



EDMUND G. BROWN Jr., Governor  
NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**  
Mailing Address: 1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 1266  
Sacramento, California 95814  
www.wcb.ca.gov  
(916) 445-8448  
Fax (916) 323-0280

## Meeting Notice WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

November 30, 2017

10:00 a.m.

Natural Resources Building, First Floor Auditorium  
1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sacramento, California 95814

### Final Agenda

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\*Proposed Consent Calendar

- \*6. Easement Transfers** **14**  
**Informational**  
Report on easement transfers made over the California Department of Fish and Wildlife controlled land pursuant to authority granted by the Wildlife Conservation Board on February 24, 1998.
- \*7. City of Arcata, Lima Conservation Easement** **15**  
**Humboldt County**  
**\$0**  
To consider the acceptance of a conservation easement over 20+ acres by CAL FIRE under the California Forest Legacy Act of 2007, for the purposes of protecting fish and wildlife habitat, located in the City of Arcata, Humboldt County.
- \*8. Snowcreek VIII Mitigation** **18**  
**Mono County**  
**\$0**  
To consider the acceptance of a conservation easement (Easement) over 15± acres by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife from the Town of Mammoth Lakes. The Easement satisfies a mitigation requirement of a grading permit issued to the Snowcreek Development Company and is located in the Town of Mammoth Lakes in Mono County.
- \*9. Wheeler Ridge, Expansion 6** **20**  
**Mono County**  
**\$305,000**  
To consider the acquisition in fee of 10± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the protection of deer and mountain lion habitat, to maintain a migration corridor for the Round Valley mule deer herd, and to provide future wildlife oriented public use opportunities, located near the community of Swall Meadows, near Mammoth Lakes in Mono 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)]
- \*10. Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve, Expansion 3** **24**  
**San Diego County**  
**\$25,000**  
To consider the acquisition in fee of 40± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the protection of threatened and endangered species, to preserve biological communities supporting sensitive species, to enhance wildlife linkages, and provide future wildlife oriented public use opportunities, as an expansion of CDFW's Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve 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. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)]

- \*11 Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve, Expansion 4** **27**  
**San Diego County**  
**\$0**  
To consider the acceptance of 3± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as an expansion to CDFW's Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve to satisfy a mitigation requirement due to the State Route 94 highway safety improvement and widening project, located near the community of Jamul in San Diego County.
- \*12. County of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan 2015 (Brown)** **29**  
**San Diego County**  
**\$83,850**  
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 Endangered Habitats Conservancy (EHC), as well as to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to EHC, to acquire fee title to 9± acres of land located near the City of Santee 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 and protection of habitat that implements or assists in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c)]
- 13. Pintail Ranch Habitat Enhancement Project** **33**  
**Butte County**  
**\$310,000**  
This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association (CWA) for a cooperative project, with the North American Wetlands Conservation Council to construct water conveyance infrastructure and restore wetlands and upland habitats on 507 acres of privately owned property located approximately seven miles south of the city of Oroville, in Butte County.
- 14. Hammill Meadows Restoration Project** **37**  
**Tuolumne County**  
**\$385,000**  
To consider the allocation for a grant to the United States Forest Service for a cooperative project with the California Department of Water Resources and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to restore five meadows, stabilize headcuts, and fill sections of incised stream channels restoring channel form, floodplain connectivity, streambank stability, and meadow vegetation, located on Stanislaus National Forest lands 7 miles northeast of Pinecrest in Tuolumne County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for forest conservation and protection projects in order to promote the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests through forest conservation, preservation and restoration of productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas, redwood forests and other forest types, including the conservation of water resources and natural habitats for native fish, wildlife and plants found on these lands. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a)]

**15. San Joaquin River Parkway (County of Madera)**

41

**Madera County**

**\$340,000**

To consider the acquisition in fee of 12± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and a Transfer of Jurisdiction of the land by CDFW to the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) for the protection of riparian habitat and provide future wildlife oriented public use opportunities, within the San Joaquin River Parkway, located near the City of Fresno in Madera County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat for river parkway projects identified by SJRC. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2007 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75050(f)]

**16. San Joaquin River Parkway, Spano River Ranch Habitat Enhancement**

45

**Project Augmentation**

**Fresno County**

**\$275,000**

To consider the allocation for an augmentation to an existing grant to the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust (Trust) for a cooperative project with the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) to improve and restore upland, riparian, and wetland habitat on 51± acres of the SJRC Spano River Ranch property, located approximately 1 mile downstream of the State Route 41 bridge within the Fresno City limits and the County of Fresno. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for river parkway projects identified by the San Joaquin River Conservancy. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84, Public Resources Code Section 75050(f)].

