



EDMUND G. BROWN Jr., Governor  
NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**  
Mailing Address: 1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 1266  
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**Notice of Meeting**  
**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**  
August 30, 2016  
10:00 a.m.  
Natural Resources Building, First Floor Auditorium<sup>1</sup>  
Sacramento, California 95814

**Final Agenda**

Item Number

1. Roll Call	1
2. Funding Status — Informational	2
3. Special Project Planning Account	10
*4. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4 – 18)	11
*5. Approval of Minutes	11
*6. Recovery of Funds	11

\*Proposed Consent Calendar

<sup>1</sup> These facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities; more information on page ix

- \*7 Big Valley Wetlands, Melo Property** **13**  
**Lake County**  
**\$135,000.00**
- To consider the allocation for a grant to the Lake County Land Trust to acquire in fee 34± acres of land for the protection of shoreline freshwater wetland, riparian woodland, and wet meadow habitats that support the State threatened Clear Lake hitch along with the western pond turtle, a State species of special concern and to provide future wildlife oriented public use opportunities, located on the northwestern shore of Clear Lake in an area known as Big Valley in Lake County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands outside the Central Valley. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley]
- \*8. Antelope Valley Wildlife Area, Expansion 6** **17**  
**Sierra County**  
**\$180,000.00**
- To consider the acquisition in fee of 160± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as an expansion of CDFW's Antelope Valley Wildlife Area, for the protection of critical winter range and an important migration corridor for the Loyalton-Truckee deer herd, located near Loyalton in Sierra County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat that accomplishes one or more of the following objectives: promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species, provides corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent fragmentation, protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems including mixed conifer forests. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)]
- \*9. Jenner Headlands Preserve Highway 1 Public Recreation Parking Lot** **21**  
**Sonoma County**  
**\$250,000.00**
- To consider the allocation for a grant to The Wildlands Conservancy for a cooperative project to construct a parking lot, including 30 vehicle spaces, ADA accessible parking and bicycle parking, to enhance public access to the 5,630 acre Jenner Headlands Preserve, located on the Jenner Headlands Preserve owned by the Wildlands Conservancy, located approximately two miles north of Jenner in Sonoma County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the development of public access facilities for hunting, fishing and other wildlife compatible recreational activities. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a)]

**\*10. Wheeler Ridge, Expansion 5**

**25**

**Mono County**

**\$435,000.00**

To consider the acquisition in fee of 20± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as an expansion of Wheeler Ridge, for the protection of a habitat/migration corridor for the Round Valley deer herd, located adjacent to CDFW's Round Valley Wildlife Area near Swall Meadows in Mono County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the development, rehabilitation, restoration, acquisition and protection of habitat that accomplishes one or more of the following objectives: promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species, protects habitat corridors, protects significant natural landscapes and riparian and wetland ecosystems [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)]

**\*11. East Contra Costa County HCP/NCCP (Coelho)**

**29**

**Contra Costa County**

**\$464,239.00**

To consider the allocation for a grant to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy (ECCCHC) and the acceptance of two U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grants and the approval to sub-grant these federal funds to the ECCCHC for a cooperative project with the East Bay Regional Park District to acquire 199± acres of land for the protection and preservation of existing regional wildlife linkages, including alkali grassland, alkali wetland, grassland and creek habitat types within the area covered by the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan, located in unincorporated Byron, Contra Costa County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat for areas in and around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta that assist in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c)(SSJD-NCCP)]

**\*12. San Joaquin River Parkway (Circle V)**

**33**

**Madera County**

**\$1,090,000.00**

To consider the acquisition in fee of 21± acres of land, together with an access easement in Madera County (Property) on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the Transfer of Jurisdiction of the Property by CDFW to the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC). The Property will be acquired for the protection of riparian and oak woodlands habitat, and for potential future wildlife oriented public use opportunities within the San Joaquin River Parkway. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for river parkway projects identified by the San Joaquin River Conservancy [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75050(f)]

- \*13. Elkhorn Slough Land Exchange, Moro Cojo Slough – Calcagno** **37**  
**Monterey County**  
**\$70,073.00**  
To consider the exchange of 14± acres for 16± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as an expansion to CDFW's Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve for the protection of wetland habitat, located near Moss Landing in Monterey County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786 b/c]
- \*14. Moss Landing Wildlife Area Enhancement, Planning, Design and Pilot** **40**  
**Monterey County**  
**\$480,000.00**  
To consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for planning, design, and environmental compliance for a levee stabilization project along Elkhorn Slough, and to install a pilot project to evaluate salinity and plant establishment to inform future planned habitat enhancements for western snowy plover, located on the CDFW Moss Landing Wildlife Area, located 15 miles northeast of Monterey in Moss Landing, Monterey County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands outside the Central Valley. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley]
- \*15. North Carrizo Water Well Easement** **44**  
**San Luis Obispo County**  
**\$1,100.00**  
To consider the acquisition of a water well easement by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the purpose of allowing the CDFW to install water pipelines and appurtenant equipment necessary to access an existing well to provide water for wildlife in North Carrizo Plains near Simmler in San Luis Obispo County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the development, restoration, acquisition, and protection of habitat that accomplishes one or more of the following objectives: promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species, protects habitat corridors, protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems, such as oak woodlands, and riparian and wetland areas. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)]
- \*16. RLA Peninsular Bighorn Sheep, Shumway Ranch** **46**  
**Riverside County**  
**\$276,622.00**  
To consider the acquisition of 640± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for a cooperative project with the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy and the acceptance of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Section 6 grants, for the protection of high desert habitat that provides linkages and corridors to support the recovery of the Peninsular bighorn sheep and other sensitive species covered under the

Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, a joint State Natural Community Conservation Plan and federal Habitat Conservation Plan, near Palm Desert in Riverside County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species; and which allows for the acquisition of habitat on which unique species or natural communities naturally exist. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786 (b/c)]

**\*17. Western Riverside MSHCP (2012) – Terra** **50**  
**Riverside County**  
**\$240,000.00**

To consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority); and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board grant to the Authority, to acquire in fee 280± acres of land for the protection of threatened and endangered species located near the city of Hemet, in Riverside County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat that implements or assists in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c)]

**\*18. Sycuan Peak Ecological Reserve, Expansion 8** **54**  
**San Diego County**  
**\$120,000.00**

To consider the acquisition in fee of 40± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as an expansion of the Sycuan Peak Ecological Reserve for the protection of habitat to support threatened and endangered species located near the city of Jamul in San Diego County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species; and which allows for the acquisition of habitat on which unique species or natural communities naturally exist. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786 (b/c)]

**19. Anderson Ranch** **57**  
**Lassen County**  
**\$1,195,000.00**

To consider an allocation for a grant to the Feather River Land Trust for a cooperative project with the Natural Resources Agency to acquire a conservation easement over 5,530± acres of land to provide protection for deer, mountain lion, and oak habitats near the town of Doyle in Lassen County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat, including native oak woodlands, to protect deer and mountain lions. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)]

- 20. Crocker Meadows Wildlife Area, Expansion 2** **61**  
**Plumas County**  
**\$1,755,000.00**
- To consider the acquisition in fee of 1,066± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to expand the Crocker Meadows Wildlife Area and for the protection of riparian and oak woodland habitat and for future wildlife oriented public use opportunities near Beckwourth in Plumas County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the development, rehabilitation, restoration, acquisition and protection of habitat that accomplishes one or more of the following objectives: promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species, protects habitat corridors, and protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)]
- 21. Sacramento River Valley, Safe Harbor Agreements** **65**  
**Various**  
**\$450,000.00**
- To consider the allocation for a grant to the CSU Chico Research Foundation for a cooperative project with the Sacramento River Forum to develop plans to enhance habitats, wildlife, and ecosystem function over the long term by creating, executing and monitoring Safe Harbor Agreements with private landowners, which will have sustainable benefits to listed wildlife in the Sacramento Valley. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which can be used for the development of scientific data, habitat mapping and other research information necessary to determine the priorities for restoration and acquisition statewide. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)]
- 22. Yolo County HCP/NCCP Development, Phase III Augmentation** **69**  
**Yolo County**  
**\$150,000.00**
- To consider the allocation to augment an existing grant to Yolo Habitat Conservancy to finalize an Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement for a Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan covering the entire County of Yolo. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for grants that implement or assist in the establishment of NCCPs. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public resources Code Section 75055(c)(SSJD-NCCP)]
- 23. Stewarts Point Ranch** **73**  
**Sonoma County**  
**\$3,020,000.00**
- To consider the allocation for a grant to Sonoma County Agriculture Preservation and Open Space District for a cooperative project with the State Coastal Conservancy to acquire a conservation easement over 871± acres of forest lands, including large areas of old and new growth redwood, located near Stewarts Point in Sonoma County. The

purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for forest conservation and protection projects in order to promote the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests through forest conservation, preservation and restoration of productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas, redwood forests and other forest types, including the conservation of water resources and natural habitats for native fish, wildlife and plants found on these lands. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a)]

**24. San Joaquin River Parkway, Weed Management and Job Creation Project** **78**  
**Fresno and Madera Counties**  
**\$959,934.00**

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission for a cooperative project with the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust and the San Joaquin River Conservancy to conduct weed removal on eight public properties within the San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway), including property owned or administered by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Lands Commission, and the Fresno County Office of Education, all located within the Parkway between State Route 99 and one mile upstream of State Route 41 in Fresno and Madera counties. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding sources, which allows for the acquisition, restoration, and protection of land and water resources located within the boundaries of the San Joaquin River Conservancy. [Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1), California Water Code Section 79731(g)].

**25. South Central Coast Invasive Weed Eradication** **82**  
**San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties**  
**\$405,000.00**

To consider the allocation for a grant to Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District for a cooperative project with California Department of Parks and Recreation, UC Santa Barbara Reserve, and California Invasive Plant Council to eradicate specific nonnative invasive weeds, located at wetland and upland sites in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding sources, which allow for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands outside the Central Valley. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley, and for the development, rehabilitation, restoration, acquisition and protection of habitat that accomplishes one or more of the following objectives: promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species, provides corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent fragmentation, protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems, or implements the recommendations of the California Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)]

- 26. Sawmill Pebble Plain Ecological Preserve, Expansion 1** **87**  
**San Bernardino County**  
**\$2,515,000.00**
- To consider the allocation for a grant to the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust for a cooperative project with the Inland Empire Resource Conservation District to acquire in fee 240± acres of land as an expansion of the Sawmill Pebble Plain Ecological Preserve, rare pebble plain habitat supporting a wide variety of endemic plant species, located south of Big Bear Lake, in the San Bernardino Mountains, in San Bernardino County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source which allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat to protect rare and endangered species, wildlife corridors and significant natural landscapes and ecosystems, such as old growth redwoods, oak woodlands and other significant habitat areas. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a)]
- 27. DFG Land Management Plans, Inland Deserts Region,** **91**  
**Phase II, Augmentation II**  
**Riverside County**  
**\$164,756.00**
- To consider the allocation for an amendment to an existing grant to the California Wildlife Foundation to implement environmental review and public participation pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act for the Land Management Plan for the 21,000-acre San Jacinto Wildlife Area on two units located approximately three miles north and ten miles east of Lakeview in Riverside County. The proposed funding source for this project allows for the preparation of management plans for California Department of Fish and Wildlife lands acquired by WCB. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a)]
- 28. North San Diego County Coastal Wetlands** **94**  
**Invasive Species Management**  
**San Diego County**  
**\$850,000.00**
- To consider the allocation for a grant to the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy for a cooperative project to implement a comprehensive habitat restoration program, remove target nonnative invasive weed species, and restore native habitat on 65 acres of coastal wetlands on several sites located at Agua Hedionda, Batiquitos Lagoon, and San Elijo Lagoon, located from approximately 9 miles north to 5 miles south of Encinitas on privately owned properties and on properties owned by the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Parks and Recreation. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass outside the Central Valley. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d)(Proposition 1E), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley]



### PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Persons with disabilities needing reasonable accommodation to participate in public meetings or other CDFW activities are invited to contact the Department's Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator Melissa Carlin at (916) 651-1214 or [Melissa.Carlin@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Melissa.Carlin@wildlife.ca.gov). Reasonable Accommodation requests for facility and/or meeting accessibility should be received by August 20, 2016. Requests for American Sign Language Interpreters should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event, and requests for Real-Time Captioners at least four weeks prior to the event. These timeframes are to help ensure that the requested accommodation is met. If a request for an accommodation has been submitted but is no longer needed, please contact the Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator immediately.

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## WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

August 30, 2016, 10:00 a.m.

Natural Resources Building, First Floor Auditorium  
Sacramento, California 95814

### 1. Roll Call

#### Wildlife Conservation Board Members

Charlton H. Bonham, Chair  
Director, Department of Fish and Wildlife

Michael Cohen, Member  
Director, Department of Finance

Eric Sklar, Member  
President Fish and Game Commission

#### Joint Legislative Advisory Committee

Senator Jean Fuller

Senator Fran Pavley

Senator Lois Wolk

Assemblymember Richard Gordon  
*Assemblymember Marc Levine -Alternate*

Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia  
*Assemblymember Miguel Santiago -Alternate*

Assemblymember Das Williams  
*Assemblymember Richard Bloom -Alternate*

#### Executive Director

John P. Donnelly

## 2. Funding Status Informational

The following funding status depicts Capital Outlay appropriations by year of appropriation and by fund source and fund number.

(a) 2016-17 WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND, (0447)	
Budget Act	\$1,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>0.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$1,000,000.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>1,000,000.00</b>
(b) 2016-17 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>0.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$20,663,000.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$20,663,000.00</b>
(c) 2015-16 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-5,240,493.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$15,422,507.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-1,819,328.00
Total Project Development	<u>-3,663,301.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$9,939,878.00</b>
(d) 2014-15 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-16,052,978.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$4,610,022.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-332,411.00
Total Project Development	<u>-3,540,000.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$737,611.00</b>
(e) 2013-14 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,714,687.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$948,313.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-77,457.00
Total Project Development	<u>-870,856.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

(f) 2012-13 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-4,474,979.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$16,188,021.00
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-630,696.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$15,557,325.00</b>
(g) 2011-12 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-14,332,328.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$6,330,672.00
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-573,804.00
Total Project Development	<u>-3,127,504.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$2,629,364.00</b>
(h) 2010-11 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,402,822.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$1,265,178.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-81,478.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$1,183,700.00</b>
(i) 2009-10 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262) (2013-14 REAPPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-20,455,731.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$212,269.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-32,589.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$179,680.00</b>
(j) 2008-09 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262) (2012-13 REAPPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-20,653,891.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$14,109.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-8,632.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$5,477.00</b>

(k)	2007-08 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
	(2011-12 REAPPROPRIATION)	
	Budget Act	\$20,674,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-20,236,520.00</u>
	<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$437,480.00</i>
	August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-52,817.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$384,663.00</b>
(l)	2006-07 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
	(2013-14 REAPPROPRIATION)	
	Budget Act	\$20,699,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,833,299.00</u>
	<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$865,701.00</i>
	August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total June Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$865,701.00</b>
(m)	2006-07 SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, AND	
	COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND, (0005)	
	(2015-16 REAPPROPRIATION)	
	Capital Outlay Budget [Sections a3, a5 & a6]	\$15,224,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-13,740,324.00</u>
	<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$1,483,676.00</i>
	August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-1,439,801.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$43,875.00</b>
(n)	1999-00 SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, AND	
	COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND, (0005)	
	Continuously Appropriated [Sec. 5096.350 (a)(1), (2), (4) & (7)]	\$36,100,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-31,262,119.00</u>
	<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$4,837,881.00</i>
	August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-517,880.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$4,320,001.00</b>
(o)	2004-05 CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND	
	COASTAL PROTECTION FUND, (6029)	
	2014-15 Reappropriation	\$11,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-10,807,019.00</u>
	<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$192,981.00</i>
	August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$192,981.00</b>

(p)	2003-04 CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND, (6029)	
	Budget Act 2016 (New Appropriation of Reverted Fund EY 2006)	
	(San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$1,500,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$1,500,000.00
	August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-1,500,000.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(q)	2001-02 CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND, (6029)	
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 5096.650)	\$273,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-254,033,097.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$18,966,903.00
	August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-2,929,757.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-4,947,000.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$11,090,146.00</b>
(r)	2003-04 WATER SECURITY, CLEAN DRINKING WATER, COASTAL AND BEACH PROTECTION FUND OF 2002, (6031) COLORADO RIVER REAPPROPRIATED 06/07, 10/11, &14/15 (SECTION 79568)	\$32,500,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-23,754,443.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$8,745,557.00
	August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-8,745,557.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(s)	2002-03 WATER SECURITY, CLEAN DRINKING WATER, COASTAL AND BEACH PROTECTION FUND OF 2002, (6031)	
	Continuously Appropriated (Sections 79565 and 79572), including Chapter 81, Statutes of 2005	\$814,350,000.00
	2003-04 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-21,000,000.00
	2004-05 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-21,000,000.00
	2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-4,000,000.00
	2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-3,100,000.00
	2006-07 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-17,688,000.00
	2007-08 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-5,150,000.00
	2008-09 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-1,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-689,214,975.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$52,197,025.00
	August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-45,013,443.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$7,183,582.00</b>

(t) 2010-11 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2014-15 REAPPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$3,380,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-72,280.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$3,307,720.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-1,090,000.00
Total Project Development	<u>-2,217,720.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(u) 2009-10 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2013-14 PARTIAL REAPPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$4,800,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-3,639,660.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$1,160,340.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$1,160,340.00</b>
(v) 2009-10 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2015-16 REAPPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$5,200,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>25,000.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$5,175,000.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$5,175,000.00</b>
(w) 2008-09 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2015-16 REAPPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$10,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-25,000.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$9,975,000.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$9,975,000.00</b>



(x)	2007-08 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2014-15 REAPPROPRIATION)	
	Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$10,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-6,931,082.00</u>
	<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$3,068,918.00</i>
	August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-3,068,918.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(y)	2009-10 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2014-15 REAPPROPRIATION)	
	Chapter 2, Statutes of 2009 (SB 8)	\$24,000,000.00
	Less 2013-14 Partial Reappropriation	<u>-15,500,000.00</u>
	<i>Balance</i>	<i>\$8,500,000.00</i>
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-5,074,012.00</u>
	<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$3,425,988.00</i>
	August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$3,425,988.00</b>
(z)	2009-10 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2013-14 PARTIAL REAPPROPRIATION)	
	Chapter 2, Statutes of 2009 (SB 8)	\$15,500,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-12,083,017.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$3,416,983.00</b>
	August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-614,239.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-568,000.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$2,234,744.00</b>
(aa)	2008-09 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051), (2014-15 REAPPROPRIATION)	
	Budget Act (NCCP Section 75055(c))	\$25,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-13,075,659.00</u>
	<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$11,924,341.00</i>
	August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-240,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-9,570,276.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$2,114,065.00</b>

(ab) 2007-08 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006 , (6051) (2014-15 REAPPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act (Section 75055(c))	\$25,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-23,465,814.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$1,534,186.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-1,534,186.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(ac) 2006-07 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051)	
Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055a)	\$164,700,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-140,069,490.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$24,630,510.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-3,020,000.00
Total Project Development	<u>-21,325,000.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$285,510.00</b>
(ad) 2006-07 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055(b)) \$123,525,000.00	
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-96,127,012.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$27,397,988.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-2,871,600.00
Total Project Development	<u>-18,800,199.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$5,726,189.00</b>
(ae) 2016-17 WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND OF 2014, (6083)	
Budget Act (Section 79735(b)(2))	\$38,400,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$38,400,000.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$38,400,000.00</b>
(af) 2016-17 WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND OF 2014, (6083)	
Budget Act (Section 79731(g))	\$3,500,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$3,500,000.00</i>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$3,500,000.00</b>

(ag)	2015-16 WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND OF 2014, (6083)	
	Budget Act (Section 79735(b)(2))	\$38,400,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-20,156,278.00</u>
	<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$18,243,722.00</i>
	August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$18,243,722.00</b>

(ah)	2015-16 WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND OF 2014, (6083)	
	Budget Act (Section 79731(g))	\$2,800,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-466,045.00</u>
	<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$2,333,955.00</i>
	August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-959,934.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$1,374,021.00</b>

#### RECAP OF FUND BALANCES

<b>Wildlife Restoration Fund (a)</b>	<b>\$1,000,000.00</b>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	-0.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$1,000,000.00</b>

<b>Habitat Conservation Fund (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k)</b>	<b>\$46,294,272.00</b>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-3,486,513.00
Total Project Development	-11,324,360.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$31,483,399.00</b>

<b>Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (l) and (m)</b>	<b>\$6,321,557.00</b>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	-1,957,681.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$4,363,876.00</b>

<b>California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (n) and (o)</b>	<b>\$19,159,884.00</b>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-2,929,757.00
Total Project Development	-4,947,000.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$11,283,127.00</b>

<b>Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (p) and (q)</b>	<b>\$60,942,582.00</b>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	-53,759,000.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$7,183,582.00</b>

<b>Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (r), (s), (t), (u), (v), (w), (x), (y), (z), (aa), (ab), (ac), (ad), (ae)</b>	<b>\$95,016,974.00</b>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-7,835,839.00
Total Project Development	-57,084,299.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$30,096,836.00</b>
 <b>Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014 (af) and (ag)</b>	 <b>\$20,577,677.00</b>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-959,934.00
Total Project Development	-0.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$19,617,743.00</b>
 <b>TOTAL – ALL FUNDS</b>	 <b>\$249,312,946.00</b>
August 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-15,212,043.00
Total Project Development	-129,072,340.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$105,028,563.00</b>

#### RECAP OF NATURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT ACT OF 2000

Chapter 113, Statutes of 2000 and Chapter 715, Statutes of 2004 Tax credits awarded through June 30, 2008	\$48,598,734.00
Chapter 220, Statutes of 2009 (effective January 1, 2010) Tax credits awarded	\$8,662,500.00

### 3. **Special Projects Planning Account Informational**

The Board has historically used a special project account to provide working funds for staff evaluation (appraisals, engineering, preliminary title reports, etc.) of proposed projects. Upon the Board's approval of a project, all expenditures incurred and recorded in the Special Project Planning Account are transferred to the Board approved project account which then reduces the Special Project Planning Account expenditures. This procedure provides a revolving account for the pre-project expenses.

