



Wildlife Conservation Board Program Review

August 2017

The Wildlife Conservation Board protects, restores and enhances California's spectacular natural resources for wildlife and for the public's use and enjoyment in partnership with conservation groups, government agencies and the people of California.

Land Acquisition Program (est. 1947)

Acquire real property or interests in real property on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and make grants to facilitate acquisitions by others.

<p><i>Implementation Methods</i></p> <p>Requires willing seller, CDFW biological assessment of resource values and recommendation for acquisition of interests in real property and water rights by means of gifts, purchases, leases, easements, transfer or exchange of property, transfer of development rights or credits, and purchases of development rights, conservation easements and other interests. Projects are reviewed and recommended for funding by CDFW under the LAE/CAPP process.</p>
<p><i>Eligible Applicants</i></p> <p>Federal, state, and local government entities (including special districts and joint powers authorities) and nonprofit organizations.</p>
<p><i>Authority/Enabling Legislation and Funding</i></p> <p>Authority: Administered pursuant to the Board's original authorizing legislation, the Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947; Fish and Game Code (FGC) Sec. 1300 <i>et seq.</i></p> <p>Funding: Wildlife Restoration Fund; Habitat Conservation Fund; and various bond funds.</p>
<p><i>Overlap with other WCB Programs</i></p> <p>The program overlaps with all other WCB programs that allow for acquisitions of land, water or rights to property.</p>
<p><i>Support of Strategic Plan/ Limitations</i></p> <p>Provides great flexibility to allow for the acquisition of any critical wildlife habitats State-wide to provide for wildlife corridors, climate change resiliency and biodiversity.</p> <p>Limitations: None</p>
<p><i>Accomplishments since inception</i></p> <p>Nearly 1500 projects protecting more than 1,110,000 acres.</p>

Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program (est. 1957, modified 1990)

Restore or enhance native fisheries, wetlands that fall outside the Central Valley, in-stream habitat, and other projects that improve native habitat quality within the State. Includes all eligible restoration and enhancement projects that fall outside the Board's other mandated programs

<p><i>Implementation Methods</i></p> <p>Initially, established for the improvement of habitats only on behalf of CDFW, but was expanded in 1990 to allow for grants to eligible entities other than CDFW. Grants to restore or enhance habitat; applicants can apply for funds under open application process.</p> <p>Grantees must provide for long-term management and maintenance of improvements.</p>
<p><i>Eligible Applicants</i></p> <p>Federal, state, and local government entities (including special districts and joint powers authorities) and nonprofit organizations.</p>
<p><i>Authority/Enabling Legislation and Funding</i></p> <p>Authority: Wildlife Protection Act of 1990; FGC Sec. 2780 <i>et seq.</i> Funding: Habitat Conservation Fund and various bond funds.</p>
<p><i>Overlap with other WCB Programs</i></p> <p>The program overlaps with all other WCB programs that allow for habitat restoration or enhancement</p>
<p><i>Support of Strategic Plan/ Limitations</i></p> <p>Provides great flexibility to allow for the restoration of any critical wildlife habitats State-wide to provide for wildlife corridors, climate change resiliency and biodiversity.</p> <p>Limitations: none</p>
<p><i>Accomplishments since inception</i></p> <p>More than 600 projects restoring more than 170,000 acres.</p>

Inland Wetlands Conservation Program (est. 1990)

Support the Implementation Plan of the Central Valley Joint Venture in protecting, restoring and enhancing wetlands and associated habitats on public or private lands in order to increase bird populations in the Central Valley.

<p><i>Implementation Methods</i></p> <p>Acquire property directly for CDFW or through grants (fee title, interests or water rights), and for grants to restore or enhance habitat. Restoration grant agreements require grantees to provide long-term management and maintenance of improvements. Applicants can apply for funds under open application process.</p>
<p><i>Eligible Applicants</i></p> <p>State and local government entities (including special districts and joint powers authorities) and nonprofit organizations described in 26 U.S.C. Section 501(c).</p>
<p><i>Authority/Enabling Legislation and Funding</i></p> <p>Authority: Inland Wetlands Conservation Program; FGC Sec. 1400 <i>et seq.</i></p> <p>Funding: Habitat Conservation Fund, Inland Wetlands Conservation Fund and various bond funds.</p>
<p><i>Overlap with other WCB Programs</i></p> <p>The program overlaps with two WCB programs, the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program and the Ecosystem Restoration on Agricultural Lands Program, because the CVJV Implementation Plan calls specifically for the enhancement of bird habitats on agricultural lands and for the protection, restoration and enhancement of riparian habitat.</p>
<p><i>Support of Strategic Plan/ Limitations</i></p> <p>Legislatively mandated program. Provides focused funding to support a very successful and well-regarded Joint Venture providing critical habitats for the Pacific flyway. Wetland habitats are much reduced in acreage and quality from historic levels.</p> <p>Limitations: Geographically restricted to wetland habitats to support bird populations in Central Valley.</p>
<p><i>Accomplishments since inception</i></p> <p>54 acquisitions protecting more than 38,000 acres, and 150 restoration projects restoring more than 170,000 acres.</p>

California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program (est. 1991)

Develop coordinated conservation efforts aimed at protecting, preserving and restoring the State's riparian ecosystems.

