

# NATURAL RESOURCES

The Natural Resources Agency consists of 29 departments, boards, commissions, and conservancies responsible for administering programs that conserve, restore, and enhance California's natural, historical, and cultural resources. The Governor's Budget includes total funding of \$14.5 billion (\$4.9 billion General Fund, \$7.6 billion special funds, \$389.4 million federal funds, and \$1.6 billion bond funds) for the programs included in this Agency.

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## DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) provides natural resource management and wildland fire protection services to 31 million acres of State Responsibility Area (SRA)—and supports federal and local efforts in non-SRA areas. It operates 237 fire stations, 13 air attack bases, 1 air tanker base, 11 helitack bases, 25 conservation camps, 31 fire centers, 14 state forests, 1 nursery, and 1 statewide seed bank. Of the 56 counties with SRA, CAL FIRE contracts with 6 counties to provide wildland fire protection services. The Budget includes \$5.3 billion (\$2.2 billion General Fund) and 14,044 positions for CAL FIRE.

The ongoing impact of climate change on California's wildlands, the consequences of a century-old legacy of actively impeding cultural and beneficial fire, and decades of underinvestment in forest health continue to create the conditions for a year-round fire season and longer, more severe peak fire seasons, resulting in catastrophic wildfire risks that threaten communities, landscapes, and ecosystems across the state. The Budget

recognizes these conditions and their impact on both firefighting operations and the state's wildfire and landscape resilience. The Budget maintains historical funding and makes further investments to enhance CAL FIRE's fire protection capacity and strengthen the state's wildfire and forest resilience. See the Climate Change Chapter for additional details on significant wildfire and forest resilience investments.

### MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since 2019, the state has dedicated significant resources to enhance CAL FIRE's firefighting capabilities.

- **Additional Engines with Year-Round Staffing**—\$32.6 million General Fund and 131 positions ongoing to add 13 additional year-round engines. This investment expanded the fleet to a total of 356 engines and increased to 65 the number of engines resourced for baseline year-round staffing. This enhancement helps meet the increased demand for wildland fire response, more equitably meet the intent of the state's Master Mutual Aid System, address the need for additional resources earlier and later in the calendar year, and better position the state to respond to larger and more frequent fires. The funding also includes proportional ongoing contract county funding.
- **66-Hour Workweek**—\$770.4 million (\$756.3 million General Fund) and 2,457 positions ongoing, phased in over five years beginning in 2024-25, to reflect the 2022 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between CAL FIRE Local 2881 (Bargaining Unit 8) and the State of California that committed to the reduction of the 72-hour workweek to a 66-hour workweek beginning on November 1, 2024. In 2025, CAL FIRE graduated a record 658 new Fire Apparatus Engineers through the Company Officer Academy. These personnel now begin a three-year apprenticeship that prepares them for promotion to Fire Captain, aligning with projected leadership needs in 2028-29 and 2029-30. More than 600 additional Company Officers are projected to graduate in 2026, contributing to the more than 1,350 new Fire Apparatus Engineers funded over the five-year plan. As staffing levels rise, units across the state are moving to a three-platoon schedule, improving coverage and reducing reliance on extended duty. With full implementation of the 66-hour workweek, CAL FIRE will operate at peak staffing for nine months per year (previously four to five months) and at base staffing for three months per year. Additionally, the number of fire engines staffed during the base period increases from 65 to 153.

- **Relief Staffing**—\$175.3 million General Fund and 576 positions ongoing to strengthen and enhance statewide fire protection capacity by adding key leadership, operational, and administrative staff. This investment includes expanded training capacity through new positions at the CAL FIRE Training Centers to meet the initial and ongoing training demands associated with the growing number of uniformed positions. One-time investments included the purchase of fire engines, engine covers, training props, furnishings, and specialized equipment needed to support increased student throughput. This funding also includes proportional ongoing contract county funding, providing consistent fire protection coverage across state-funded county operations.
- **Hand Crews (CAL FIRE, CCC, and CMD)**—\$484.4 million General Fund and 2,022 positions ongoing within CAL FIRE, the California Conservation Corps (CCC), and the California Military Department (CMD) to augment the number and increase the availability of non-incarcerated hand crews in response to decreases in the number of incarcerated individuals available to staff hand crews. Since 2019, California has added 60 new state hand crews, 12 contract county fire crews, and converted 16 existing state hand crews from seasonal to year-round. These significant investments have resulted in a total of 180 state hand crews (95 incarcerated, 38 CAL FIRE, 33 CCC, and 14 CMD) and 12 fire crews in the six contract counties, as of January 2026.
- **Aviation Resources**—\$123.9 million one-time General Fund and \$61.4 million General Fund and 51 positions ongoing for enhanced aviation resources. This funding supports seven C-130 large airtankers, expanding CAL FIRE's capabilities and extending the life of the existing S2-T airtankers, as well as the purchase of four additional S-70i FIREHAWK helicopters, providing aircraft availability to help maintain continuous flight operations during critical fire weather conditions when frontline helicopters are due for maintenance.
- **Surge Equipment**—\$35.8 million one-time and \$5.8 million ongoing General Fund to purchase 42 fire engines and 10 bulldozers that increase surge capacity for wildland fire emergency response. Since 2023, this additional equipment has been staffed during periods of elevated fire weather or to provide coverage for extended assignments of other engines.