Some appropriations now made to the Board do not include a specific budgeted planning line item appropriation necessary to begin a project without prior Board authorization. Pre-project costs are a necessary expenditure in most all capital outlay projects. The Special Project Planning Account is available to be used for these costs.

The Board, at the May 6, 1986 meeting, authorized the Executive Director to use up to one percent of a budgeted appropriation to set up and maintain an appropriate planning account with the provision it would be reported to the Board as an informational item.

Accordingly, a planning account has been set up as follows:

Habitat Conservation Fund .....	\$100,000.00
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund.....	\$25,000.00

Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River  
and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 .....\$25,000.00  
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014 .....\$25,000.00

**\*4. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4 – 18)**

**\*5. Approval of Minutes**

**\*6. Recovery of Funds**

The following projects previously authorized by the Board are now completed, and some have balances of funds that can be recovered and returned to their respective funds. It is recommended that the following totals be recovered and that the projects be closed.

RECOVERIES BY FUND	Amount
Habitat Conservation Fund	5,310.00
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection	24,278.35
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006	\$21,140.00

RECOVERIES BY PROJECT
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Habitat Conservation Fund	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Western Riverside MSHCP (2013) - Kaelin, Riverside County	880,675	875,365	5,310
<i>Total Recoveries to Habitat Conservation Fund</i>			<i>\$5,310</i>

California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Mouth of Cottonwood Creek Wildlife Area, (Manner), Shasta County	\$350,000.00	\$325,721.65	24,278.35
<i>Total Recoveries to California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund</i>			<i>\$24,278.35</i>

Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River And Coastal Protection Fund Of 2006	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Eel River Peninsula, Phase II (Foster Mountain), Mendocino County	867,971	867,971	0
Eel River Peninsula, Phase II (Garcia Creek), Mendocino County	1,080,839	1,080,839	0
Eel River Peninsula, Phase II (Summer Camp), Mendocino County	1,581,190	1,581,190	0
Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition, City of Carlsbad (Cielo del Norte Phase II), San Diego County	10,000	2,470	7,530
Ten Mile River - Parker Ranch - Forest Conservation Program, Mendocino County	\$3,470,000	\$3,456,390	13,610
<i>Total Recoveries to Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality And Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund Of 2006</i>			<i>\$21,140</i>

**\*7 Big Valley Wetlands, Melo Property**  
**Lake County**  
**\$135,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Lake County Land Trust (LCLT) to acquire in fee 34± acres of land for the protection of shoreline freshwater wetland, riparian woodland, and wet meadow habitats that support the state threatened Clear Lake hitch along with the western pond turtle, a state species of special concern, and to provide the potential for future wildlife oriented public use opportunities.

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The property, known as the Melo property (Property), is located on the northwestern shore of Clear Lake in Lake County (County). The County contains approximately 1,329± square miles and is situated in a rural and mountainous region comprised of the eastern portion of the coastal mountain range with elevations that peak at 7,000 feet. It is estimated that 48 percent of the County is federally or state protected lands. A few of these lands include the Mendocino National Forest, Clear Lake State Park, and the Cache Creek and Clear Lake Wildlife Areas. The most prominent feature of the County is Clear Lake which contains 43,785 surface acres with 100 miles of shoreline and is the largest natural fresh water lake in California. Due to the large quantity of public recreational protected areas and the presence of the state's largest fresh water lake, the County has evolved into a prime tourist destination and resort area.

The Property is located on the southeast corner of Star Lane and Clipper Lane in an unincorporated neighborhood known as Big Valley, located in the southeastern portion of the city of Lakeport. Lakeport is situated on the northwestern shore of Clear Lake at the foot of nearby mountain ranges with a topography that is predominately level which provides favorable development opportunities. Access to Lakeport is provided by Highways 29 and 175 which run parallel along the western shore of Clear Lake. Lakeport is 2.5 square miles, and has a lakeshore frontage of 2.5 linear miles. Lakeport's waterfront location and numerous docking facilities allow convenient access by water from other towns situated on the shores of Clear Lake. The Big Valley Rancheria, a reservation for the federally recognized Pomo and Pit River Indians, is located just west of the Property. The Rancheria includes the Konocti Vista Casino Resort, Marina and RV Park. Overall, the majority of Lakeport is typically improved with large acreage rural residential and agricultural properties with several small lot residential developments adjacent to Clear Lake's shoreline.

The Property is identified in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Big Valley Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The CAPP aims to protect 27,951± acres of natural shoreline, near-shore areas, and tributaries in Big Valley. Habitats targeted for protection include wetlands and riparian woodlands in areas where the shoreline and adjacent creeks are still undeveloped and constitute the most significant remaining unprotected natural wetlands and near-shore riparian areas on Clear Lake. These wildlife habitats provide breeding, nesting and foraging grounds for many bird species as well as nursery habitat for the state threatened Clear Lake hitch, a large minnow endemic to the waters of Clear Lake.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Property consists of a 34± acre rectangular parcel with generally level topography. The Property is bounded by the Clear Lake shoreline to the north, unimproved private land to the east, orchards to the south, and Holiday Cove, a single family home development, to the west. Improvements on the Property include perimeter fencing, utility lines providing electricity at both

ends of the Property, and non-operative water well and pump system. The current zoning is defined as agriculture, floodway fringe, and wetlands. Due to wetlands and flood acreage, 22± acres of the Property are deemed undevelopable. The remaining 12± acres are considered a potential rural residential site. The designated wetlands are on the northern end of the Property and include shoreline freshwater wetland, riparian woodland and wet meadow habitat characterized by bulrush, water lilies, cattails, tules, cottonwood, valley oak, buttonbush, sedges and rushes. The southern section of the Property is developable and consists of open space and grasses.

This proposed acquisition will ensure the protection of the Property by eliminating any disturbance to the wetlands caused by the potential ongoing pattern of agricultural and lake shore development in the Big Valley area. Further, this Property is a high priority within the Big Valley CAPP, supporting the protection of near-shore wetlands for the Clear Lake hitch and the western pond turtle. The Property also contains suitable habitat for black tailed deer, California quail, gray squirrel, wild turkey, wading birds, osprey, and migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant is being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Land Acquisition Program. The Land Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, *et seq.*) authorizing the WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. Under the program, the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities. These activities are carried out in conjunction with CDFW, which evaluates the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (LAE/CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The project meets the following WCB strategic Plan goals:

*Goal A.2* – Fund projects and landscape areas that conserve, protect, or enhance water resources for fish and wildlife

- This project will protect the Property's near-shore wetlands which provides habitat for the Clear Lake hitch and the western pond turtle.

*Goal A.4* – Invest in priority conservation projects recommended under CDFW's land acquisition evaluation process or within other conservation plans supported by CDFW.

- The project is identified in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Big Valley CAPP. The CAPP aims to protect 27,951± acres of natural shoreline, near-shore areas, and tributaries in Lake County's Big Valley.

*Goal C.1* – Support a wide range of recreational activities in conjunction with other land uses and without degrading environmental resources.

- This project supports the LCLT's intention of allowing limited public recreation. The Property provides the opportunity for a future nature trail with interpretive signage.



LCLT may also explore the potential to construct a wildlife viewing platform without disturbing the primary purpose of protecting the Property's natural wetlands.

*Goal E.1* - Maximize expenditures of remaining bond funds and identify opportunities to leverage existing funds as effectively as possible.

- Through cooperative negotiation, WCB was able to secure a contribution of \$75,000 from the LCLT toward the fair market value purchase price of the Property.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The LCLT will own and provide long-term monitoring and management to protect the natural conservation values of the Property. The LCLT will produce a Property baseline report with plans to restore native vegetation and conduct invasive species removal. The LCLT hopes to allow use of the Property outside the wetlands area for limited public recreation. This may take the form of a nature trail with interpretive signage. LCLT may also explore the potential to construct a wildlife viewing platform.

#### TERMS

The property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$185,000. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the property for the approved appraised fair market value of \$185,000. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant to LCLT provides that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the grantee to encumber the property with a conservation easement in favor of the State or another entity approved by the State, and seek reimbursement of funds.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	110,000
Lake County Land Trust	75,000
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>185,000</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	25,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$135,000</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$25,000 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including an appraisal and DGS appraisal review.

#### WCB FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands outside the Central Valley. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley]

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project has been reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$135,000.00 from the [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117) Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley] for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff and the CDFW to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*8. Antelope Valley Wildlife Area, Expansion 6**

**Sierra County**

**\$180,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the acquisition in fee of 160± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as an expansion of CDFW's Antelope Valley Wildlife Area, for the protection of critical winter range and an important migration corridor for the Loyalton-Truckee deer herd (LTDH).

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property) is located in Sierra County, two miles south of the City of Loyalton, just east of Antelope Valley Road, and approximately 24 miles north of the town of Truckee. The property is located in a region known as the Sierra Valley (Valley). The Valley is encircled by the northern Sierra Nevada Mountains on the south, north, west, and the Bald Mountain Range on the east. The Valley contains approximately 110,000± acres with a base elevation of 5,000 feet. The Valley's watershed is a tributary to the middle fork of the Feather River, a federally designated scenic and wild river. Primary access to the Valley is provided by State Routes 49 and 89 which are connected by a network of county roads to serve the north and south ends of Valley. The Valley has short, warm, generally dry summers and cold winters with an average of 56 days of snow cover annually. Farming and ranching began in the Valley in the 1850s and remains an important enterprise to this present day. There are about 150 active ranches in the Valley, most producing hay and livestock. The City of Loyalton is the largest town in the Valley hosting a population of approximately 750 residents. Since Truckee has been priced out of reach for California buyers looking for a lifestyle change, Loyalton has become favorable option. The Loyalton subdivision of Sierra Brooks contains 400 half acre lots to accommodate this trend.

The immediate outlying area of the Property is a mixture of public and private lands. All of the Property is bounded by Tahoe National Forest, except for the southeast corner which abuts a 2-acre private property. The southwest corner of the Property is joined to the northeast corner of the Antelope Valley Wildlife Area (AVWA), owned and managed by the CDFW. The AVWA was originally established with funding provided by the Wildlife Conservation Board in 1980, and was most recently expanded in 1998. The AVWA now encompasses 5,600± acres of land. A quarter mile east of the Property is the 1,400± acre CDFW owned Smithneck Creek Wildlife Area which surrounds the majority of the Sierra Brooks subdivision. These wildlife areas have been established primarily for the protection of sagebrush-bitterbrush habitat that is critical winter range area for the LTDH.

The Property has been identified as a high priority for protection in the CDFW Sierra Valley – Truckee Basin Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The CAPP identified approximately 339,000± acres of unprotected lands that are available for development compromising connectivity and habitat integrity in this region. These lands support wetland, wet meadow, riparian, sagebrush and bitterbrush habitats for LTDH as well as other sensitive species.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This Property consists of an unimproved square shaped parcel totaling 160± acres with moderately sloped terrain containing habitat characterized by sagebrush, bitterbrush, Sierran mixed conifer, aspen and white fir. Elevations along the east boundary average 5,300 feet while the west boundary rises to 5,800 feet. Access to the Property is provided by a dirt road which connects to Antelope Valley Road. The Property is zoned as General Forest which permits the development of single family residences and accessory buildings along with allowing various

agricultural practices. The acquisition of this Property supports the expansion of the AVWA and provides permanent protection from development and habitat fragmentation while also creating core habitat linkages and migratory corridors. Critical summer and winter ranges, fawning areas, transitional areas and migratory corridors have been and continue to be disrupted by development. The acquisition would also reduce private in holding ownership near the wildlife area and create a more contiguous corridor between AVWA and the SCWA.

Interest by the CDFW to protect the surrounding area of this Property began in 1977, when a major high density residential subdivision was proposed for development on the winter and intermediate ranges routinely used by the LTDH. This development would have destroyed part of the winter range and caused serious negative impacts to the LTDH from disturbance by people and domestic dogs, blocking of a traditional migratory corridor, and loss of deer to collisions with automobiles. In 1980, the opportunity to address this concern became a reality with the purchase by CDFW of over 5,000 acres of the proposed residential subdivision to create the AVWA. Rather than being one compact unit, the wildlife area consists of many blocks interspersed through and surrounded by the Tahoe National Forest.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition is being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Code Section 1300, et seq.), which authorizes WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property, and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with the acquisition of properties. Under the Program, the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife oriented recreation opportunities. These activities are carried out in conjunction with CDFW, which evaluates the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (LAE/CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

This Project is guided by the WCB Strategic Plan and supports the following outlined goals:

*Goal A.1 – Fund projects and landscapes that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change.*

- This project increases an existing network of protected linkages. Wildlife linkages provide ecosystem responses to climate change by incorporating elevation gradients that allow species and vegetation communities to shift upward in elevation.

*Goal A.4 – Invest in priority conservation projects recommended under CDFW's land acquisition evaluation process or within other conservation plans supported by CDFW.*

- CDFW created the Sierra Valley – Truckee Basin CAPP which identified this Property as a high priority for protection due to the significance of critical winter range the Property provides for the LTDH.

*Goal C.1-* Support a wide range of recreational activities in conjunction with other land uses and without degrading environmental resources.

- The Project expands existing recreational opportunities as part of the AVWA.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The CDFW will manage and monitor the property as part of AVWA. This expansion adds additional area for public recreational activities which include hiking, wildlife viewing, seasonal camping, hunting, and trapping.

#### TERMS

The property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$160,000. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the property for the approved appraised fair market value of \$160,000. Once approved by the WCB the transaction must also be reviewed and approved by the DGS.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	160,000
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>160,000</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	20,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$180,000</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$20,000 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including environmental assessment, mineral remoteness study, DGS appraisal and transaction review, and escrow and title insurance costs.

#### WCB FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the development, rehabilitation, restoration, acquisition and protection of habitat that accomplishes one or more of the following objectives: promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species, provides corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent fragmentation, protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems including mixed conifer forests. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)]

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project has been reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$180,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b) for the acquisition and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*9. Jenner Headlands Preserve Highway 1 Public Recreation Parking Lot  
Sonoma County  
\$250,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to The Wildlands Conservancy (TWC) for a cooperative project with the State Coastal Conservancy to construct a parking lot with 30 vehicle spaces, American Disability Act (ADA) compliant parking, and bicycle parking to enhance public access to the 5,630 acre Jenner Headlands Preserve (JHP), located approximately two miles north of Jenner in Sonoma County.

**LOCATION**

The JHP includes 5,630 acres of rolling coastal terrace and wooded slopes that contain outstanding scenic, biological, and cultural resources located in coastal grasslands east of Highway 1 approximately 2.2 miles north of Jenner on the high cliffs opposite the offshore Sharkfin Rock. A public-private partnership lead by Sonoma Land Trust (SLT) and TWC acquired the JHP in 2009 to permanently protect it from subdivision, conserve and manage its natural, cultural and forest resources, and provide a means for the general public to enjoy the property. Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District holds a conservation easement on the land that protects it as open space in perpetuity.

The site includes a diverse array of habitats including coastal prairie grasslands, mixed redwood and Douglas fir forests, lush green gulches, and oak woodlands that dot the inland ridges. The property is adjacent to significant corridors of protected lands including the 10,000-acre Sonoma Coast State Beach, and thousands of acres of other protected lands in western Sonoma County. The JHP is home to a diverse range of wildlife that includes coyote, badger, deer, mountain lion, bobcat, fox, and a wide range of bird species. Opportunities for wildlife viewing include whale watching, birding, tracking, and the raptor migration that takes place during the fall months.

TWC acquired JHP in 2009 through funds provided by the Wildlife Conservation Board's Forest Conservation Program, the California State Coastal Conservancy, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Sonoma County Open Space District. An Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP) was prepared to serve as the guiding document for the management of the JHP. The IRMP provides an outline for public recreation on the JHP and identified the project site as the most appropriate for vehicular access for public recreation.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Sonoma Coast has over three million people visit each year to recreate and enjoy the beautiful coastline. On a typical summer weekend, California State Parks' parking lots and pullouts along Highway 1 are filled to capacity with sightseers and other visitors wanting to experience the coast. This project site would provide access to the coastal bluffs of the JHP, including access to approximately 2.5 miles of coastal bluffs with spectacular views of the Sonoma Coast and Russian River Estuary and would include access to a potential route for the California Coastal Trail (CCT). This parking area would also provide access to Sonoma Land Trust's Little Black Mountain and Pole Mountain Preserves, providing access to the highest point along the Sonoma County Coast with sweeping 360 degree views.

Soon after acquisition of the JHP, TWC and SLT partnered with Sonoma County Regional Parks to conduct a study that compared all the potential access points from public roads to the JHP, which included sites along Highway 1 and through the community of Jenner. Each access point was evaluated for resource protection, public safety, permitting complexity, and costs. The site

that best met the evaluation criteria was the proposed Highway 1 project site location; it is ideal in terms of public safety because this particular stretch of highway is a long, straight section with excellent visibility in both directions.

Due to the current lack of an adequate parking area on the JHP, public access is limited only to brief guided hikes. These hikes are restricted to a coastal loop trail and group trips up to Sonoma Land Trust's Pole Mountain Preserve. Additionally, the CCT alignment currently follows Highway 1, which directs hikers to travel adjacent to the highway. Upon completion of the Hwy 1 parking area, the parking lot and associated infrastructure will be ideally located to provide access for a future segment of the CCT that would travel through the JHP. This alignment would greatly improve hikers' experience of the coast and provide a much safer CCT route before reconnecting with other protected public lands. Public outreach and education programs will provide access and information to school groups, youth organizations, clubs, and outdoor enthusiasts.

The parking lot would consist of 30 spaces, including bicycle parking, two spaces reserved for ADA accessible vehicles, and two spaces for school buses. All parking lot surfaces would drain into a central bio-swale that would capture and remediate rainfall runoff and distribute it through an infiltration basin to a coastal drainage. An ADA- accessible trail would run approximately 500 feet from the parking lot to a restroom facility and day use area. From the day use area the general public could gain access to existing trails and roads to explore the JHP. The entire site will be planted with native herbaceous and woody vegetation to screen the facility, enhance native plant cover, and restore wetlands.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Public Access Program and meets the program's goal of providing public access for hunting, fishing, or other wildlife-oriented recreation statewide.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN CONSISTENCY

The project furthers the following goals outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan:

*Goal C. 1* – Support a wide range of recreational activities (e.g., hunting, fishing, birding, hiking, camping, photography, etc.) in conjunction with other land uses and without degrading environmental resources.

*Goal C.4* – Place greater emphasis on projects that accommodate compatible wildlife-oriented public uses, while supporting urban areas and disadvantaged communities.

- The goals of the project are to provide safe public access to the 5,630 acre JHP.
- The parking lot and associated infrastructure will be ideally located to provide access for a future segment of the CCT that would travel through the JHP. This alignment would greatly improve hikers' experience of the coast and provide a much safer CCT route before reconnecting with other protected public lands.
- ADA trail would travel along a ranch road located at the mouth of Russian Gulch.
- The proposed project would provide opportunities for members of the public and other interested groups to safely experience JHP, while ensuring protection of the property's natural and cultural resources.



## MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The parking lot will be open seven days a week during daylight hours and free to the public. Long term project management will be conducted by TWC. TWC has twenty years of managing preserves that are open to the public.

The expected life of the initial public access infrastructure is 25 years without any major repair. The parking lot and associated infrastructure do not include electricity or the use of running water, which will greatly reduce long-term maintenance needs. The restroom will be a simple two-unit vault toilet, cinderblock building. It will include a living roof that will absorb rainfall and support the growth of native grasses and forbs.

The project has been designed to blend into the natural topography as much as possible and withstand human use and the harsh coastal conditions. It includes many low-maintenance public access design features. The entire parking lot surface and ADA portion of the trail will be paved with ParkTread, which is an extremely durable, all-natural material that is locally sourced and manufactured in Sonoma County. It is free of heavy metals, toxins and other pollutants.

## PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Item	WCB	Coastal Conservancy	SLT (Pending)	Other Funds	Totals
Mobilization and Grading	215,000	0	0	121,490	336,490
Parking lot, Bioswale, Culvert, ADA	35,000	500,000	0	441,034	976,034
Restroom	0	0	100,000	16,142	116,142
Planting and Erosion Control	0	0	\$0	263,380	263,380
Construction Oversight	0	0	\$0	156,931	156,931
<i>Totals</i>	<i>\$250,000</i>	<i>\$500,000</i>	<i>\$100,000</i>	<i>\$998,977</i>	<i>\$1,848,977</i>

Project costs will be for mobilization, demobilization and related preparation, clearing and grubbing, rough grading and spoils placement.

## FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a). The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the development of public access facilities for hunting, fishing, and other wildlife compatible recreational activities.

## CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department, as lead

agency, prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has considered the MND and has prepared proposed written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$250,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*10. Wheeler Ridge, Expansion 5**

**Mono County**

**\$435,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the acquisition in fee of 20± acres of land on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for protection of deer range habitat and a migration corridor for the Round Valley mule deer herd, and to provide for future wildlife oriented public use opportunities. The acquisition expands on existing adjacent public lands owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and previous Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) funded conservation easement projects.

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The Property is positioned south of the community of Swall Meadows in Mono County and west of Highway 395. Swall Meadows is approximately 20 miles north of Bishop and 25 miles south of Mammoth Lakes. More specifically, the Property is located south of the southerly terminus of Willow Road, west of Sierra Wave Drive.

The Property is also situated in the CDFW's Wheeler Ridge Wildlife Area Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP), and is almost entirely surrounded by CDFW's Round Valley Wildlife Area. The CDFW property is bounded to the west by the Inyo National Forest and is located adjacent to open space lands owned by the Eastern Sierra Land Trust (ESLT) and the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. To the north and east are the Swall Meadows and Rimrock Ranch residential developments.

The surrounding properties are also referred to as the Wheeler Crest area. The Wheeler Crest area is comprised primarily of one to two acre single family residential lots. Larger parcels in the area are primarily encumbered by conservation easements held by ESLT. The outlying areas are in close proximity to federal public lands administered by BLM or the United States Forest Service. Both federal agencies recognize the importance of maintaining the viability of the Round Valley deer herd migration corridor in their management plans.

The Property is part of a known migration and holding area for mule deer of the Round Valley herd. This Wheeler Ridge area once supported over 6,000 deer. Currently, mule deer numbers reflect a significant decrease to approximately 3,000 animals. The primary purposes of the Wheeler Ridge Wildlife Area CAPP is to acquire property to preserve, maintain and enhance critical Round Valley mule deer winter range, holding area, and migration habitat. The secondary purposes of this CAPP are to maintain and enhance opportunities for deer hunting and wildlife viewing and preserve habitat for the numerous other species that utilize this region.

General Plans for both Inyo and Mono Counties also urge the preservation of wildlife migration corridors, and Inyo County has designated Round Valley as an "Environmental Resource Area" due to the diversity of plant and wildlife species, wetlands, and riparian areas in the valley.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The irregularly shaped Property is vacant and unimproved. Access to the site is via Redtail Road, a private gated dirt road that follows the southeast boundary of the Property. The land use designation of the subject site is ER2, which has the legally permissible potential for a single home site.

The Property is bisected by a deep ravine containing a perennial stream, which supports riparian and aquatic habitats that include the state-ranked rare vegetation alliance water birch riparian scrub habitat. The wetter-habitat areas on the site include willows, and stream and bog orchids. The predominant vegetation habitat is pinyon-juniper-sagebrush. The migration corridor running near and through the Property serves as a temporary holding area important to deer during the spring and fall migrations. Having these open spaces allows the herd the necessary flexibility to survive annual variability in weather. With a very small winter range available to the herd, the lower elevations of the holding area and migration corridor become even more critical. Furthermore, the threat of development within this narrow migration corridor is considered a significant threat to the long term stability of the herd.

The project will protect and preserve not only the mule deer of the Round Valley herd, but will also provide essential habitat to resident wildlife. Wildlife species potentially present on the Property and benefited by the acquisition include; federally endangered and State threatened Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, federally endangered Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep and other wildlife species such as Sierra Nevada red fox, mountain lion, long-tailed weasel and black bear. Studies completed by CDFW have also documented the existence of 137 bird species, 16 bat species, neo-tropical migrants and riparian birds such as the yellow warbler and yellow-breasted chat, raptors such as the bald and golden eagles, and a considerable number of reptiles and amphibians present in the area.

## WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition is being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Land Acquisition Program. The Land Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the WCB's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, *et seq.*), which authorizes WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property, and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. Under the program, the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities. These activities are carried out in conjunction with the CDFW, which evaluates the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (LAE/CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

Consistent with Goals A-1 and A-4 (environmental protection and conservation) of the WCB's Strategic Plan, the acquisition would continue to allow migration and movement of species and provide for habitat connectivity between identified habitat areas.

## MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Following the proposed acquisition, CDFW will own and manage the property as part of the undesignated land of the Swall Meadows Unit located within the boundaries of the Wheeler CAPP. Costs associated with managing the Property will be minimal as the main purpose of the acquisition is to retain the site in its natural state for continued deer use. Site visits will be required from time to time to monitor the Property. These site visits will be included with other surrounding parcels in State ownership and management.

The Property has the potential for wildlife viewing and day hiking. This site is situated within a no-shooting zone around Swall Meadows, no hunting will be allowed at this time.

## TERMS

The property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$400,000. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the property for its approved appraised fair market value. Staff of the WCB will review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. Once approved by the WCB the transaction must also be reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services.

## PROJECT FUNDING

The Proposed funding breakdown for this project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	400,000
Total Purchase Price	400,000
Other Project Related Admin Costs	35,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$435,000</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$35,000 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs including the environmental assessment, appraisal, mineral remoteness study, DGS appraisal and transaction reviews, and escrow and title insurance costs.

## WCB FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the development, rehabilitation, restoration, acquisition and protection of habitat that accomplishes one or more of the following objectives: promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species, protects habitat corridors, protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems such as riparian and wetland areas. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)]

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project has been reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant

or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$435,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b) for the acquisition and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*11. East Contra Costa County HCP/NCCP (Coelho)**

**Contra Costa County**

**\$464,239.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy (ECCCHC) as well as the acceptance of two U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grants and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the ECCCHC, for a cooperative project with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) to acquire 199± acres of land for the protection and preservation of existing regional wildlife linkages, including annual grassland, alkali grassland, alkali wetland, and creek habitat areas, within the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (ECCC HCP/NCCP) area.

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property) is located in the southeast corner of the ECCC HCP/NCCP area, in unincorporated Byron, Contra Costa County. It represents an important opportunity to link numerous existing and proposed ECCC HCP/NCCP properties. Surrounding land uses include rural homesites, existing natural park lands, wildlife mitigation lands, and private cattle ranching.

The ECCC HCP/NCCP designates the Property as a high priority for acquisition and protection because the Property supports high quality habitat for several key covered species of the plan including rare habitat, and because the Property serves a critical connectivity function. The Property is adjacent to previously conserved areas within the ECCC HCP/NCCP area. Over the past several years the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), USFWS, ECCCHC, and EBRPD have partnered to acquire nearly 13,000 acres of habitat within the ECCC HCP/NCCP area, helping protect essential habitat and connectivity for multiple wildlife species. The project is also consistent with action proposed under the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) California Wildlife Action Plan (Plan). The project is located within the Central Valley and Bay Delta region within the Plan. Two of the recommended conservation actions called out for this region are protection of upland linkages and reduction of habitat isolation in the eastern San Francisco Bay Area.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Property is 199± acres in size and is currently used for cattle grazing. The Property is bisected by Vasco Road, effectively creating two irregularly shaped portions of the site. The east and west portions of the Property are connected by a tunnel that allows for movement of cattle and is wide enough to accommodate a one-ton pick-up truck. The topography is rolling to moderately sloping, with two minor hills located in the central area of each portion of the Property. Elevations range from approximately 160 feet in the northeast corner to approximately 230 feet at the top of the highest hill located on the western portion of the Property. Frisk Creek traverses the northwest corner of the Property for a distance of approximately 1,041 feet. It is a seasonal creek that flows in a northeastern direction across the Property. Habitat types found on the Property include annual grassland, alkali grassland, alkali wetland, and creek.

The Property is adjacent to or in close proximity to several acquisitions within the ECCC HCP/NCCP. These linkages include a movement corridor for the state threatened and federally endangered San Joaquin kit fox. Acquisition of the Property will protect suitable habitat for the state-listed threatened California red-legged frog and a variety of other rare and important wildlife

species including California tiger salamander, golden eagle, western burrowing owl, Swainson's hawk, and vernal pool fairy shrimp.

#### WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD (WCB) PROGRAM

The proposed grant and subgrant for this project are being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.) and enables the WCB to pursue acquisitions and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. The project has been reviewed and approved by the CDFW under its Natural Community Conservation Plan program, substantiating the biological values of the Property and recommending it for funding. The USFWS grant proposed for acceptance for this project has been reviewed and approved by the CDFW as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition grant selection and review process.

This Project is guided by the WCB Strategic Plan and supports the following outlined goals:

*Goal A.1* – Fund projects and landscapes that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change.

- The Project enhances habitat connections by expanding a network of protected linkages. The Project will expand the protection of wildlife linkages and provide ecosystem responses to climate change by incorporating elevation gradients that allow species and vegetation communities to shift upward in elevation.

*Goal A.3* – Fund projects that support the implementation of Natural Community Conservation Plans, Habitat Conservation Plans and recovery of listed species.

- The Property is identified in the ECCC HCP/NCCP and supports the recovery of listed species.

*Goal A.4* - Invest in priority conservation projects recommended under CDFW's land acquisition evaluation process or within other conservation plans supported by CDFW.

- CDFW was instrumental in the creation and support of the ECCC HCP/NCCP through its NCCP program. Under the NCCP program, CDFW works with numerous private and public partners to develop a regional protection plan identifying properties to acquire for long term protection of habitat for plants and animals.

*Goal E.1* - Maximize expenditures of remaining bond funds and identify opportunities to leverage existing funds as effectively as possible.

- The Property is proposed to be acquired with WCB funds and funds from the USFWS Section 6 subgrant and EBRPD funds.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

EBRPD has agreed to manage the property once it is acquired. Funding of future management activities for this Property will be provided by ECCCHC and EBRPD, in part through wind turbine and communication tower lease revenue from prior acquisitions within the ECCC HCP/NCCP plan area. It is anticipated that the Property will offer the potential for future passive recreational uses, an allowed use under the ECCC HCP/NCCP. The habitat will be maintained in conjunction with other properties acquired by EBRPD.



## TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$1,495,750. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and the USFWS. The owner has agreed to sell the Property for the approved appraised fair market value. The USFWS funds require a non-federal match that is being provided by EBRPD and the proposed WCB grant to ECCCHC. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and subgrant to the ECCCHC provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the grantee to encumber the Property with a conservation easement in favor of WCB and seek reimbursement of funds.

## PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	454,239
USFWS Subgrant Funds	873,936
East Bay Regional Park District	147,575
Other	20,000
Total Purchase Price	1,495,750
Other Project Related Admin Costs	10,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$464,239</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$10,000 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including DGS appraisal review costs. Under the terms of the USFWS grant the WCB may seek partial reimbursement of these costs.

## FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c) (SSJD-NCCP) that allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat that assists in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans.

## CEQA

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve the project as proposed; approve the acceptance of two Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant funds from the USFWS in the amount of \$873,936.00 and approve the subgrant of the federal funds to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy; allocate \$464,239.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c) (SSJD-NCCP) for the grant and to cover the project-related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*12. San Joaquin River Parkway (Circle V)**

**Madera County**

**\$1,090,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the acquisition in fee of 21± acres of land, together with an access easement in Madera County (Property) on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the Transfer of Jurisdiction of the Property by CDFW to the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC). The SJRC Board approved the acquisition of the Property on June 1, 2016. The Property will be acquired for the protection of riparian and oak woodlands habitat, and for potential future wildlife oriented public use opportunities within the San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway).

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The Property is located at 42388 Avenue 11, in an unincorporated area of south-central Madera County. It is located east of State Highway 41, approximately 16 miles southeast of the City of Madera, and approximately 12 miles north of the Fresno downtown business district. Access is from State Route 41, a publicly maintained road to the Avenue 11 road.

A 7± acre portion of the Property is located on a bluff improved with two residences situated alongside 13± acres of unirrigated pasture. There is also 7± acres of sycamore/Valley oak woodland located just below a steep bluff slope that extends onto a floodplain and the San Joaquin River. There may have been vernal pools in the upper portion of the Property, however most of the land and its surrounding areas have been graded for homesites and pasture.

The Property fronts to and is adjacent to the San Joaquin River. Across the river are contiguous public lands such as the CDFW's - Rank Island Unit of the San Joaquin River Ecological Reserve, and the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust's – Owl Hollow Educational Facility. Nearby are SJRC properties located along both sides of the San Joaquin River. The SJRC properties comprise parts of the San Joaquin River Parkway holdings that include Gibson, Cagila, Jenco, Jensen River Ranch, Woodward Park, Wildwood Native Park & River West properties.

This parcel is also within the County of Madera's Rio Mesa Area Plan, and near the Gunner Ranch West and Village of Gateway area plans. Furthermore, the Property is surrounded by properties planned for large scale development such as Riverstone community development.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The majority of the Property is unimproved and, as mentioned previously, is improved with two single family residences (5,513 square feet and 1,720 square feet) constructed around the 1960s. The improvements include a storage shed, an in-ground swimming pool, and perimeter fencing located around the residences.

The parcel is irregular in shape and positioned within Madera County's – Agricultural Rural Valley District (ARV-2) zoning designation. Permitted uses on the site include agriculture, two single family dwellings, and a guest house. Under Madera County's General Plan the Property lies within both the LDR (Low Density Residential) and OS (Open Space) designations. The LDR portion of the site allows primary and secondary residential structures, bed-and-breakfast, limited agriculture, public and quasi-public uses. The OS designation provides for low-intensity agriculture, grazing, forestry, golf course, recreation and equestrian, and habitat protection.

The western portion of the site has a level upper bench, and a steeply sloping bluff in the middle portion that descends about 100 feet to a mostly level riparian area along the San Joaquin River at the east side of the Property. The east side also includes groves of sycamore/Valley oak woodland. The bluff slope enables a panoramic view of the river, the San Joaquin Valley, and the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

The Property's attributes include high quality riparian habitat within a floodplain. Resident wildlife consists of deer, small mammals, coyotes, songbirds, and raptors that live or forage on the site. Above the Property's bluff there are remnants of a seasonal swale, which lends to the previous existence of vernal pools. The site also meets SJRC's criteria for high-priority Parkway land acquisitions that include: protection of habitat values, connectivity and protection of wildlife movement corridors, and need for conservation in path of development.

Following the proposed Transfer of Jurisdiction of the Property to SJRC, plans are to maintain and rent the residences on a month-to-month basis as a source of income. It is likely that one of the residences will also be used for stewardship purposes. Future plans on the balance of the site include habitat-friendly recreation such as: universal-access vista point for nature observation, a public Parkway feature and river access, and hiking trail, and a boating rest stop. SJRC will also conserve the riparian and floodplain habitat to protect the Property's conservation values, and restrict future development in perpetuity.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition is being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (Board or WCB) Land Acquisition Program. The Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, *et seq.*), which authorizes WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of the CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property; and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. Under the Program, WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities.

The WCB assists with the administration of project funding for SJRC. WCB, represented by its Executive Director, holds a position on the SJRC Board along with CDFW, which is represented by the Regional Manager of the Central Region. The SJRC Board reviews and approves projects to ensure they are viable and consistent with the goals of the current SJRC Parkway Master Plan, prior to consideration by WCB. As indicated above, the SJRC Board approved this acquisition on June 1, 2016. Under this transaction WCB would acquire the Property on behalf of CDFW and then complete a Transfer Jurisdiction to SJRC.

#### CDFW/WCB/SJRC GOALS

Acquisition of the Property would be consistent with the following SJRC Master Plan (2000) Natural Resources, Recreation, and Land Acquisition objectives:

*NRO3.* In areas that are not publicly owned or managed, establish, through purchase, easements, or other mutually satisfactory arrangements, a continuous wildlife corridor along the river of sufficient width to facilitate the movement of large mammals between habitat areas, to

provide a variety of nesting and foraging areas, and to enhance and protect the aquatic habitats of the river and nearby wetlands.

RO4. Unify Parkway elements into a recognizable unit and a visually integrated park system.

LO2. Make the most effective use of limited public funds.

Additionally, the acquisition of the Property would be consistent with WCB Strategic Plan Goals A (Environmental Protection and Conservation) and C (Public Use and Recreation), and further the following Strategic Plan Objectives.

*Goal A.1* -Fund projects and landscapes that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change.

- The Property contains and meets the criteria for high-priority Parkway land acquisitions: protection of habitat values (both riparian and floodplain), connectivity and protection of wildlife movement corridors; need for conservation in path of development; and expands geological Parkway benefits along the San Joaquin River.

*Goal A.2* -Fund projects and landscape areas that conserve, protect, or enhance water resources for fish and wildlife.

- This privately-owned Property is situated in close proximity to other properties currently owned by the State that are under the jurisdiction of CDFW and SJRC. The Property is surrounded by large developer-owned properties, and is in the immediate vicinity of active home/community building, including the Riverstone “new home community” development. Acquisition of the proposed Property eliminates the possibility of development, thereby protecting and conserving the Property’s conservation values that include sycamore/Valley oak woodlands, riparian and floodplain habitat that extends to the San Joaquin River.

*Goal C.1* -Support a wide range of recreational activities (e.g., hunting, fishing, birding, hiking, camping, photography, etc.) in conjunction with other land uses and without degrading environmental resources.

- As a future addition to the Parkway, the Property will be used for future public access and recreational opportunities that include a possible universal-access vista point for nature observation, hiking trail to the woodlands and a boating stop.

## MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be managed by SJRC as part of the Parkway. Since the Property includes two residences, SJRC plans to lease the residences and utilize the income derived from the leases as a fund source for future habitat restoration, recreation, and public access projects, as well as support the ongoing operation of the Parkway.

## TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$1,045,000. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the property for the approved appraised fair market value. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB acquisition provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. Once approved by the WCB the transaction must also be reviewed and approved by the DGS.

## PROJECT FUNDING

The Proposed funding breakdown for this project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	1,045,000
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>1,045,000</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	45,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$1,090,000</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$45,000 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs including the environmental assessment, termite inspections, appraisal, DGS appraisal and transaction reviews and escrow and title insurance costs.

## WCB FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75050(f), which allows for river parkway projects identified by the San Joaquin River Conservancy.

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project has been reviewed for compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for preservation of fish and wildlife habitat, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant and animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,090,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75050(f) for the acquisition, authorize the Transfer of Jurisdiction to the San Joaquin River Conservancy, and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*13.Elkhorn Slough Land Exchange, Moro Cojo Slough – Calcagno  
Monterey County  
\$70,073.00**

This proposal is to consider the exchange of 14± acres owned by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for 16± acres, including an access easement, of privately owned real property to serve as an expansion to CDFW's Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve (Reserve) for the protection of wetland habitat and associated wildlife species.

