

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**

1416 9<sup>TH</sup> STREET, ROOM 1266  
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814  
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State of California  
Natural Resources Agency  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**  
Minutes

November 20, 2014

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**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**

November 20, 2014

The Wildlife Conservation Board met on Thursday, November 20, 2014, at the State Capitol, Room 112, in Sacramento, California. Mr. Charlton H. Bonham, Director of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Chairman of the Wildlife Conservation Board, called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. Mr. John Donnelly, Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board, performed the roll call.

1. Roll Call

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS

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

Karen Finn, Program Budget Manager  
Vice, Michael Cohen, Member  
Director, Department of Finance

Michael Sutton, Member  
President, Fish and Game Commission

JOINT LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Rachelle Caouette  
Vice, Senator Jean Fuller

Senator Fran Pavley

Senator Lois Wolk

Diane Colborn  
Vice, Assembly Member Anthony Rendon

Sarah Arce  
Vice, Assembly Member Das Williams

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
John P. Donnelly

**Wildlife Conservation Board Staff Present:**

Anh Dang, Office Technician  
Brian Cary, Public Land Management Specialist III  
Brian Gibson, Senior Land Agent  
Candice Marg, Senior Land Agent  
Celestial Baumbach, Staff Services Analyst  
Colin Mills, Staff Counsel  
Dawn Otis-Drowne, Staff Services Analyst  
Elizabeth Hubert, Public Land Management Specialist IV  
Heidi West, Public Land Management Specialist IV  
Jasen Yee, Associate Land Agent

John Walsh, Senior Land Agent  
Kurt Weber, Senior Land Agent  
Laura Featherstone, Executive Assistant  
Liz Yokoyama, Senior Land Agent  
Lloyd Warble, Staff Services Analyst  
Melissa Ho, Budget and Fiscal Officer  
Peter Perrine, Assistant Executive Director  
Ron Wooden, Seasonal Clerk

Scott McFarlin, Public Land Management Specialist IV  
Teri Muzik, Senior Land Agent

**Others Present:**

Sylvie Lee, California Coastal Commission  
Laura Borden, Yurok Tribe  
Tarlyn Ipiña, Yurok Tribe  
Gary Reents, Reclamation District 2035  
Magdalena Rodriguez, CDFW  
Laurie Wayburn, Pacific Forest Trust  
Chris Mower, California Strategies, LLC  
Matt Yurko, Tides Center/Marine Education Program  
Bruce Wilcox, Imperial Irrigation District  
Troy Fletcher, Yurok Tribe  
Nathan Voegeli, Yurok Tribe  
  
Peter Jorris, San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust  
Megan Wargo, Pacific Forest Trust  
John Davis, Hancock Timber Resource Group  
Michael Kobseff, Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors  
Lee Fledderjohann, Collins Timber Company  
Armand Gonzales, CDFW  
Timothy Smith, CDFW

Phil Wallin, Western Rivers Conservancy  
Sue Dorroff, Western Rivers Conservancy  
Julie Treppa, Western Rivers Conservancy  
Vance Russell, National Forest Foundation  
Paul Mason, Pacific Forest Trust  
Clark Stevens, RCD Santa Monica Mountains  
David Lass, Trout Unlimited  
Craig Garner, Ducks Unlimited  
Mindy Natt, Yurok Tribe  
Javier I Kinney, Yurok Tribe  
Dennis Diemer, Woodland Davis Clean Water Agency  
Connie Best, Pacific Forest Trust  
Joe Croteau, CDFW  
Bob Hawkins, CDFW  
Michael Flores, CDFW  
  
Eric Haney, CDFW  
John Battistoni, CDFW  
Linda Parks, Ventura County

2. Funding Status Informational

Mr. Donnelly pointed out that the following information depicts the current funding status and is an ongoing item at every board meeting. He asked if there were any questions and there were none.

(a) 2014-15 Wildlife Restoration Fund, (0447)

Budget Act	\$1,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-1,000,000.00</u>
<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	\$0.00
Total Project Development	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

(b) 2014-15 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)

Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-2,860,000.00</u>
<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$17,803,000.00</b>
November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-7,627,515.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$10,175,485.00</b>

(c) 2013-14 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)

Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-9,213,161.00</u>
<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$11,449,839.00</b>
November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-3,031,800.00
Total Project Development	<u>-8,418,039.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

(d) 2012-13 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)

Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-4,255,000.00</u>
<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$16,408,000.00</b>
November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-2,231,283.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$14,176,717.00</b>

(e)	2011-12 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-11,391,923.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$9,271,077.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-3,479,164.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$5,791,913.00</b>
(f)	2010-11 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-15,141,371.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$5,526,629.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-412,096.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-4,846,401.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$268,132.00</b>
(g)	2009-10 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-20,238,064.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$429,936.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-53,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-376,936.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(h)	2008-09 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2012-13 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-16,685,396.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$3,982,604.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-3,982,604.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(i)	2007-08 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2011-12 Reappropriation)	

	Budget Act	\$20,674,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-20,060,904.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$613,096.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-613,096.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(j)	2006-07 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,699,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,833,298.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$865,702.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-865,702.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(k)	2004-05 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,577,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,982,286.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$594,714.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-594,714.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(l)	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>-31,257,610.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$4,842,390.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	37,904.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-54,486.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$4,750,000.00</b>
(m)	2004-05 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund, (6029)	
	Reappropriated 14/15	\$11,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-6,346,452.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$4,653,548.00</b>



	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-147,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$4,506,548.00</b>
(n)	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>-249,130,704.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$23,869,296.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-2,000,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-4,768,093.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$17,101,203.00</b>
(o)	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)	
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>\$32,500,000.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$10,595,557.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$10,595,557.00</b>
(p)	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>-680,544,372.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$60,867,628.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-4,350,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-31,990,000.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$24,527,280.00</b>

(q)	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>-0.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$3,380,000.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-3,380,000.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(r)	2009-10 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$4,800,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-1,970,880.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$2,829,120.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-2,829,120.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(s)	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>-2,889,082.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$7,110,918.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$7,110,918.00</b>
(t)	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)	\$8,500,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-5,074,012.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$3,425,988.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>

	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$3,425,988.00</b>
(u)	2009-10 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
	Chapter 2, Statutes of 2009 (SB 8)	\$15,500,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-7,996,075.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$7,503,925.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-7,503,925.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(v)	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>-10,066,048.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$14,933,952.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-2,934,568.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$11,999,384.00</b>
(w)	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(d)(1))	\$25,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-23,379,568.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$1,620,432.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-1,620,432.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(x)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2013-14 Appropriation)	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(1))	\$205,194.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$205,194.00</b>

	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$205,194.00</b>
(y)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2013-14 Appropriation)	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(2))	\$1,500,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-966,398.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$533,602.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-304,682.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$228,920.00</b>
(z)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2013-14 Appropriation)	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(4))	\$2,368,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-1,217,236.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$1,150,764.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-270,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-325,000.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$555,764.00</b>
(aa)	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>-106,974,123.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$57,725,877.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-15,125,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-19,402,000.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$23,198,877.00</b>
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055(b))	\$123,525,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-86,495,083.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$37,029,917.00</b>
	November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-650,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-4,050,000.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$32,329,917.00</b>

**RECAP OF FUND BALANCES**

<b>Wildlife Restoration Fund (a)</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	-0.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Habitat Conservation Fund (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k)</b>	<b>\$66,944,598.00</b>
November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-3,496,896.00
Total Project Development	-33,035,455.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$30,412,247.00</b>
<b>Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (l)</b>	<b>\$4,842,390.00</b>
November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-37,904.00
Total Project Development	-54,486.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$4,750,000.00</b>
<b>California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (m), (n)</b>	<b>\$28,522,844.00</b>
November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-2,147,000.00
Total Project Development	-4,768,093.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$21,607,751.00</b>
<b>Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (o), (p)</b>	<b>\$71,463,185.00</b>
November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-4,350,000.00
Total Project Development	-31,990,000.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$35,123,185.00</b>
<b>Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (q), (r), (s), (t), (u), (v), (w), (x), (y), (z), (aa)</b>	<b>\$137,449,688.00</b>
November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-16,045,000.00
Total Project Development	-42,349,727.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$79,054,961.00</b>
<b>TOTAL – ALL FUNDS</b>	<b>\$309,222,704.00</b>
November 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-26,076,800.00
Total Project Development	-112,197,760.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$170,948,144.00</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	\$0.00

**SUMMARY OF BOND CASH**

The following summary provides the status of the up-front general obligation bond sale proceeds that the Wildlife Conservation Board has received since the spring of 2009.

<b>Bond Fund</b>	<b>Authorized GO Bond Proceeds</b>	<b>Expenditures through 10/17/14</b>	<b>Encumbrances through 09/30/14</b>	<b>Cash Balances Includes Encumbrances</b>
Proposition 12	\$12,621,973.31	\$9,242,883.90	\$494,884.00	\$2,884,205.41
Proposition 40	\$91,923,942.78	\$80,566,179.20	\$17,087,418.40	-\$5,729,654.82
Proposition 50	\$164,644,999.96	\$79,841,951.31	\$29,339,838.33	\$55,463,210.32
Proposition 84	\$258,771,862.99	\$231,441,319.65	\$24,162,364.24	\$3,168,179.10
Proposition 1E	\$65,725,202.07	\$48,167,124.87	\$8,514,203.10	\$9,043,874.10
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>\$593,687,981.11</b>	<b>\$449,259,458.93</b>	<b>\$79,598,708.07</b>	<b>\$64,829,814.11</b>

3. Special Project Planning Account Informational

Mr. Donnelly said this account is set up periodically by staff on approval of the Board back in 1986 to set up planning accounts. These accounts are used to pay for early project costs such as appraisals and appraisal reviews. The Board authorized up to 1% of the appropriation to be used for special project planning. Once the project is approved by the Board, these early costs are abated back to the project fund. He asked if there were any questions and there were none.

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 1% 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 .....	\$25,000.00
California Clean, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund .....	\$50,000.00
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 .....	\$150,000.00

4. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 5 – 8 and 10 – 13)

Mr Donnelly noted for the record that Item #9 was withdrawn from the Consent Calendar. The Consent Calendar includes Items 5 through 8 and 10 through 13, as well as the Minutes from August 28, 2014. Chairman Bonham asked to pull Item # 10 as he has a comment in regards to the project.

**It was moved by Board Member Karen Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve Consent Calendar Items 5 through 8 and 11 through 13 as proposed in the individual agenda explanations.**

**Motion carried.**

- \*5. Approval of Minutes – August 28, 2014

**As one of consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the Minutes of the August 28, 2014, Wildlife Conservation Board meeting.**

**Motion carried.**

\* Proposed Consent Calendar



\*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.

**\$0.00** to the **General Fund**  
**\$61,882.03** to the **Habitat Conservation Fund**  
**\$0.00** to the **Wildlife Restoration Fund**  
**\$1,964,531.32** to the **California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe  
Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection  
Fund**  
**\$966,970.13** to the **Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal  
and Beach Protection Fund of 2002**  
**\$33,644.83** to the **Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply,  
Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection  
Fund of 2006**

**GENERAL FUND**

Bear Creek Watershed Habitat Restoration, Colusa County

Allocated	\$79,900.00
Expended	<u>-79,900.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

**Total General Fund** **\$0.00**

**HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND**

Amargosa -Tecopa Hot Springs, Inyo County

Allocated	\$56,750.00
Expended	<u>-37,106.97</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$19,643.03

Bear Creek Watershed Habitat Restoration, Colusa County

Allocated	\$395,100.00
Expended	<u>-394,700.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$400.00

Canebrake Ecological Reserve, Cap Canyon Unit, Expansion 3, Kern County

Allocated	\$332,000.00
Expended	<u>-308,027.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$23,973.00

Pole Mountain, Sonoma County

Allocated	\$655,000.00
Expended	<u>-652,952.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$2,048.00

Quiota Creek Fish Passage Phase II, Santa Barbara County

Allocated	\$150,000.00
Expended	<u>-150,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Sinnamon Meadows Conservation Easement, Mono County

Allocated	\$630,000.00
Expended	<u>-620,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$10,000.00

Western Riverside County Multi Species Habitat Conservation Plan (2012) -  
Berger, Riverside County

Allocated	\$71,000.00
Expended	<u>-68,214.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$2,786.00

Western Riverside, Multi Species Habitat Conservation Plan (2012) - Fuller,  
Riverside County

Allocated	\$78,500.00
Expended	<u>-75,468.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$3,032.00

**Total Habitat Conservation Fund \$61,882.03**

**WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND**

North Grasslands Wildlife Area Hunter Check Station, Merced County

Allocated	\$708,790.00
Expended	<u>-708,790.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

**Total Wildlife Restoration Fund \$0.00**

**CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS,  
AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND**

DFG Land Management Plans, Sacramento Valley-Central Sierra Region,  
Phase III, Solano/Sierra/Butte County

Allocated	\$411,000.00
Expended	<u>-322,922.78</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$88,077.22

Lake Earl Wildlife Area Expansions, Pacific Shores Unit, Phase II, Del Norte County

Allocated	\$2,000,000.00
Expended	<u>-282,915.40</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$1,717,084.60

Millville Plains Conservation Area and Expansion 1, Shasta County

Allocated	\$348,000.00
Expended	<u>-194,900.50</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$153,099.50

North Grasslands Wildlife Area Hunter Check Station, Merced County

Allocated	\$21,210.00
Expended	<u>-21,210.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Sawmill Pebble Plain Ecological Preserve, San Bernardino County

Allocated	\$2,015,000.00
Expended	<u>-2,008,730.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$6,270.00

**Total California Clean Water,  
Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks,  
and Coastal Protection Fund** **\$1,964,531.32**

**WATER SECURITY, CLEAN DRINKING WATER, COASTAL AND BEACH  
PROTECTION FUND OF 2002**

Carlsbad Hydrologic Unit Exotic Invasives Removal, San Diego County

Allocated	\$1,500,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,499,984.95</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$15.05

Salton Sea Interim Restoration and Management, Riverside/Imperial County

Allocated	\$2,000,176.00
Expended	<u>-1,033,220.92</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$966,955.08

**Total Water Security, Clean Drinking  
Water, Coastal and Beach  
Protection Fund of 2002** **\$966,970.13**

**SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD  
CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006**

Carmel River Lagoon Ecosystem Protective Barrier, Monterey County

Allocated	\$145,000.00
Expended	<u>-144,962.50</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$37.50

Coachella Valley Natural Community Conservation Plan, Shadowrock,  
Riverside County

Allocated	\$786,750.00
Expended	<u>-786,750.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Humboldt County Community Forest McKay Tract, Humboldt County

Allocated	\$4,510,000.00
Expended	<u>-4,494,181.50</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$15,818.50

Rancho Vierra Oak Woodland Conservation Easement, Monterey County

Allocated	\$660,000.00
Expended	<u>-652,032.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$7,968.00

San Diego County MSCP HCPLA/NCCP 2010 (multiple parcels), San Diego  
County

Allocated	\$685,250.00
Expended	<u>-680,090.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$5,160.00

Ten Mile River (Perry-Smith Ranch), Mendocino County

Allocated	\$3,510,000.00
Expended	<u>-3,505,339.17</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$4,660.83

Yolo County HCP/NCCP Development, Yolo County

Allocated	\$600,000.00
Expended	<u>-600,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

<b>Total Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006</b>	<b>\$33,644.83</b>
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**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Board Member Karen Finn, that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the Recovery of Funds. Recovery totals include \$61,882.03 to the Habitat Conservation Fund; \$1,964,531.32 to the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund; and \$966,970.13 to the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002, and \$33,644.83 to the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006**

**Motion carried.**

- \*7. Little Shasta Valley Conservation Easement, Fogg Gulch, \$53,000.00  
Siskiyou County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) to acquire a conservation easement over 645± acres of land for protection of critical winter range for elk and other regional California wildlife and protection of grasslands that sustain working landscapes. The project will allow dry land farming and livestock operations to continue under the terms of the conservation easement while at the same time protecting the property's natural resource values.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located east of the City of Yreka and six miles northeast of the town of Montague in Siskiyou County near Ball Mountain Road and Hovey Gulch Road. The general terrain is characterized by rolling hills within flat valley bottoms containing vast rangeland and grassland, interspersed with wetland and riparian areas. Fogg Gulch is the primary drainage flowing south through the Property and includes several ponds on the site. The Property is part of the upper eastern watershed of the Shasta River, a major tributary to the Klamath River. Protection and conservation of both the Shasta and Klamath River watersheds are important to the recovery of salmonid species.

The Property is located approximately two miles southwest of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Shasta Valley Wildlife Area. Portions of the Klamath National Forest are approximately two miles to the east. The Property is also within the viewshed and watershed areas of the north side of Mount Shasta, providing excellent views of Mt. Shasta to the south and the Shasta Valley to the west.

The Property and surrounding properties currently support agricultural livestock grazing and/or dry farming operations. Approximately four miles to the north of the Property, several sections of grazing land have been subdivided into single-family dwellings or ranchettes, demonstrating the subdivision potential and habitat fragmentation that could occur on the Property if left unprotected.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property topography ranges from relatively flat to moderately steep terrain. The dry farming occurs on the flatland while upper slopes of the Property are used for seasonal grazing. The Property provides a seasonal migration path and crucial winter habitat for the elk and other wildlife species such as coyotes, foxes, pronghorn antelope and deer. Numerous other migratory and local species including eagles, raptors, quail, dove, pheasants and Canadian geese also frequent the Property throughout the year and several aquatic species (pond turtles and amphibians) are dependent upon the gulches, ephemeral streams and ponds found on the Property.

The Property is an open space component of the Shasta River and Klamath River watersheds, absorbing rainfall and providing seasonal inflow. Furthermore, the landowners have actively improved the watershed and water quality conditions by constructing in-stream structures, installing streamside plantings, and developing and maintaining buffer/filter strips along its gulches. These restoration enhancements along with protection of the land provide water quality and habitat benefits downstream for both the Shasta and Klamath rivers and their dependent species.

