coastal Commission* • Ventura Land Trust* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAUSE* • Ventura County Watershed Coalition 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Water 	

Metrics for Transfer

To determine when and how to potentially transfer ownership of property to partners, TNC will apply a clear set of metrics to assess the capacity of potential transfer and take-out partners and determine which partners are suitable to serve in this role. TNC has existing due diligence standards that guide transfer of land ownership to other nonprofits (Appendix F). To summarize, TNC's existing standards require that the take-out partner be a public entity with a conservative mission, or a private entity with the following attributes:

- **Accreditation:** The transferee is a nonprofit conservation organization that has received accreditation by the Land Trust Alliance Accreditation Commission (as evidenced by a copy of the transferee's current accreditation letter).
- **Preparedness and capacity:** The transferee is a nonprofit conservation organization that, based on due diligence performed by TNC, is legally formed and in good standing, is financially and organizationally sound, and has sufficient staffing, scientific capabilities, level of training and preparedness, and a good record of managing conservation lands.

To complement and add additional useful information to help evaluate these two standards, particularly the second standard, TNC will consider additional metrics to evaluate capacity of potential transfer and take-out partners, including:

- **Financial capacity:** Potential partners have financial security in perpetuity, ensuring long-term management capabilities.
- **Mission alignment:** The goals of and activities conducted by potential partners align with TNC's vision and goals for the SCRC Project Area, as articulated throughout this plan.
- **Organizational capacity:** Partners have strong organizational capacity to support land management, as evidenced by the existence of management plans for properties they own, on-the-ground staff, and experience acting as a long-term land manager.
- **Track record in community:** Partners enjoy support by other organizations and stakeholders and are well-regarded by the community, ensuring accountability and trustworthiness in their management activities.

Communication and Marketing Approach

This section provides an overview of TNC's approach to communications and marketing, including a brief description of its communications and marketing priorities for the coming years and milestones of its strategy.

Communication and Marketing Priorities

As an organization, TNC has great potential to increase public and stakeholder awareness of its work. Through the timeframe of this strategic plan, TNC will solidify and enhance its communication and marketing through the following potential approaches (which TNC will assess, dependent on staff capacity and funding) with the local community and funders.

Local Community Communication and Marketing Priorities

- **Advance TNC brand awareness in the community:** TNC will increase public and stakeholder recognition of its brand and name, with the overarching goal of furthering the organization’s message in the community and goals for the SCRC Project. To support brand awareness and understanding of TNC’s work, it will strategically use and share its branded materials—including web materials and social media platforms—and materials specific to the SCRC Project and activities under it.
- **Create community education experiences on livelihoods, recreation, and resources tied to the SCRC:** TNC will work with local partners to develop and implement educational and interpretative programming for key locations in the SCRC region. Specifically, TNC will improve its science communication to non-technical audiences.
- **Develop methods to reach and engage disadvantaged and multicultural communities and communities with language preferences beyond English:** TNC will engage with local and community-based groups to develop strategies for strengthening TNC’s outreach with disadvantaged communities, as well as developing and engaging in multilingual outreach and education activities in collaboration with its partners.

Funder Communication and Marketing Priorities

- **Improve messaging language:** TNC will focus on improving its articulation of TNC’s mission, vision, goals, and land use strategy (as articulated in this plan). In addition, TNC will frame its work locally and integrate other local issues (e.g., engaging and serving disadvantaged communities, building healthy communities) in its messaging.
- **Increase awareness of ecosystem and socio-ecological value of the SCRC region:** ensuring durable long-term funding to support TNC’s goals in the SCRC region is a core priority. TNC will prioritize communication and marketing opportunities that have the potential to change knowledge, attitude, and behavior relating to the ecosystems and threats, and to emphasize the socio-ecological value of the SCRC region.
- **Ensure clear communications on total costs of restoration projects and long-term management of SCRC area:** As restoration activities are costly, TNC will communicate to funders on the actual costs of restoration projects, as well as the ongoing costs of long-term management.

- **Expand public access and restoration:** With its focus on accessible ecosystems and engaged communities, TNC will continue to integrate plans for public access and restoration into grant proposals when possible. This will help ensure that TNC is securing funds to expand public access in the SCRC region, which will promote local stewardship and appreciation for these areas.

Communication and Marketing Approach and Implementation Milestones

Below is a high-level plan for the next three years that outline when TNC will implement some of the key activities mentioned in the communication and marketing priorities above.