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The 16± acres of privately owned real property, and associated access easement, proposed to be acquired under the exchange (Acquisition Property) is located one mile east of Moss Landing, eight miles south of the city of Watsonville, east of Highway 1 off Dolan Road in Monterey County. The Acquisition Property's southern perimeter abuts the Moro Cojo Slough. To the west and the south is 200± acres of land owned by The Elkhorn Slough Foundation which conserves and manages key lands in the Elkhorn Slough Watershed. Elkhorn Slough is a seven mile long, ecologically diverse estuary off Monterey Bay. The Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve (Reserve), designated in 1979, consists of 1,700 acres of salt marsh, mud flat, freshwater pond, oak woodland, grassland, and estuarine habitats.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

CDFW owns the 71± acre Seal Bend parcel which is part of the Reserve. Proposed for exchange is a 14± acre portion of the Seal Bend parcel (Exchange Property). The Seal Bend parcel was purchased in 1982. At the time the Seal Bend parcel was purchased, the Exchange Property was leased by the owner of the Acquisition Property and used for a cow-feeding operation. The lease and the cow-feeding operation still continue. The Exchange Property does not support wildlife habitat and CDFW would like to exchange it for the Acquisition Property. CDFW will retain a 20' right of way for access on the north and east sides of the Exchange Property to be able to continue to access the remainder of the Seal Bend parcel.

The Acquisition Property is contiguous to Moro Cojo Slough on the south and includes wetland habitat. The Central Coast Wetlands Group at the Moss Landing Marine Laboratory restored the upland portion of the Acquisition Property with native grasses, coast live oaks, and native shrubs. Marshlands across Moro Cojo Slough consist of approximately 800± acres of pickleweed marsh owned by the Elkhorn Slough Foundation. The Acquisition Property supports a wide variety of wildlife including: the federally endangered Tidewater Goby, California species of special concern including the California brackish water snail, the Northern harrier, and the Grasshopper sparrow, as well as a state candidate species, the Tricolored blackbird.

**WCB PROGRAM**

The proposed exchange is being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Code Section 1300, et seq.), which authorizes WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property, and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with the acquisition of properties. Under the Program, the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife oriented recreation opportunities. These activities are carried out in conjunction with CDFW,

which evaluates the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (LAE/CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

This Project is guided by the WCB Strategic Plan and supports the following Strategic Plan goals: *Goal A.4* -Invest in priority conservation projects recommended under CDFW's land acquisition evaluation process or within other conservation plans supported by CDFW.

- The Acquisition Property provides a high level of habitat value in both uplands and wetlands and is proposed to be acquired pursuant to a Land Conversion Evaluation submitted by CDFW. Additionally, acquiring the Acquisition Property helps create an intact and interconnected network of natural communities to protect biodiversity and sensitive species.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CDFW will manage the Acquisition Property in conjunction with the existing Reserve. Public access will be available consistent with the existing public access at the Reserve.

#### TERMS

The Acquisition Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$134,050. The access easement has a value of \$5,623. CDFW's Exchange Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$135,600 including the reserved access. The appraisals have been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services. The owner of the Acquisition Property has agreed to the exchange and WCB will pay \$4,073, the difference in the fair market value. The terms and conditions of the proposed exchange provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for the exchange, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the exchange.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

Appraised Value of the Acquisition Property	134,050
Appraised Value of the Access Easement	5,623
Combined Appraised Value	139,673
Less Appraised Value of CDFW's Exchange Property	135,600
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>4,073</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	66,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$70,073</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$66,000 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including appraisal, DGS appraisal review, survey, escrow and title insurance costs.



#### WCB FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786 b/c]

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The exchange has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$70,073.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786 b/c for the exchange and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*14. Moss Landing Wildlife Area Enhancement, Planning, Design and Pilot**

**Monterey County**

**\$480,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU) for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Point Blue Conservation Science (Point Blue) and the Moss Landing Marine Laboratory (MLML) for planning, design, and environmental compliance to stabilize a levee along Elkhorn Slough and a pilot project studying salinity and revegetation to improve understanding for future habitat enhancements for western snowy plover (plover), located on CDFW's Moss Landing Wildlife Area (MLWA), 15 miles northeast of Monterey in Moss Landing, Monterey County.

**LOCATION**

MLWA comprises 872 acres of tidally influenced habitat located near the mouth of Elkhorn Slough at Moss Landing. The Moss Landing salt ponds consist of 153 acres of retired salt evaporation ponds. Highway 1 borders the ponds to the west, Elkhorn Slough to the south, Elkhorn Ranch to the east and Bennett Slough to the north. In 2008, the Moss Landing Wildlife Area experienced over 1,000 visits throughout the year. Angling has become increasingly popular at this location.

MLWA is adjacent to the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (Reserve). The MLWA and Reserve sit on the edge of a large estuary with habitats that include productive salt marshes, rich mudflats, and meandering tidal channels and creeks. Dozens of vascular algae and plant species, over 100 fish species, over 135 bird species, and over 550 invertebrate species have been reported in Elkhorn Slough's estuarine habitats. The ponds provide various habitat functions for numerous shorebirds, seabirds, and waterfowl. Brown pelicans, American avocets, and black-necked stilts nest on the levees or ponds and rear their young in the ponds.

WCB and CDFW partnered to purchase the ponds from Western Salt in 1984 for the purpose of maintaining shorebird and waterfowl habitat in the area. Prior to the purchase, the ponds had been inactive for a period of years leading to a levee breach in 1982. The salt ponds are extremely important to the Monterey Bay breeding population of plover, a federally listed threatened species. In 1999, 63 percent of the plover young known to have fledged in the Monterey Bay region were produced in the salt ponds, and they also had the highest hatching success and fledging rate in the Monterey Bay area. In recent years, hatching success is still higher than most other areas, but total contribution of nests to the regional population has declined substantially. Despite this, the ponds remain among the most productive plover habitat in the Monterey Bay region.

The management goal for the Moss Landing salt ponds is to provide foraging and breeding habitat for plover and other shorebirds, as well as roosting areas for brown pelicans and migratory waterfowl. Additionally, limited public access is encouraged at MLWA. A parking lot, interpretive signage, and viewing platforms are all part of the existing public access features.

WCB partnered with CDFW, Ducks Unlimited, and several other partners on prior phases of work, which have substantially improved both habitat quality and public access opportunities within MLWA. In 2006, Phase 1 of the Moss Landing Habitat Enhancement Project was completed, and included reconfiguring the ponds and water distribution systems to maximize habitat benefits for plover while minimizing water management burden for CDFW staff. Nine ponds were reconfigured into 6 larger ponds to improve habitat quality and reduce upland corridors for terrestrial predators. The Phase 2 project was completed in 2012. This phase included

re-contouring pond topography and removing vegetation in four ponds to enhance habitat, cleaning, repairing and augmenting the existing water distribution system, addition of one public access viewing platform and upgrading the existing viewing platform to be ADA-compliant. It also included select levee improvements and improvements to the parking lot and road, which had been partially flooded under higher tides prior to project implementation.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The current proposed Phase 3 project includes the planning, design, and environmental compliance necessary to stabilize the levee along Elkhorn Slough. The project will also complete a pilot salinity and revegetation study to improve methods for future habitat enhancements for plover as part of a future (Phase 4) construction project.

### 1. Planning, Design, and Environmental Compliance

During the Phase 2 project, CDFW, DU, and other project partners recognized that the levee along Elkhorn Slough would need to be stabilized. The bank is noticeably eroding and erosion and bank failure is visible in aerial photographs. The proposed project work includes obtaining the proper environmental documentation and permits required to construct multiple improvements to the MLWA within and adjacent to the former salt ponds. Design and environmental documents will include the following proposed elements for a future Phase 4:

- Elkhorn Slough bank stabilization - CDFW desires to maintain the existing acreage of habitat for plovers. Based on this desire and discussions with multiple stakeholders, CDFW believes bank stabilization by an articulated cable blanket system, connected by cables allowing each individual block to be flexible and form to the terrain of the ground will best achieve this goal.
- Pond interior maintenance - The pilot salinity and revegetation study will be used to inform minor internal pond grading, which will be included in the overall project design, and will enhance plover habitat quality. This may include grading in all ponds.
- Public access and site protection - The footings to the visitor's kiosk are currently flooded by high tide events. These footings and the kiosk will be evaluated during design to determine the best way to elevate it.

Work will include site analyses, topographic, bathymetric, geotechnical, and hydrologic studies, project design plans up to 100 percent, and preparation of bid documents.

### 2. Pilot Salinity and Revegetation Study

Between Phases 1 and 2, pickleweed density began to interfere with successful nesting and fledging of breeding plovers. Plover nesting began to decline in all ponds after pickleweed was cleared during Phase 2. Biologists also tried augmenting the pond bottoms through the addition of oyster shells in order to camouflage the plover nests. Recent research suggests that nests located in or near vegetated patches have greater nest survival than those on barren flats. Habitat complexity also appears to increase nesting survivorship, and sparse vegetation cover is preferred for courtship and nesting.

The goal of the pilot salinity and revegetation work is to gather data for use in a potential future larger revegetation project that would restore sparsely vegetated, more complex habitats for plover use in courtship and nesting. Tasks in the pilot project include 1) surveys for soil and water salinity in the ponds; 2) observations of water management at the ponds to better understand annual patterns in pond flooding; 3) propagation and testing of common native species for

survival in salt pond sediments by planting small test plots. Once this data is in hand, plans can be developed to increase the scale of revegetation efforts to improve plover recruitment.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and meets the program's goal of providing restoration of wetlands that fall outside the jurisdiction of the Inland Wetland Conservation Program such as coastal, tidal, or fresh water habitats, coastal scrub, grasslands, threatened and endangered species habitats.

The project furthers the following goals outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan:

*Goal B.1-* Invest in projects and landscape areas that help provide resilience in the face of climate change, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife and enhance habitats on working lands:

- This project could result in a future project design that would enhance and protect some of the only protected nesting habitat for snowy plovers in the Monterey Bay region. Over the next 100 years, all existing potential snowy plover nesting habitat associated with beaches may be eliminated. The project site will continue to provide nesting habitat as long as surrounding levees are maintained, both from overtopping and being undercut.

In addition, the proposed project addresses the following priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan: Improve habitat for threatened or endangered species:

- The salt ponds are extremely important to the Monterey Bay breeding population of plover, a federally threatened species.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The project site is owned by CDFW and managed by CDFW, DU and Coastal Conservation and Research, Inc. (CC&R), the restoration arm of the Moss Landing Marine Labs Benthic Lab. All will partner on the pilot salinity and revegetation study. Point Blue is assisting CDFW with water management and avian monitoring. Point Blue has been monitoring snowy plover nesting habitat for several years and will continue monitoring efforts for the next several years. In addition, CC&R will monitor salinity, grain size, water management, and pilot revegetation, as described above.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Item	WCB	DU	Totals
Project Management, Meetings, Coordination	31,808	5,000	36,808
Site Investigations, Design, Bid Documents	99,784	0	99,784
Environmental Compliance	248,700	0	248,700
Pilot Salinity & Revegetation Study	50,000	0	50,000
Contingency	22,285	0	22,285
Administration	27,423	0	27,423
<i>Totals</i>	<i>\$480,000</i>	<i>\$5,000</i>	<i>\$485,000</i>

Project costs will be for salinity, revegetation, topographic, bathymetric, geotechnical and hydrologic studies, project designs, permitting, bid documents, review of bids, recommendation to award, and project management and administration.

#### FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley, which provide funding for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands outside the Central Valley and are consistent with the objectives of this project.

#### CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

The CDFW has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15262), as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$480,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*15.North Carrizo Water Well Easement**

**San Luis Obispo County**

**\$1,100.00**

This proposal is to consider the acquisition on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) an easement over certain portions of property owned by Topaz Solar Farms LLC, a Delaware limited liability company (Owner). The easement will allow CDFW to install water pipelines and appurtenant equipment necessary to tie into an existing well on Owner's property and to take water from the well for use on adjacent CDFW property for the benefit of wildlife.

**LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES**

The 2,000± square foot easement is located on 2.5 acres (Property) in eastern San Luis Obispo County in the northern portion of the Carrizo Plain. The Property is entirely surrounded by property owned by CDFW. The Carrizo Plain is located about 150 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles and lies midway between Santa Maria and Bakersfield in a valley separating the Coast and Temblor mountain ranges.

Specifically, the Property is located south of Highway 58 and south of the Topaz Solar Farm Project (Project). The (Project) is a solar energy development project involving installation of photovoltaic modules and related facilities over an area approximately 3,510 acres in size.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

In 2013, 12,000 acres in the northern Carrizo Plain were conveyed to CDFW as mitigation for habitat loss from the Project (CDFW Lands). The CDFW lands were conveyed to offset impacts to San Joaquin kit fox, pronghorn, and a suite of other species which were displaced by the Project.

There is currently a well on the Property. CDFW would like to acquire the easement to use the well to pump water for storage and distribution to troughs for wildlife on the CDFW Lands. Mitigation funds are available for the purchase of a solar pump and water storage tank needed to make the well functional. Once a solar pump is installed, a 1.25-inch PVC line would run from the well to the tank. From the water tank, a 1.25- or 1-inch PVC line will run to the trough or troughs. The lines will be trenched at least 18 inches deep. Multiple troughs (both livestock and wildlife) can be run from the well. In some cases, the troughs will be over 1 mile from the tank.

The CDFW has been providing water for pronghorn on the CDFW Lands since 2014. These sources have been important for conserving this pronghorn population during the current drought. CDFW would like to have these troughs connected to the well this summer to ensure that there is a reliable water source during the critical time of pronghorn fawn rearing.

**WCB PROGRAM**

The proposed easement is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program. The Land Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, *et seq.*), under which WCB may authorize CDFW to acquire rights in real property by various means including easements.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The solar power will ensure that there are no utility bills associated with the well. An endowment for the mitigation lands has been established to cover all startup and maintenance costs (including personnel time).

#### TERMS

This is a nonexclusive easement with a term of five (5) years.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	100
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>100</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	1,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$1,100</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$1,000 will be needed to cover project-related expenses.

#### WCB FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat that accomplishes one or more of the following objectives: promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species, protects habitat corridors, protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems, such as oak woodlands, and riparian and wetland areas. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)]

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project has been reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is proposed as exempt under both CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4, as a minor public alteration to the condition of land which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees, Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,100.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b), for the easement and to cover internal project-related expenses; and authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*16.RLA Peninsular Bighorn Sheep, Shumway Ranch**

**Riverside County**

**\$276,622.00**

This proposal is to consider the acquisition of 640± acres of land on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for a cooperative project with the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (CVMC) and the acceptance of two U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition Grants and two U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grants for the protection of high desert habitat that provides linkages and corridors to support the recovery of the Peninsular bighorn sheep (PBS) and other sensitive species covered under the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, a joint State Natural Community Conservation Plan and federal Habitat Conservation Plan (CV MSHCP/NCCP).

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property), known as Shumway Ranch, is located in the Santa Rosa Mountains at an elevation range of 4,000 feet and is approximately 15 miles south of the City of Palm Desert. Highway 74 is one mile south of the Property and provides access by turning west onto Carrizo Road, a well maintained dirt road managed by the County of Riverside. Though the majority of the surrounding area is conservation land, just one mile southeast of the Property are the residential subdivisions of Royal Carrizo, Pinyon Crest, and Alpine Village. These subdivisions offer 1-acre and 2.5-acre parcels for residential home development which has become a popular option for those who enjoy a higher elevation rural desert landscape.

The Property is in a region known as the Coachella Valley (Valley) which extends for approximately 45 miles in Riverside County southeast from the San Bernardino Mountains to the northern shore of the Salton Sea. The Valley is bounded by the outlying mountain ranges of the San Jacinto Mountains on the west, the Santa Rosa Mountains on the South, and the Little San Bernardino Mountains on the north and east. Approximately 100 miles east of Los Angeles, the Valley is considered one of the fastest growing areas in the rapidly expanding Riverside County. The Valley's urban and residential development has been growing quickly and, with a population of nearly 600,000 people, it is part of the Inland Empire the 13<sup>th</sup> largest metropolitan area in the United States.

The Property is identified for protection within the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area, a designated conservation area within the CV MSHCP/NCCP area approved for the Coachella Valley portion of Riverside County. The purpose of the CV MSHCP/NCCP is to provide a regional vision for balanced growth to meet the requirements of federal and state endangered species laws, while promoting enhanced opportunities for recreation and tourism. The CV MSHCP/NCCP aims to conserve an additional 240,000 acres of open space to support the 500,000 acres of pre-existing conservation land for the protection of 27 plant and animal species. With the support of other conservation partners, the State and the federal government have helped conserve approximately 85,000 acres within the CV MSHCP/NCCP.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The subject Property consists of two contiguous legal parcels totaling 640± acres. The Property is currently zoned for controlled development which allows for, but is not limited to, single family dwellings and various agricultural practices. A 5± acre portion of the Property is improved with four dwelling units, a summer sleeping cottage, and four water wells with pumps and storage tanks. The majority of the topography consists of mountainous desert terrain with intermittent areas that are level to gently sloping and is characterized by natural desert vegetation consisting



of Sonoran mixed woody and succulent scrub and peninsular juniper woodland. The Property is bounded by public land on the south while the north, west, and east boundaries abut private undeveloped properties.

This acquisition permanently protects the Property, preventing future development and habitat fragmentation while providing core habitat linkages and foraging corridors for the federally endangered Peninsular bighorn sheep (PBS). PBS are endangered by widespread habitat loss and degradation, particularly in the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains, which border the rapidly developing Valley. Conservation of habitat along urban-wildland interfaces is a high priority for PBS conservation. The Property's linkages and corridors created with other surrounding protected core habitat areas allows for range shifts and migration of species due to climate change. Along with the PBS, other species that will benefit from the acquisition is the federally threatened desert tortoise, burrowing owl, Le Conte's thrasher, and the gray vireo.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition is being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, *et seq.*) authorizing the WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. Under the Program, the WCB acquires lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities. In addition the project has been reviewed and approved by the CDFW under its Natural Community Conservation Plan program, substantiating the biological values of the property and recommending it for funding. The USFWS grants proposed for and accepted for this project has also been reviewed and approved by CDFW as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition Grant selection and review process.

This Project is guided by the WCB Strategic Plan and supports the following outlined goals:

#### STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The project meets the following WCB strategic Plan goals:

*Goal A.1* – Fund projects and landscapes that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change.

- One of the goals of the CV MSHCP is to preserve existing habitat connections by expanding a network of protected linkages. Connectivity in the habitat area is essential to maintaining the genetic viability of listed/sensitive species being conserved under the plan. Wildlife linkages also provide ecosystem responses to climate change by incorporating elevation gradients that allow species and vegetation communities to shift upward in elevation.

*Goal A.3* – Fund projects that support the implementation of Natural Community Conservation Plans, Habitat Conservation Plans and recovery of listed species.

- The property is identified in the CV MSHCP and the CDFW NCCP as a priority acquisition that supports the recovery of listed species.

*Goal A.4* – Invest in priority conservation projects recommended under CDFW’s land acquisition evaluation process or within other conservation plans supported by CDFW.

- CDFW was instrumental in the creation and support of the CV MSHCP through its NCCP program. Under the NCCP program, CDFW works with numerous private and public partners to develop a regional protection plan for plants, animals and their habitats.

*Goal E.1* - Maximize expenditures of remaining bond funds and identify opportunities to leverage existing funds as effectively as possible.

- The Property is proposed to be acquired with USFWS Section 6 grant funds with matching state funds coming from WCB and CVMC.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

After CDFW acquires the Property it proposes to transfer the 5± acre portion of the Property with the improvements along with an access easement to CVMC through a Transfer of Jurisdiction. Two dwelling units along with the sleeping cottage are eligible for historic registry and will be preserved by CVMC to provide cultural and educational opportunities for the public. The two remaining dwellings have reached the end of their useful lives and will be removed prior to close of escrow. The remaining 635± acres of the Property will be managed and monitored by CDFW staff in accordance with the CV MSHCP/NCCP.

#### TERMS

The property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$1,565,000. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and USFWS. The property owner has agreed to sell the property for the approved appraised fair market value of \$1,565,000. The USFWS will provide four grants; two Habitat Land Conservation Plan – Land Acquisition Grants for a total of \$568,579; and two Recovery Land Acquisition Grants for a total of \$483,177. The USFWS funds require a non-federal match that is being provided by the WCB and CVMC. The terms and conditions of the proposed USFWS grant funds provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. Once approved by the WCB, the transaction must also be reviewed and approved by the DGS.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	256,622
WCB – Subgrants of USFWS Funds	1,051,756
Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy	256,622
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>1,565,000</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	20,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$276,622</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$20,000 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including environmental assessment, mineral remoteness study, DGS appraisal and transaction review, and escrow and title insurance costs.

#### WCB FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)]

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project has been reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$276,622.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(b/c), for the acquisition and to cover internal project-related expenses; accept the two USFWS Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grants in the amount of \$568,579.00; and accept two USFWS Recovery Land Acquisition Grants in the amount of \$483,177.00; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*17. Western Riverside MSHCP (2012) - Terra  
Riverside County  
\$240,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant, and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority), and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to the Authority, to acquire in fee 280+ acres of land.

**LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property), known as the Terra property, is located in Aguanga in an unincorporated area of southwest Riverside County. More specifically, it is located southwest of Wilson Valley Road, west of Golden Hills Drive, and on the south side of Leo Road and El Ranchito Road. Most of Aguanga and the neighborhood terrain remains in a raw and natural state, with scattered rural residential housing with limited commercial and agricultural use. The site is also located south and north of existing lands conserved by the Authority.

Aguanga is located near the intersection of State Route 79 and State Route 371, approximately 22 miles east of Temecula and 24 miles south of Hemet. A number of attractions draw both visitors and residents to the area because of its proximity to both the Cleveland National Forest and Palomar Observatory.

This area of Riverside County falls within the Western Riverside County Multi-species Habitat Conservation Plan (WRC MSHCP) Area, which encompasses approximately 1.2 million acres of land providing habitat for over 146 wildlife species, several of which are both state and federally listed as threatened or endangered. The WRC MSHCP was established under the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) program under the Natural Community Conservation Planning Act of 1991 (Fish and Game Code Section 2800, *et seq.*).

The NCCP program is a cooperative effort that includes both private and public partners and takes a broad-based ecosystem approach to planning for the protection and perpetuation of biological diversity. A NCCP identifies and provides for the regional or area wide protection of plants, animals and their habitats, while allowing compatible and appropriate economic activity. Under the WRC MSHCP, the goal of the Authority is to assemble a reserve of 500,000 acres of conserved properties to sustain and protect important wildlife ecosystem processes and corridors throughout western Riverside County. To date, 53,347 acres have been added to the reserve.

The WRC MSHCP designates the following six distinct habitat areas for conservation: Western Core/Linkage, Alkali Playa/Vernal Pool Area, Temecula Creek Watershed, Santa Rosa Plateau, San Timoteo Canyon, and B Canyon Area. The Property is located in the Temecula Creek Watershed (TCW) habitat area located in the southeastern section of the WRC MSHCP Area near the border with San Diego County. Properties targeted for acquisition within the TCW habitat area provide connectivity between the Cleveland National Forest and San Diego County. This area hosts a diversity of plant and animal species, including many federal and State listed species that include the federally endangered Quino checkerspot butterfly and arroyo toad, federally endangered and state threatened Stephens' kangaroo rat, state/federally endangered least Bell's vireo and slender-horned spine flower; and the federally threatened and state endangered Vail Lake ceanothus.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The unimproved Property consists of an irregularly shaped parcel of land, which has legal access from County maintained graded roads off of Leo Road. The zoning designation assigned to the Property is Rural Residential, which potentially allows one single-family/mobile home with a minimum lot size of one-half acre. The zoning designation also allows light agriculture, animal husbandry and farm animals.

The terrain varies from level to rolling to hilly. Surface elevations range from 2,000 feet to 2,300 feet. The majority of the Property is located within the active channel and floodplain of Wilson Creek. GIS data from Riverside County Transportation & Land Management Agency also shows the existence of a blue line stream drawn southwesterly across the northerly portion of the Property. The stream broadens into a fairly wide creek bed (seasonal creek) and extends south through the center of the site. Dependent upon the availability of water, the plant life present on the site varies from lush areas of vegetation that include large trees to rocky mountainous areas devoid of vegetation. The predominant vegetation on the site is scalebroom and other vegetation species that include: coastal sage scrub, chaparral, grassland, riparian scrub, alluvial fan sage scrub, and coastal oak woodland.

The Property is also located in a critical conservation area within the TCW habitat area referred to as Core 7, and supports Riverine and Foothill Riparian habitat. Riverine is a general habitat designation associated with both rivers and creeks. Although no lakes are present on the site, the Property consists of an estimated 17.93 acres of riverine habitat that supports alluvial fan sage scrub habitats. The Property's complex of annual grassland, sage scrub, woodland, chaparral and riparian habitats also supports a suite of rare plants and animals including the Los Angeles pocket mouse, San Diego pocket mouse, tri-colored blackbird and golden eagle. The acquisition of parcels in Core 7 are also sought for assemblage into the Authority's conserved properties because the parcels are essential to the long-term conservation and recovery efforts of the slender-horned spineflower, Stephens' kangaroo rat, coastal California gnatcatcher, and least Bell's vireo.

## WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, the "Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, *et seq.*), which authorizes WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property, and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisition of properties. Under the Program, WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities.

The Property has been reviewed and approved by CDFW under its NCCP program, substantiating the biological values of the Property and recommending it for funding. The USFWS grant proposed for acceptance for this project has also been reviewed and approved by CDFW as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition Grant selection and review process.

The project meets WCB's Strategic Plan goals:

*Goal A.1* – Fund projects and landscapes that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change.

One of the goals of the WRC MSHCP is to preserve existing habitat connections by expanding a network of protected linkages. Connectivity in the WCL habitat area is essential to maintaining the genetic viability of listed/sensitive species being conserved under the plan. Wildlife linkages also provide ecosystem responses to climate change by incorporating elevation gradients that allows species and vegetation communities to shift upward in elevation.

*Goal A.3* – Fund projects that support the implementation of Natural Community Conservation Plans, Habitat Conservation Plans and recovery of listed species.

The project meets WCB's Strategic Plan by supporting the implementation of the WRC MSHCP. The WRC MSHCP complements WCB's Strategic Plan through its goal to acquire properties for the purpose of wildlife habitat and landscape preservation. The Authority has successfully worked on the expansion of protected wildlife habitat linkages and corridors to ensure the success and recovery of threatened and endangered wildlife species, and for the protection of natural landscapes within the WRC MSHCP area.

*Goal A-4* – Invest in priority conservation projects recommended under CDFW's land acquisition evaluation process or within other conservation plans supported by CDFW.

CDFW, together with other public and private parties, was instrumental in the creation of the WRC MSHCP through its NCCP program. Under the NCCP program, all parties recognized the importance of western Riverside County's conservation values. The conservation values recognized by all include the mixture of habitats located across diverse landscapes with numerous ecosystems and wildlife species found nowhere else in the world. This fact, coupled with the extensive growth and urbanization of the area has resulted in the decline of these habitat communities. Since 2006, WCB and the USFWS Section 6 grant program have supported and participated in funding several acquisitions in the WRC MSHCP area.

## MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Authority will manage the Property as part of the WRC MSHCP reserve system, which serves to provide permanent habitat protection for populations of federal and state-listed endangered and threatened species that occupy the reserve and to increase regional wildlife habitat cores and linkages that will connect existing habitat reserve areas throughout western Riverside County. As part of its obligation under the WRC MSHCP, the Authority retains a Reserve Manager to ensure that management actions are consistent with the plan. Management costs for parcels acquired under the WRC MSHCP will be provided by the Authority's operating funds.

## TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$1,150,000. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and USFWS. The Property owner has agreed to sell the Property for less than its approved appraised fair market value at \$950,000. The USFWS grant requires a non-federal match in the amount of \$233,000 that is proposed to be provided by a grant from the WCB. The

terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and subgrant of USFWS funds to the Authority provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the grantee to encumber the Property with a conservation easement in favor of the State or another entity approved by the State and seek reimbursement of funds.

## PROJECT FUNDING

The Proposed funding breakdown for this project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	233,000
WCB – subgrant of USFWS funds	717,000
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>950,000</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	7,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$240,000</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$7,000 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including the DGS appraisal review. The Authority, as project proponent, will fund all other project-related administrative costs for the acquisition, including but not limited to the environmental site assessment, appraisal, survey, escrow, and title insurance costs.

## FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat that implements or assists in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c)]

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

The project has been reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; authorize the acceptance of the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$717,000.00 and approve the subgrant of these federal funds to the Authority; allocate \$240,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c) for the WCB grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; and authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*18.Sycuan Peak Ecological Reserve, Expansion 8**

**San Diego County**

**\$120,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the acquisition in fee of 40± acres of land (Property) on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). This project will protect habitat that supports threatened and endangered species and will secure key regional wildlife linkages all consistent with the San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP), a joint Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP).

**LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES**

The proposed acquisition focuses on land that will augment the San Diego MSCP, a comprehensive long-term habitat conservation plan addressing the needs of multiple species and the preservation of natural vegetation communities in San Diego County. The MSCP addresses the potential impacts of urban growth, natural habitat loss, and species endangerment and creates a plan to mitigate for the potential loss of covered species and their habitat due to the direct impacts of future development of both public and private lands within the MSCP area.

Acquisition of the Property will secure key regional wildlife linkages and preserve core resource areas of habitat. Core resource areas are defined as areas of high concentration of sensitive biological resources which, if lost, could not be replaced or mitigated elsewhere.

The Property is located northeast of the community of Jamul, in San Diego County, and is a privately-owned inholding in the 2,300± acre CDFW Sycuan Peak Ecological Reserve (Reserve). The Sweetwater River flows through the northern portion of the Reserve before it eventually feeds into the Sweetwater Reservoir southwest of the Reserve. The Loveland Reservoir, located in the Cleveland National Forest, is located northeast of the Reserve. Other protected lands in the vicinity of the Property include CDFW's Crestridge Ecological Reserve to the north and Hollenbeck Canyon Wildlife Area and Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve to the south.

Also in the vicinity of the Property are residential subdivisions, with larger estate developments and intermittent commercial development along the major thoroughfares. Protecting this strategically located Property will avoid further development encroachment that would result in a fragmented landscape and preclude connectivity between already protected areas.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Property contains a variety of landscapes and habitats, including coastal sage scrub habitat for the federally threatened coastal California gnatcatcher as well as habitat suitable for the federally endangered Quino checkerspot butterfly and the arroyo toad. MSCP target species found, or expected, on the site include mountain lion, orange-throated whiptail, San Diego horned lizard, and Cooper's hawk.

The Property is unique, in that the naturally occurring ecological processes necessary to maintain a fully functioning ecosystem are still intact. Conservation of this Property will not only preserve this ecosystem but will also increase the protected linkages among nearby public lands. These nearby lands are managed by the County of San Diego, CDFW, USFWS, and The Endangered Habitats Conservancy.



The proposed acquisition will contribute to the San Diego MSCP's ability to address the effects of climate change by conserving additional core and linkage habitat and will enhance the supported species' opportunities to utilize suitable habitat and/or expand their ranges as necessitated by climate change.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition on behalf of CDFW is being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB or Board) Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.), authorizing WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of CDFW and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions of properties. Under the Program, WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities. The project has been reviewed and approved by CDFW under its NCCP program, substantiating the biological values of the Property and recommending it for funding.

This project is guided by the WCB Strategic Plan and supports the following Strategic Plan goals: *Goal A.1* -Fund projects and landscapes that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change.

- The Property contains habitat and wildlife corridors for threatened and endangered species. In addition to the gnatcatcher, the Quino checkerspot butterfly and the arroyo toad, the Property supports habitat for the following six federally listed as endangered and/or threatened species: thread-leaved brodiaea, southwestern willow flycatcher, least Bell's vireo, San Diego thorn-mint, San Diego ambrosia, and Encinitas baccharis. Linkages and corridors between major core habitat areas will be protected and maintained to allow for range shifts and migration of species to utilize suitable habitat as necessitated by climate change or temporary loss of habitat due to catastrophic fires or drought.

*Goal A.3* -Fund projects that support the implementation of Natural Community Conservation Plans, Habitat Conservation Plans and recovery of listed species.

- The Property is within the MSCP area and will help meet the goals of the MSCP. Also, the project has been reviewed and approved by the CDFW under its NCCP program, substantiating the biological values of the Property and recommending it for funding.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

CDFW will manage the Property as part of the Sycuan Peak Ecological Reserve. CDFW expects minimal, if any, additional expenses as a result of this acquisition. Possible future public use opportunities that may be considered include hiking, photography, and bird watching.

#### TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$105,000. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The owner has agreed to sell the Property for the approved appraised fair market value. WCB will perform all necessary due diligence to acquire the Property, including review and approval of all title documents and preliminary title reports, inspections and environmental site assessments. WCB will also prepare all acquisition documents including the Property Acquisition

Agreement, Grant Deed and escrow instructions. This acquisition is exempt from DGS transaction review. Once approved by WCB, all funds will be ordered and disbursed directly into the escrow account established for this transaction.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breaks down as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	105,000
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>105,000</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	15,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$120,000</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$15,000 will be needed to cover project-related administrative costs, including DGS appraisal, escrow and insurance.

#### FUNDING SOURCE

The purpose of this project is consistent with the proposed funding source, the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c), which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species and which allows for the acquisition of habitat on which unique species or natural communities naturally exist .

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve the project as proposed; allocate \$120,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786 (b/c), for the acquisition and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

## **19. Anderson Ranch**

### **Lassen County**

**\$1,195,000.00**

This proposal is to consider an allocation for a grant to the Feather River Land Trust (FRLT) for a cooperative project with the California Natural Resources Agency to acquire a conservation easement over 5,530± acres to provide protection for deer, mountain lion, and oak habitats.

#### **LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property) is located one mile west of Hallelujah Junction, 20 miles south of the community of Doyle and 20 miles north of Reno. Access to the Property is by Scott Road, a Lassen County maintained dirt route that extends seven miles north of State Route 70 bisecting the Ranch. The Property is almost entirely surrounded by public land and abuts United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service property to the west and north and United States Bureau of Land Management property to the east, south, and west.

The surrounding land uses on privately owned properties are primarily small ranch and semi-urban development. Elevations within the Property range from around 5,000 feet along the southern portion of the Property to over 6,000 feet along ridges and bluffs in the north and east.

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Property falls within the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Sierra Valley - Truckee Conceptual Area Protection Plan (SVT CAPP). Anderson Ranch plays an important role in maintaining regional landscape connectivity. Seven parcels of the Property were identified within the original SVT CAPP. An additional 15 parcels are within the newly expanded 2015 SVT CAPP. The main objectives of the SVT CAPP are to conserve and enhance biodiversity, protect threatened vegetative communities along with other rare and important plants and animals, and maintain habitat linkages that help protect elevation gradients that allow species to migrate and adapt to climate change.

Due to its large size and unique location at the intersection of the Sierra Nevada, Great Basin, and Cascade ecoregions, and long history of sustainable management, the Anderson Ranch is in excellent ecological condition and supports an incredible diversity of native plants and animals. The Property provides critical winter range for two of California's migratory deer herds, the Doyle and Truckee-Loyalton. The Doyle deer herd is one of the largest and most economically important migratory deer herds in California and Nevada. The Truckee-Loyalton deer herd is one of the most threatened migratory deer herds in California and Nevada. Recent telemetry data indicates deer from the migratory interstate Truckee-Loyalton deer herd use the area to migrate into northeastern California and western Nevada.

In addition to the deer herds, the Property provides critical habitat for a growing, breeding herd of 30-40 pronghorn, which are rare in the Eastern Sierra. The Property links important migration corridors and provides prime habitat for mountain lion, black bear, and other wide ranging predators as well.

Spectacular granite rock formations and cliffs are home to nesting prairie falcons, peregrine falcons, golden eagles, rock wrens, and canyon wrens. To date, more than 150 documented bird species have been observed, including golden eagle, peregrine falcon, Lewis' woodpecker, red-breasted sapsucker, gray flycatcher, western scrub jay, pinyon jay, western tanager, warbling

vireo, plumbeous vireo, Nashville warbler, yellow warbler, black-headed grosbeak, burrowing owl, and yellow headed blackbird. Extensive montane riparian and wetland habitat along several miles of Long Valley Creek supports a variety of riparian species, including beaver, northern oriole, bank swallow, marsh wren, and various waterfowl species. The diverse habitat includes over 1,500 acres of black oak woodlands, rarely found on the eastern slope of the Sierra and more than 1,500 acres of high quality montane meadow habitat in five major spring-fed meadows, along with a significant hot spring which produces a flow of 1,000 gallons/minute into Long Valley Creek.

Under the terms of the proposed conservation easement, the Property owner will retain certain rights in the following zones: New Residence Zone #1- 20 acres, New Residence Zone #2- 20 acres, Improvement Zone- 80 acres, Solar Energy Zone- 10 acres, Hot Springs Zone- 80 acres, Research Center Zone- 20 acres, Wildland Zone- 460 acres. Uses are still restricted in these zones and any improvements are strictly governed by the FRLT. How and where these sites are situated is constrained under the terms of the conservation easement to limit any impacts to the Property's resource values. All other development rights will be permanently extinguished by the conservation easement.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being made under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Code Section 1300, et seq.) authorizing the WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with the acquisitions of properties. Under the Program, the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife oriented recreation opportunities. These activities are carried out in conjunction with CDFW, which evaluates the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (LAE/CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

This Project is guided by the WCB Strategic Plan and supports the following Strategic Plan Goals:

*Goal A.1-* Fund Projects and Landscapes that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change.

- The project conserves natural forest and riparian habitat that support healthy fish, wildlife and plant populations and ecosystem functions in a changing climate. Furthermore, the project protects connectivity areas between critical habitats to allow the movement of species in response to climate change.

*Goal A.4-* Invest in priority conservation projects recommended by CDFW.

- The acquisition of this conservation easement is at the request of CDFW and the surrounding area contains resources for sensitive habitat.

## MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The conservation easement will be managed by FRLT, which will monitor the Property for compliance with its terms and conditions. A stewardship fund will be established between the Property owner and FRLT to provide for monitoring and oversight.

## PROJECT FUNDING

The Property owner has agreed to sell the conservation easement to FRLT at the appraised fair market value of \$2,160,000. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that WCB staff must review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary reports, documents connected with the purchase and sale including escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance, as well as baseline report and monitoring protocol prior to disbursement of funds into an escrow account established for the transaction. In the event of breach of the grant terms, the WCB can seek specific performance or require the grantee to transfer the conservation easement to WCB or another qualifying entity approved by WCB.

## FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	1,185,000
California Natural Resources Agency	975,000
Total Purchase Price	2,160,000
Other Project Related Admin Costs	10,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$1,195,000</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$10,000 will be needed to cover project-related administrative costs, including DGS appraisal review.

## FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a), which allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat to protect deer and mountain lions.

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,195,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) for the grant funding and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

## **20. Crocker Meadows Wildlife Area, Expansion 2**

### **Plumas County**

**\$1,755,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the acquisition in fee of 1,066± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as an expansion of its Crocker Meadows Wildlife Area (CMWA), for the protection of critical winter range and an important migration corridor for the Loyalton-Truckee deer herd (LTDH).

#### **LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES**

The proposed acquisition (Property) is north of Highway 70, just east of the small town of Beckwourth in the Sierra Valley area of Plumas County, approximately 55 miles north of the town of Truckee.

The Property falls within the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Sierra Valley - Truckee Conceptual Area Protection Plan (SVT CAPP). The main objectives of the SVT CAPP are to conserve and enhance biodiversity, protect threatened vegetative communities along with other rare and important plants and animals and maintain habitat linkages that help protect elevation gradients that allow species to migrate and adapt to climate change.

The proposed acquisition reflects a multi-year effort to protect and conserve a working landscape with important resource and wildlife corridor values in and around the Sierra Valley. The Property is almost entirely surrounded by public land and abuts the existing Crocker Meadows Wildlife Area to the east / north and US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to the west / north. The Plumas National Forest is south of the Property.

The proposed acquisition would build upon over a decade of private and public investments to protect this working lands corridor. The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) has supported a significant number of fee and conservation easement acquisitions within the region, such as the original 1,731± acre Crocker Meadows Wildlife Area acquisition, the 3,904± acre Goodwin Red Clover Valley Ranches conservation easement, the 5,640± acre Antelope Valley Wildlife Area acquisition, the 13,110± acre Sierra Valley Conservation Area conservation easement, and the 1,455± acre Lemon Canyon Ranch conservation easement.

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Property is zoned mainly for agricultural use and is currently operated as a ranch, with central ranch operation facilities, a residence and supporting pasture areas. The Property has an irregular shape and is bisected by the Beckwourth-Genessee road which runs north to south through the Property. The southern portion of the Property, located near State Route 70, rises out of the valley floor and above the floodplain. The Property is composed of bottom lands and uplands. The bottom lands are generally an alluvial fan from Mapes Creek where the elevation is 4,900± feet near the southeast boundary, and rises to 6,150± feet in the uplands. Slopes vary from gentle to flat in the bottom lands to nearly 50 percent on some of the uplands. The Property generally drains west and south to the Feather River.