**17. Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration, Augmentation**

50

**Monterey County**

**\$400,000**

To consider the allocation for an augmentation to an existing grant to the Elkhorn Slough Foundation for a cooperative project with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), California State Coastal Conservancy, California Department of Water Resources, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Santa Cruz County Public Works, to restore 46 acres of tidal marsh and five acres of perennial grasses, on CDFW's Elkhorn Slough National Marine Estuarine Research Reserve, located two miles east of Moss Landing in Monterey County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding sources, which allows for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of habitat to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, to provide corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent habitat fragmentation, and to protect significant natural landscapes and ecosystems and other significant habitat areas [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a)], and allows for the development, rehabilitation, restoration, acquisition and protection of habitat that accomplishes one or more of the following objectives: promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species, protects habitat corridors, protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems, 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)]

**18. Trabuco Creek Fish Passage Design**

**55**

**Orange County  
\$523,000**

To consider the allocation for a grant to California Trout for a cooperative project with California Department of Fish and Wildlife to complete environmental permitting and to construct a final physical model of a proposed fish passage structure to determine the physical parameters necessary to restore steelhead trout in Trabuco Creek, located in San Juan Capistrano in Orange 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. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f)]

**19. Wildlife Conservation Board Strategic Plan**

**59**

**Informational/Action**

Staff presentation of next steps in the implementation of the WCB Strategic Plan. The status of planning efforts that are underway in cooperation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the development of a monitoring plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the Board's programs.

**20. Eden Landing Ecological Reserve Wetland Restoration Construction Project**

**63**

**Informational**

Staff presentation of a project summary and video highlighting the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve Wetland Restoration Construction Project. Approved in 2009, the WCB allocated \$8,000,000 to implement a cooperative project with the State Coastal Conservancy and the Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) leading to the restoration of approximately 230 acres of coastal wetlands and the construction of public access improvements at the CDFW's Eden Landing Ecological Reserve.

**21. 2018 Board Meeting Dates**

**63**

**Informational/Action**

Board will be asked to approve WCB meeting dates for 2018

Quarterly Board Meetings

Feb 22, 2018

May 24, 2018

Aug 30, 2018

Nov 15, 2018

Streamflow Enhancement Board Meeting

March 22, 2018

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Persons with disabilities needing reasonable accommodation to participate in public meetings or other CDFW activities are invited to contact the Department's EEO Officer at (916) 653-9089 or [EEO@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:EEO@wildlife.ca.gov). If a request for an accommodation has been submitted but is no longer needed, please contact the EEO Officer immediately.

## WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

November 30, 2017

10:00 a.m.

Natural Resources Building  
First Floor Auditorium  
1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
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

Diane Colburn, Public Member

Mary Creasman, Public Member

#### Joint Legislative Advisory Committee

Senator Jean Fuller

Senator Nancy Skinner

Senator *(vacant)*

Assemblymember Laura Friedman  
*Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi -Alternate*

Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia  
*Assemblymember Miguel Santiago -Alternate*

Assemblymember Monique Limon  
*Assemblymember Marc Levine -Alternate*

#### Executive Director

John P. Donnelly

2. Funding Status  
Informational

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

(a) 2017-18 WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND, (0447)	
Budget Act	\$1,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-10,000.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$990,000.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$990,000.00</i>
(b) 2017-18 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-50,000.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$20,613,000.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	-3,000,000.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$17,613,000.00</i>
(c) 2016-17 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-1,379,328.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$19,283,672.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	-310,000.00
Total Project Development	-13,645,000.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$5,328,672.00</i>
(d) 2015-16 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-10,272,041.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$10,390,959.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	-330,000.00
Total Project Development	-7,831,890.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$2,229,069.00</i>
(e) 2014-15 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-17,937,636.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$2,725,364.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	-2,030,000.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$695,364.00</i>