## SIGNIFICANT BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

- **Fixed-Wing Pilot and Mechanics Contract Increase**—\$66.5 million ongoing General Fund to support contract cost increases for fixed wing pilots and mechanics. CAL FIRE operates the largest civil aerial wildfire suppression fleet in the world, and uninterrupted maintenance is critical to keeping aircraft mission-ready. These resources ensure continued access to skilled aviation personnel, allow the Aviation Management Unit to maintain the fleet to required standards, and support safe, reliable aircraft operations throughout the fire year.
- **Permanent Resources for Enhanced Defensible Space Inspections**—\$6.2 million General Fund and 31 positions ongoing for CAL FIRE to continue to meet the state's goal of 250,000 annual parcel inspections within the SRA. The additional resources will continue a portion of the previous one-time Wildfire and Forest Resilience funding as well as provide additional year-round inspectors and associated support.

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## CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION CORPS

The California Conservation Corps (CCC) has long served as a cornerstone of workforce development in California, offering young people and veterans meaningful opportunities to serve their state while gaining valuable life, work, and educational experiences. Through hands-on service in environmental conservation, fire prevention and protection, disaster response, habitat restoration, and clean energy projects, Corpsmembers develop the skills needed to become empowered workers and engaged citizens. The Budget includes \$213.3 million (\$125.6 million General Fund) and 574 positions for CCC.

In addition to the CCC, California supports 14 certified local conservation corps and 5 tribal corps programs located in communities across the state. These corps provide similar workforce development and training opportunities, engaging young people in conservation, recycling, education, and community service activities that improve local environments and promote civic engagement.

Through these programs, the state is making a strategic investment in its future workforce—empowering young Californians with the skills, experience, and values needed to contribute meaningfully to their communities and the broader economy.

## MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since 2019, California has invested significant resources to support the CCC, and this support has been invaluable to the implementation of the state's climate goals and emergency response activities.

- **Corpsmember Services**—\$2 million (\$1.1 million General Fund) and 14 positions ongoing since 2021-22 to help Corpsmembers transition to higher education, military, vocational education, apprenticeships, or other careers after leaving the CCC program. In 2024-25, Corpsmembers received about 424,000 training hours, with at least 1,500 Corpsmembers receiving at least one certification and/or credential, about 350 Corpsmembers participated in the CCC High School Program, about 900 Corpsmembers enrolled in an education program following their service with the CCC and 600 Corpsmembers were employed following their service with the CCC, including 184 with CAL FIRE's firefighting program.
- **Forestry Corps**—\$9.4 million ongoing (\$4.4 million General Fund) for crews that develop and implement forest health projects, including one local conservation corps crew that is supported by an annual grant to the Greater Valley Conservation Corps. This program assists Corpsmembers in obtaining forestry and forest technician degrees and certificates through project work that includes fuel reduction, seedling collection, tree mortality and tree felling, and tree nursery and arborist training. From 2021-22 through 2023-24, CCC also received \$15 million General Fund annually to temporarily expand its Forestry Corps Program.

## SIGNIFICANT BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

- **Wildfire Readiness Seven-Day-Per-Week Schedule - CCC Hand Crews**—\$11.7 million General Fund, 49 positions, and 47 full-time equivalent Corpsmember and Special Corpsmember positions ongoing to implement a seven-day operational schedule year-round, enhancing wildfire readiness, rapid response, and workforce development. The proposal supports CAL FIRE's goals by increasing crew capacity, improving safety and resilience, and aligning with statewide climate and conservation initiatives.
- **Staffing and Operations for the Greenwood Residential Center**—\$12.3 million (\$6.8 million General Fund), 24 positions, 100 Corpsmembers, and 6 Special Corpsmembers ongoing to fully staff and operate the new Greenwood Residential Center in El Dorado County, scheduled for occupancy in July 2026. This proposal

expands CCC's emergency response capacity, conservation work, and youth development programs in a strategically vital region.