The Property is adjacent to the existing Crocker Meadows Wildlife Area, which provides summer, winter and key fawning habitat for the LTDH. Further, the area contains holding areas and major migration corridors used by deer as they travel between seasonal ranges. This acquisition could

potentially provide public access for wildlife-based recreation on lands frequented by several game species including mule deer, black bear, gray squirrel, and mountain and California quail. The Property also provides habitat for several raptor species including bald eagles, golden eagles, Swainson's hawks, red-tailed hawks and rough-legged hawks. Additional species in the area are mountain lions, bobcats, and blue grouse.

On the Property there are a variety of habitats and native plants supporting wildlife that migrate through and occupy the Sierra Valley region. These include alpine meadow, grasslands, wetlands, marshes, ponds, chaparral and year round springs. The Property also provides a key linkage between existing U.S. Forest Service and BLM administered lands.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program. The acquisition program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300 et seq.) authorizing the WCB to grant funds to nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property. Under the program, the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities. These activities are carried out in conjunction with the CDFW, which evaluates the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (LAE/CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN

This project is guided by the WCB Strategic Plan and supports the following Strategic Plan goals:

*Goal A.1- Fund Projects and Landscapes that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change.*

- The project provides essential winter range and expands an existing migratory corridor for the Doyle deer herd. The Property also provides habitat linkage for several native species between the Sierra Valley and the Sierra Foothills, providing the ability for these species to move between these habitats to nest, rest, and forage and potentially adapt to any climate change impacts.

*Goal A.2- Fund projects and landscape areas that conserve, protect or enhance water resources for fish and wildlife.*

- This project will provide water from Mapes Creek, a tributary of the Feather River. Protection of the creek's natural floodplain and riparian vegetation will allow for improved water quality and reduction of downstream flooding on the lower portions of the Feather River.

*Goal A.4- Invest in priority conservation projects recommended under CDFW's land acquisition evaluation process or within other conservation plans supported by CDFW.*

- The Property is listed in the CAPP as a priority acquisition by CDFW because of the habitat values and the location within the migration corridor for the wintering Doyle deer herd.



*Goal C.1-* Support a wide range of recreational activities in conjunction with other land uses and without degrading environmental resources.

- Recreational opportunities in CMWA include hiking, wildlife viewing, birdwatching, photography, and hunting. The additional 1,066+/- acres will add even more outdoor opportunities.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CDFW will be the owner in fee simple and will add this Property to the adjacent CMWA. Given the Property's location adjacent to the CMWA, additional management funds for staffing will not be required. Public access to the CMWA is currently provided for low-impact recreational activities, including hiking, wildlife viewing, birdwatching, photography, and hunting.

#### TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$1,730,000. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The Property owner has agreed to sell the Property for the appraised fair market value of \$1,730,000.

Staff of the WCB will review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. If approved by the Board, the transaction will also be subject to review and approval by DGS.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	1,730,000
Total Purchase Price	1,730,000
Other Project Related Admin Costs	25,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$1,755,000</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$25,000 will be needed to cover project-related administrative costs, including DGS appraisal review, title and escrow costs.

#### FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the development, rehabilitation, restoration, acquisition and protection of habitat that accomplishes one or more of the following objectives: promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species, protects habitat corridors, protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)]

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project has been reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,755,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b) for the acquisition and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

## **21. Sacramento River Valley, Safe Harbor Agreements**

### **Various**

**\$450,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to CSU Chico Research Foundation (Foundation) for a cooperative project with the Sacramento River Forum (Forum) to develop plans to enhance habitats, wildlife, and ecosystem function over the long term by developing and monitoring Safe Harbor Agreements (SHA) with private landowners, which will have sustainable benefits to federally listed species in the Sacramento Valley.

### **LOCATION**

The Sacramento Valley was historically occupied by a diverse assemblage of habitats associated with the Sacramento River and its floodplain, including mixed riparian forest, shrubland, valley oak woodland, marshes, wetlands, and grasslands. The riparian zone is characterized by physical and hydrological factors which influence the habitat and landscape. These factors include river flooding, rich soils, and the occurrence of wildlife and plant species which are adapted to the fluctuations of the river and flood or drought cycles. This dynamic environment creates beneficial conditions for riparian species, and also supports a great diversity of wildlife.

Large portions of Sacramento Valley were converted to agriculture uses on privately owned properties. However, significant tracts of historical riparian habitat remain along the Sacramento River and its tributaries. More recently, large areas of agricultural lands and degraded riparian habitat have been restored to native habitat. These extant and restored habitats provide essential wildlife habitat and a nexus for connectivity on private lands. Significant restoration potential exists on Sacramento Valley agricultural lands to create habitat for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle (VELB), which is federally listed as threatened. Some of these agricultural lands maintain adequate elevation, hydrology, and soils that can be restored to support elderberry which VELB require to survive.

Historical wetlands found in the Colusa, Sutter and Butte basins have largely been converted to agriculture, with some extant and restored habitat in refuges and on private lands. Significant areas of potentially beneficial wildlife habitat are now located on agricultural lands where historic sloughs have been converted to water distribution facilities and canals. Giant garter snakes (GGS), a federally threatened species, inhabit marshes, sloughs, ponds, small lakes, and low-gradient streams in the Sacramento Valley. Agricultural water distribution canals have become surrogate habitat and are important for sustaining the GGS in the absence of historical wetland habitat. Private lands are particularly significant for GGS corridors.

The proposed Project will plan and administer Safe Harbor Agreements and restoration work on several private farms located in the Sacramento River Valley. One Project site is at the Davis Ranch in Colusa County, a 5400+ acre ranch with diversified farming which has connections to restored riparian and wetland habitat. The Davis Ranch is currently farmed for rice, walnuts, and row crops. Several previously implemented habitat restoration projects at Davis Ranch restored hedgerows, riparian and wetland habitat. The WCB also funded a previous habitat improvement project at Davis Ranch. This ranch also has 238+ acres of potential suitable GGS habitat, 40+ acres of which are to be restored to riparian habitat under the Cooperative Agreements (Agreements) developed for this project.

In addition to the Davis Ranches, there are up to eight additional Sacramento Valley properties which have expressed interest to enter into the SHA program. Each of these has large acreages

of land currently farmed for rice, a variety of field crops, and orchards. Potential habitat improvements which would be considered at each location include restoration of historic sloughs, wetlands, riparian reaches, and potential habitat connections to neighboring ranches or extant wildlife habitat. Potential improvements would also include expansion and enhancement of riparian forest, planting hedgerows and elderberries, and management of irrigation waterways for sustainable GGS habitat for the benefit of VELB, GGS, and other wildlife.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In December 2013, the Forum entered into a Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement (PSHA) with United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the Sacramento River corridor. The Foundation, in partnership with the Forum, will coordinate and monitor Agreements with private landowners under the PSHA. The proposed project will fund development and monitoring of a detailed Agreement between the landowner and the USFWS for each property. These Agreements detail specific land management practices and habitat management activities that the property owner must undertake, and provide a detailed and lengthy baseline biological survey. The giant garter snake and the valley elderberry longhorn beetle are covered under the Forum's PSHA.

The Project area includes properties throughout the Sacramento River Corridor, and the Agreements will facilitate restoration and conservation management activities to benefit multiple federally listed species. The PSHA program provides assurances under the Federal Endangered Species Act to landowners who make habitat enhancements on their properties. Following the successful development of an Agreement, the USFWS regulatory assurances ensure that any restoration projects done pursuant to the Agreement, and associated management activities, result in a net conservation benefit for the particular listed species and their habitat.

In addition to the planning, monitoring, and outreach for landowner Agreements, the Project will also provide the following:

- Habitat mapping. Mapping efforts have been initiated to assist in identifying areas suitable for riparian habitat restoration along the Upper Sacramento River and major tributaries.
- Management Plans. For each property, a long-term management plan will be developed. The management plan specifies management activities, restoration practices, and avoidance for protected species. Practices identified in the long-term management plans provide ecological benefits to associated native riparian and/or wetland habitats.
- Outreach. Forum staff will meet with landowners to discuss their property management and conduct extensive ecological monitoring on Project sites. Additional outreach will provide information to other private landowners who may wish to join the PSHA program. Outreach activities that result in new private properties being added to the PSHA programs will provide additional habitat connections between neighboring properties.
- Monitoring and reports: Extensive baseline ecological monitoring is conducted prior to the execution of management plans. Project sites are monitored regularly and annual reports will be provided each year for the 25-year life of the Project. These detailed data sets also contribute to ecological knowledge, and will help to plan and inform future restoration efforts. Baseline ecological monitoring reports, annual reports, and ecological data will be provided for each Project site.

The project will develop a minimum of four and up to eight Agreements, and staff will conduct biological monitoring for new and existing Agreements. Habitat enhancement activities (funded separately) covered within the Agreement would cover approximately 15 river miles and 25,000 ranch acres, and will provide 795 acres of restored wetland and riparian habitat acres on working farms in the Sacramento Valley.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program and meets the program's goal of increasing riparian habitat across California by implementing riparian habitat restoration and enhancement projects.

The project furthers the following goals shown in the WCB Strategic Plan:

*Goal B.1* - Invest in projects and landscape areas that help provide resilience in the face of climate change, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife, and enhance habitats on working lands:

- The project provides enhanced riparian habitat and strengthens habitat connectivity throughout the Sacramento River. All proposed private landowner partnerships included in the proposal are on working lands.

In addition, the proposed project addresses the following priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan:

- Provide species strongholds or refugia.
- Provide or enhance habitat connectivity and corridors.
- Improve habitat for threatened or endangered species.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

This project's objectives are to enhance riparian habitats and ecosystem function over the long term through cooperative Safe Harbor Agreements with private landowners throughout the 220-river mile project area. This project will support regional coordination on project implementation, and will help WCB and other potential funders evaluate new projects based on maps, data and monitoring information collected through this project. Cooperative Agreements, baseline ecological monitoring data and annual ecological monitoring reports will be provided for the 25-year life of the project

#### PROJECT FUNDING

Item	WCB	Match	Totals
Project Management	80,000	0	80,000
Education & Outreach	185,000	300,000	485,000
Safe Harbor Agreements	185,000	400,000	585,000
<i>Totals</i>	<i>\$450,000</i>	<i>\$700,000</i>	<i>\$1,150,000</i>

*Match includes: Landowner contributions, Natural Resources Conservation Service and United States Geological Survey technical assistance.*

Project costs will be fund the planning and mapping necessary to secure SHAs, public outreach, and long-term monitoring of the SHAs funded by this project

#### FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which can be used for the development of scientific data, habitat mapping and other research information necessary to determine the priorities for restoration and acquisition statewide (Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)).

#### CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

CDFW has reviewed this project and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The project has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is proposed as statutorily exempt pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15262 Feasibility and Planning studies, as it involves feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$450,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

## **22. Yolo County HCP/NCCP Development, Phase III Augmentation**

### **Yolo County**

**\$150,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation to augment an existing grant to the Yolo Habitat Conservancy (YHC) to finalize the Yolo Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community (HCP/NCCP) Conservation Plan and the associated an Environmental Impact Report /Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) covering the entire County of Yolo.

#### **LOCATION**

The proposed HCP/NCCP covers all of Yolo County, an area totaling slightly more than 652,000 acres.

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The HCP/NCCP program was developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to provide a unified effort by the USFWS, CDFW, and numerous private and public partners to take a broad-based ecosystem approach to planning for the protection and perpetuation of biological diversity. A HCP/NCCP identifies and provides for the regional or area-wide protection of plants, animals, and their habitats, while allowing compatible and appropriate economic activity. The primary objective of the HCP/NCCP program is to conserve natural communities at the ecosystem level while accommodating compatible land use. The program seeks to anticipate and prevent the controversies and gridlock caused by species' listings by focusing on the long-term stability of wildlife and plant communities while including interested parties in the process.

The YHC is preparing the Yolo Natural Heritage Program, comprised of the countywide HCP/NCCP and a local conservation strategy. The draft Yolo HCP/NCCP is a countywide habitat conservation plan proposing to cover 12 endangered and threatened species and 15 natural communities. The Yolo HCP/NCCP will provide for the conservation of these species in Yolo County, as well as request 50-year incidental take authorization issued under state and federal endangered species laws by CDFW and USFWS. Separately, the YHC is also developing the Yolo Local Conservation Plan to help conserve species and natural communities not covered by the Yolo HCP/NCCP. Together, these two plans will establish a framework to protect, enhance, and restore natural resources across Yolo County while allowing for continued rural and urban development in the region.

In 2012, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approved a grant to the YHC for completion of a first draft of the Yolo County HCP/NCCP. The initial project funded the completion of GIS mapping layers and the administrative draft HCP/NCCP, as well as circulation to CDFW and USFWS. In 2014, the WCB approved a grant to assist with the implementation of phase two of this project, which funded completion of a second draft of the HCP/NCCP and development of the administrative draft of an EIR/EIS for that plan. The YHC has completed phase one and two, with the administrative draft of the EIR/EIS released to CDFW and USFWS in February 2016.

The YHC completed the First Administrative Draft of the Yolo HCP/NCCP in July 2013, followed by the Second Administrative Draft on March 31, 2015. The Conservancy selected an EIR/EIS consultant in May 2015. YHC is now working on the Public Review Draft of the HCP/NCCP and the Public Review Draft of the EIR/EIS and expects to release these drafts for public comment by the end of August 2016. At this time, YHC will start work on the Final Draft of the HCP/NCCP and

the Final Draft of the EIR/EIS, for completion in 2017. This augmentation is needed to allow for additional work and analysis required by federal agencies for additional issues, including indirect effects analysis, mineral rights issue, and quantification of Giant Garter Snake and California Tiger Salamander potential take.

The YHC developed a funding plan to complete the Yolo HCP/NCCP through a mix of State, local and federal funding. Local member agencies have committed \$100,000 toward the completion of the HCP/NCCP in addition to the nearly \$165,000 already contributed by these agencies. The YHC has received one USFWS Section 6 grant and has applied for an additional USFWS Section 6 grant to complete the project. The YHC has been in contact with USFWS leadership in Sacramento, who have expressed support for the funding plan.

The proposed WCB grant augmentation, with assistance from the existing 2014 and 2016 Section 6 grants and the local member agency contributions will specifically pay for the following tasks:

- Completion of the Administrative Draft EIS/EIR (February 2016)
- Completion of the Public Review Draft HCP/NCCP (January 2017)
- Completion of the Public Review Draft EIS/EIR (January 2017)
- Completion of the Final HCP/NCCP (November 2017)

#### WCB PROGRAM

The project is consistent with the priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan, pursuant to:

*Goal B.1-* WCB will invest in projects that help provide resilience in the face of climate change, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife and enhance habitats on working lands through the following strategies:

- Establish reserves for the conservation of covered species within the Yolo HCP/NCCP geographic area and linkages to adjacent habitat inside and outside Yolo County.
- Incorporate a range of environmental gradients and high habitat diversity into the reserve system to compensate for shifting species distributions in response to changing circumstances (e.g., in response to climate change).
- Protect and maintain habitat areas that are large enough to support sustainable populations of covered species.
- Support wildlife friendly activities on working landscapes through protection of agricultural lands that support at-risk species such as Swainson's hawks and tri-colored blackbirds.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Upon adoption of the HCP/NCCP and issuance of the regulatory permits, the Yolo Natural Heritage Program will transition to implementation, moving to land protection and habitat restoration pursuant to the adopted plan. The YHC or a successor agency will undertake the subsequent duties of long-term management, implementation, monitoring, and compliance over the proposed 50-year term of the Yolo Natural Heritage Program. It is anticipated that funding for implementation will come from project fees and implementation grants.



## PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board (2012)	600,000
Wildlife Conservation Board (2014)	700,000
Wildlife Conservation Board (2015)	462,500
Wildlife Conservation Board (2016) ( <i>proposed</i> )	150,000
Member Agencies Contribution	264,900
FWS Section 6 Grant (2014)	350,720
FWS Section 6 grant (2016)( <i>proposed</i> )	613,000
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$3,341,120.</i>

The YHC proposes the following WCB grant and matching funds to complete the Yolo HCP/NCCP:

- August 2016 – \$150,000 WCB
- July 2016 –\$613,000 FWS Section 6 grant (applied for)
- 2015-16 Fiscal Year -- \$100,000 Member Agency contribution (committed)

Project costs for the WCB portion of this final phase will be for completing the Public review Draft EIR/EIS and the Public Review Draft HCP/NCCP, and will provide funds toward the completion of the Final HCP/NCCP and the Final EIR/EIS. Upon receipt of the FWS funding, the EIR/EIS will be completed and the Yolo HCP/NCCP will be finalized.

## FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c), which allows grants that implement or assist in the establishment of natural community conservation plans for areas in and around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

## CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

CDFW has reviewed this project and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15262), as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$150,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c) (SSJD-NCCP); authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**23. Stewarts Point Ranch**  
**Sonoma County**  
**\$3,020,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (SCAPOS) for a cooperative project with the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) to acquire a conservation easement over 871± acres of forest lands, including large areas of old and new growth redwood, Douglas-fir and Grand fir that will enhance the protection and conservation of natural resources, preserve wildlife area linkages, provide habitat to numerous wildlife species, reduce soil erosion, and sustain water quality.

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The Property is situated at the crossroads of Stewarts Point - Skaggs Springs Road and State Route One. It is surrounded on three sides by sustainably-managed private forestland and on the fourth by the Pacific Ocean. The property includes coastal bluffs and rolling/sloping hillside benches. The property is located in the rural coastal area of western Sonoma County, at the historic town of Stewarts Point. It includes one mile of coastal bluff along the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) designated Stewarts Point State Marine Reserve and the Stewarts Point State Marine Conservation Area, and extends inland east over about two miles of forestland to the South Fork Gualala River, where the property includes approximately 1.7 miles of riparian habitat along the Gualala River, a designated Wild and Scenic River. The Property boasts relatively pristine and diverse habitats, running from the coastal tide zone to interior riverine habitat. Elevations range from sea level to more than 700 feet along the northern boundary.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Property provides scenic enjoyment, with views from State Route One over the coastal prairie and bluffs and up the forested ridge from the coast, and into the forest from Stewarts Point - Skaggs Springs Road. Both roadways are designated Scenic Corridors in the Sonoma County General Plan as they represent the variety and beauty of the county's landscapes. Improvements to the Property are minimal and include two modest residences, a few tenant cabins, and historic barns. The approximately 1.4-acre commercial area that will not be included in the conservation easement includes a U.S. Post Office, four tenant cabins, a barn, and a former medical office building. The Property is surrounded by tens of thousands of acres of largely unfragmented redwood and Douglas-fir forests.

Most of the Property (approximately 738 acres) is comprised of mature redwood and Douglas-fir forests. The coastal portion of the forest, extending from the coastal terrace up to the property's first ridge, is dominated by Bishop pine. The inland portion of the forest is second growth redwood and Douglas-fir and is on fairly level ground. The third portion of the forest is located along the steep banks of the South Fork Gualala River, where large old-growth redwoods grow in the alluvial flat and two sag ponds can be found along the San Andreas Fault. Northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet nesting/breeding territories have been found on neighboring properties along the river. The Property's eastern boundary is the South Fork Gualala River, one of the key anadromous fish streams in northern Sonoma County. CDFW and University of California Davis surveys have documented persistent steelhead and coho runs in the river, increasing in recent years from late 20th century lows. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Plan for the Gualala River recommends implementing riparian enhancement projects to increase density and diversity of tree canopy along the river, goals that the proposed project will help to achieve.

Under the conservation easement, approximately 75 percent of the Property's forests will be managed as working forest. The working forest includes the property's coastal ridge, where Bishop pine is dominant and the middle portion of the property, where the forest is mixed redwood/Douglas-fir. Most of the working forest is located on a flat bench with a good road network and well-maintained stream crossings. Protection of this Property will contribute to the region's economic stability by ensuring that the area remains a working forest into the future. These objectives are aligned with the Forest Conservation Program principles as the project will maintain the structural and ecological integrity of a portion of native California forest habitat as well as ensure that the forest will remain working into the future and contribute to the landowners' and region's economic viability. If this project is not completed, the likely consequence will be future development and possible conversion of the area's valuable forest habitat.

The conservation easement designates 175 acres of the property along 1.7-miles of the South Fork Gualala River as the Late Seral Restoration Reserve. The goal of the Reserve is to maintain, protect, and enhance the older forest so that it can continue to develop older forest characteristics, support old-growth dependent wildlife species, and minimize the amount of sedimentation that is entering the Gualala River. Conserving this portion of the forest will enhance habitat for threatened species, including steelhead trout and the marbled murrelet, and protect the sag ponds created by the San Andreas Fault. This Reserve will also provide a 600' to 1300' wide buffer along this Class I River, a significant expansion of the riparian buffer required under forest practice rules. This portion of the forest is located on the steep hill slope above and along the South Fork Gualala River and is important to protect for its sensitive ecological features. Over time, the Late Seral Restoration Reserve will increase the amount of older redwood forest habitat available along the Gualala River, and will buffer the existing old-growth redwood groves on the adjacent forest property where marbled murrelets and northern spotted owls are found.