- **Year 2020:**
 - Expand outreach materials (e.g., project descriptions, including co-benefits) for the SCRC Project to use as a communication tool with potential funders
 - Update website specific to the SCRC Project that TNC can use as a communication tool with partners, stakeholders, and funders
- **Year 2021:**
 - Implement the outreach strategy, which will outline target audiences and key messages
 - Continue to engage existing partners and stakeholder groups, and develop new external collaborations.
 - Continue to develop and update outreach materials for the SCRC Project
- **Year 2022:**
 - Continue to implement the outreach strategy
 - Begin to monitor the progress toward TNC's public engagement and fundraising goals

TNC's approach to communications and marketing will comprise the following key components:

- **TNC staff presence:** Increase staff presence at workshops and public meetings throughout the region to convey TNC priorities and updates, and to exchange information.
- **Educational and public access signage:** Increase signage to indicate public access points and provide educational resources to visitors.
- **Web-based outreach:** Enhance website to teach the community about TNC and our history and future priorities at SCRC.
- **Multilingual outreach:** Conduct multilingual outreach for all components of engagement to reach diverse and disadvantaged communities in the region.

Revenue Generation Model

Ongoing fundraising is necessary to ensure that TNC has the resources to achieve its goals. This section describes existing and potential revenue streams that TNC can use to support its goals for the SCRC Project, and types of potential funders for TNC to pursue.

High-Level Revenue Model

There are a few key types of revenue that TNC can target to obtain funding to achieve the goals of the SCRC Project. To implement its ambitious program, it will be necessary for TNC to focus on securing funding from a diverse array of federal, state, private foundation, corporate, and individual funders. Additionally, TNC will continue to pursue alternative funding options (Figure 8 highlights specific considerations TNC can consider for each revenue stream). For more details on the various potential funders related to the federal, state, private foundation, corporate and individual funders, see Appendix D.

Figure 8. Revenue Stream Considerations



Risks, Future Considerations, and Opportunities

Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Several risks factors may affect TNC’s ability to achieve its goals in the coming years. Table 14 outlines several of the primary risks, as well as mitigation strategies for each. Additionally, TNC can use the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) process described in the following section of this plan to adaptively manage the plan’s theory of change and priorities, in addition to preventing or addressing any issues or risks that arise.

Table 14. Risk Factors and Mitigation Strategies

Risks	Mitigation Strategies
Delayed or overly ambitious pace of restoration or public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reprioritize funding sources based on desired outcomes • Increase collaborations and information exchange with neighbors to secure access to restoration sites • Improve engagement and communication with new and existing partners to reaffirm commitment to goals of the SCRC Project • Utilize pilot programs to test new ideas for reducing restoration costs (as feasible based on funding and other programmatic priorities) • Work with permitting consultants to streamline and batch permits, if possible • Utilize consultants and subject matter experts to help resolve conflicts and create plans
Limited political and social will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build relationships with community-based organizations supportive of conservation efforts, built on public access and education, that create a constituency of community support to mobilize support of goals. • Build relationships with decision-makers to strengthen political will and support for improved land protection, restoration, public access, and threat abatement (e.g. ecological impacts of homeless encampments) • Build constituencies that proactively prepare the organization to act when political opportunities arise (e.g., support of relevant legislation) • Identify partners with the capacity to advocate and champion for key acquisitions and conservation easements to maintain protected and resilient ecosystems, and organizations who can serve as take-out partners in the future (as outlined in the <i>Partnership Approach</i> section of this plan)
Ecological changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for a dynamic future, in which climate change and disasters (manmade or natural) will occur • Develop collaborative research partnerships to study and respond to changing ecological conditions. • Proactively collaborate with content experts and working groups to monitor and address invasive species and disease proliferation • Work with funders to quickly access emergency funding following sudden ecological events (e.g. floods or fires) as opportunity for Arundo removal

Risks	Mitigation Strategies
Lack of alignment on short- and long-term priorities, investments, and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communication and work planning across diverse teams • Seek continuous input from TNC project managers, subject matter experts, and key partners (e.g., via quarterly meetings of existing stakeholder committees)
Limited funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage partnerships to broaden the scale of projects, gain in-kind support, and build new funding relationships tied specifically to Ormond Beach and the Santa Clara River • Ensure financial sustainability by continuing to diversify revenue sources
Limited collaboration among partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a culture of cooperation by leading successful collaborations and avoiding duplication of effort • Work with partner organizations to build their capacity through outreach, training, and identification of key leaders who can serve as champions

Future Considerations and Opportunities

TNC is uniquely positioned to build on our current work and expand our impact. While implementing this plan, TNC will continually evaluate potential new opportunities that arise if funding and staff capacity become available. Additionally, throughout plan execution, TNC will need to consider the changing regulatory and socio-political environment in California, including policy and public opinion related to topics such as biodiversity, climate change, water management and quality, and other emerging priorities. The research and discussions that led to the development of this strategic plan uncovered some opportunities, listed below, that TNC could consider in the future if it wishes to expand beyond the scope of activities outlined in this plan, based on available funding and staff capacity. These opportunities may also represent areas that TNC may wish to collaborate on with partners to better leverage expertise and capacity. Potential opportunities identified through development of this plan include:

