

North Bay Bear Collaborative 2025–2026 Napa WCC Grant Deliverables Summary

While field sampling efforts were significantly affected by circumstances beyond the project's control, including the Pickett Fire and prolonged periods of unsuitable weather, the North Bay Bear Collaborative remained committed to advancing the goals of this grant. A substantial portion of our Napa County sampling efforts occur on Napa Land Trust properties, particularly in the Angwin area, as well as Robert Louis Stevenson State Park, Bothe-Napa Valley State Park, and a few private properties on the napa boundary line next to Sugarloaf Ridge State Park. The Pickett Fire, first reported on August 21, 2025, impacted both Duff Preserve and Wildlake Preserve, two primary DNA sampling locations, while weather conditions resulted in the cancellation of planned surveys after October 2025.

Despite these challenges, project partners adapted by expanding opportunistic sample collection, strengthening partnerships with Napa County organizations, investing in volunteer training and community outreach, and increasing wildlife camera monitoring capacity. As detailed in the following sections, the grant supported meaningful progress across multiple project objectives, including public education, volunteer engagement, wildlife monitoring, equipment deployment, and continued black bear conservation efforts throughout Napa County.

Labor Costs

NBBC Project Investigator (PI) – Community Meetings and Outreach

The Project Investigator completed approximately 18 hours of planning, coordination, travel, and presentation time associated with three community meetings focused on black bear conservation and coexistence in Napa County.

- **Meeting 1 – May 20, 2026: Data and Connectivity Workshop**
This meeting brought together conservation organizations, researchers, land trusts, and community members to discuss black bear movement, habitat connectivity, wildlife corridor planning, and conservation priorities within Napa County and the greater North Bay region. Participants reviewed current research, discussed movement barriers, and explored opportunities to use DNA and wildlife camera data to support future conservation planning.
- **Meeting 2 – May 28, 2026: Bear DNA Sampling Volunteer Training**
Hosted at Sugarloaf Ridge State Park, this training prepared volunteers and community members for the annual DNA sampling season. Participants learned black bear scat identification, sample collection protocols, safety procedures, sample prioritization methods, and documentation requirements. Volunteers were also introduced to outreach opportunities supporting community science efforts throughout Napa County and neighboring regions.

- **Meeting 3 – Online Zoom Recording: Outreach and Community Engagement Planning**

Meghan Walla-Murphy and the Land Trust of Napa County to develop a Napa County-specific online presentation highlighting local NBBC research, volunteer opportunities, and conservation efforts for public access.

Total Expenditure: \$1750.00

Services & Supplies

Field Kit Supplies, Ethanol, Collection Bottles, First Aid, and Safety Gear

Three complete DNA field kits were assembled and distributed to Napa County-based partner organizations and volunteer crew leaders conducting bear monitoring efforts. Supplies included collection materials, preservation supplies, safety equipment, and field documentation materials.

Total Expenditure: \$405.76

Volunteer Training Materials

We were also able to create and distribute training materials for both volunteers and community members participating in the project. Field protocols, sampling procedures, and educational resources were developed to support DNA collection efforts and ensure consistency in field methods. Sampling protocols and training documents were produced in-house, while volunteer guidance brochures were professionally printed through VistaPrint for use during volunteer training, community meetings, and public outreach activities throughout Napa County.

Total Expenditure: \$485.03

DNA Lab Testing

Due to wildfire impacts and weather-related survey cancellations, fewer samples were collected than originally anticipated. However, NBBC continued to support bear monitoring efforts through opportunistic DNA sample collection reported by community members. Images of potential bear scat observations submitted by the public were reviewed by project staff, and when observations were determined to be likely black bear scat, trained volunteers or staff collected the samples following established protocols. Through this effort, three opportunistic black bear scat samples were collected and submitted to the UC Davis Mammalian Ecology and Conservation Unit for genetic analysis.

Because laboratory processing and genetic analysis are ongoing, results are not expected until late summer or early fall of 2026. These data will contribute to understanding black bear distribution, movement patterns, and genetic diversity within Napa County and the greater North Bay region.

Total Expenditure: \$525.00 (\$175.00 per/sample)

Equipment

Wildlife Cameras

The cameras will be installed on Napa Land Trust properties where bear activity has been documented or is suspected. These sites include areas that have not previously been surveyed through organized scat collection efforts. The camera network will help identify new locations of bear activity, guide future DNA sampling efforts, and support long-term monitoring of black bears within Napa County.

Five Bushnell wildlife cameras were purchased to expand monitoring efforts in Napa County.

Total Expenditure: \$982.98

Camera Installation Equipment

Additional equipment was purchased to support camera deployment, including SD cards, batteries, security boxes, and locking cables.

Total Expenditure: \$309.69

For anyone interested in learning more about the project, please visit this story map created by UC Santa Barbara's Bren School of Environmental Science & Management students for the North bay Bear Collaborative while we wait for our new website:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/4621b4e460ff46bb8718b154b7d17de5>