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(f) 2013-14 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-19,879,042.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$783,958.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	-523,000.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$260,958.00</i>
(g) 2012-13 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-5,667,463.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$14,995,537.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$14,995,537.00</i>
(h) 2011-12 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-15,971,552.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$4,691,448.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	-1,681,308.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$3,010,140.00</i>
(i) 2010-11 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262)	
Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-19,331,865.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$1,336,135.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	-1,199,386.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$136,749.00</i>
(j) 2009-10 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-20,537,752.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$130,248.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$130,248.00</i>
(k) 2008-09 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262) (2012-13 Reappropriation)	
Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-20,646,836.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$21,164.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	-8,632.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$12,532.00</i>

Wildlife Conservation Board Meeting, November 30, 2017

(l) 2007-08 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262) (2011-12 Reappropriation)	
Budget Act	\$20,674,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-20,307,040.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$366,960.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$366,960.00</i>
(m) 2006-07 HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND, (0262) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
Budget Act	\$20,699,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-19,839,667.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$859,333.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	-859,333.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>
(n) 2017-18 SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND, (0005)	
Budget Act 2017-18 [Sec. 5096.350 (a)(3), (5), & (6)]	\$3,690,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-25,000.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$3,665,000.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	-595,000.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$3,070,000.00</i>
(o) 2017-18 SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND, (0005)	
Budget Act 2017-18 (SJRC Projects, 5096.355)	\$141,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	0.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$141,000.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$141,000.00</i>
(p) 2006-07 SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND, (0005) (2015-16 Reappropriation)	
Capital Outlay Budget [Sec. 5096.350 (a)(3), (5), & (6)]	\$15,224,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-15,170,125.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$53,875.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$53,875.00</i>

Wildlife Conservation Board Meeting, November 30, 2017

(q) 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	-36,012,120.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$87,880.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	-87,880.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>
(r) 2003-04 CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND, (6029)	
Budget Act 2016 (New Appropriation of Reverted Fund EY 2006) (SJRC Projects Sec. 5096.650b5)	
	\$1,500,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-218,155.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$1,281,845.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$1,281,845.00</i>
(s) 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	-260,009,751.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$12,990,249.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	-200,000.00
Total Project Development	-7,846,000.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$4,944,249.00</i>
(t) 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	-713,439,177.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$27,972,823.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	-19,596,188.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$8,376,635.00</i>

(u) 2009-10 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051) (2013-14 Partial Reappropriation)	
Budget Act (SJRC Projects)	\$4,800,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-3,639,660.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$1,160,340.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$1,160,340.00</i>
(v) 2015-16 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051), (New Appn in 15/16 of reverted funds; 2008-09 natural reversion)	
Budget Act (SJRC Projects)	\$10,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-243,660.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$9,756,340.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	-615,000.00
Total Project Development	-6,135,000.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$3,006,340.00</i>
(w) 2017-18 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051)	
Chapter 14, Statutes of 2017 (NCCP)	\$11,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-50,000.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$10,950,000.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	-83,850.00
Total Project Development	-2,820,150.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$8,046,000.00</i>
(x) 2017-18 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006, (6051)	
Chapter 14, Statutes of 2017 (SB 8 SSJD-NCCP)	\$5,700,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-1,408,000.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$4,292,000.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	-899,750.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$3,392,250.00</i>
(y) 2006-07 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006 CO Budget (6051) Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055a)	
Forest Conservation	\$164,700,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-147,808,604.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$16,891,396.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	-385,000.00
Total Project Development	-16,375,000.00

