
Sonoma
Water
FY
2025
2026
ANNUAL
REPORT

OUR MISSION



To provide reliable water supply, wastewater management and flood protection — essential services for a thriving community and a healthy environment.

www.sonomawater.org



WELCOME

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR
REBECCA HERMOSILLO, SONOMA WATER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Serving as chair of the Sonoma Water Board of Directors during fiscal year 2025-26 reinforced what makes this organization effective: careful planning, strong partnerships and a steadfast commitment to serving our communities.

This year reminded us that California's climate continues to challenge traditional approaches to water management. An encouraging start to the rainy season gave way to a dry spring, underscoring the importance of resilient infrastructure and informed decisions about every drop of water we manage. Through Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations, Sonoma Water continued leading the nation in using modern weather forecasting to improve reservoir operations while maintaining flood protection for downstream communities.

Across Sonoma and Marin counties, our work continued well beyond water supply. We made major improvements to water transmission and wastewater infrastructure while investing in flood protection, environmental stewardship and watershed restoration. These efforts sustain the reliable public services our communities depend on every day.

This year also demonstrated the value of regional collaboration. Sonoma Water worked with cities, special districts, Tribal governments, state and federal agencies and community organizations to solve complex challenges. Long-term planning for the future of the Potter Valley Project and significant funding for wastewater infrastructure improvements show what these partnerships can achieve for the North Bay.

None of this work happens without Sonoma Water's employees. Their professionalism, technical expertise and commitment to public service allow us to respond to changing conditions while delivering reliable, essential services.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you to our employees, customers, partners and community members for your continued trust and support. Together, we are building a more resilient future for the people and environment we serve.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Hermosillo
Chair, Board of Directors
Sonoma Water



2026 Sonoma Water Board of Directors (L-R: David Rabbitt, James Gore, Lynda Hopkins, Rebecca Hermosillo and Chris Coursey.)

MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER GRANT DAVIS, SONOMA WATER

Fiscal year 2025-26 demonstrated the importance of preparing today for the challenges of tomorrow. As weather patterns become more variable and infrastructure continues to age, Sonoma Water remains focused on delivering reliable public services while investing in the long-term resilience of our systems.

Our team continued to build on decades of innovation in water management. Through Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations, we used modern weather forecasting to improve water supply reliability while maintaining flood protection. We also completed and continued critical projects throughout our water transmission and wastewater systems for the hundreds of thousands of people who depend on Sonoma Water every day.

We made progress on regional priorities that require collaboration beyond any single agency. Through the Eel-Russian Project Authority, we continued developing a long-term regional solution that supports reliable water supplies and healthy fisheries. Partnerships with local, state and federal agencies also secured critical investments in wastewater infrastructure and strengthened our readiness for future challenges.

Our strategic plan guided this work, with priorities centered on organizational excellence, environmental stewardship, climate adaptation and community engagement. These principles shape our decisions as we maintain critical infrastructure, protect natural resources and serve our customers.

The people behind this work give me the greatest confidence in Sonoma Water's future. Every accomplishment in this report represents the dedication, professionalism and expertise of our staff. Their commitment to public service allows Sonoma Water to respond to changing conditions while maintaining the service our communities expect.



I am grateful to the Sonoma Water Board of Directors for its leadership and support and to our customers, partners and community members for their continued trust. Together, we have built an organization prepared to meet the challenges ahead and serve the North Bay for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Grant Davis
General Manager
Sonoma Water



RELIABLE WATER SUPPLY

Sonoma Water invested in infrastructure, planning and water-use efficiency to support reliable service under changing climate conditions.

Water system projects

Sonoma Water completed the Sebastopol Road and Occidental Road wells as part of the Santa Rosa Plain Water Supply Resiliency Project, increasing local groundwater production and strengthening drought resilience.

Construction progressed on the Ely Booster Station Hazard Mitigation Project. Delivery of new electrical switchgear marked an important milestone toward the project's scheduled completion in September 2026. The improvements will support reliable station operations during emergencies.

The Cotati Tank No. 3 Recoating Project remained on track for substantial completion in July 2026, while the Santa Rosa and Russian River-Cotati Intertie Aqueducts Cathodic Protection Upgrade Phase 1 neared completion. Together, these projects extend the service life of critical storage and transmission infrastructure.

Sonoma Water completed designs and advertised the Ralphine Tank No. 1 and Sonoma Tank No. 1 recoating projects for construction. Both are expected to reach substantial completion in spring 2027.

