

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

1807 13TH STREET, SUITE 103
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814
(916) 445-8448
FAX (916) 323-0280



State of California
The Resources Agency
Department of Fish and Game
Wildlife Conservation Board

Minutes
February 17, 2000

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DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

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February 17, 2000

The Wildlife Conservation Board met at the State Capitol, Room 113, Sacramento, California on February 17, 2000. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 A.M. by Mr. Robert Hight, Director, Department of Fish and Game. Introductions were made at this time, welcoming the newest member of the Wildlife Conservation Board, Mr. Michael Chrisman, President, Fish and Game Commission.

1.

Roll Call

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS

Michael Chrisman, Chairperson
President, Fish and Game Commission
Annette Porini, Chief Deputy Director
Vice, B. Timothy Gage, Member
Director, Department of Finance
Robert C. Hight, Member
Director, Department of Fish and Game

JOINT LEGISLATIVE INTERIM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Senator Byron Sher
Gavin Payne
Vice, Senator Jack O'Connell
Kristie Halstenrud,
Vice, Assembly Member Mike Machado

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

W. John Schmidt

Staff Present: W. John Schmidt, Executive Director
Jim Sarro, Assistant Executive Director
Georgia Lipphardt, Assistant Executive Director
Frank Giordano, Senior Land Agent
Debra Townsend, Senior Land Agent
John Donnelly, Senior Land Agent
Scott Clemons, Riparian Program Manager
Marilyn Cundiff, Wetlands Program Manager
Peter Perrine, Public Land Management Specialist
Roxanne Woodward, Budget Officer
Terri Muzik, Staff Services Analyst
Jan Beeding, Office Technician
Maureen Rivera, Executive Secretary

Others Present: George McArthur
Tim Wirth, Trust for Public Land
Banky Curtis, Department of Fish and Game
Frank Tortorich, Oregon California Trails Association
Jerry Henry, Yuba County GIS
Jim Manning, Yuba County Community Development
Peter Schmidt, Ducks Unlimited
Fritz Reid, Ducks Unlimited
Terry Hanson, City of Redding
Jesse Gonzalez, Sacramento Safari Club
Craig Britton, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Ken Nitz, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Nancy Schaefer, The Conservation Fund
Dave Patterson, California Waterfowl Association
Scott Stone, Yolo Land and Cattle Company
Judy Boshoven, Audubon Society
John Brissenden, Alpine County Chamber of Commerce
Patrick O'Brien, Department of Fish and Game
Bob Fredenburg, Senator Chesbro's Office

2. Election of Chair

Ms. Porini placed into nomination President Michael Chrisman as the Chairman of the Wildlife Conservation Board. Mr. Hight seconded the nomination.

Motion carried.

At this time, Mr. Chrisman expressed his appreciation and pleasure to serve on the Wildlife Conservation Board. He then turned over the meeting to Mr. John Schmidt for

further business. Mr. Schmidt welcomed Mr. Chrisman to the Board.

3. Funding Status as of February 17, 2000 Informational

(a) 1999-00 Wildlife Restoration Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Governor's Budget - Land Acquisition.....	\$200,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(2,000.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$198,000.00
Governor's Budget - Minor Projects.....	\$955,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(135,860.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$819,140.00

(b) 1998-99 Wildlife Restoration Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Governor's Budget - Land Acquisition.....	\$200,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(154,300.20)
Unallocated Balance	\$45,699.80

(c) 1997-98 Wildlife Restoration Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Governor's Budget - Land Acquisition.....	\$275,000.00
Plus Budget Revision-Reimbursement	247,710.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(522,710.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$0.00

(d) 1999-00 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Governor's Budget.....	\$18,932,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(1,812,344 .05)
Unallocated Balance	\$17,119,655.95

(e) 1998-99 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Governor's Budget.....	\$17,960,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(14,941,285.96)
Unallocated Balance	\$3,018,714.04

(f) 1997-98 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Governor's Budget.....	\$16,598,000.00
Plus Mid-year Adjustment	250,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(15,918,500.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$ 929,500.00

(g) 1997-98 Environmental License Plate Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Governor's Budget.....\$341,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations(341,000.00)
 Unallocated Balance\$0.00

(g) 1997-98 Safe, Clean, Reliable Water Supply Fund, River Parkway
Subaccount
Capital Outlay Budget

Governor's Budget.....\$9,800,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations(7,049,387.00)
 Unallocated Balance\$2,750,613.00

(i) 1999-00 General Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Governor's Budget.....\$34,100,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations(2,934,250.00)
 Unallocated Balance\$31,165,750.00

(j) 1998-99 General Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Governor's Budget.....\$4,850,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations(4,202,320.00)
 Unallocated Balance\$647,680.00

(k) 1999-00 Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund

Governor's Budget.....\$1,050,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations(200,000.00)
 Unallocated Balance\$ 850,000.00

(l) 1999-00 Forest Resources Improvement Fund

Governor's Budget.....\$2,600,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations(500,000.00)
 Unallocated Balance\$2,100,000.00

RECAP OF FUND BALANCES

Wildlife Restoration Fund (a), (b) and (c)\$1,062,839.80
 Habitat Conservation Fund (d), (e) and (f)\$21,067,869.99
 Environmental License Plate Fund (g).....\$0.00
 Safe, Clean, Reliable Water Supply Fund, River Parkway Subaccount (h)....\$2,750,613.00
 General Fund (i) and (j)\$31,813,430.00

Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund (k)\$850,000.00
Forest Resources Improvement Fund (l).....\$2,100,000.00

Mr. Schmidt asked is there were any questions regarding the above item. There were none.

4. PROPOSED CONSENT CALENDAR (Items 5 - 13)

Mr. Schmidt reported that the Consent Calendar consisted of Items 5 - 13. Staff recommended that the Board approve the Consent Calendar as presented, absent any objection. There were no comments or objections.

It was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve Consent Items 5 - 13 as proposed in the individual agenda explanations, including funding as noted therein.

Motion carried.

5. *Approval of Minutes - November 18, 1999 Meeting

Approval of the minutes of the November 18, 1999 meeting of the Wildlife Conservation Board was recommended.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the minutes of the November 18, 1999 WCB meeting be approved as written.

Motion carried.

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 was recommended that the following totals be recovered and that the projects be closed.

\$140,989.47 to the Habitat Conservation Fund
\$16,451.30 to the CA Wildlife, Coastal and Park Land Fund of 1988

WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND

Fox Grove Fishing Access, Stanislaus County

Allocated	\$125,000.00
Expended	<u>-125,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$ 0.00

Total Wildlife Restoration Fund Recoveries \$0.00

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND

Antelope Valley Wildlife Area, Exp. 3, 4 & 5, Sierra County

Allocated	\$255,000.00
Expended	<u>-246,351.40</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$8,648.60

Cosumnes River Wildlife Area, Exp. 4, Sacramento County

Allocated	\$355,000.00
Expended	<u>-338,478.17</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$16,521.83

Cosumnes River Wildlife Area, Exp. 5, 6, & 7, Sacramento County

Allocated	\$2,344,000.00
Expended	<u>-2,282,554.17</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$61,445.83

Crestridge Ecological Reserve, San Diego County

Allocated	\$3,516,000.00
Expended	<u>-3,506,581.66</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$9,418.34

East Grasslands Habitat Enhancement/Restoration,
(Castle Land and Cattle) Phase II, Merced County

Allocated	\$ 15,000.00
Expended	<u>-15,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$ 0.00

Owens Creek Habitat Restoration, Merced County

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

Pine Creek Wildlife Area (Fencing), Modoc County

Allocated	\$14,000.00
Expended	<u>-13,920.55</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$79.45

West Branch Mill Creek Riparian Restoration Project, Del Norte County

Allocated	\$13,800.00
Expended	<u>-13,680.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$120.00

Wetland and Riparian Habitat Restoration, (Wilmarth) Colusa County

Allocated	\$211,499.00
Expended	<u>-179,479.44</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$32,019.56

Wetlands Enhancement, Shasta, Siskiyou and Modoc Counties

Fall River Valley Wetland Enhancement, (Bar-D-Bar Ranch), Shasta County

Allocated	\$12,675.00
Expended	<u>-12,239.14</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$435.86

Pilot Butte Wetland Enhancement (River Ranch), Modoc County

Allocated	\$14,100.00
Expended	<u>-1,800.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$12,300.00

Total Habitat Conservation Fund\$140,989.47

CALIFORNIA WILDLIFE, COASTAL AND PARK LAND FUND OF 1988

Heenan Lake Water and Storage Rights, Alpine County

Allocated	\$1,111,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,102,359.70</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$8,640.30

Moore Creek Conservation Easement, Santa Cruz County

Allocated	\$241,357.00
Expended	<u>-233,546.00</u>
	-32770-

Balance for Recovery	\$7,811.00
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Woodbridge Ecological Reserve Habitat Enhancement, San Joaquin County

Allocated	\$184,000.00
Expended	<u>-184,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$ 0.00

Total CA Wildlife, Coastal and Park Land Fund of 1988\$16,451.30

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight to recover funds for the projects listed on pages 5 thru 8 of this agenda and close the project accounts. Recovery totals include \$140,989.47 to the Habitat Conservation Fund and \$16,451.30 to the California Wildlife, Coastal and Park Land Fund of 1988.

Motion carried.

*7. Putah Creek Fishing Access, Yolo County \$130.00

This proposal was to consider approval of a new Cooperative Agreement with the County of Yolo to continue their operation and maintenance of the Putah Creek Fishing Access area. The site, which includes four separate parcels, is located approximately 10 miles westerly of the town of Winters on 82± acres of Department of Fish and Game-owned land. The project area stretches for about 2.5 miles along the left bank of Putah Creek, adjacent to Highway 128, below Monticello Dam and Lake Berryessa. The Board acquired the subject property in two phases in 1963 and 1972. Additional adjacent land under lease to the State by the Bureau of Reclamation was also managed by the County until the lease and the Cooperative Agreement expired on December 4, 1999.

The State-owned project area consists of four access roads from Highway 128, seven parking areas and six portable sanitary facilities. The federal lands have one access road and parking area. The County has operated and maintained the area under a Cooperative Agreement with the State since 1963. The project receives heavy use, with a reported 110,000 visitor days of use in 1998. Putah Creek offers excellent trout fishing and is easily accessible to the Sacramento Valley and San Francisco Bay area population centers.

The County has provided a resolution in support of this proposal and has agreed to enter into a new Cooperative Agreement with the Board to continue their operation and maintenance of the State-owned lands for an additional 25 years. They also intend to negotiate a new lease and operating agreement with the Bureau for the adjacent federal lands.

