



## WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

June 2, 2016

10:00 a.m.

California State Capitol, Room 437  
Sacramento, California 95814

### Final Agenda Items

<u>Item Number</u>	<u>Page</u>
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2. Funding Status — Informational	2
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*4. Approval of Minutes	10
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\*Proposed Consent Calendar

- \*6. Contracts Executed by the Executive Director 13  
 Informational  
 Recent non-controversial operational contracts entered into by Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) staff pursuant to the authorization provided by the Board on February 24, 2016.
- \*7 Placer County Oest Ranch Oak Woodlands Conservation Easement, 14  
 Expansion 1  
 Placer County  
 \$495,000.00  
 To consider the allocation for a grant to the Placer Land Trust to acquire a conservation easement over 77± acres of land for the protection of native oak woodland habitat and for the protection and preservation of sensitive biological resources located near the City of Auburn in Placer County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding sources, such as native oak woodland habitat pursuant to the Oak Woodlands Conservation Act (Fish and Game Code Section 1360 *et seq.*) [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(2) and 75055(b)]
- \*8. Sheep Ranch Conservation Easement, Expansion 4 19  
 Calaveras County  
 \$270,000.00  
 To consider the acquisition of a conservation easement over 155± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the protection of habitat, including native oak woodlands, for the benefit of deer and mountain lions located near Arnold in Calaveras County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat, including native oak woodlands, to protect deer and mountain lions. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786 (a)]
- \*9. East Contra Costa County HCP/NCCP (Hanson Hills) 22  
 Contra Costa County  
 \$10,000.00  
 To consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant and the approval to sub-grant these federal funds to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy for a cooperative project with the East Bay Regional Park District to acquire 76± acres of land for the protection and preservation of existing regional wildlife linkages, including grassland and oak woodland savannah habitat areas within the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan, located in the Diablo Mountain Range, west of the City of Brentwood in Contra Costa County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat for areas in and around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta that assist in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c)]

- \*10 Alameda County Stock Pond Enhancement, Phase II 26  
Alameda County  
\$85,800.00  
To consider the allocation for a grant to the Alameda County Resource Conservation District for a cooperative project with the landowners and the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, to restore two livestock ponds in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for projects to assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration and wildlife protection. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(4)]
- \*11 Santa Cruz Integrated Watershed Restoration, Watsonville Slough 29  
Santa Cruz County  
\$340,000.00  
To consider the allocation for a grant to the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County for a cooperative project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California State Coastal Conservancy, the Watsonville Wetlands Watch and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County to restore riparian and wetland habitat on privately owned land in areas critical to special status amphibian and fish species in Santa Cruz County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the development, rehabilitation, restoration, acquisition and protection of habitat that accomplishes one or more of the following objectives: promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species, provides corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent fragmentation, protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems such as riparian and wetland areas, or implements the recommendations of the California Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)]
- \*12 California State Lands Commission Lease-PRC 9174.9 34  
Fresno County  
\$0.00  
To consider a proposal to authorize the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to execute a lease with the California State Lands Commission to use and maintain an existing storm drain outfall and to construct, use, and maintain a volitional release pipeline and apron in association with the proposed Salmon Conservation and Research Facility located near Friant on the San Joaquin River in Fresno County.
- \*13. Bufford Ranch Conservation Easement, Expansion 1 37  
Kern County  
\$214,000.00  
To consider the allocation for a grant to the California Rangeland Trust to acquire a conservation easement over 261± acres of land to preserve, protect and sustain the rangeland, grazing land, grassland, working landscapes, wildlife habitat, and watersheds located approximately 12 miles south of Lake Isabella in Kern County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the protection of grazing land pursuant to the California Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Act (Public Resources Code Section 10330 et seq.) [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(1)]

- \*14. Puma Canyon, Expansion 7 41  
 San Bernardino County  
 \$105,000.00  
 To consider the allocation for a grant to the Transition Habitat Conservancy for a cooperative project with National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to acquire 20± acres of land to conserve lower montane chaparral and woodland habitat for the benefit of deer, mountain lion, and other wildlife species located in Puma Canyon, near the community of Phelan in western San Bernardino County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat to protect deer and mountain lions. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code 2786(a)]
- \*15. Canada de San Vicente, (Dunn) 44  
 San Diego County  
 \$370,000.00  
 This item has been withdrawn from consideration at this time.
- \*16. Hollenbeck Canyon Wildlife Area, Expansion 7 and 8 45  
 San Diego County  
 \$369,240.00  
 To consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant to assist with the acquisition in fee of 141± acres of land from two separate landowners by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the protection of core wildlife linkages and endangered species habitat, located near the community of Jamul in San Diego County. The purposes of these projects are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding sources, which allow for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species; and which allow for the acquisition of habitat on which unique species or natural communities naturally exist [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)]
- \*17. Sycuan Peak Ecological Reserve, Expansion 7 49  
 San Diego County  
 \$32,000.00  
 To consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant to assist with the acquisition in fee of 10± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the preservation and protection of habitat to protect rare, threatened, endangered and fully protected species, located near the community of Jamul in San Diego County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect, rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species; and which allows for the acquisition of habitat on which unique species or natural communities naturally exist [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)]

- \*18. San Joaquin River Parkway, Ball Ranch Habitat Restoration Planning Project 53  
 Fresno County  
 \$28,045.00  
 To consider the allocation for a grant to River Partners for a cooperative project with the San Joaquin River Conservancy (Conservancy) to assess environmental conditions and complete a plan and environmental review to restore habitat on the Conservancy's Ball Ranch property located 4.5± miles downstream of Friant Dam in Fresno County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding sources, which allow for multi-benefit water quality, water supply, and watershed protection and restoration projects located within the boundaries of the San Joaquin River Parkway. [Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1), California Water Code Section 79731(g)]
19. Silver Spur Ranch 57  
 Lake County  
 \$440,000.00  
 To consider the allocation for a grant to Tuleyome to acquire in fee 1,280± acres of land for the protection of habitat such as blue oak woodland, riparian areas, and chaparral, and to provide for potential future wildlife oriented public use opportunities located near Clearlake Oaks in Lake County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the development, rehabilitation, acquisition and protection of habitat that accomplishes one or more of the following objectives: promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species, protects habitat corridors, protects significant natural landscapes. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)]
- 20 Rim Fire Forest Restoration 60  
 Tuolumne County  
 \$3,510,000.00  
 To consider the allocation for a grant to Tuolumne River Preservation Trust for a cooperative project with the United States Forest Service (USFS) to restore or enhance habitat and to install infrastructure to benefit wildlife on areas decimated by the Rim Fire, located within the USFS Stanislaus National Forest approximately 20 miles east of Sonora in Tuolumne County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for promoting the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests through forest conservation, preservation and restoration of productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas, redwood forests and other forest types, including the conservation of water resources and natural habitats for native fish, wildlife and plants found on these lands. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a)]
21. San Joaquin River Parkway, Milburn Pond Habitat Restoration and 65  
 Public Access Improvements Planning and Design Project  
 Fresno County  
 \$438,000.00  
 To consider the allocation for a grant to the California Department of Water Resources for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the San Joaquin River Conservancy to conduct planning and preliminary design for the isolation of a gravel pit from the San Joaquin River, restore riparian and floodplain habitat, and provide public

access on the Milburn Unit of the CDFW San Joaquin River Ecological Reserve and the CDFW Hansen Farm property located within the Fresno city limits, located approximately four miles upstream of State Route 99 in Fresno County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding sources, which allow for multi-benefit water quality, water supply, and watershed protection and restoration projects located within the boundaries of the San Joaquin River Parkway. [Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1), California Water Code Section 79731(g)]

22. Badger Almond Wetland Enhancement 70  
Kern County  
\$722,000.00  
To consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association for a cooperative project with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act to restore and enhance 356± acres of wetlands within the historical bed of Goose Lake in northwest Kern County, located approximately six miles southeast of Lost Hills, CA. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands in the Central Valley. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program].
23. Kern Refuge Recirculation Project 74  
Kern County  
\$1,308,000.00  
To consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association for a cooperative project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to restore and enhance 80± acres of wetlands and to construct water recirculation infrastructure, located on the USFWS Kern National Wildlife Refuge within the bed of the historical Goose Lake in northwest Kern County, six miles southeast of Lost Hills, CA. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands in the Central Valley. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program].
24. Upper Devereux Slough Restoration 77  
Santa Barbara County  
\$3,820,000.00  
To consider the allocation for a grant to the University of California, Santa Barbara to restore 136± acres of slough, wetland, transitional, and upland habitats in portions of the historic northern extent of Devereux Slough, located adjacent to the southern city limits of Goleta in Santa Barbara County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, protection and restoration of coastal wetlands identified in the Southern California Coastal Wetlands Inventory, located within the coastal zone, other wetlands connected and proximate to such coastal wetlands and upland areas adjacent and proximate to such coastal wetlands. [Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(a)]

25. Live Oak Canyon and Expansion 1 82  
Riverside and San Bernardino Counties  
\$1,067,500.00  
To consider the allocation of two grants, one to the Western Riverside County - Regional Conservation Authority and one to the City of Redlands for cooperative projects with Western Riverside County-Regional Conservation Authority, the Riverside Land Conservancy, and the City of Redlands to acquire a total of 162± acres of land from two separate landowners in Riverside and San Bernardino County. The acquisitions will protect habitat essential for the recovery of threatened and endangered species in the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan. The purposes of these projects are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species; and which allows for the acquisition of habitat on which unique species or natural communities exist. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117) Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)]
26. Western Riverside MSHCP (2012) – Riverpark 87  
Riverside County  
\$818,500.00  
To consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant, and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority), as well as to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board grant to the Authority, to acquire in fee 108± acres of land near the City of Lakeview in western Riverside County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species; and which allows for the acquisition of habitat on which unique species or natural communities exist. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117) Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)]
27. Red Hill Bay Shallow Water Habitat 91  
Imperial County  
\$1,850,000.00  
To consider the allocation for a grant to the Imperial Irrigation District to restore 600± acres of shallow brackish water habitat in the Red Hill Bay area of the Salton Sea, located 15 miles northwest of Brawley in Imperial County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, protection and restoration of land and water resources necessary to meet state obligations for regulatory requirements related to California’s allocation of water supplies from the Colorado River. [Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79568(a)]
28. Chollas Creek, Riparian Restoration – Planning 95  
San Diego County  
\$970,000.00  
To consider the allocation for a grant to the Urban Corps of San Diego County for a cooperative project with the City of San Diego to complete planning, design, environmental review and initial permitting to restore eight± acres of land on Chollas Creek, located in the City of San Diego in San Diego County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed

funding source, which allows for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat and aquatic habitat for salmonids and trout to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f)]

29 Contract Authorization for Accounting Services 99  
Informational/Action

This proposal is to consider delegating authority to the Executive Director of the WCB to execute a three-year interagency agreement with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Accounting Services Branch to provide the WCB with professional accounting and fiscal support services.

30. California Streamflow Enhancement Program 100  
Informational/Action

The 2016/17 final Proposal Solicitation Notice (Solicitation) for the California Streamflow Enhancement Program will be presented to the Board for discussion and approval pursuant to the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1), authorized by the voters in November 2014.





EDMUND G. BROWN Jr., Governor  
NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**  
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## WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

June 2, 2016  
10:00 a.m.

California State Capitol, Room 437  
Sacramento, California 95814

1. Roll Call

Wildlife Conservation Board Members

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

Michael Cohen, Member  
Director, Department of Finance

Eric Sklar, Member  
President Fish and Game Commission

Joint Legislative Advisory Committee

Senator Jean Fuller

Senator Fran Pavley

Senator Lois Wolk

Assemblymember Richard Gordon  
*Assemblymember Marc Levine -Alternate*

Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia  
*Assemblymember Miguel Santiago -Alternate*

Assemblymember Das Williams  
*Assemblymember Richard Bloom -Alternate*

Executive Director

John P. Donnelly

**2. Funding Status  
Informational**

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

(a) 2015-16 WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND, (0447)	
Budget Act	\$1,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$1,000,000.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-5,000.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$995,000.00
(b) 2015-16 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-3,087,398.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$17,575,602.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-2,798,740.00
Total Project Development	<u>-3,572,611.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$11,204,251.00
(c) 2014-15 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-13,814,767.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$6,848,233.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-2,304,210.00
Total Project Development	<u>-3,685,389.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$858,634.00
(d) 2013-14 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,678,315.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$984,685.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-19,681.00
Total Project Development	<u>-965,004.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00
(e) 2012-13 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-4,474,979.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$16,188,021.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-26,021.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>

	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$16,162,000.00
(f)	2011-12 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-14,339,208.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$6,323,792.00
	June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-827,138.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-474,411.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$5,022,243.00
(g)	2010-11 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-18,984,822.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$1,683,178.00
	June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-1,020,000.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$663,178.00
(h)	2009-10 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262) (2013-14 REAPPROPRIATION)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-20,450,871.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$217,129.00
	June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-44,292.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-31,589.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$141,248.00
(i)	2008-09 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262) (2012-13 REAPPROPRIATION)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-20,653,891.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$14,109.00
	June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$14,109.00
(j)	2007-08 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262) (2011-12 REAPPROPRIATION)	
	Budget Act	\$20,674,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-20,620,782.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$53,218.00
	June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-26,391.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$26,827.00

(k) 2006-07 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262) (2013-14 REAPPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act	\$20,699,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,833,299.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$865,701.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-6,368.00
Total June Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$859,333.00
(l) 2006-07 SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND, (0005) (2015-16 REAPPROPRIATION)	
Capital Outlay Budget [Sections a3, a5 & a6]	\$15,224,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-13,740,324.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$1,483,676.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$1,483,676.00
(m) 1999-00 SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND, (0005)	
Continuously Appropriated [Sec. 5096.350 (a)(1), (2), (4) & (7)]	\$36,100,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-31,262,119.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$4,837,881.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-87,881.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$4,750,000.00
(n) 2004-05 CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND, (6029)	
2014-15 Reappropriation	\$11,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-10,807,019.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$192,981.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$192,981.00
(o) 2001-02 CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND, (6029)	
Continuously Appropriated (Section 5096.650)	\$273,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-254,065,983.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$18,934,017.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-6,043,500.00</u>

Projected Unallocated Balance	\$12,890,517.00
(p) 2003-04 WATER SECURITY, CLEAN DRINKING WATER, COASTAL AND BEACH PROTECTION FUND OF 2002, (6031) COLORADO RIVER	
Reappropriated 06/07, 10/11, &14/15 (Section 79568)	\$32,500,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-21,904,443.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$10,595,557.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-1,850,000.00
Total Project Development	<u>-8,745,557.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00
(q) 2002-03 WATER SECURITY, CLEAN DRINKING WATER, COASTAL AND BEACH PROTECTION FUND OF 2002, (6031)	
Continuously Appropriated (Sections 79565 and 79572), including Chapter 81, Statutes of 2005	\$814,350,000.00
2003-04 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-21,000,000.00
2004-05 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-21,000,000.00
2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-4,000,000.00
2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-3,100,000.00
2006-07 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-17,688,000.00
2007-08 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-5,150,000.00
2008-09 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-1,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-688,515,958.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$52,896,042.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-3,820,000.00
Total Project Development	<u>-45,263,443.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$3,812,559.00
(r) 2010-11 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2014-15 REAPPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$3,380,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-72,280.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$3,307,720.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$3,307,720.00

(s) 2009-10 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2013-14 PARTIAL REAPPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$4,800,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-3,639,660.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$1,160,340.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-1,160,340.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00
(t) 2009-10 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2015-16 REAPPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$5,200,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>25,000.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$5,175,000.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-4,954,660.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$220,340.00
(u) 2008-09 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2015-16 REAPPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$10,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-25,000.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$9,975,000.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$9,975,000.00
(v) 2007-08 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2014-15 REAPPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$10,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-6,931,082.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$3,068,918.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$3,068,918.00

(w) 2009-10 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2014-15 REAPPROPRIATION)	
Chapter 2, Statutes of 2009 (SB 8)	\$24,000,000.00
Less 2013-14 Partial Reappropriation	<u>-15,500,000.00</u>
Balance	\$8,500,000.00
Previous Board Allocation	<u>-5,074,012.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$3,425,988.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-3,425,988.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00
(x) 2009-10 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2013-14 PARTIAL REAPPROPRIATION)	
Chapter 2, Statutes of 2009 (SB 8)	\$15,500,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-12,075,200.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$3,424,800.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-10,000.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$3,414,800.00
(y) 2008-09 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051), (2014-15 REAPPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act (NCCP Section 75055(c))	\$25,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-13,082,729.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$11,917,271.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-8,617,814.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	3,299,457.00
(z) 2007-08 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006 , (6051) (2014-15 REAPPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act (Section 75055(c))	\$25,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-23,465,814.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$1,534,186.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-1,534,186.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00

(aa) 2007-08 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2013-14 APPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(1))	\$1,279,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-1,072,000.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$207,000.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	214,000.00
Total Project Development	<u>0.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	(\$7,000.00)
(ab) 2007-08 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2013-14 APPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(2))	\$1,500,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-1,280,143.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$219,857.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-219,857.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00
(ac) 2007-08 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2013-14 APPROPRIATION)	
Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(4))	\$2,368,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-2,282,200.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$85,800.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-85,800.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00
(ad) 2006-07 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051)	
Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055a)	\$164,700,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-136,559,490.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$28,140,510.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-3,510,000.00
Total Project Development	<u>-24,610,000.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$20,510.00



(ae) 2006-07 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051)	
Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055(b))	\$123,525,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-95,071,880.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$28,453,120.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-1,055,143.00
Total Project Development	<u>-16,985,100.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$10,412,877.00
(af) 2015-16 WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND OF 2014, (6083)	
Budget Act (Section 79735(b)(2))	\$38,400,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-20,171,278.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$18,228,722.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$18,228,722.00
(ag) 2015-16 WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND OF 2014, (6083)	
Budget Act (Section 79731(g))	\$2,800,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$2,800,000.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-466,045.00
Total Project Development	<u>-959,934.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$1,347,021.00

**RECAP OF FUND BALANCES**

WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND (A)	\$1,000,000.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	-5,000.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$995,000.00
HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND (B), (C), (D), (E), (F), (G), (H), (I), (J), (K)	\$50,753,668.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-6,026,450.00
Total Project Development	-9,775,395.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$34,951,823.00
SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND (L) AND (M)	\$6,321,557.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	-87,881.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$6,233,676.00

CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND (N) AND (O)	\$19,126,998.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	-6,043,500.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$13,083,498.00