<p><i>Implementation Methods</i></p> <p>Acquire property directly for CDFW or through grants (fee title, interests or water rights), and grants to restore or enhance habitat. Restoration grant agreements require grantees to provide long-term management and maintenance of improvements. Applicants for restoration projects can apply for funds under open application process. Acquisitions projects are reviewed and recommended for funding by CDFW under the LAE/CAPP process.</p>
<p><i>Eligible Applicants</i></p> <p>Federal, state, and local government entities (including special districts and joint powers authorities) and nonprofit conservation organizations qualified for exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.</p>
<p><i>Authority/Enabling Legislation and Funding</i></p> <p>Authority: California Riparian Habitat Conservation Act; FGC Sec. 1385 <i>et seq.</i></p> <p>Funding: Habitat Conservation Fund and various bond funds.</p>
<p><i>Overlap with other WCB Programs</i></p> <p>Riparian projects in the Central Valley overlap with the Inland Wetland Conservation Program because the CVJV Implementation Plan calls specifically for the protection, restoration and enhancement of riparian habitat. The Ecosystem Restoration on Agricultural Lands Program overlaps with this program because many farms and ranches include streams that contain riparian habitats.</p>
<p><i>Support of Strategic Plan/ Limitations</i></p> <p>Legislatively mandated program. Riparian habitat is the most species-rich habitat in California and provides essential connectivity between protected habitats. Riparian habitats have been reduced in acreage by 90% or more from historical levels.</p> <p>Limitations: Geographically limited to Statewide riparian habitats only.</p>
<p><i>Accomplishments since inception</i></p> <p>More than 180 acquisitions protecting more than 130,000 acres and nearly 160 restoration projects restoring nearly 25,000 acres.</p>

Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Program (est. 2000, suspended 2002, reinstated 2005)

Protect wildlife habitat, parks and open space, archaeological resources, agricultural land and water by providing State tax credits for donations of qualified land and water rights.

<p><i>Implementation Methods</i></p> <p>Board authorized to approve granting of State tax credits for donations of qualified land (fee title or conservation easement) and water rights made to eligible donees pursuant to the program. Tax credit equal to 55% of the appraised fair market value of the donation. Applicants can apply for funds under open application process.</p>
<p><i>Eligible Applicants</i></p> <p>California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA); statutory entity within CNRA authorized to hold title to land (CNRA Entity) to which property owner has applied to donate property; local government; local government that has submitted a joint application with a CNRA Entity requesting approval of a donation to the local government; or designated nonprofit organization</p>
<p><i>Authority/Enabling Legislation and Funding</i></p> <p>Authority: Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act of 2000, as amended effective January 1, 2010 (expires June 2015); Public Resources Code Sec. 37000 <i>et seq.</i></p> <p>Funding: General Fund (reimbursable using Prop. 40, 50, and 84 bond funds and specified other non-General Fund monies)</p>
<p><i>Overlap with other WCB Programs</i></p> <p>The program overlaps with all other WCB programs that allow for acquisitions of land, water or rights to property.</p>
<p><i>Support of Strategic Plan/ Limitations</i></p> <p>Legislatively mandated program. Provides a cost effective method for acquiring critical wildlife habitat, including projects that enhance biodiversity, provide corridors or provide resilience to climate change.</p>
<p><i>Accomplishments since inception</i></p> <p>25 land acquisition projects have protected more than 91,000 acres. To date, tax credits totaling \$57,261,234 have been awarded.</p>

Oak Woodlands Conservation Program (est. 2001)

Support and encourage voluntary, long-term private stewardship and conservation of California's oak woodlands. Encourage farming and ranching operations that protect and promote healthy oak woodlands. Protect oak trees providing superior wildlife values on private land. Encourage local land use planning that is consistent with oak woodlands preservation.

Implementation Methods

Grants for purchase of oak woodlands conservation easements from willing sellers; grants for land improvement; financial incentives including cost-share payments to private landowners who enter into long-term conservation agreements; technical assistance; public outreach and education. Applicants can apply for funds under open application process, so long as funding is available. Requires an Oak Woodlands Management Plan to be in place for the city or county in which the money would be spent. Proposed project must be consistent with that Plan.

Eligible Applicants

Local government entities, park and open space districts, resource conservation districts, private landowners and tax-exempt non-profit organizations.

Authority/Enabling Legislation and Funding

Authority: Oak Woodlands Conservation Act; FGC Sec. 1360 *et seq.*

Funding: Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund, various bond funds.