This project is part of RMEF Siskiyou Initiative Focus Area Landscape, an effort to protect and conserve large ranch and landscape properties from future fragmentation. It is contemplated that if this conservation easement is implemented, additional large acreage landowners may also be interested in pursuing agricultural or conservation easements on their properties to help further expand and protect open space and rangeland properties in the Shasta River watershed in perpetuity.

#### 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.*), 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 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.

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

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

RMEF, a non-profit conservation organization committed to conserving natural habitats for the protection of wild free-ranging elk and other species, will be responsible for monitoring the Property according to the terms of the conservation easement with the property owners. The Grant Agreement requires a baseline

report be completed by the Grantee. The conservation easement does not convey a general right of access to the public but allows access to both RMEF and WCB for monitoring purposes.

**TERMS**

The property owners have agreed to sell the conservation easement to RMEF for its appraised fair market value of \$243,000. 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 prior to disbursement of funds into the established escrow account. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can seek specific performance or require that the conservation easement be transferred to WCB or another qualifying entity.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

California Department of Fish and Wildlife	\$200,000.00
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$43,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	<u>\$10,000.00</u>
<b>Total WCB Allocation</b>	<b>\$53,000.00</b>

It is estimated that the \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover internal project-related costs, including DGS appraisal review costs.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) that provides funds for the acquisition of habitat, including native oak woodlands, necessary to protect deer and mountain lions.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION**

The proposed 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 existing natural conditions, including open space and habitat, and to allow continued agricultural use. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$53,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) for the grant to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Board Member Karen Finn, that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$53,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) for the grant to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

- \*8. C & R Ranch Habitat Enhancement, \$270,000.00  
Tehama County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Tehama County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD) for a cooperative project with the landowner, the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to restore native habitat and improve fencing and water features on the C & R Ranch, located 17 miles west of the city of Corning in Tehama County.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The C & R Ranch is a 330-acre ranch located just east of Paskenta, in Tehama County, California, approximately 22 miles southwest of Red Bluff. The ranch lands are located in the Thomes Creek watershed and include a portion of Thomes Creek at the lower elevations, one unnamed intermittent creek that empties into Thomes Creek, and several ephemeral creeks that flow through the ranch. The ranch is mostly oak woodland habitat in the uplands of the property with a significant riparian corridor at the lower elevations of the ranch associated with Thomes Creek. Much of the lower-elevation floodplain portion of the ranch was historically farmed, and native oaks and other woody vegetation were removed. Grasslands at the ranch are dominated by non-native annual grasses and forbs. A perennial manmade reservoir is located in the center of the ranch, but lacks any native woody riparian habitat, mainly due to past livestock grazing regimes.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

At the C & R Ranch, past farming and heavy grazing practices negatively impacted plant diversity and abundance and reduced habitat availability and connectivity for wildlife. The degradation of the property contributed to sedimentation, bank erosion, impacts on water quality, and encouraged invasion of weedy plants.

The current owners have taken an interest in managing for conservation of wildlife habitat to reverse the impacts of these past practices. Recently implemented projects by the landowners have started restoration of woody vegetation habitat corridors, native grasslands and oak savannahs. Recent fencing and the construction of off-site watering system facilities, e.g., water troughs and pipes to provide water away from the stream and reservoir, provide an infrastructure to allow for the implementation of a rest-rotational grazing system.

This project will continue the restoration begun by the landowners by restoring approximately 11 acres of wildlife habitat, including upland grasslands, hedgerows and riparian zones. Project work will focus on creating habitat to connect three existing high-quality habitat areas: riparian habitat along Thomes Creek on the southern boundary of the property, a perennial reservoir on an intermittent stream in the center of the ranch, and intact blue oak woodland and chaparral habitats in

the upper portions of the property. The proposed project will have elements within each of these areas and are described in more detail below.

Near Thomes Creek, project elements aim to create hedgerows and riparian habitat near the mouth of the intermittent stream that flows through the property into Thomes Creek. The riparian habitat will connect the existing habitat at Thomes Creek with the permanent water of the reservoir in the center of the ranch. The hedgerows and shrubs will link these new riparian areas with existing high quality oak woodlands on the surrounding hillsides.

In the center of the ranch, streambank protection projects will be implemented upstream of the reservoir to control erosion and trap sediment. In addition, weedy species will be removed and emergent rushes established at the upper end of the reservoir to filter sediment loads. Riparian vegetation will be established around the reservoir to improve wildlife habitat at this permanent water site.

Finally, fencing will be installed to exclude cattle from riparian habitats above the reservoir. Off-site water will be supplied to allow for cattle to be maintained in these upper pastures. In addition, a new well and pump, powered by a solar panel station, will provide seasonal irrigation of new plantings in all areas of the ranch, and for emergency maintenance of reservoir levels for wildlife during drought.

The project will remove and control non-native and invasive vegetation and plant a diversity of native plant species (grasses, trees, shrubs, and vines). Established native plants will provide a diversity of forage, refuge and nesting habitat for a broad spectrum of avian and mammal species. The new connectivity of habitats will facilitate wildlife use of the entire landscape.

The C&R Ranch owners are committed to the implementation and benefits of native habitat restoration, practices, and management. Field tours are currently offered to local conservation and agricultural organizations, and the ranch will serve as a local model for demonstrating how wildlife habitat restoration activities can work in conjunction with productive grazing lands.

The project is consistent with the 2007 Tehama West Management Plan (prepared by TCRCD), which encourages restoration of riparian and oak woodland communities and enhancement of habitat on ranches.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Ecological Restoration on Agricultural Lands Program and meets the Program's goal of assisting landowners in developing sustainable wildlife-friendly practices on agricultural property that can co-exist with ongoing operations.

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

fund projects that provide resilience in the face of climate change for native wildlife species, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife, provide or enhance habitat connectivity and corridors, and enhance habitats on working lands.

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS**

The ranch will implement a rotational grazing system to protect riparian areas and to reduce pressure on grasslands. The landowner will regularly move cattle to freshly rested areas, allowing recently-grazed areas an opportunity to recover. The benefits of rotational grazing systems include improving beef production while simultaneously reducing soil erosion and improving plant vigor, production, and diversity, which contributes to improved wildlife habitat. Employing a rotational grazing system will allow for an increase in the accumulation of organic matter in the soil, which can sequester significant quantities of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>. New fencing and off-site watering system upgrades provide the infrastructure for the grazing rotation.

Irrigation and weed control will be established for the duration of the grant period by the landowners. After project implementation, landowners will maintain the restored habitat, well and fencing for the duration of the 25-year life of the project.

The TCRCD will be responsible for ensuring that the property owners manage the improvements pursuant to terms of the Grant Agreement and management plans, and to ensure the successful establishment and maintenance of the enhancement features. If at any time during the life of the project, the landowner does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires the Grantee to refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding for the project is as follows:

Description	NRCS EQIP	USFWS Partners	C&R Ranch	WCB	TOTAL
Fencing, pasture planting	\$123,588		\$55,272		\$178,860
Spring development, upland restoration		\$110,262	\$65,795		\$176,057
Hedgerows			\$6,655	\$66,553	\$73,208
Restoration sites - multiple			\$7,507	\$110,565	\$118,072
Riparian pasture fence			\$1,302	\$13,020	\$14,322
Irrigation and water system			\$286	\$27,212	\$27,498
Project Management				\$43,956	\$43,956
Contingency				\$8,694	\$8,694
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$123,588</b>	<b>\$110,262</b>	<b>\$136,817</b>	<b>\$270,000</b>	<b>640,667</b>

Project costs will be for weed control, plant establishment, fencing, water system, and project administration.

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(d)(4), which allows for projects to assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration and wildlife protection, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

CEQA AND DFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 4 of the Categorical Exemptions, California Code of Regulations, Title 4, Section 15304, as a minor alteration to land which does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$270,000.00 from Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(4); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Board Member Karen Finn, that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$270,000.00 from Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(4); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

\*9 Excelsior Ranches, \$0.00  
Yuba County

This project was withdrawn from consideration.

10. San Joaquin River Parkway, \$147,000.00  
Lewis S. Eaton Trail Extension,  
River West CEQA, Augmentation III,  
Fresno County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for an augmentation of a previously approved grant to the San Joaquin River Conservancy (Conservancy) to plan, implement environmental review, and facilitate public participation for a proposed extension of the Lewis S. Eaton Trail from its current terminus near the City of Fresno's Woodward Park through the Conservancy's River West property located immediately west of State Route 41 in Fresno County.

#### LOCATION

The San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway) will ultimately consist of approximately 5,900 acres on both sides of a twenty-two mile long reach of the San Joaquin River between Friant Dam in the east and State Route 99 to the west, in Fresno and Madera Counties. The Conservancy was created by State legislation in 1992 to plan, implement, and manage the Parkway 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 the local communities. The Conservancy's mission includes both public recreational access and habitat restoration within the Parkway.

The planned Parkway will be linked by a multiple use trail. The proposed project will extend an existing segment of the trail, the Lewis S. Eaton Trail, across the Conservancy's 360± acre River West Property, located west of State Route 41, south of the San Joaquin River. The purchase of the Property was approved by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) in August 2001 for conservation, restoration, and enhancement of habitat and to provide low-impact public recreational and educational opportunities.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project involves preliminary design and evaluation of potential environmental impacts of the proposed the Eaton Trail extension in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The trail would extend from its terminus near Woodward Park through the River West property within the Parkway. The proposed project will include trailhead parking and other support amenities.

The original \$160,000.00 project was authorized by the Conservancy board on May 10, 2007, and funding was authorized by the WCB on August 23, 2007. By late 2008, the resources assessment of the project site and a conceptual plan was developed and a public workshop held. In December 2008, the project was suspended due to the State freeze on bond fund expenditures and awards. In June 2010, at the request of the Conservancy board, the WCB authorized an

additional \$40,000.00 to update the three-year old data and evaluations, and provide public outreach to disseminate new project information. In November 2011, the Conservancy board and WCB authorized an additional \$200,000.00 in funds for the project to expand the scope of work to complete an Environmental Impact Report to more extensively evaluate newly identified potential impacts. The augmentation brought the total amended budget to \$400,000.00.

To date, the resources assessment, public workshops, a public scoping meeting, and conceptual design of the proposed project have been completed. Based on public input at workshops and the scoping meeting, and comments from the City of Fresno and Conservancy board members, it was determined that the scope of the project must be expanded to evaluate potential environmental impacts associated with providing public access to the site from an alternative location in the vicinity of Palm and Nees Avenues. This expanded evaluation will require additional funding and a time extension to December 31, 2016, to complete the project. The scope of work increased significantly to address the complex environmental and design issues associated with the expanded study area.

The project is consistent with the following goals and objectives (among others) from the Conservancy's San Joaquin River Parkway Master Plan (1997):

- FG3. Provide for conservation, education, and recreation, particularly a continuous trail, in a cooperative manner with affected landowners.
- RO3. Link all recreation areas and natural reserves between State Route 99 and Friant Dam with a continuous, multipurpose trail on land and with canoe put-in, take-out, and rest areas along the river to create a recreation system with a variety of recreational opportunities within the Parkway. Connect the multipurpose trail with other local and regional trails and bikeways originating in surrounding areas.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The WCB's Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and Public Access Program provide the basis for WCB's ability to restore habitat and provide public access Statewide. In addition, funds were allocated to the WCB within California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40) to be provided to the Conservancy for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of land and water resources within the Parkway.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Conservancy is overseeing the planning and EIR work and managing its consultant contract with URS Corporation to complete all requirements for the grant and related CEQA compliance. The engineered design and construction of the proposed project will not be funded until long term operation and maintenance of the project is secured by the Conservancy, its member agencies, and other



partners.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Project Task</b>	<b>Existing Budget</b>	<b>Grant Augmentation 2014</b>	<b>Total Project Cost</b>
Resources Assessment	\$37,000		\$37,000
Public Participation	\$57,000		\$57,000
CEQA Analysis	\$250,000	\$134,000	\$384,000
Project Management	\$40,000		\$40,000
Contingencies	\$16,000	\$13,000	\$29,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>	<b>\$147,000</b>	<b>\$547,000</b>

Project costs will be an augmentation of \$147,000.00 for an existing project to expand the scope of work in order to adequately address project alternatives in the EIR in compliance with CEQA for extension of the Lewis S. Eaton Trail south through the Conservancy’s River West property.

**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(b)(5), that allows for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of lands located within the boundaries of the Conservancy.

**STATE RECOMMENDATION**

The proposed project is included among the high-priority projects recommended by the Conservancy’s Interagency Project Development Committee, whose role is to evaluate projects to be considered by the Conservancy Board. On September 17, 2014, the proposed augmentation was authorized by the Conservancy board, which includes a representative with the CDFW, subject to the concurrence of the WCB.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$147,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

Chairman Bonham asked that this item be pulled from the Consent Calendar

as he wished to comment on the project. He said that in the description of the project, it appears that this is the third time the proponents of the project have come to the Board and asked for an extension on the Scope and additional review funds to go along with it. He hopes that they do not come back again and ask for a fourth revision and request. Mr. Donnelly said this is a San Joaquin River Conservancy Parkway project and he will reiterate his concerns back to the Conservancy Executive Director.

**It was moved by Board Member Karen Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$147,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

- \*11. Allensworth Ecological Reserve, Expansion 50-56 \$0.00  
Tulare County

This proposal was to consider the acquisition of 7 separate ownerships totaling 13+/- acres of land on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the protection of habitat supporting the San Joaquin kit fox and other species found within the area of the CDFW Allensworth Ecological Reserve (Reserve) and to enhance habitat linkages and connectivity.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject properties (Properties) are located in the southeast region of the San Joaquin Valley, near the City of Earlimart, in Tulare County. The Properties lie in an area comprised mostly of small parcels typified as open land, sparsely vegetated, and dominated by grassland and valley sink scrub. Much of the area outside the Reserve has been, or is currently being, converted to extensive agricultural uses including alfalfa, grapes, or orchard use. If acquired, the Properties would be managed as part of the Reserve. Other protected lands in the vicinity include the Colonel Allensworth State Park located to the west, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Pixley National Wildlife Refuge to the north, and the USFWS Kern National Wildlife Refuge to the southwest.

Over the last 15 years, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approved projects to protect nearly 3,000 acres of land that is now part of the Reserve. The valley sink and saltbush scrub plant communities found at the Reserve represent some of the highest quality examples of these plant communities in the San Joaquin Valley. There are also a number of vernal pools found within the Reserve, supporting vernal pool fairy shrimp.

The Reserve is important to the survival and recovery of several endangered or sensitive species including the state and federally endangered blunt-nosed leopard lizard, the Tipton kangaroo rat, and San Joaquin pocket mouse; the state threatened and federally endangered San Joaquin kit fox, the state threatened San Joaquin antelope squirrel, and the federally threatened Hoppings blister beetle. Other rare and important species that either reside at or frequent the Reserve include badger, greater sandhill crane, merlin, Swainson's hawk, and western pond turtle.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The five "Southern" parcels are located north of Avenue 24 and west of County Road 112 and the three "Northern" parcels are located north of Sierra Avenue and east of County Road 112, in Tulare County. The Properties range in size from approximately .92 to 5 acres, totaling 13 ± acres, and are being proposed for acquisition as Expansions 50-56 of the Reserve. The Properties are currently zoned for agricultural use and are being utilized as pastureland. The topography ranges from fairly level to slightly undulating, and the dominant habitat is native grasses. If acquired, the Properties will be managed as part of the Reserve,

expanding open space, habitat connections, grasslands and habitat areas for wildlife species. The acquisition will also help improve habitat connectivity between the Reserve and the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge located to the north.

### WCB PROGRAM

This project is being proposed under 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 government 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 acquires and grants funds to facilitate 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.

Consistent with Goals A-1 and A-4 (environmental protection and conservation) of WCB's Strategic Plan, the Properties provide habitat for threatened and endangered species. Additionally, the Properties will help provide resilience to the impacts of climate change for native species by providing habitat linkages and corridors for increased movement. This project has been requested and is supported by CDFW as it increases the size of the Reserve, protecting additional habitat for threatened and endangered species and provides connectivity to the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge in an effort to build a wildlife corridor between the two conservation areas.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Properties proposed for acquisition represent a nominal addition to the Reserve and, according to CDFW, can be readily absorbed into existing CDFW operations. CDFW has advised WCB that CDFW will be able to manage and monitor the Properties with existing staff and within its existing budget.

### FUNDING SOURCE

All project related costs will be paid from the California Department of Corrections Statewide Electric Fence Project mitigation fund assigned to CDFW. These mitigation funds were made available to CDFW to offset the impacts to valley floor habitat associated with electric fences constructed around correctional facilities in the San Joaquin Valley. The CDFW and the WCB have each analyzed and determined that the purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source.

TERMS

Each of the owners has agreed to sell its property for the appraised fair market value as shown below. The total purchase price for all the Properties is \$54,000.00. The appraised values (all included in one appraisal report), have been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The terms and conditions of the proposed acquisitions provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for each separate acquisition.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding and fair market values for the Properties is as follows:

Expansion 50	\$ 4,000.00
Expansion 51	\$ 12,000.00
Expansion 52	\$ 5,000.00
Expansion 53	\$ 5,000.00
Expansion 54	\$ 5,000.00
Expansion 55	\$ 19,000.00
Expansion 56	\$ 4,000.00
Total Purchase Price	\$ 54,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	\$ 14,000.00
Total Project Costs	\$ 68,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>

It is estimated that \$14,000.00 will be needed to cover internal project-related expenses, including title and closing costs. These costs will also be paid by California Department of Corrections Statewide Electric Fence Project mitigation fund.