	<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$131,396.00</i>
(z)	2006-07 SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006 CO Budget (6051) Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055b) &75055b3 UC Natural Reserve & 75055b LA Rivers	\$123,525,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	-110,450,672.00
	<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$13,074,328.00</i>
	November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	-200,000.00
	Total Project Development	-6,575,000.00
	<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$6,299,328.00</i>
(aa)	2017-18 WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND OF 2014, (6083) Budget Act (Section 79735(b)(2))- WCB Only	\$38,400,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	-15,000.00
	<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$38,385,000.00</i>
	November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	0.00
	<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$38,385,000.00</i>
(ab)	2016-17 WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND OF 2014, (6083) Budget Act (Section 79735(b)(2))- WCB Only	\$38,400,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	-17,939,278.00
	<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$20,460,722.00</i>
	November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	0.00
	<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$20,460,722.00</i>
(ac)	2015-16 WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND OF 2014, (6083) Budget Act (Section 79735(b)(2))- WCB Only	\$38,400,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	-18,122,078.00
	<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$20,277,922.00</i>
	November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	0.00
	<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$20,277,922.00</i>
(ad)	2017-18 WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND OF 2014, (6083) Budget Act 2017 (Section 79731(g))- SJRC only	\$3,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	-10,000.00
	<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$2,990,000.00</i>
	November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	0.00
	<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$2,990,000.00</i>

(ae) 2016-17 WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND OF 2014, (6083)	
Budget Act 2016 (Section 79731(g))- SJRC only	\$3,500,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-1,888,427.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$1,611,573.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$1,611,573.00</i>
(af) 2015-16 WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND OF 2014, (6083)	
Budget Act 2015 (Section 79731(g)) – SJRC Only	\$2,800,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-1,435,979.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$1,364,021.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$1,364,021.00</i>
(ag) GENERAL FUND (0001)	
Budget Act 2017 (Lower American River)	\$1,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	-25,000.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$975,000.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$975,000.00</i>
(ah) GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION FUND (3228)	
Budget Act 2017 (Chapter 249, Statutes 2017)	\$20,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	0.00
<i>Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$20,000,000.00</i>
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$20,000,000.00</i>
<b>RECAP OF FUND BALANCES</b>	
WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND (0447)	\$990,000.00
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$990,000.00</i>
HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND (0262)	\$76,197,778.00
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	-1,163,000.00
Total Project Development	-30,255,549.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$44,779,229.00</i>

Wildlife Conservation Board Meeting, November 30, 2017

SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND (Proposition 12) (0005)	\$3,947,755.00
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	-682,880.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$3,264,875.00</i>

CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND (Proposition 40) (6029)	\$14,272,094.00
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	-200,000.00
Total Project Development	-7,846,000.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$6,226,094.00</i>

WATER SECURITY, CLEAN DRINKING WATER, COASTAL AND BEACH PROTECTION FUND OF 2002 (Proposition 50) (6031)	\$27,972,823.00
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	-19,596,188.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$8,376,635.00</i>

SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006 (Proposition 84) (6051)	\$56,124,404.00
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	-1,283,850.00
Total Project Development	-32,804,900.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$22,035,654.00</i>

WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND (Proposition 1-6083)	\$85,089,238.00
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$85,089,238.00</i>

GENERAL FUND (0001)	\$975,000.00
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$975,000.00</i>

GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION FUND (3228)	\$20,000,000.00
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$20,000,000.00</i>

<i>TOTAL – ALL FUNDS</i>	\$265,569,092.00
November 2017 Board Meeting Allocation	-2,646,850.00
Total Project Development	-91,185,517.00
<i>Projected Unallocated Balance</i>	<i>\$171,736,725.00</i>

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

Chapter 113, Statutes of 2000 and Chapter 715, Statutes of 2004	
Tax credits awarded through June 30, 2008	\$48,598,734.00

Chapter 220, Statutes of 2009 (effective January 1, 2010)	
Tax credits awarded	\$8,662,500.00

**3. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4 – 15)**

**\*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>	<b>Amount</b>
Habitat Conservation Fund	30,245.00
Wildlife Restoration Fund	0.00
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund	78,489.95
Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002	392,898.30
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006	100,665.06
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014	598,127.00
Other	0.00
<b>Total Recoveries for All Funds</b>	<b>\$1,200,425.31</b>

<b>Habitat Conservation Fund</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Expended</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Carlsbad Hydrologic Unit and San Luis Rey Watershed Exotic Invasive Removal Phase 2, San Diego County	952,000.00	944,005.70	7,994.30
Hamilton City Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration, Glenn County	10,000.00	1,710.00	8,290.00
North Shore Ranch - Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel and Delta Area, Riverside County	407,500.00	402,500.00	5,000.00
Southern California Coastal Wetland and Riparian Restoration, Various County	400,000.00	392,879.02	7,120.98
Strawberry Creek Riparian Restoration, Humboldt County	253,000.00	252,920.28	79.72
Western Riverside MSHCP (2015) – McLaughlin, Riverside County	589,750.00	587,990.00	1,760.00
<b>Total Recoveries to Habitat Conservation Fund</b>			<b>\$30,245.00</b>