- **New partnerships:** Consider engaging the community to create new opportunities for activities that meet the goals of the SCRC Project (e.g., potential collaboration with Port Hueneme to facilitate green development on new parcels).
- **Mitigation funding revenue stream:** Explore opportunities for mitigation funding in the SCRC region
- **Multi-benefit projects:** In collaboration with partners, identify opportunities for diversified co-benefit funding for projects that address homeless and the associated environmental impacts (e.g., providing services to homeless population and reducing their impacts to the SCRC ecosystem, engaging local municipalities in cleanup and restoration efforts).
- **Impact investment and public funding in California:** Explore opportunities in impact investing and public funding related to water markets and acquisitions. TNC will work with private investors to investigate impact investment options. In addition, in collaboration with existing or future partners, TNC could consider exploring opportunities for climate bonds and general funds directed to environmental conservation.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

Monitoring, evaluation and learning is a process that TNC can use to assess progress toward the goals outlined in this plan. The measures of performance and milestones outlined below will provide a mechanism for TNC to understand its contribution and impact by acknowledging which approaches are working, which are not, and how to adaptively manage to increase impact in the SCRC Project area.

Measures of Performance

Table 15 outlines how TNC will measure progress toward SCRC project goals. TNC will continually assess the suitability of these measures and will adapt existing and add new measures as needed.

Table 15. Measures of Performance by Goal

Goal 1: Protected and resilient ecosystems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acres of land protected using fee or easement • Acres of land restored
Goal 2: Accessible open space and engaged communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of adult and child visitors per year • # of community groups engaged, including educators and groups representing disadvantaged communities • # of properties with managed public access
Goal 3: Science-based and innovative solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of new partnerships formed for innovative solutions • # of pilot projects tested
Goal 4: Strengthened management capacity and partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of partnerships in each priority area (e.g., restoration, public access, acquisition, stewardship, monitoring)
Goal 5: Durable long-term funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of long-term funding needed for ongoing management • \$/year transferred to endowment • \$ raised • # of grants and \$ applied for • % success rate for grants • \$ of funds raised from new foundations

Milestones

TNC seeks to accomplish several milestones in each year of this Strategic Plan. At a high level, TNC’s approach will begin with **developing a work plan, establishing baseline measurements and develop a dashboard to track progress**. Mid-way through the strategy TNC will begin to plan for an assessment and review of success and **evaluate large-scale changes needed to achieve goals**. This will be an opportunity to show progress toward its goals and identify opportunities to pivot or refine measures of progress and adjust strategies. Toward the end of the strategy, TNC will **engage external evaluators** to perform a more systematic, third-party review to understand and map the impact of TNC’s work in the SCRC region.

Development of this Strategic Business Plan

To develop this strategic business plan, TNC engaged Blue Earth Consultants (Blue Earth), a Division of ERG, to perform research and guide a planning process, building off previous work that Blue Earth conducted in relation to the initial planning process for Ormond Beach in 2016. Below is a summary of the research and process that resulted in the creation of this plan.

- **Web-based research and document review:** Blue Earth conducted a review of existing documents provided by TNC related to Santa Clara River, Ormond Beach, and the region.
- **Interviews with key stakeholders:** Blue Earth conducted 35 total interviews with informants identified in collaboration with the project Steering Committee. The interviews included 11 regional informants, 16 Santa Clara River informants, and eight Ormond Beach informants (see Appendix A for a list of informants and Appendix B for the interview tool). Interviews probed informants on key themes regarding restoration needs and priorities for the area and the region, as well TNC's role in future efforts. See Appendix C for a summary of interview findings.
- **Funding research:** Blue Earth performed web research to develop a database of private foundations and county, state, and federal government organizations with funding priorities that are aligned with the goals of SCRC project and could represent new prospective funding mechanisms (Appendix D). Blue Earth analyzed findings, tiered potential funders, and calculated the percent likelihood of win, average grant amounts, and recommended ask amounts to inform development of a five-year revenue model for the SCRC Project.
- **Land use priorities development:** The TNC Stewardship Team evaluated restoration, public access and acquisition opportunities throughout the project area to develop a Land Use Priorities summary that describes current conditions, intended restoration and public access outcomes, and timelines and estimated costs for planning, permitting, fundraising, implementation and long-term management of TNC-owned properties.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Blue Earth	Blue Earth Consultants
CAUSE	Central Coast Alliance United for A Sustainable Economy
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
FSCR	Friends of the Santa Clara River
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plans
HRNA	Hedrick Ranch Nature Area
HVP	Heritage Valley Parks
MICOP	Mixteco/Indígena Community Organizing Project
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
SCRC	Santa Clara River and Ormond Beach
SCC	State Coastal Conservancy
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
USC	University of Southern California