WATER SECURITY, CLEAN DRINKING WATER, COASTAL AND BEACH PROTECTION FUND OF 2002 (P) AND (Q)	\$63,491,599.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-5,670,000.00
Total Project Development	-54,009,000.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$3,812,599.00

SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006 (R), (S), (T), (U), (V), (W), (X), (Y), (Z), (AA), (AB), (AC), (AD), (AE)	\$100,095,510.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-5,094,800.00
Total Project Development	-61,288,088.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$33,712,622.00

WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND OF 2014 (AF) AND (AG)	\$21,028,722.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-466,045.00
Total Project Development	-959,934.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$19,602,743.00

TOTAL – ALL FUNDS	\$261,818,054.00
June 2016 Board Meeting Allocation	-17,257,295.00
Total Project Development	-132,168,798.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$112,391,961.00

RECAP OF NATURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT ACT OF 2000 Chapter 113, Statutes of 2000 and Chapter 715, Statutes of 2004 Tax credits awarded through June 30, 2008	\$48,598,734.00
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Chapter 220, Statutes of 2009 (effective January 1, 2010) Tax credits awarded	\$8,662,500.00
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**3. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4 – 13)**

**\*4. Approval of Minutes**

**\*5. Recovery of Funds**

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

<b>RECOVERIES BY FUND</b>	Amount
Habitat Conservation Fund	96,972.77
Wildlife Restoration Fund	117,000.00
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection	32,886.27
Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002	7,140.00
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006	\$34,253.00

<b>RECOVERIES BY PROJECT</b>			
<b>Habitat Conservation Fund</b>	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Blue Ridge-Berryessa CAPP, Smittle Creek Napa County	1,415,515.00	-1,412,860.00	2,655.00
Cameron Meadows, Phase II, El Dorado County	10,000.00	-1,560.00	8,440.00
County of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan 2011 (Multiple Parcels) San Diego County	1,562,645.00	-1,544,803.00	17,842.00
Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area, Expansion 14 Yuba County	2,630,000.00	-2,622,428.00	7,572.00
Pajaro Valley Riparian Restoration Santa Cruz County	263,000.00	-263,000.00	0.00
Rose Creek Watershed Invasives Control Project, San Diego County	330,000.00	-329,698.26	301.74
San Diego County Water Authority (Rancho Cielo), San Diego County	1,520,000.00	-1,502,665.00	17,335.00
Santa Cruz Sandhills, Zayante (Bias) Santa Cruz County	10,000.00	-2,080.00	7,920.00
Summers Meadow, Mono County	1,345,000.00	-1,345,000.00	0.00
Sycuan Peak Ecological Reserve, Expansion 5, San Diego County	77,650.00	-55,268.00	22,382.00
Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area- Little Dry Creek Habitat Restoration, Butte County	515,000.00	-508,119.97	6,880.03
Western Riverside MSHCP (2012) - Caramello, Riverside County	50,000.00	-47,275.00	2,725.00
Western Riverside MSHCP (2014/2015) - Bautista, Riverside County	846,200.0	-843,280.00	2,920.00
<b>Total Recoveries to Habitat Conservation Fund</b>			<b>\$96,972.77</b>

<b>Wildlife Restoration Fund</b>	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Point Pinole Fishing Pier Improvements, Contra Costa County	234,000.00	-117,000.00	117,000.00
<b>Total Recoveries to Wildlife Restoration Fund</b>			<b>\$117,000.00</b>

<b>California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund</b>	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Blue Ridge-Berryessa CAPP, Smittle CreekNapa County	4,485.00	-3,705.00	780.00
DFG Land Management Plan, Bay Delta Region, Yolo and Solano Counties	297,000.00	-264,893.73	32,106.27
Yolo County Water Intake and Fish Screen Yolo County	2,000,000.00	-2,000,000.00	0.00
<b>Total Recoveries to California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund</b>			<b>\$32,886.27</b>

<b>Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund Of 2002</b>	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Buena Vista Lagoon ER (MacHutchin) San Diego County	1,360,000.00	-1,352,860.00	7,140.00
Dos Palmas Area Saltcedar Removal and Habitat Restoration, Riverside	610,000.00	-610,000.00	0.00
<b>Total Recoveries to Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund Of 2002</b>			<b>\$7,140.00</b>

<b>Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality And Supply, Flood Control, River And Coastal Protection Fund Of 2006</b>	Allocated	Expended	Balance
East Contra Costa CountyHCP/NCCP (Nunn), Contra Costa County	2,742,400.00	2,740,217.00	2,183.00
Project Planning, Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Program, Statewide	25,000.00	--0.00	25,000.00
San Diego County Multiple Species Conservation Plan (Skyline 244), San Diego County	10,000.00	--4,940.00	5,060.00
Thousand Palms Conservation Area, Expansion 1, Riverside County	43,500.00	-41,490.00	2,010.00
Willow Hole Conservation Area, Expansion 2, Riverside County	31,250.00	-31,250.00	0.00
<b>Total Recoveries to Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality And Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund Of 2006</b>			<b>\$34,253.00</b>

**\*6. Contracts Executed by the Executive Director  
Informational**

At the February 24, 2016, Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) meeting, the Board authorized the Executive Director to execute non-controversial contracts with private and public entities to support the mission and goals of the WCB, limiting such authority to routine service and interagency contracts and amendments of no more than \$150,000.00 in value per year and no more than three years in length per contract.

The Board’s action allowed the Executive Director to execute time-sensitive contracts as soon as practically possible and without the delays associated with bringing non-controversial contracts before the Board for approval at their next quarterly meeting. The action was also taken to ensure compliance with the California State Contracting Manual, Volume 1, Section 2.06(B), which requires that for contracts in excess of \$5,000, State boards and commissions must have either statutory authority for the executive officer to sign contracts, or the authority must be conveyed by the board or commission by written resolution, order, or motion.

The Board placed one condition on its delegation of authority: WCB staff must report contracts executed under the delegation of authority to the Board at its next scheduled meeting. Pursuant to the aforementioned condition, the following contracts were executed by the Executive Director.

<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Project/Purpose</b>	<b>Total Value</b>	<b>Term</b>
State Water Resources Control Board	Technical and Scientific Services to Support WCB’s Streamflow Enhancement Program	\$411,000 (\$137,000 annually)	3 Years
California Natural Resources Agency	Professional Consulting Services for Implementation of the Financial Information System for California (FI\$Cal)	\$150,000	3 Years
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Security Guard Services for WCB Office Building	\$27,398	1 Year, 11 Months

**\*7 Placer County Oest Ranch Oak Woodlands  
Conservation Easement – Expansion I  
Placer County  
\$495,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Placer Land Trust (PLT) to acquire a conservation easement over 77 ± acres of land, for the conservation of native oak woodland habitat and the protection and preservation of sensitive biological resources.

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The proposed conservation easement (Conservation Easement) is located on a 77± acre portion of a 947± acre ranch complex known as the Oest Ranch (Ranch). The Conservation Easement is situated in the northwest portion of the Ranch approximately seven miles northwest of the City of Auburn in the western portion of Placer County. More specifically, the Conservation Easement area is located on the southwest corner of State Highway 49 and Lone Star Road.

The neighborhood surrounding the Ranch is along State Route 49 from Dry Creek Road to the Nevada County line and Bear River. The general neighborhood is further defined by Garden Bar Road to the west and the communities of Meadow Vista and Christian Valley to the east. The immediate neighborhood is comprised primarily of farms and ranches of various acreages used mostly for cattle grazing. The Auburn Valley Golf and Country Club and a residential development are also located within the boundaries of the neighborhood.

The Conservation Easement is located within the Spenceville Conservation Area Protection Plan (CAPP). Properties situated within the CAPP include oak woodlands, riparian areas, and grassland pastures that are located adjacent to, or in the vicinity of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Spenceville Wildlife Area (SWA). The Ranch serves as a link that connects a corridor of protected properties from the east towards Penn Valley to the north. Maintaining this linkage supports quality habitat for species including the California black rail, mule deer, elderberry longhorn beetle, various small mammals, and birds and snakes. Furthermore, the Ranch also sits in the central portion of Placer County at an elevation of approximately 1,280 to 1,395 feet, which places it near the central eastern edge of an area known as the “Great Valley Oak Woodland.”

The City of Auburn is the County Seat of Placer County and is one of the primary economic hubs for all of Western Placer County. The Auburn area has experienced rapid growth over the past years due to its substantial development activity. Placer County has become one of the leading industrial/manufacturing high-tech areas in the Sacramento region. The population has grown 26% from 2003 to 2013. Between 2013 and 2023 the population growth in the County is projected to be approximately 18%. As such, several agricultural properties in Placer County have been developed to meet the population demand. The Ranch’s scenic view, together with its close proximity to commercialized areas in Auburn, makes it very appealing to developers for subdivision into smaller parcels for residential construction.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Conservation Easement represents the second PLT Oest Ranch project to be funded under Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) - Oak Woodlands Conservation Program. The first project was a 36± acre conservation easement that was approved by WCB on May 21, 2015. The proposed project is comprised of two irregularly shaped contiguous parcels located in the northwest portion of the Ranch. If this Conservation Easement is approved by WCB, a combined 113± acres of land would be protected in perpetuity. In addition, PLT has protected another 410 acres of Oest Ranch since 2009 with private funding.

The Conservation Easement is located in the F-B-X 20 AC MIN zoning designation (farm use with a minimum parcel size of 20 acres). This zoning designation permits commercial agricultural operations together with low density residential land use, manufacturing and recreation. The property is currently used as a working landscape for a family-owned livestock farming operation. It is vacant and unimproved, except for fence lines used to segregate cattle grazing.

The Conservation Easement area consists of lower elevation foothill terrain with a ridgetop area that extends along most of the western portion of the site. The ridgetop contains scattered woodlands and generally slopes downward towards the east to a year round stream and large rolling pasture area. The year round stream traverses the eastern portion of the site in a north-south direction. The southern portion of the Ranch is also bisected by the Lone Star Canal (Canal) and other open water canals and smaller irrigation ditches. The stream combined with the Canal and ditches provide untreated water for flood irrigation and irrigated pasture for grazing throughout the Ranch complex.

The project would conserve approximately 20 acres of oak woodlands, which represents approximately 55% of the Conservation Easement area. The predominant plant species found on the Property are live oak, blue oak, black oak, ponderosa pine, and foothill pine. The project also supports a number of shrubs, grasses and flowers. The wildlife confirmed on the site by PLT includes Canadian geese, acorn woodpecker, red tailed hawk, coyote, deer, and western gray squirrel. The Property is also likely to support mountain lion, bobcat, gray fox, feral pig, western fence lizard, Southern alligator lizard, red shouldered hawk and various other wildlife species.

The Conservation Easement will require the landowner to implement stewardship practices that recognize and incorporate the ecological requirements of oak woodlands and associated habitats. These practices utilize grazing management that benefits valley oak regeneration and control of invasive plants. The terms of the Conservation Easement have been reviewed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). CDFW supports the project because it includes multiple benefits for the landscape, as well as connectivity for wildlife along the Coon Creek and Bear River watersheds.

The project also meets and complements multiple natural resource conservation objectives that: (1) are consistent with the open space goals of the Placer County General Plan (1994); (2) contribute to the objectives of the Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program (2000); and (3) comply with Placer County's Conservation Plan in western Placer County. The proposed Conservation Easement will advance the goals of the Placer County Conservation Plan by protecting oak woodlands, working landscapes and scenic open space.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under the WCB's Oak Woodlands Conservation Program (Program). Grant proposals for the Program are evaluated and selected for funding by WCB staff based on established criteria. In order to be eligible for funding under the Program, a project must be located within a county that has adopted an Oak Woodlands countywide management plan. The Program is designed to help local efforts to achieve oak woodland protection. More importantly, this Program provides a mechanism to bring ranchers and conservationists together in a manner that allows both to achieve sustainable ranch and farming operations and healthy oak woodlands.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The project meets the following WCB Strategic Plan goals:

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

The Conservation Easement is not only located within in an established CDFW CAPP, but it is also located adjacent to other protected properties. The combined acreage of protected properties protects existing wildlife linkages and corridors, thereby allowing wildlife travel to reach available food and habitat resources.

The Lone Star Canal's network of ditches and water canals running throughout the Ranch also provides water needed by the property's plants, oak trees and resident wildlife. The availability of water is essential to plant and animal species alike, especially in California's present drought situation.

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

The Conservation Easement is located within the Spenceville CAPP. CDFW has identified this area as a high priority for acquisition. This project furthers *Goal A.4* by taking advantage of the opportunity to acquire a conservation easement that protects important species and habitats including "working landscapes," and to acquire property within large blocks of already protected lands.



**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS**

The Conservation Easement will be held and managed by PLT and monitored according to the terms of the Conservation Easement and WCB Grant Agreement. PLT will monitor the Conservation Easement annually with the use of a Baseline Conditions Report. PLT will also utilize an estimated \$200,000.00 endowment towards the perpetual stewardship of the conservation easements on the Ranch, which will be funded in part by the landowner. PLT also plans to raise funds from various private funders for the perpetual stewardship of these conservation easements.

**TERMS**

The Conservation Easement has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$565,000. The appraisal was reviewed by WCB staff, and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the Conservation Easement for its approved appraised fair market value. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, WCB can require specific performance of the grant agreement or require PLT to convey its interest in the Conservation Easement to WCB or, at the election of WCB, another entity or organization authorized by California law to acquire and hold conservation easements and that is willing and financially able to assume all of the obligations and responsibilities of PLT.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding for the conservation easement is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	485,000
Placer County	85,000
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>565,000</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	10,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$495,000</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover WCB project related administrative costs and DGS appraisal review fees.

The Placer Land Trust is contributing approximately \$15,000 to cover the costs of the land survey, appraisal, and administrative costs; and will split the costs of the title and escrow fees with the property owner.

**WCB FUNDING SOURCE**

The purposes of this grant are consistent with the proposed funding source, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Sections 75055(d)(2) and 75055(b), which allows for

the preservation of native oak woodland habitat pursuant to the Oak Woodlands Conservation Act (Fish and Game Code Section 1360, *et seq.*); and for the acquisition and protection of habitat that provides corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent fragmentation, and protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems such as oak woodlands areas.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$495,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code, Sections 75055(b)(2) and 75055(b),; and authorize staff and CDFW to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project and proceed substantially as planned.

**\*8. Sheep Ranch Conservation Easement, Expansion 4  
Calaveras County  
\$270,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the acquisition of a conservation easement (Conservation Easement) over 155± acres of land on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the protection of deer and mountain lion habitat, including native oak woodlands.

**LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property) is located on the lower slopes of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the community of Sheep Ranch, 6 miles north of Highway 4, and approximately 15 miles northeast of the city of San Andreas. The Property lies adjacent to and is accessible from Armstrong Road. The surrounding lands are predominantly devoted to livestock rangeland, timber, rural home sites, dry land farming, and recreational uses. More recently a number of properties in the area surrounding the city of San Andreas have converted to residential development and irrigated farming uses, primarily dedicated to wine grape vineyards. The increase of rural residential development and conversion to less wildlife compatible agricultural uses in the area continue to threaten and diminish wildlife habitat corridors.

South of the Property are two Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) funded fee acquisitions consisting of 715 acres, and two conservation easements totaling 2,212± acres. Additionally, to the north, is Swiss Ranch which consists of multiple WCB funded conservation easements, approved between 1985 and 2014, totaling 5,841± acres. Bureau of Land Management and US Forest Service - Stanislaus National Forest lands are located 1.5 miles east of the property.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Property contains mostly rolling to steep topography at an elevation approximately 3,000-feet above sea level. O'Neil Creek (Creek) flows year-round and has brook and rainbow trout present. The Creek transverses the Property and contributes to a unique 50-foot waterfall located on the Property. The Property also consists of archeological remanences of historical Miwok grinding stones. Improvements on the Property include a main dwelling with an attached carport, cabin, multiple sheds, and fencing

The Property is situated in CDFW's Railroad Flat Deer Winter Range Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP), which comprises almost 9,000 acres of deer wintering rangeland. The Property is part of a migration area for deer herds traveling west over the Stanislaus National Forest, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, and private land until they reach their winter habitat in Calaveras County. Seventy-five percent of the deer wintering range in Calaveras County is under private ownership. Private land uses that are compatible with deer wintering habitat are diminishing with the threat of development.

This acquisition will not only conserve contiguous wintering range habitat for a declining mule deer herd, but will also protect mixed hardwood conifer habitat that attracts species such as the California spotted owl, golden eagle, Cooper's hawk, black bear, and northern goshawk.

## WCB PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

The Property is within CDFW's Railroad Flat Deer Winter Range CAPP and the inclusion of this Property further promotes significant habitat linkages and corridors within this CAPP to allow for species movement and habitat connectivity.

## MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

According to the terms of the Conservation Easement, CDFW will monitor and enforce the terms of the Conservation Easement. CDFW has determined that existing staff resources will be sufficient to monitor the Conservation Easement. Since the Conservation Easement is on private land, public access will not be allowed absent landowner approval. The Property owner intends to partner with groups and programs to open the Property up for outdoor educational programs.

## TERMS

The Conservation Easement has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$255,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the Conservation Easement for the fair market value of \$255,000.00. WCB staff will review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. Once approved by the WCB, the transaction must also be reviewed and approved by DGS.

### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	255,000
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>255,000</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	15,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$270,000</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$15,000 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including environmental assessment, appraisal, DGS appraisal and transaction review, survey, escrow and title insurance costs.

### WCB FUNDING SOURCE

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

### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$270,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786 (a) for the acquisition and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*9. East Contra Costa County HCP/NCCP (Hanson Hills)  
Contra Costa County  
\$10,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant and the approval to sub-grant these federal funds to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy (ECCCHC), for a cooperative project with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) to acquire 76± acres of land for the protection and preservation of grassland, oak woodland, and oak savannah habitat areas within the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan /Natural Community Conservation Plan (ECCC HCP/NCCP) plan area.

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property) is located in the central region of the ECCC HCP/NCCP plan area, north of Marsh Creek Road in an unincorporated area of Contra Costa County, approximately 5 miles south of the City of Antioch and 4 miles west of the suburban area of the City of Brentwood. It would contribute to an important and central piece of the wildlife corridor connecting Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve to Marsh Creek State Park and Round Valley Regional Preserve. Surrounding land uses include rural homesites, existing natural park lands, wildlife mitigation lands, and private cattle ranching.