<b>Wildlife Restoration Fund</b>	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Breuner Marsh Wetland Restoration, Contra Costa County	950,000.00	950,000.00	0.00
<b>Total Recoveries to Wildlife Restoration Fund</b>			<b>\$0.00</b>

<b>California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund</b>	Allocated	Expended	Balance
CDFW Land Management Plan Knoxville Wildlife Area, Napa County	172,500.00	172,500.00	0.00
CDFW Land Management Plan Knoxville Wildlife Area, Augmentation, Napa County	57,500.00	43,262.96	14,237.04
San Joaquin River Parkway, Lost Lake Regional Park Master Plan, Fresno County	400,158.00	339,729.34	60,428.66
San Joaquin River Parkway, Sycamore Island Pond Isolation, Planning and Design, Fresno County	232,000.00	\$232,000.00	\$0.00
San Joaquin River Parkway, Sycamore Island Pond Isolation, Planning and Design, Augmentation, Fresno County	73,000.00	69,175.75	3,824.25
<b>Total Recoveries to California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund</b>			<b>\$78,489.95</b>

<b>Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002</b>	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Arroyo Sequit Fish Passage Improvements, Los Angeles County	209,000.00	209,000.00	0.00
Breuner Marsh Wetland Restoration, Contra Costa County	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	0.00
Malibu Lagoon State Beach Lagoon Restoration, Construction Phase, Los Angeles County	4,000,000.00	3,607,101.70	392,898.30
<b>Total Recoveries to Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002</b>			<b>\$392,898.30</b>

<b>Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006</b>	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Big Sky Natural Area CAPP - Alamos Canyon, Ventura County	1,852,126.00	1,852,058.00	68.00

Carpenter Valley, Nevada County	3,510,000.00	3,502,278.00	7,722.00
Crocker Meadows Wildlife Area, Expansion #2, Plumas County	1,755,000.00	1,755,000.00	0.00
Facilities Renovation at McLaughlin Reserve, Lake County	1,725,000.00	1,660,702.94	64,297.06
Glen Deven Redwood Forest Restoration, Monterey County	190,000.00	189,089.90	910.10
San Joaquin River Parkway (Circle V), Madera County	1,090,000.00	1,062,420.00	27,580.00
San Joaquin River Parkway, River West Fresno, Pump and Irrigation Improvements, Fresno County	35,200.00	35,200.00	0.00
Yolo County HCP/NCCP Development, Phase II, Yolo County	700,000.00	699,912.10	87.90
<b>Total Recoveries to Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006</b>			<b>\$100,665.06</b>

<b>Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014</b>	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Addressing Limiting Factors in the San Lorenzo River Lagoon, Santa Cruz County	458,750.00	0.00	458,750.00
Mckee Creek Enhancement Project, Humboldt County	139,377.00	0.00	139,377.00
<b>Total Recoveries to Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014</b>			<b>\$598,127.00</b>

<b>Other (Manual Recoveries)</b>	Allocated	Expended	Balance
American Canyon, Napa County	0.00	0.00	0.00
State Route 36, Buck Mountain Mitigation, Humboldt County	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Recoveries to Other</b>			<b>\$0.00</b>

**\*6. Easement Transfers  
Informational**

At the February 24, 1998, Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB or Board) meeting, WCB authorized the Executive Director to transfer less-than-fee interests (easements, right of ways, etc.) in California Department of Fish and Wildlife or WCB-controlled land, where the value of the interest is less than \$50,000.00. This action was taken to improve service to the public and reduce the cost of processing these transfers.

The Board placed two conditions on its delegation of authority. First, the grant of less-than-fee interest must be made at the request or with the recommendation of CDFW to assure adequate consideration of impacts on habitat and programs. Second, any grant made under this authority must be reported to the Board as an informational item.

Pursuant to the above described process, the following easement transfers have been completed by staff.

