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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **\$3.1 M AWARDED TO RESTORE HABITAT FOR LOCAL ENDANGERED SALMON**

(Half Moon Bay, CA- March 22, 2018) At the same time today in different cities, meetings of the California Wildlife Conservation Board in Sacramento and the California State Coastal Conservancy in Oakland awarded grants that will enable the San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD) and partners to enhance the survival of locally endangered coho salmon and threatened steelhead trout. Additionally, last week the RCD's Board of Directors voted to accept a third grant from the Fisheries Restoration Grant Program of the California Department of Wildlife. Cumulatively, the grants provide over \$3.1 million dollars for habitat restoration in coastal San Mateo County.

The Wildlife Conservation Board awarded \$866,590 to the RCD through its Streamflow Enhancement Program for a project that will enable agriculture and salmon to share the water in San Gregorio Creek. The project will construct a 30 acre-foot pond on Peninsula Open Space Trust's (POST) San Gregorio Farm that will allow Blue House Farm to store winter water from the creek and then irrigate crops from that stored water during the summer and fall when severely limited streamflow can threaten fish survival. The project is a partnership effort of the RCD, Trout Unlimited, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, POST, and Blue House Farm. The last three partners are also contributing additional funds to the project. The National Fish and Wildlife Federation also contributed design funding.

The California State Coastal Conservancy awarded \$1,087,000 for the innovative Integrated Watershed Restoration Program, a partnership of the RCDs of Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Mateo Counties to design and secure permits for high priority restoration projects that help ensure the survival of threatened and endangered species. Approximately one third of the funds

will be allocated to the San Mateo RCD and partners to restore natural creek function, reduce erosion, restore wetland habitat, and improve water quality.

The Fisheries Restoration Grant Program of the California Department of Fish and Game awarded \$1,173,784 to the RCD to remove a barrier to fish migration in Alpine Creek, a tributary to San Gregorio Creek. To provide unimpeded access for fish to over three miles of high quality habitat, the project will modify the culvert under Pescadero Creek Road adjacent to the intersection with Alpine Creek Road near La Honda. It will reconstruct a more natural creek channel at a better gradient for fish migration. Current conditions make the site impassible to juvenile fish and only navigable by adults under ideal flow conditions (water depth and velocity). Project partners include San Mateo County and private landowners in the project area.

Coho salmon and steelhead trout historically existed in abundance in some watersheds in San Mateo County, including San Gregorio and Pescadero. Populations were severely reduced in the late 1970s to early 1980s in part due to a significant drought. Central California Coast coho salmon is listed as endangered under the state and federal Endangered Species Acts. Similarly, the steelhead trout population has declined rapidly. The National Marine Fisheries Service has identified the local population to be nearly extirpated, and has identified Pescadero and San Gregorio watersheds as essential to recovery of the species.

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About the RCD: The San Mateo Resource Conservation District is a public special district that provides comprehensive, non-regulatory services to protect, conserve, and restore natural resources. Serving as a local hub for conservation efforts, Resource Conservation Districts across California work in partnership with land owners and managers, technical advisors, area jurisdictions, government agencies, and others. For more information visit [www.sanmateorcd.org](http://www.sanmateorcd.org).

About Peninsula Open Space Trust: POST protects open space, farms and parkland for communities in and around Silicon Valley. As a private nonprofit land trust, POST has been responsible for saving more than 75,500 acres over the last 40 years. POST works with private landowners and public agencies to connect people and nature for the benefit of all. Visit [openspacetrust.org](http://openspacetrust.org) for more information.

About Blue House Farm: Blue House Farm grows 50 acres of organic vegetables, fruit and flowers for CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), Farmers' Markets, stores, wholesale,

special events, and farmstands for their Bay Area and Peninsula neighbors. Visit <https://bluehousefarm.com/> for more information.

About Trout Unlimited: Trout Unlimited (TU) is North America's leading coldwater fisheries conservation organization, dedicated to the conservation, protection and restoration of trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. The organization has more than 150,000 members in 400 chapters across the United States, including 10,000 members in California. Visit [www.tu.org](http://www.tu.org) for more information.

About USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service: The NRCS has been helping people help the land since 1935, getting conservation on the ground through local partnerships to meet local needs. Visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov) for more information.

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