The ECCC HCP/NCCP designates the Property as a medium priority for acquisition and protection due in part to its close proximity to previously conserved areas within the ECCC HCP/NCCP plan area. Over the past several years the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), USFWS, ECCCHC, and EBRPD have partnered to acquire nearly 13,000 acres of habitat within the ECCC HCP/NCCP plan area, helping protect essential habitat and connectivity for multiple wildlife species. The project is also consistent with action proposed under the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) California Wildlife Action Plan (Plan). The project is located within the Central Valley and Bay Delta region within the Plan. One of the recommended conservation actions called out for this region is protection of upland linkages and reducing the risk of habitat isolation in the eastern San Francisco Bay area.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Property is 76± acres in size and is currently used as a rural residential homesite. The terrain includes one gently sloping valley in the center of the Property with rolling to steep sloping terrain rising on each side. Elevations range from approximately 450 to 890 feet. Long Canyon Creek traverses the center of the Property for a distance of approximately 1,600 feet. It is a seasonal creek that flows in a southeastern direction across the Property. Habitat types found on the Property include annual grassland, oak savannah, and oak woodland.

Although the Property is not adjacent to any other ECCC HCP/NCCP protected properties, it is one parcel away from the 960± acre Smith property which WCB approved in May of 2014. Adjacent to the Smith property is the 1,885± acre Roddy Ranch property which WCB approved in November of 2013. Both properties were acquired in fee by EBRPD. These linkages include a northwest-southeast movement corridor for the state threatened and federally endangered San Joaquin kit fox. Acquisition of the Property will protect suitable habitat for the conservation of the California-listed threatened red-legged frog and a variety of

other rare and important wildlife species including California tiger salamander, golden eagle, western burrowing owl, Swainson's hawk, Alameda whipsnake, and western pond turtle.

#### WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Goal A.4* – Invest in priority conservation projects recommended under CDFW's land acquisition evaluation process or within other conservation plans supported by CDFW. CDFW was instrumental in the creation and support of the ECCC HCP/NCCP through its NCCP program. Under the NCCP program, CDFW works with numerous private and public partners to develop a regional protection plan identifying properties to acquire long term protection of habitat for plants and animals.

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

Although the Property is not proposed to be acquired with WCB funds, WCB funds will cover certain project related costs with a USFWS Section 6 subgrant and EBRPD funds to be used for the direct acquisition.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

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

**TERMS**

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$730,000. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and the USFWS. The owner has agreed to sell the Property for the approved appraised fair market value. The USFWS funds require a non-federal match that is being provided by EBRPD bond funds. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB subgrant to the ECCCHC provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the grantee to encumber the Property with a conservation easement in favor of WCB and seek reimbursement of funds.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

USFWS Subgrant Funds	547,500
East Bay Regional Park District	182,500
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>730,000</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	10,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>

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

**FUNDING SOURCE**

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

**CEQA**

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



#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve the project as proposed; approve the acceptance of Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant funds from the USFWS in the amount of \$547,500.00 and approve the subgrant of the federal funds to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy; allocate \$10,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(c) to cover the project-related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*10 Alameda Stock Pond Enhancement Phase II**

**Alameda County**

**\$85,800.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Alameda County Resource Conservation District (ACRCD) for a cooperative project (Project) with the landowners and the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), to enhance wildlife habitat on two existing stock ponds on private properties in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

**LOCATION**

Project sites are located in the hills of Alameda County and in Contra Costa County. Habitat surrounding the ponds consists of annual grassland and oak woodland. Ranchers graze the sites with livestock for production purposes, to maintain and improve habitat conditions for plants and animals, and to provide vegetation management to prevent wildfires.

Projects will occur on rangelands that have been grazed for generations. As part of livestock management, cattle ranchers constructed multiple livestock ponds in Bay Area and California rangelands in the mid-1900's. These ponds were built on seasonal or ephemeral drainages which had active natural springs. Many of the ponds were located in isolated areas on ranches, with the goal of distributing water throughout the landscape. These livestock ponds continue to provide water for grazing animals and have also become important habitat for native wildlife.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

There are over 1000 livestock ponds in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties that were built in the mid-1900's. Many of the ponds on the landscape are at risk of failure, or have already failed, due to siltation and spillway erosion. Pond repairs are not economical for ranchers, with costs ranging from ten to sixty thousand dollars. Many ranchers no longer depend on stock ponds as their primary source of livestock water, as water storage tanks and troughs have become a cheaper alternative to addressing livestock water needs on the landscape. Ponds that fail, either by drying up due to sedimentation or spillway failures, will result in a loss of valuable breeding habitat for a variety of wildlife species.

The survival and recovery of two California amphibians in the area of the proposed Project increasingly depends on existing livestock ponds and the efforts of local cattle ranchers. The California red-legged frog and California tiger salamander (CTS) occur primarily on rangelands, where the primary management activity is cattle grazing. Both species are federally listed as threatened in Alameda County. The CTS is also a state listed threatened species. Much of these species' habitat has been altered or lost to development and cropland. Natural breeding habitats (slow-moving creeks and vernal pools) in particular have been affected by these uses. Stock ponds, which can provide high-quality aquatic habitat for both species in addition to other wildlife, have become a vital feature on the landscape as natural habitat is lost. Private ranches and grazed public lands hold the majority of potential remaining habitat. The recovery of these species requires ongoing stewardship by these land managers.

The ACRCD has been working over the past ten years to plan and implement the Alameda County Wildlife-Friendly Pond Restoration Program (Program). To date, the ACRCD has successfully implemented over 20 wildlife-friendly livestock restoration projects. This Program

is designed to offer incentives to ranchers to restore their ponds for wildlife. These incentives include streamlined permitting assistance, project planning and design, cost share assistance, federal Safe Harbor assurances and engineering/biological assistance during project implementation. These cost-share incentives are critical to the Program. Pond restoration is expensive, and with less expensive watering alternatives available, restoring these existing ponds with the necessary avoidance and minimization measures for habitat and species is not economically viable for many landowners.

The proposed project consists of restoration at two wildlife-friendly pond restoration sites and their associated uplands. Following the ongoing restoration efforts of eight ponds through a previously funded WCB Project in 2014, the Project would restore an additional two ponds. Project restoration activities will include dredging of the ponds, spillway stabilization, fencing, and riparian planting to reduce sediment deposit into the ponds and provide additional wildlife value. Restoration of the livestock ponds included under this proposal will also improve water quality through sediment reduction. Enhancement of non-breeding habitat associated with restored ponds will be completed as well, including riparian fencing, riparian plantings, and offstream water development to reduce livestock pressure at the pond sites. Pond restoration projects included under this proposal will address sediment sources from erosion and inputs of fine sediment into stream courses and San Francisco Bay.

#### WCB PROGRAM

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

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The ACRCDC has adhered to established conservation practice standards for livestock ponds that are endorsed by the NRCS. These practices provide guidance for applying conservation technology on the land. Each established conservation practice has an expected lifespan. Stock pond renovations are expected to last a minimum of twenty years based on landowner and grantees following a plan developed for that practice. The Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of each livestock pond and associated lands will be the responsibility of the landowner. Project landowners have entered into contracts with the ACRCDC to maintain these projects for their 20-year life. The ACRCDC will provide technical assistance during the twenty-year maintenance period. The O&M plans are a part of the grant, which requires the Grantee to assure that the landowners will maintain the improvements for the twenty-year life of the project. If at any time during the life of the Project the landowner does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires the Grantee to refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Item	Contributors			
	NRCS	Landowner	WCB	Total
<b>2016 Projects 9-11</b>				
Project management	0	0	15,836	15,836
Design and planning	18,680	0	15,532	34,212
Biological surveys & monitoring	14,400	0	11,157	25,557
Construction	67,500	9,000	17,100	93,600
Permits	3,600	0	12,675	16,275
Construction contingency	0	0	13,500	13,500
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>\$104,180</i>	<i>\$9,000</i>	<i>\$85,800</i>	<i>\$198,980</i>

Project costs will be for project management, final design, biological surveys and permits, and construction on private properties.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding source for this project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(4). This fund is for use for projects to assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration and wildlife protection, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION**

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by WCB. The Alameda County Resource Conservation District, as lead agency, has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has considered the MND and prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB’s compliance with CEQA. Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file a Notice of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the proposed written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$85,800.00 from the from Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(4); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*11 Santa Cruz Integrated Watershed Restoration, Watsonville Slough  
Santa Cruz County  
\$340,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County (RCDSCC) for a cooperative project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California State Coastal Conservancy, Watsonville Wetlands Watch and Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (Land Trust) to restore riparian and wetland habitat in areas critical to special status amphibian and fish species on privately owned land in Santa Cruz County.

**LOCATION**

The project site is located within a complex of State and federal lands, including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Watsonville Slough Ecological Reserve to the east and west, the Struve Slough Unit of the Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge to the northwest, a 43.6-acre conservation easement held by the Open Space Alliance to the north, and 76 acres of environmental mitigation areas surrounding the Pajaro Valley High School to the northeast.

The project site is located approximately two miles southwest of the City of Watsonville, within the unincorporated County of Santa Cruz. The project is bounded on the south by the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line and on the north by the Struve/Watsonville Slough. The six sloughs that make up the Watsonville Sloughs, comprise the largest freshwater wetland in Santa Cruz County. The project site is at the junction of the Watsonville Sloughs and Pajaro River floodplains, about two miles from Monterey Bay. Historically, the Pajaro River meandered across this area and deposited fertile topsoil, which led to agricultural production.

The site is part of the Watsonville Slough Farm, a 491-acre Land Trust property that hosts 251 acres of working farmland and 240 acres of wetlands and uplands that are managed for habitat today and planned for public access in the future. The Land Trust acquired the Watsonville Slough Farm (Farm), including the project parcel with financial support from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and many other partners. WCB approved partial funding of the properties at the November 2008 board meeting. Several wetland and grassland restoration projects have been completed or are underway on the Farm, including the recently completed Pajaro Valley Riparian Restoration, which WCB funded in February 2012.

The alignment designated for the future Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail and Coastal Trail borders the project site. Its location at the center of the lower Pajaro River watershed offers a unique opportunity to demonstrate innovative approaches for balancing protection, enhancement and restoration of ecological resources while maintaining and supporting the local agricultural economy.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Existing conditions include historic agricultural fields that are in the process of reverting to a mix of permanent and seasonal marsh and upland habitats. Vegetation communities include seasonal marsh, wet meadow, willow scrub, and ruderal grassland habitat and mudflats. Several landscape features from past farming practices remain, including the historically dredged maintenance channels of Watsonville Slough and Struve Slough.

The project site was leveled and used for row crop agriculture until 2007 when rising water levels in drainage channels limited agricultural production, making farming no longer profitable. The entire property has been fallowed since 2010, with portions managed by discing, mowing, habitat preservation and invasive plant management.

The proposed project is the second phase of a larger effort to restore approximately 45 acres of seasonal wetland, riparian and grassland habitat across three floodplain parcels. Fifteen acres were enhanced in Phase 1, which were restored by the halting agricultural practices beginning in 2003. Additionally, select areas were planted with native riparian vegetation in 2010 and 2011. Phase 2, the subject of this proposal, will enhance an additional 8.5 acres. Subsequent phases will restore another 12-acre area of wetlands and grasslands, and create a 4-acre drainage water reuse facility to demonstrate the treatment of nitrate and other agricultural drainage water compounds using wetlands and other cost effective technologies.

The goal of this project is to protect, expand, and enhance habitat for native wildlife and plants. The specific objectives are to:

- Enhance regional biodiversity by restoring valley grassland, wet meadow, and seasonal freshwater marsh habitats.
- Benefit the ongoing breeding success of adjacent populations of California redlegged frog (CRLF), marsh harrier, white-tailed kite, and bald eagle.
- Enhance ecosystem resilience to climatic and hydrologic change by targeting processes and multiple habitat types rather than the narrow needs of a specific species.
- Increase the viability of agriculture in the broader area, by receiving floodwaters and improving water quality through wetland processes.
- Provide an aesthetic demonstration of ecologic restoration along the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Trail.

The primary enhancement strategy is to recover wetland hydrology by restoring topographic variability through grading. Native grassland and wetland vegetation will be planted to jumpstart recovery of diverse habitats.

Construction will consist of excavating broad depressions from the previously leveled farm fields to depths of up to four feet below existing grade and placing the excavated material in broad deposits to serve as islands and to raise the elevation of a portion of the property that will be later used to treat agricultural drainage water.

The grading will move approximately 5,000 cubic yards of material and affect 12.5 acres of land (including the 8.5-acre enhancement site and the 4-acre drainage water treatment area). The resulting restored landscape will include topographic variability that will result in a variety of water levels in the wetlands. These areas will be supported by the shallow water table, precipitation, and occasionally by flooding. While the site presently dries down by the end of March each year, after project implementation several acres will retain water into the summer and some areas will hold water into the fall in a typical rainfall year.

The result will be a substantial increase in the heterogeneity of habitats. Seasonal marsh, wet meadow and native grassland habitats will be reintroduced to areas presently dominated by

non-native plants. The deeper portions of enhanced seasonal wetlands are anticipated to support conditions suitable for CRLF breeding, which currently occurs within 1000 feet of the project site. These areas are designed to be groundwater fed and to dry down in the late fall, which will also contribute to reducing available bullfrog habitat.

#### WCB PROGRAM

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

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

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

- The project will provide resilience in the face of climate change by establishing native grasses and sedges in the planned seasonal wetlands and grasslands. This will result in the vertical accretion of soil at a rate higher than anticipated sea level rise.

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

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

In addition, the project is consistent with several conservation actions of the State Wildlife Action Plan, and the identified priority to restore and protect CRLF habitat. The Project also [furthers/supports] the CRLF Recovery Plan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2002) including its recommendation that conservation efforts be focused on watersheds that currently support healthy populations, corridors for dispersal, and functional habitat.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Monitoring and maintenance activities would ensure the successful establishment of plant material and prohibit the establishment of high and moderate priority invasive plant species. The active monitoring and maintenance period for this project is anticipated to be two years; however, regulatory permits and authorizations for the proposed project may include active monitoring and reporting for up to five years. Adaptive management of the site is expected to last seven years. The self-sustaining design of the project will lead to limited need for intervention.

Proposed maintenance practices include various weeding techniques, mowing, and herbicide application. A broadleaf-specific herbicide would be used to remove invasive forb species and establish native grass cover, if necessary. All maintenance practices would occur outside of areas with surface water inundation or saturated soils.

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

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Item</b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Construction	279,840	50,358	330,198
Consultants	36,000	38,750	74,750
Personnel	13,062	26,500	39,562
Operating Expenses	1,676	976	2,651
Project Administration	7,359	0	7,359
Contingencies	2,063	0	2,063
<i>Totals</i>	<b>\$340,000</b>	<b>\$116,584</b>	<b>\$456,584</b>

WCB funding will contribute to costs associated with construction, revegetation, regulatory compliance and project management. Matching funds will be provided by the Land Trust, which will contribute to engineering, project management, site preparation, and adaptive management. Per an agreement with the Coastal Conservancy, lease revenue from the Farm, approximately \$250,000 per year, is reinvested in the property and the watershed to restore coastal habitats, sustain agriculture, and provide public access. A portion of these funds are available to provide matching financing for the proposed project.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

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

**CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION**

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



**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$340,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*12 California State Lands Commission Lease-PRC 9174.9  
Fresno County  
\$0.00**

This proposal is to authorize the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to execute a lease with the California State Lands Commission (CSLC) to use and maintain an existing storm drain outfall and to construct, use, and maintain a volitional release pipeline and apron in association with the proposed Salmon Conservation and Research Facility (SCARF). The lease will encompass .05± acres of land under the jurisdiction of CSLC.

**BACKGROUND**

The San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) stems from a Settlement Agreement reached as a result of federal court action in *Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) et al. v. Kirk Rodgers et al.* which challenged the renewal of long-term water service contracts between the United States and the Central Valley Project Friant Division contractors. One of the primary goals of the settlement is to restore and maintain fish populations in good condition, including naturally reproducing and self-sustaining populations of salmon and other native fish in the Restoration Area (defined as the main stem of the San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to the confluence with the Merced River). As an implementing State agency for the SJRRP, CDFW proposes to construct and operate the SCARF to produce a genetically diverse spring-run Chinook salmon stock for reintroduction to the San Joaquin River.

The SCARF will include a hatchery building, tanks with associated accessories, volitional release pipe with concrete apron, water supply and wastewater systems, a parking lot, and an aeration tower. The majority of the SCARF will be constructed on CDFW owned land, allowing existing San Joaquin Fish Hatchery (SJFH) infrastructure to be converted to support the new facility. The future volitional release pipe with concrete apron and an existing storm drain outfall to be utilized by the SCARF will be located in the secondary channel of the San Joaquin River which is under the jurisdiction of CSLC. On December 18, 2015, CSLC authorized a lease between it and CDFW for two parcels of land totaling .05± acres (PCR 9174.9/W26788 or Lease). If executed, the Lease would be for a term of ten years, beginning December 18, 2015, and ending December 17, 2025, and will allow for the use and maintenance of an existing storm drain outfall and for the construction, use, and maintenance of a volitional release pipeline and apron on the CSLC property.

**LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES**

The SCARF will be located adjacent to the existing SJFH, approximately 1.1 miles downstream of Friant Dam in Fresno County. The site is situated along the eastern edge of the San Joaquin Valley at the base of the Sierra Nevada foothills. The SCARF will encompass approximately 65 acres in total. The SCARF site includes portions of the San Joaquin River floodplain and terrace landforms. To the northwest of the site is the San Joaquin River, which is regulated by Friant Dam, and the Interim Facility, which will be integrated into the SCARF after construction. The Interim Facility is a fish-rearing facility located on a portion of the SCARF site that is owned by CDFW. To the northeast is the SJFH which was completed in 1955 and operates as a trout and kokanee salmon hatchery. SJFH effluent ponds are located immediately south and further south is the community of Friant and the Fresno County Lost Lake Recreation Area.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Two parcels will be leased through CSLC totaling approximately .05± acres and both are located adjacent to the proposed SCARF in the secondary channel of the San Joaquin River. The first parcel includes the area that has an existing storm drain outfall. As part of the SCARF, the storm drain outfall will be utilized to convey storm water from the new facility. The second parcel will be leased to construct a volitional release pipe and apron to allow for the release of salmon juveniles to the secondary channel of the San Joaquin River when conditions are suitable. Currently the second parcel is riparian habitat.

The parcels will be used for the SCARF operations including construction, operation, and maintenance of the volitional pipeline and apron and maintenance and use of an existing storm drain outfall. The SCARF itself will not be open to the public; however, the public can visit the current SJFH and the San Joaquin Hatchery Public Access and Trail (Hatchery Trail) currently undergoing construction. The Hatchery Trail will lead around the SCARF from the SJFH to the San Joaquin River.