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## DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

California continues to experience weather extremes as droughts, floods, and temperatures become more severe. Building systems resilient to these weather extremes is a core pillar of the state's climate investments.

In August 2022, the Administration launched California's Water Supply Strategy, "Adapting to a Hotter, Drier Future," to increase water supply and adapt to more extreme weather patterns caused by climate change. This strategy builds on the broader Water Resilience Portfolio released in 2020 as a blueprint to equip California with the tools to address more extreme droughts and floods, a lack of safe drinking water in many communities, rising temperatures, declining fish populations, and an over-reliance on groundwater.

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) continues to play a key role in the implementation of both the Water Resilience Portfolio and the Water Supply Strategy, setting a course for managing water supplies in the face of an ever-changing climate. Historic levels of one-time state support have provided the opportunity to make generational investments across program areas tasked with bolstering the state's resilience to these weather extremes. While rising temperatures continue to introduce new challenges for managing water in California, DWR has implemented a broad, diversified approach to address long-standing challenges while preparing for the future.

### MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Urban Flood Risk Reduction Program**—California has some of the highest flood risk in the nation. Accordingly, urban flood risk reduction is identified as a priority in the 2022 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan. Since 2019, \$608.8 million (\$569.9 million General Fund) one-time has been appropriated to leverage \$2.9 billion in federal funding for urban flood risk reduction projects. These projects were accomplished through partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies that are currently implementing \$11.9 billion of flood infrastructure improvements in the Central Valley.
- **Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Implementation**—\$422.7 million General Fund in state operations and grants to Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to advance the development and implementation of

Groundwater Sustainability Plans. These investments improve groundwater management, recharge, and storage critical to addressing the state's water supply challenges while strengthening long-term climate resilience for vulnerable communities, agriculture, and the environment. This targeted funding accelerated sustainable groundwater implementation in high and medium priority basins, to help GSAs stay on track to meet SGMA's sustainability goals by 2040.

- **Salton Sea**—The Administration has overseen a critical shift from planning to implementation at the Salton Sea to confront public health and environmental risks, translating years of research and analysis into massive dust suppression projects and habitat restoration that span miles across previously exposed lakebed. With approximately \$750 million (\$94.2 million General Fund) one-time in state and partner funding currently advancing over 16,000 acres of projects that are either complete or in progress, the state continues to accelerate the pace and scale of its work to bring plants, water, and wildlife back to the Salton Sea.

## SIGNIFICANT BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

- **River Forecast and Snow Survey Resources**—\$9.5 million ongoing General Fund to support DWR's efforts to provide 24-hour river forecasts and collect snow course measurements that are critical for water supply forecasting, offsetting the vulnerabilities created by recent federal reductions in these areas.
- **Delta Levees Program Mitigation**—\$14 million one-time General Fund for DWR's Delta Levees Program. This funding will support the mitigation required for implementing levee safety projects in the Delta. This compensatory mitigation is required by state and federal law when levee improvement projects adversely impact habitat.
- **San Joaquin River Settlement State Obligations - Eastside Bypass Control Structure Fish Passage Rock Ramp**—\$25 million (\$9.5 million Proposition 1 and \$15.5 million Proposition 4) one-time for DWR to implement the Eastside Bypass Control Structure Fish Passage Rock Ramp project. This project includes modification of a control structure and construction of a rock ramp to improve fish passage for adult salmon and other native fish within the San Joaquin River system to further the work towards the state-obligated San Joaquin River Restoration Program.

## DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

The Department of Parks and Recreation (California State Parks) consists of 280 parks, beaches, trails, wildlife areas, open spaces, off-highway vehicle areas, and historic sites totaling approximately 1.6 million acres of land, including over 340 miles of coastline; 970 miles of lake, reservoir and river footage; more than 15,000 campsites and alternative camping facilities; and more than 5,200 miles of motorized and non-motorized trails. The Budget includes \$1 billion (\$225.9 million General Fund) and 4,743 positions for California State Parks.

### MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since 2019, the Administration has made significant investments to expand access to the outdoors and address the impacts of climate change. The Administration's commitment to advancing California's Outdoors for All Initiative has resulted in programs that enable safe, equitable, and enjoyable access to parks, open spaces, and recreational opportunities. These programs remove historical, financial and logistical barriers that prevent children and families from accessing state parks and amplify the Administration's promise of a California for All. Highlights include:

- **Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program**—This program creates new parks and recreation opportunities in underserved communities across California. Since 2019, approximately \$852.3 million in grants have been awarded to 183 projects. Funding has come from bond funds (Proposition 40, Proposition 84, and Proposition 68), and the General Fund. As a result, hundreds of new and improved parks now provide walkable, safe recreation opportunities for thousands of Californians in previously park-poor areas. The 2025 Budget Act included an additional \$188.5 million from the Climate Bond for this program.
- **Dos Rios State Park**—In 2023, the Department opened Dos Rios State Park, California's first new state park in ten years, restoring a former agricultural site at the confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin Rivers to provide floodplain habitat, climate resilience, and new public recreation.
- **Outdoor Access Programs**—Beginning in 2021–22, these programs have significantly reduced cost barriers and expanded equitable park access statewide, including:
  - The California State Library Parks Pass, which offers free vehicle day-use entry to state parks through partnerships with public libraries statewide. The Department has partnered with the California State Library to provide 33,000 State Library

Parks Passes to more than 1,100 library branch locations, including tribal libraries, throughout the state.

- The Adventure Pass, which offers free day-use entry to over 50 state parks for fourth-grade public school students and their families. This program was made ongoing beginning in 2024-25 through a \$2.1 million annual investment of Proposition 98 General Fund to continue the Adventure Pass program for fourth graders attending public schools.
- The Golden Bear Pass, which provides year-round, free access at over 200 state parks for families who receive CalWORKs, individuals who receive supplemental security income, income-eligible Californians over age 62, and participants of California's Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. Through an innovative partnership with the Department of Social Services, pass usage has increased by over 4,000 percent since 2021.
- **Arts in California Parks**—Through a partnership with the California Arts Council and Parks California, \$13.9 million one-time General Fund was invested in 61 grantees and over 200 events to uplift artists, culture bearers, California Native American tribes, and communities in creating artwork at local and state parks that offer unique perspectives on California's past and present. Approximately 40 percent of projects are led by California Native American tribes or tribal-serving organizations.
- **Tribal Lands Acknowledgement**—With an investment of \$9.8 million one-time General Fund in 2022-23, 69 tribes partnered with the Department to create land acknowledgement content for 191 state parks to be added into new entry signage, orally at events, and on parks' websites and educational materials. Funding was also provided for 35 projects to co-create exhibits and interpretive content with California Native American tribes.
- **California Indian Heritage Center (CIHC)**—With the tribally-led CIHC Task Force, State Parks has engaged in outreach to tribal communities for the design of the California Indian Heritage Center. The CIHC Outreach Initiative report has been finalized and the design team and the CIHC Task Force, with input from tribal leaders and community, are developing the Overall Site Master Plan for CIHC, including immediate public use areas, buildings, native gardens, and outdoor spaces.
- **Deferred Maintenance**—These investments strengthen safety, sustainability, and long-term access across the State Park System. Since 2019, approximately \$271.1 million one-time has been appropriated for deferred maintenance projects

from various funding sources, including General Fund, Proposition 40, Proposition 68, and the Climate Bond. These investments have addressed high-priority projects to enable improved access and enhanced visitor experience across the state.

### SIGNIFICANT BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

- **California State Parks Library Pass Program**—\$6.8 million ongoing General Fund to support the California State Parks Library Pass program. Library card holders can borrow a pass from their local library to access select state parks, beaches and monuments for free, helping to remove cost barriers to visit these treasured spaces.
- **California Indian Heritage Center**—\$2.1 million one-time General Fund for the construction of an immediate public use area to further the Administration's commitment to make significant progress in the construction of the tribally-led CIHC. The Budget also includes \$842,000 General Fund and 3 permanent positions ongoing to provide immediate support to ensure tribal and non-tribal community members have access to portions of the property and develop community programming to advance the tribally-led goals of the CIHC.

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## DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is the agency that safeguards the state's unparalleled nature including rare and endangered species, native plants and their habitats. CDFW is dedicated to stewarding California's rich natural biodiversity for all Californians, and does so through science-based work, collaborative partnerships, enforcement of environmental laws, and forward-looking conservation efforts. CDFW works to ensure California's natural systems remain sustainable for current and future generations. CDFW plays a key role balancing natural resource conservation with public access, the changing climate, and navigating the intersection of human activity and ecological preservation.

### MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Salmon Strategy for a Hotter, Drier Future**—Salmon are a keystone species in California. They are vital to the health of river ecosystems, Native American communities and the economic sustainability of commercial and recreational fishing communities across the state. Salmon are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of drought and its effect on water temperatures and availability. In

January 2024, the Administration launched the "California Salmon Strategy for a Hotter, Drier Future," which charts important priorities and actions needed to support California's struggling salmon populations.

Since 2021, the state has invested over \$171 million General Fund in projects that enhance river ecosystems resiliency to drought and climate change. These projects directly benefit salmon populations through restoration and protection of riparian and aquatic habitat and river channels, reconnection of historical flood plains, or improvements to ecological functions.

One of these restoration projects, the largest river restoration project in American history, the Klamath Dam Removal Project was completed in 2024. A primary goal of the Klamath River dam removal was the reestablishment of viable, wild, self-sustaining populations of salmon and other anadromous fish species for conservation, for their ecological benefits, and to enhance tribal, commercial, and recreational fisheries.

A little more than a year after the dam removal, CDFW scientists are observing salmon reoccupy just about every corner of their historic habitat. CDFW has invested more than \$30 million General Fund to support fish habitat restoration projects within the Klamath Basin.

## SIGNIFICANT BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

- **San Joaquin River Basin Spring and Fall-run Chinook Salmon Restoration**—\$5 million ongoing General Fund and 3 permanent positions to provide necessary resources for the operation of the newly-constructed San Joaquin Research and Conservation Hatchery Facility, to continue the San Joaquin River Restoration Program, and the Merced River Hatchery.
- **Nutria Eradication Program**—\$8.2 million ongoing General Fund and 1 permanent position to support the continued and expanded operations of the Nutria Eradication Program, which addresses the spread of the invasive nutria species to protect critical flood infrastructure and sensitive habitat.

## EXPOSITION PARK

Exposition Park is a 160-acre campus located in the heart of Los Angeles that includes three state entities: the Office of Exposition Park Management, the California African American Museum, and the California Science Center. The Park currently attracts up to eight million visitors per year to the state entities listed above and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, the City of Los Angeles Rose Garden, the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, and the BMO Stadium. The Budget includes \$154.8 million (\$116.9 million General Fund) and 203 positions for Exposition Park.

### MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Exposition Park has become one of California's most visited destinations and valuable open, green spaces in the Los Angeles area. Since 2019, three new museums have been developed within the Exposition Park campus, including the construction of the Natural History Museum's Commons, the California Science Center's Samuel Oschin Air and Space Center, and the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art. Important community amenities have also been added, including renovation of the Jesse A. Brewer Jr. Park.

- **California Science Center**—Over \$12 million (\$9 million General Fund) has been invested in the California Science Center to support its mission of stimulating curiosity and inspiring science learning. This includes \$2 million one-time General Fund for deferred maintenance, including life safety and infrastructure upgrades, and \$10 million (\$7 million General Fund) ongoing for operations and maintenance of the new Samuel Oschin Air and Space Center that will house the Space Shuttle Endeavour in launch position—the only authentic full Space Shuttle stack in the world. Collectively, these investments have helped to reinforce the Science Center's position as one of California's premier family educational destinations featuring award-winning exhibits and education programs.
- **California African American Museum (CAAM)**—Since 2019, \$19.4 million (\$18.3 million General Fund) has been invested in CAAM to renovate and upgrade museum gallery space and support major renovations, infrastructure repairs, and severe storm-related emergency recovery efforts. These investments brought the facility into compliance with current building and fire and life safety standards, enabling CAAM to continue its mission to research, collect, preserve, and interpret the history, art, and culture of African Americans, with an emphasis on California and the western United States.

**SIGNIFICANT BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS**

- **Utility Replacement and Site Improvements**—\$96.5 million one-time (\$76 million General Fund and \$20.5 million Exposition Park Improvement Fund) to complete critical deferred maintenance projects necessary to meet code compliance and accessibility requirements prior to increased patronage from notable Park developments and events, such as the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- **California Science Center: Phase III Air and Space Center Facility Operations and Opening**—\$9.3 million ongoing General Fund and 31 positions to support the fall 2026 public opening of the Air and Space Center and ongoing operations of the Phase III facility.