Sonoma Water also awarded the $6.8 million Wilfred Booster Station Resiliency Project. Construction is scheduled for completion in December 2027.

Planning for long-term reliability

In May 2026, the Sonoma Water Board of Directors adopted the 2025 Urban Water Management Plan and Water Shortage Contingency Plan, updating the agency's long-term strategy for maintaining a reliable water supply for more than 600,000 residents in Sonoma and Marin counties.

Updated every five years as required by state law, the Urban Water Management Plan evaluates water supply and demand under normal, dry and multiple dry-year conditions. The 2025 plan found that Sonoma Water has adequate water supplies to meet projected demands through 2050. The Water Shortage Contingency Plan identifies conservation measures, supplemental supplies and operational strategies that could be used if a future supply shortfall occurs.

The plans also address changing precipitation patterns, climate change and environmental requirements and highlight the role of tools such as Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations in managing water supplies under increasingly variable conditions.

Sonoma Water renewed its water supply agreement with Marin Municipal Water District for 15 years. The agreement aligns with the Restructured Agreement for Water Supply, combines two previous contracts, gives Marin Water greater operational flexibility and includes a one-time $12.5 million payment to Sonoma Water.

Water-Use Efficiency

Sonoma Water and the 12 water retailers of the Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership continued regional programs that support long-term water savings and statewide efficiency goals under the Making Conservation a California Way of Life regulation.

Because about half of urban water use goes to irrigation, outreach focused on converting underused, high-water-use lawns into landscapes better suited to the region's dry-summer Mediterranean climate. These landscapes can use less water while offering benefits during fires, floods and longer droughts.

The 2025 summer campaign promoted climate-ready landscapes and rebates. A demonstration garden at the Sonoma County Fair showed how rain gardens can be incorporated into lawn-removal projects to reduce irrigation needs and improve stormwater quality.

In fall 2025, the water efficiency team worked with the California Water Efficiency Partnership to develop statewide resources about Assembly Bill 1572, which prohibits watering nonfunctional turf with potable water beginning in 2027. The effort supported the October launch of nonfunctionalturfca.org, a resource for businesses, landscape professionals, homeowners association managers and other affected groups.

In February 2026, the Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership and Russian River Watershed Association hosted the biennial Russian River-Friendly Landscaping symposium. The event, Turf's Up: Tree Care and Lawn Conversion in a New Regulatory Landscape, brought together landscape professionals, property managers and homeowners association representatives to share lessons from local projects.

The May Eco-Friendly Garden Tour featured 25 gardens across Sonoma and Marin counties and drew a record 4,200 registrations. The gardens highlighted California native plants, water-saving practices and sustainable design.

The Partnership's summer 2026 campaign, Less Lawn … More Savings, Inspiration, Curb Appeal, etc., used testimonials from residents and businesses to show the water-saving and community benefits of sustainable landscapes.

Learn more at www.savingwaterpartnership.org.

WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

Sonoma Water continued major treatment, pumping and collection system improvements while strengthening wet-weather operations and regulatory compliance.

Sanitation system projects

At the Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District treatment plant, crews completed the new effluent pumping facility and transferred operations to the new system. They also began demolishing the existing influent pumping facility and installing new influent pumps. The new facility is expected to begin operating in October 2026.

Sonoma Water completed the Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District Roof Replacement Project in June 2026 after awarding the construction contract the previous summer.

At the Russian River County Sanitation District, crews removed an underground fuel tank and installed a new aboveground tank. The Main Lift Station Aboveground Diesel Fuel Tank Project remained on schedule for completion in August 2026.

The Russian River County Sanitation District secured $47.8 million in state funding to repair and modernize its wastewater system. The project will upgrade mechanical and electrical equipment at all 11 lift stations, rehabilitate or replace force mains and replace aging infrastructure at the treatment plant. Sonoma Water plans to complete final design by September 2027.

Treatment reliability and wet-weather response

At the Russian River County Sanitation District treatment plant, staff upgraded tertiary filtration equipment and implemented new turbidity monitoring tools to improve treatment performance and support compliance with water quality requirements.

Following an untreated wastewater spill at the district during winter storms in early 2026, Sonoma Water worked with partner agencies to evaluate the incident and reduce future risk. Staff updated operating procedures, evaluated sources of stormwater entering the collection system and began planning an inflow and infiltration study to better understand wet-weather conditions.

Crews also replaced equipment at the Occidental lift station to improve pumping reliability and reduce noise for nearby residents, and restored treatment capacity at the Geyserville wastewater treatment plant through sludge removal.