Project Title	Transfer Type	Grantee	Size	Consideration
Lake Tahoe Public Access, Lake Forest Water Quality R/W	Two Drainage Easements and a Highway Easement Recorded: 4/24/14	County of Placer	1,957 sq. ft.	\$540
Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area – Utility Easement (Hussein)	Utility Easement Recorded: 5/21/14	PG&E	8,276 sq. ft.	\$84
Lower Yuba River Excelsior Utility Easement (Amendment)	Utility Easement Recorded: 2/1/16	PG&E	6,534 sq. ft.	\$200
Crocker Meadows WA Easement Clarification	Four Utility and R/W Easements Recorded: 6/3/16	County of Plumas	16.5 acres	\$21,888
Yuba Narrows Utility Access Easement	Utility Easement Recorded: 5/16/14	PG&E	6,534 sq. ft.	\$200
Spenceville WA Powerline Realignment Easement	Utility Easement Recorded 11/9/17	PG&E	5,079 sq ft	\$500

**\*7. City of Arcata, Lima Conservation Easement  
Humboldt County  
\$0**

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a conservation easement (Easement) over 20± acres by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE). The Easement is being conveyed as a condition of a grant from CALFIRE to the City of Arcata (City) under the California Forest Legacy Program Act of 2007, with funding provided by the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. The Easement will protect significant scenic, recreational, timber, riparian, fish and wildlife, cultural, carbon sequestration, and environmental values.

**LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property) is located at the end of Granite Avenue in the City of Arcata, Humboldt County. The Property borders Humboldt State University on the west and the Arcata Community Forest on the east. Immediately to the north of the Property is a low density residential neighborhood with private open space to the south.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Property is within the Jolly Giant Creek watershed and provides critical habitat for a variety of special status fish, wildlife, and plant species. The Property will link the 2,302 acre Arcata Community Forest to Humboldt State University. The Easement will permanently preserve a working redwood forest, contribute to the protection of water quality in the Humboldt Bay region, protect the significant biological resources of the Property, and expand the recreational and educational opportunities for residents and visitors to the area. The Easement provides an excellent opportunity to match the guiding principles of the Forest Legacy Program with the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.

The Property is comprised mainly of coast redwood and Sitka spruce. The primary groupings of plant species within the forest are the redwood-oxalis, the redwood-sword fern, and the redwood-salmonberry types. Redwood oxalis generally occurs on the lower 1/3 slope position characterized by concave topography and moist conditions. In addition to redwood in the over story, this type contains grand fir, Douglas fir, and Sitka spruce. The herb and fern layer is dominated by redwood sorrel with other common, although less abundant, associates including wild ginger, redwood violet, trillium, and lady fern.

Redwood sword fern occurs on the middle to upper 1/3 slope position where conditions are drier and warmer than that of the oxalis sites. Canopy associated with redwood include grand fir, Douglas fir, Sitka spruce, and on occasion Western hemlock. The shrub layer of this plant grouping consists of evergreen huckleberry, salal, and rhododendron. Sword fern is the dominant species in the herb layer.

The forest, creeks, and streams that run through the Property serve as critical habitat for a variety of species, many of them rare, threatened, and/or endangered. Several state and federally listed endangered or threatened species that may exist or are known to exist on properties adjacent to the Property include steelhead trout, coho salmon, tidewater goby, northern spotted owl, and bald eagle.

The Property also contains high-quality habitat for the following State-listed Species of Special Concern: southern torrent salamander, northern red-legged frog, Del Norte salamander, foothill yellow-legged frog, coastal cutthroat trout, osprey, Cooper's hawk,

sharp-shinned hawk, Pacific fisher, red tree vole, and the fully protected ring-tailed cat.

The City will incorporate the Property into the Arcata Community Forest and the City's Community Forest Management Plan, which is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified for sustainable forestry practices. The Arcata Community Forest was dedicated in 1955 and has functioned as a recreational, educational, habitat, and timber resource for the community and its residents. It is the first community forest in California and the first municipal forest granted FSC certification in the United States.