Related Programs: Federal Forest Legacy Program (16 U.S.C. Section 2103); California Forest Legacy Program (Public Resources Code Section 12200 *et seq.*)

Overlap with other WCB Programs

Many oak woodlands are managed for cattle grazing, so the Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Program overlaps with the Oak program when a Rangeland project falls within the oak woodland ecoregions.

Support of Strategic Plan/ Limitations

Legislatively mandated program. Most oak woodlands are still privately owned, managed as cattle ranches, which provide significant wildlife habitat. Many ranches are at significant risk of development. Strategic Plan calls for protecting working landscapes.

Accomplishments since inception

20 acquisition projects protecting more than 42,000 acres of oak woodlands on working landscapes and seven educational or restoration projects resulting in 41 acres of restored oak woodlands.

Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Program (est. 2002)

Protect the integrity of California's rangeland, grazing land, and grasslands by preventing conversion to non-agricultural uses, protecting the long-term sustainability of livestock grazing, and ensuring continued wildlife, water quality, watershed and open space benefits to the State from livestock grazing.

<p><i>Implementation Methods</i></p> <p>Direct expenditures and grants for acquisition of conservation easements over qualified property from willing sellers; applicants can apply for funds under open application process, so long as funding is available.</p>
<p><i>Eligible Applicants</i></p> <p>State agencies, local public agencies and nonprofit organizations</p>
<p><i>Authority/Enabling Legislation and Funding</i></p> <p>Authority: Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Act , Public Resources Code Sec. 10330 <i>et seq.</i></p> <p>Funding: Bond Funds, Prop 84</p>
<p><i>Overlap with other WCB Programs</i></p> <p>Oak Woodlands Conservation Program allows for conservation of oak woodlands, most of which are grazed. The Ecosystem Restoration on Agricultural Lands Program, while focused on croplands, is sufficiently broad to allow for improvements on rangelands, so could be used in conjunction with that program to provide improvements on protected rangelands..</p>
<p><i>Support of Strategic Plan/ Limitations</i></p> <p>Legislatively mandated program. Working landscapes provide enormous wildlife habitat in California, and many are at significant risk of development. Strategic Plan calls for protecting working landscapes.</p>
<p><i>Accomplishments since inception</i></p> <p>27 projects protected more than 70,000 acres of working lands.</p>

Forest Conservation Program (est. 2006)

Promote 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.

<p><i>Implementation Methods</i></p> <p>Grants for acquisition (fee title or conservation easement) from willing sellers; long-term management agreements; applicants can apply for funds under open application process, so long as funding is available.</p>
<p><i>Eligible Applicants</i></p> <p>Federal, state, and local government entities (including special districts and joint powers authorities) and nonprofit organizations</p>
<p><i>Authority/Enabling Legislation and Funding</i></p> <p>Authority: Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006, Public Resources Code Section 75055 (a).</p> <p>Funding: Bond Funds, Prop 84</p>
<p><i>Overlap with other WCB Programs</i></p> <p>None</p>
<p><i>Support of Strategic Plan/ Limitations</i></p> <p>The California Forest Legacy Program Act of 2007 identified how funds provided to WCB for protection of forests in Propositions 12 and 84 be spent, and gave direction as to how projects would be evaluated, acquired, and maintained. Strategic Plan calls for protection of working landscapes.</p>
<p><i>Accomplishments since inception</i></p> <p>30 acquisition projects protected more than 165,000 acres and five restoration projects enhanced more than 40,000 acres.</p>

Ecosystem Restoration on Agricultural Lands (ERAL) (est. 2006)

Assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration and wildlife protection.

<p><i>Implementation Methods</i></p> <p>Grants to restore or enhance habitat. Grant agreements require grantees to provide long-term management and maintenance of improvements. Applicants can apply for funds under open application process.</p>
<p><i>Eligible Applicants</i></p> <p>Federal, state, and local government entities (including special districts and joint powers authorities) and nonprofit organizations.</p>
<p><i>Authority/Enabling Legislation and Funding</i></p> <p>Authority: Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006, Public Resources Code 75055(d)(4).</p> <p>Funding: Habitat Conservation Fund and various bond funds.</p>
<p><i>Overlap with other WCB Programs</i></p> <p>The Ecosystem Restoration on Agricultural Lands, while focused on croplands, is sufficiently broad to allow for improvements on rangelands, so some overlap with the Rangelands program is possible.</p>
<p><i>Support of Strategic Plan/ Limitations</i></p> <p>Provided for in Proposition 84. Working landscapes provide enormous wildlife habitat in California, enormous potential for habitat improvements, and many are at significant risk of development. Strategic Plan calls for improvements to working landscapes to benefit wildlife.</p> <p>Limitations: Restricted to the enhancement activities on agricultural lands.</p>
<p><i>Accomplishments since inception</i></p> <p>19 projects restored more than 2000 acres of wildlife habitat on working farms.</p>