FLOOD PROTECTION AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations

In October 2025, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers adopted a new Water Control Manual for Coyote Valley Dam and Lake Mendocino. Developed through more than a decade of collaboration among Sonoma Water, the Army Corps, the California Department of Water Resources and the Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes at UC San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography, the manual makes Lake Mendocino the nation's first U.S. Army Corps reservoir to permanently incorporate Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations into an updated Water Control Manual for improved water supply reliability and flood risk management. The approach uses improved weather and hydrologic forecasts to better balance flood protection and water supply reliability.

Better forecasting and regional planning

Completion of the Advanced Quantitative Precipitation Information radar network marked another major milestone. Installation of the final ocean-facing C-band radar completed the Bay Area system, providing more accurate precipitation data for flood forecasting, reservoir operations and emergency response.

Sonoma Water completed the Russian River Watershed Resilience Pilot with local governments, Tribal partners, resource agencies, nonprofit organizations and community groups. The partners identified climate vulnerabilities and developed strategies that improve watershed resilience while providing environmental and community benefits.

Working with the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management, Sonoma Water helped complete the Sonoma County Drought Resilience Plan. The plan identifies actions to improve drought preparedness for small water systems and domestic wells.

Sonoma Water launched development of a Climate Equity Strategy to consider the needs of vulnerable communities while delivering its core services. The strategy will also strengthen the agency's ability to compete for grants that emphasize equity and collaboration.





Water and energy resilience

Sonoma Water continued its partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy on HyperFORMANCE, a multi-institutional research initiative to improve water and energy system resilience. The project combines advanced computer modeling and artificial intelligence with collaboration between researchers and water managers to develop practical planning and operational tools.

The agency entered agreements to replace solar power systems at its Aviation Boulevard campus and the Sonoma Valley treatment plant. It also prepurchased replacement electrical switchgear for the Warm Springs Hydropower Plant to modernize equipment that has reached the end of its service life.

Operations and Maintenance expanded the stream maintenance program through sediment removal and vegetation management at dozens of locations throughout Sonoma County.

Environmental stewardship

Russian River Biological Opinion

On April 29, 2025, the National Marine Fisheries Service issued a second Russian River Biological Opinion to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Sonoma Water. The 10-year opinion covers operations and maintenance activities, including water supply, flood control, channel maintenance and habitat restoration in the Russian River watershed. The agency concluded that operations are not likely to jeopardize endangered and threatened coho salmon, Chinook salmon or steelhead, or adversely modify their critical habitat. This nonjeopardy finding marks a significant change from the 2008 jeopardy opinion and recognizes investments by Sonoma Water, its customers and the federal government in operational improvements and fisheries conservation.

Work under the 2025 Biological Opinion includes continued habitat enhancement in Dry Creek, revised Russian River estuary adaptive management and restoration, studies of salmon and steelhead migration and survival and continued improvements to reservoir and river flow management.

Salmon and steelhead research and monitoring

State and federal grants continued to support life-cycle monitoring for coho and Chinook salmon and steelhead. During the salmonid spawning season that ended in early 2025, Sonoma Water observed the highest number of adult coho and nests recorded to date. Staff estimated that more than 1,000 adults returned based on detections of marked fish in the lower main stem Russian River.

In spring 2026, Sonoma Water added a downstream migrant trap on the main stem Russian River at Hopland to









address questions in the 2025 Biological Opinion. The trap captured more than 3,000 Chinook smolts. Staff also began a steelhead smolt survival study using radio tags to estimate travel rates and survival. A total of 145 radio-tagged steelhead were released into the East Fork Russian River, with five receivers positioned along the Russian River to detect them.

New Eel-Russian Facility

Pacific Gas and Electric Co. filed its final application to surrender and decommission the Potter Valley Project on July 25, 2025. At the same time, it applied for permission for the Eel-Russian Project Authority to pursue the New Eel-Russian Facility.

Also in July 2025, nine organizations signed a Water Diversion Agreement supporting the proposed facility and seasonal diversions from the Eel River to the Russian River. The parties are the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Eel-Russian Project Authority, Round Valley Indian Tribes, Sonoma Water, Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission, California Trout, Humboldt County, Sonoma County and Trout Unlimited.

Through its management of the Eel-Russian Project Authority, Sonoma Water secured nearly $11 million in state and federal grants for engineering design and regulatory work needed for construction and operation.

