



**For Immediate Release**

December 4, 2014

**Contact:**

Jason Weiner, Wishtoyo, 805-823-3301  
Mati Waiya, Wishtoyo, 805-794-1248  
Rich Rozzelle, California State Parks,  
805-585-1847  
Mary Larson, California Department of  
Fish and Wildlife, 562-342-7186

## **Partnership Formed to Plan the Future of McGrath State Beach and the Santa Clara River Estuary**

*Wishtoyo Foundation and Government Entities Commence Campground Relocation Feasibility Study*

**Ventura and Oxnard, Calif.** – The Santa Clara River Estuary Habitat Restoration, Enhancement and Campground Relocation Feasibility Study has commenced under the partnership between Wishtoyo Foundation, California State Parks and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

Over the next year, Wishtoyo, State Parks, CDFW, a team of ecological consultants led by cbec eco engineering as well as a panel of independent experts will be studying the feasibility of relocating the McGrath State Beach campground further down beach and restoring the estuary to part of its former footprint. Ultimately this future action would benefit endangered Southern California Steelhead and other native and endangered species.

Upon completion of the study, a suite of alternative restoration concepts and plans will be produced for the restoration of 15-35 acres of contiguous estuary lagoon, side channel and/or upland habitat, and the placement of a new campground further down the beach. The new campground would be adjacent to the restored estuary habitat and would offer residents and visitors enhanced coastal access, recreational opportunities, wildlife viewing, and educational and cultural experiences.

“The project has tremendous potential co-benefits,” says Project Manager and Wishtoyo Foundation’s Water Initiative Director, Jason Weiner. “It offers to restore 15-35 acres of the Santa Clara River Estuary needed for the recovery and protection of steelhead, a plethora of native birds, and the ecology of the Santa Clara River system, while restoring an unmatched coastal campground experience for residents and visitors that benefits the local economy.”

"We are looking forward to finding a plan which mitigates for the loss of camping and public access due to flooding at McGrath State Beach while enhancing these significant natural resources," stated Richard Rozzelle, State Park Superintendent.

"We are pleased to partner with Wishtoyo and State Parks on these necessary first steps in the restoration of the Santa Clara River Estuary, which provides habitat for a variety of the native wildlife" said CDFW Senior Fisheries Biologist Mary Larson.

The Feasibility Study is principally funded through CDFW's Fisheries Restoration Grant Program with additional funds granted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the McGrath Lake Trustee Council. Wishtoyo Foundation and California State Parks will be providing "in kind" support. In total, the study's budget is over \$947,000.

**California State Parks**

*To provide 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. For more information, visit [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).*

**California Department of Fish and Wildlife**

*The Mission of the Department of Fish and Wildlife is to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public.*

**The Wishtoyo Foundation**

*Founded in 1997, Wishtoyo is a 501(c)(3) non-profit grassroots organization with over 700 members consisting of Ventura County's diverse residents and Chumash Native Americans. Wishtoyo's mission is to preserve and protect Chumash culture, the culture of all of Ventura County's diverse communities, and the environment that our current and future generations depend upon. Wishtoyo shares traditional Chumash Native American beliefs, cultural practices, songs, dances, stories, and values with the public in its Chumash Discovery Village and through educational programs in schools to promote environmental awareness and natural resources stewardship. In 2000, Wishtoyo founded its Ventura Coastkeeper Program ("VCK"). VCK's mission is to protect, preserve, and restore the ecological integrity and water quality of Ventura County's inland and coastal waterbodies for all beings in the County's diverse community through outreach and education, restoration projects, advocacy, litigation, and community organizing and empowerment. For more information about Wishtoyo Foundation and its Ventura Coastkeeper Program Visit: [www.wishtoyo.org](http://www.wishtoyo.org).*