Throughout the Property, migratory nesting songbirds are present, and bat habitat in the form of basal hollows has also been observed. The property has habitat that is known to support the following federally-listed species: California red-legged frog, northern spotted owls, marbled murrelet, coho salmon, and steelhead. Other species expected to be found on the property that are considered to be of special status in California include the Sonoma tree vole, Gualala roach, American marten, Pacific fisher and the pallid bat. These declining and sensitive species rely upon the attributes of mature forests such as snags, decadent live trees, and coarse woody debris, which are found on this property. Nesting osprey and red-shouldered hawks can be found on the forested bluffs overlooking the ocean. These forested habitats are heavily influenced by the coastal weather, and as such they have ongoing natural recruitment of complex trees with structural developments that are beneficial to wildlife. Numerous trees throughout the forest have nesting platforms, complex crowns, and reiterated tops that are all utilized by wildlife species.

The conservation easement will provide for potential future public access on the 105-acre Stewarts Point coastal terrace and could one day add approximately three quarters of a mile to the California Coastal Trail.

Save the Redwoods League (SRL) is the current owner of the property. SRL secured the property in advance to allow time for SCAPOSD to identify funding necessary to purchase the CE and protect the property for the future. Once the CE is in place, SRL will sell the underlying fee to a conservation-minded buyer as a working forest.

## WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD (WCB) PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under the WCB's Forest Conservation Program (Program). Grant proposals are evaluated and selected for funding by WCB staff based on established criteria approved by the Board on November 17, 2007, and utilizing a peer review process involving biological and forestry expertise, including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and CAL FIRE. The Program seeks to promote the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests through conserving, preserving and restoring productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas, redwood forests and other forest types, including the conservation of water resources and natural habitats for native fish and wildlife and plants found on these lands. One of the primary objectives of the Program is the protection and conservation of working forests and productive managed forest lands. Selected projects promote the restoration and/or maintenance of the ecological integrity and economic stability of the property in the context of the surrounding landscape and regional economy.

## STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The project meets the following Strategic Plan Goals:

*Goal A.1* – Fund projects and landscapes that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change.

- The project conserves natural forest and riparian habitat that supports healthy fish, wildlife and plant populations and ecosystem functions in a changing climate. Furthermore, the project protects connectivity areas between critical habitats to allow the movement of species in response to climate change.

*Goal A-4* - Invest in priority conservation projects recommended by CDFW.

- The acquisition of this conservation easement is at the request of CDFW and the surrounding area contains resources for sensitive habitat.

*Goal A.5* – Improve transparency and efficiency of WCB and CDFW project evaluation and recommendations to approve or deny applications.

- The project was submitted under WCB's Forest Conservation Program. To qualify and be approved under the Program, the application must be reviewed and assessed by a review panel comprised of qualified biologists and foresters. The review panel consists of members representing the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, CDFW, and the WCB. All aspects of the project are evaluated by the panel to determine whether the project meets all Program requirements. This project has met all requirements under the Program. Any concerns uncovered during the evaluation have been addressed by landowner and/or have been incorporated in the terms of the conservation easement.

## MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

SCAPOS will be responsible for monitoring and managing the conservation easement.

Allowable uses include one existing single family residence within specified residential zone, up to three additional caretaker cabins not to exceed 1,000 s.f. each, grazing of livestock in accordance with a plan prepared by the landowners and approved by WCB and the conservation easement holder, and harvesting, removal of timber, and other forest management activities in accordance with the Timber Management Plan developed for the Property. The sustained timber harvesting will provide revenues to assist in the management of the Property. Prior to

disbursement of funds, a baseline report of the Property's resource values will have been completed by SCAPOSD and reviewed and approved by the WCB. The baseline report will be the basis from which SCAPOSD will conduct future monitoring for compliance with the terms of the conservation easement.

#### TERMS

The Property owners have agreed to sell the conservation easement to SCAPOSD for \$6,000,000, its appraised fair market value as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). DGS reviewed the appraisal as well as the review provided by an independent reviewer and registered professional forester (RPF) of the timber valuation. Under terms of the grant, WCB staff is responsible for review of all acquisition-related documents prior to disbursement of grant funds. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can seek specific performance of the grant or require the grantee to transfer the conservation easement to WCB or another qualified holder.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	3,000,000
SCAPOSD	2,000,000
State Coastal Conservancy	1,000,000
Total Purchase Price	6,000,000
Other Project Related Admin Costs	20, 000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$3,020,000</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$20,000 will be needed to cover project-related administrative costs, including DGS appraisal review and independent timber appraisal review. The grantee will fund all other appraisal, escrow and title insurance costs.

#### WCB FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for forest conservation and protection projects in order to promote the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests through forest conservation, preservation and restoration of productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas, redwood forests and other forest types, including the conservation of water resources and natural habitats for native fish, wildlife and plants found on these lands. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a)]

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE.

The acquisition has been reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of lands for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in lands to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,020,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a) for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**24. San Joaquin River Parkway, Weed Management and Job Creation Project  
Fresno and Madera Counties  
\$959,934.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission (FEOC) for a cooperative project with the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust (Trust) and the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) to conduct weed removal on 272+ acres located on eight public properties (Property) within the San Joaquin River Parkway as part of SJRC's Proposition 1 program.

**LOCATION**

The public properties on which the project will take place include Camp Pashayan and the Milburn Unit administered by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as part of the San Joaquin River Ecological Reserve (SJER), Jensen Island administered by the State Lands Commission (SLC), Scout Island owned by the Fresno County Office of Education (FCOE), and Sycamore Island, Spano River Ranch, Van Buren Unit, and Wildwood Native Park administered by the SJRC and located within the San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway) between State Route 99 and about one mile upstream of State Route 41 in Fresno and Madera Counties. Parkway is defined by state law as approximately 5,900 acres on both sides of a twenty-two mile long reach of the San Joaquin River between Friant Dam to the east and SR 99 to the west, in Fresno and Madera Counties (Public Resources Code Section 32510). The SJRC was created in 1992 to preserve and enhance the San Joaquin River's extraordinary biological diversity, protect its valued cultural and natural resources, and provide educational and recreational opportunities to local communities. The SJRC mission includes providing public access and restoring habitat within the Parkway.

The San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) guides the return of restoration river flows to the San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to the confluence with the Merced River in order to restore and maintain populations of salmon and other fish; the Parkway encompasses the first twenty-two miles of this SJRRP program area. The SJRRP recognizes that implementation of measures to return restoration flows have the potential to increase the size and spread of invasive species to new locations within the program area. Infestations of weed species reduce habitat values for native species. Therefore, the SJRRP identified goals in its Conservation Strategy to address invasive species. The SJRRP conservation measure (INV-1) to implement the Program's Invasive Vegetation Monitoring and Management Plan, is a component of the Strategy's goal to control and manage invasive weeds. The Program's targeted weed species are red Sesbania, giant reed, saltcedar, and Chinese tallow. Other invasive weeds that could interfere with SJRRP restoration efforts include perennial pepperweed, tree-of-heaven, and fig.

The Parkway consists of floodplain and low lands bordering the San Joaquin River and some of the uplands and slopes of the surrounding bluffs. Over the past 200 years, the area has undergone a transition from pristine natural habitat to agricultural and mining uses. Currently, local, state, and federal agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are working to restore and conserve much of the area within the Parkway. The eight public lands where the FEOC will conduct weed removal are managed to protect resources and provide opportunities for public recreation such as hiking and fishing. Habitats generally consist of fragmented wetlands and riparian vegetation, annual grassland, and oak woodlands. The FEOC will work in riparian and wetland areas on the eight properties where giant reed, Chinese tallow, red sesbania, and salt cedar typically occur.



The FEOC is a non-profit Community Action Agency, founded on the federal Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The FEOC serves Fresno County with the goal of facilitating independence through equality of opportunity in education, employment, health, and living conditions. Among its many programs, the FEOC administers a Local Conservation Corps (Corps) program that provides vocational training for at-risk young adults who will learn valuable vocational job skills and reengage in high school, on their way to self-sufficiency. For this Project, the FEOC will provide supervised labor from its Corps that will focus on the removal of the four SJRRP targeted weed species on the Property. Other weed species will be treated if opportunities arise.

The Trust, acting as the Monitor and Technical Advisor on the Project, will coordinate with the FEOC Corps, and will be responsible for the technical aspects of the Project, including mapping invasive weed infestations prior to removal providing baseline data for monitoring the effectiveness of management techniques. Prior to submittal of the FEOC Proposition 1 proposal to the SJRC, the Trust received a federal grant from the US Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) to provide management, supervision, data gathering, reporting, and related equipment and supplies to remove invasive weeds within the SJRRP area. Labor to remove weeds, however, was not funded, and USBR encouraged the Trust to pursue labor for the Project through other sources. The Trust and FEOC then coordinated for the FEOC to submit its Proposition 1 proposal for weed removal to the SJRC.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As river flows have been restored to the San Joaquin River channel, the flows re-wetted areas that typically remained dry except during floods. These dry areas within the channel have not supported riparian vegetation without river flows, and have become bare substrate considered to be prone to the establishment of both native riparian and non-native invasive vegetation. Invasive weeds may compromise the establishment of native habitat to support Chinook salmon and the ability of the SJRRP to achieve its restoration goals. Additionally, newly restored flows may spread invasive species to other portions of the river. With the requested funds, the FEOC Corps will be able to reduce weed infestations within the Parkway and greater SJRRP area.

The FEOC Corps will receive technical expertise and coordination from the Trust as part of the Trust's USBR grant. The Trust's assistance will guide weed removal efforts by the Corps crew, consisting of crew managers and the young crew members. Additionally, the Trust will coordinate with public landowners to provide access to work sites for the Corps crew. The main elements of the Project include the following:

#### Project and Crew Management (FEOC Corps Supervising Staff and Crew Managers):

- Coordinate education and professional opportunities for young adults from the City of Fresno and surrounding communities. These opportunities will enable Corps crew members to work toward achieving their full potential with educational and job training.
- Supervise weed species removal conducted by the crew members.
- Coordinate with Trust to receive technical assistance and access to work sites.

Weed Treatment (FEOC Corps Crew Managers and Crew Members):

- Conduct biomass removal by hand pulling, with weed wrenches and loppers, and hauling away. Follow with repeated herbicide treatments of sprouting seedlings by certified applicators. In some instances, seeds of native grasses or other native riparian herbaceous species will be broadcast on sites where weed treatments have been done.

Training (FEOC Corps Crew Members):

- Youth crew members will receive education and training in conservation stewardship.

WCB /SJRC PROGRAM

The Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1), California Water Code Section 79731(g), allocates funds for projects that provide multi-benefit water quality, water supply, and watershed protection and restoration projects located within the boundaries of the Parkway and is consistent with the objectives of this Project.

WCB assists with the administration of project funding for the SJRC. WCB, represented by its Executive Director, and CDFW, represented by the Central Region Manager, each hold a position on the 15-member SJRC Board. The SJRC Board reviews and approves projects to ensure they are viable and consistent with the goals of the current SJRC Parkway Master Plan (2000) (Parkway Master Plan) and Proposition 1, prior to consideration by the WCB. After the SJRC solicited grant proposals for its Proposition 1 Multi-Benefit Ecosystem and Watershed Protection and Restoration competitive grant program, the FEOC submitted its proposal for the Project, and the SJRC Proposition 1 Proposal Evaluation Panel recommended it to the SJRC Board for funding. The SJRC Board approved the project on March 23, 2016.

The proposed Project is consistent with WCB's Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and meets the program's goal of providing for native fisheries restoration, restoration of wetlands that fall outside the jurisdiction of the Inland Wetland Conservation Program such as fresh water habitats, grasslands, and threatened and endangered species habitats.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Removal of weed infestations on public lands within the Parkway supports the SJRRP goal to control and manage invasive weeds, restore flows to the San Joaquin River, and conserve the river and its habitats which support threatened and endangered species and other wildlife.

This Project contributes to returning flows to the San Joaquin River as required by the SJRRP by removing weeds that use large amounts of water and that reduce habitat values for native species when they out-compete native plants for resources such as space to grow. The objectives of the Project are consistent with the policies, goals, and objectives in the Parkway Master Plan which supports the restoration of riparian habitat and removal of invasive species that threaten habitat values. The project also will help achieve many of the objectives of Proposition 1, including enhanced water quality, supply and watershed protection. The Project is also supported by the City of Fresno, and Counties of Fresno and Madera.

The Project is consistent with the following Parkway Master Plan goals and objectives.

Fundamental Goals:

- Preserve and restore a riparian corridor of regional significance on the San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to the Highway 99 crossing.
- Protect wildlife species that depend on or prefer the river environment.
- Protect an irreplaceable natural resource in a way that will also meet recreational and educational needs.

Natural Resources Goals (NRG)

*NRG1.* Promote the long-term preservation, enhancement, and public enjoyment of the aquatic, plant, and wildlife resources of the San Joaquin River and the riverbottom.

*NRG2.* Preserve existing habitat and maintain, enhance, or restore native vegetation to provide essentially continuous riparian and upland habitat for wildlife along the river between Friant Dam and Highway 99.

Natural Resources Objectives (NRO)

*NRO1.* Protect the San Joaquin River as aquatic habitat and a water resource. Enhance and protect fisheries in the river and lakes in the Parkway.

*NRO2.* Protect and manage existing publicly owned land with suitable habitat as natural reserves and segments of wildlife corridor.

*NRO4.* Control and remove exotic plant species from the Parkway, including the river channel, where they threaten to displace native plant species or disrupt natural plant community structure.

*NRO5.* Revegetate with native species to close gaps in the wildlife corridor or enhance the effectiveness of buffer zones.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Item	WCB	Grantee In-Kind Cost Share	Total
Project And Crew Management	346,056	20,000	366,056
Weed Treatment	548,478	0	548,478
Travel To And From Work Site	21,000	0	21,000
Corps Member Training, Gear, and Equipment	44,400	80,000	124,400
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>\$959,934</i>	<i>\$100,000</i>	<i>\$1,059,934</i>

The \$959,934 Proposition 1 grant will cover most of the costs for the project and crew management, weed treatment, and travel, and partial costs for education, gear, and equipment for corps members.

#### FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, which allows for multi-benefit water quality, water supply, and watershed protection and restoration projects located within the boundaries of the San Joaquin River Parkway. [Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1), California Water Code Section 79731(g).]

#### CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

The SJRC Proposition 1 evaluation panel recommended awarding the grant because the Project will assist in accomplishing an important component of the SJRRP, a program of statewide significance, with the removal of non-native invasive weeds in the San Joaquin River corridor and providing funds for the labor necessary for the success of the Trust's federally funded project. The Project was approved for submittal to the WCB by the SJRC Board on March 23, 2016.

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR), as lead agency, prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff considered the EIR and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB adopt the written findings and approve this Project as proposed; allocate \$959,934.00 from the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1), California Water Code Section 79731(g), authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this Project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**25. South Central Coast Invasive Weed Eradication  
San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties  
\$405,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District (US-LT RCD) for a cooperative project with California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), the University of California Santa Barbara Natural Reserve System, and the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) to eradicate specific nonnative invasive weeds located at wetland and upland sites in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties.

**LOCATION**

The proposed project is located in a variety of wetland and upland sites in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties. Key watersheds to be protected include the Morro Bay, Santa Maria River, Santa Ynez, San Antonio River, Cuyama River, and Santa Barbara Coastal Watershed. The two counties are primarily made up of small size communities, scattered along the beaches, coastal hills, and mountains of the Santa Lucia, San Rafael, and Sierra Madre ranges, providing a wide variety of coastal and inland hill ecologies to support many kinds of fishing, agriculture, and recreational activities.

The region is experiencing pressure from development and increasing recreation, both of which can introduce and spread invasive plants. Cal-IPC, with local stakeholders, identified top invasive plant priorities for regional eradication in order to prevent them from extensive spread in the region. If left unchecked, these weeds will impact a variety of habitats, including grasslands, dunes, salt marsh and riparian areas. These areas are important to many local species. Potentially impacted listed species include the California tiger salamander, the Morro Bay kangaroo rat, the Morro shoulderband snail, and salt marsh bird's-beak. Each of the targeted weed species are rated by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) as listed noxious weeds or are classified as invasive in the Cal-IPC Inventory. The invasive plant populations are currently found in disturbed areas adjoining intact habitat, making immediate eradication a high priority. Waiting to address the infestations once they have moved into intact habitat areas would be a more significant impact.

This project is a strategic regional effort aimed at eradicating all known populations of five species of invasive non-native weeds. Their current distribution is limited, making this possible. While infestation sizes of these plant species are currently still small, there are over 70 distinct populations to be eradicated at varied locations. Many sites are along roadsides (both county- and state-maintained), a typical vector for introduction and spread of invasive plants. Drainage from roadsides ends up in streams that are vulnerable to future spread and may result in significant wildlife impacts. The majority of treatment sites are on located public lands, including Morro Bay State Park, Montaña de Oro State Park, Oceano Dunes SVRA, and Camp San Luis Obispo. A smaller number of additional sites are found on private property.

In June 2013, WCB provided a grant to the Cal-IPC for a Statewide Strategic Plan for Invasive Plants, designed to enhance habitats and ecosystem function by identifying, prioritizing, and planning high-priority invasive plant eradication projects. These projects were to be cost-effective projects that prevent high-impact invasive plants from moving into new areas. Using new tools for prioritization and planning, the Cal-IPC worked with partners throughout the State to develop regional priority lists of eradication, control, and surveillance targets, and to provide shovel-ready project specifications for top projects. The proposed project was identified as a high-priority project within this priority list.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Invasive plants can significantly impact vegetation and wildlife communities, even ecosystem processes, when they become widely distributed. The species addressed in this project are all known to be capable of spreading widely and having significant impacts. The most effective solution is to manage invasive plants while populations are still small and distribution is limited. The species in this project were identified by state and local partners as top priorities because full regional eradication is currently feasible.

This project protects a variety of habitats that are invaded or could be invaded by these invasive plants. Several species are known to invade coastal grasslands and riparian areas. These habitats are important to many species, including a number of Federal and State-listed species. Invasive sea lavender invades salt marshes, which provides important habitat for migratory shorebirds. Russian wheatgrass invades coastal dunes. The coastal dune habitats in the area are known for open interstitial spaces which could become occupied by these species, causing problems for native dune species that need those open spaces. Russian wheatgrass can also stabilize active sand sheets affecting the ecological processes of dune migration and formation. Canada thistle inhabits agricultural land and other disturbed locations including stream banks, forest openings, rangeland, hillsides, moist depressions, gardens, crop fields, and roadsides. Dalmatian toadflax habitats include open fields, pastures, riparian areas, rangeland, and agricultural fields. Lastly Japanese dodder attacks and covers ornamental shrubs and fruit trees. However, Japanese dodder also can parasitize annuals, perennials, and native trees such as oaks and willows.

This project will control each of these species and populations systematically, using the most effective techniques available and tracking outcomes in order to assure full regional eradication. Additional surveys will be conducted in the area around known populations to make sure any other nearby populations are found and controlled. A public awareness campaign will encourage citizens to report sightings for any of these species.

Each of the targeted plant species has its own biological characteristics, which dictate which control approaches will be most effective. Each member of the project team will use an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to determine the most effective treatment approach based on best practices as described by University of California Cooperative Extension as well as successful techniques learned from past treatments and consultation with wildlife experts from the US Fish & Wildlife Service and the California Dept. of Fish & Wildlife.

The project will implement multiple rounds of repeat treatments over five years to achieve 95 percent or greater reduction in these invasive plant populations. Because this project focuses on early eradication of generally small invasive plant populations, passive restoration through nearby native plant recruitment will be sufficient to revegetate areas where invasive plant populations are controlled. Ongoing follow-up will be set up through partner agencies and stakeholders participating in the San Luis Obispo County and Santa Barbara County Weed Management Areas.

The project is consistent with the mandates and commitments of State Parks to control invasive species that threaten natural resources, and with the mandate of the county agricultural commissioners to control noxious weeds. This work is also consistent with the State Wildlife Action Plan, which identifies invasive species as one of the top threats to wildlife and recommends taking early action to keep high-priority species from spreading. In addition, the project fulfills goals described in the state's 2012 invasive species guidelines, including

supporting regional collaborations and public-private partnerships, developing and implementing prioritization models for managing invasive species, expanding invasive species surveillance efforts, and integrating new tools in risk assessment to set priorities.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and meets the program's goal of providing for restoration of wetlands that fall outside the jurisdiction of the Inland Wetland Conservation Program such as coastal, tidal, or fresh water habitats, coastal scrub, grasslands, threatened and endangered species habitats.