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 habitat, 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 recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the acquisition of seven ownerships totaling 13+/- acres as proposed; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff

and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Board Member Karen Finn, that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the acquisition of seven ownerships totaling 13+/- acres as proposed; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

- \*12. Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (2012) - Monte Cristo, Riverside County \$60,800.00

This proposal was 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), as well as to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to the Authority, to acquire 21± acres of land in western Riverside County to protect habitat that supports threatened and endangered species and increase regional wildlife habitat corridors and linkages located within the Plan Area of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (WRC MSCHP).

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property), known as the Monte Cristo property, is located in a rural area of southwest Riverside County known as Tenaja. More specifically, the Property is located along Avocado Mesa Road near the intersection of Avocado Mesa Road and Ave Peira Bonita Road. Development in this area is almost exclusively custom single family homes on large acreage parcels. Although a significant portion of the area is considered remote and undeveloped, it is considered desirable with many homes valued at over a million dollars. Local residents shop in the nearby city of Murrieta that includes a mixture of rural residential and equestrian estates interspersed with planned residential developments.

Due to the Property's close proximity to the City of Murrieta, the threat of residential development is a major concern. Riverside County is the fourth largest county in California in terms of population; and the eleventh largest county in the nation. Since 2000, Riverside's population has grown by approximately 44%, which represents the largest percentage of population growth in the state. Recently, the real estate market in Riverside County has experienced an increase in sales. Projections through 2035 estimate that there will be more than 1.2 million housing units (a rate of growth of 51% over the next 22 years) in Riverside County. The rising climb in population continues to degrade wildlife habitat resulting in the loss of essential wildlife linkage areas/corridors and habitat areas needed to sustain fragile ecosystems necessary to support native plant and animal life.

The Murrieta area of Riverside County falls within the WRC MSHCP Plan 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 State's 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. An 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 identified to sustain and protect important wildlife ecosystem processes and corridors throughout western Riverside County. To date, 48,254 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 Western Core/Linkage (WCL) habitat area, which extends from the City of Murrieta west across State Route 215 and angles northwest along both sides of Interstate 15 north to Lake Elsinore. Properties targeted for acquisition in the WCL area are important because they help satisfy and complement the goals of the WRC MSHCP by building onto existing core areas and providing or enhancing connections throughout the region; including enhancing linkages that connect with Lake Mathews-Estelle Mountain Reserve to the northeast, the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve to the south, the Cleveland National Forest to the west, and the Southwestern Riverside Multiple Species Reserve to the east.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property consists of an irregularly shaped parcel of land located just west of the city of Murrieta with direct frontage along the westerly line of Camino de las Brisas and the northern line of Avocado Mesa Road. It is situated in a RR (Rural Residential) zone with a minimum parcel size of one-half acre. The only improvements to the Property are a public water service line located within its Camino de las Brisas frontage and electrical service.

The site is gently sloping and a significant portion of the Property is suitable for future residential development. The Property contains some of the last remaining contiguous blocks of coastal sage scrub in western Riverside County, a plant community that is essential to resident wildlife. In recent years, coastal scrub habitat has been destroyed and fragmented, thereby causing a degradation of ecological processes. The proposed acquisition will protect habitat for multiple federal and state listed species within the WRC MSHCP habitat area, including the federally endangered quino checkerspot butterfly, Munz's onion, southwestern willow flycatcher and the thread-leaved brodiacea.

#### 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 Goal A.3 contained in WCB's Strategic Plan by supporting implementation of NCCPs.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be managed by the Authority 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 \$186,000.00. 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 \$186,000.00. The USFWS funds require a non-federal match in the amount of \$55,800.00 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 funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Approved Fair Market Value	\$186,000.00
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$ 55,800.00
WCB – subgrant of USFWS funds	<u>\$130,200.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$186,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$ 5,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$ 60,800.00</b>

It is estimated that \$5,000.00 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, 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.

**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 recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$130,200.00 and approve the subgrant of these federal funds to the Authority; allocate \$60,800.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Board Member Karen Finn, that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$130,200.00 and approve the subgrant of these federal funds to the Authority; allocate \$60,800.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

- \*13. Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (2012) - Oldar, Riverside County \$95,000.00

This proposal was 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). In addition, to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to the Authority, to acquire 157± acres of land in western Riverside County to protect habitat that supports threatened and endangered species and increase regional wildlife habitat corridors and linkages located within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (WRC MSHCP) Area.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property), known as the Oldar property, lies in a rural area in unincorporated Riverside County known as Aguanga. The general location of Aguanga is the intersection of Highway 371 and Highway 70. The Property lies approximately 7 miles north of this intersection. Highway 371 is the nearest major artery for the site. The largest nearby city is Temecula, located approximately 17 miles to the east. More specifically, the Property is located approximately ¼ mile west of the intersection of Reed Valley Road and Marmot Road. Access is via Centennial Street on the east side, which is an unpaved dirt road that bisects Reed Valley Road.

According to the 2010 census, Aguanga is a sparsely populated community comprised of about 1200 residents in a 13.6 square mile area. The vast majority of the properties in the vicinity are unimproved and rural in nature. The surrounding neighborhood is mountainous and hilly and comprised of scattered modest single family dwellings for mobile homes on lots ranging from 5 to 20 acres.

This area of Riverside County falls within the WRC MSHCP Plan 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 State's 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. An 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 identified to sustain and protect important wildlife

ecosystem processes and corridors throughout western Riverside County. To date, 48,254 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 lies within the Temecula Creek Watershed (TCW) habitat area, which includes three subareas: (1) Silverado-Anza Knolls; (2) Oldar Properties and; (3) Vail Lake. All three subareas are located in the southeastern section of the WRC MSHCP Area near the border of San Diego County.

The Property lies adjacent to other properties the Authority owns and manages as part of the WRC MSHCP. The proposed acquisition would extend the Authority's holdings to form a more contiguous pattern of protected properties.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is an irregular "L" shaped parcel situated in rolling mountainous terrain. Property elevations range from about 2,600 feet on the southeast side of the property to over 3,000 feet on the northwestern side. The Property is zoned as RR (Rural Residential), which allows one single family dwelling for every 5 acres of land.

The vacant and unimproved Property is covered sporadically with coastal sage, chaparral, chemise and large boulder outcroppings.

The Property and other properties within the TCW are essential to the survival of several federally listed endangered species. The TCW habitat area includes one of the largest remaining known populations of the federally endangered quino checkerspot butterfly. Over 100 observations of this species have been recorded in this region, representing some of the highest recorded densities of this butterfly within its remaining distribution. The TCW is also important to many narrow endemic species such as the arroyo toad. Furthermore, the Property is also the home of the federally endangered and state endangered slender-horned spineflower. Only eight areas are known to support the slender-horned spineflower, four of which occur in western Riverside County. The Property also contains important biological resources, including vital coastal sage scrub chaparral and desert scrub habitats essential for the survival of the aforementioned species.

Acquisition of the Property is important in a broader ecological context due to the close proximity of the Property to other WRC MSHCP lands and existing reserves. Conserving these properties ensures connectivity to the Southwestern Riverside County Multiple Species Reserve to the northwest, the San Bernardino National Forest to the northeast, and the Cleveland National Forest to the south. Moreover, conservation of parcels in the TCW will ensure that the ecological processes within the riparian corridor are maintained.

### 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 furthers Goal A.3 contained in WCB's Strategic Plan which supports the implementation of NCCPs.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be managed by the Authority 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 \$300,000.00. 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 \$300,000.00. USFWS funds in the amount of \$210,000.00 require a non-federal match in the amount of \$90,000.00 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, agreements 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 funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Approved Fair Market Value	\$300,000.00
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$ 90,000.00
WCB – subgrant of USFWS funds	<u>\$210,000.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$300,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$ 5,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$ 95,000.00</b>

It is estimated that \$5,000.00 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, 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.

**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 recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$210,000.00 and approve the subgrant of these federal funds to the Authority; allocate \$95,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the WCB 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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Board Member Karen Finn, that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$210,000.00 and approve the subgrant of these federal funds to the Authority; allocate \$95,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the WCB 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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**



14. Blue Creek, \$5,035,000.00  
Humboldt and Del Norte Counties

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC) for a cooperative project with the State Coastal Conservancy, the Wyss Foundation, and the Yurok Tribe (Tribe), to acquire 6,479± acres of land known as Blue Creek Phase 2B, for the protection of a mixed conifer forest property, including riparian corridors, salmonid streams, coastal watershed, and habitat linkages.

Mr. John Walsh presented the project to the Board.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located along the eastern side of the Klamath River between the towns of Weitchpec and Klamath Glen in Del Norte and Humboldt Counties. The Property is privately owned and managed by Green Diamond Resource Company (GDRC).

The Property lies within the Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion, which is one of the most diverse in North America. Spanning more than 12 million acres, this bioregion of southwestern Oregon and northwestern California is recognized as an area of global botanical significance. One of just 200 ecoregions on the planet designated for special study and conservation, the Klamath-Siskiyou is home to wild salmon runs, old-growth forests, wild rivers, and more than 3,500 plant species – 220 of which are found nowhere else on Earth.

The Property lies in a key location to maintain and restore habitat connectivity in the North Coast Ecoregion. Continuous with Six Rivers, Klamath, Shasta-Trinity and Mendocino National Forests on the east, and Redwood National and State Parks on the coast, the project area provides one of the best linkage opportunities between coastal and interior forests.

The portion of the Property is within the lower Blue Creek watershed. Approximately 80% of this watershed is managed by the U.S. Forest Service under the Six Rivers National Forest Plan. The majority of the upper watershed is protected as part of the Siskiyou Wilderness Area. Blue Creek is also designated as a key watershed under the Northwest Forest Plan and the Six Rivers National Forest Plan.

The acquisition of Phase 2B will complement previous purchases of an adjacent 22,495± acres (Phase 1) and 8,494± acres (Phase 2A) of land from GDRC, completed by Western Rivers Conservancy and the Tribe in 2011 and 2013 respectively. The proposed acquisition will also accomplish priority goals outlined in several state and federal plans including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Land Acquisition Evaluation, WCB's Strategic Plan, WCB's Forest Conservation Program, the Northwest Forest Plan and the Six Rivers

Forest Plan. In addition, the Nature Conservancy has identified the Blue Creek watershed as an Ecoregional Priority.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The majority of the Property is mountainous, remote, and undeveloped except for unpaved logging access roads and an old abandoned cabin near the confluence of Blue Creek and the Klamath River; it is almost wholly forested, primarily with Redwood and Douglas fir, along with some western hemlock, cedar, and pine, as well as various hardwoods. The timber stands range from recently harvested areas with young plantations to very limited pockets of scattered individual old-growth trees. The preponderance of timber stands are 20 to 50 years of age. The land is owned by GDRC and has been managed for industrial forestry products for over 50 years.

Blue Creek, which runs through a portion of the Property, is the largest tributary of the Klamath River downstream of the Trinity River confluence. The creek drains 81,296 acres, and is steep and mountainous with moderate high channel confinement. Elevations in the Blue Creek watershed range from 40 feet at the mouth to 5,685 feet in the headwaters. The headwaters originate east of the Property in the Chimney Rock and Elk Valley area of the Siskiyou Wilderness at an elevation of 4,800 feet. The stream then flows southwesterly through approximately 3,798 acres of the Property to its confluence with the Klamath River. Blue Creek enters the Klamath River near river mile 16, about 24 miles below the confluence of the Trinity and Klamath Rivers. The lower portion of the Blue Creek watershed consists of gentle to moderately steep slopes with some alluvial flats and valley bottoms.

In addition to recovery of coho salmon, other species likely to benefit from protection of the Property include the following: fall Chinook salmon, winter run steelhead trout, coastal cutthroat trout, and Pacific lamprey as well as small numbers of spring Chinook, summer steelhead, and chum salmon. The project area is also important for several terrestrial species including federally and state listed species such as the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet, and for several other species of conservation concern, such as the Humboldt marten and Pacific fisher.

### WCB PROGRAM

Part of the proposed grant for this project is being considered under the WCB's Forest Conservation Program (Forest Program). Forest 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 CDFW. The Forest 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 Forest 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.

The project is also being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program (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.*), 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 Acquisition 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. 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, A2, and A-4 (environmental protection and conservation) of the WCB Strategic Plan, the Property provides habitat for threatened and endangered species as well as assimilating additional habitat connectivity within the Blue Creek watershed. The Blue Creek project also invests in streams and watersheds supporting threatened and endangered salmonids and native fish assemblages. This project has been requested and is supported by CDFW.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The project will be funded, in part, with proceeds from a transaction utilizing New Markets Tax Credits available under Section 45D of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (NMTC). The NMTC program, which is jointly administered by the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund of the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service, uses federal tax incentives to help economically distressed communities attract private investment capital into operating businesses and real estate. A tax credit investor is able to claim a federal tax credit equal to 39 percent of its investment. The tax credit is claimed over a seven-year period, with five percent of the investment amount available in each of the first three years and six percent in each of the following four years. WRC will purchase the Property and, as part of the NMTC transaction (discussed further under Project Funding, below), sell it to Western Rivers Forestry (WRF). WRF plans to contract with the Tribe to manage the Property.

The Tribe currently manages approximately 45,000 acres of fee and Tribal trust lands within and nearby the Yurok Reservation. The Tribe intends to manage the Property to enhance its tremendous fisheries values and safeguard this gateway to the cultural heart of the Yurok people. Its goals for the Property include eliminating clear cut harvesting and the use of herbicides; expanding protective riparian stream buffers; decommissioning excess roads, sequestering forest carbon; and implementing watershed, fisheries, and habitat restoration projects. The Blue Creek watershed will transition from the current even-aged management to an old growth preserve, using light-touch timber harvesting to accelerate a late successional forest. The Tribe's harvest will be miniscule compared to current allowed practices. This will eliminate clear-cutting impacts to anadromous fish habitats and reduce sources of fine sediment discharges. The remaining Property will be sustainably managed for long-term water quality and cultural resource protection while fostering the economic development of the Tribe and community members.

WRC intends to initiate a carbon sequestration project on the Property. Pursuant to a Credit Agreement entered into between WRC and the David and Lucille Packard Foundation (Foundation) to finance a portion of the Phase 2A purchase price, any net carbon revenues generated off the Property are encumbered to repay the indebtedness under the Credit Agreement. The WCB Grant Agreement requires that any net carbon revenues generated after the indebtedness to Foundation is repaid must be used for management and maintenance of the Property or, subject to the approval of WCB for other conservation purposes. An annual carbon report must be delivered to WCB and shall account for all carbon revenues received and disbursed in the previous calendar year.

#### TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$9,900,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff, reviewed and approved by an independent appraiser hired by WCB staff, and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The timber valuation portion of the appraisal has been reviewed and approved by a registered professional forester. The independent appraisal review was posted on the WCB's website at least thirty days prior to the November 20, 2014 WCB Board meeting. The terms and conditions of the WCB grant provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions, financing documents 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	\$5,000,000.00
State Coastal Conservancy (pending)	\$2,000,000.00
Wyss Foundation	\$1,000,000.00
New Markets Tax Credit Financing	<u>\$1,900,000.00</u>
Total Purchase Price	\$9,900,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	\$35,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$5,035,000.00</b>

It is estimated that \$35,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related administrative costs, including DGS appraisal review.

Approximately 20 percent of the purchase price of the Property will be provided by NMTC financing. Use of NMTC financing requires a specific structure for the transaction; for the tax credit period (up to seven years) the Property must be owned by a special-purpose nonprofit organization created specifically for the project and known as a Qualified Active Low-Income Community Business (QALICB). In addition, as part of the NMTC financing the Property will be encumbered by two deeds of trust securing short-term loans to the QALICB.

WRF will be the QALICB for this project. WRF will be a party to the WCB Grant Agreement as Successor Grantee and, upon its acquisition of the Property, be responsible for the Grantee's under the Grant Agreement. Following expiration of the tax credit period and repayment of the short-term loans, WRF wishes to transfer the Property to the Tribe. The proposed WCB Grant Agreement consents to this transfer, subject to conditions in the Grant Agreement. The Grant Agreement also acknowledges that, if the Tribe becomes the owner of the Property, it may later wish to transfer it to the United States in order for the Property to be held in trust for the Tribe. Any transfer to the United States would require approval under the Grant Agreement and applicable law.

#### FUNDING SOURCE

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

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 recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,535,000.00 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) and \$1,500,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the grant to WRC and to cover project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Donnelly said he received letters of support from Senator Noreen Evans, Assembly Member Wesley Chesbro, Rex Bohn, Chair, Humboldt County Board of Supervisors; Irma Lagomarsino, Assistant Regional Administrator for NOAA; William Zielinski and Keith Saluson, Research Wildlife Biologist for the U.S. Forest Service; Peter Moyle, Professor of Fish Biology, UC Davis; Paul Beier, Regents Professor, School of Forestry, Northern Arizona University; Thomas O'Rourke, Chairperson, Yurok Tribe; and Curtis Knight, Executive Director, California Trout.

Mr. Walsh introduced Yurok Tribe Councilmembers Mindy Natt and Laura Borden; Troy Fletcher, Executive Director; Javier Kinney, Office of Self Governance Director; Nathan Voegeli, Staff Attorney. Also in attendance from Western Rivers Conservancy was Sue Dorroff, President; Phillip Walin, Vice President; Cam Tredennick, Senior Project Manager. Attending from the Department of Fish and Wildlife is Eric Haney, Lands and Conservation Planning Coordinator.

Chairman Bonham said the wildlife value in this area speaks for itself. It is a salmon stronghold. One of a few left along the coast. He also wanted to comment on the relationship between the Yurok tribe and the Department of Fish and Wildlife. It is the state's largest tribe in terms of members and it is one of the most remote and challenging places from an economic perspective. While wildlife, on its own, is enough to qualify this project, he asked the Board not to overlook tribal sovereignty and self-development elements of this program as well.

Mr. Sutton added this project is supported by innovative financing, it is a carbon

sequestration project, it supports the restoration of the Klamath River, it supports critical habitat for salmon and steelhead and there is much to like about this project.