Staff recommended that the Board authorize staff to enter into a new Cooperative Agreement with the County of Yolo; allocate \$130.00 for General Services' review costs from the Wildlife Restoration Fund; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board authorize staff to enter into a new Cooperative Agreement with the County of Yolo; allocate \$130.00 for General Services' review costs from the Wildlife Restoration Fund; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

*8. Riparian Habitat Restoration, Union School Slough Watershed, \$33,600.00
Yolo County

This proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to the National Audubon Society (Audubon) for a cooperative project with Audubon, the landowner, the Department of Fish and Game, and the Board to restore and protect 13+ acres of riparian and wetland habitats on privately-owned property.

The subject property is located approximately seven miles southwest of the City of Woodland within the Union School Slough watershed, a subset of the Willow Slough watershed, in Yolo County. The project site includes two ponds situated on intermittent streams in Perkins Canyon and Cottonwood Canyon and is a part of a 7,500± acre ownership which is managed for livestock production.

At its meeting on February 2, 1994, the Board approved funding to develop the West Yolo County Water Management and Wildlife Habitat Plan. This planning effort produced the Willow Slough Integrated Resources Management Plan (Plan), which was published in 1996 in a cooperative venture with the Board, Yolo County, Yolo County Resources Conservation District (RCD), Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, and local landowners.

The subject project is based upon the Plan, and is an element of the Union School Slough Watershed Improvement Program (Program), a focused effort being undertaken by Audubon and the Yolo County RCD, with partial grant funding support from CalFed. The Program is coordinating several other efforts on neighboring properties within the Union School Slough watershed, by including controlled burning to encourage native grass establishment, fencing to protect riparian corridors, and monitoring efforts to analyze the responses of streams and groundwater conditions to these management changes.

The accepted practice for rangeland management has been to develop streams into stock

water impoundments and to allow unobstructed access for cattle and other livestock. These practices have reduced habitat values in the ponds, with a few remaining riparian trees and small clumps of freshwater emergent plants (tules and cattails). To remedy some of the problems created by past practices on the subject property, this project will include the removal of sediment from the ponds, installation of perimeter fences and gates around each pond and the associated riparian and upland areas, and construction of off-stream stock water systems, which will use solar powered pumps to pump water from the pond to a tank and watering troughs. The fenced pond areas will be revegetated with appropriate native riparian trees, shrubs, forbs and grass species, which will then be irrigated and protected from weeds and rodents for two growing seasons. To promote the rapid return of wildlife to the project area, wildlife structures will be installed, including brush piles, nest boxes for songbirds, bats, wood ducks and barn owls, and perch structures for raptors. Controlled grazing may also be used for vegetation management within the fenced areas after the desired habitats are established. The subject project should be completed within three years. Project signs will be installed at each pond to let the public know about the restoration project and the cooperating entities.

A primary benefit of this project is that it will demonstrate a “habitat-friendly” agricultural practice (providing livestock water without the usual animal impacts to the water source) that can be replicated regionally and state-wide. Wildlife benefits to be derived from the project will include improved habitat and food sources for deer, quail, migratory birds and waterfowl, raptors, bobcats, gray fox, and tree squirrels. The project will also improve habitat for those target species identified in the Yolo County Habitat Conservation Plan that rely on riparian and grassland habitat including the State-threatened Swainson’s hawk, Cooper’s hawk, northern harrier, loggerhead shrike, tri-colored blackbird, California yellow warbler, short-eared owl, burrowing owl, bank swallow, federally-threatened valley elderberry longhorn beetle, and the northwestern pond turtle. In addition, the project will provide indirect benefits to fish and other aquatic species through reduced sedimentation from erosion and grazing practices, increased water quality through filtering of non-point source pollutants, and reduced water temperature through shading.

Cost estimates for this proposal have been developed by Audubon and have been reviewed and approved by staff as follows:

		<u>Description</u>
Project Development and Management	\$3,000.00	
Excavation	4,000.00	
Fencing	12,500.00	
Stock water systems	11,500.00	
Plantings 9,600.00		
Temporary irrigation system	1,300.00	
Weed control	3,400.00	
Wildlife Structures	3,600.00	

Signs	2,000.00
<u>TOTAL ESTIMATED COST</u>	<u>\$50,900.00</u>

Proposed Funding Breakdown:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$33,600.00
Landowner	14,300.00
CalFed	3,000.00
<u>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING</u>	<u>\$50,900.00</u>

Audubon has agreed to administer the project and work with the landowner to make the project improvements. To protect the State’s investment, the landowner has agreed to manage and maintain the property to benefit riparian and wetland wildlife species for 25 years. If during the 25-year life span of the project, the landowner determines he is no longer able to manage and maintain the project, the landowner has agreed to reimburse the State the amortized cost of the project.

This project is representative of the level of interest and support for conservation projects that has emerged within the western Yolo County areas since the completion of the Plan. Many neighboring landowners have come forward expressing interest in doing similar projects in the future. The project has also received technical support from the National Resources Conservation Service, the Yolo County Resource Conservation District, the University of California Cooperative Extension, the California Native Grass Association, and The Nature Conservancy.

Consistent with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act, this project is categorically exempt under Section 15304, Class 4, as a minor alteration to land to restore fish and wildlife habitat.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the grant as proposed; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; allocate \$33,600.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund [Section 2786 (e/f) Aquatic/Riparian], and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve the grant as proposed; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; allocate \$33,600.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund [Section 2786 (e/f) Aquatic/Riparian], and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

*9. Andrew Creek Ecological Reserve, Tuolumne County \$96,000.00

This proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to assist in the cooperative acquisition of 253± acres of

privately-owned land, which is part of a larger phased purchase, for the preservation of upland and wetland habitats. In addition to the BLM and the Board, the Trust for Public Land, the Packard Foundation and the Tuolumne County Land Trust are also partners in the project.

The subject property is located in Tuolumne County, just east of State Highway 108/120, less than a mile south of Yosemite Junction, where Highway 120 separates to the east. The County seat, Sonora, is located approximately 10 miles to the northeast and the town of Chinese Camp is about 2.5 miles to the east. Access to the property is off of Highway 108/120. Topography of this Sierra foothill property is gently rolling from an elevation of approximately 1,040 feet to 1,400 feet.

Land uses in the area are generally rural in nature. The property itself is unimproved and is currently used for grazing. Portions of the site's perimeter are fenced, but much of the boundary between BLM property and some of the private ownerships remains unfenced.

The primary purpose of this proposed acquisition is to protect habitat for a number of sensitive plant and animal species found on the site. The subject is located within the Red Hills area, a region of serpentine soil well known for its rare plants and spectacular wildflower displays. This area is primarily composed of mixed chaparral, but also includes annual grasslands and blue oaks, digger pines and valley foothill riparian habitats. Significant portions of Andrew Creek, which flows through the property, and its tributaries, are intermittent streams. Sections of these streams have small permanent pools that support riparian vegetation, as well as amphibians and fish. Generally, the riparian zones are dominated by willows, with occasional valley oak, and other portions are dominated by sedges.

The Andrew Creek area is part of the State-designated Red Hills Significant Natural Area (SNA), totaling 16,300± acres, an area designated because it has one of the best examples of a population of the rare Chinese Camp brodiaea, and six other rare species. Four of the six SNA species occur on the property proposed for purchase. The site's serpentine soil results in a sparsely-vegetated landscape that provides for species that are uncommon in the region, as well as kangaroo rats which are common on the site.

The California verbena and Red Hills ragwort are found on the site. Both species are considered endemic to the Red Hills area with the site supporting a significant portion of their total population. At least four additional rare plants are found on these serpentine soils, including Rawhide Hill onion, Red Hills soaproot, Congdon's lomatium and Hernandez bluecurls.

Three animal species considered sensitive by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) are found on the property, including the San Joaquin roach, the foothills yellow-legged frog and the western pond turtle. These species can be found in the creek, its tributaries and ponds located on the site. In addition, a California mastiff bat colony is located on the face of the table mountain that

bounds the northwestern portion of the proposal. Also found on the property are other mammal species common to the foothills including deer, mountain lions, coyotes, rabbits and skunks.

The BLM owns land to the east, west and south, contiguous with the subject. The 7,100± acres they own to the south and east constitutes the Red Hills Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), which was designated to protect the rare species and rare serpentine habitat of the Red Hills. The area proposed for purchase would help connect the ACEC with other isolated BLM parcels, greatly increasing habitat viability and connectivity.

The primary threat to the area is from potential development into residential ranchettes. The property has already been subdivided and is ready for sale for development. In addition, even if left in its current condition, overgrazing is a continuing problem and certainly detrimental to the wildlife resources found on the property. The purchase of the land by BLM would assure the elimination of this excessive grazing as well as the threat of residential development and would allow for enhancement of the property's wildlife values.

Management of the property will be handled by the BLM with similar objectives that they have in managing their adjacent ownership. This would include providing compatible public access, maintenance of habitats of the rare species, guided wildflower field trips and hunting as compatible with the protection of the species of concern.

The owners have agreed to sell their property for the Department of General Services' approved fair market value appraisal of \$695,000.00. The Board's proposed \$92,500.00 grant, if approved, will be used in combination with an additional \$300,000.00 contribution by the Packard Foundation, \$300,000.00 by the BLM and \$2,500.00 by the Tuolumne County Land Trust, bringing the total to the \$695,000.00 purchase price. It is estimated that an additional \$3,500.00 will be needed for administrative expenses including Department of General Services' review costs, bringing the total Board allocation necessary for this proposal to \$96,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that staff will review all proposed title documents, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into escrow. The grant will also require that maintenance and monitoring of the property will be conducted by the BLM. In addition, should BLM no longer desire to use this property for the purposes for which this grant is to be made, they will be required to reimburse the Board or grant a conservation easement over the property to the State, or another party named by the Board, at the Board's option.

The Department of Fish and Game has highly recommended the purchase of this property through this grant assistance. The purchase is exempt from CEQA, under Class 13 of Categorical Exemptions, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the award of a grant to the BLM to be applied to the acquisition of the 253± acres, as proposed; allocate \$96,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Section 2786 b/c) to complete the grant and for General Services' review costs; authorize staff to enter appropriate agreements as necessary to carry out this project; authorize staff to deposit the funds into escrow as a grant toward BLM's purchase; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve the award of a grant to the BLM to be applied to the acquisition of the 253± acres, as proposed; allocate \$96,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Section 2786 b/c) to complete the grant and for General Services' review costs; authorize staff to enter appropriate agreements as necessary to carry out this project; authorize staff to deposit the funds into escrow as a grant toward BLM's purchase; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

*10. GIS Model for Wetland Protection and Restoration, \$150,000.00
Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba Counties

This proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited (DU) for the development of a computer generated planning tool, in Geographic Information System (GIS) layers, which will assist land use planning efforts in Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba Counties. Specifically, the final product will be designed to assist these counties, resource agencies and others to rank priority areas for wetland, riparian, and agricultural protection and restoration efforts.