The volitional release pipe and concrete apron site and storm drain outfall are located in a riparian forest. Fremont cottonwood, Oregon ash, and willow are co-dominant in the overstory. Himalayan blackberry is dominant in the understory. Emergent wetlands that occur in the secondary channel are dominated by herbaceous hydrophytes such as paleyellow iris and rice cutgrass. Amphibians and reptiles that may use this habitat include Sierran treefrog, western toad, gregarious slender salamander, Gilbert's skink, common garter snake, gopher snake, common kingsnake, and western racer. Raptors observed in this habitat include red-shouldered hawks, osprey, and white-tailed kite. Mammals likely to use the riparian habitats at the site include ornate shrew, deer mice, desert cottontails, Virginia opossums, raccoon, striped skunk, gray fox, bobcat, and mule deer.

## TERMS

The Lease, which expires on December 17, 2025, does not require CDFW to pay any monetary consideration. The Lease presently requires CDFW to construct, manage, operate and maintain structures on the leased land at its sole expense, and to maintain a comprehensive general liability insurance policy and property damage insurance. Since it is self-insured, CDFW does not acquire separate insurance policies for leased land.

The proposed Lease would: (1) allow the construction of the volitional release pipe and apron for the SCARF; and (2) allow CDFW to operate and manage the parcels and associated structures according to the terms of the Lease. CSLC authorized the lease of these properties on December 18, 2015; however, construction will not begin until September 2016 and is scheduled for completion in 2017. Maintenance activities will not begin until after construction is complete.

## MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

If this project is approved, CDFW will manage the leased parcels and associated structures as part of the future SCARF. CDFW will manage and operate the SCARF according to the Hatchery and Genetics Monitoring Plan and current federal 10(a)(1)(A) Enhancement of Species Permit which provides guidelines for the management and operation of the SCARF.

SCARF construction is funded by CDFW. Operation and maintenance funding will be provided to CDFW by the Bureau of Reclamation through a federal grant as a reimbursable contract agreement. As part of the SCARF, the two parcels and associated structures will not result in any significant new or increased management costs.

#### WCB PROGRAM

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

#### WCB FUNDING SOURCE

No funds are being requested for this project. There is no monetary consideration payable under the Lease.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

As Lead Agency, the CDFW has prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has considered the EIR and prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB authorize CDFW to execute Lease No. PRC 9174.9 to allow CDFW to use and maintain an existing storm drain outfall and to construct, use, and maintain a volitional release pipeline and apron on land under the jurisdiction of CSLC in association with the proposed Salmon Conservation and Research Facility (SCARF); authorize staff and CDFW to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*13. Bufford Ranch Conservation Easement Expansion 1**

**Kern County**

**\$214,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Rangeland Trust (CRT) to assist with the acquisition of a conservation easement (Conservation Easement) over 261± acres of land in north-central Kern County to preserve, protect, and sustain its rangeland, grazing land, grassland, working landscapes, wildlife habitat, cultural values, and watersheds.

**LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property) is located approximately 12 miles south of Lake Isabella and 50 miles east of Bakersfield on the north side of Walker Basin. The Walker Basin is a unique upper alpine basin in the southern Sierra Nevada Mountain range which contains a number of rare and sensitive alpine-dependent species. Adjoining the Property is the original 575± acre Bufford Ranch conservation easement acquired with a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) in 2013. These two properties form the Bufford Ranch. To the north of the Property are lands managed by the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Property and BLM areas are also linked and surrounded by U.S. National Forest lands. In the northwest portion of Walker Basin is a 150-acre parcel that WCB acquired for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) in 2003 to provide habitat protection for the rare primrose sphinx moth. Near the southern portion of Walker Basin is the Parker Ranch, a 9,500-acre conservation easement funded by WCB in 2007. Next to Parker Ranch and further south and west is the 15,000-acre Rudnick Ranch conservation easement which is held by the Nature Conservancy and was funded by WCB in 2011. These properties support a protected wildlife corridor and linkage from the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains into the Tehachapi Mountain Range and the 62,000-acre Tejon Ranch conservation project that WCB funded in 2010.

Portions of the Walker Basin have been subdivided and approved for development into small residential tracts, threatening to fragment the habitat values within the basin. The Property is bordered on the south and west by partially built out residential subdivision lots as small as 2.5 acres. The proposed Conservation Easement would preclude any future residential development on the Property. If the Property were developed, it could result in encroachment on good pasture and grazing land as well as create a demand for additional domestic wells that would draw down the water table, impacting streams within the basin. The Property itself is within the Thompson Creek watershed of the Middle Kern/Upper Tehachapi-Grapevine hydrologic unit. Thompson Creek, a perennial stream, and two intermittent streams flow through the entirety of the Property, through Walker Basin and into the Kern River.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Property is comprised of 261± acres of varied vegetation. The majority of Bufford Ranch is open savannahs of blue oak and Canyon live oak with areas of California juniper, buckbrush, and gooseberry. The northeastern portion of the Property is mostly steep to very steep with significant rock outcroppings. Elevations range from approximately 3,600 to 4,900 feet. There are approximately 15 springs on the entire Bufford Ranch property. Annual grasses, forbs, and scattered native perennial bunchgrasses, including purple needlegrass and blue wildrye are found on the Property.

Bufford Ranch encompasses six different ecosystem types. Vegetation types include blue oak/foothill pine woodland, pinyon-juniper, montane riparian, wet meadows, annual/perennial grassland, chaparral, and desert sub-shrub and associated riparian corridors. Stands of perennial grasslands, riparian drainage channels, and small mountain wetlands are unique habitats that would be protected by this project.

Special-status species that have been identified on the Property include the Alkali Mariposa Lily and the Coast Horned Lizard. The Property provides a key foothill wildlife migration corridor as well as a reliable habitat, sanctuary, and breeding area for many species including deer, bear, mountain lion, bobcat, coyotes, ducks, raptors, skunk, raccoon, quail, and badger.

The Property contains many artifacts that reflect a long and rich history. The landowners have been working with the California State University at Bakersfield Biology and Archeology Departments to allow scientific exploration of the Property on an annual basis. In 2006, a cultural resource assessment was conducted that found artifacts dating back 3,200 years. One of the archeological sites found on Bufford Ranch is believed to be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The Property was also active during the gold rush era and many mining artifacts have been collected on the Property. Current infrastructure includes fencing, stock ponds, wells, corrals, and dirt roads.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under WCB's Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Program (Program). Grant proposals are evaluated and selected for funding by WCB staff based on established criteria. The Program provides funding for the acquisition of conservation easements on private properties for the protection of rangeland, grazing land, and grasslands. The Program seeks to prevent the conversion of rangeland, grazing land, and grassland to nonagricultural uses, protect the long term sustainability of livestock grazing, and ensure continued wildlife, water quality, watershed and open-space benefits to the State of California from livestock grazing. The project has been reviewed under the Program and has been recommended for approval.

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

*Goal A.1* Fund projects and landscapes that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change. This acquisition is part of a large habitat corridor that allows for the migration of species. The proposed project will expand the network of existing wildlife habitat linkages and corridors to ensure the success and recovery of threatened and endangered wildlife species.

*Goal A.4* Invest in priority conservation projects recommended under CDFW's land acquisition evaluation process or within other conservation plans supported by CDFW. As previously noted, the project was evaluated and approved under WCB's Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Program.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

When establishing a new agricultural conservation easement, CRT works closely with the landowner to address the protection of a property's natural habitat and agricultural resources. The purpose of the Conservation Easement is to ensure that both the agricultural and wildlife habitat values are recognized and conserved in balance with one another. CRT has prepared

an initial baseline assessment of the existing development and the agricultural and natural resources on the Property and provided this report to WCB.

After the Conservation Easement is recorded, CRT will monitor the Property at least once a year to ensure the Conservation Easement terms are being honored. Under the terms of the grant agreement WCB can accompany CRT on these monitoring visits. CRT will provide a written report documenting the visit and will note any significant changes to the resources or compliance issues CRT identifies. If necessary, corrective action will be recommended and noted in the report. CRT will provide a copy of the report to WCB in accordance with the terms of the grant agreement.

While the Conservation Easement does not convey a general right of access to the public, the landowners have been working with the California State University at Bakersfield to document the historical artifacts found on the Property. The landowners have also contemplated possibly conducting archeological explorations and nature hikes in the future as a way of sharing the important historic and biological resources protected on the Property.

#### TERMS

The Conservation Easement has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$204,000. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The Property owner has agreed to sell the Conservation Easement for \$204,000. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant to CRT provide that staff of WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, WCB can require specific performance of the grant agreement or require CRT to convey its interest in the Conservation Easement to WCB or, at the election of WCB, another entity or organization authorized by California law to acquire and hold conservation easements and that is willing and financially able to assume all of the obligations and responsibilities of CRT.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for this project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	204,000
Other Project Related Admin Costs	10,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$214,000</i>

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

#### FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the protection of grazing land pursuant to the California Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Act (Public Resources Code Section 10330, et seq.), Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(1).

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 13525, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$214,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(1), for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project, and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.



**\*14. Puma Canyon, Expansion 7  
San Bernardino County  
\$105,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to Transition Habitat Conservancy (THC) for a cooperative project with the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation to acquire approximately 20± acres of land to conserve and protect lower montane chaparral and woodland habitat for the benefit of deer, mountain lion and other wildlife species.

**LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property) is located within Puma Canyon, approximately five miles south of the community of Pinon Hills, south of State Route 138, in San Bernardino County. Surrounding land uses are primarily rural/suburban home sites. Puma Canyon provides a habitat link between the southern slopes of the San Gabriel Mountains (that lie within the San Bernardino National Forest), stretching north and connecting with the southwest region of the Mojave Desert. The canyon ranges in elevation from 4,470 to 5,658 feet and contains a unique blend of vegetative communities that only occur at the transition zone between the Mojave Desert and San Gabriel Mountain ecoregions. The general terrain in the area is high desert, with large washes and arroyos separated by small undulating hills and ridges that give way to steeper terrain as the Puma Canyon extends up into the San Gabriel Mountains. Pinyon pines, juniper and Joshua tree dominate the landscape and provide important habitat to many desert wildlife species.

The Property falls within the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Puma Canyon Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The main objectives of this CAPP are to conserve and enhance biodiversity, and protect threatened vegetative communities along with other rare and important plants and animals.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Property is comprised of a single rectangular parcel, located in a Rural Living (RL) zoning designation. The RL zoning has a 2.5-acre minimum parcel size designation in the Pinon Hills area, and allows a single family dwelling and accessory structures. The Property is improved with a small 696± square foot vacation cabin constructed with a concrete slab foundation, and concrete block exterior walls. Utilities to the site include electricity, telephone, and water service.

The Property is covered with natural vegetation consisting of desert shrubs, pinyon pines, junipers, and Joshua trees. There are also a series of alternating ridges and canyons running north to south on the Property, and the ridge tops afford good views of Victor Valley to the north and east. The site provides important habitat for several species such as mountain lion, deer, bobcat, Cooper's hawk, golden eagles, and loggerhead shrike, as well as special status species such as arroyo toad, California red-legged frog, Coast Horned Lizard, and southwestern willow flycatcher.

The proposed acquisition will link two unconnected portions of THC's Puma Canyon property holdings into a contiguous network of protected properties.

## WCB PROGRAM

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

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

## MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be owned and managed by THC. THC staff and volunteers will provide stewardship and monitoring. Funding for management operations is derived from various sources that include foundations, corporations, State and federal grants, memberships and bequests for the management of Puma Canyon. THC will consider the potential for future public uses such as self-guided nature trails, hiking, horseback riding, nature viewing, and outdoor educational programs for local schools. Future uses for the cabin on the Property might include utilizing it as a visitor learning center or for meetings with agency partners, including CDFW, and for Desert Land Trust conference meetings.

## TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$196,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The terms and conditions of the proposed grant between WCB and THC provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the grantee to encumber the Property with a conservation easement in favor of the State or another entity approved by the State and seek reimbursement of funds.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	98,000
Transition Habitat Conservancy	25,000
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation/ Wells Fargo Grant	50,000
Total Purchase Price	196,000
Other Project Related Admin Costs	7,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$105,000</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$7,000 will be needed to cover project-related administrative costs, including DGS appraisal review.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

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

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION**

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

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$105,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) for the grant funding and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*15. Canada de San Vicente, -(Dunn)**  
**San Diego County**  
**\$370,000.00**

This item is withdrawn from consideration at this time.

**\*16. Hollenbeck Canyon Wildlife Area, Expansion 7 and 8**

**San Diego County**

**\$369,240.00**

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition (HCPLA) grant to assist with the funding of Expansion 7 and the acquisition in fee of 141± acres of land from two separate landowners in San Diego County (Properties) on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). These are cooperative projects with USFWS for the protection of core areas of habitat to support threatened and endangered species and to secure key regional wildlife linkages all consistent with the San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP), a joint Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP).

**LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES**

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

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

The Properties are located in the community of Jamul, about 20 – 25 miles east of downtown San Diego and are on the northern boundary of the Hollenbeck Canyon Wildlife Area (HCWA). The 6,100± acre HCWA shares boundaries with other important state, federal, and county owned and managed conserved public lands to the east, west, and south and is an important wildlife corridor between Otay Mountain and the Jamul Mountains. Other protected lands in the vicinity of the Property include CDFW's Crestridge Ecological Reserve and Sycuan Peak Ecological Reserve to the north and Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve to the south.

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

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

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

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

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

#### WCB PROGRAM

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

These projects are guided by the WCB Strategic Plan and support the following Strategic Plan goals:

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

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

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

The Properties are within the MSCP area and will help meet the goals of the MSCP. Also, the projects have been reviewed and approved by the CDFW under its NCCP program, substantiating the biological values of the Properties and recommending them for funding.

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

The USFWS grant proposed for Expansion 7 has been reviewed and approved by CDFW as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition grant selection and review process.

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

CDFW will manage the Properties as part of the HCWA. CDFW expects minimal, if any, additional expenses as a result of these acquisitions.

Possible future public use opportunities that may be considered include hiking, photography and bird watching.

**TERMS AND FUNDING**

Both of the Properties were appraised by an independent licensed appraiser. The appraisals were reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). For Expansion 7, the appraisal was also reviewed and approved by the USFWS.

Below is specific information for each property:

*Expansion 7*

The property consists of 27+/- acres. A fair market value of \$240,000 was approved by USFWS and DGS. The landowner has agreed to sell the property for the approved, appraised value. The proposed USFWS HCPLA grant requires a non-federal match to the federal money. WCB will provide the non-federal match.

**PROPOSED FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

USFWS HCPLA grant	155,760
Wildlife Conservation Board	84,240
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>235,000</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	20,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$104,240</i>

*Expansion 8*

The property consists of 113+/- acres. A fair market value of \$235,000 was approved by DGS. The landowners have agreed to sell for the approved, appraised value.

**PROPOSED FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Approved Fair Market Value	235,000
Wildlife Conservation Board	235,000
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>235,000</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	30,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$265,000</i>

It is estimated that project-related administrative costs will include appraisal costs, DGS appraisal, environmental and transaction review, escrow and title insurance costs.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

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

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE**

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

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the WCB approve the projects as proposed; allocate \$369,240.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786 (b/c), for the acquisitions and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize acceptance of the USFWS Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$155,760.00; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish these projects; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.



**\*17. Sycuan Peak Ecological Reserve, Expansion 7**

**San Diego County**

**\$26,210.00**

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition (HCPLA) grant and the acquisition in fee of 10± acres of land in San Diego County on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). This is a cooperative project with the USFWS for the protection of core areas of habitat to support threatened and endangered species and to secure key regional wildlife linkages, all consistent with the San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP), a joint Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP).

**LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property) is located northeast of the community of Jamul, in San Diego County, and is adjacent to the southern boundary of the 2,300± acre CDFW Sycuan Peak Ecological Reserve (Reserve). The Sweetwater River flows through the northern portion of the Reserve before it eventually feeds into the Sweetwater Reservoir southwest of the Reserve. The Loveland Reservoir, located in the Cleveland National Forest, is located northeast of the Reserve.

Other protected lands in the vicinity of the Property include CDFW's Crestridge Ecological Reserve to the north and Hollenbeck Canyon Wildlife Area and Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve to the south.

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

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

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

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

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

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

By reducing development, securing wildlife corridors and protecting habitat of land identified in the MSCP, wildlife will have the ability to move between protected areas as necessary when faced with impacts to the habitat from climate change, droughts and fires.

#### WCB PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The USFWS grant proposed for this project has been reviewed and approved by CDFW as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition grant selection and review process.

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

**TERMS**

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$32,000 . The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and USFWS. The owner has agreed to sell the Property for the approved appraised fair market value. The USFWS funds require a non-federal match that will be provided by WCB from the Habitat Conservation Fund. WCB will perform all necessary due diligence to acquire the Property, including review and approval of all title documents and preliminary title reports, inspections and environmental site assessments. WCB will also prepare all acquisition documents including the Property Acquisition Agreement, Grant Deed and escrow instructions. This acquisition is exempt from DGS transaction review. Once approved by WCB, all funds will be ordered and disbursed directly into the escrow account established for this transaction.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for this project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board (non-federal match)	11,210
USFWS HCPLA grant funds	20,790
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>32,000</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	15,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$26,210</i>

It is estimated that project-related administrative costs will include appraisal costs, DGS appraisal review, escrow and title insurance costs.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

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

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

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

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve the project as proposed; allocate \$26,210.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786 (b/c), for the acquisition and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize acceptance of the USFWS Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$20,790.00 ; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*18. San Joaquin River Parkway  
Ball Ranch Habitat Restoration Planning Project  
Fresno County  
\$28,045.00**

To consider the allocation for a grant to River Partners for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) to assess environmental conditions and complete a plan, environmental review and initial permitting, to restore habitat on the Willow Unit of the CDFW San Joaquin River Ecological Reserve (ER), and SJRC's Ball Ranch. These properties are located approximately 4.5 miles downstream of Friant Dam in Fresno County.

**LOCATION**

The San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway) is defined by state law as approximately 5,900 acres on both sides of a twenty-two mile long reach of the San Joaquin River between Friant Dam to the east and SR 99 to the west, in Fresno and Madera Counties (Public Resources Code Section 32510). SJRC was created in 1992 to preserve and enhance the San Joaquin River's extraordinary biological diversity, protect its valued cultural and natural resources, and provide educational and recreational opportunities to local communities. The SJRC mission includes providing public access and restoring habitat within the Parkway.