Sue Dorroff, President of Western Rivers Conservancy, spoke in support of this project and said it benefits fish, wildlife and people. She said for fish, Blue Creek is the critical cold-water tributary in the lower Klamath. We cannot insure the survival of the run without Blue Creek. For wildlife, this is a 47,000 acre project in a 12 million acre ecoregion and possibly, the most important project she will ever work on in her career. It will provide continuous habitat for wildlife and connect the wilderness and the park and will allow for threatened species to have a chance for survival. For people, it is critical for the economy for Del Norte and Humboldt counties and it has cultural and spiritual significance for the Yurok Tribe. She ended by thanking the Board for their consideration.

Troy Fletcher, Executive Director of the Yurok Tribe, spoke next in strong support of the project. This project represents the ongoing work of a decade or more of discussions with Green Diamond on how to achieve restoration and conservation goals. This project has tremendous ecological value. We cannot understate how important this area is for fish. It is also very important as it is a key corridor for wildlife. It is one more step to a larger project. On behalf of the Yurok tribe, they fully support this project.

Mr. Donnelly added that he was waiting for a letter of support from Del Norte County, which he had not yet received. He did talk to the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, David Finnigan, who indicated the Board of Supervisors was going to consider this project on November 25, which is in five days. Mr. Donnelly said Mr. Finnigan is in full support of the project, however, there is a condition that the county tax base not be impacted. Western Rivers Conservancy will provide a guarantee to the county that they will continue to pay taxes.

**It was moved by Board Member Michael Sutton, that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,535,000.00 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) and \$1,500,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the grant to WRC and to cover project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

15. Salt River Wetland Restoration, Humboldt County \$450,000.00

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU) for a cooperative project with the State Water Quality Control Board (SWQCB), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW, through its Fisheries Restoration Grant Program (FRGP)), the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) and the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to restore and enhance salt marsh, riparian forest and tidal sloughs on approximately 356 acres of former tidal area on 2.5 miles of the Salt River channel, located three miles northwest of Ferndale and one mile from the mouth of the Eel River in Humboldt County.

Mr. Scott McFarlin described the project and its location to the Board.

#### LOCATION

The Salt River is located at the southern end of the Pacific temperate rain forest ecoregion in the “coastal redwood zone” of northwestern California about 100 miles south of the California-Oregon border and just northwest of the town of Ferndale. The site is part of the Humboldt Bay/Eel River estuary complex, which encompasses the second and fourth largest estuaries on the California coast. The Salt River watershed includes several tributaries that originate in the heavily forested Wildcat Mountains, located south of the estuary. This area is internationally recognized for its historic and continued importance to fish, waterfowl, shorebirds, and other wetland-dependent species.

The Eel River is the third largest river system in California, and its estuary includes the Salt River and all the former tidelands in the greater area including the CDFW’s Salt River Unit of the Eel River Wildlife Area. Historically, the Eel River estuary was a maze of tidal channels and riparian and wetland habitats supporting enormous populations of migrating and juvenile fish. Salmonids, including coho and Chinook salmon, steelhead, and coastal cutthroat trout, as well as Pacific lamprey, tidewater gobies, longfin smelt, and other species all utilized these once productive coastal wetlands. Following the lead of the native Weott people, whose fishing villages once ringed the estuary, the first commercial salmon cannery was opened in 1877 at the mouth of the Eel River, and in its ten year operation produced 4,123,200 pounds of processed salmon. By the turn of the century, however, the Eel/Salt River salmon and steelhead fishery had been reduced to a shadow of its former productivity.

During this same period, the estuary was diked off and converted to agricultural production, primarily dairy pasture. Those practices continue to this day, and the floodplain produces significant income for the area in dairy and beef products. In addition, some minor development is found in the floodplain, especially near the City of Ferndale.



### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Salt River is a relatively small tributary to the Eel River, yet it once was the main vector of the area's shipping industry between 1860 and the early part of the 20th century. At that time it was a tidally influenced slough measuring 200 feet across and 15 feet deep at Port Kenyon, four miles above its confluence with the Eel River. It has since been reduced to a minimally defined channel barely four feet across. This is the result, mainly, of two past practices. First, heavy logging and other activities in the upper watershed greatly increased the amount of sediment delivered to the estuary. Second, diking the many tidal channels and marshes within the estuary itself greatly reduced the amount of tidal flushing, thereby reducing the amount of sediment that the estuary can move. As a result, not only are the estuarine and aquatic habitat severely compromised, but the sedimentation has created serious flooding problems for roads, residences, and agricultural land all along the river. The hydraulic dysfunction of the Salt River has caused significant problems related not only to flooding and wildlife habitats, but also compromised the Ferndale wastewater treatment plant, creating water quality issues.

These problems increase each year as the sediment continues to fill the channel and drainages. Currently, the Salt River carries very little water before overtopping its banks. The problem is so severe that even small rain events cause the Salt River and the lower reaches of its tributaries to overflow their banks resulting in near perpetual flood conditions in the wet season.

In 2011, the WCB assisted with the first phase of a project to restore ecological function of the Salt River. That project, the Eel River Wildlife Area Salt River Unit Wetland Restoration, also known as the Riverside Ranch Restoration project, restored 250 acres of tidal marsh to improve wildlife and fish habitat and improve sediment transport and reduce flooding. The proposed project will complement the Riverside Ranch project by restoring approximately 2.5 miles of the Salt River channel and floodplain immediately upstream, reconnecting the historic fish migration corridors to two tributaries: Francis and Reas Creeks. In all, the project will restore nine acres of tidal/brackish marsh, six acres of freshwater wetlands, and 19 acres of riparian habitat. This is a critical step in the on-going process of restoring the entire Salt River watershed by alleviating chronic and economically damaging flooding, restoring fish and wildlife habitat that have been lost due to ongoing aggradation of the Salt River channel, and restoring historic ecosystem processes and functions of the Salt River watershed.

The restored Salt River channel, and more than a half mile of restored channel on Francis Creek, will be comprised of three features: 1) An approximately 20 foot wide active channel in the center that is designed to maximize velocity and sediment transport capacity; 2) an active bench surrounding the channel that serves as a connection between the floodplain and the active channel; and 3) a floodplain zone that contains a riparian and wetland buffer that will help contain high flows and provide valuable wildlife habitat. Fish habitat will be enhanced

through the installation of an array of in-stream woody structures, including logs, root masses, and wooden weirs.

The excavated channel and floodplain will be vegetated in order to stabilize the channel and create diversified habitat conditions in the corridor. The planting area consists of a mosaic of habitat types including, tidal freshwater riparian, freshwater riparian, and brackish and freshwater wetlands. Native plants will be used and consist of wetland plugs, shrubs, ferns, trees, potted plants, and seed mixtures. The wetlands will be seeded with a native seed mix to provide ground cover and foraging habitat. The riparian habitat will provide diversity in vegetation structure by planting different types of trees and shrubs. To provide immediate nesting habitat for cavity-nesting birds, large alder logs will be installed vertically along the Salt River channel. Finally, wildlife-friendly fencing will be installed along the restored channel to allow continued livestock grazing on adjacent private agricultural lands while protecting the restored habitats from cattle grazing.

In order to maintain the functions and processes of the channel, such as maintaining optimal flow and sediment conveyance, sediment management areas will be constructed in the floodplain to trap and manage sediment over the full spectrum of winter flows. These areas will emulate natural floodplains along the mainstem Salt River by separating the floodplain and low-lying areas from the river channel.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and meets the program's goals of restoring coastal and tidal habitats, and providing habitats for native fisheries and threatened and endangered species.

The project is consistent with the priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan to fund projects that provide resilience in the face of climate change for native wildlife species, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife, provide or enhance habitat connectivity and corridors, improve habitat for threatened or endangered species, and support disadvantaged communities.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Humboldt County Resource Conservation District (HCRCD) developed an Adaptive Management Plan (AMP) that spells out the timing, roles and responsibilities, and thresholds and triggers for a variety of monitoring and maintenance activities. The AMP activities have been included in the project's long term maintenance permits. HCRCD and the Salt River Watershed Council, a local community group, have partnered in the development of a community-based public-private partnership with a variety of resource agencies and Humboldt State University professors to conduct required monitoring and to address maintenance needs as they arise.

Active sediment management areas may require annual maintenance through manual sediment removal. The overall project has developed specific plans to reuse the excavated sediments on adjacent agricultural lands to assure cost-effective disposal long-term. The plans have been approved by the landowners and involved agencies.

The duties described here will be the responsibility of the HCRCD, with assistance from the Watershed Council in Years 0-5. After Year 5, the Watershed Council will assume primary responsibility with guidance and assistance from the HCRCD. The NRCS will be responsible for some monitoring and maintenance activities in connection with a Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) contract on Riverside Ranch and also on other conservation easements throughout the channel corridor. DU will be responsible for ensuring that the HCRCD and the Watershed Council manage and maintain the project improvements pursuant to the terms of the Grant Agreement. If at any time during the life of the project, the HCRCD and Watershed Council do not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that DU refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Task	WCB	FRGP	SWQCB	SCC	DWR	Total
Project Management	\$21,600	\$30,875	\$152,000	\$132,000	\$140,125	\$476,600
Construction	\$301,400	\$195,928	\$1,800,000	\$472,500	\$1,300,000	\$4,069,828
Revegetation	\$100,000	\$0	\$200,000	\$0	\$44,500	\$344,500
Project Administration	\$27,000	\$6,292	\$5,000	\$5,668	\$38,940	\$82,900
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$450,000</b>	<b>\$233,095</b>	<b>\$2,157,000</b>	<b>\$610,168</b>	<b>\$1,523,565</b>	<b>\$4,973,828</b>

Project costs will be for site preparation, earthwork, installation of water control structures, revegetation, fencing, signs, construction management and project administration.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding sources for this project are the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Proposition 12), Public Resources Code Section 5096.350(a)(1)(B), which allows for the acquisition, development, restoration and protection of wetlands and adjacent lands outside the Sacramento – San Joaquin Valley; and the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d)(Proposition 1E), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley, which allows for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass outside the Central Valley. Both are consistent with the purposes of this project.

CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION

The Humboldt County Resource Conservation District, as lead agency, prepared an Environmental Impact Report 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. All required permits have been secured. The CDFW has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$412,096.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d)(Proposition 1E), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley and \$37,904.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Proposition 12), Public Resources Code Section 5096.350(a)(1)(B); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. McFarlin introduced Craig Garner from Ducks Unlimited to help answer any questions.

Ms. Finn asked why the locals are not participating in this project. Mr. McFarlin said the locals are not participating on this phase of the project, but had in earlier phases. Ms. Finn asked if there were another phase to come or is this the last phase. Mr. Garner said a phase 3 will continue up the watershed. Ms. Finn asked if funding has been identified for that phase yet. Mr. Garner said they are in the process of identifying future funding for that phase.

There were no further comments or questions.

**It was moved by Board Member Karen Finn, that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$412,096.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d)(Proposition 1E), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley and \$37,904.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Proposition 12), Public Resources Code Section 5096.350(a)(1)(B); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried**

16. Mt. Shasta Headwaters Forest, Hancock (Town Block), Siskiyou/Shasta County \$9,090,000.00

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Pacific Forest Trust (PFT) for a cooperative project with the California Department of Transportation to acquire a forest conservation easement (Conservation Easement) over 12,644+/- acres of working forestlands, forest reserve areas and habitat linkages, located near the town of McCloud in Siskiyou and Shasta Counties. The Conservation Easement will allow continued forest harvesting and prohibit conversion to non-forest land uses. The Conservation Easement will promote restoration and conservation of wildlife habitat for rare and threatened species such as the willow flycatcher and the northern spotted owl; conserve forested buffers along Highway 89, the National Volcanic Scenic Byway; and permit expanded public recreational access opportunities. The project offers significant strategic, landscape-level benefits by linking existing US Forest Service (USFS)-designated Late Successional Reserves.

Ms. Connie Best from Pacific Forest Trust and Mr. Brian Gibson presented the project to the Board.

#### LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES

The property (Property) proposed for protection by the Conservation Easement straddles the border between Shasta and Siskiyou Counties on the south side of Mt. Shasta, encompassing 12,644+/- acres of productive working forestland within the southern extent of the Cascade Range. Adjacent to the town of McCloud, the Property is bisected by the National Volcanic Scenic Byway. The Property also abuts the Shasta-Trinity National Forest; including USFS-designated Late Successional Reserves, as well as other large, commercial timber properties. The property makes up a significant portion of the McCloud River watershed. The Conservation Easement will significantly expand the conservation of this watershed, which is a major tributary to the upper Sacramento River providing cold water for downstream fisheries, drinking water, and agriculture.

Most of the area surrounding the Property can be described as rural, with forest and agricultural properties, interspersed with rural residential properties, including several large land holdings. The Property is approximately 15 miles from lands protected by a 9,200+/- acre forest conservation easement completed with WCB funding in 2006 and the 8,230+/- acre Bear Creek Working Forest conservation easement completed in 2012 also with WCB funding.

The Property is located within a vast complex of mostly contiguous habitat. Intervening land owners include the United States Forest Service, Roseburg Resources Company, Hearst Corporation, The Campbell Group and smaller private landowners. This project will help achieve landscape-level conservation goals by enhancing ecosystem functionality across ownerships and enhance

wildlife habitat connectivity and corridors.

The Conservation Easement will accomplish priority goals outlined in several state and federal plans including sections of the WCB's Strategic Plan, CDFW's Mount Shasta Forest Headwaters CAPP, the California Water Action Plan, the CDFW's Essential Habitat Connectivity Project and the USFS Forests to Faucets study for its significant contribution to drinking water.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is largely forested, highly productive and unfragmented conifer forest. The elevation varies from about 2,800 feet near the outflow of Cabin Creek to 4,832 feet atop Snowman's Hill. Terrain ranges from gentle to moderately steep. Portions of the Property are in the level "pine flats" area along Highway 89 with steeper areas in the southern portion of the Property along various streams having slopes approaching fifty percent. The range of seral stages within the Property's forestlands, from early-to-late seral, is quite diverse relative to other private ownerships in the region. The Conservation Easement will ensure this forest remains forever undeveloped and that the sustainable forestry practiced on the Property and certified by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) is maintained through time at standards that exceed those required by California's regulations. No residential or agricultural conversion will be allowed, although limited grazing will be permitted as a vegetation management tool. Within the area subject to the Conservation Easement, approximately 1,060+/- acres will be managed as Special Habitat Management Zones for the conservation of sensitive and rare habitat types, including 705+/- acres of "Mature Forest Reserve." The Conservation Easement will also strengthen protection of more than 35 miles of Class I, II, and III watercourses as well as 78 cold-water springs through setbacks and canopy retention requirements.

Interspersed among the conifer forests on the Property and adding significantly to the diversity of habitat types are 236 acres of wetlands, 125 acres of oak woodlands, 705 acres of mature forests, and 766 acres of riparian habitat. Together, these lands provide habitat for 17 special status plants and animals including the northern spotted owl, Pacific fisher, American pine marten, and willow flycatcher. Data from CDFW indicates that 127 species will benefit from the Special Habitat Management Zones and the forest management practices provided under the Conservation Easement. Of equal importance, these habitats house whole species guilds, contributing to landscape level diversity and providing an important buffer against future population declines.

The Conservation Easement will allow the Landowner to continue to operate the Property as an economically sustainable forest, as this is one of the objectives of the funding source, providing additional benefits to the regional economy and local wage earners in an area where unemployment is at 10%. The Conservation Easement will permit non-motorized, non-consumptive public recreation across the whole Property subject to a public access management plan, offering the potential

for expanding recreational opportunities in the area. The project will also create scenic buffers along the National Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway.

The Property bridges a key north-south gap between Late Successional Reserves within the Shasta-Trinity National Forest and enhances the existing 17,500+/- acre network of working forest conservation easements in the McCloud area. This project will restrict timber harvest levels to achieve higher forest carbon stores than would typically be found on forests under commercial timber management. Conservation of this tract will create a large-scale, well-connected system of conserved lands to facilitate adaptation and migration of species consistent with California's Climate Adaptation Strategy - *Safeguarding California*.

### 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 at its November 17, 2007 meeting, utilizing a peer review process involving biological and forestry expertise from CDFW. The Program seeks to promote the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests through conserving, preserving and restoring productive managed forestlands, 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 forestlands. 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.

This project is consistent with WCB's Strategic Plan Goal A (Environmental Protection and Conservation), directions A-1 (protect intact landscapes to provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change), A-4 (invest in priority conservation projects recommended by CDFW), and A-5 (communicate and coordinate with CDFW in the selection and implementation of projects), as well as Goal C (Public Use and Recreation), direction C.1 (support a wide range of recreational activities in conjunction with other land uses and without degrading environmental resources).

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

If this proposal is approved, the Property will be protected according to the terms and conditions of the Conservation Easement. The Property will continue to be owned and managed by the Landowner for sustainable timber harvesting and enhancement of watershed, wildlife, fishery and plant resources, subject to the provisions of the Conservation Easement. The PFT will be responsible for the long-term monitoring and enforcement of the Conservation Easement according to the terms and conditions of the WCB grant agreement. Prior to closing, the PFT will be required to provide the WCB with a baseline conditions report documenting

the current conditions of the Property. At closing, the Landowner will make a donation to PFT's stewardship fund to cover the perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs.

**TERMS**

The Conservation Easement has been appraised as having a fair market value (FMV) of \$11,700,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff, reviewed and approved by an independent appraiser hired by WCB staff, and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The timber valuation portion has been reviewed and approved by a registered professional forester. The independent appraisal review was posted on the WCB's website at least thirty days prior to the November 20, 2014 WCB Board meeting. The Property owner has agreed to sell the Conservation Easement for \$11,700,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant to the PFT 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 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:

Approved Fair Market Value	\$11,700,000.00
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$ 9,000,000.00
Caltrans/Resources EEMP grant funds	\$ 350,000.00
Other	<u>\$ 2,350,000.00</u>
<b>TOTAL Purchase Price</b>	<b>\$11,700,000.00</b>
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$ 90,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$ 9,090,000.00</b>

It is estimated that an additional \$90,000.00 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including DGS appraisal review and timber harvest appraisal review.