California agriculture is considered to be one the most diversified industries in the world with an abundance of land resources, fertile soils and temperate climate zones. Coupled with sophisticated technology, California is one of the top ranking agricultural states in the nation. Within California, the Central Valley is the nation's most important agricultural area, with 11 of its 21 counties producing 250 different commodities.

While the abundance of land resources, fertile soils and temperate climate zones produce an environment that is conducive to high yields and high farm cash returns, it also provides for some of the most diverse and abundant wildlife in the nation. The Central Valley wetlands and agricultural areas support the largest single concentration of wintering waterfowl (approximately 3 to 4 million birds) and is considered one of the most important wintering areas for waterfowl in North America.

Recognizing the importance of integrating local land use priorities and environmental

protection efforts, California is engaged in a delicate balancing act between what is good for the environment and what is good for the economy. In a recent survey (1999), conducted by the Great Valley Center, more than 2,100 landowners expressed the need to protect agricultural lands and restore wetlands. The protection of agricultural lands and the restoration of wetlands were two leading factors upon which the respondents agreed. This project will provide a tool, in the form of a GIS model, that local officials, planners and resource agencies can use to help determine what actions need to be taken to satisfy the economic needs and the environmental needs of a particular region.

To create the GIS model, DU will collect geographic data from the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and various State and federal resource agencies. Combined with state-of-the-art satellite imagery and the use of GIS technology, they will organize this data in a comprehensive, standardized database. Using 15 data layers, the GIS component will allow users to weigh the importance of land use priorities, whether they be urban boundaries, transportation corridors, land ownership patterns, agricultural land uses, wetlands, riparian corridors, or other types of land activities.

Unlike previous GIS efforts that map critical natural resource areas with single data sets, this project goes one step further. Specifically, after the GIS data layers have been collected, the data will be organized in a comprehensive, standardized database. The interactive models, unique to each participating county, will then be developed. Working at the "grass roots" level, the model will then be used in personal interviews, discussions, workshops, and meetings with key local policy leaders, conservation and environmental leaders, agency personnel, community and civic leaders, developers and agricultural interests. Scientific data will be used to guide discussions on specific landscape actions. For example, one can ask the questions, "Where should agricultural protection occur, or where should wetland restoration occur?" To answer these questions, the interactive GIS model requires the participation of stakeholders in a ranking and selection process. If certain stakeholders disagree with the priority data set selection, or ranking, they can quickly rerun the interactive nature of the model based on the new priority rankings. As part of the project, DU will also develop an urban growth model for Yolo and Sutter Counties, to project urban and rural development to the years 2020 and 2040.

Since the protection of agricultural land and critical wetland and riparian areas can be highly controversial, an interactive GIS guided discussion often reduces controversy and facilitates an understanding and awareness of the environmental, agricultural and social resources present within a local region. Using scientific data, county participants can "see" the impact of their decisions on the local resources. If a participating county has identified protection of critical farmland and protection and restoration of critical habitat as a local priority, the GIS model will display this information in a way that supports mutual understanding and public deliberation within the communities.

To develop the interactive GIS models for each of the participating counties, the following costs have been identified:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
Data Development	\$20,000.00
Data Collection	
Data Standardization	
Meta Data Development	
Model Development.....	40,000.00
Arc View Avenue Programming	
Visual Basic Programming	
Documentation.....	10,000.00
Help Screens and User Manuals	
 <u>TOTAL ESTIMATED COST</u>	 <u>\$150,000.00</u>

As part of this effort, each of the counties will receive a CD containing the unique interactive model (run on ArcInfo-Oracle). In addition, each county will receive a companion workbook designed to help users in working with the model for wetland conservation planning efforts. All data layers, GIS coverages, ARC macro language applications developed for data analysis, data viewing, map composition and production will be provided to the Department of Fish and Game (DFG). Further, DU will provide a copy of each county workbook to the DFG and the Wildlife Conservation Board.

Consistent with the provisions of CEQA, this project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15301, Class 1 (i) maintaining fish and wildlife habitat to protect wildlife resources.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$150,000.00 from the General Fund (98/99) as specifically authorized for use by the Inland Wetlands Conservation Program; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$150,000.00 from the General Fund (98/99) as specifically authorized for use by the Inland Wetlands Conservation Program; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

*11. San Joaquin River Riparian Habitat (SJRC #4 - Wagner), \$510,000.00
Madera County

This proposal, presented on behalf of the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC), was to consider the acquisition of 64.3± acres of land located on the right bank of the San

Joaquin River, at the base of the Friant Dam. Access to the subject property is obtained over a dirt road from Road 206, a Madera County maintained road. The purchase of this property is consistent with the goals of the SJRC, to protect and enhance habitat along the San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to Highway 99 and to provide public access opportunities as appropriate. It will also provide the opportunity to do some habitat restoration and enhancement.

In 1988 the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) began an acquisition program along the San Joaquin River, between the Friant Dam and Highway 99, using funds specifically designated for this purpose in Proposition 70, a voter approved bond act. The first purchase under this program, the 286± acre Milburn Unit, was completed in November, 1988. Since that time the WCB has approved and staff has completed direct acquisitions, or made grants to enable the purchase of an additional 674.6± acres. These purchases, combined with the WCB's purchase of the 75± acre Lost Lake property in 1957, brings the total WCB protected area along this stretch of the San Joaquin River to 1,035.6± acres, prior to the actions being considered in this agenda.

The WCB's 1999/00 Budget contained \$5,000,000.00 in funding from the General Fund with control language directing that these funds be used for "San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects and Acquisitions." After several public meetings of the SJRC Board where this proposed purchase was discussed, and consistent with the intent of the budget act, the SJRC Board voted to recommend that the WCB use \$500,000.00 (plus costs) of these funds to purchase the property described in this agenda item.

The topography on this property is generally undulating, sloping to the San Joaquin River. While it is improved with two single family residences, most of the property is still in a natural state, including riparian habitat along Cottonwood Creek, as well as the San Joaquin River. While preservation of the natural area is the primary purpose of this purchase, the entire parcel is being proposed for purchase. To do otherwise would leave the County with the problem of a non-conforming parcel in this 40-acre minimum zoned area. The SJRC proposes to lease the residences back to the owner upon the close of escrow for this purchase.

Habitat values on the subject property are consistent with those found along the river, including habitat for such species as raccoon, opossum, coyote, snowy egret and great blue heron. Various species of songbirds also inhabit the area, with bird usage expected to diversify and expand with a proper management program along the river.

It is proposed that once this property is acquired that it will be transferred to the SJRC through a "Transfer of Control and Possession." Management will be the responsibility of the SJRC, but will no doubt ultimately be accomplished under a cooperative management agreement with the Department of Fish and Game and other public landowners along the parkway. Acquisition of this site is categorically exempt from CEQA as an acquisition of land for wildlife habitat conservation purposes and the appropriate Notice of Exemption has been filed.

The subject property has been appraised for \$602,000.00, an amount approved by the Department of General Services. However, the owner has agreed to sell for \$500,000.00, resulting in a donation to the State of \$102,000.00 in land value. Any potential State Land Commission claims have been considered in the appraisal. Costs to carry out this purchase, which include General Services' review costs, appraisal costs, title insurance costs and escrow fees, are estimated at \$10,000.00. Therefore, the total allocation necessary to complete this purchase is \$510,000.00.

The San Joaquin River Conservancy Board has passed a motion recommending that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the acquisition of this 64.3± acre parcel; approve the allocation of \$500,000.00 (plus costs) to complete the purchase and agreeing to accept control of the property at the completion of the purchase.

Staff therefore recommended that the Board approve the acquisition of this property as proposed; allocate \$510,000.00 from the General Fund (1999/00) to cover the purchase price and related costs; accept the donation in land value from the owner; authorize the transfer of the property to the San Joaquin River Conservancy through a "Transfer of Control and Possession"; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve the acquisition of this property as proposed; allocate \$510,000.00 from the General Fund (1999/00) to cover the purchase price and related costs; accept the donation in land value from the owner; authorize the transfer of the property to the San Joaquin River Conservancy through a "Transfer of Control and Possession"; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *12. San Joaquin River Riparian Habitat (SJRC #5 - Schneider), \$211,000.00
Madera County

This proposal, presented on behalf of the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC), was to consider the acquisition of 47.1± acres, together with the transfer of any rights the owner claims to 40.3± acres of land lying within the an area subject to claims by the State Lands Commission, of riparian and upland habitat located along the San Joaquin River. More specifically, the subject property is located on the north bank of the river, between the river and Avenue 7, at its juncture with Road 35, approximately one mile east of State Highway 99. Private property is located directly west of the property with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad tracks located along its easterly boundary. The purchase of the property is consistent with the goals of the SJRC, to protect and enhance habitat along the San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to Highway 99, and to provide public access

opportunities as appropriate. It will also provide the opportunity to do some habitat restoration and enhancement.

In 1988 the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) began an acquisition program along the San Joaquin River, between Friant Dam and Highway 99, using funds specifically designated for this purpose in Proposition 70, a voter approved bond act. The first purchase under this program, the 286± acre Milburn Unit, was completed in November, 1988. Since that time the WCB has approved and staff has completed direct acquisitions, or made grants to enable the purchase of an additional 674.6± acres. These purchases, when combined with the WCB's purchase of the Lost Lake property in 1957, brings the total WCB protected area along this stretch of the San Joaquin River to 1,035.6± acres, prior to the actions being considered in this agenda.

The WCB's 1999/00 Budget contained \$5,000,000.00 in funding from the General Fund with control language directing that these funds be used for "San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects and Acquisitions." After several public meetings of the SJRC Board where this proposal was discussed, and consistent with the intent of the budget act, the SJRC Board voted to recommend that the WCB use \$200,000.00 (plus costs) of these funds to purchase the property described in this agenda item. In addition, the SJRC has received approval of a \$500,000.00 Transportation Enhancement Activities grant to be used toward this purchase.

The subject property, which is part of a larger 127.1± acre parcel, slopes from the north from an elevation of about 293 feet to 291 feet above mean sea level, to a bluff near the property's southern edge where it drops to the river bottom area with elevations ranging from approximately 260 feet to 219 feet mean sea level at the river. The upper portion of the property, including portions of the property being proposed for acquisition, previously received tentative approval for a 119-unit residential subdivision.