The proposed Ball Ranch Habitat Restoration Planning Project includes site assessment, scientific data and literature review, public input, environmental review, and initiation of regulatory permitting to develop a habitat restoration plan (Project) on approximately 358 acres of Ball Ranch and an adjacent approximately 12 acres of the Willow Unit commonly known as the riverside portion (Property). The Property is located between the San Joaquin River to the west and North Friant Road to the east in Fresno County.

The Property ranges from flat to gently sloping with undulations associated with past gravel mining activity. Ball Ranch contains significant habitat diversity including mixed riparian forest, valley oak riparian forest, valley oak woodland, willow scrub, non-native grasslands, freshwater marsh, and artificial open water ponds. The riverside portion of the Willow Unit contains similar terrestrial habitats, but lacks any large open water ponds. Little Dry Creek, a seasonal tributary to the San Joaquin River, runs through the Property. Additionally, the Property has a resident deer population and a wide array of bird species, although natural resource values have been degraded by past gravel mining and establishment of invasive species. The Property provides the opportunity for a large-scale habitat restoration project that would provide multiple benefits to both the Parkway and local community.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Habitat restoration at Ball Ranch is a high priority for the Parkway. The evaluation panel for the SJRC Proposition 1 Program has recognized the importance of the goals of the proposed Project, which include:

- Contribution to the restoration of river parkways.
- Protection and restoration of aquatic, wetlands, and migratory bird ecosystems, including fish and wildlife corridors.

- Implementation of habitat improvements that benefit federal and state threatened and endangered species.
- Evaluation of potential floodplain improvements to benefit threatened salmonid species.
- Development of a framework for the site to become part of a network of restored lands benefiting the broader San Joaquin River ecosystem.
- Restoration of riparian habitat to improve habitat diversity and climate change resiliency.
- Collaboration and support among local partners, to allow for improved habitat while also serving future recreational needs.

The Project includes a scientific assessment of habitat values and needs, and stakeholder and public outreach, which were not included in the Ball Ranch Master Development Plan accepted by the SJRC Board in 2005. The Project is low-cost and a good value, given the technical expertise of River Partners team and their science-based approach to habitat restoration. Additionally, the Project will inform future SJRC public access planning for Ball Ranch to ensure appropriate consideration of natural resource values.

The proposed Project is comprised of five major tasks including:

- Site assessment of soil, habitat, vegetation, and restoration planting considerations and challenges.
- Review of existing data and stakeholder input from meetings and workshops.
- Development, distribution, and review of a draft restoration plan.
- Communication of results from site visits and publicizing of the plan.
- Project management including record-keeping, environmental review and initiation of regulatory permitting.

Ultimately, this Project will recommend a design for habitat restoration and complete the majority of environmental review and regulatory compliance, providing a path forward to implement restoration at Ball Ranch and provide habitat connectivity to the riverside portion with the Willow Unit.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) assists with the administration of project funding for the SJRC. WCB, represented by its Executive Director, and CDFW, represented by the Central Region Manager, each holds a position on the 15-member SJRC Board. The SJRC Board reviews and approves projects to ensure they are viable and consistent with the goals of the current SJRC Parkway Master Plan (2000) (Parkway Master Plan) and Proposition 1, prior to consideration by WCB. The SJRC Board approved this Project on March 23, 2016.

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

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

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Restoring Ball Ranch and maintaining natural connectivity with the riverside portion of the Willow Unit are a critical component to restoring the Parkway and informing the SJRC about natural resources as planning for public access moves forward for Ball Ranch. River Partners draws on eighteen years of experience developing riparian habitat restoration projects with designs that provide the best possible benefits to the San Joaquin River ecosystem. Project completion will provide the foundation to move forward with restoration.

The proposed Project meets the purposes and intent of Chapter 6 of the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1), Water Code Section 79730 et seq., by providing a restoration plan that will promote benefits for wildlife, and the San Joaquin River watershed and ecosystem.

The goals and objectives of the Project broadly include restoration and protection of ecosystems, wildlife corridors, and floodplains; implementation of habitat improvements that benefit federal and state threatened and endangered species; and collaboration among local partners to facilitate habitat improvements while considering future recreational needs. These goals and objectives are consistent with the policies, goals, and objectives in the Parkway Master Plan which summarized include:

#### Fundamental Goals

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

#### Natural Resources Goals (NRG)

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

#### Natural Resources Objectives (NRO) and Natural Resources Policies (NP)

- NRO1. Protect the San Joaquin River as aquatic habitat and a water resource. Enhance and protect fisheries in the river and lakes in the Parkway.
- NP8.2. Preserve and incorporate natural features (e.g., wetlands, grasslands, woodlands, and other native vegetation) and supporting artificial features (e.g., lakes on reclaimed mined lands) into the development's site design such that those features can...enhance the ecological values of the river, the wildlife corridor, a natural reserve, or the multiple purpose trail.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

<b>Item</b>	<b>River Partners</b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Data Review	503.26	3,932.08	4435.34
Site Assessment	912.38	7,130.52	8042.9
Compile Restoration Plan	944.26	7,377	8321.26
External Communications	672.41	5,206.32	5878.73
Environmental Review and Permitting	864.68	2,555.28	3419.96
Project Management	236.01	1,843.80	2079.81
<i>Totals</i>	<i>\$4,133.00</i>	<i>\$28,045.00</i>	<i>\$32,178.00</i>

Total Project costs of \$32,178.00 will be distributed among River Partners and Proposition 1 grant funds for data review to attain background information about the Project site; site assessment; Restoration Plan development; communications with the SJRC, CDFW, other stakeholders, and the public; environmental review and compliance; and project management. River Partners will fund its indirect costs equal to \$4,133.00, and the proposed \$28,045.00 Proposition 1 Grant will cover direct costs related to each budget item.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

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

**CEQA AND SJRC REVIEW / RECOMMENDATION**

The SJRC Proposition 1 evaluation panel recommended the proposed Project for funding because habitat restoration planning at Ball Ranch has been a high priority for Parkway development since the Ball Ranch Master Development Plan was accepted by the SJRC Board in 2005.

The Project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15262), as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions that have not been approved.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this Project as proposed; allocate \$28,045.00 from the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1), California Water Code Section 79731(g), authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.



**19. Silver Spur Ranch**  
**Lake County**  
**\$440,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to Tuleyome to acquire in fee 1,280± acres of land for the protection of habitat such as blue oak woodlands, riparian areas, and chaparral, as well as to provide for potential future wildlife oriented public use opportunities.

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property) is located five miles north of State Route 20, just south of Indian Valley Reservoir, near the community of Clearlake Oaks in northern Lake County. The Property lies adjacent to and is accessible from Benmore Canyon Road. Contiguous to the east and west of the Property are approximately +/- 3,766 acres of protected lands owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). To the north is the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Indian Valley Wildlife Area. Further to the east are four adjacent Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) funded conservation easements held by the California Rangeland Trust: the Bear Valley Conservation Area, approved at the February 2001 Board Meeting; the Cache Creek Conservation Area, approved at the May 2006 Board Meeting; the Keegan Ranch Conservation Easement, approved at the February 2016 Board Meeting; and the Epperson Ranch Conservation Easement, approved at the February 2016 Board Meeting. Together these properties total approximately 20,000 acres.

The Property lies, and was ranked with high priority, within the Blue Ridge–Berryessa Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) which was prepared and approved by CDFW. The CAPP establishes criteria to prioritize the conservation of privately-owned parcels to increase or enhance habitat, migration corridors, and connectivity. The Property is also located within the boundary of the 331,000-acre Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, which was established on July 10, 2015.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Property is irregular in shape and is mostly unimproved with the exception of a gated entrance, intermittent fencing, two sheds, and interior dirt roads. The terrain varies from relatively low lying and gentle, to moderately sloping, to steep. The northern portion of the Property contains approximately one mile of frontage to the North Fork of Cache Creek which connects to the Sacramento River. The center of the Property is defined by a canyon and seasonal water courses. The elevational variance on the Property is approximately 1,200 to 2,200 feet above sea level. This variation in elevation allows for adaption to climate change between the lower elevation riparian habitat through the higher elevation oak woodland and chaparral habitat which, in connection to its proximity and connectivity with other protected lands, allows for an expanded opportunity for wildlife movement.

Protection of this Property adds a northern access point to a tract of BLM lands that has been underutilized due to lack of convenient access. The Property contains blue oak woodland, riparian areas, and chaparral habitat types that support a number of special status species including the golden eagle, western pond turtle, mountain lion, tule elk, ringtail, peregrine falcon, and bald eagle.

## THE WCB PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

The Property is a high priority within the approved Blue Ridge–Berryessa CAPP, which establishes criteria to prioritize privately-owned parcels for *conservation*. It includes several habitats with varying elevation and terrain including wet meadow, riparian areas, vernal pool, blue oak woodland, and lacustrine and supports a number of special status species. In addition, the Property is adjacent to BLM land and four existing WCB-funded Conservation easements which will increase and enhance protected habitat, migration corridors, and connectivity.

## MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be owned and managed by Tuleyome. Tuleyome intends to protect, enhance, and manage the property and habitat in addition to providing potential future wildlife based recreation and public use opportunities.

Once acquired Tuleyome hopes to enter into an agreement with CDFW under its SHARE program to allow for public access, hiking, biking, horseback riding, recreation, and possibly camping on the Property.

After completion of the sale, Tuleyome will immediately begin working with the local Resource Conservation District, BLM, and CDFW to coordinate restoration, erosion control, invasive species control, and develop a management plan for the Property. Tuleyome has already approached the BLM about partnering on prevention of unauthorized vehicular use from adjacent BLM lands, and opening the Property to the public. Tuleyome will incorporate this Property into the overall planning process for the new Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, which surrounds the Property.

**TERMS**

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$670,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The Property owner has agreed to sell the Property for \$500,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant between WCB and Tuleyome provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the grantee to encumber the Property with a conservation easement in favor of the State or another entity approved by the State and seek reimbursement of funds.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for this project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	430,000
Tuleyome	70,000
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>500,000</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	10,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$440,000</i>

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

**WCB FUNDING SOURCE**

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

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE**

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 13525, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and habitat. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$440,000 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b), to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**20 Rim Fire Forest Restoration  
Tuolumne County  
\$3,510,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to Tuolumne River Preservation Trust for a cooperative project with the United States Forest Service (USFS) to restore or enhance habitat and to install infrastructure to benefit wildlife on areas decimated by the Rim Fire, located within the USFS Stanislaus National Forest approximately 20 miles east of Sonora in Tuolumne County.

**LOCATION**

The Rim Fire was the third largest wildfire in California history and the largest wildfire in the recorded history of the Sierra Nevada. It was also California's largest forest fire, burning across a largely conifer-dominated forest landscape. The fire started in August 2013 in a remote area of the Stanislaus National Forest (SNF) about 20 miles east of Sonora, near the confluence of the Clavey and Tuolumne Rivers. Exhibiting extreme fire behavior, the fire made runs over 30,000 acres, and quickly spread up the Tuolumne River watershed and its main tributaries. Over several weeks it burned 257,314 acres, or 400 square miles, including 154,530 acres of SNF lands. The fire also burned within Yosemite National Park, Sierra Pacific Industries private timberland, other private lands, and Bureau of Land Management land.

The project has various elements located throughout the burn area within SNF on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. The SNF is located primarily in eastern Tuolumne County, adjacent to the northwestern part of Yosemite National Park, with parts in southern Alpine, northern Mariposa, and eastern Calaveras counties. Typical uses within the SNF include conservation, timber harvesting, livestock grazing, watershed protection and recreation.

As with many areas in the Sierra Nevada, the landscape through which the Rim Fire burned has been heavily influenced over the last 150 years by past management activities and natural occurrences that include mining, grazing, harvesting, fire exclusion, large high-severity fires, and more recent drought-related mortality. These past management activities created relatively homogeneous areas typified by small trees existing at high densities increased the potential for stand-replacing high-severity fire events.

Prior to the fire and in unburned areas, vegetative communities include grassland, meadows, oak woodlands, chaparral, lower westside ponderosa pine, mixed conifer and high elevation true fir and lodgepole pine. The forested area is Sierran Mixed Conifer, which includes ponderosa pine, incense cedar, white fir, sugar pine, and black oak.

A diverse array of terrestrial wildlife species occur across the forest, indicating the diverse habitat types available. Two federally listed species, the threatened California red-legged frog and endangered Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog; and three sensitive species, the foothill yellow-legged frog, western pond turtle, and hardhead, have suitable breeding and upland habitat in the Rim Fire area. Six species of fish are known to occur within the Rim Fire area. They include rainbow trout, brown trout, California roach, Sacramento sucker, riffle sculpin, and Sacramento pikeminnow.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Rim Fire resulted in dramatic changes to habitat availability and distribution across the landscape, as well as changes to most habitat types. It therefore affected wildlife species to varying degrees. Several vulnerable areas were identified in the Rim Fire area through wildlife and aquatic surveys conducted throughout the summer of 2014.

The Rim Fire Restoration Project consists of a suite of actions which will repair or improve habitat and natural resources affected by the Rim Fire. These actions include installing two wildlife guzzlers and twenty-one wildlife-friendly troughs; removing encroaching conifers on thirty-two acres of aspen stands; restoring forty-two acres of meadows and streams; installing up to fifty-eight great gray owl nest structures; replacing two culverts; and improving 719 acres of migratory deer habitat. The vision for this project is to apply innovative restoration techniques to reduce risk of the high intensity patches re-burning, promote early and late seral forest conditions for improved wildlife habitat, provide year-round water to wildlife, restore the health and vigor of aspen, riparian, and wet meadow areas, and improve the function of streams for aquatic habitat affected by the Rim Fire. The goal is to leverage these targeted restoration activities and related efforts to meet the needs of a broader long-term restoration and forest resiliency plan for the Rim Fire footprint on the SNF. Implemented together, these projects contribute to an environmentally sustainable strategy for the long-term recovery of wildlife and aquatic habitat in the Rim Fire area.

### Project Tasks and Outcomes

- Installation of 2 Wildlife Guzzlers - 500 acres of improved wildlife habitat per guzzler for a total of 1,000 acres
- Installation of 21 Wildlife-Friendly Troughs - 500 acres of improved wildlife habitat each, totaling 10,500 acres
- Restoration of 32 acres of Aspen Stands - 32 acres of improved wildlife habitat and forest health
- Installation of up to 58 Great Gray Owl Nest Structures - 200 acres of improved wildlife habitat per meadow for a total of 1,800 acres
- Restoration of 719 acres of Deer Habitat - 719 acres of improved wildlife habitat and forest health
- Replacement/Removal of 2 Culverts - 1 mile of improved aquatic habitat and stream health upstream of each culvert and 0.5 miles of improved stream health downstream of each culvert for a total of 3 miles
- Restoration of 9 Meadows - 42 acres of improved wildlife habitat and meadow health

### WCB PROGRAM

This project will be funded through the Forest Conservation Program and meets the program's goal of promoting the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests for all their public benefits through forest conservation, preservation and restoration of productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas, redwood forests and other forest types,

including the conservation of water resources and natural habitat for native fish and wildlife and plants found on these lands.

In addition, this project meets several of the Forest Conservation Program's Guiding Principles:

- Working forests/productive managed forestlands shall be the primary emphasis of the Forest Conservation Program.
- Forest reserve areas are an important component of California's diverse native forests and shall be part of the Forest Conservation Program.
- Each project must promote the restoration and/or the maintenance of the ecological integrity and economic stability of the property in the context of the surrounding landscape and regional economy.

The project also furthers the following goal outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan:

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

The purpose of this project is to restore the health and vigor of aspen, riparian, and wet meadow areas, improve the function of streams for aquatic habitat, reduce the risk of high intensity fires, improve forest diversity, improve wildlife habitat, and provide year- round water to wildlife.

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

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

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Strategic Plan for FY 2010-2015 targets the restoration of watersheds and forest health as a core management objective of the National Forests and Grasslands. To achieve this goal, the USDA Strategic Plan directs the USFS to restore degraded watersheds such as the watersheds in the Rim Fire area by strategically focusing investments in watershed improvement projects and conservation practices at the landscape and watershed scales.

The USFS will be responsible for long-term maintenance and management of the project once implementation has occurred. Based on the USFS's past experience with similar restoration, the need for significant maintenance is often minimized after implementation because natural hydrologic and geomorphic processes are restored.

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

## PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Task</b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>USFS In-Kind Match</b>	<b>Total Project</b>
Wildlife Guzzlers	48,078	7,750	55,828
Wildlife Friendly Troughs	147,028	38,000	185,028
Aspen Stand Restoration	140,810	40,750	181,560
Great Gray Owl Nest Structures	98,648	35,250	133,898
Deer Habitat Restoration	812,005	68,250	880,255
Culvert Replacement/Removal	822,743	10,750	833,493
Meadow and Stream Restoration	1,231,175	40,000	1,271,175
Grant Administration and Project Management	202,179	0	202,179
Contingency	7,334	0	7,334
<i>Totals</i>	<b>\$3,510,000</b>	<b>\$240,750</b>	<b>\$3,750,750</b>

Project costs will be for installing two wildlife guzzlers; twenty-one wildlife-friendly troughs; removing encroaching conifers on thirty-two acres of aspen stands; restoring forty-two acres of meadows and streams; installing up to fifty-eight great gray owl nest structures; replacing two culverts; and improving seven hundred and nineteen acres of migratory deer habitat.

## FUNDING SOURCE

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

## CEQA REVIEW

The Governor may proclaim a state of emergency under Government Code section 8625. California Constitution Article V, Section 1 and Government Code sections 8567 and 8571 authorize the Governor to suspend the application of law in the event of an emergency. Governor Jerry Brown's Executive Order B-23-13, dated October 23, 2013, suspended the application of state statutes, rules, regulations and requirements to the extent they apply to specified activities to address the effects of the Rim Fire, including restoration and rehabilitation of timberland, streams and other waterways. The Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency has determined that the project is eligible to be conducted under this suspension.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,510,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as plan



**21. San Joaquin River Parkway, Milburn Pond Habitat Restoration and Public Access Improvements Planning and Design Project  
Fresno County**

**\$438,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) to conduct planning and preliminary design for the isolation of gravel pits from the San Joaquin River, restoration of riparian and floodplain habitat, and creation of public access on the Milburn Unit of the CDFW San Joaquin River Ecological Reserve and the CDFW Hansen Farm property. These properties are located within Fresno city limits, approximately four miles upstream of State Route 99 in Fresno County.

**LOCATION**

The San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway) is defined by state law as approximately 5,900 acres on both sides of a twenty-two mile long reach of the San Joaquin River between Friant Dam to the east and SR 99 to the west, in Fresno and Madera Counties (Public Resources Code Section 32510). The SJRC was created in 1992 to preserve and enhance the San Joaquin River's extraordinary biological diversity, protect its valued cultural and natural resources, and provide educational and recreational opportunities to local communities. The SJRC mission includes providing public access and restoring habitat within the Parkway.

