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UC Santa Barbara Staff

Green for Some Green

UC Santa Barbara's North Campus Open Space (NCOS), home of the former Ocean Meadows Golf Course, is a giant step closer to its former wetland glory, thanks to a $1 million grant from the California Strategic Growth Council. The council recently approved $40.2 million in local assistance grants across the state for sustainable community planning and urban greening, and the NCOS is among them.

UCSB's Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration (CCBER) is one of 40 recipients of urban greening grants meant to support a variety of initiatives in urban and infill environments: to beautify spaces and make them hospitable to visitors, conserve water, recharge groundwater and treat runoff.

"This grant reflects the importance Californians have placed on open space, and by extension, how important this restoration project is," said Lisa Stratton, CCBER's director of ecosystem management. The NCOS encompasses more than 130 acres of open space between residential areas and Coal Oil Point Reserve.

Part of the larger Ellwood-Devereux open space, the project will help link people to the greater open space that includes bluff-top mesas and the beach, Stratton added.

At the NCOS, efforts are aimed largely at restoring the historic upper arms of Devereux Slough, which will reduce flooding and provide habitat for fish, birds and other wildlife. The golf course, which was created by filling in the estuary in 1965, was a challenge to maintain due to the persistent salty soils and regular floods. The property was purchased in 2013 by the conservation group Trust for Public Land and

gifted to UC Santa Barbara.

According to Stratton, the $1 million urban greening grant will fund the restoration of buffer areas between the developed edge of the NCOS and the estuary restoration project on the former Ocean Meadows Golf Course. While still in the early stages and in the process of refinement, plans for NCOS also include a trail system and enhancements to coastal habitats.

The first phase of planning and restoration of the area is estimated to cost as much as $8 to $10 million, said Stratton, funds that CCBER is seeking from public granting sources dedicated specifically to restoration and enhancement of coastal wetlands and habitats. In addition to this urban greening grant, UCSB has received a total of $1.685 million, from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s National Coastal Wetland Conservation program, as well as from the California Coastal Conservancy and the Goleta Valley Land Trust.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.