The wildlife values found on the property are typical of those found along the entire river corridor between Friant Dam and Highway 99. The lower portions of the property contain a series of small ponds or marshy areas located within the riparian habitat, providing good habitat for water-oriented birds such as herons, egrets, grebes and ducks. Many songbirds also inhabit the area, the use of which is expected to diversify and expand with proper management of this riverine habitat. The property, especially the upper portions, also provides good habitat and foraging area for the Cooper's hawk, northern harrier, sharp-shinned hawk, prairie falcon and an occasional bald or golden eagle. Mammals found on this property include raccoon, opossum, coyote and deer.

This acquisition would protect this land from development, providing a buffer between land proposed for development and the riparian habitat found thereon, while providing the opportunity to enhance its habitat and buffer values. It would also leave the owner with a balance of approximately 40 acres for potential development, or other uses deemed appropriate for this remainder. Because of the property's high wildlife value and the high threat of development, this purchase is considered a high priority by both the SJRC and the Department of Fish and Game.

It is proposed that, once the property is acquired, it be transferred to the SJRC through a "Transfer of Control and Possession." Management will be the responsibility of the SJRC, but will no doubt ultimately be accomplished under a cooperative management agreement with the Department of Fish and Game and other public landowners along the San Joaquin River Parkway. Like other purchases along the Parkway, this acquisition will afford the opportunity to provide public uses such as birding, sightseeing, photography, hiking, picnicking and, of course, great educational opportunities.

The purchase will include a public access to the river at this location. It will also clear up any rights the owner may claim over lands subject to State Lands Commission jurisdiction. The acquisition is categorically exempt from CEQA as an acquisition of land for wildlife habitat conservation purposes and the appropriate Notice of Exemption has been filed.

The property to be purchased (47.1± acres) has been appraised for \$1,536,826.00, an amount approved by the Department of General Services. However, the owner has agreed to sell for \$700,000.00, resulting in a donation to the State of \$836,826.00 in land value. Costs to carry out this purchase, which include General Services' review costs, appraisal costs, title insurance costs and escrow fees are estimated at \$10,000.00. Therefore, the total allocation necessary to complete this purchase is \$210,000.00.

The San Joaquin River Conservancy has passed a motion recommending that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the acquisition of this 47.1± acre parcel; approve the allocation of \$200,000.00 (plus costs) to complete the purchase, accept a Transportation Enhancement Activities grant in the amount of \$500,000.00 for use toward this purchase, accept control of the property and accept a conveyance of any rights the landowner may claim to approximately 40.3± acres of land lying within the area claimed by the State Lands Commission.

Staff therefore recommended that the Board approve the acquisition of this property as proposed; allocate \$210,000.00 for the purchase and related costs from the General Fund (1999/00); accept the Transportation Enhancement Activities grant of \$500,000.00 for placement directly into escrow; accept a partial donation in land value from the owner; accept a conveyance from the landowner of any rights they may claim to lands lying within an area subject to the State Lands Commission jurisdiction; authorize the transfer of the property to the San Joaquin River Conservancy through a "Transfer of Control and Possession"; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve the acquisition of this property as proposed; allocate \$210,000.00 for the purchase and related costs from the General Fund (1999/00); accept the Transportation Enhancement Activities grant of \$500,000.00 for placement directly into escrow; accept a partial donation in land

value from the owner; accept a conveyance from the landowner of any rights they may claim to lands lying within an area subject to the State Lands Commission jurisdiction; authorize the transfer of the property to the San Joaquin River Conservancy through a “Transfer of Control and Possession”; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

*13. San Joaquin River Riparian Habitat Expansion #8 \$6,815,000.00
(Willow Unit III/SJRC #3 - Ball), Fresno County

This proposal, presented on behalf of the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC), was to consider the acquisition of 358.4± acres of riparian and upland habitat located along the San Joaquin River, about two miles downstream from the community of Friant and about two miles north of the city limits of Fresno. This acquisition would be an expansion to two previous acquisitions from the same owners, one approved by the Board in 1990 and the other approved in 1992 (San Joaquin River Riparian Habitat Expansions #1 and #2 respectively).

In 1998, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) began an acquisition program along the San Joaquin River, between the Friant Dam and Highway 99, using funds specifically designated for this purpose in Proposition 70, a voter approved bond act. The first purchase under this program, the 286± acre Milburn Unit, was completed in November, 1988. Since that time the WCB has approved, and staff has completed, direct acquisitions, or made grants to enable the purchase of an additional 674.6± acres. These purchases, combined with the WCB’s purchase of the 75± acre Lost Lake property in 1957, brings the total WCB protected area along this stretch of the San Joaquin River to 1,035.6± acres, prior to the actions being considered in this agenda.

The WCB’s 1999/00 Budget contained \$5,000,000.00 in funding from the General Fund with control language directing that these funds be used for “San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects and Acquisitions.” In addition, the 1997/98 Budget contained \$5,000,000.00 in funding from the River Parkway Subaccount/Proposition 204 (Safe, Clean, Reliable Water Supply Act), with control language directing that these funds “shall be used for the San Joaquin River Parkway in furtherance of the mission of the San Joaquin River Conservancy.” After several public meetings of the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) Board, where this proposed purchase was discussed, and consistent with the intent of the budget act, the SJRC Board voted to recommend that the WCB use some of the remaining funds from the above two noted sources to complete this purchase.

In addition to funds specifically made available for SJRC purchases, and because of the property's high wildlife values, staff is recommending that \$1,000,000.00 in Habitat Conservation Funds available to the WCB be used to make up the balance needed to complete this purchase.

The subject property lies adjacent to, and was part of, the same ownership as the lands acquired pursuant to the Board's previous actions in 1990 and 1992, as discussed above. It is bounded on the west by river frontage property previously acquired by the Board and on the east by Friant Road, which provides good access to the property. Millerton Lake State Recreation Area is located about four miles north of the property by way of Friant Road. Lost Lake Recreation Area, a project partially funded by the WCB and currently operated by Fresno County, is located about 1.5 miles upstream.

The flow of the river in this vicinity is controlled by releases from Friant Dam, located approximately four miles upstream. The property contains some mixed riparian forest habitat, primarily consisting of sycamores, cottonwoods, willows and oaks, and upland habitat consisting of grasslands, oaks, some ponds and wetlands, largely created by past gravel mining operations.

The property is zoned for single family residential purposes, with lot sizes not less than 12,500 square feet. There is currently a valid development plan approved for the property (Fresno County Tentative Map 4156A) which provides for the development of 65 residential lots and a golf course. However, at this time, development plans are on hold pending possible revisions to the flood plain maps for the area. According to conditions placed on the Tentative Map approval by the County, the Map will then need to be revised to reflect the updated flood maps. The threat of future development of this property is certainly a possibility, making this acquisition a priority for both the San Joaquin River Conservancy and the Department of Fish and Game.

Due to the property's abundant food supplies and available cover and nesting sites for a wide variety of wildlife species, wildlife use of this area is considered very good, and certainly can be enhanced with some restoration and enhancement. Species known to use the area include bald eagle, golden eagle, Cooper's hawk, northern harrier, sharp-shinned hawk and prairie falcon. Many songbirds also inhabit the area, the use of which is expected to diversify and expand with proper habitat management of this riverine habitat. Other species common to this environment are also found on the property, including raccoon, opossum, coyote and deer.

It is proposed that, once the property is acquired, it be transferred to the SJRC through a "Transfer of Control and Possession." Management will be the responsibility of the SJRC, but will no doubt ultimately be accomplished under a cooperative management agreement with the Department of Fish and Game and other public landowners along the Parkway. Like the first two Willow Unit purchases, this property affords the opportunity to provide public uses such as birding, sightseeing, photography, hiking, picnicking, and

of course, great educational opportunities. Enhanced access will also be provided to the existing Willow Unit.

Acquisition of the site is categorically exempt from CEQA as an acquisition of land for wildlife habitat conservation purposes and the appropriate Notice of Exemption has been filed. According to the State Lands Commission staff, there are no State Lands claims over this property.

The subject property has been appraised for \$7,906,000.00, an amount approved by the Department of General Services. However, the owners have agreed to sell for \$6,800,000.00, resulting in a donation to the State of \$1,106,000.00 in land value. Costs to carry out this purchase, which include General Services' review costs, appraisal costs, title insurance costs and escrow fees are estimated at \$15,000.00. Therefore, the total allocation necessary to complete this purchase is \$6,815,000.00.

The San Joaquin River Conservancy has passed a motion recommending that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the acquisition of this 358.4± acre parcel; approve the allocation of \$6,800,000.00 (plus costs) to complete the purchase; \$5,800,000.00 (plus costs) to come from funds made available for SJRC use on the San Joaquin River, and agreeing to accept control of the property at the completion of the purchase.

Staff therefore recommended that the Board approve the acquisition of this property as proposed; allocate \$6,815,000.00 for the purchase and related costs [\$2,646,263.00 from the River Parkway Subaccount--Safe, Clean, and Reliable Water Supply Act/Prop. 204, \$3,168,737.00 from the General Fund/1999/00 and \$1,000,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund/2786 (e/f)]; accept the donation in land value from the owners; authorize the transfer of the property to the San Joaquin River Conservancy through a "Transfer of Control and Possession"; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve the acquisition of this property as proposed; allocate \$6,815,000.00 for the purchase and related costs [\$2,646,263.00 from the River Parkway Subaccount--Safe, Clean, and Reliable Water Supply Act/Prop. 204, \$3,168,737.00 from the General Fund/1999/00 and \$1,000,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund/2786 (e/f)]; accept the donation in land value from the owners; authorize the transfer of the property to the San Joaquin River Conservancy through a "Transfer of Control and Possession;" authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

14. Bear Creek Redwoods, Santa Clara County \$2,010,000.00

Mr. Schmidt reported that this proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to assist in its acquisition of 805± acres of property, in the Santa Cruz mountains. The primary objectives in acquiring this property are to preserve and restore wildlife habitat, protect the watershed areas draining into Lexington Reservoir, protect special status plant and animal species and habitats, and provide low-intensity recreational and environmental education experiences for the public. Ms. Townsend reported that Messrs. Ken Nitz and Craig Britton, representing the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, were in the audience should there be any questions. Following Ms. Townsend's explanation of the project's location, Mr. Schmidt summarized the proposal.

The subject property is located adjacent to the 260± acre District-owned Bear Creek Open Space Preserve. More specifically, it is located on the southeastern slopes of the Santa Cruz Mountains in Santa Clara County, west of State Route 17 and Lexington Reservoir County Park, placing it within the sphere of influence of the town of Los Gatos. This irregularly shaped property is bisected by Bear Creek Road (a Santa Clara County Scenic Highway), which provides direct access to the site approximately one mile west of its intersection with State Route 17.