The PFT has applied for a \$2,350,000.00 grant from Cal Fire through its Greenhouse Gas Reduction & Fire Prevention Grant program. At the time this Agenda was prepared, no decision had been made by Cal Fire regarding the grant application.

The PFT has been awarded an Environmental Enhancement Mitigation Program



grant in the amount of \$350,000.00 and will apply the funds toward the purchase.

#### WCB 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(a), which provides funding for forest conservation and protection projects that promote the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests through conservation and preservation 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, plants found on these lands.

#### 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 recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$9,090,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a) for the conservation easement acquisition grant to Pacific Forest Trust and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Donnelly received letters of support for this project from Senator Ted Gaines, Assembly Member Wesley Chesbro, Assembly Member Brian Dahle, John Laird, California Secretary for Natural Resources; Erin Williams, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services; Michael Kobseff, Chair, Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors; Curtis Knight, Conservation Director for California Trout; Ben Miles, Executive Director of Shasta Land Trust; Adriane Garayalde, District Administrator for Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District; Nina Kapoor, Vice President of Legislative Affairs from California Forestry Association and Kathleen Hit, Conservation Director for Shasta Land Trust.

Mr. Gibson introduced Laurie Wayburn, President and Co-CEO of Pacific Forest Trust; Paul Mason Vice President of Policy and Incentives for Pacific Forest Trust; Megan Wargo, Conservation Director with Pacific Forest Trust; John Davis, Vice President of Hancock Natural Resource Group and Michael Kobseff from the

Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors and Eric Haney, Lands and Conservation Planning Coordinator from the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Mr. Sutton asked about the Special Habitat Management Zones and how they contribute to climate adaptation and if Hancock Natural Resource Group is planning to move toward certification of their operations with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Ms. Best said Hancock's current management practices exceed FSC standards. She also added those high standards will be maintained as it is written into the conservation easement. Mr. Sutton said that since their practices are meeting such a high standard, they should not have a problem meeting the FSC certification standards. He did add that the easement takes care of the habitat, but the certification speaks to forest management practices beyond just habitat conservation. Ms. Best said the Special Habitat Management Zones are located around the more sensitive habitat areas and allow these areas to be managed toward habitat goals. The areas outside of these Special Habitat Management Zones will have forest management guided by goals and restriction developed with the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Consequently, there are habitat goals across the whole property.

Chairman Bonham asked if ownership does change in the future, does the grant agreement require Pacific Forest Trust to continue to monitor the terms of the agreement. Ms. Best said that was correct.

Ms. Finn asked what happens if the Trust does not receive the grant from Cal Fire, since it is a competitive process. Mr. Donnelly answered saying it will be up to Pacific Forest Trust to raise the remaining balance if the Cal Fire funding does not materialize or it is less than expected. Additionally, the grant agreement between the Wildlife Conservation Board and Pacific Forest Trust has a date in which escrow has to close. If escrow does not close by that date, then WCB can close the grant out and recover the funding or the grant timeline can be extended.

Michael Kobseff, Chair of the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors, spoke in support. He said the Board of Supervisors supports the project and it is a very unique area. He added that he is available to answer any questions.

John Davis, Vice President of Hancock Natural Resource Group, spoke next in support of the project. He was thankful for the opportunity to bring conservative working forest management to this property and work in a collaborative way with the other partners on the project. He thanked the Board for their consideration. He did respond to Mr. Sutton's question regarding FSC certification by saying they were certified, but allowed it to lapse as there is a cost associated with such a certification, but no return on such cost. He added that the management of the property will exceed the standards required of such a certification.

Eric Haney, Lands and Conservation Planning Coordinator from the Department of Fish and Wildlife also spoke in support of the project. He said the conservation

easement provides a model for how to manage other areas of the Klamath/Cascade.

Chairman Bonham asked if there were any further questions and there were none.

**It was moved by Board Member Michael Sutton that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$9,090,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a) for the conservation easement acquisition grant to Pacific Forest Trust and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

17. Barry Point Fire Forest Restoration, Modoc County \$2,500,000.00

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Pacific Forest Trust (PFT) for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and Collins Timber Company (Collins), the landowner, to restore forest habitat on Collins' 32,686-acre Lakeview Tract property, located just west of Goose Lake, approximately 30 miles north of the city of Alturas in Modoc County.

Mr. Scott McFarlin presented the project to the Board.

#### LOCATION

The project area encompasses 22,414 acres of the approximately 32,686-acre Lakeview Forest tract owned by Collins Timber Company. The project is located in Modoc County on the Modoc plateau west of Goose Lake, immediately adjacent to the California/Oregon state line.

Elevations range from 5140 feet to 5980 feet. Topography in the project area is typical of the Modoc plateau in that it is a basaltic formation of flat to gently rolling terrain. The property and restoration project area drain into Goose Lake, which was historically the headwaters to the Pit River, part of the Sacramento River watershed. Agricultural water diversions have lowered the lake level below the outlet, creating a semi-closed drainage basin with surface flows into the Pit River during years of heavy precipitation. The Goose Lake drainage basin is still the subsurface headwaters to the Pit River and the Sacramento River system.

The Modoc National Forest wraps around the project area on three sides, west, south and east, while the Fremont-Winema National Forest abuts the property to the north in Oregon. This property provides a critical wildlife corridor linking the two national forests on the Modoc Plateau. Sitting within the Pacific Flyway it also serves as a migratory stopover and nesting site for a number of species including the greater sandhill crane.

Habitat in the project area is described as Eastside Pine under the California Wildlife Habitat Relationship classification system. Ponderosa pine, white fir, incense cedar and western juniper dominate the property. Understory vegetation is composed of snowbrush, green-leaf manzanita, bitterbrush, snowberry and mountain mahogany. The grass and forb complex is dominated by wyethia and Idaho fescue. Interspersed among the project's conifer forests are seasonal meadows, aspen stands, and low sage habitat that add significant wildlife habitat diversity to the landscape.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In August 2012, the Barry Point Wildfire was started by a lightning ignition in the Fremont-Winema National Forest. In total, the fire burned nearly 60,000 acres of federal forestland and 33,000 acres of private land- including 22,000 acres owned

by the Collins Timber Company. The Barry Point fire was a devastating fire, causing as much as 75% tree mortality. The burn scar, where most of the forest and vegetative cover has been lost, represents an area that is almost 7 miles wide and 6 miles long. Fortunately, some of the wildlife habitat elements were less impacted by the wildfire including the existing aspen stands and xeric meadows.

Following the fire, Collins started the initial stages of rehabilitation of the forest. Dead commercial timber has been or will be removed from the site while retaining snags for bird habitat and future down woody debris recruitment. Any tree that is expected to live will remain on-site, ensuring that there will be some of the original gene pool left on the property. Furthermore, leaving green trees will add to the vertical structural diversity of the forest as it is reestablished.

With the lack of surface organic material and minimal vegetative cover on the site, the erosion potential is significant. Overland flow, which can lead to mass sheet erosion, is a potential following any wildfire, and the best way to prevent this erosion is through reestablishment of native forest on the site. Bare mineral soil also can result in the introduction of noxious weeds and quickly reestablishing a cover on the bare soil will minimize that threat.

This restoration project is designed to restore the ecosystem functionality of the property and meet the following forest restoration and conservation goals:

- Re-establish the full suite of native tree species that make up the indigenous eastside pine forest, and manage it for the retention and recruitment of larger trees and closed canopies representing characteristics of a mature, late-seral forest. These structural elements will be designed to provide foraging and nesting habitat for species such as the great grey owl. Thin newly planted and natural regenerating trees will provide maximum habitat values. During the thinning phase, designated stands adjacent to seasonal xeric meadow will be treated for the purpose of growing larger trees quicker and the creation of multi-storied stands through the regeneration of a second, smaller stand of trees. Reducing the initial number of saplings will result in larger diameter growth over the same time frame as trees grown at higher densities.
- Restore and enhance aspen groves throughout the property through several methods. First, no conifer trees will be planted within 100 feet of the boundary of any existing aspen grove. Second, all existing live conifer trees within 100 feet of the aspen clumps will be removed.
- Protect and enhance the xeric meadows on the property by removing encroaching conifers.
- Promote landscape-level connectivity and contribute to the re-creation of an interconnected network of public and private lands managed for timber as well as for habitat and watershed values.

The fire severely impacted wildlife habitat resources and landscape connectivity

within the forest. Rehabilitation of the forest on this property will bring back forest structure that will benefit the great grey owl, provide the necessary ecotype juxtaposition of forest cover and meadows needed by elk to find forage and shelter, and reestablish the canopy that assists in water temperature regulation for three rare native fish found on the property: the short nosed sucker, Modoc sucker and red-band trout. This restoration work will also reestablish the connectivity for wildlife traveling north and south between the two national forests.

To further assure the long-term management of the property, and as part of the cost-share for this Project, the Collins Company has agreed to charitably grant to PFT a perpetual working forest conservation easement over the whole of the 32,686-acre tract.

#### WCB PROGRAM

This project will be funded through the Forest Conservation Program and meets the program's goal of promoting the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests for all their public benefits 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 habitat for native fish and wildlife and plants found on these lands.

The project is consistent with the priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan to fund projects that provide resilience in the face of climate change for native wildlife species, provide species strongholds or refugia, provide or enhance habitat connectivity and corridors, improve habitat for threatened or endangered species, and enhance habitats on working lands.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Once the restoration is complete, the on-going costs of restoration and stewardship over time will be the responsibility of the landowner. As the forest matures, wood products sustainably harvested under the terms of the easement will enable Collins Timber Company to continue to make investments in stewardship while providing jobs for the depressed local economy.

Overall, this restoration effort may take 60 - 80 years. The first phase, which includes site preparation and planting, will be completed in the first 10 years and is the subject of this proposal. The second phase is the growth phase, which will include the pre-commercial thinning and will be the subsequent 5 years. The on-going management phase will start around year 20 and will continue on through 60 - 80 years of the project life.

The landowner committed to donating a permanent conservation easement over this property to ensure that it remains in its natural forested condition in perpetuity. The easement will cover the entire property – including burnt and un-burnt areas – with terms that assure its commercial timber production will be integrated in perpetuity with management for wildlife habitat values. This conservation

easement will protect the public investment in habitat restoration and guide the landowner's on-going management in providing commercial timber production and wildlife and recreation values. Commercial forestry and other land uses will be limited and used to enhance habitat values across the property over time, recreating a mature, complex forest and the mosaic of non-forest habitats that make this such an extraordinary property. A management plan will be required by the perpetual conservation easement, prepared in consultation with CDFW, and subject to PFT's approval. Forestry and other activities will be monitored by PFT at least annually to ensure compliance.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Task</b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>Matching Funds</b>	<b>Total</b>
Site Preparation	\$200,000	\$468,000	\$668,000
Seed Propagation and planting	\$1,529,471	\$405,402	\$1,934,873
Monitoring	\$0	\$94,600	\$94,600
Vegetation control	\$770,529	\$1,524,236	\$2,294,765
Project Management	\$0	\$307,000	\$307,000
Project Administration	\$0	\$150,000	\$150,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,500,000</b>	<b>\$2,949,238</b>	<b>\$5,449,238</b>

Collins Timber Company has committed to provide the Matching Funds, which may come from grant requests from any of the following: the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention, or California Conservation Corps. In addition, the landowner has committed to donating a conservation easement over the entire property, which is estimated to be valued at \$2.5 million.

Project costs will be for contracts, salaries and wages, vehicle expenses, and supplies/equipment.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding source for this project is the WCB's Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, Public Resources Code Section 75055 (a), which provides funding for the promotion of the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests for all their public benefits through restoration of productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas, redwood forests and other forest types and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

**CEQA AND CDFW RECOMMENDATION**

The Central Modoc Conservation District, 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. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,500,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, Public Resources Code Section 75055 (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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Donnelly received letters of support from Senator Ted Gaines, 1<sup>st</sup> Senate District; Assembly Member Brian Dahle, 1<sup>st</sup> District; Jim Willis, Chair of the Modoc County Board of Supervisors; Pearce Flournoy, President, Central Modoc Resource Conservation District; and Neil Manji, Regional Manager from the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Mr. McFarlin introduced Connie Best and Megan Wargo from Pacific Forest Trust, Lee Fledderjohann from Collins Timber Company and Eric Haney, Joe Croteau, and Bob Hawkins from the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Mr. Fledderjohann spoke in support of the project and said that in one day, 21,000 acres burned, and the goal of this project is to restore the wildlife habitat that was lost to the fire. In addition, the conservation easement includes the unburned areas as well. The Collins Timber Company is Forest Stewardship Council certified. He concluded by thanking the board for their consideration.

Joe Croteau spoke in support of the project as well and said the fire was devastating and ruined some plans for timber restoration. This project is unique and without out WCB's support, Collins would not be able to restore the forest as quickly as they would like. He concluded by saying it is a great project and is excited to support it and thanked the board for their consideration.

Ms. Finn asked if there were any further questions and there were none.

**It was moved by Board Member Michael Sutton that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,500,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, Public Resources Code Section 75055 (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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

18. Little Truckee River Fish Habitat Restoration, Nevada and Sierra Counties \$190,000.00

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the National Forest Foundation for a cooperative project with the U.S. Forest Service and Trout Unlimited to enhance fish habitat in the Little Truckee River where it flows through the Tahoe National Forest, in an area located generally ten miles north of the city of Truckee in Nevada County.

Mr. Scott McFarlin described the project and its location to the Board.

#### LOCATION

The proposed project is located in the eastern half of the Middle Truckee and Upper Little Truckee watershed within the Little Truckee River between Boca Reservoir and Stampede Reservoir. The area is primarily surrounded by National Forest lands under the management and direction of the Truckee Ranger District of the Tahoe National Forest. Nearby communities include Truckee, Sierraville, and Loyalton. Nearby recreational facilities include campgrounds at Prosser Creek Reservoir, Boca Reservoir, Stampede Reservoir, and Independence Lake. The Town of Truckee is located approximately nine miles southwest of the project site.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The three-mile stretch of the Little Truckee River between Boca and Stampede reservoirs is one of the most highly sought after areas for fishing in the State of California but has been severely altered with the construction of the reservoirs. It is used as a conveyance reach by the Bureau of Reclamation for the transport of water. The project element area is lacking coarse woody debris, pool depth, and exhibits areas of high erosion.

The project would enhance and improve the physical conditions on five sections of the Little Truckee River and nearby terrestrial environments to create complex, high quality aquatic fish and wildlife habitat. The main treatments for this element include the following:

- Add 200 large boulders to the channel for fish structure
- Anchor 80 large trees to streambanks to add pool depth and habitat complexity
- Create two new backwater habitats for juvenile wild trout rearing by extending existing low velocity spawning areas through excavation and placement of logs and boulders
- Transplant 50-70 adult willows along banks to provide shade, cover, and bank stability
- Enhance spawning gravels in channel to increase wild trout reproduction by providing cover and reducing water velocity

Expected benefits for wild trout are improved spawning habitat, creation of backwater resting areas, improved invertebrate production for an increase in prey, cooler water, and a general increase in diversity of the stream. Enhancements will not change channel patterns or the current flood regime, and will not alter existing water conveyance or dam operations. The proposed project will maintain water conveyance from Stampede Reservoir to Boca Reservoir and the structures will be designed to accommodate large and small dam releases out of the Stampede Reservoir. Structures will be permanently anchored to avoid any downstream impacts to Boca Reservoir.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and meets the program's goal of providing for native fisheries restoration and in-stream restoration.

The project is consistent with the priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan to fund projects that provide resilience in the face of climate change for native wildlife species and that enhance water resources for fish and wildlife.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Forest Service will be responsible for long-term maintenance of the project. The project will occur on public lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service under the 1990 Tahoe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), as amended by the 2004 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Record of Decision. These plans direct long-term management of the Tahoe National Forest in perpetuity.

Funding for long-term management will come from the U.S. Forest Service Tahoe National Forest watershed budget. The past experience with this type of restoration has shown that while it is important to have provisions for long-term maintenance, significant maintenance is often not needed once natural hydrologic and geomorphic processes are restored.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Task</b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>NFF</b>	<b>USFS</b>	<b>TU</b>	<b>Total</b>
Construction	\$152,000	\$70,000	\$152,000	\$184,000	\$558,000
Project Management	\$38,000	\$13,200	\$0	\$0	\$51,200
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$190,000</b>	<b>\$83,200</b>	<b>\$152,000</b>	<b>\$184,000</b>	<b>\$609,200</b>

Project costs will be for salaries and wages, vehicle expenses, supplies/equipment, restoration contracts, monitoring, and project administration.

### FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f), which provides funding for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat and aquatic habitat for salmonids and trout and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

### CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW

As Lead Agency, the Tahoe Resource Conservation District has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has considered the MND and prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Following the Board's approval of the project, staff will file a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$190,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. McFarlin introduced Vance Russell with the National Forest Foundation and David Lass with Trout Unlimited.

Chairman Bonham said this individual project was part of a set of projects that came to the Board in August. At that time, there was not a quorum and Chairman Bonham elected to recuse himself as his prior employer was Trout Unlimited. He has elected to remove himself from decisions that are directly related to that organization.

Mr. Donnelly asked if there were any questions or comments and there were none.

**It was moved by Board Member Michael Sutton that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$190,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

19. Yolo County Water Intake and Fish Screen, \$2,000,000.00  
Yolo County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to Reclamation District 2035 (RD 2035) for a cooperative project with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), the Department of Water Resources (DWR), and the Woodland Davis Clean Water Agency (WDCWA) to construct a new screened water intake for RD 2035. The project will screen the largest remaining unscreened intake on the Sacramento River north of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, located five miles east of Woodland on privately-owned land on the west bank of the Sacramento River levee, approximately one-half mile north of Interstate 5, in Yolo County.