Invasive mussel prevention

Sonoma Water contractor Dogs with Jobs completed more than 17,000 incoming vessel inspections at Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino to prevent the introduction of invasive quagga and zebra mussels. Canine teams conducted 7,539 inspections, or 44% of the total, and alerted handlers to five vessels requiring additional inspection.

RELIABLE OPERATIONS AND EMERGENCY READINESS

Operations and Maintenance

Operations and Maintenance keeps Sonoma Water's water, wastewater and flood protection systems operating safely and reliably. During fiscal year 2025-26, the division focused on preventive maintenance, regulatory compliance and system reliability while responding to emergencies and supporting major projects.

Work orders completed	More than 7,500
Planned or preventive maintenance	Approximately 75%
811 utility locate requests	Approximately 5,800
Additional service requests	450

O&M completed most of the nearly 9,900 work orders generated agencywide. The high share of planned and preventive work demonstrates an emphasis on identifying and addressing problems before they affect service.

Crews upgraded storage tanks and performed major maintenance at the Wohler and Mirabel collector facilities, which draw raw water from the Russian River. They replaced pumps, valves and other key components to support reliable regional water deliveries.

O&M supported activation of the Sebastopol Road Well and continued the aquifer storage and recovery program through well conditioning, pilot testing and facility commissioning. Staff also helped secure a new Water Supply Permit from the California Division of Drinking Water and completed initial hazard assessments required under Sonoma Water's Cross-Connection Control Plan.

Before a planned shutdown of the Ely Booster Pump Station, O&M conducted operational exercises and coordinated with Sonoma Water's water contractors to maintain reliable service.

Crews upgraded access at the Kawana and Los Guilicos tanks and launched an electronic logbook system to replace paper records, improve documentation and strengthen operational reporting.

Information Technology

Information Technology strengthened cybersecurity, modernized critical systems and improved emergency communications to support organizational excellence, infrastructure resilience and emergency preparedness.

IT replaced Sonoma Water's firewall infrastructure with next-generation technology, supported by a $250,000 grant from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. The team also deployed enterprise endpoint protection, expanded vulnerability scanning, integrated real-time threat intelligence and implemented immutable backups to improve recovery from ransomware and other cyber incidents.

IT moved wireless service to AT&T FirstNet, a nationwide network for public safety and essential service providers. FirstNet provides priority voice and data service during emergencies and access to deployable cellular equipment when local communications are disrupted. The transition also reduces annual wireless costs by approximately $120,000.

The division began replacing its aging phone system with a cloud-based platform and planning a hybrid server environment to improve performance, reduce long-term virtualization licensing costs and increase flexibility.

IT also launched artificial intelligence pilot projects to streamline documentation, reporting and vendor communications. Hands-on training allowed employees to explore practical applications and build skills for use across the organization.

Emergency, Safety and Security

Sonoma Water established the Emergency, Safety and Security Section during fiscal year 2025-26, bringing emergency management, occupational health and safety and security into one organization. The section focused on communications, employee training and protection of critical facilities.





Emergency management

Emergency Management deployed a new agencywide digital radio system with desktop radios at key facilities, mobile radios in fleet vehicles and portable radios for field staff.

The program delivered 29 emergency training courses and exercises, including Emergency Concept of Operations refreshers, an Unsafe Water Communications tabletop exercise with water contractors and an earthquake-focused Emergency Operations Center exercise.

Staff designed and equipped a mobile incident support trailer for on-scene command, communications and coordination. The trailer also serves as a backup for the Emergency Operations Center.

Emergency Management expanded the inventory of aqueduct pipe and other critical supplies to support faster response, reduce service disruptions and restore infrastructure after an emergency.

Safety

From September through December 2025, the Safety program assessed Sonoma Water's policies, procedures and workplace culture. The assessment identified opportunities to improve safety systems and produced a roadmap for phased improvements and future investment.

The program delivered 36 training sessions covering first aid, CPR/AED, chlorine safety and operation of specialized heavy equipment. The courses helped employees maintain certifications and build the skills needed to work safely.





Security

The Security program installed cameras and video alarm systems at water tank sites. A U.S. Department of Homeland Security grant funded seven projects, expanding monitoring and improving response to potential incidents.

The program also implemented a security management system for continuous monitoring of Sonoma Water facilities. Together, these investments improve protection of employees, critical infrastructure and essential services.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, MEDIA AND EDUCATION

Working in concert, Sonoma Water's community engagement team and public information officer handled media inquiries and crisis communications while connecting with residents through events and educational programs.

IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT

VISITOR CENTER: **18,325** total visitors

PUBLIC TOURS: **322** attendees

COMMUNICATIONS REACH

SOCIAL MEDIA: **750,000+** people reached; **900+** posts

WEBSITE: Approximately **96,000** visitors

NEWSLETTER: **3,300** subscribers

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AT A GLANCE

16 EVENTS

APPROXIMATELY **10,788** PEOPLE REACHED

STEM AND WATERSHED EDUCATION

COMMUNITY EVENTS

CAREERS AND WORKFORCE

WATER AND RESOURCE PROTECTION

Sonoma Water issued 18 news releases covering board actions, infrastructure projects, grant awards, environmental initiatives and educational programs. The public information officer coordinated interviews and responded to inquiries from local, regional and national news organizations.

The community engagement team supported the Lake Sonoma Steelhead Festival, Earth Day celebrations, school programs and other public events. The team also coordinated events marking the Lake Mendocino Water Control Manual signing and the $47.8 million State Water Resources Control Board grant for the Russian River County Sanitation District.

Sonoma Water co-hosted the 17th annual [illegible] Festival, welcoming





thousands of visitors to the Milt Brandt Visitor Center and Don Clausen Fish Hatchery. Visitors enjoyed live music, food, hands-on activities and educational exhibits while learning about watershed stewardship, fish habitat and threatened and endangered species.

Lake Sonoma Visitor Center

Sonoma Water staffs the Lake Sonoma Visitor Center with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Sonoma Water employees provide weekday coverage and Army Corps volunteers provide weekend coverage.

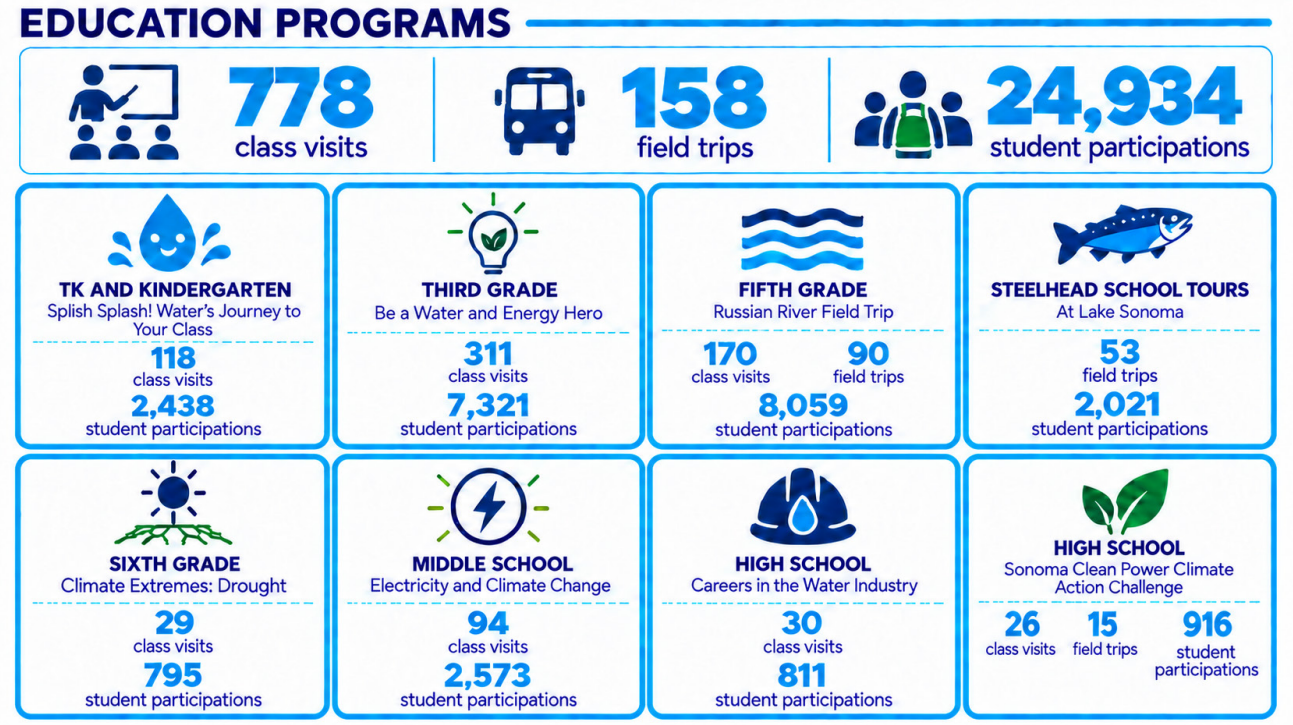
The visitor center welcomed 18,325 people during the year. Sonoma Water staff assisted 11,001 visitors, about 60% of the annual total. Sonoma Water and the Army Corps also offered public tours of Lake Sonoma for 322 participants.