The proposed Milburn Pond Habitat Restoration and Public Access Improvements Planning and Design Project (Project) includes completion of preliminary planning documents to isolate the gravel pits (Milburn Pond) on the Milburn Unit from the San Joaquin River, improve the stability and durability of the isolation berms that separate the pond from the river, construct a wider and more functional floodplain near the pond adjacent to the river, and improve public access to the pond for off-stream fishing on approximately 320 acres of land commonly known as the Hansen Farm and Milburn Pond, located in Fresno County, California (Property). The CDFW is the fee owner of the Property.

In the 1950's and 1960's, the Project area was subject to aggregate mining, which resulted in large, water-filled gravel pits separated from the river by berms. CDFW acquired the property, including the pits comprising Milburn Pond and the land immediately surrounding the pond, in 1988 and incorporated the site into the San Joaquin River Ecological Reserve as the Milburn Unit. CDFW pumped water out of the pits, re-contoured the bottom, and constructed islands for wildlife habitat. Pumping was subsequently discontinued to allow the pits to fill with water, encircling the islands and creating shallow water habitat. In 1999, CDFW also acquired a portion of the privately-owned Hansen Farm, adjacent to the Milburn Unit and formerly used for agricultural production.

In 1995 and 1997, San Joaquin River flood flows breached the berms between the river and Milburn Unit, causing inundation of the islands and shallow water habitat and impacting river hydraulics and sediment transport in the vicinity of the breaches. Additionally, warm water, non-native fish species in aquatic habitats of the Milburn Unit gained access to the river.

These non-native species are predators of riverine, native cold blooded species, such as salmon, that are being re-introduced to the river system in the future.

The Milburn Unit is disturbed with topography that has been affected by mining and berm breaching. The Unit contains fragmented riparian vegetation around Milburn Pond. Typical of off-stream water bodies adjacent to riverine systems, Milburn Pond still harbors warm water fish species that have the ability to access the river and predate native fish species. The CDFW Hansen Farm property is located along the river to the northeast of the Milburn Unit and also borders the river but is not separated from it by berms. Topography ranges from sparsely vegetated flat to low hills that may indicate a history of gravel mining activity.

The Milburn Unit is located at the northern edge of the City of Fresno at the end of a wide public street. The Unit also is just west of the Bluff Point Golf Center, a leased public use on SJRC property. Based on its location, the Milburn Unit, with Milburn Pond and the Unit's access to the river, could be made accessible to the public. Both the SJRC and CDFW have received public inquiries about opening the area for recreational use.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) has the stated goal of maintaining fish populations, including re-introduced salmon, in good condition in the main stem of the San Joaquin River below Friant Dam. The SJRRP identifies DWR as a party to its implementation and includes isolating or filling gravel pits as one of its highest priorities. SJRC, CDFW, and DWR have identified the need to reconstruct a stable berm across the breached areas between Milburn Pond and the river, and restore native vegetation and habitat along the reconstructed berm and floodplains to provide habitat for re-introduced native salmonids and other wildlife. DWR has identified the Hansen Farm as a borrow site for a portion of the materials it will use to reconstruct the berm. Subsequently, DWR will restore the borrow site to river floodplain habitat. Additionally, habitat restoration and public access at the Milburn Unit are high priorities for both Parkway development and the SJRRP. The evaluation panel for the SJRC Proposition 1 Program has recognized the importance of these goals by recommending this planning and preliminary design Project as a first step toward implementing pond isolation and public access on the Milburn Unit of the CDFW San Joaquin River ER.

The proposed Project is comprised of several major tasks including:

- Project coordination efforts with local, state, and federal stakeholder agencies and the public led by CDFW and supported by DWR.
- Project management and planning led by DWR.
- Data collection led by DWR to develop the opportunities and constraints analysis and provide information for preliminary design.
- Development of conceptual design options led by DWR in coordination with CDFW.
- Selection of recommended design led by DWR and CDFW in coordination with stakeholders.
- Development of preliminary design for preferred option led by DWR.
- Preparation of the Final Planning and Design Report by DWR for submission to CDFW, SJRC, and WCB.

Ultimately, this planning and preliminary design Project will recommend a conceptual design for habitat improvement and public access. The next potential project phases would include environmental review and permits and 95% design, final design and construction, and monitoring.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The WCB assists with the administration of project funding for the SJRC. WCB, represented by its Executive Director, and CDFW, represented by the Central Region Manager, each holds a position on the 15-member SJRC Board. The SJRC Board reviews and approves projects to ensure they are viable and consistent with the goals of the current SJRC Parkway Master Plan (2000) (Parkway Master Plan) and Proposition 1, prior to consideration by the WCB. The SJRC Board approved this Project on March 23, 2016.

The proposed Project will be funded through the WCB Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program. It meets the program's goal of providing for native fisheries restoration and restoration of wetlands that fall outside the jurisdiction of the Inland Wetland Conservation Program, such as coastal, tidal, or fresh water habitats, coastal scrub, grasslands, threatened and endangered species habitats, and in-stream restoration projects including removal of fish passage barriers and other obstructions.

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

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Repairing and improving the berms between Milburn Pond and the San Joaquin River is a critical component to restoring the river and reintroducing native salmonids to the river reach just downstream of Friant Dam. Additionally, the installation of public recreation facilities is a critical objective in development of the Parkway. DWR has the engineering expertise, ability to collect current scientific data, and access to historic data to complete preliminary planning documents for this Project. Project completion will provide the foundation to move forward with the next project phases.

The proposed Project meets the purposes and intent of Chapter 6 of the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1), California Water Code Section 79730 et seq., to protect and restore aquatic, wetland, and migratory bird ecosystems, including fish and wildlife corridors, and collaborate with federal agencies in the protection of fish native to California and wetlands in the Central Valley of California.

This Project and the eventual isolation of the gravel pits from the San Joaquin River, restoration of riparian and floodplain habitats, and installation of public facilities meet objectives of the Parkway Master Plan, River West Madera Plan, and SJRRP.

The objectives of the Project, to develop preliminary planning documents for restoration and enhancement of natural habitat for fish and wildlife and installation of accessible public recreation facilities within the Parkway, are consistent with the policies, goals, and objectives in the Parkway Master Plan which summarized include:

**Fundamental Goals**

- Preserve and restore a riparian corridor of regional significance on the San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to the Highway 99 crossing.
- Protect wildlife species that depend on or prefer the river environment.
- Provide for conservation, education, and recreation, particularly a continuous trail.
- Protect irreplaceable natural resources in a way that will also meet recreational and educational needs.

**Natural Resources Goals (NRG)**

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

**Natural Resources Objectives (NRO) and Natural Resources Policies (NP)**

- NRO1. Protect the San Joaquin River as aquatic habitat and a water resource. Enhance and protect fisheries in the river and lakes in the Parkway.
- NP8.2. Preserve and incorporate natural features (e.g., wetlands, grasslands, woodlands, and other native vegetation) and supporting artificial features (e.g., lakes on reclaimed mined lands) into the development's site design such that those features can...enhance the ecological values of the river, the wildlife corridor, a natural reserve, or the multiple purpose trail.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows;

<b>Description</b>	<b>DWR</b>	<b>CDFW</b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>Total</b>
Public Participation and Coordination	15,000	10,000	0,00	25,000
Research and Feasibility	31,000	5,000	48,000	84,000
Preliminary Design	0.00	10,000	306,000	316,000
Reporting	0.00	0.00	42,000	42,000
Project Management	84,000	15,000	3,000	102,000
Contingency	20,000	0.00	39,000	59,000
<i>Totals</i>	<i>\$150,000</i>	<i>\$40,000</i>	<i>\$438,000</i>	<i>\$628,000</i>

Project costs of \$628,000 will be distributed among DWR, CDFW, and the requested Proposition 1 grant funds. DWR will leverage \$150,000 of its SJRRP Proposition 84 funds and CDFW will provide \$40,000 in staff time as in-kind or leveraged funds from a 10-year reimbursable funding agreement with the Natural Resources Agency under California Water Code Section 79736(d). The \$438,000 Proposition 1 grant will cover a portion of each budget item with the exception of Public Participation and Coordination. The method used by DWR to develop the Project costs is based on costs for recent projects with similar components.

#### FUNDING SOURCE

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

#### CEQA AND SJRC REVIEW / RECOMMENDATION

The SJRC Proposition 1 evaluation panel recommended awarding the grant because habitat restoration and public access at the Milburn Unit are a high priority for Parkway development, based on the property's proximity to the City of Fresno, and for the SJRRP, a species recovery program of statewide significance. The Project was approved for submittal to the WCB by the SJRC Board on March 23, 2016.

The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15262), as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions which have not been approved.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$438,000.00.00 from the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1), California Water Code Section 79731(g), authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

**22. Badger Almond Wetland Enhancement  
Kern County  
\$722,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association (CWA) for a cooperative project with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) to restore and enhance 356± acres of wetlands within the historical bed of Goose Lake in northwest Kern County, located approximately six miles southeast of Lost Hills, CA.

**LOCATION**

In 2014, through a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant, CWA acquired approximately 2,200 acres in Kern County, California. CWA has a vision of restoring the entire 2,200 acres. This project is located on 926 acres of that acquisition on an area known as the Badger Almond site (Property). In 2015, CWA partnered with the NRCS and NAWCA to restore 320 acres of the Property from fallow farmland back to palustrine emergent wetland and associated upland habitats. This completed restoration was located on the eastern portion of the Property. This proposed project enlarges that effort through the restoration effort of 356 acres on the Property (Project Site).

The restoration of 320 acres completed in 2015 included the construction of perimeter and interior levees, swales, potholes, islands and loafing bars. These improvements were constructed with water efficiency in mind while maximizing diversity. Water control structures were installed to provide control of water depth and efficient water conveyance between moist soil wetland units. Native willows and cottonwood trees were planted throughout the restoration site. All of the restored perimeter and interior levee slopes and adjacent upland buffers were seeded with a perennial/annual grass and forb mix. Seeding has helped provide upland nesting habitat while decreasing the establishment of invasive weed species.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Many wetland dependent wildlife species require wetland habitats that are a few inches deep at their deepest end. The current condition of the Project Site, however, consists of old remnant unmanageable wetland units that have a large amount of fall, that is, are very deep at the lowest end and dry at the upper reaches as well as deep channels throughout each unit. These extreme variations in elevation take an exorbitant amount of water to even partially flood. Furthermore, the current units and their field elevations do not correspond with one another and further prevent the units from flooding sequentially, which impedes water flow. A majority of the units are also not tied into an existing deep well, which is the only reliable water source on the Property. The Property does have right to delivered surface water, but reliability and quantities vary yearly. The ability to effectively and efficiently manage these units is not feasible in their current condition.

The Property's surface water is delivered only consistent with adjacent agricultural lands, in late spring and summer, which for wildlife purposes is good only for management of semi-permanent and seasonal wetland irrigations to provide food. The availability of reliable water supplies for fall flood up and winter maintenance necessary to provide habitat for wintering waterfowl and shorebirds currently must come from the deep well.

The goal of this proposed project is to augment and restore the Project Site and tie it into the existing water infrastructure system present on the remainder of the Property. Earthwork will include grading, removal of levees and filling deep excavated channels and large holes to a more manageable level. New perimeter levees will be constructed at identified topographical breaks on the landscape in order to reduce the overall fall, reducing the total water needs to irrigate and flood these new units for ideal moist soil plant management. Each wetland unit will be designed for maximized management capabilities while ensuring significant water conservation is accomplished. A new interconnected meandering swale and pothole system will be constructed to efficiently and effectively drain the wetland units to a water recovery basin. New water control structures will be installed to connect the swales between each new unit, allowing for complete control of water throughout the year. A new well will be drilled to augment existing water supplies. This extensive earthwork will be accompanied with newly constructed water infrastructure which will allow significantly more habitat acreage to be flooded and managed for moist soil plants using far less water. New infrastructure will include pipelines, control structures, recovery lift pumps and the deep well.

The proposed project represents one of the largest wetland restoration efforts within the Tulare Basin. The overall increase in habitat availability will provide an extremely valuable resource to resident and migratory water birds traveling along the Pacific Flyway. This project would also greatly increase public hunting opportunities as the newly restored wetlands will be incorporated into CWA's public hunt program in Kern County.

Past surveys identified a total 135 bird species, and numerous mammal, reptile and amphibian species on the nearby Kern National Wildlife Refuge. It is anticipated that over 26 species of waterfowl will frequent the property after the restoration work is completed and potentially benefit from the proposed project. Migratory birds including waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, raptors, and neotropical migrants should benefit from this project. The wetland enhancement and restoration efforts will provide a significant expansion of the habitat base that will be used for foraging, roosting, and nesting.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Inland Wetland Conservation Program and meets the program's goal of assisting the Central Valley Joint Venture's (CVJV) mission to protect, restore, and enhance 40,000 acres of wetlands and associated habitats, as identified in the CVJV Implementation Plan, within the Tulare Basin of California's Central Valley.

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

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

- The project provides water-wise wetland habitat in a very wetland limited region in critical times for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds and other wildlife.

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

- The project maintains open space and develops opportunities for controlled hunting, recreation, and research and educational uses that are compatible with the managed wetlands.

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

- Provide species strongholds or refugia

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CWA will be responsible for all maintenance and upkeep of the completed project perpetually. The design work and construction practices will have specifications and features that will allow for management with existing CWA equipment and personnel. The improved water management capabilities associated with this wetland enhancement will allow the CWA to provide improved wetland habitat through more efficient water delivery and drainage, with less water.

If at any time during the 25-year life of the project, CWA does not assure that the project improvements are managed according to the Management Plan, the Grant Agreement requires that CWA refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Item	NAWCA	NRCS	WCB
Capital Improvement	191,000	354,971	642,000
Project Management	35,000		60,000
Grant Administration	22,750		20,000
Partner Totals	248,750	354,971	722,000
<i>Grand Total</i>			<i>\$1,325,721</i>

Project costs will be for construction, wetland infrastructure, and project management (survey, engineering, design and construction management). Construction costs are associated with acquisition and installation of water control structure (pipes, water control structures, deep well, lift pump) and earthwork.

#### FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands in the Central Valley. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program].



#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15304, Class 4, as a minor alteration to land. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$722,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d); authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

**23. Kern Refuge Recirculation Project**  
**Kern County**  
**\$1,308,000.00**

To consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association for a cooperative project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to restore and enhance 80± acres of wetlands and to construct water recirculation infrastructure, located on the USFWS Kern National Wildlife Refuge within the bed of the historical Goose Lake in northwest Kern County, six miles southeast of Lost Hills, CA.

**LOCATION**

Kern National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is located within the Tulare Basin in northwest Kern County, 10 miles north of Lost Hills, CA. The NWR, established in 1960, is an 11,249 acre multi-faceted complex, consisting of 6,500 ± acres of developed moist soil wetland units deeper semi-permanent wetland units, riparian forested habitats and 3,600± acres of associated uplands consisting of grasslands, alkali playa, and valley sink scrub. Water for the refuge wetland units traditionally was supplied by deep wells or purchased annually from local water districts, but eventually both became cost-prohibitive. In 1992, following the passage of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA), the refuge was provided with a reliable annual water supply.

The historic Tulare Lakebed, which at one time contained the largest contiguous freshwater wetland habitat landscape west of the Mississippi. In heavy rainfall years, the ancient Tulare, Kern, Goose, and Buena Vista Lake basins would swell and cover an estimated 500,000 acres. The region provided a vast expanse of shallow seasonal and deeper perennial wetland habitats, benefiting migrating, wintering and breeding waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, and many other terrestrial and aquatic species. The region remained in its natural state until the 1850s, at which time agriculture began diverting the main tributaries to the Valley for farming. By 1905, full-scale reclamation of wetland habitats was underway. Levee construction and water diversions confined and eventually reduced the wetland habitat to less than 25,000 acres. The greatest limiting factor of quality wetland habitat within the Tulare Basin is reliable water supplies, but just as importantly as a reliable supply is innovative ways to further conserve and make the delivered water go further.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The infrastructure on the existing KNWR currently does not allow for the recapture and recirculation of water supply for storage and reuse. Most of the wetland water is released off the KNWR and lost during the spring draw down. The proposed project seeks to enable all water from multiple wetland units to be recaptured and sent back to the start of the KNWR delivery system, which will provide reuse for management on all wetland and riparian units. By keeping the water on the KNWR and enabling staff to use it for wetland irrigation, moist soil plant (seed) productivity will increase greatly, benefiting all water-dependent species. The project will also include wetland expansion and enhancement activities in Unit 2A which will increase the wetland footprint while improving habitat conditions and management capabilities as well as increasing hunter opportunity. In addition removal of invasive salt cedar trees from within Unit 2A will be undertaken to further improve habitat and conserve water.

The proposed project involves earthmoving to grade units, create swales and develop a recapture basin. New infrastructure includes water control structures, a lift pump and a delivery pipeline. Results will expand the floodable wetland acreage but at the same time reduce water usage.

The needed infrastructure improvements to allow recapturing of critical water supplies are as follows:

- Installation of a 100 HP lift pump and lift pump basin
- Installation of 10,500 feet of 30" pipeline
- Construction of a return swale and lift pump basin
- Restoration of 80 acres of wetlands
- Removal of invasive salt cedar tree from Unit 2A
- Purchase and installation of new water control structures
- Installation of signs identifying the funding by WCB and the USFWS

The public will see benefits from improved habitat conditions with the potential for increased bird numbers as management is improved. The project will support the large number of hunters, bird watchers and other recreationists that use the Kern Refuge each year. The project will expand and enhance habitat conditions on a significant portion of the wildlife refuge. The completion of wetland projects that increase habitat values such as the one proposed, aids in ensuring long term habitat quality for all wetland-dependent species in the Tulare Basin.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Inland Wetland Conservation Program and meets the program's goal of assisting the Central Valley Joint Venture's (CVJV) mission to protect, restore, and enhance 40,000 acres of wetlands and associated habitats, as identified in the CVJV Implementation Plan, within the Tulare Basin of California's Central Valley.

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

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

- The project provides wetland habitat in a very wetland limited region in critical times for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds and other wildlife.