Mr. Brian Cary presented the project to the Board.

#### LOCATION

The project is located on the west bank of the Sacramento River levee, approximately one half mile north of the I-5 river crossing and directly adjacent to the existing RD 2035 intake in unincorporated Yolo County. The nearest urban area is the City of Woodland, located approximately five miles west of the project site.

The Project area consists primarily of rural and agricultural lands in unincorporated Yolo County. The major urban uses in the immediate vicinity of the project site include County Road 117, the Sacramento River Levee, the existing RD 2035 intake and irrigation canal, railroad tracks owned and operated by the Sierra Northern Railway, and the I-5 Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge south of the project site. There is one existing rural residential house located approximately one quarter mile north of the Project site and several residences across the river to the east.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

RD 2035 pumps Sacramento River water for agricultural irrigation through an existing 400 cfs intake and pump station built in 1919. The pump station is located on the west bank of the Sacramento River, immediately upstream from the I-5 Vietnam Veterans Bridge. The existing diversion is the largest remaining unscreened intake on the Sacramento River north of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Conaway Preservation Group (CPG), the largest property served by the pump station, has appropriate water rights with 1919 and 1947 priorities, and a Central Valley Project (CVP) water right settlement contract with BOR. This water supply irrigates approximately 17,000 acres of CPG farmland, growing crops such as rice, corn, alfalfa, wheat, tomatoes, safflower, and other annual crops. In addition, the property contains significant amounts of wetland and upland habitat. In 2012, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife funded conservation easements on the property for the protection of threatened and endangered species, including Swainson's hawk, giant garter snakes, and tri-colored blackbirds, and to protect current wildlife-

friendly agricultural practices.

Natural populations of Chinook salmon and steelhead have declined over the years, leading to their listing under the state and federal Endangered Species Acts. The declines of Chinook salmon and steelhead populations in the Sacramento River system have been caused by factors such as unscreened diversions, inadequate flows and inadequate passage at diversion dams, agricultural return drains, poor water quality, reduced spawning gravel, and illegal harvest. Unscreened diversions have been particularly detrimental to winter-run Chinook salmon. Water diversions entrain emigrating juvenile salmon and create flow changes near pump stations that confuse adult salmon during migration. As a result of these population declines, federal and state fish agencies are working with water districts and agencies, as well as with individual landowners, to minimize or eliminate entrainment of these fish species through the construction of modern, state-of-the-art fish screens on their diversions.

The Project will replace the existing intake structure, with a new structure that will include a state-of-the-art fish screen, intake structure, and pump station. The Project, once constructed, will provide environmental and water quality benefits, improve water supply reliability in the region, and achieve goals that are consistent with the following:

- The ecosystem restoration goals of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program;
- The federal Anadromous Fish Screen Program; and
- The environmental priorities identified under “Eliminate Barriers to Fish Migration” Actions contained in Governor’ Brown’s recently published Water Action Plan.

The Project objectives are as follows:

- Ensuring the screened water intake meets current NMFS and CDFW fish screen design criteria;
- Protecting CPG’s existing water rights and ensuring that RD 2035 can maintain a reliable long-term supply to its service area even if the listed species are present in the vicinity of the intake facility; and
- Constructing a screened intake for RD 2035 that allows for joint use by the WDCWA in conjunction with implementation of the Davis Woodland Water Supply Project, which will provide a new surface water supply to the Cities of Woodland and Davis and to the University of California, Davis.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and meets the program's goal of providing for native fisheries restoration, threatened and endangered species habitats, in-stream restoration projects including removal of fish passage barriers and other

obstructions.

The project is consistent with the priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan to fund projects that provide resilience in the face of climate change for native wildlife species, provide or enhance habitat connectivity and corridors, and improve habitat for threatened or endangered species.

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS**

The Project is a Joint Venture between RD 2035 and the WDCWA. Operation and Maintenance of the Project will be managed by the WDCWA as delineated in the *WDCWA-RD 2035 Joint Intake Operations Agreement*, dated February 6, 2014

If at any time during the 25-year life of the project, the RD 2035 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**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Project Task	Total Cost	WCB	WDCWA Cost	BOR	State Share*
Project Development	\$1,503,334	\$0	\$374,116	\$564,609	\$564,609
Construction Mgmt.	\$4,530,000	\$0	\$1,288,491	\$1,620,755	\$1,620,755
Construction	\$45,863,961	\$2,000,000	\$11,318,009	\$16,272,976	\$16,272,976
Contingency	\$4,586,396		\$1,331,801	\$1,627,298	\$1,627,298
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$56,483,691</b>	<b>\$2,000,000</b>	<b>\$14,312,417</b>	<b>\$20,085,638</b>	<b>\$20,085,638</b>

*\*State Share includes \$10,000,000 committed from DWR. Additional State funding has been requested.*

Project costs will be applied to the construction of the new intake structure, fish screen, a pump station, and Project development and management.

**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), allows for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of habitat to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, to provide corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent habitat fragmentation, and to protect significant natural landscapes and ecosystems and other significant habitat areas.

**CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION (IF NEEDED)**

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The Reclamation District 2035, 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 recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,000,000.00 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 and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr Donnelly said he received a letter of support from a congressional contingent that included Congressman John Garamendi, Senator Dianne Feinstein, Congressman Mike Thompson, Congresswoman Doris Matsui, and Congressman Doug LaMalfa. He also received letters from Senator Lois Wolk; Pablo Arroyave, Deputy Regional Director, Bureau of Reclamation; William Marble, Chair of the Water Resources Association of Yolo County; Todd Manley, Director of Governmental Relations, Northern California Water Association; Bob Schneider, Senior Policy Director of Tulyome; Robert Faris of Faris Farms, and Tina Bartlett, Regional Manager of Region 2, Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Mr. Cary introduced Bob Thomas, President of RD 2035; Gary Reents, Joint Intake and Fish Screen Project Manager; Dennis Diemer, General Manager of the Woodland Davis Clean Water Agency.

Senator Wolk spoke in support of this project saying it has so many benefits to the state. She said both cities have been reliant on ground water and it is now time to move off ground water. This is the largest unscreened diversion north of the Delta. It will have many benefits to the Delta and is consistent with the Governor's Action Plan and the WCB Strategic Plan. She urged the Board's support for this project and thanked staff for working with them on this project.

Chairman Bonham spoke saying the Department of Fish and Wildlife has been in a long term partnership with the Bureau of Reclamation to screen diversions up and down Sacramento all the way to Red Bluff. This is the last remaining large unscreened diversion and we need to get it screened. Finally, the Department of Fish and Wildlife is the state department written into the action item in the Governor's Water Action Plan about screening these diversions. We are excited about making progress in satisfying that action. Chairman Bonham asked, with today's approval, does the project move into implementation or will it have to wait for the remaining funds to be approved. Mr. Cary said construction is currently underway.



Ms. Finn asked how is the state's share identified. Mr. Thomas spoke saying this follows the typical state and federal funding in which there is a 5% local share and the state and Feds match their share.

Mr. Sutton asked what is the Board paying for in the larger context of the project. Mr. Thomas answered saying part of the state and federal funding will be used to replace the existing worn-out fish screens. Chairman Bonham added these are very expensive screening and intake projects.

Mr. Thomas thanked the Board for their consideration. He added that when this project initially came up, through Senator Wolk's leadership, they were able to put together a partnership with RD 2035, the City of Woodland and the City of Davis and UC Davis on a cooperative single fish screen. He thanked Senator Wolk for her involvement in this project.

Mr. Bonham asked if there were any further questions and there were none.

**It was moved by Board Member Michael Sutton that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,000,000.00 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 and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

20. San Joaquin River Parkway, Ball Ranch (Quarry Site),  
Fresno County \$0.00

This project was withdrawn from consideration.

21. Metcalf Meadow, \$570,000.00  
San Bernardino County

This proposal was to consider the acceptance of a 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 grant to the SBMLT to acquire 14± acres of land in San Bernardino County to promote recovery of rare and endangered plant and wildlife species.

Mr. Kurt Weber presented the project to the Board.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property), known as Metcalf Meadow, is adjacent to Big Bear Lake, on the southern side on Metcalf Bay. The Property is contiguous with the Lake View Pines mobile home park and the City of Big Bear Civic Center. It is bounded on 3 sides by residential or commercial development and the Property is bisected by Highway 18 (aka Big Bear Blvd). The California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Baldwin Lake Ecological Reserve is located approximately nine miles to the northeast. Other uses in the area include two major ski resort facilities located several miles southeast of the Property.

The Property contains one of the largest intact remaining montane meadow habitats in the area, with a scarce amount of pebble plains habitat on the perimeter. Since inundation of the large Bear Valley meadow, meadow habitat in the San Bernardino Mountains has been reduced to small disconnected meadow remnants around Big Bear and Baldwin lakes, and small outlier meadows in the surrounding San Bernardino National Forest.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Less than 1+ acre of the Property is improved with a small vacant building. There is a cellular tower location that is currently leased for \$1,310 per month (plus 5% annual increases), and will continue after the acquisition, with SBMLT using the proceeds to help offset management and operation costs of the Property.

On its eastern border the Property is bounded by Metcalf Creek (also targeted for acquisition pending USFWS approval of a Section 6 Recovery Land Acquisition Grant). An unnamed creek with a significant riparian corridor flows on the western portion of the Property. The site is relatively level, sloping gently toward Big Bear Lake.

Species to benefit from the proposed acquisition include the following: federally endangered, State endangered pedate checker-mallow; federally endangered California taraxacum (dandelion); San Bernardino bluegrass; Bear Valley sandwort; and southwestern willow flycatcher.

Pedate checker-mallow occurs mostly on private property on the perimeter of Big

Bear Lake and nearby Baldwin Lake. Acquisition of the Property would help to accomplish Recovery Task 1.11 identified in the USFWS Recovery Plan for this plant by protecting priority habitat and sites. In keeping with WCB's Strategic Plan guiding principles and primary objectives, this area was identified as a high priority site because it encompasses one of the last remaining intact meadows occupied by pedate checker-mallow on the south shore of Big Bear Lake.

### 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 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 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 acquisition has been reviewed and approved by CDFW which has substantiated the biological values of the property and recommended 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, effectively leveraging WCB's funding as stipulated in our strategic plan under Goal E.1.

In accordance with Goal A, Environmental Protection and Conservation, Directions A-1 (Fund projects that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change) and A-3 (Fund projects that promote the recovery of listed species) of the WCB's Strategic Plan, acquisition of the Property will reduce major habitat fragmentation and help implement the recovery of the listed species found on or near the Property.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be owned and managed by SBMLT. The preponderance of the Property is natural open space, and will be maintained as such. The existing office structure and associated parking could provide a convenient location for public outreach. Other potential future public use opportunities on the Property could include nature viewing, photography, and scientific study.

### TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$1,613,600.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and the USFWS. The Property owners have agreed to sell the Property to the SBMLT for \$1,600,000.00. The USFWS funds require a non-federal match that would be provided by the proposed WCB

grant. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and subgrant of USFWS grant funds each provide that WCB staff must review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance, prior to disbursement of funds into the escrow account established for the purchase of the Property. 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	\$ 560,000.00
USFWS Subgrant Funds	<u>\$ 1,040,000.00</u>
TOTAL	\$ 1,600,000.00
Other Project-related Costs	\$ 10,000.00
<b>Total WCB Allocation</b>	<b>\$ 570,000.00</b>

It is estimated that \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover internal project-related costs including DGS appraisal review costs.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(b/c) that is available for use for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species.

**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 recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; approve the acceptance of Recovery Land Acquisition grant funds from USFWS in the amount of \$1,040,000.00 and approve the subgrant of these federal funds to the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust; allocate \$570,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the grant to the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust and to cover the project-related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate

agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

Ms. Finn asked if there were any questions or comments and there were none.

**It was moved by Board Member Karen Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; approve the acceptance of Recovery Land Acquisition grant funds from USFWS in the amount of \$1,040,000.00 and approve the subgrant of these federal funds to the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust; allocate \$570,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the grant to the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust and to cover the project-related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

22. Big Tujunga Canyon Restoration, \$1,245,000.00  
Los Angeles County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the National Forest Foundation (NFF) for a cooperative project with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Alcoa, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens (RSABG), Oakwood School, and Los Angeles Conservation Corp (LACC) to restore and enhance riparian and chaparral habitats within the Big Tujunga Canyon in the Angeles National Forest (ANF), located immediately east of the city of Los Angeles in Los Angeles County.

Mr. Scott McFarlin described the project and its location to the Board

#### LOCATION

The proposed Project is located in the Big Tujunga Creek watershed in the San Gabriel Mountains in Los Angeles County, California. Big Tujunga Canyon includes rarely visited open space in the upper watershed and highly utilized recreational areas near urbanized communities in the lower watershed. Big Tujunga Creek, the main stream feature in the watershed, is a major tributary of the Los Angeles River. The canyon is generally accessed from well-maintained and highly used county roads along the California Interstate 210 corridor.

The project starts at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains adjacent to the City of Los Angeles in the Sunland neighborhood and continues east within ANF lands. The ANF provides the scenic vista to the Los Angeles metropolitan area while providing critical wildlife, recreation, and water supply values to the region.

The ANF provides Los Angeles County with 33% of its drinking water and over 72% of its open space. Every year millions of visitors connect to this forest to hike, swim, picnic, and enjoy this vast open space in Los Angeles County. Watershed and riparian protection of the ANF is critical to the health and well-being of the entire Los Angeles basin. The 97,000-acre Big Tujunga Canyon Watershed is one of the largest watersheds to the Los Angeles River, containing a variety of habitats including chaparral, conifer forest and riparian forest.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 2009, the Big Tujunga Canyon watershed was the center of the Station Fire, a large and extremely hot fire that severely damaged riparian, chaparral, and conifer habitats. The Big Tujunga Watershed provides habitat for several important aquatic species, many of which are threatened or endangered, including the Santa Ana sucker, arroyo chub, Santa Ana speckled dace, arroyo toad, coastal rainbow trout, western pond turtle, as well as terrestrial species such as the two-striped garter snake, least Bell's vireo, peregrine falcon, and southwestern willow flycatcher. The loss of this habitat and the subsequent recovery provides an opportunity to achieve multiple goals for habitat restoration for these and many more species within the forest and adjacent public lands.

The purpose of the proposed Project is to implement ecological restoration actions throughout a large portion of the Big Tujunga Creek watershed to assist in ecosystem recovery, while fostering meaningful connections between local residents and their forest.

The proposed restoration Project effort is comprised of the following four primary tasks: 1) riparian restoration; 2) aquatic restoration; 3) chaparral restoration; and 4) ecologically sustainable recreation. Below is a description of each task and related subtasks, implementation methods, and environmental benefits. All tasks will be implemented using multiple features to avoid and minimize potential impacts to sensitive and protected resources.

**Task 1. Riparian Restoration.** To address the threats to the riparian corridors within the watershed, invasive weed removal will be conducted to ensure native plants and habitats have an opportunity to thrive within the Big Tujunga Watershed. This action will be followed by active restoration, including tree and shrub planting, passive restoration within the riparian areas, and monitoring to track conditions and maintenance to ensure success.

A combination of weed crews, conservation corps crews, and community volunteers already have restored more than 150 stream miles within the burn area by removing invasive species manually. This work will continue with active removal of invasive weeds from an additional 200 stream miles focusing on the manual removal of Spanish broom, tree tobacco, tamarisk, and sweet clover. Additionally, some invasive species will be controlled with limited herbicide application, focusing on the removal of Arundo and tree of heaven.

Native riparian species, such as oaks, willow cuttings, or other appropriate riparian trees and shrubs will be planted where appropriate. In some locations, invasive plants will be removed and not actively replanted, allowing for passive restoration. This approach will require continued weeding of these locations for the first year or more so that native plants have an increased probability to re-establish. Maintenance may include continued weeding of areas treated, replanting, and monitoring of plots to document success and treatment effectiveness.

**Task 2. Aquatic Restoration - Recreational Dam Removal.** In-stream restoration is designed to ensure that three protected native fish species (Santa Ana sucker, arroyo chub, and Santa Ana speckled dace) and coastal rainbow trout are able to fully recover and thrive within the watershed. The actions include evaluating the fish passage barrier assessment to determine any temporary barriers that need removal, and then addressing additional threats from encampments, water play, and recreational dams.

Efforts will focus on the removal of recreational user created dams that alter the stream hydrology and substrate creating modified and degraded stream habitats and impediments to upstream and downstream movement. This task will also



include development of a program to address the social component of this issue, based on recommendations from the sustainable recreation workshop. For the restoration to be successful, forest visitors must be knowledgeable of the impacts of their activities on the surrounding species and will be provided with information on how to protect the sensitive habitats and species while they are recreating.

Task 3. Chaparral Restoration. Chaparral is the dominant vegetation type in the Project area and is the vegetation type that suffered the most damage during the fire. Given years of intense fire suppression, the presence of non-native grasses and other non-native species, the intensity of the Station Fire, and the disturbance associated with fire-fighting activities, chaparral is susceptible to complete conversion to habitat dominated by non-native grasses. To combat this potential, the Project proposes to evaluate the efficacy of various chaparral restoration techniques, beginning with a small five acre pilot project and then scaling up to a larger 30 acre restoration project.

The pilot area will be restored using randomly dispersed plots with one of four treatments: 1) reseeding alone, 2) replanting with nursery stock, 3) active weed removal alone, and 4) control (no treatment). The results of this pilot will be published and shared with agencies via reports and presentations in order to inform recovery methods in other locations throughout southern California. Results and lessons learned from the pilot project will be used to expand the restoration to another location within the Project area, restoring an additional 30 acres.

