

SAN LUIS OBISPO CREEK RESILIENCY AND REWILDING ACTION PLAN – Press Release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SAN LUIS OBISPO CREEK WINS SUPPORT FOR MUCH-NEEDED HABITAT RESTORATION

SAN LUIS OBISPO, Calif. (Mar. 23, 2023) – California coastal communities often regard their creeks as little more than a source of water, as a conveyance for waste, or as a threat to cities and farms from flooding. Through a generous grant from the Harold J. Miossi Charitable Trust, Creek Lands Conservation will work with community stakeholders and partners in San Luis Obispo to lead a change. The “SLO Creek Resiliency & Rewilding Action Plan” will provide much-needed restoration of critical habitat for steelhead trout and other iconic wildlife species, with ample input from community stakeholders.

“This partnership shows the strength of our SLO community,” says Don Chartrand, executive director of Creek Lands Conservation. “We are excited to officially kick-off this collaborative effort to enhance the well-being of the SLO Creek watershed at Mission Plaza on April 21. Come for a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 4:30PM, followed by a reception at the SLO Museum of Art that is also celebrating our 40th Anniversary.”

Among California’s many coastal watersheds, the SLO Creek watershed is unique in that its undeveloped upland tributaries flow into urban areas, yet still support a diverse array of native aquatic species, including California Red-legged frog, Tidewater goby, Pacific lamprey, and the beloved Steelhead trout. Unlike many of our neighboring coastal creeks, steelhead continue to migrate, spawn and rear new generations in SLO Creek.

The SLO Creek watershed supports migration of adult steelhead that swim past golf courses, apple orchards, many businesses, schools and neighborhoods, and spawn in gravels in nearby parks and within Cal Poly’s creeks and streams. Recent flooding has highlighted the importance of better planning for human health and safety, economics, and thriving ecosystems alike. This plan will strive to dovetail with flood control measures while also focusing on habitat enhancement concerns.

“Steelhead trout are an iconic representation of the California spirit,” says Mr. Chartrand. “These survivors are a keystone species, and their success defines the functional well-being of entire ecosystems. SLO Creek is at a tipping point in the watershed’s history. If the community can protect and restore the key elements needed to support steelhead, they may be able to persist here for future generations. If we fail, this population could disappear. We are holding the line to species decline when it comes to our local steelhead population.”

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