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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR RIO DEL MAR STATE BEACH COMMUNITY PLANTING DAY

Native dune species will be planted March 15 to increase coastal resilience

FEB 28, 2025 — APTOS, CA — California State Parks and Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends), in partnership with the Monterey Bay Living Shoreline Program and Groundswell Coastal Ecology, will be hosting a community planting day at Rio del Mar State Beach to support the Rio del Mar Living Shoreline Pilot Project.

The community planting event will be 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 15. Space is limited and volunteers are encouraged to preregister on Eventbrite (<https://RDMLivingShorelineCommunityDay.eventbrite.com>).

California State Parks, Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks, Groundswell Coastal Ecology and volunteers will be planting native dune plants in an area of the beach that is adjacent to the Rio del Mar Esplanade. The plants selected are well-suited to the local coast, helping to stabilize loose sand and trap more sand over time to keep the dunes intact. They also attract native pollinators, which benefits the local ecosystem.

This project was initiated following storm events in 2021 that caused significant beach and habitat loss, threatening to undermine the public bathrooms. Restoring native dune vegetation is a final step in reinforcing the dunes at Rio del Mar to improve coastal resiliency and benefit native biodiversity. California State Parks worked with Integral Consulting, Inc., to develop a new approach to protecting public facilities while supporting natural processes. The project created a new system, underpinned by stacked driftwood logs sourced from nearby Seacliff State Beach, and topped with native plantings. The dunes span approximately a half-acre of the “back beach,” away from the average tideline, and vary in width from 40 to 100 feet.

First implemented in 2022, the pilot project has survived the catastrophic swell events of recent winters, with further additions to the buried driftwood in 2023 and 2024. Funding for the project comes from a Coastal Conservancy grant.

About the Monterey Bay Living Shoreline Program

The Monterey Bay Living Shoreline Program focuses on planning and implementing nature-based projects that enhance coastal resilience against the impacts of climate change such as sea level rise, erosion and coastal storms. Living shorelines provide multiple benefits such as protection from rising seas, storms and erosion, restoration of critical habitats for wildlife and preservation of recreational and cultural values along the coast. Learn more about Monterey Bay Living Shoreline Program at www.mblsp.org.

About California State Parks

The California Department of Parks and Recreation, popularly known as State Parks, and the programs supported by its Office of Historic Preservation and divisions of Boating and Waterways and Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation provides for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state’s extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation. Learn more at parks.ca.gov.

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About Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks

Established in 1976, Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends) is a vital partner with California State Parks, creatively working to ensure our cherished local parks and beaches are thriving and available to all. Friends' innovative and collaborative community partnership provides support and investment for education, equity and inclusion, conservation, facilities improvements, historic preservation and cultural events. Friends operates a robust online ParkStore offering nature- and history-themed merchandise for sale to benefit local parks and beaches. Friends also operates ParkStores at Natural Bridges, New Brighton (seasonal), Santa Cruz Mission, Seacliff and Wilder Ranch. Learn more at www.ThatsMyPark.org or via [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#) and [YouTube](#).

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