Task 4. Ecological Sustainable Recreation. This task will implement recommendations from the Ecological Restoration and Sustainable Recreation Workshop hosted by the NFF in February 2013. This workshop brought together representatives from the Forest Service and from the outside, including biologists, landscape architects, recreational and land managers, trail users, and representatives from local nonprofit organizations, to discuss opportunities for resource protection while enhancing visitor experience. Actions are designed to reduce recreational impacts to stream habitat by redirecting use away from the streams and back to established recreational sites, limiting access to certain locations of the creek, reducing the building of rock dams, and removing the patchwork of unauthorized access routes that currently exists. A trail reroute will also protect sensitive riparian and upland habitats and protect arroyo toads and other species from human-caused impacts.

This task consists of repairing three recreational sites and rerouting one trail. The three high use recreational sites (Wildwood Picnic Area, Vogel Flat/Stonyvale Picnic Areas, and Delta Flat) are located in Lower Big Tujunga Creek. They are adjacent to the portion of Lower Big Tujunga Creek that is habitat for three protected fish species (Santa Ana sucker, Santa Ana specked dace, arroyo chub) that only inhabit this location in the Project area.

### WCB PROGRAM

This project will be funded through the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f), which allows for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat and aquatic habitat for salmonids and trout; and the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(b), which allows for the acquisition, protection and restoration of coastal watersheds and adjacent lands in Los Angeles, Ventura or Santa Barbara Counties. Both are consistent with the objectives of this project.

The project is consistent with the priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan to fund projects that provide resilience in the face of climate change for native wildlife species, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife, provide or enhance habitat connectivity and corridors, improve habitat for threatened or endangered species, provide opportunities for greater public involvement in restoration projects, support disadvantaged communities.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

In 2005, the Forest Service updated its management plans for the ANF. The forest plan includes the provisions of the National Forest Management Act, the implementing regulations, and other guiding documents. The multiple-use desired conditions and objectives, land use zoning, design criteria (standards), and monitoring all work together to define management direction.

In 2011, the Pacific Southwest Region of the Forest Service issued the ANF Ecological Restoration Implementation Plan. This plan describes the Forest Service's vision and strategies toward achieving short- and long-term ecological restoration goals. The ANF Land Management Plan and the ANF Ecological Restoration Implementation Plan are the principal guidance documents for planning, managing, and implementing all tasks included in the proposed Project.

Also in 2011, the Forest Service, NFF, and community partners developed the Station Fire Restoration Strategy to guide ecosystem restoration of burned areas. The strategy envisions an improved ecological landscape, safe, ecologically sustainable public use consistent with the Land Management Plans, and a broad community of stewardship (the "Forest Community") comprised of volunteers and partners actively working with ANF staff in the stewardship of the forest.

The NFF will work with the Forest Service to implement project tasks from September 2014 through June 2017, except chaparral restoration, which will continue through June 2018. After that, the Forest Service will perform long-term management of the project. The Forest Service has interdisciplinary teams of hydrologists, fisheries biologists, wildlife biologists, ecologists, botanists, and recreational resource managers who will continue to provide monitoring and required resource protection measures for the project on an ongoing basis as

needed.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Task</b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>NFF</b>	<b>USFS</b>	<b>Alcoa</b>	<b>RSABG</b>	<b>Oakwood School</b>	<b>LACC</b>	<b>Total</b>
Riparian Restoration	\$450,000	\$45,000	\$450,000	\$24,000	\$30,000	\$0	\$25,000	\$1,024,000
Aquatic Restoration	\$25,000	\$5,000	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$55,000
Chaparral Restoration	\$370,000	\$50,000	\$370,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$790,000
Ecological Sustainable Recreation	\$155,000	\$7,500	\$155,000	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$392,500
Project Management	\$145,000	\$65,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$210,000
Operating Costs	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$100,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,245,000</b>	<b>\$172,500</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>	<b>\$24,000</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$2,571,500</b>

Project costs will be for salaries and wages, vehicle expenses, supplies/equipment, restoration contracts, monitoring, and project administration.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding sources for this project are the WCB’s Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f), which provides funds which allows for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat and aquatic habitat for salmonids and trout; and the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(b), which allows for the acquisition, protection and restoration of coastal watersheds and adjacent lands in Los Angeles, Ventura or Santa Barbara Counties. Both are consistent with the objectives of this project.

**CEQA AND CDFW RECOMMENDATION**

The Antelope Valley Resource Conservation District, 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. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$591,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 50 SoCal), and \$654,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking

Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(b); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Donnelly said letters of support were received from Michael D. Antonovich, Supervisor, County of Los Angeles; Richard Alarcon, Councilmember, City of Los Angeles; David R. Pettijohn, Director, Department of Water Resources – City of Los Angeles; Thomas R. Contreras, Supervisor, USDA Forest Services and Daniel J. Knapp, Deputy Director, Los Angeles Conservation Corp.

Mr. McFarlin introduced Vance Russell with the National Forest Foundation to help answer any questions.

Ms. Finn asked if there were any questions and there were none. She did note the variety of funding for this project.

**It was moved by Board Member Michael Sutton that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$591,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 50 SoCal), and \$654,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(b); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

23. Liberty Canyon Wildlife Crossing, \$650,000.00  
Los Angeles County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains for a cooperative project with Caltrans, Los Angeles County, a private landowner, and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) to enhance an existing undercrossing to allow wildlife to cross Highway 101 in an area located approximately nine miles east of Thousand Oaks in Los Angeles County.

Mr. Brain Cary presented the project to the Board.

#### LOCATION

The Liberty Canyon Wildlife Crossing project will consist of the enhancement of an existing under-crossing located at the Liberty Canyon Road and Highway 101 Interchange in Agoura Hills in northwestern Los Angeles County. Immediately north and south of the project area is permanently protected public land, consisting of coast live oak woodland and chaparral habitats. A small stream with riparian habitat flows north to south down Liberty Canyon, crossing Highway 101 through a culvert near the interchange. Two small suburban developments are located near the interchange, one immediately east of the interchange and a second approximately one quarter mile to the west.

The physical and topographical attributes of the project center on the fact that this site is the best remaining wildlife connection between very large undeveloped open space in the Santa Monica Mountains to the south and the Simi Hills, with the Los Padres National Forest beyond, to the north. The 101 Freeway, which runs east and west through this area from the LA Basin to Ventura, is the largest barrier to animals moving between these large blocks of native habitats. This is one of the few remaining stretches of the 101 Freeway with undeveloped habitat on both sides of this freeway.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Construction of the ten lane highway and its elevated fill slopes have buried eight hundred linear feet of the Liberty Canyon riparian zone and virtually eliminated wildlife movement between the Santa Monica Mountains on the south and the Simi Hills and Los Padres National Forest to the north. This major fragmentation and severing of critical wildlife habitat linkages has reduced the genetic health and adaptability of many local species. The problem is especially critical for the mountain lion population in the Santa Monica Mountains. The isolation of this population caused inbreeding, putting the health and existence of the population at risk. Providing wildlife a means to cross Highway 101 is critical.

The project site has been selected for two reasons. First, there is contiguous protected land on both sides of the freeway. At its narrowest point, there is a quarter mile of protected lands between suburban developments that make

mountain lion passage to and from the project site feasible. Second, the primary topographical attribute of the project is the creek running through Liberty Canyon. The creek's riparian corridor, which guides and provides cover for wildlife, disappears at the freeway when the creek drops into a culvert near the interchange, reappearing 800 feet south of the freeway. The culvert is not suitable for wildlife passage. This project is designed to enhance vegetation within the quarter mile of protected lands, to shield animals from the disturbance of the freeway, and direct them to a safe crossing under the freeway adjacent to the lightly used Liberty Canyon Road.

The project proposes to re-establish and enlarge the existing riparian zone. On the north side of the freeway, the project will widen and extend the riparian zone to provide additional cover for wildlife approaching the underpass area. Additional vegetative cover will be planted on the shoulders of the onramps. Caltrans is supporting the project proposal by agreeing to maintain relatively heavy wildlife cover within areas typically cleared of vegetation.

South of the underpass, an existing parking lot will be removed and restored into native habitat, connecting existing habitat with the south side of the Liberty Canyon Road undercrossing. An existing swale will be enhanced with additional vegetative cover and extended into previously restored riparian areas farther south. In order to provide additional cover for wildlife moving into the area from the south, valleys leading to the crossing area from south of two-lane Agoura Road are proposed to be restored with coast live oak woodland and chaparral habitats as part of the project.

The goal of the project is to provide seven acres of new habitat and to screen as much as possible the visual impact of the freeway on the crossing zone. Wildlife will be guided to the crossing area and prevented from entering the freeway through the construction of nearly three miles of new and enhanced fencing.

Restoration will utilize appropriate native trees, shrubs and understory species to create a dense thicket that will direct animals into the underpass area. Plants will also be selected for fire resistance, particularly in areas immediately adjacent to paved areas. Under the freeway, where sunlight penetration is insufficient to support even shade tolerant natives, the area will be graded into a sunken "dry wash" topography, and rocks and boulders will be installed to further screen this portion of the wildlife corridor from the paved road.

The Missing Linkages project identified this area as a key location within the Santa Monica to Sierra Madre linkage. The National Park Service lion GPS data suggests that in this area at least one mountain lion has successfully crossed the freeway and a second lion was hit and killed trying to cross the freeway.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Habitat Enhancement and

Restoration Program and meets the program's goal of providing for and protecting habitat corridors.

The project is consistent with the priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan to fund projects that provide resilience in the face of climate change for native wildlife species and provide or enhance habitat connectivity and corridors.

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS**

Once established, native habitats will require minimal annual maintenance. Caltrans will maintain all the fencing and any established vegetation within the Caltrans right-of-way. The MRCA will maintain all habitat established outside of the Caltrans right-of-way. If at any time during the 25-year life of the project, the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains does not assure that the project improvements are managed and maintained, 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**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Task	WCB	Caltrans	MRCA	Landowner	LA County	Total
Landscape design	\$37,160					\$37,160
Agency Review/coordination	\$26,360	\$8,000			\$4,000	\$38,360
Project Management	\$70,300					\$70,300
Construction	\$329,500	\$200,000		\$175,000	\$196,000	\$900,500
Management	\$96,800		\$250,000			\$346,800
Reporting	\$30,850					\$30,850
Contingency	\$59,030					\$59,030
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$650,000</b>	<b>\$208,000</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>	<b>\$175,000</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$1,483,000</b>

Project costs will be for design, fencing, habitat restoration, reporting, and project management.

**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(b), 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 and are consistent with the objectives of this project.

CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, 15302, Class 2, as the replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and 15304, Class 4, as a minor alteration to land which does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$650,000.00 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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Donnelly said he received numerous letters of support for this project from Senator Fran Pavley, Assembly Member Richard Bloom, David Szymanski, Superintendent for the National Park Service; Zev Yaroslavsky, Supervisor, District 3, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Illece Weber, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Agoura Hills, William Koehler, Mayor, City of Agoura Hills; Lucy Martin, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Calabasas; Harry Schwarz, Council Member, City of Agoura Hills; Joan House, Council Member, City of Malibu. In addition, Mr. Donnelly received a letter from seven past Mayors from the City of Agoura Hills. He also received between 60 and 70 letters from other organizations, local citizens and homeowners associations. This is a very well supported project.

Mr. Cary introduced Clark Stevens, Executive Officer from the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains to help answer any questions.

Mr. Sutton asked how success is measured on this type of project. Mr. Cary responded by saying the National Park Service GPS monitoring of collared lions will indicate whether or not lions are utilizing the undercrossing. Mr. Sutton suggested the use of trail cameras to capture wildlife using the crossing.

Ms. Finn asked who the land owner is. Senator Pavley responded saying a small business owner owns the land.

Linda Parks, a Ventura County Supervisor spoke in favor of the project. The Ventura County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to support a wildlife crossing in Liberty Canyon. In addition, the city of Thousand Oaks has made this project one of their top five priorities for their city and they all look forward to the



Board's support of this project.

Senator Pavely spoke in support of this project as well. This project crosses both Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. She noted that the Board feels it is critically important to have partnerships with Caltrans very much invested in the project. Los Angeles County has also contributed \$200,000 towards this project. There is no opposition to the project and it is critical to extend these corridors for mountain lions and other wildlife. This project will be Phase 1 and should be completed sooner rather than later. This is a great project and she thanked Mr. Stevens and Ms. Parks.

Mr. Stevens came forward to say he is available to answer questions. In regards to the outdoor camera, that is part of the plan, but was not included as they do not have the specifics worked out. The landowner is very supportive and is removing parking that is in the immediate area. This is a part of a larger more robust crossing strategy in this area. This is the first step of several crossings in which animals will have a choice of over or under.

Mr. Sutton thanked staff for bringing forward a project in which the Board is paying less than half the bill. The Board likes to see that and have asked the staff to do more of that.

**It was moved by Board Member Michael Sutton that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$650,000.00 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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

24. Newport Valley Habitat Restoration, \$381,000.00  
Orange County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Tides Center-Marine Education Project (TCMEP) for a cooperative project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Coastal Commission and the City of Newport Beach to restore 15± acres of habitat at Newport Valley Property approximately 1.5 miles northeast of Newport Beach Harbor in Orange County.

Ms. Elizabeth Hubert presented the project to the Board.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The project is located on the 25-acre Newport Valley Property and is one of the largest remaining natural areas adjacent to the Upper Newport Bay. The site is located off Back Bay Drive northeast of Newport Bay Harbor. The valley is bordered by a housing development to the north, the Hyatt Hotel grounds, which includes a tennis club and mini golf course, to the south, Jamboree Road to the east, and Back Bay Drive to the west. A golf course lies upstream of the project site, across Jamboree Road to the east. The project site is owned by the City of Newport Beach.

Natural habitats within Newport Valley include coastal sage scrub, with freshwater marshes and riparian habitat at the valley bottom. The coastal sage scrub is partially degraded by weedy plant species. This site historically contained a seasonal stream; however, water currently flows year round due to runoff from the local residential area and golf course. This added water now supports the permanent freshwater marsh and provides for an enhanced riparian zone.

The site is adjacent to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) 752-acre Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve (UNBER). UNBER is an internationally significant birding site and provides nesting, feeding and wintering habitat for thousands of resident and migratory birds. Six rare or endangered avian species and one endangered plant are also found in the UNBER, which contains an estimated 70 percent of all remaining light-footed clapper rails, a federally and State listed endangered species.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Over the decades, the project site has been degraded through a host of human activities, including grazing, introduction of non-native invasive species, and urbanization. A housing development was built adjacent to the project site in the 1990s, and much of the vegetation on the project site was removed. These past disturbances have left approximately 13 acres severely impacted and dominated by invasive weedy species. The remainder of the site is wetland and riparian habitat and, while less affected by past practices than the uplands, is also in poor condition.

The proposed project will have two goals: to eradicate invasive plants and propagate and install native plants. First, non-native invasive plants will be eradicated from the site. Concurrently, seeds and cuttings will be collected and propagated in an on-site nursery. Second, once the weeds are controlled and the site prepared, volunteers will install and maintain the seedlings and provide ongoing maintenance, irrigation, and weed control. A total of 15 acres of habitat, made up of approximately 13 acres of coastal sage scrub and approximately 1,600 linear feet of riparian habitat, will be enhanced and restored as a result of the project.

As part of its mission, the TCMEP, through scientifically supported community involvement, engages the public to restore the native biodiversity of Upper Newport Bay. The program has hundreds of volunteers with a wide range of participants from local schools, corporate organizations, and community members. The program is unique in its efforts to increase awareness of native plant communities, engage community members with their natural surroundings, and foster positive partnerships with local organizations. The TCMEP makes a concerted effort to provide opportunities to schools in disadvantaged communities to restore natural plant communities.

Located adjacent to the tidally influenced Upper Newport Bay, the project provides essential habitat refugia and resilience to sea level rise. The site is rich with wildlife, including several rare bird species such as the California gnatcatcher and burrowing owl. It is hoped that light-footed clapper rail and least Bell's vireo, while not yet documented within the project area, will utilize the riparian and freshwater marsh habitats in future.

This project is consistent with the NCCP/HCP for the Central Coast Sub-region of Orange County. The plan covers 38,000 acres and was established to protect specific plant and animal species, including the California gnatcatcher and coastal sage scrub habitat, and linkages to marshes and other related habitats. The Newport Valley site is also considered an Environmental Study Area (ESA) within the City of Newport Beach General Plan. An ESA may support species and habitats that are sensitive and rare within the region or may function as a migration corridor for wildlife.

#### 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 habitats, coastal scrub, grasslands and threatened and endangered species habitats.

The project is consistent with the priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan to fund projects that provide resilience in the face of climate change for native wildlife species, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife, provide species

strongholds or refugia, improve habitat for threatened or endangered species, provide opportunities for greater public involvement in restoration projects, and support disadvantaged communities.

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS**

The TCMEP is the lead organization in the long-term management of the site. The program maintains partnerships with local organizations and agencies to support onsite work, including the CDFW, Newport Bay Conservancy, Orange County Parks, and the City of Newport Beach.

Maintenance will be conducted by program volunteers. Maintenance activities include invasive plant removal, irrigation, placement of plant cages to exclude herbivores, and adaptive management. Active restoration of the site is expected for five years and active maintenance for another five years to meet established success criteria and final project goals. Once established, the restored habitats will require minimal maintenance for the remainder of the 25-year life of the project. If at any time during the life of the project, the TCMEP 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**

The proposed funding for the project is as follows:

<b>Task Description</b>	<b>USFWS</b>	<b>Coastal Commission</b>	<b>Others <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>Funders TBD</b>	<b>Total</b>
Project Management	\$6,702	\$12,542	\$13,005	\$50,998	\$38,474	\$121,721
Plant Propagation	\$4,200	\$10,628	\$8,095	\$148,022	\$325	\$171,270
Plant Installation	\$9,486	\$42,578	\$16,535	\$141,149	\$18,340	\$228,088
Monitoring	\$3,375	\$2,369	\$0	\$18,304	\$8,871	\$32,919
Community Education	\$0	\$9,883	\$7,800	\$22,528	\$5,914	\$46,125
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$23,763</b>	<b>\$78,000</b>	<b>45,435</b>	<b>\$381,000</b>	<b>\$71,924</b>	<b>\$600,123</b>

<sup>1</sup> Others: the Marisla Foundation, Orange County Community Foundation, Patagonia, and CDFW in-kind contributions.