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

- The project maintains open space and develops opportunities for controlled hunting, recreation and, research and educational use that are compatible with the managed wetlands.
-

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

- Provide species strongholds or refugia

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS**

The USFWS will be responsible for all maintenance and upkeep of the completed project perpetually. The design work and construction practices will have specifications and features that will allow for management with existing USFWS equipment and personnel. The improved water management capabilities associated with this wetland enhancement will allow the USFWS to provide improved wetland habitat through more efficient water delivery and drainage, with less water. Monitoring of plant response to water and cover management practices is the responsibility of the USFWS, but technical assistance and periodic habitat reviews may be performed by CWA biologists.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown is as follows:

<b>Item</b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>FWS</b>	<b>Total</b>
Construction	1,192,600	150,000	1,193,000
Management	115,400		115,000
<i>Partner Totals</i>	<i>\$1,308,000</i>	<i>150,000</i>	<i>\$1,458,000</i>

Project costs will be for construction, wetland infrastructure, and project management (survey, engineering, design and construction management). Construction costs are associated with acquisition and installation of water control structure (pipes, water control structures, deep well, lift pump) and earthwork.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Inland Wetland Conservation Program. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands in the Central Valley.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION**

The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15304 Class 4, as a minor alteration to land. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,308,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Inland Wetland Conservation Program; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

**24. Upper Devereux Slough Restoration  
Santa Barbara County  
\$3,820,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) to restore slough, wetland, transitional, and upland habitats in portions of the historic northern extent of the Devereux Slough, located adjacent to the southern city limits of Goleta in Santa Barbara County.

**LOCATION**

The project site is comprised of 136± acres located in the south coast region of California, near the city of Goleta at the downstream end of a 3.5 square mile watershed which includes Devereux Creek, Phelps Creek and several unnamed tributaries. From 1965 to 2013, the Ocean Meadows Golf Course operated at the site. Construction of the golf course within the upper arms of Devereux Slough resulted in the creation of more than 200 acres of degraded, weed-dominated land, channelized creeks and localized flooding problems. In addition, 45 years of golf course operation contributed to regular disturbance of this open space area by golfers and maintenance work which disrupted wildlife and reduced water quality.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Devereux Slough has been greatly impacted by land use changes within the watershed and by construction within the slough itself. Historically, the project site supported a significant portion of the Devereux Slough coastal estuary system. Records from the 1870s show that the slough was already impacted at that time by agriculture and grazing in the upland watershed. Aerial photos of the slough, the earliest taken in the 1920s, reveal a pattern of agricultural and urban development encroaching into the historic slough footprint. Today the estuarine region of Devereux Slough is only 38% of the size of its historic area, and the associated vernal wetland complex is only 15% of its historic extent.

In 1965, the wetlands of the upper Slough were filled to create the Ocean Meadows Golf Course. Soil was moved from adjacent lands to fill the estuary, causing severe degradation of the borrow sites and raising the elevations on the golf course property up to 10 feet. This action significantly reduced habitat for wetland dependent wildlife, including mammals, fish, birds, and insects of concern, and reduced flood conveyance capacity in the system. The impacts of this action were not limited to the upper area of the slough; sedimentation resulting from erosion of the graded areas reduced the capacity of the area of Devereux Slough below the golf course by 50%. While in operation, the golf course delivered irrigation runoff carrying excessive nutrients to the lower Slough.

The proposed restoration will entail modifying the project site to restore the upper Slough and adjacent mesa to a more natural geomorphic configuration, hydrologic regime, and habitat mosaic. The restoration area will be graded and planted with appropriate native species to restore a diversity of wetland habitats characteristic of the Devereux Slough system, including estuarine and palustrine (freshwater) habitat types, and to provide enhanced habitat values and connections to the larger 652-acre Ellwood Devereux Coastal Open Space which includes the project site.

The design will preserve and expand estuarine, seasonal wetland, riparian, vernal pool, and native upland habitats; create conditions that may support special status species, including southern tarplant, tidewater goby, Belding's savannah sparrow, and western snowy plover; and maintain genetic integrity on the project site. Public access and passive recreational opportunities will be provided with trails, interpretive and viewing elements and regional trail connections.

Features of the proposed project design include the following:

- A large seasonally ponded feature will be created at the northern site boundary, west of the Phelps Creek tributary connection, with potential benefits to migratory shorebirds and other wildlife.
- A ditch carrying fresh water inflows will be graded to create expanded and enhanced riparian and wetland habitats and a fresh water to brackish water connection to the restored estuary.
- In the southeastern area of the site, a large extent (approximately 2.75 acres) of marsh plain habitat will be graded, augmented with sand, and not be revegetated, in order to provide conditions suitable for nesting snowy plovers.
- Revegetation of the restored landscape with native salt marsh, fresh and/or brackish wetland, high marsh/transitional, seasonal wetland, vernal pool, riparian, back dune woodland/scrub, coastal sage scrub, native grassland, and sandy dune annual species, according to their physiological requirements, to create natural zonation and structural diversity within the restored habitat.
- The proposed design will include provision for substantial wildlife viewing opportunities, a hierarchy of networked trails to accommodate trail use, and near-trail plantings to enhance the sense of solitude and relaxation that many users desire.

## WCB PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The project is consistent with the following plans:

- Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project Regional Strategy and Work Plan: Listed as a Tier One, high priority project.
- CDFW, California Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy: Growth and development cited as a primary stressor in the Central Coast. Project enhances and protects a large habitat area and links wildlife corridors.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

UCSB will be responsible to conduct regular monitoring following the completion of construction in order to document the evolution of ecological and geomorphic conditions at the project site. Monitoring results will inform the adaptive management of the project site, which may include actions such as additional planting or alterations to the original planting and irrigation plan, control of invasive plant species, installation or removal of temporary erosion control measures, maintenance of public access infrastructure, and public outreach efforts.

In addition, UCSB must complete a monitoring and adaptive management plan as part of final project design. This plan may include elements and/or conditions required by permitting or granting agencies. Monitoring protocols and project performance/success criteria may be developed in consultation with said agencies and be performed to evaluate vegetation establishment, wildlife utilization, physical processes, and site conditions related to potential development of hazards such as slope stability and flood capacity.

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

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Task</b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>NCWCGP Grants<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>CNRA Depts<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Caltrans ATP Grant</b>	<b>Local<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>UCSB Match</b>	<b>Total</b>
Project Management	50,000	270,000	120,300	100,000			540,300
Project Design		565,000	771,210		185,000	246,890	1,768,100
Construction Grading	1,470,000	406,000	2,327,000				4,203,000
Restoration	1,983,074	1,194,000	1,122,000			550,000	4,849,074
Public Access				2,249,000			2,249,000
Monitoring	30,000	20,000	116,500				166,500
Signage & Education			37,800				37,800
Indirect Costs	286,926	130,000		100,000			516,926
<i>Totals</i>	<i>\$3,820,000</i>	<i>\$2,585,000</i>	<i>\$4,494,810</i>	<i>\$2,449,000</i>	<i>\$185,000</i>	<i>\$796,890</i>	<i>\$14,330,700</i>

*Notes:*

- 1. USFWS National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program Planning (\$855,000), Implementation (flex) (\$730,000), and Vernal Pool (\$1,000,000) grants*
- 2. Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Greenhouse Gas Sequestration (\$920,000), CDFW Proposition 1 (\$939,500), Department of Water Resources Urban Streams (\$985,310), State Coastal Conservancy (\$650,000) and California Natural Resource Agency (CNRA) Urban Greening (\$1,000,000) grants*
- 3. Goleta Valley Land Trust (\$85,000) and County Flood Control (\$100,000) grants*

Project costs will be for project management; construction grading (mobilization, demolition, fine grading, placement work); restoration (labor, plants, irrigation, erosion control, and supplies); and monitoring.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding source for this project is the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(a), which provides funding for the acquisition, protection and restoration of coastal wetlands identified in the Southern California Coastal Wetlands Inventory, located within the coastal zone, other wetlands connected and proximate to such coastal wetlands, and upland areas adjacent and proximate to such coastal wetlands.

**CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION**

As lead agency, UCSB prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has considered the MND and has prepared proposed written findings documenting WCB's



compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,820,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

**25. Live Oak Canyon and Expansion 1  
Riverside and San Bernardino Counties  
\$1,067,500.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation of two grants, one to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority) and one to the City of Redlands, for cooperative projects with the Authority, the Riverside Land Conservancy (RLC), and the City of Redlands (City) to acquire 162± acres of land from two separate landowners. The acquisitions will protect habitat essential for the recovery of threatened and endangered species in both counties.

**LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES**

The subject properties (Properties) are comprised of two ownerships, the 80± acre RLC property and the 82± acre Hudson property. The Properties are adjacent to one another. They are situated approximately five miles southeast of the City and approximately five miles southwest of Calimesa. Access is either just off of Interstate 10, Live Oak Canyon Road exit, or San Timoteo Canyon Road.

The Properties are located within an area known as Live Oak Canyon (Canyon), which runs east-west between Interstate 10 on the east, to San Timoteo Canyon Road on the west. The Canyon features steep, rounded hills covered with coastal sage scrub and a valley floor which ranges from approximately ¼ to ½ mile wide. There are several scattered homesites located nearby with the land primarily dedicated to agriculture, livestock grazing, and equestrian use.

The majority of the Properties are located within the boundaries of the Authority's Western Riverside County – Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (WRC MSHCP). The balance of the Properties lie adjacent to other conserved properties owned by the City. The Properties contain biological resources that have been authenticated under the Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP). The NCCP is a cooperative effort that includes both private and public partners and takes a broad-based ecosystem approach to planning for the protection and perpetuation of biological diversity. This State program provides long term conservation for ongoing protection, monitoring and management of conservation plan areas, such as the WRC MSHCP, which contains large interconnected habitat areas needed to protect diminishing habitat and wildlife.

The Properties are located within a wildlife corridor. The wildlife corridor is a critical connection between the San Bernardino Mountains, the San Jacinto Mountains and the Santa Ana River. Wildlife travels from the Santa Ana River southeast up San Timoteo Creek to Live Oak Creek, then northeast to the Crafton Hills and Wildwood State Park area. From the San Jacinto Mountains, wildlife travels across the Bad Lands in Riverside County, along San Timoteo Creek to Live Oak Creek. The proposed acquisitions will connect other conserved areas to the south; thereby protecting in perpetuity habitat and vital foraging and breeding linkages for the long-term survival of listed species.

The Properties are situated just north of several protected properties that include California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) San Jacinto Wildlife Area (7± miles south) and California Department of Parks and Recreation's San Timoteo Canyon State Park (4± miles southeast).

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Properties are comprised of eight irregularly shaped parcels located in unincorporated areas of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Three of the parcels are improved with a 1,750 square foot residence, garage, small hay/horse barn and fencing. The balance of the parcels remain in their natural unimproved state. The topography is flat to rolling, covered with an expanse of diverse plant life that includes native grasslands, coastal sage scrub and chaparral. Ownership of the parcels will be split between the City and Authority. The three parcels situated in San Bernardino County will be owned by the City and the remaining five parcels situated in Riverside County will be owned by the Authority.

The parcels located in Riverside County are located in a habitat plan area known as Pass Area Plan – Subunit 3 – San Timoteo, Rough Step 2. This plan area is considered to be a priority habitat conservation area in the WRC MSHCP. Properties located within this plan area are important linkage areas that are being assembled to expand the network of protected properties. Conservation of this land will help protect several wildlife species, including the federally endangered gnatcatcher and other species that include mountain lion, Bell's sage sparrow, Cooper's hawk, yellow warbler, bobcat and the Los Angeles pocket mouse. Furthermore, the acquisition will help to protect native communities of diminishing coastal sage scrub habitat. The site's coastal sage scrub and grassland ground cover, combined with the site's elevational gradients, provide species and ecosystem responses to climate change by allowing species and vegetation communities to shift upward in elevation.

The area surrounding the proposed City-owned parcels are known as the "Emerald Necklace." The Emerald Necklace is comprised of a series of open spaces, parks, and points of interest owned and protected by the City that are tied together, and encircled by a scenic road and trail system. The City's acquisition of the three parcels will add to the Emerald Necklace and serve as a buffer into the City. They will offer opportunities for passive and active open space uses, especially resource preservation and habitat restoration/preservation.

## WCB PROGRAM

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

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

The project will preserve existing habitat connections by expanding a network of protected linkages. Connectivity is essential to maintaining the genetic viability of listed/sensitive species being conserved in this area. As mentioned previously, wildlife linkages provide ecosystem responses to climate change by incorporating elevation gradients that allows species and vegetation communities to shift upward in elevation.

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

The project supports the implementation of the WRC MSHCP and the recovery of listed species. The Properties complement WCB's Strategic Plan through its goal to acquire properties for the purpose of wildlife habitat and landscape preservation. The proposed project will expand the network of existing wildlife habitat linkages and corridors to ensure the success and recovery of threatened and endangered wildlife species.

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

CDFW, together with other public and private parties, was instrumental in the creation of the WRC MSHCP through its NCCP program. Under the NCCP program, all parties recognized the importance of the conservation values in this area. These conservation values include the mixture of habitats located across diverse landscapes with numerous ecosystems and wildlife species found nowhere else in the world. The project will also offset the continued growth and urbanization in the area, which has contributed to the decline of these habitat communities.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

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

The City will enter into an agreement to have RLC maintain their property. The land will be used for habitat preservation, education, and as a potential future gateway for access into RLC and Riverside County open space areas.

#### TERMS

The Properties have been appraised as having a fair market value of \$2,107,000.00 (Hudson ownership \$1,674,000.00 + RLC ownership \$433,000.00). The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owners have agreed to sell each of their respective Properties for its approved appraised fair market value. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grants to the City and Authority provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account

established for each acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms WCB can require each of the grantees to encumber their respective properties with a conservation easement in favor of the State or another entity approved by the State and seek reimbursement of funds.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

Below is specific information for each property:

**Live Oak Canyon**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	971,500
Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority	351,000
Riverside Land Conservancy	351,500
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>1,674,000</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	7,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$978,500</i>

**Live Oak Canyon, Expansion 1**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	82,000
City of Redlands	351,000
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>433,000</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	7,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$89,000</i>

**TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION \$1,067,500**

It is estimated that an additional \$14,000.00 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs including the DGS appraisal review.

**WCB FUNDING SOURCE**

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

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION**

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

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,067,500.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the grants and to cover internal project-related expenses; and authorize staff and CDFW to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and proceed substantially as planned.

**26. Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (2012) – Riverpark  
Riverside County  
\$818,500.00**

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant, and the approval to subgrant these federal funds, to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority); and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to the Authority, to acquire in fee ±108 acres of land.

**LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES**

The subject property, known as the Riverpark property (Property), is located near the community of Lakeview. More specifically, the Property is located on the northwest corner of 11<sup>th</sup> Street and “A” Avenue in an unincorporated area of southwest Riverside County. The Property’s is bounded by Interstate 215 to the west; Gilman Springs Road to the north; Sanderson Avenue to the east and State Highway 74 to the south. The surrounding area is primarily comprised of scattered ranchettes and agriculture uses.

The Property has been identified in Riverside County’s Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (WRC MSHCP). The WRC MSCHP designates six distinct habitat areas for conservation: Western Core/Linkage, Alkali Playa/Vernal Pool Area, Temecula Creek Watershed, Santa Rosa Plateau, San Timoteo Canyon, and B Canyon Area. The Property is located in the Alkali Playa/Vernal Pool Area (AP/VPA), which encompasses lands that are located along the San Jacinto River, east of the City of Perris, northwest of the City of San Jacinto, and lands within the Hemet vernal pools complex located west of the City of Hemet.

Properties within the AP/VPA are located in a habitat area rich in endemic plant species because of its unique hydrology and soils. The presence of certain unique alkaline soils provide habitat for specific plant species found only in the western Riverside region. Core populations of plant life supported by this habitat area include the federally threatened spreading navarretia and the federally endangered San Jacinto Valley crowscale. This area also contains some of the most ecologically significant vernal pools in California. Key populations of listed species dependent upon the vernal pools include the federally threatened Riverside fairy shrimp and vernal pool fair shrimp. Furthermore, the proposed acquisition is important because the acquisition of the Property would expand the Authority’s assemblage of protected properties that are adjacent to or in close proximity to a number of existing reserves.

The WRC MSHCP was established under the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (CDFW) Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) program under the State’s Natural Community Conservation Planning Act of 1991 (Fish and Game Code Section 2800, *et seq.*). The NCCP program is a cooperative effort that includes both private and public partners and takes a broad-based ecosystem approach to planning for the protection and perpetuation of biological diversity. An NCCP identifies and provides for the regional or area wide protection of plants, animals and their habitats, while allowing compatible and appropriate economic activity. Under the WRC MSHCP the goal of the Authority is to assemble a reserve of 500,000 acres of conserved properties identified to expand, sustain and protect important wildlife ecosystem processes and corridors throughout western Riverside County. To date, 52,805 acres have been added to the reserve.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property consists of two primarily rectangular parcels improved with a small water reservoir. The Rural Residential (RR) zoning designation, which specifies a minimum one-half acre lot size, is assigned to the parcels. The General Plan allows two to five dwelling units per acre. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Property is located in a FEMA Floodway Zone AE, or on a floodway that is in the channel of a stream plus/or an adjacent floodplain area.

According to the Authority's biological studies, the Property is located within multiple cells of the WRC MSHCP's AP/VPA, and has been identified as having important biological resources. Conservation of this land would help to assemble the reserve for this area and protect important habitat for the vernal pool fairy shrimp. In addition to the Property's location within the AP/VPA, the site is also identified as part of an area referred to as Extension of Existing Core 4 (Core 4). Properties in Core 4 connect directly to conserved lands to the north such as CDFW's San Jacinto Wildlife Area, which includes Mystic Lake, and Lake Perris State Park to the northwest. Conserving properties such as the Riverpark property would also expand the WRC MSHCP network of protected properties and assist in preserving the connectivity to the San Bernardino National Forest to the southeast and major core reserves to the southwest.

The Authority has verified that the Property is positioned in a playas and vernal pool habitat area. Species observed on the site by the Authority include the federally endangered arroyo toad; federally threatened Riverside fairy shrimp and vernal pool fair shrimp; as well as mountain plover, tricolored blackbird, white-faced ibis, Los Angeles pocket mouse, western pond turtle, and Coulter's goldfields.

## WCB PROGRAM

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

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



The project meets the following WCB's Strategic Plan goals:

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

One of the goals of the WRC MSCHP is to preserve existing habitat connections by expanding a network of protected linkages. The Property will connect to other WRC MSHCP conserved properties, which promotes maintaining the genetic viability of listed/sensitive species being conserved under the plan. Wildlife linkages also provide ecosystem responses to climate change by incorporating elevation gradients that allow species and vegetation communities to shift upward in elevation.

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

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

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

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

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

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

Management costs for parcels acquired under the WRC MSHCP will be provided by the Authority's operating funds.

#### TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$2,705,000. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and USFWS. The Property owner has agreed to sell the Property for the

approved appraised fair market value. The USFWS grant requires a non-federal match in the amount of \$811,500 that is proposed to be provided by a grant from the WCB. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and subgrant of USFWS funds to the Authority provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the grantee to encumber the Property with a conservation easement in favor of the State or another entity approved by the State and seek reimbursement of funds.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	811,500
WCB – subgrant of USFWS funds	1,893,500
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>2,705,000</i>
Other Project Related Admin Costs	7,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$818,500</i>

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

**FUNDING SOURCE**

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

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE**

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

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; authorize the acceptance of the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$1,893,500.00 and approve the subgrant of these federal funds to the Authority; allocate \$818,500.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the WCB grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; and authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**27. Red Hill Bay Shallow Water Habitat  
Imperial County  
\$1,850,000.00**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) to restore approximately 600 acres of shallow brackish water habitat in the Red Hill Bay area of the Salton Sea, located 15 miles NNW of Brawley in Imperial County.

**LOCATION**

Red Hill Bay is located in the southeast quadrant of the Salton Sea, immediately south of Red Hill, approximately 12.5 miles north of the city of Westmoreland, California. It is bordered to the west by the Salton Sea and to the east by Garst Road and adjacent wildlife habitat managed by the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). Red Hill Road forms the northern boundary and Cox and Gentry roads form the southern limit of the project.

The Red Hill Bay site was recently a shallow (1 to 3 feet deep) bay off of the Salton Sea. It was part of the larger Salton Sea but uncovered as the lake elevations declined in the 1920 to 1940s – portions of the area were in agricultural production during that time. The site was inundated again, when water levels rose in the Salton Sea, during the late 1980s and 1990s. While it provided some habitat for fish, including the federally listed, endangered native desert pupfish, its main functional value was as a habitat for invertebrates which provide excellent forage for wading and shore birds. The Red Hill Bay project will restore the shallow water habitat value.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Red Hill Bay project will restore approximately 600 acres of shallow brackish water habitat in Red Hill Bay. The bay has dried as the Salton Sea water elevation has declined from the levels in the early 2000s. A series of low earthen berms will be constructed to create water impoundments in two large cells. Short perimeter berms will be constructed around the north and east boundaries of the site and a larger berm will be constructed on the western boundary of the site along the lake shoreline. There is an existing berm on the southern boundary of the site.

The resulting impoundments will contain approximately two or three feet of water at the western end of the cells and will become increasingly shallow to the east. The cells will be connected by culverts and the western cell will discharge to the Salton Sea. Loafing islands, snags and other habitat enhancements will be added to each cell. Channels will be constructed in the central portions of each cell to provide deeper water habitat that might be suitable for fish species and as a method to direct water between the cells. Water for the project will be pumped from the adjacent Alamo River channel and from the Salton Sea. Water from the two sources will be mixed to maintain a brackish (approximately 20- 25 parts per thousand) habitat. Two pump sites will be required (one at the river and one at the lake). The water intake in the lake will be located in deeper water to allow the saline water to be accessed even when the lake elevations drop, as expected in the coming years.

The water infrastructure for the project consists of a saline intake and a fresh water intake. The water delivery system is designed to mix fresh and brackish water to a target salinity of 15 to 25 parts per thousand and provide a flow through system that discharges to the Salton Sea. The water delivery infrastructure will be constructed to the capacity necessary for supplying water to both cells - regardless of the phasing of the cell construction.

The project also accounts for its location within the Salton Sea Known Geothermal Resource Area and is designed to allow access to the area for geothermal drilling and pipeline corridors. Access corridors will be created in a 300' buffer zone along Garst Road and Red Hill Bay roads that will enable geothermal exploration and development external to the project foot print. Any geothermal well development will be from well pads located in the access corridors utilizing a below ground slant drilling process that will not impact the developed habitat areas. The timeline of any development of this nature is subject to many variables, but it is not anticipated to occur for at least a minimum of five to seven years.

#### WCB PROGRAM

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

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

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

- The project will create brackish shallow water habitat that will benefit local and migratory bird species as well as the federally listed, endangered native desert pupfish.
- The project will provide a means to stabilize habitat in the event climate change impacts the local hydrologic cycle.

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

The Red Hill Bay project is a component of the IID/Imperial County Salton Sea Restoration and Renewable Energy Initiative and the Salton Sea Authority's lake management plan. The project is consistent with relevant regional plans including Imperial County's recently completed renewable energy program and the Open Space Element (under revision) of its General Plan. In addition, the Red Hill Bay project is included in the Refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan and was evaluated in its accompanying Environmental Assessment.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Refuge will operate and manage the project after completion. Cost for that effort is included in the in-kind services from IID and the Refuge. Maintenance and operational costs will include electrical costs for pumping the water into the cells, periodic cleaning of the water delivery channels, repair of eroded areas, maintenance of berms and related tasks.

Ongoing monitoring of the site for pesticide residuals and selenium concentrations will be conducted by the Refuge, IID Water transfer mitigation team, the Salton Sea Authority water transfer mitigation program (as part of the transfer water permit requirements), and U.S. Geological Survey. The monitoring will include documentation of bird sightings and monitoring of water constituents. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation will also participate in the analysis of selenium and other samples.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Item</b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>FAP<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>SBSSN WR<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>IID<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Total</b>
Environmental Compliance			25,000	15,000	40,000
Land Lease				85,000	
Project Design	40,000		160,000	10,000	210,000
Construction	1,630,000	658,154	97,760		2,385,914
Electrical Power System	150,000	536,000			686,000
Monitoring and Management	30,000		50,000	20,000	100,000
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$1,850,000</i>	<i>\$1,194,154</i>	<i>\$332,760</i>	<i>\$130,000</i>	<i>\$3,506,914</i>

Notes:

1. United States Fish and Wildlife Service Financial Assistance Program
2. Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge
3. Imperial Irrigation District

Project costs will be for the finalization of the project design; construction (salt water intake station, river channel, berm and pond construction); extending electrical power to the project site; project management; and water quality monitoring.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding source for this project is the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79568(a), which provides funding for the for the acquisition, protection and restoration of land and water resources necessary to meet state obligations for regulatory requirements related to California’s allocation of water supplies from the Colorado River. These water supplies are to be used to assist the State of California in restoring habitat to the Salton Sea.

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

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

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,850,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79568(a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

## **28. Chollas Creek, Riparian Restoration – Planning**

### **San Diego County**

**\$970,000.00**

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Urban Corps of San Diego County (UCSDC) for a cooperative project with the City of San Diego to complete planning, design, environmental review and permitting to restore approximately eight acres of land on Chollas Creek, located in the City of San Diego in San Diego County

#### LOCATION

The project site is a 1,250-foot segment of Chollas Creek, located approximately 3.5 miles east of downtown San Diego. The highly urbanized Chollas Creek watershed spans about 16,270 acres and drains to San Diego Bay. The site is situated between Interstate 805 and Imperial Avenue, adjacent to the Jackie Robinson YMCA on the south and east, and Greenwood Memorial Park on the west and north. The proposed project site, known as Segment 5 of Chollas Creek, is located between the communities of Chollas View, Lincoln Park, and Mountain View. The parcels of Greenwood Memorial Park adjacent to Chollas Creek, the YMCA parking area, and the privately-owned Carlin property lie in San Diego unincorporated areas, while the remainder of the site is within the City of San Diego.

The current Phase I Planning Project proposes to prepare surveys, a concept plan, technical reports, and environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); select the best alternative given existing ecological, hydrological, environmental, social, and jurisdictional constraints; create final designs, engineering plans, and construction drawings; and obtain necessary permits. A preliminary study was completed in 2008, and included a conceptual design for the restoration of this segment. The proposed project will build on this conceptual restoration design through a phased process.

Biological resources on site include four habitat types: disturbed riparian scrub, disturbed coastal sage scrub, developed, and non-native ornamental trees. Vegetation within the project area is highly disturbed and contains little native plant material with the exception of occasional arroyo willows that have established along the cobble bottom and between the cracks of the slope paving. There are small occasional and widely spaced individuals of native mulefat and cheesebush. Dense stands of the invasive giant cane (*Arundo*) and some castor bean are present on the west side of the channel. Eucalyptus trees, acacia, and Peruvian pepper trees are scattered through the area. Several bird species have been observed in the dense acacia and willow areas on the southeast bank near I-805.

In its existing condition, the creek is subject to excessive runoff, bank erosion, impaired downstream water quality, non-native weed species and vandalism. Chollas Creek often exceeds water quality objectives for total suspended sediment, turbidity, surfactants, biological and chemical oxygen demand, and trash.

Finally, Segment 5 of Chollas Creek is located adjacent and immediately upstream of high quality riparian habitat that was recently restored. Another portion of Chollas Creek is currently under restoration 0.83 miles upstream. The ultimate restoration of Segment 5 represents a significant linkage in the Chollas Creek restoration program.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project site is generally degraded and weedy, with many concrete surfaces and other impediments. In its current state, potentials for quality habitat, flood control, connectivity, and public access are limited. Impervious concrete surface along the length of the east side of the project area inhibits growth of native vegetation, eliminates potential wildlife habitat, and decreases stormwater infiltration, leading to polluted stormwater runoff downstream into San Diego Bay. In addition, the large amount of concrete, urban debris, and a lack of native habitat significantly reduces the viability of this area to be utilized as a riparian habitat corridor connecting this portion of Chollas Creek to the previously restored segment immediately to the southwest.

The ultimate project implementation would include channel widening and modification, some slope protection to deter bank erosion, and removing old impermeable bank armoring. Planting native vegetation and widening the floodplain would substantially improve infiltration in the area. The constructed project will significantly contribute to the Chollas Creek habitat corridor by linking completed downstream and future upstream restoration projects. Project construction will restore Segment 5 of Chollas Creek to historic natural habitat types, including riparian scrub and coastal sage scrub. Currently, the site only contains highly disturbed habitat, but nearby restored sites have shown significant potential for Chollas Creek's riparian areas to support high-quality habitat following targeted biological and hydrological improvements.

Restoration of the riparian habitat, as well as the adjacent buffer area of coastal sage scrub would benefit numerous species. Restoration could potentially benefit coastal California gnatcatcher (Federal Threatened), least Bell's vireo (State and Federal Endangered), and southwestern willow flycatcher (State and Federal Endangered), which are found nearby in higher quality habitat. Numerous other birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians would benefit from restored riparian habitat, including raccoon, belted kingfisher, Pacific tree frog, toad, and salamander. Coastal sage scrub restoration would benefit animals such as coyote, rabbit, red-tailed hawk, and horned lizard. Despite its impaired water quality, Chollas Creek does support a limited fish population which would benefit from restoration activities that improve pollutant filtration and improve water quality.

Ultimately, this planning and preliminary design Project will recommend the design for habitat improvement and implementation, in addition to completing a CEQA document. The next potential project phases would include final design and permits, construction, and monitoring.

## WCB PROGRAM

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

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

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



- The project will lead to the creation and enhancement of sensitive habitats such as riparian and coastal sage scrub, increasing their acreage to provide a larger buffer against climate impacts. Expanding the riparian area will provide refuges for wildlife during drought. Reducing existing stressors, such as pollution and habitat loss, will help the Chollas Creek watershed build resilience to climate change.

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

- The overall project will include public access, trails and educational elements which will be funded separately from the riparian restoration.

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

- Provide or enhance habitat connectivity and corridors:

The project is consistent with the City of San Diego's 2002 Chollas Creek Enhancement Program to guide restoration, public access, art opportunities, and environmental education along the entire length of Chollas Creek. Segment 5 provides a key linkage that will help meet the goals of the Chollas Creek Enhancement Program as a whole.

Proposed restoration activities are consistent with the Multiple Species Conservation Program's guidelines for habitat conservation and enhancement.

The project is also consistent with the open space and trail goals listed in the recently updated Southeastern San Diego Community Plan, adopted by the City Council on November 16, 2015. Specifically, the proposed project is consistent with the Chollas Creek Open Space, Wetlands, and Landform Preservation Policies P-CS-14 and P-CS-15:

- Implement the recommendations contained in the Chollas Creek Enhancement Program such as emphasizing natural settings and encouraging wildlife, while restoring and enhancing wetland/riparian and upland transitional habitat with native soils and vegetation and removing concrete channels in Chollas Creek, where feasible, to create a more natural function and appearance, and establishing trails and other passive recreation amenities.
- Remove invasive species from Chollas Creek and restore habitat.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Planning for the improvement of this segment of Chollas Creek is an important component to enhancing the site, improving wildlife habitat, and providing public access. Completion of the planning phase of this Project will provide the foundation to move forward with the next project phases.

UCSDC is a certified local conservation corps offering habitat management and restoration services through an integrated program which trains and educates local youth. Urban Corps is a private, independent local conservation corps (LCC) certified by the California Conservation Corps, and follows a similar model combining youth development and environmental enhancement. Urban Corps has met the CCC's high standards for LCC certification annually

since its founding in 1989. UCSDC is approved to hold conservation easements and currently serves as habitat manager for 10 open space preserves throughout San Diego County. Professional staff is qualified to plan, implement and monitor the biological preservation of sensitive plant and wildlife habitats. Staff have also planned, implemented, and performed extensive habitat restoration work at the San Diego River, Tijuana Estuary, Alvarado Creek, Chollas Creek, Adobe Falls, Mission Trails Regional Park, and Old Mission Dam.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Item</b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Planning	51,000	113,000	164,000
Engineering and Design	280,000		280,000
CEQA Review	390,000		390,000
Permits, Review, and Process	162,000		162,000
Contingency	87,000		87,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$970,000</b>	<b>\$113,000</b>	<b>\$1,083,000</b>

Project costs will be for Phase I, which proposes to prepare surveys, a concept plan, technical reports, and a CEQA document evaluating the restoration and hydrological alternatives; select the best alternative given existing ecological, hydrological, environmental, social, and jurisdictional constraints; create designs, engineering plans, and construction drawings; and obtain initial permits and agreements to implement the project.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f), which allows for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat and aquatic habitat for salmonids and trout to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass. Funding for the restoration of Chollas Creek was provided in SB 97 (State Budget Act), approved by the Governor on June 24, 2015.

**CEQA REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION**

The project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15262), as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions which have not been approved.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$970,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

**29. Contract Authorization for Accounting Services  
Informational/Action**

This proposal is to consider delegating authority to the Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) to execute a three-year interagency agreement not to exceed \$870,000 (\$290,000 annually) with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Accounting Services Branch (ASB) to provide the WCB with professional accounting and fiscal support services. The ASB is currently providing these services to the WCB through an interagency agreement expiring at the end of the current fiscal year.

The services provided by the ASB are integral to the WCB's day-to-day administrative operations and support all of its land acquisition and habitat conservation programs. Examples of such services include but are not limited to the following: processing and facilitating payments for all incoming invoices for project development and land acquisition projects and activities; establishing and maintaining general ledger accounts; reviewing expenditures and reconciling CALSTARS reports with State Controller's Office accounts; and preparing and reviewing financial statements, expenditure, and encumbrance reports for all WCB funds, including Proposition 40, 50, 84, and 1E bond funds. The WCB does not directly employ staff that possesses the diverse and extensive technical knowledge required to provide all of the independent professional accounting service functions required to support its daily operations.

Historically, past interagency agreements have provided funding for approximately 1-3 ASB accounting positions. The number of positions funded is based largely on the WCB's program needs, total available funding and the number of planned and ongoing development and acquisition projects. The proposed agreement will provide funding for two Associate Accounting Analyst positions. Staff believes that funding two positions is reasonable to support the WCB's current operations, as well as to manage the expected increase in accounting-related work as a result of the WCB's recent allocation from the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1). This contract would be valid and enforceable only if sufficient state operations funding is made available by the Budget Act for the Fiscal Year(s) involved.

Finally, ASB staff expects to transition from their current accounting system to the new Financial Information System for California (FI\$Cal) in mid-2017, requiring additional training and increasing ASB workloads across the board. Although the proposed agreement will provide funding for two ASB staff, the breadth of the workload is beyond the disciplinary scope of just two specialists and can routinely involve up to five different staff to provide the full level of technical expertise required to provide the WCB with the professional accounting services it needs. The ASB ensures that the WCB's accounting needs are met regardless of how, ultimately, the workload is divided among its staff.

Staff recommends that the Board delegate authority to the Executive Director to execute a three-year interagency agreement not to exceed \$870,000 (\$290,000 annually) with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Accounting Services Branch to provide the WCB with professional accounting and fiscal support services.

**30. California Streamflow Enhancement Program  
Informational/Action**

Staff will present the proposed FY 2016/17 Proposal Solicitation Notice (Solicitation) for the California Streamflow Enhancement Program (Program) to the Board for discussion and approval. California voters approved Proposition 1, known as the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Act), in November 2014. The Act, which provides funding to address varied challenges facing California’s water resources, authorizes the Legislature to appropriate \$200 million to the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) for projects that result in enhanced stream flows.

FY 2015/2016 was the first year WCB administered the Program and \$38.4 million was available for expenditure. On February 18, 2016, an allocation of \$20,156,278.00 was approved by the Board, with \$5 million of that total directed towards planning and scientific studies. Entering into the second year of the Program, \$18,243,722.00 will be carried over from FY 2015/2016 and combined with the FY 2016/2017 funds in the amount of \$38,400,000 for allocation. This totals \$56,643,722.00 with \$5 million again being made available for planning and scientific studies.

Grant funding will be awarded on a competitive basis to projects adhering to the mission of the WCB that address the three goals of the California Water Action Plan: reliability, restoration, and resilience. Funding is directed to projects predicted to result in significant and measurable enhancement to the amount, timing and/or quality of water available for anadromous fish, or special status, threatened, endangered or at risk species and that also provide resilience to climate change.

The WCB Program FY 2016/2017 projected timeline and list of deliverables is shown below.

Date	Deliverable
4/25/16 - 5/9/16	Electronic draft of Proposal Solicitation Notice (Solicitation) released to public for review
5/13/16	Workshop held for public discourse and discussion on Solicitation
5/9/16- 5/20/16	Revisions of Solicitation based on public comments and input
6/2/16	WCB seeks approval and finalization of Solicitation to be released on July 1, 2016
6/3/16 - 6/30/16	WCB Staff available for Proposal Consultation
7/1/16 - 8/31/16	Final Solicitation opened
8/31/16	Solicitation Closed

Staff recommends that the Board authorize staff to finalize and release the Solicitation to the public, on or after July 1, 2016.

Follow link to view the most recent draft of the  
[2016 Proposition 1 California Streamflow Enhancement Program  
Solicitation Notice](#)

