

PRESS RELEASE



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Humboldt Bay's Dunes and Communities to Benefit from \$2 Million Grant

Two million dollars is on its way to Humboldt Bay to restore native dune ecosystems, increase biodiversity, and provide climate resiliency.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) just announced a record \$136 million investment in projects nationwide that will help communities prepare for increasing coastal flooding and more intense storms, while improving thousands of acres of coastal habitats.

A native foredune restoration project planned in partnership by Friends of the Dunes and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was identified by NFWF and NOAA as one of the most promising nature-based solutions to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise in the United States.

The resulting \$2 million grant award from NFWF to Friends of the Dunes will result in the restoration of approximately 20 acres of foredunes at two ends of a previously restored 4 miles of shoreline on the North Spit of Humboldt Bay, which protects the community of Manila.

"This project builds on the visionary work of Andrea Pickart and our partners at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore native coastal habitat and create a more resilient dune system," said Mike Cipra, Executive Director of Friends of the Dunes. "It means a lot that the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and NOAA are investing in the future of our biodiverse dunes and in the protection of Humboldt Bay communities."

Newly published research conducted through the multi-partner Humboldt Coastal Resilience Project has demonstrated that restoring native dune vegetation leads to increased resilience. Invasive species such as European beachgrass prevent the movement of sand inland and build steep, narrow, static foredunes that are subject to scarping and significant loss during winter storms—storms that are predicted to grow more severe with climate change and sea level rise. Replacing invasive plant species with native species creates a broader, higher foredune, allows quicker recovery from large storms, and maintains sediment flow, with movement of sand from the beach to the foredune and backdune.

This landmark restoration and resilience project will implement the peer-reviewed findings of the Humboldt Coastal Resilience Project by removing invasive species that decrease resilience and revegetating with native species that increase resilience and biodiversity. The project is a collaboration involving multiple partners, including the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Friends of

the Dunes, Redwood Community Action Agency, the California Conservation Corps, and the Wiyot Tribe.

"We are excited to have an opportunity to work with our community partners on this collaborative restoration effort. This project is the culmination of 40 years of partnering with the community on the collective goals of conserving biodiversity and restoring habitats in and around Humboldt Bay," said Cashell Villa, Project Leader for the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. "The completion of this project will mark a major milestone in achieving Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge's vision for complete habitat restoration within our dunes units. "

The areas where the planned restoration work will take place over the next four years include the 122-acre Humboldt Coastal Nature Center property and the relatively newly conserved 325-acre Wadulh Unit of the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge, just north of the Lanphere Dunes. Wadulh means "dunes" in Soulatluk, Wiyot language.

When this project is complete, there will be a 5.3-mile, contiguous stretch of fully restored foredunes running from the Humboldt Coastal Nature Center in the south, through the Ma-l'el and Lanphere Dunes, to the Wadulh Unit.

"These are the most intact, native coastal dunes on the U.S. West Coast," said Cipra. "And research has now demonstrated that restoring this entire dune system is crucial to the future of our communities. With this knowledge, we have the responsibility to work together to restore these places, and fulfill a promise to the future—a promise that values native biodiversity and resilience."

For more information about the NFWF coastal resilience grant awards, visit <https://www.nfwf.org/media-center/press-releases/nfwf-noaa-announce-record-136-million-coastal-resilience>

For more information about the Humboldt Coastal Resilience Project, including access to the published study, visit <https://www.friendsofthedunes.org/hcrp>

Attached photo: Restored foredune at Lanphere Dunes by Andrea Pickart