Project costs will be for project management, weed control, plant propagation, monitoring, and volunteer leadership training.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding source for this project is the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(a), which allows for the acquisition, protection and restoration of coastal wetlands identified in the Southern California Coastal Wetlands Inventory,

located within the coastal zone, other wetlands connected and proximate to such coastal wetlands and upland areas adjacent and proximate to such coastal wetlands and is consistent with the purposes of this project

CEQA AND DFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 4 of the Categorical Exemptions, California Code of Regulations, Title 4, Section 15304, as a minor alteration to land which does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$381,000.00 from Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(a), authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

Ms. Hubert introduced Matthew Yurko, Program Manager and Sylvie Lee, Grants Coordinator from Tides Center/Marine Education Program.

Mr. Yurko spoke in support of the project and reiterated they are a community based restoration program and volunteers complete a vast majority of the work. Ms. Finn asked who manages the nursery. Mr. Yurko said volunteers manage the nursery, but it is onsite with the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Mr. Donnelly pointed out that the property is completely surrounded by urbanization. A new development went in in the 1990 and severely impacted the site. Mr. Donnelly asked how will they ensure the habitat that is being created will be sustained overtime. Mr. Yurko said the program is long-term in partnership with different agencies that manage the land.

Ms. Finn asked if there were any further questions and there were none.

**It was moved by Board Member Michael Sutton that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$381,000.00 from Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(a), authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

25. Salton Sea Species Conservation Habitat, Imperial County \$3,315,000.00

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to construct 640± acres of shallow saline water habitat identified as part of the Salton Sea Species Conservation Habitat Project, located at the mouth of the New River approximately ten miles west of Calipatria in Imperial County.

Mr. Peter Perrine presented the project to the Board.

#### LOCATION

The Project is located on an exposed playa near the shoreline at the southern end of the Salton Sea, just east of the mouth of the New River. The site is approximately 8.5 miles northwest of the city of Westmorland, Imperial County. The property is owned by IID. Adjacent property uses include long-term fallow fields, active agriculture, and a duck club. CDFW's Wister Wildlife Management Unit of the Imperial Wildlife Area is located approximately 20 miles to the northeast along the eastern edge of the Salton Sea. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Sonny Bono National Wildlife Refuge is located just east of the project area.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Salton Sea (Sea) was created in 1905 when the Colorado River floodwaters breached a levee and flowed into the Salton Sink. Since that time, the Sea has been maintained by agricultural runoff and local rivers. The Sea is the State's largest inland body of water and provides a critical link in the Pacific flyway, supporting more than 400 species of migratory bird.

Historically, since the Salton Sea is a terminal lake, evaporation has resulted in a salt concentration that is 50% greater than the ocean. Additionally, increased demand for water in southern California, Nevada and Arizona, resulted in a negotiated settlement between the federal and state governments, and local water agencies, known as the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA). The QSA imposes local water conservation measures to restrict transfer of water elsewhere until 2017. After 2017, the reduction in water entering the sea is expected to reduce the size of the Sea. As the lake water elevation declines, larger and larger areas around the Sea will be exposed significantly affecting fish and wildlife resources and impacting air quality from wind erosion of newly dried shoreline areas. While inflows to the lake will decrease and continued water surface elevation declines are projected, hydrological modeling for the water transfer project suggests that lake inflows will stabilize at approximately 700,000 to 750,000 acre feet per year with sources primarily from the New and Alamo Rivers, creating a permanent hyper-saline pool in the center of the basin.

In recognition of these significant impacts of the QSA, the United States Congress approved the Salton Sea Reclamation Act to avoid long term impacts. This was followed by California's Salton Sea Restoration Act and establishment of the Salton Sea Restoration Fund appropriated funding by Propositions 50, 84 and other funding sources—notably the local water agencies. The joint State and federal programmatic Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) was then developed to evaluate various restoration alternatives for the Sea.

The ERP identified a preferred alternative to provide long-term stable aquatic and shoreline habitat for a diversity of fish and wildlife species dependent on the lake, reduction of air quality impacts, and protection of water quality. The alternative was more specifically described and evaluated in the Salton Sea Species Conservation Habitat Project (SCH), which called for the creation of up to 1,600 acres of shallow saline ponds (one to six feet in depth) to provide habitat for fish and the bird life that depend on them.

The proposed project will initiate the SCH by developing the infrastructure for the first phase of the SCH, approximately 640 acres of shallow saline habitat, consisting of two ponds that will provide a functional ecosystem for fish and avian species that inhabit the Salton Sea area. The ponds will be excavated with internal meandering channels to form a variety of depths of fish habitat and riprap will be placed as required to reduce erosion from wave action. The project will include numerous loafing and nesting islands of various sizes in each pond. Woody material cleared from the site will be piled in several areas inside of the project to provide underwater cover for fish and around the outside of the project to provide cover habitat for small mammals and birds. Avian nesting/roosting structures will be constructed on the margins.

The water for the ponds will be a blend of water from the New River channel (fresh to slightly brackish water) and the Salton Sea (saline water). The saline Salton Sea water will be pumped through a force main from a saline Pump Station that will be constructed as part of the project to a mixing structure at the New River pumping station then distributed into the main ponds. Each pond may be operated with a different mixture of water sources allowing for a variety of salt concentrations. Construction included with this first phase will consist of the installation of new power system to provide for the new pumps. The project will require the upgrade of existing electrical distribution lines and installation of new distribution line.

Any projects developed at the Salton Sea will face challenging and changing site conditions. Playa surfaces vary from reasonably stable in some areas that have been exposed for many years to extremely unstable areas that have been recently exposed. Surface conditions often mask different and potentially unstable soils that are a foot or so below the surface. Additionally, playa conditions vary across areas with little or no visible evidence of the changing condition. The SCH project is designed as a proof-of-concept project to evaluate the suitability of different construction methods in the Salton Sea playa environment. As such, the design

plans have a built-in adaptive management strategy from differing site conditions. They include several methodologies for berm construction given site specific conditions and outline a methodology for making field determinations of the site conditions.

### WCB PROGRAM

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

The project is consistent with the priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan to fund projects that provide resilience in the face of climate change for native wildlife species, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife, improve habitat for threatened or endangered species, and support disadvantaged communities.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Stressors include declining water elevations, increased salinity and other water quality issues. With the reduction of inflows to the Salton Sea, these problems will increase in the main body of the sea. Unfortunately there are no immediate measures that can be taken to increase flows into the Sea. The Project will mitigate for these impacts through the creation of impoundment, which can be better managed to maintain reasonably constant water elevations and manage salinity concentrations to levels more suitable for habitat. This will result in habitat with better functional values and higher carrying capacities.

The State of California has developed a management plan for the long term operation and maintenance and monitoring of the project. The plan is based in part on the *Salton Sea Ecosystem Monitoring and Assessment Plan* prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey. The project will include biological and water quality monitoring to assess various management techniques for future projects.

Portions of the site are managed by USFWS Sonny Bono Salton Sea NWR (Refuge), with the remainder expected to be managed by CDFW. The State of California (CDFW and DWR), the federal government (USFWS Sonny Bono Salton Sea NWR and the United States Geological Survey Salton Sea Science office) and IID have all contributed to the development of the project. The IID will provide maintenance as required by the grant for the long term success of the project. The IID has agreed to maintain the improvements for 25 years, or until the property is transferred to CDFW. If IID does not manage and maintain the project improvements for the 25-year life of the project or until transfer to CDFW, 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**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Task</b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>DWR</b>	<b>IID</b>	<b>CDFW</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
Design and Permitting			\$379,000		\$379,000
Construction	\$2,100,000	\$25,195,000	\$40,200		\$27,485,200
Management	\$1,215,000			\$607,027	\$1,663,027
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,315,000</b>	<b>\$25,195,000</b>	<b>\$419,200</b>	<b>\$607,027</b>	<b>\$29,527,227</b>

WCB’s portion of projects costs will cover construction management, site preparation and an improved electrical power system necessary to accommodate new pumping demands.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding source for this project is the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Water Code Section 79565 (SB 71) and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

**CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/RECOMMENDATION**

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The California Natural Resources Agency, 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 recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,315,000.00 from Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Water Code Section 79565 (SB 71); 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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Donnelly received letters of support from Congressman Raul Ruiz, 36<sup>th</sup> District; Michael Flores, Senior Environmental Scientist from the Department of Fish and Wildlife and Senator Ben Hueso, 40<sup>th</sup> Senate District.

Mr Sutton said the Salton Sea was created by accident more than 100 years ago and has since become extremely important. There was a New York Times article published on the Salton Sea dated November 10<sup>th</sup>. He said the Salton Sea is an internationally recognized wildlife habitat area and there is much concern of its

future.

Mr. Perrine introduced Bruce Wilcox from the Imperial Irrigation District, Michel Flores from the Department of Fish and Wildlife and Kent Nelson with the Department of Water Resources.

Chairman Bonham said the Salton Sea is a place of national importance and attention. The Department of Fish and Wildlife is working in partnership with the Department of Water Resources and they are very confident in their local partner, the Imperial Irrigation District. Chairman Bonham said this project needs to get underway. An additional benefit is that it will help manage dust and air quality concerns for the local communities.

Ms. Finn asked if there is an alternative that has been decided upon. Mr. Perrine said there are two different EIRs, one is an EIR for the Salton Sea as a whole that has not yet been approved, and a second EIR has been approved and a Notice of Determination has been submitted to restore 1600 acres of wetlands. The alternative that was presented today was the preferred alternative of that second EIR. Ms. Finn noted that the EIR is for 1600 acres but the project is only for 640 acres. Mr. Perrine said that the EIR evaluated the potential impacts for 1600 acres, but the amount of money available will only allow the restoration of 640 acres at this time.

Mr. Sutton echoed Chairman Bonham's sentiments saying this project needs to get underway.

Bruce Wilcox from the Imperial Irrigation District spoke in support of the project. He started by thanking the WCB staff and Board for working closely with them on this project. He said this project is a great example of collaboration and projects that can be completed as a group.

Kent Nelson from the Department of Water Resources also spoke in support of the project. What is important is that they built a coalition of local stakeholders who are interested in taking the first steps in completing habitat conservation at the Salton Sea.

**It was moved by Board Member Michael Sutton that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,315,000.00 from Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Water Code Section 79565 (SB 71); 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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

26. State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP)

Informational

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has embarked on an important effort to prepare a state wildlife action plan (SWAP) for fish and wildlife conservation using a comprehensive, internally consistent, and digitally accessible framework for assembling scientific information and designing conservation strategies with a wide array of stakeholders. First prepared in 2005 and now being updated for 2015, the SWAP is a requirement mandated by Congress for a state to receive federal funding through the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants (SWG) Program. Using the *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation* as the planning framework, SWAP 2015 will identify the species of greatest conservation need for each target ecosystem, define their key ecological attributes, and prescribe measures to best protect the ecosystems from human-caused threats and environmental stresses, importantly including climate change. The SWAP update seeks to create a flexible but scientific process to respond to changing challenges, including population growth, the need for renewable energy, and global climate change. The SWAP will integrate and promote implementation of common goals and objectives from multiple sectors. CDFW seeks to make best use of limited resources while developing lasting partnerships and increasing public participation in the conservation and management of California's valued natural resources. The Board will be given a short briefing on the 2015 update to the SWAP.

**Due to time constraints, this item was postponed to the next board meeting.**

27. Strategic Plan Update

Informational

The Wildlife Conservation Board Strategic Plan provides a high-level blueprint for WCB decision-making and establishes the primary framework for implementing the WCB vision over the next five years. The Plan was adopted during the August 28, 2014 Board Meeting.

Ms. Finn thanked all the staff that worked on the Strategic Plan. She said it is a great first step. She asked that the goals of the plan are specifically referred to when projects are presented. Mr. Donnelly said that they will be specific in the next full agenda.

Mr. Sutton requested that as the WCB implements actions, that it be brought to the Board.

Mr. Donnelly said he received a letter of support from the U.S. Department of Forestry congratulating the Board on adopting the plan and thanking staff for all their hard work.

There were no further comments or questions on the Strategic Plan.

28. 2014 Wildlife Conservation Board Meeting Schedule

Informational

The Board will consider and possibly adopt its 2015 meeting schedule.

February 26, 2015  
May 21, 2015  
August 20, 2015  
November 19, 2015

The Board decided to move the August meeting to the beginning of September due to conflicting schedules.

Mr. Donnelly announced that the Wildlife Conservation Board will be relocating to new offices as of December 19, 2014. The new addresses are

Physical Address  
Wildlife Conservation Board  
1700 9th Street, 4th Floor  
Sacramento CA 95811

Mailing Address  
Wildlife Conservation Board c/o CDFW  
1416 9th Street, Suite 1266  
Sacramento, CA 95814

29. Executive Session (Not Open to the Public)

The board may met in closed session pursuant to California Government code Section 11126(e)(1) to discuss pending litigation to which the wildlife conservation board is a party:

Jamulians Against The Casino vs. California Wildlife Conservation Board, et al., Sacramento County, Superior Court, Case Cumber 34-2014-80001894 (California Environmental Quality Act),

Bird Haven Ranch, LLC, et al. vs. State Of California, Department Of Fish And Wildlife Of The State Of California, Wildlife Conservation Board Of The State Of California, Glenn County, Superior Court, Case Number 14cv01345 (Quiet Title).

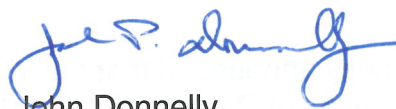
Ms. Finn and Mr. Sutton received an update from staff council on pending litigation. No action was taken.

In attendance: Karen Finn  
John Donnelly

Michael Sutton  
Laura Featherstone  
Colin Mills  
Peter Perrine  
Celestial Baumbach

The Closed Executive Session was adjourned and the public session was reopened.  
With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



John Donnelly  
Executive Director

## PROGRAM STATEMENT

At the close of the meeting on November 20, 2014, the amount allocated to projects since the Wildlife Conservation Board's inception in 1947 totaled \$2,588,500,983.02. This total includes funds reimbursed by the Federal Government under the Accelerated Public Works Program completed in 1966, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program, the Anadromous Fish Act Program, the Sport Fish Restoration Act Program, the Pittman-Robertson Program, and the Estuarine Sanctuary Program.

The statement includes projects completed under the 1964 State Beach, Park, Recreational and Historical Facilities Bond Act, the 1970 Recreation and Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Bond Fund, the Bagley Conservation Fund, the State Beach, Park, Recreational and Historical Facilities Bond Act of 1974, the General Fund, the Energy Resources Fund, the Environmental License Plate Fund, the State, Urban and Coastal Park Bond Act of 1976, the 1984 Parklands Fund, the 1984 Fish and Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Bond Act, the California Wildlife, Coastal and Park Land Conservation Act of 1988, Cigarette and Tobacco Products Surtax Fund of 1988, California Wildlife Protection Act of 1990, the Safe, Clean, Reliable Water Supply Act of 1996, the Natural Resources Infrastructure Fund, the Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund, Forest Resources Improvement Fund, the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond, Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection, and Flood Protection Fund, California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund, Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002, Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, and the Wildlife Restoration Fund. In addition to projects completed with the above funding sources, this statement includes tax credits awarded under the Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act. The tax credits are not reflected in the total amount allocated to projects.

A. Fish Hatchery and Stocking Projects .....	\$18,414,719.06
B. Fish Habitat Preservation, Development & Improvement .....	49,372,782.87
Reservoir Construction or Improvement .....	5,605,699.00
Stream Clearance and Improvement.....	33,597,009.73
Stream Flow Maintenance Dams.....	542,719.86
Marine Habitat .....	3,191,581.57
Fish Screens, Ladders and Weir Projects .....	6,435,772.71
C. Fishing Access Projects.....	61,530,953.38
Coastal and Bay .....	6,274,134.53
River and Aqueduct Access .....	23,440,342.38
Lake and Reservoir Access .....	10,813,623.43
Piers .....	21,002,853.04
D. Game Farm Projects.....	146,894.49
E. Wildlife Habitat Acquisition, Development and Improvement.....	2,369,364,967.28
Wildlife Areas (General) .....	443,984,171.23
Miscellaneous Wildlife Habitat Development.....	40,661,575.88

Wildlife Areas/Ecological Reserves, (Threatened, Endangered or Unique Habitat) .....	791,987,103.89
Land Conservation Area .....	15,130,464.18
Inland Wetlands Conser. Grants & Easements ....	31,349,664.38
Riparian Habitat Conser. Grants & Easements ....	96,104,199.14
Other Wildlife Habitat Grants .....	950,147,788.58
F. Hunting Access Projects .....	1,365,195.57
G. Miscellaneous Projects (including leases) .....	45,234,297.39
H. Special Project Allocations.....	1,892,496.37
I. Miscellaneous Public Access Projects .....	40,643,618.54
State Owned .....	2,247,004.81
Grants .....	38,396,613.73
J. Sales and/or exchanges .....	535,058.07
K. Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act (tax credits awarded)...	(48,598,734.00)
Statutory plans .....	(0.00)
Corridors, wetlands, wildlife habitat, streams and riparian habitat .....	(6,234,658.00)
Agricultural lands .....	(13,775,640.07)
Water and water rights.....	(0.00)
State and local parks, open space and archaeological resources .....	(28,588,435.93)
Total Allocated to Projects.....	\$2,588,500,983.02