The project is consistent with the following priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan:

*Goal B.1* – Invest in projects and landscape areas that help provide resilience in the face of climate change, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife and enhance habitats on working lands:

The National Fish, Wildlife and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy recommends addressing existing stressors such as invasive species as an immediate action that we can take to help wildlife adapt.

The project is consistent with ecological goals for protecting biodiversity and habitat for listed species, control of noxious weeds, and enhancement of wildlife habitat in local plans.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Following project treatment it is anticipated that 95 percent or greater of the plants for the target plant species will be eliminated through thorough repeat treatments. Some may remain because they were overlooked, they were not treated thoroughly, or they are new plants. Subsequent vigilant monitoring of project sites will be conducted for long-term conservation success to ensure that no new plants emerge from the soil seed bank or rhizomes.

Each of the local treatment partners are committed to long-term maintenance of project sites. The US-LT RCD will continue to ensure that access remains available with property owners and will provide landowner right-of-entry agreements for private properties.

The US-LT RCD and Cal-IPC will remain engaged with the counties' Weed Management Areas to monitor implementation of the long-term plan. An adaptive management plan which specifies the partners' commitments will be completed. Each of the partners will be responsible for the project management period.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Item	WCB	Match	Totals
Project Management	123,500	0	123,500
Weed Eradication	281,500	242,320	523,820
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$405,000</i>	<i>\$242,320</i>	<i>\$647,320</i>

Match funding is provided by State Parks, US-LT RCD, Cachuma Resource Conservation District, San Luis Obispo County Agriculture, Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County, UC Natural Reserve System, and Cal-IPC.

Project costs will be for project management, weed eradication and monitoring.

#### FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding sources for this project are the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley and the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b), which provide funding for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands outside the Central Valley and for the development, rehabilitation, restoration, acquisition and protection of habitat that accomplishes one or more of the following objectives: promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species, provides corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent fragmentation, protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems, or implements the recommendations of the California Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy.

#### CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

CDFW has reviewed this project and recommends it for funding by the WCB. US-LT RCD, as lead agency, prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff considered the MND and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$354,500.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley and \$50,500 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.



**26. Sawmill Pebble Plain Ecological Preserve, Expansion 1**  
**San Bernardino County**  
**\$2,515,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a potential U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Recovery Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust (SBMLT), as well as to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to the SBMLT for a cooperative project with the Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD) to acquire 240± acres of rare pebble plain habitat supporting a wide variety of endemic plant species.

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The subject property (Property) is located approximately one mile southeast of Big Bear City, adjacent to and northeast of the Moonridge subdivision and directly west of the Sugarloaf subdivision. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) lands and other undeveloped lands occur to the north and northwest of the Property with residential development occurring on the south and east edges. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Baldwin Lake Ecological Reserve is located approximately three miles to the northeast on the north shore of Lake Baldwin. Other uses in the area include two major ski resort facilities located southwest of the Property.

Pebble plains are unique open areas and known as relics of the Pleistocene Age. The Property contains one of the largest intact remaining pebble plain habitats in the area. These areas are covered with miniature rare plants and contain some of the most threatened and biologically rare plant communities found in California. In fact, only 246 acres of this type of pebble plain exist in the world, all of it in the Big Bear and Holcomb Valleys located in the San Bernardino Mountains. Pebble plains were formed when ancient glaciers in the area receded. They have underlying dense clay soils that freeze during the winter, which causes pebbles contained in the soil to heave to the surface. Due to the unique clay soil composition and isolation from other mountain ranges, the pebble plain flora has gradually changed and adapted to the drier, desert montane climate to the degree that many of the pebble plain species are unique to only this area. The pebble plain contains important examples of California's biological diversity and is identified by CDFW as a Significant Natural Area (SNA), and within the California Natural Diversity Data Base, the pebble plain habitat is ranked as G1S1, the highest level of rarity and endangerment. There are eleven primary endemic plant species associated with pebble plain habitats, of which three are federally listed as threatened.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Property is currently unimproved and its topography ranges from relatively flat to moderate terrain with elevations from 6,880 feet to over 7,100 feet with a large, centrally located plateau surrounded by a mixture of Montane conifer, pinyon pine and juniper woodlands. The Property is currently owned by a development company, with tentative plans for custom single family residential development.

The pebble plain area, although relatively small compared to the overall size of the Property, represents some of the largest remaining pebble plain habitat area known to exist. Equally important, the Sawmill Pebble Plain also contains all eleven of the endemic and rare species mentioned above that are associated with pebble plains; including the three federally endangered plants, the ash-gray Indian paintbrush, Bear Valley sandwort and the southern mountain buckwheat. The Property also supports other rare animal species, such as the

California spotted owl, the southern rubber boa, the San Bernardino flying squirrel, the sharp-skinned hawk, Cooper's hawk, northern goshawk, and the Lewis woodpecker.

Protection of this unique habitat is consistent with one of the major habitat protection goals of CDFW which is to maintain native plant species and natural communities for their intrinsic and ecological value and their benefits to people. This includes providing habitat protection and maintenance in a sufficient amount and quality to ensure the survival of all species and natural communities.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB or Board) Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Code Section 1300, et seq.) authorizing the WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. Under the Program, the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife oriented recreation opportunities. These activities are carried out in conjunction with CDFW, which evaluates the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (LAE/CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund. Additionally, the USFWS grant proposed for acceptance for this project has also been reviewed and submitted by CDFW as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition Grant selection and review process. Approvals for the grant are due in late August or Early September, requiring the dual funding scenarios.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

This Project is guided by the WCB Strategic Plan and supports the following Strategic Plan Goals:

*Goal A.1- Fund Projects and Landscapes that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change.*

- The project conserves natural forest and riparian habitat that support healthy fish, wildlife and plant populations and ecosystem functions in a changing climate. Furthermore, the project protects connectivity areas between critical habitats to allow the movement of species in response to climate change.

*Goal A.3- Fund projects that promote the recovery of listed species.*

- Acquisition of the Property will reduce major habitat fragmentation and help implement the recovery of the listed species found on or near the Property.

*Goal A.4- Invest in priority conservation projects recommended by CDFW.*

- The acquisition of this Easement is at the request of CDFW and the surrounding area contains resources for sensitive habitat.

## MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be owned by SBMLT, which will manage it in conjunction with the adjacent USFWS property. The majority of the Property is natural open space, and will be maintained as such. Historic trails, some currently in disuse, may be re-established in the future for use by the public on docent led tours, connecting with other existing public use trails located to the north and south of the Property.

## TERMS

The Property owners have agreed to sell the Property to the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust for \$2,760,000. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The appraisal has also been reviewed and approved by USFWS in anticipation of the federal grant being approved. The terms and conditions of the proposed grant and Subgrant provide that WCB staff must review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary reports, documents connected with the purchase and sale including escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds into the established escrow account. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the grantee to encumber the Property with a conservation easement in favor of WCB and seek reimbursement of funds.

## PROJECT FUNDING

CDFW has applied for a USFWS Recovery Land Acquisition Section 6 grant to assist with the funding of this project. Indications are that the grant will likely be approved but the approval notification will not be received until the end of August or beginning of September. Once approved, the grant funds will be available to be used in this transaction. The two scenarios are presented below.

*Scenario 1- Reflects the proposed funding without federal funds*

Wildlife Conservation Board	2,500,000
Inland Empire Resource Conservation District	260,000
Total Purchase Price	2,760,000
Other Project Related Admin Costs	15,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$2,515,000</i>

*Scenario 2- Reflects receipt of an approved federal grant*

Wildlife Conservation Board	1,672,000
USFWS Subgrant Funds	828,000
Inland Empire Resource Conservation District	260,000
Total Purchase Price	2,760,000
Other Project Related Admin Costs	15,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$1,687,000</i>

It is estimated that \$15,000 will be needed to cover internal project related costs including the appraisal review costs by DGS.

## FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a), that allows for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of habitat to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, provide corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent habitat fragmentation, and protect significant natural landscapes and ecosystems and other significant habitat areas.

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; authorize the acceptance of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$828,000.00 if approved, and authorize a subgrant of federal funds to SBMLT, allocate up to \$2,515,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a) for the grant and to cover internal project -related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**27. DFG Land Management Plans, Inland Deserts Region, Phase II, Augmentation II  
Riverside County  
\$164,756.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for an amendment to an existing grant to the California Wildlife Foundation (CWF) to conduct environmental review and public participation pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Land Management Plan for the 19,000-acre San Jacinto Wildlife Area which is owned by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and is located north and east of Lakeview in Riverside County.

**LOCATION**

San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA) encompasses approximately 19,000 acres in central Riverside County, near the city of Lakeview, California and is made up of two units: the Davis Unit and the Portrero Unit. The 9,900-acre Davis Unit lies generally north of Lake Perris Drive/Ramona Expressway, southeast of Gilman Springs Road, and west of the Lake Perris Recreation area. The 9,100-acre Portrero Unit is located west of the Davis Unit immediately west of Highway 79 in the southern portion of the City of Beaumont.

The two units are characterized by distinct habitats. The Davis Unit contains Mystic Lake, a large, natural, ephemeral lake, and surrounding uplands. The Portrero Unit consists of rolling foothills. Both areas are interspersed with a wide variety of habitats including riparian, alkaline desert and coastal scrub, fresh emergent marsh, chaparral, annual grasslands, vernal pools and open water. These habitats are utilized by a wide variety of game and non-game species.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), among other things, acquires properties on behalf of CDFW. Many CDFW lands are managed pursuant to existing Land Management Plans (LMP), but some areas either have never had LMPs developed or are managed under plans that are out of date. As such, in 2002, the WCB was granted the authority to provide funding to prepare LMPs for those areas acquired in fee for CDFW. Given that the Davis Unit had been operating under a plan developed in the 1980s, and the more recently acquired Portrero Unit was not addressed at all, the WCB granted \$221,000 to CWF in 2007 to prepare a LMP for the San Jacinto Wildlife Area.

Once work began under this original grant, it soon became clear that the initial cost estimate was too low due to the biological complexity of the area, the multiple management needs, and the intense public interest in the SJWA. In August 2010 the WCB board approved an augmentation for an additional \$260,000 for completion and circulation of the appropriate CEQA documentation for the plan.

Since 2010, work has been completed on the LMP, and a draft is on the street for review. However, it also has become clear that additional information is needed to complete the EIR. Additional unexpected analysis of the biological resources of the SJWA are needed, updated records searches for hazardous materials and cultural resources need to be completed, and changes to CEQA guidelines will require additional analysis of utilities and services, greenhouse gases, geology and paleontology. Finally, additional coordination is needed with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Western Riverside Regional Conservation Authority and CDFW in

order to assure compliance with the FWS's Western Riverside County Multi-Species Plan. The draft EIR for the SJWA LMP will be circulated, and comments will provide guidance to CDFW to complete the LMP. This augmentation will allow these tasks to be completed to finalize the EIR and complete the LMP for the SJWA.

#### WCB PROGRAM

Under Proposition 40, WCB specifically received funding to prepare management plans for properties acquired in fee by the WCB.

The project furthers the following goals outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan:

*Goal B.1* – The LMP will lead to the enhancement of wetland and riparian areas for fish and wildlife.

In addition, the LMP will lead to the protection and enhancement of habitats to provide species strongholds, and to enhance habitats for threatened and endangered species. The LMP will also provide direction to CDFW in providing enhanced public use, and will benefit under-served communities.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

SJWA is large and has a diverse assemblage of habitat types and wildlife species. The complexity and length of the LMP will be determined by the SJWA's management requirements.

The LMP is to be prepared per CDFW guidelines, *A Guide and Annotated Outline for Writing Land Management Plans* (Guide), and other local or Federal agency requirements as necessary. The LMP is to be written to guide CDFW in managing the SJWA and to fulfill CEQA and CESA requirements.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

To date, the WCB has encumbered \$481,000 (\$221,000 in 2007 and \$260,000 in 2010). The proposed funding breakdown for this augmentation is as follows:

Task	Cost
Project Management	21,453
Project Scoping and Meetings	39,901
Preparation of Drafts and Public Review Draft EIR	59,612
Comments and Circulation	43,790
<i>Total Cost Estimate</i>	<i>\$164,756</i>

The Project costs will be for the preparation, circulation, and finalization of the LMP for SJWA and the EIR addressing the environmental impacts of adoption of the LMP.

#### FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a), which allows for the preparation of land management plans for properties acquired in fee by the WCB.

#### CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

CDFW has reviewed this project and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15262), as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions which have not yet been approved or adopted. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$164,756.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a); authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

## **28. North San Diego County Coastal Wetlands Invasive Species Management**

### **San Diego County**

**\$850,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation of a grant to the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy (SELC) to manage invasive plant species and implement a comprehensive habitat restoration program on approximately 65 acres of coastal wetlands in the Carlsbad Hydrological Unit in San Diego County.

#### **LOCATION**

The project is located in the greater Carlsbad Hydrologic Unit (CHU) in northern San Diego County. The CHU is composed of seven coastal watersheds in northern San Diego County. More than 200 miles of major and minor creeks run through the CHU, and all of the seven watersheds of the CHU drain to the Pacific Ocean. Restoration activities will be undertaken at the following six sites in and around the Cities of Encinitas and Carlsbad: San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve, Batiquitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve, Agua Hedionda Lagoon Ecological Reserve, and Ponto Beach. Land ownership of the project area is divided between the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, San Diego County, public utilities, a homeowners association; other State of California owned properties, and private entities.

The San Elijo East, San Elijo West, Batiquitos East and Batiquitos West sites are characterized as coastal and valley freshwater marsh. Currently, the habitats in these areas are impacted by populations of giant reed and iceplant. The Ponto Beach site, located in South Carlsbad State Beach, is currently impacted by iceplant, sea lavender, tamarisk, pampas grass, and Eucalyptus trees and will be restored to southern foredunes habitat. The Agua Hedionda site is characterized as estuarine and coastal salt marsh habitat currently being impacted by sea lavender.

The six project sites were selected based on a number of criteria: targeted invasive plant species (target species) cover density, stratum of the dominant target species (e.g. herbaceous layer), ecological needs (e.g. open sand for nesting birds), native plant species distribution within project sites, and the potential for target species to recolonize in the absence of competition.

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The SELC proposes to conduct invasive plant species management and implement a comprehensive habitat restoration program on 65 acres of coastal wetlands at six sites. Invasive species management activities include initial herbicide and mechanical treatments of target weed species, with periodic re-treatments as needed until complete eradication of the population of target species is achieved at each site. Once eradication efforts are deemed successful, continuing site assessments will occur to detect and treat new infestations. Some of the sites are small enough that invasive species eradication should result in passive restoration of the sites. Specifically, these sites are expected to recolonize with native plant species as native seed banks are able to germinate in the absence of a weed population. Furthermore, once successful germination occurs, native plants will have the opportunity to establish and colonize in the absence of competition by target species.

Project habitat restoration activities refer to a comprehensive program which includes invasive species management, revegetation with native plant species, irrigation, target species re-treatments, native plant infill, site monitoring and long-term site maintenance. Overall, with most established invasive plants, one to three retreatments are necessary in order to fully clear



an area of the targeted infestation. Giant reed and pepperweed are expected to take up to ten years to achieve 100 percent control.

For each site, an assessment is made of historic habitat conditions and target habitat conditions are developed given current land uses. Where current hydrologic and other site-influencing factors are aligned with historic conditions, the appropriate historic habitat type is selected as the target. SELC proposes to restore these coastal wetland habitat types to pre-invasive species infestation conditions. In areas such as Ponto Beach where habitat conversion has occurred, SELC proposes to restore the site to represent the most appropriate habitat type based on historic conditions, hydrology, soils, and topography.

The project will utilize methods that have been developed and refined by SELC through a successful adaptive management process spanning over 11 years. Project managers will perform strategic mapping and planning for each site prior to treatment. The program is designed to reduce future land management costs by installing and fostering native plant communities at sites where invasive vegetation is treated. In this way, treated areas are more quickly re-colonized by native plants, thus reducing the likelihood of re-infestation and retreatment costs.

The project will also preserve habitat connectivity via enhancing natural corridors. Project activities are designed to protect conserved lands from infestation from neighboring properties. Restoration plans will include corridor and edge-effect evaluations for all sites.

The legacy of multiple, changing land uses, and the current level of human activity and development in northern San Diego County ensure that natural habitats face an ongoing risk of degradation from exotic plant invasion. Left uncontrolled, invasive vegetation will further encroach on the limited and fragmented natural habitats that exist in the area. When completed, the project will benefit special-status plant and animal species through the protection and restoration of native habitats. Protected species known to occur in the project area include Least Bell's vireo, California gnatcatcher, and Ridgeway's rail.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and meets the program's goal of providing for restoration of wetlands that fall outside the jurisdiction of the Inland Wetland Conservation Program such as coastal, tidal, or fresh water habitats, coastal scrub, and threatened and endangered species habitat.

The project furthers the following goals outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan:

*Goal B.1* – Invest in projects and landscape areas that help provide resilience in the face of climate change, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife and enhance habitats on working lands:

- The project provides coastal open space and lowlands that can be managed for inland migration of wetlands expected to occur with sea level rise, storm surges and flooding.
- The project restores and enhances wetland habitats that support waterbirds, including migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.

*Goal C.1* – Support a wide range of recreational activities (e.g., hunting, fishing, birding, hiking, camping, photography, etc.) in conjunction with other land uses and without degrading environmental resources:

- The project maintains open space and develops opportunities for passive recreation, research, and educational use that are compatible with the environmentally sensitive resources of the area.

In addition, the proposed project addresses the following priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan:

- Provide species strongholds or refugia
- Provide or enhance habitat connectivity and corridors
- Improve habitat for threatened or endangered species

The project is designed to complement existing conservation related plans. The Multiple Habitat Conservation Plan (MHCP) for northwestern San Diego County (March 2003) is an approved component of the Southern California Coastal Sage Scrub Natural Community Conservation Planning Program. Project implementation sites lie within the MHCP Focus Planning Area and are therefore high priority areas for native plant community restoration. The proposed program serves to accomplish MHCP goals by protecting existing native plant communities, controlling invasive plants, and restoring native habitat for protected species.

The project is also consistent with local plans, including a reserve-scale management plan, the San Elijo Lagoon Vegetation Management Plan, and several watershed management plans which include the Escondido Creek Watershed Action Strategy, Agua Hedionda Watershed Management Plan, Buena Vista Lagoon Management Plan, and the Loma Alta Creek Watershed Management Plan. The project is also consistent with a regional plan at the hydrologic unit-scale, the Carlsbad Watershed Management Plan.

This project is consistent with the California Invasive Plants Council (CAL-IPC) Statewide Strategic Plan for Invasive Plants, funded by WCB in 2013. This Strategic Plan focused on six high-priority regions in the state for invasive weeds eradication. This Southwest project area, including San Diego County, was not one of these targeted regions. However, Cal-IPC initiated regional mapping efforts for one of the San Diego County target species, sea lavender. The project work is also consistent with Cal-IPC's early eradication recommendations and mapping methodology.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

SELC will conduct maintenance and monitoring according to the "Carlsbad Hydrologic Unit Invasive Vegetation Control and Habitat Restoration Program Monitoring and Assessment Plan." This plan, published by the SELC in August 2015, provides criteria, goals, methods and protocols for the monitoring and adaptive management of active and passive restoration sites in the project area.

If at any time during the 25-year life of the project, SELC does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

## PROJECT FUNDING

Task	Project Total	WCB	NRCS	EMP5	Pending Match
Project Management	297,551	108,440		7,200	181,911
Invasives Control	452,800	313,030	34,710	13,750	91,310
Restoration	966,556	347,810	125,073	66,973	426,700
Monitoring, Maps, GIS	103,690	45,990			57,700
Travel Expense	31,070	11,570			19,500
Indirect Costs	23,160	23,160			
<i>Totals</i>	<i>\$1,874,827</i>	<i>\$850,000</i>	<i>\$159,783</i>	<i>\$87,923</i>	<i>\$777,121</i>

*NRCS - Natural Resources Conservation Service, EMP5 - San Diego Association of Governments.*

Costs will be for all aspects of the project, including management, compliance and monitoring. The bulk of WCB funds will be used for the control of invasive species and restoration activities.

## FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d)(Proposition 1E), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass outside the Central Valley.

## CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

CDFW has reviewed this project and recommends it for funding by the WCB. As lead agency, the County of San Diego prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has considered the MND and has prepared proposed written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$850,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d)(Proposition 1E), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.