The property provides an important link with the region's recreational trail system which includes segments of two regional trails: the San Francisco Bay Area Ridge Trail and the Los Gatos Creek Trail. A network of trails on the property connect it to numerous nearby existing open space areas such as the Lexington Reservoir County Park and three other open space preserves. Only a 20 minute drive from downtown San Jose, the property is easily accessible to millions of Bay Area residents for recreational opportunities.

The permanent preservation of this site will ensure responsible management of a variety of habitats, including old and second growth redwoods, grasslands, riparian corridors, coastal oak woodlands, northern coastal scrub, and mixed evergreen forests. By protecting these environments, the habitats for a variety of special status plant and animal species will also be protected. The special status animal species that have been observed on the property include golden eagle, long-eared owl, western pond turtle, California red-legged frog, and the California tiger salamander. Overall, 90 species of birds, 32 species of mammals, and 22 species of reptiles and amphibians are known to occur on the site.

Protection of the property's sweeping views, recreational opportunities, trail linkages, and habitat have generated widespread support for this project by diverse groups including the region's elected officials, local governments, environmental and citizen groups, and business groups. The Santa Clara County Preservation 2020 Task Force identified this entire 1,065± acre area as the second-highest open space acquisition priority in the

County. This ranking was based on the area's value as watershed and viewshed, its natural habitats, and its potential for public access. The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) supports the purchase of the property by the District and the Board's assistance with this proposed grant.

The District intends to embark on a long-term use and management planning process, with public access being limited until the plan is complete. Ultimately, the management objectives would be to protect special status plant and wildlife habitat, preserve second and old growth redwoods, and provide for low-intensity public recreational access when and where consistent with the protection of the natural resources. Additionally, there are opportunities for environmental education on the site, including docent-led interpretive hikes, earthquake fault education, and natural history walks. While the District will initially be the sole manager of the land, there is the possibility of joint management opportunities with Santa Clara County Department of Parks and Recreation, which may expand the opportunities for low-intensity public recreational use. The DFG will have no management responsibilities nor will they have any obligation to provide funds for management of the subject property.

The timber rights to a portion of the property are owned by Big Creek Lumber Company. They have recently logged 125± acres of the second growth in accordance with an approved timber harvest plan. No new roads were built and strict erosion control measures were used as part of this harvest. The District estimates that Big Creek Lumber removed less than 30 percent of the available timber and that, in general, Big Creek Lumber exceeds the State's forestry practice standards in order to demonstrate sustainable forestry practices. The District continues to monitor the harvest to minimize logging impacts.

In March, 1999, the District, with funding assistance from the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), acquired the property at a bargain price of \$25 million. The entire property, however, was beyond the District's acquisition budget. After the District acquired the property, the two entities divided the 1,065± acres into "lower" (260± acres) and "upper" (805± acres) portions. The District retained the lower property for which it paid \$15 million, with POST holding title to the upper property until the District, with POST's assistance, secured the necessary funding to acquire title. The upper property, with up to 34 potential home sites, has been appraised at \$17.14 million. As was their original intent, POST has now agreed to transfer this property to the District for \$10 million.

The Coastal Conservancy has made a grant to POST in the amount of \$3 million, and a reimbursable grant in the amount of \$3 million (to be repaid with private funding). POST has also secured \$2 million in private funds to be applied toward the \$10 million purchase. The District has now requested a \$2 million grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board to complete the funding gap. If approved, the Board's proposed \$2 million grant will be used with the private and public funding contributions toward the purchase price of \$10 million for the subject property. It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed for administrative expenses, including Department of General

Services' review costs, bringing the total allocation for this proposal to \$2,010,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that staff will review all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into escrow. The proposal is exempt from CEQA under Class 13 of Categorical Exemptions, as an acquisition for land for wildlife conservation purposes.

Mr. Schmidt reported that letters of support of this project were received from the Friends of Bear Creek Redwoods, Sempervirens Fund, Sierra Club - Loma Prieta Chapter, Mayor of Los Gatos, Green Belt Alliance, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors and Senator Sher (attached).

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the award of a grant to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to be applied to the acquisition of the 805± acres, as proposed; allocate \$2,010,000.00 from the General Fund (1999/00); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Chrisman asked if there were any comments. There were none.

It was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the award of a grant to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to be applied to the acquisition of the 805± acres, as proposed; allocate \$2,010,000.00 from the General Fund (1999/00); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

At this time, Mr. Schmidt introduced Mr. Gavin Payne of Senator Jack O'Connell's office.

15. Bass Hill Wildlife Area, Expansion #6, Lassen County \$300,000.00

Mr. Schmidt reported that this proposal was to consider the acquisition of 278± acres of land, as an addition to the Bass Hill Wildlife Area (WA), for the purposes of protecting a critical migration corridor and deer winter range habitat for migratory black-tailed and Rocky Mountain mule deer. The property is located approximately 6 miles southeast of Susanville, Lassen County. More specifically, it is situated adjacent to the southwestern boundary of the Bass Hill WA and can be easily accessed from Bass Hill Road (Lassen County Road No. 207). The property is improved with a house (main residence), an A-frame cabin and a small shop building. As a part of this proposed purchase, the landowner will retain a life estate over the main residence and shop building, with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) assuming control of the A-frame cabin. Following

Mr. Donnelly's explanation of the project's location, Mr. Schmidt summarized the proposal.

The Wildlife Conservation Board authorized the first purchase of 1,878± acres at Bass Hill in 1977. Subsequent acquisitions have been approved by the Board since 1977, with the most recent occurring in 1997, which involved a 1,760± acre land exchange with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). A total of 5,275± acres have been acquired to date and, if this acquisition is approved, it will bring the total acreage protected to 5,553± acres.

A diverse mix of vegetation and habitat types can be found on the subject property, of which some 50± acres are devoted to meadow pasture, which includes the usual mix of annual and perennial grasses and forbs. The upland portions of the property are brushy rangelands with a mix of sagebrush, bitterbrush, mountain mahogany and other woody species. The property is traversed by Baxter Creek, which enters the property on its northern boundary and flows southerly emptying into open meadowlands on the lower reaches of the property to the south. The riparian zone along Baxter Creek has typical riparian vegetation with aspen, cottonwoods, and a scattering of mature Ponderosa and Jeffrey pines.

With the diversity of habitats found on the subject property, a number of important wildlife species are present on site. These include resident and migratory deer, mountain lion, Merraim's turkey, California quail, and many other bird and small mammal species. It also provides suitable habitat for endangered willow flycatcher and the threatened bank swallow has been documented using the site.

The subject property provides critical winter range and a migration corridor to adjacent DFG and BLM lands within a setting that has become fragmented due to rural housing and agricultural development. It is essential that the existing deer winter range in the Bass Hill - Bald Mountain area not be cut off from summer range which lies to the southwest in the Lassen and Plumas National Forests. Future management of this proposed acquisition will complement the long-term management of the existing Bass Hill WA and will provide additional recreational opportunities to the public for big game and upland game hunting and bird watching, as well as fishing opportunities associated with Baxter Creek.

The appraised value of the property is \$322,500.00, an amount approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). As indicated above, the landowner will retain a life estate over a portion of the property to be acquired. The value of this life estate is \$34,000.00, again an amount approved by DGS. The value of the property subject to the life estate is \$288,500.00, an amount at which the landowner has agreed to sell. An additional \$11,500.00 is estimated to be needed for project costs, including appraisal, DGS review and escrow. The project is exempt from CEQA under Class 13 of

Categorical Exemptions as an acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes.

Mr. Schmidt reported that Mr. Banky Curtis, former Regional Manager in this area, was in the audience should there be any questions. Mr. Curtis added that this proposal would be a key acquisition linking summer and winter ranges. There were no further comments.

Staff recommended that the Board approve acquisition of the property, subject to the life estate as proposed; allocated \$300,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund [Section 2786 (a)] to cover acquisition costs and project expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Ms. Annette Porini that the Board approve acquisition of the property, subject to the life estate as proposed; allocated \$300,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund [Section 2786 (a)] to cover acquisition costs and project expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

At this time, Mr. Chrisman welcomed Senator Sher to the meeting. Mr. Schmidt advised the Senator that his letter of support of the Bear Creek Redwoods proposal had been conveyed during previous discussion of that proposal.

16. Wetland Habitat Restoration (Butte Basin and Colusa Basin), \$983,780.00
Butte, Colusa, Glenn and Sutter Counties

Mr. Schmidt reported that this proposal was to consider the acceptance of a federal reimbursable grant from the North American Wetlands Conservation Council (NAWCC) for \$983,780.00, and secondly, to allocate funds in the same amount through a grant to Ducks Unlimited (DU) to restore and enhance approximately 4,686± acres of wetlands at ten separate locations in the Butte and Colusa Basins, and to construct an extensive water delivery system on the Gray Lodge Wildlife Area (WLA). The Butte and Colusa Basins are two natural depressions where water concentrates in wet winters. Following Ms. Cundiff's explanation of the project's location, Mr. Schmidt summarized the proposal.

Consistent with enabling legislation for the Inland Wetlands Conservation Program, staff submitted a proposal to the NAWCC for wetland restoration and enhancement projects in the Central Valley. The proposal was designed to restore approximately 956± acres of emergent wetlands and enhance another 3,730± acres of wetlands. In addition, the proposal requested funds to construct the first phase of a new water delivery system to replace an existing aging and ineffective water system on the Gray Lodge WLA.

All of the projects focus on the Butte Creek drainage and Colusa Trough, an area that has seen major activity in restoration projects in recent years because of concerns for anadromous fish. With the recent listing of the spring-run Chinook salmon as a threatened species, and the listing of steelhead and winter-run Chinook salmon, additional emphasis has been placed on providing fish-safe water for wetland management. In addition, the Butte and Colusa Basin is historically an important area for pintails and other migrant wintering waterfowl. The Butte Basin is prone to periodic flooding and as such provides quality habitat for waterfowl and other wetland dependent species. Butte Creek and other Sacramento River Tributaries flow through this basin and have been identified as important spawning areas for endangered and threatened salmonid species.

The wetland projects proposed to be completed under this proposal will help increase water quality by acting as natural filters of agricultural drain and flood waters. Many riparian areas exist between the wetlands and support a variety of species such as wood ducks, mallards, gadwalls, cinnamon teal, raptors, neotropical migrants, and wading birds.

One specific component of the grant is to rehabilitate an inefficient water delivery system on the Gray Lodge WLA. The 8,340± acre Gray Lodge WLA was acquired over time, with individual properties having their own water supply. This project will redevelop the antiquated water system and create a flow-through system that will reduce or eliminate dependence on deep wells. During periods of drought, the cost of operating deep wells can be as high as \$75,000.00 per month. The new system will substantially reduce operating costs and provide a reliable source of high quality water that will be available for year-round wetland management.