Water and energy education

Sonoma Water's Water Education Program provides hands-on learning about watersheds, water resources, environmental stewardship and the agency's role in managing regional water systems.

Beyond the classroom presentations, field trips and student participation highlighted here, the education team reached thousands more people through the ZunZun Musical Assembly Program, Steelhead in the Classroom, A Call to Action small grants, teacher professional development, career exploration opportunities, community events and other outreach activities.

The team also strengthened partnerships through the Sonoma County Environmental Education Collaborative, expanded workforce development opportunities for students and enhanced the Steelhead School Tours Program with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



Partnerships and funding

Federal partnerships strengthen water resilience

Sonoma Water continued to secure federal support for water supply reliability, flood protection, fisheries restoration and weather forecasting through partnerships with Congress and federal agencies.

Congress approved fiscal year 2026 funding for operation and maintenance of the Russian River watershed's two federal reservoirs: $7.3 million for Warm Springs Dam and Lake Sonoma and $4.7 million for Coyote Valley Dam and Lake Mendocino.

Congress appropriated $65 million for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, supporting salmon and steelhead habitat restoration throughout the western United States. Since the program began in 2000, it has received nearly $2 billion in federal funding, supported in part by Sonoma Water's long-standing leadership and advocacy.

The fiscal year 2026 appropriations package also maintained funding for Advanced Quantitative Precipitation Information, subseasonal-to-seasonal forecasting research and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Water Operations Technical Support program. These programs use advanced weather and hydrologic forecasts to improve reservoir operations, flood protection and water supply reliability.

Federal legislation under consideration would authorize further investments in weather forecasting and regional water infrastructure, including up to $60 million for water and wastewater projects in Sonoma and Marin counties.

Grant awards

Sonoma Water and its affiliated districts and authorities secured $63.4 million in grant funding during the reporting period.

Entity	Project	Funding agency	Grant	Match	Total
State-funded grants					
ERPA	NERF Planning, Design, and Water Supply Resiliency Project	CDFW	$8,700,000	—	$8,700,000
SCWA	Direct Contract - Russian River Salmonid Monitoring	CDFW	$2,259,000	—	$2,259,000
SCWA	Mussel Infestation Prevention Program, Lake Sonoma & Lake Mendocino (Year 1)	USACE	$547,105	$298,098	$845,203
SCWA	2025 Quagga/Zebra Mussel Inspection Program at Lake Sonoma	DBW	$400,000	—	$400,000
SCWA	Mussel Infestation Prevention Program, Lake Sonoma & Lake Mendocino (Year 2)	USACE	$901,163	$491,190	$1,392,353
SCWA	Subseasonal and Seasonal Precipitation Forecasting	DWR	$200,000	—	$200,000
State total			**$13,007,268**	**$789,288**	**$13,796,556**
Federal-funded grants					
OCSD	Occidental County Sanitation District Pipeline Design	EPA	$1,450,000	—	$1,450,000
RRCSD	Headworks, Lift Stations and Force Main Project (construction)[1]	SWRCB	$47,766,537	—	$47,766,537
SCWA	Russian River Coho Salmon Captive Broodstock Monitoring (Year 4)[2]	USACE	$356,350	—	$356,350
SCWA	Russian River Coho Salmon Captive Broodstock Monitoring (Year 4 continuation)[2]	USACE	$165,407	—	$165,407
SCWA	Cybersecurity Improvement	FEMA	$250,000	—	$250,000
SCWA	Monterey County FIRO	USBR	$173,185	—	$173,185
Federal total			**$50,161,479**	**—**	**$50,161,479**
Local grants					
SCWA	Cloverdale Water Resiliency Project	District 4	$150,000	—	$150,000
SCWA	Russian River Confluence	District 4	—	$50,000	$50,000
SCWA	Mark West Creek Preserve	District 4	$42,000	—	$42,000
Local total			**$192,000**	**$50,000**	**$242,000**
Grand total			**$63,360,747**	**$839,288**	**$64,200,035**

[1] Construction funding with full principal forgiveness.
[2] Additional funding awarded.



Sonoma Water

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Design by Pat Davis Design Group