In addition to the water delivery system on the Gray Lodge WLA, seven private land restoration and enhancement projects and three projects on the Colusa National Wildlife Refuge are proposed and, when completed, will increase wetlands by 4,686± acres and enhance the wetland and upland values on the properties discussed below.

With the exception of the Davis Ranch, all of the project lands are protected in perpetuity with a wetland easement, either through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) or the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). In addition, all of the landowners have agreed to manage and maintain the restoration and enhancement efforts for 20 years, pursuant to an agreement with Ducks Unlimited.

The following projects are proposed and when completed will restore and enhance 4,686± acres of wetlands:

Davis Ranch, Glenn County: This project will restore 35± acres of wetlands and 10± acres of associated upland nesting cover. The area contains two historic sloughs that have been degraded while the surrounding landscape includes riparian areas, corn and rice fields that are used by numerous waterfowl and wading birds. Total estimated project cost is \$23,970.00, of which the grant will

provide \$16,300.00 and the landowner will contribute \$7,670.00. This property is not protected in perpetuity, however, the landowners have agreed to manage and maintain the improvements for a 20-year period.

Kingsley & Bolston Ranch, Butte County: This project will restore 346± acres of wetlands and 40± acres of upland nesting habitat on former agricultural land. The area the project is located in is next to Angel Slough, a natural flyway for waterfowl, which is used extensively by wood ducks, Canada geese, Snow geese, and sandhill cranes. Total estimated project cost is \$66,920.00, of which the grant will provide \$26,920.00 and the NRCS will provide \$40,000.00. This property is protected in perpetuity with a WRP easement.

Steidlmayer Ranch, Colusa County: This project will restore 278± acres of wetlands, 10± acres of riparian habitat, and 60± acres of upland nesting habitat. The project area is adjacent to the Colusa NWR and Cortina Creek, which is used by numerous waterfowl and wading birds. Total project costs are estimated at \$80,050.00, of which the grant will provide \$20,050.00 and the landowner will contribute \$20,000.00. An additional \$20,000.00 will be contributed by the FWS, and \$20,000.00 will come from the Bureau of Reclamation. This property is protected in perpetuity with a WRP easement.

Colusa NWR, Colusa County: This project will restore 57± acres of fallow farmland to vernal pool habitat. This project will recreate historic vernal pool habitat and provide benefits to waterfowl, giant garter snakes, shorebirds, and grassland songbirds. The estimated total project cost is \$20,000.00, with the entire amount being provided by grant funds.

Circle 6 Ranch, Sutter County: This project will restore 100± acres of wetlands and 20± acres of associated upland habitat for nesting cover. This project is adjacent to the Gray Lodge WLA and will benefit mallards, northern pintails, and white fronted geese. The total project cost is estimated at \$22,135.00, of which the grant will provide \$12,135.00, and the landowner will provide \$10,000.00. This property is protected in perpetuity with a FWS easement.

Butte Lodge Outing, Colusa County: This project will enhance 1,080± acres of wetlands and 30± acres of riparian habitat, and 90± acres of associated upland habitat. This project is adjacent to Butte Creek and will benefit woodducks and mallards. The estimated total project cost is \$134,950.00, of which the grant will provide \$109,950.00, and the landowner will provide \$25,000.00. This property is protected in perpetuity with WRP and FWS easements.

Colusa NWR, Colusa County: This project will develop 40± acres of permanent ponds to benefit nesting waterfowl, and an additional 60± acres of summer brood ponds. The project will cost an estimated \$50,000.00 and will be funded entirely

with grant funds.

Piper’s Patch, Butte County: This project will restore 275± acres of wetland and 25± acres of associated upland. The area is adjacent to the Gray Lodge WLA and provides habitat for numerous waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds, neotropical migrants and raptors. The entire project cost is estimated at \$25,005.00 of which the grant will provide \$15,005.00, and the landowner will provide \$10,000.00. This property is protected in perpetuity with a FWS easement.

Brady Ranch, Butte County: This project will enhance 765+ acres of wetlands and 20± acres of riparian vegetation, and 95± acres of upland nesting cover. This area is also adjacent to the Gray Lodge WLA and provides habitat for numerous waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds, neotropical migrants and raptors. The estimated cost of the project is \$150,370.00, of which the grant will provide \$120,370.00, and the landowners will provide \$30,000.00. This property is protected in perpetuity with a FWS easement.

Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, Water Delivery System, Butte County: Staff have estimated that a new water distribution system will cost approximately \$3.5 million over a 5-year, phased construction period. This project will construct the first phase of the water distribution system for a cost of \$631,550.00. This phase will improve supplies to 1,070± acres of emergent wetlands, 60± acres of riparian wetlands and 120± acres of upland nesting habitat. The grant will provide \$504,650.00 of the estimated \$631,500.00 project cost with the Department of Fish and Game providing the balance of \$126,900.00. It is anticipated that the remaining system will be completed with federal funds from subsequent NAWCC applications.

Restoration and enhancement activities for the above-mentioned projects, will include levee construction and/or removal, pond bottom excavation, construction of new brood ponds, water delivery design and construction. In addition, independent water control systems will be installed, including water control structures, and delivery and drainage swales unique to each restoration and enhancement project. Project construction and management will be administered by Ducks Unlimited in cooperation with the landowners.

Cost estimates for this project, which have been reviewed by staff are as follows:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
Materials	\$99,110.00
Contracts for actual onsite work	796,270.00
Construction Management	18,000.00
Survey and Design	40,400.00
Project Management	30,000.00

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST \$983,780.00

As previously mentioned, this project is to be funded entirely from federal funds awarded by the NAWCC. While the merits of this effort played a major role in the approval of the project, another reason this proposal scored so high was due to the number of partners associated with this project. Specifically, to secure this grant, the NAWCC required matching funds. To qualify as a matching fund, similar projects must have been completed within the last two years. As such, the following partners provided documentation on completed, eligible projects. Further, the partners supported this effort and the application for federal funds:

Proposed Funding Breakdown:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$500,000.00
Ducks Unlimited	485,527.00
Metropolitan Water District	1,610,000.00
Private Landowners	193,157.00
Department of Fish and Game	126,900.00
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	1,589,140.00
Natural Resource Conservation Service	40,000.00
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	20,000.00

TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING **\$4,564,724.00**

Consistent with the provisions of CEQA, this project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15301, Class 1 (i) as maintaining fish and wildlife habitat to protect wildlife resources.

As the proposed grant is a reimbursable grant, it will be necessary that funds be expended before they are received. It will, therefore, be necessary that the Board make an allocation of existing funds to complete the above-described work. Upon completion of the work, staff will submit bills to receive the reimbursement.

Mr. Schmidt reported that Messrs. Peter Schmidt and Fritz Reid, representing Ducks Unlimited, were in the audience should there be any questions. Ms. Porini requested clarification regarding cost savings in the water delivery system in the Gray Lodge Wildlife Area compared to the \$75,000.00 current pumping costs. Mr. Fritz Reid responded that their engineers estimate \$30,000.00 annual savings during the first phase, and even greater savings in the future. Mr. Chrisman asked about the source of the water and Ms. Cundiff advised that they are currently using ground water.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; authorize the acceptance of the North American Wetlands Conservation Council grant of \$983,780.00; allocate \$983,780.00 from the Inland Wetlands Conservation Fund; authorize staff to

enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Chrisman asked if there were any comments or questions. There were none.

It was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve this project as proposed; authorize the acceptance of the North American Wetlands Conservation Council grant of \$983,780.00; allocate \$983,780.00 from the Inland Wetlands Conservation Fund; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

17. Lake Redding Fishing Access, Shasta County \$195,260.00

Mr. Schmidt reported that this proposal was to consider a cooperative project with the City of Redding to improve an existing boat launch facility with a new restroom, boarding float and walkways, all in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Lake Redding Fishing Access area is located on lands owned by the City of Redding, on the Sacramento River, just west of Highway 273, and southeast of Keswick Dam in the City of Redding. Following Mr. Perrine's explanation of the project's location, Mr. Schmidt summarized the proposal.

Currently, Lake Redding Fishing Access, constructed in 1964, consists of a two-lane boat ramp with a small parking lot and restroom. It provides the only fishing access to a five-mile portion of the Sacramento River from Keswick Dam downstream to a small dam in the City of Redding operated by the Anderson-Cottonwood Irrigation District (A.C.I.D.). CalFed has recently awarded a grant to the A.C.I.D. to improve fish passage at the dam. It is anticipated that the CalFed project will allow for increased salmon and steelhead use on this portion of the river, which would improve fishing opportunities as well. The site is already a rather popular fishing area, and the City estimates that over 1,000 boats launch here each year.

The proposed project will remove the existing restroom, replace it with a larger, barrier-free restroom, construct access walkways to the restroom and replace the aging boarding float. In addition to contributing to the administration of the project, the City of Redding is totally funding certain additional project amenities, including the landscaping, lighting, a shade ramada, picnic tables and the area walkways.

Cost estimates for this project, which have been reviewed and approved by staff, are as follows:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
Barriers and temporary service	\$2,000.00

Demolition, clearing and grubbing		11,000.00
Utilities		32,000.00
Restroom		85,000.00
Concrete slab and restroom walkways		12,000.00
Boarding float		40,000.00
Permits and fees		3,500.00
Project sign		3,500.00
Landscaping (City)		
	21,000.00	
Shade ramada and picnic tables (City)		
	16,000.00	
Area walkways (City)		18,000.00
Area lighting (City)		
	6,000.00	
Engineering/contract management		35,500.00
Contingencies		19,000.00
<u>TOTAL ESTIMATED COST</u>		<u>\$304,500.00</u>
 <u>Proposed Funding Breakdown:</u>		
Wildlife Conservation Board		\$195,000.00
City of Redding		109,500.00
<u>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING</u>		<u>\$304,500.00</u>

An additional \$260.00 will be required for Department of General Services' review costs, bringing the allocation necessary for the Board's portion of the project to \$195,260.00. It is anticipated that the project will qualify for federal participation under the Sport Fish Restoration Act. After approval by the Board, staff will file the appropriate application with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which, if approved, will provide the Board and City with a 75 percent reimbursement of all project costs.

The Department of Fish Game has reviewed this proposal and supports the proposed improvements. The City of Redding will complete the appropriate notice to satisfy CEQA requirements and has agreed to operate and maintain the property for 25 years through a Lease and Operating Agreement, and will handle the contract administration for the construction of the improvements.

Mr. Schmidt reported that Mr. Terry Hanson, representing the City of Redding, was in the audience should there be any questions.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$195,260.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund; authorize the receipt of federal reimbursements from the Sport Fish Restoration Act; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Chrisman asked if there were any comments. There were none.

It was moved by Ms. Annette Porini that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$195,260.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund; authorize the receipt of federal reimbursements from the Sport Fish Restoration Act; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

18. Hope Valley Fishing Access (Carson River), Alpine County \$250,000.00

Mr. Schmidt reported that this proposal was to consider an allocation for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and County of Alpine to install a barrier-free fishing access facility at the DFG-owned Hope Valley Wildlife Area. The Hope Valley Wildlife Area consists of approximately 2,850± acres which was acquired by the Wildlife Conservation Board on behalf of the DFG in four separate purchases between 1988 and 1990. Hope Valley lies on the east side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains approximately 15 miles south of South Lake Tahoe. The area to be improved is located just off Highway 88 near its intersection with Highway 89, also known as Pickett's Junction, in northern Alpine County. Ms. Lipphardt reported that Mr. Frank Tortorich, representing the Emigrant Trail research group, Mr. John Brissenden, representing Friends of Hope Valley, and Messrs. Pat O'Brien and Banky Curtis of the Department of Fish and Game, were in the audience should there be any questions. Following Ms. Lipphardt's explanation of the project's location, Mr. Schmidt summarized the proposal.

The topography of Hope Valley consists of a grassland meadow complex on the level valley floor and Jeffery pine forests on the surrounding slopes, which also include small scattered meadows, riparian drainage fingers and aspen thickets, all at an elevation varying between 7,000 and 8,300 feet. Hope Valley is considered to be one of the most scenic valleys in the Sierra Nevada. The area also provides excellent deer summer range and fawning habitat, as well as habitat for a wide variety of songbirds and upland game species. The West Fork of the Carson River flows through the valley, providing excellent opportunities for trout fishing. In addition to protection, other purposes in acquiring this property were to improve the fishery resource and to provide for public access to the Carson River.

The planned improvements include two fishing platforms, an information kiosk, a parking area for eleven vehicles, a restroom facility and a walkway from the parking area to the fishing platforms, all to be constructed in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). The platforms will be low profile cement structures that have been designed to be visually unobtrusive and shaped to fit the landscape. They will be

placed close to the water's edge to make the fishing experience more enjoyable during low water flows and yet designed to withstand the high flows of winter storms. The informational kiosk will be placed on site and used by Alpine County and the DFG to provide the public with information on the Hope Valley area and on activities within the County. The small parking area will have four ADA approved vehicle spaces, with the remaining seven spaces available for general use. The proposed single vault restroom is engineered and designed for long life in extreme conditions and to meet or exceed the effects of a 350 pounds per square foot snow load. The restroom facility has a steel reinforced concrete construction and will not rot, rust or burn, making it easy to maintain and vandal resistant. The walkway will be approximately 900 feet long, leading from the parking area, over a portion of the old abandoned Highway 89 and off through a rocky meadow to the water's edge.

A segment of the historic Emigrant Trail also transverses the project and members of the Oregon California Trails Association have offered to provide a free-standing interpretive marker to mark the trail segment. Starting in 1848 and on through the turn of the 19th century, thousands of wagons, gold seekers and people seeking a better life followed the Emigrant Trail. The Association has found that the Emigrant Trail in Hope Valley is one of the most historic spots on the Carson River Route of the California Trail as it relates to the Westward Migration and the Gold Rush. This particular segment of the trail has been classified by the Association as a Class I trail as it is easily visible and has not been altered or damaged over the years. DFG staff has reviewed the offer by the Association and supports the installation of a trail marker.

Alpine County has signed a resolution supporting the project and has agreed to operate and maintain the facilities in cooperation with DFG, pursuant to a 25-year Operating Agreement. Under the agreement, the County will provide for day to day housekeeping operations and minor repairs, and DFG will provide for the major repairs and maintenance activities. DFG's Engineering staff have designed the project, will be obtaining the necessary permits and will be managing the construction to complete the project. In addition, DFG staff have prepared and will file the appropriate environmental documents as required under CEQA. Cost estimates for this project, which have been developed by DFG Engineering, are as follows:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>	
Mobilization and Demobilization	\$ 10,000.00	
Earthwork	17,000.00	
Entrance Road, Project Sign & Gates	22,000.00	
Parking Area, Striping, Kiosk & Signs	36,000.00	
Walkways		71,700.00
Vault Restroom		22,000.00
Fishing Platforms (2)		40,000.00
Contingencies		25,040.00
		Site Clearance

TOTAL
ESTIMATED COSTS **\$ 249,740.00**

An additional \$260.00 will be required for Department of General Services' review costs for the project, bringing the total allocation necessary to complete this project to \$250,000.00.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the funding for the construction of this barrier-free fishing access project as proposed; allocate \$250,000.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund for project costs and General Services' review costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Chrisman asked if there were any comments. Mr. John Brissenden, representing Sorensen's Resort and Friends of Hope Valley, complimented the Board and the Department of Fish and Game staff for the initial acquisition of this property and continuing work in the area.

Mr. Frank Tortorich, representing the Oregon California Trails Association, expressed his pleasure about this proposal and provided a very interesting historical perspective of the trail and its relationship to other trails in the area. Mr. Chrisman requested further information regarding the Association. Mr. Tortorich explained that the Association is a national organization, founded in 1982, with members in 50 states and some foreign countries. He explained that the purpose of the Association is to preserve, interpret and protect historic trails, and stated that legislation was passed in 1992 designating 5,600 miles of emigrant trails as national historic trails. Mr. Chrisman complimented Mr. Tortorich and everyone involved for their efforts.

It was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve the funding for the construction of this barrier-free fishing access project as proposed; allocate \$250,000.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund for project costs and General Services' review costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

19. Riparian Habitat Restoration, Pit River, Lassen County \$192,500.00

Mr. Schmidt reported that this proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association (CWA) for a cooperative project with the CWA, the landowner, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the Board to restore and enhance 1,700+ acres of riparian habitat and permanent/seasonal wetlands on privately-owned property. Following Mr. Clemons' explanation of the project's location, Mr. Schmidt summarized the proposal.

The subject property, which includes a reach of the Pit River and is bisected by Highway 299, is located between the towns of Bieber and Nubieber in the Big Valley region of Lassen County. The DFG's Ash Creek Wildlife Area is located approximately one mile northeast of the subject property, which is a 3,500+ acre ownership that is managed primarily for livestock grazing. However, the landowner has also been managing portions of his land to benefit many species of waterfowl and has traditionally found the property to be well used by sandhill cranes. The northern half of the property, consisting of 1,700 acres± and the site of the proposed project, is now protected under the federal Wetlands Reserve Program through a 30-year NRCS conservation easement.

Over 90 percent of the mature trees and shrubs that once grew along California's waterways have been lost over the last 150 years. Conditions along the Pit River in Big Valley are no exception. More than 100 years of intensive grazing, and 50 years of intensive hay and grain production along the river and its tributaries have removed all but a few isolated stands of mature riparian trees and shrubs. Currently, high water temperatures, nutrient loading, low dissolved oxygen and excessive erosion adversely impact water quality and beneficial uses throughout much of the Pit River system.

In fact, the river has been listed as an impaired water body under the Federal Clean Water Act. The local Resource Conservation Districts (RCD), with support from the NRCS, have formed the Upper Pit River Watershed Enhancement and Protection Project to coordinate restoration efforts in the area, and have contributed to the development of the proposed project. The proposed project will contribute directly to achieving overall resource enhancement goals and state and federal water quality goals for the Pit River Watershed. Protection and restoration proposed under the subject project will contribute directly to habitat goals established for the California Riparian Habitat Joint Venture, the Partners in Flight Riparian Habitat Conservation Program, the Intermountain West Joint Venture under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and, of course, the Board's California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program.

The overall goals of this project are to reestablish 200+ acres of montane riparian woodland canopy consisting of native trees and shrubs and understory vegetation, as well as to restore more than 100 acres of seasonal wetlands. In addition, a grazing plan has been prepared which will provide the opportunity to closely control the timing and duration of livestock grazing. Also, the internal flow of water on the property will be reestablished to as close to historical conditions as possible. It is anticipated that this combination of work will provide a major decrease in erosion, an improvement in the water quality and, of course, an increase in habitat for birds and other wildlife species.

A grazing management plan has been prepared by NRCS in cooperation with the landowner, DFG and CWA. Cross fencing, one element of this plan, will allow close control of the timing and duration of livestock grazing to achieve habitat goals for a diversity of riparian and wetland habitat-dependent wildlife. Fencing will be installed by the California Conservation Corps, and more than 56,000 willow and cottonwood

cuttings will be planted in selected zones within view of Highway 299. In addition, 500 each of native alder, ash, wild rose, bittercherry and elderberry will be planted. Hydrology will be restored and irrigation managed by constructing and/or reconstructing 13 structures for controlling water in manmade drains. After baseline conditions are established, the development of riparian woodlands and use by wildlife, including neotropical migrant birds, will be monitored every two years over a 10-year period by qualified observers.

The subject project will restore habitat that will benefit at least 11 bird species designated by Partners in Flight as species of concern in California riparian habitats, including Swainson's hawk, willow flycatcher, bank swallow, Swainson's thrush, warbling vireo, yellow warbler, Wilson's warbler, yellow-breasted chat, black-headed grosbeak, blue grosbeak, and song sparrow. Waterfowl will benefit by increased breeding and brood habitat, and feeding areas. Rainbow trout, German brown trout and other aquatic organisms will benefit from the shade produced by the increased abundance and density of riparian vegetation. California Mule deer, wild turkey, and California valley quail will also have improved habitat. When riparian trees become established, wood duck boxes will be installed to promote the production of wood ducks. Public benefits will include improved information on the occurrence of songbirds in the region, bird watching and other passive recreational uses will increase, and as game populations improve in response to the improved habitat, hunting in the region should improve.

The landowners have offered to provide tours of the project site to groups or individuals that are interested in riparian and/or wetland restoration. Plans have been made to utilize local schools to help with the project, to carry out field studies, and observe fish and wildlife on the site. In addition, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has awarded a grant to CWA to partially fund the project.

Cost estimates for this proposal have been developed by CWA and have been reviewed and approved by staff as follows:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
Fencing (46,875+ feet)	\$75,000.00
Drain Blocks/Flashboard risers (including labor)(13 structures)	100,399.00
Plant propagation, planting and protection (approx. 58,270 plants)	62,915.00

Monitoring wildlife use	10,000.00
Monitoring riparian development	10,000.00
Project signs (2)	2,000.00
Project design	7,500.00
Project management	10,500.00
Contingencies (10%)	26,095.00

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST **\$304,409.00**

Proposed Funding Breakdown:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$192,500.00
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	30,915.00
Landowner	80,994.00

(providing 30% of the capital costs of the project)

TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING **\$304,409.00**

The Department of Fish and Game has reviewed the proposed project and recommends it be approved for funding by the Board. It is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (Section 15034), as a minor alteration to land that will improve fish and wildlife habitat. The project has local support, as evidenced by a letter from the Lassen County Board of Supervisors. The proposal also has regional and statewide significance, as represented by a letter from the California Riparian Habitat Joint Venture.

Mr. Schmidt reported that the property owner, Mr. George McArthur, was in the audience and complimented Mr. McArthur for his cooperation in this project. Mr. Schmidt added that letters of support for this project were received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Lassen County Board of Supervisors, Riparian Habitat Joint Venture, California Regional Quality Control Board and the California Waterfowl Association.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish the project; allocate \$192,500.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund - [Section 2786 (e/f) (Aquatic/Riparian)], and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Chrisman asked if there were any comments. There were none.

It was moved by Ms. Annette Porini that the Board approve this project as proposed; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish the project; allocate \$192,500.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund - [Section 2786 (e/f) (Aquatic/Riparian)], and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

20. Wilderness Ranch Wildlife Area, Tulare County \$338,000.00

Mr. Schmidt reported that this proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to the Four Creeks Land Trust (Trust), to assist them in the cooperative acquisition of 725± acres of privately-owned land, for the preservation of riparian and vernal pool wetland habitat. In addition to the Trust and the Board, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Packard Foundation are also providing funds for this purchase. The Conservation Fund (Fund), while not a funding partner, has been assisting with the negotiations for this purchase. Mr. Giordano reported that Ms. Nancy Schaefer, representing the Fund, was in the audience should there be any questions. Following Mr. Giordano's explanation of the project's location, Mr. Schmidt summarized the proposal.

The subject property is located in the Tulare Lake Basin, in California's Central Valley, easterly of the City of Tulare and westerly of the community of Lindsay. Access is obtained from State Highway 137 (Avenue 232), located along the property's northern boundary, at its juncture with Farmersville Road.

This subject property is comprised of a unique combination of wetlands, vernal pools and uplands. The protection and restoration of this site will provide a tremendous opportunity to establish a wetland prairie complex along a wildlife corridor extending from the Sierra foothills to the Tulare Lake Basin. In addition, because of its position on Lewis Creek and Outside Creek, this property provides a natural linkage in the wildlife corridor to the Valley oak riparian forest at Kaweah Oaks Preserve, owned and managed by the Four Creeks Land Trust.

In 1992, the Board allocated \$75,095.00 to prepare a plan that identified opportunities to create a multi-use corridor system along the waterways of the Kaweah River Delta. This multi-use system would integrate needed water storage and recharge sites with significant fish and wildlife protection. The subject acquisition would be a step in implementing this earlier Board funded effort.

These lands are one of the largest remaining privately-owned, relatively undisturbed, habitats remaining on the valley floor, in Tulare County. The wetlands provide valuable habitat for wintering waterfowl and at least twelve species of shorebirds, Canada geese, and seven species of ducks, with Mallards and cinnamon teal using the seasonal marsh and vernal pools to nest. More importantly, these birds use this property as brood water for their ducklings, a use that can be enhanced if properly managed. Swainson's hawks, a threatened species, forage over the property, and at least five species of burrowing owls, a California species of special concern, nest on the site. California horned lark, a federal species of concern, has also been found to nest on the property. White-faced ibis, Northern harrier, ferruginous hawk, golden eagle, merlin, prairie falcon, long-billed curlew, and the tricolored blackbird are eight other species of special concern that spend at least part of the year on the property. Eleven raptor species are known to forage on

this property, an indication of the sites's biological importance and productivity.

While the property is currently used for cattle grazing, its protection by public acquisition is felt to be extremely important to protect the sensitive habitat noted above. Should public protection not take place in the very near future, the property will almost certainly be converted to other uses, which are detrimental to the wildlife habitat located thereon. In fact, there is a very real threat that this property could be converted to a dairy ranch if not acquired.

The Trust and the Fund have been handling the negotiations for the purchase of this property, which has a Department of General Services' approved appraised value of \$1,650,000.00. In fact, the Fund has an option for the purchase which they will assign to the Trust as part of this transaction. The Board's proposed grant, if approved, would provide \$335,000.00 toward this purchase. This amount will be combined with \$565,000.00 from Bureau of Reclamation, and \$400,000.00 from the Packard Foundation, bringing the funds being placed into this project to \$1,300,000.00. The owners have agreed to sell for this amount, indicating a donation of \$350,000.00 in land value by the owners. In addition to the grant amount proposed herein, an additional \$3,000.00 is estimated to be needed for administrative expenses, including General Services' review costs, bringing the total allocation necessary for this proposal to \$338,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that staff will review all proposed title documents, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into escrow. The grant will also require that maintenance and monitoring of the property will be conducted by the Trust. In addition, should the Trust no longer use this property for the purposes for which the grant is being made they will be required to reimburse the Board, or grant a conservation easement to the state, or another party named by the Board, at the Board's option.

The Department of Fish and Game has recommended that the Board become a funding partner in this transaction through this grant. The proposal is exempt from CEQA, under Class 13 of Categorical Exemptions, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the grant to the Four Creeks Land Trust to be applied to the purchase of the 725± acres as proposed; allocate \$338,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund [\$200,000.00 from funds specifically made available to the Inland Wetland Conservation Program and \$138,000.00 from Section 2786 (b/c)]; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; authorize staff to accept any reimbursements of its allocation which may become available; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Chrisman reported that he has seen the project area and that this type of property is a prime example of vernal habitat in the Central Valley prior to settlement of the Valley. Ms. Schaefer expressed her appreciation to the Board, Mr. Giordano and Ms. Cundiff, for their efforts in this project, and added that she recently learned that the Four Creeks Land Trust would be receiving a \$50,000.00 grant for restoration efforts. Mr. Chrisman asked if there were further comments. There were none.

It was moved by Mr. Robert Hight that the Board approve the grant to the Four Creeks Land Trust to be applied to the purchase of the 725± acres as proposed; allocate \$338,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund [\$200,000.00 from funds specifically made available to the Inland Wetland Conservation Program and \$138,000.00 from Section 2786 (b/c)]; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; authorize staff to accept any reimbursements of its allocation which may become available; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

21. Resolution Honoring Richard T. Thieriot

Mr. Schmidt reported that the following resolution was submitted for enactment by the Wildlife Conservation Board:

WHEREAS, Mr. Richard T. Thieriot has, in January 2000, completed two years of service as the Chairman of the California Wildlife Conservation Board and as President of the California Fish and Game Commission; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Thieriot, with his intense interest in the programs of the Wildlife Conservation Board, coupled with his sound judgement and experience as a businessman, his love for California's wildlife resources and his concern for the protection of these ever declining resources, has greatly assisted the Board and its staff in carrying out its duties and responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Thieriot, as Chairman of the Board, has supported the Board's program throughout his tenure, making preservation, enhancement and restoration of wildlife habitat a true priority, particularly concentrating on wetland habitat in California's great Central Valley; and

WHEREAS, All who have served with Mr. Thieriot have appreciated his consistent support, leadership, comments and advice, and have especially appreciated the personal and pleasant manner in which he has conducted the business of the Board, all of which have earned for him the love, esteem and respect of all who have worked with him; and

WHEREAS, It is the desire of the Board to gratefully acknowledge his contribution to the works of the Board and the entire State of California; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we, the Members of the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Joint Legislative Advisory Committee, and the Board staff convey to Richard Thieriot our sincere appreciation for his noteworthy contributions to the Board, and express our best wishes to him as he continues on with his personal endeavors; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution be made a part of the official minutes of this Board and that a copy be provided to Mr. Thieriot.

Mr. Chrisman advised that during the past three years he has served on the Commission, he has enjoyed working with Mr. Thieriot and that he will be missed.

It was moved by Mr. Michael Chrisman that the Board approve this resolution as proposed, that it be made a part of the official minutes of this Board and that a copy of this resolution be furnished to Mr. Thieriot.

Motion carried.

Mr. Schmidt announced that the Board meeting dates for 2000 changed. The Wildlife Conservation Board meetings are now scheduled to be held on May 24, August 10 and November 2, 2000 and that written notice would be provided to all the Board members.

Mr. Chrisman expressed his appreciation to all and welcomed the opportunity to work with the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:35 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

W. John Schmidt
Executive Director

Attachment

PROGRAM STATEMENT

At the close of the meeting on February 17, 2000, the amount allocated to projects since the Wildlife Conservation Board's inception in 1947 totaled \$679,406,773.65*. 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 bond Act, 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 and the Wildlife Restoration Fund.

A.	Fish Hatchery and Stocking Projects.....	\$16,006,219.06
B.	Fish Habitat Preservation, Development & Improvement.....	22,433,022.63
	Reservoir Construction or Improvement	\$ 4,525,972.75
	Stream Clearance and Improvement.....	14,788,961.69
	Stream Flow Maintenance Dams	547,719.86
	Marine Habitat	646,619.07
	Fish Screens, Ladders and Weir Projects	1,923,749.26
C.	Fishing Access Projects.....	38,228,766.60
	Coastal and Bay	\$ 2,992,860.08
	River and Aqueduct Access.....	9,766,128.28
	Lake and Reservoir Access.....	7,194,317.98
	Piers	18,275,460.26
D.	Game Farm Projects	146,894.49
E.	Wildlife Habitat Acquisition, Development & Improvement	587,830,112.55
	Wildlife Areas (General)	\$198,480,232.46
	Miscellaneous Wildlife Habitat Dev.	4,633,633.74
	Wildlife Areas/Eco Reserves, (Threatened, Endangered or Unique Habitat)	213,035,099.57
	Land Conservation Area	21,057.18
	Inland Wetlands Conservation Grants & Easements.....	7,115,232.57
	Riparian Habitat Conservation Grants & Easements.....	5,294,743.47
	Other Wildlife Habitat Grants	159,250,113.56
F.	Hunting Access Projects.....	484,898.57
G.	Miscellaneous Projects (including leases).....	10,653,879.29
H.	Special Project Allocations	1,116,464.79
I.	Miscellaneous Public Access Projects	1,956,095.63
	State Owned.....	\$917,735.63
	Grants	1,038,360.00
J.	Sales and/or exchanges.....	<u>550,420.04</u>
	Total Allocated to Projects	\$679,406,773.65*

*This total includes allocations in the sum of \$230,500,000.00 for grants to acquire the Headwaters and Grizzly Creek Forests and the acquisition of Owl Creek Forest.

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