#### WCB AND CALFIRE PROGRAMS

The proposed acquisition is being considered under the California Forest Legacy Program Act (CFLPA). The Forest Legacy Program Act (Public Resources Code section 12200, *et seq.*) allows CALFIRE to accept lands and interests in lands to protect environmentally important forestlands that are threatened by present or future conversion to non-forest uses. Priority is to be given to lands that can be effectively protected and managed and that have important scenic, recreational, timber, riparian, fish and wildlife, threatened and endangered species, and other cultural and environmental values. Under the CFLPA, WCB may acquire conservation easements on behalf of CALFIRE (Public Resources Code section 12240).

Proposals under the CFLPA are evaluated and recommended for funding by CALFIRE staff based on criteria established under the California Forest Legacy Program Act of 2007. Eligible properties may be working forests where forestland is managed for the production of forest products and traditional forest uses are maintained. These forest uses include both commodity outputs and non-commodity values. The purpose of the Easement is to maintain the forest intact and to provide such traditional forest benefits as timber production, wildlife habitat, watershed protection, and increased carbon sequestration through increased growth and inventory and long-term management of the timberlands.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CALFIRE will enter into the Easement with the City and monitor the Property for compliance with the terms of the Easement. The Easement allows access by CALFIRE or its agents annually for monitoring purposes.

#### TERMS

The City has agreed to grant the Easement to CALFIRE as a condition of a grant for the purchase of the Property. Staff of the WCB will review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, the Easement, and instruments of conveyance.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

The project has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitat. 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, approve the acceptance of the Easement over 20± acres on behalf of CALFIRE under the California Forest Legacy Act; authorize staff and CALFIRE to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff, CALFIRE, and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*8. Snowcreek VIII Mitigation  
Mono County  
\$0**

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a conservation easement (Easement) over 15 acres by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) from the Town of Mammoth Lakes. The Easement satisfies a mitigation requirement of a grading permit issued to the Snowcreek Development Company (Applicant).

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property) is located in the Town of Mammoth Lakes (Town) on the east slope of the Sierra Nevada mountain range also known as the Eastern Sierra in Mono County. The Property includes the southeast portion of the meadow along Mammoth Creek west of Minaret Road and north of Golden Creek and Timber Creek Roads and Old Mammoth Road. There is a public access easement and recreation trail already in existence that bisects the Property.

The Property is in CDFW's Wheeler Ridge Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The main purpose of this CAPP is to protect a migration corridor, holding area, and summer range for the Round Valley mule deer herd, as well as habitat for neotropical migratory and riparian obligate birds, raptors, upland game species, upland mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Applicant applied for a grading permit from the Town to store rock and other fill materials for eventual use in the construction of the Snowcreek VIII project on 3 acres of land within the Snowcreek VIII project area. The 3-acre project area was included in the final Snowcreek VIII Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and the final EIR identified the project area as important habitat for holdover and summer resident deer from the Round Valley herd. To reduce impacts from the loss of habitat, EIR Mitigation Measure (MM) BIO-4a requires the Applicant to purchase or contribute funds to purchase a parcel in fee title or a conservation easement on property that contains important lands for the Round Valley mule deer herd or any other migratory mule deer herd within the Mammoth Lakes vicinity as determined by CDFW.

CDFW determined that permanent protection and perpetual management of compensatory habitat at a 3:1 acreage ratio is necessary and required to comply with MM BIO-4a to mitigate project-related impacts. Based on the 3-acre project area, the Applicant is required to provide permanent protection and management of 9 acres of Habitat Management (HM) lands. To satisfy this requirement, the Applicant chose to donate 15 acres of HM lands to the Town. The Town will then provide CDFW the Easement over the Property to protect it in perpetuity. The remaining 6 acres of land that is included in the Easement will remain available to the Town for future mitigation needs.

The Easement will provide high-quality habitat for mule deer, mountain beaver, and nesting migratory songbirds and raptors and contains riparian, wet meadow, and sagebrush scrub vegetation communities.



#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acceptance of Property is being considered 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 Section 1300, et seq.). Under Fish and Game Code section 1348, the WCB may authorize acquisition of real property or rights in real property by the CDFW. WCB acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the CDFW, which evaluates the biological values of property through the development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE)/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP).

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The principal management objective would be to conserve and enhance habitat for the conservation of the Round Valley mule deer herd and other resident wildlife. The property is also popular with recreational users including anglers, bird watchers, and hikers. The Town will manage the property and CDFW costs will be minimal, consisting of annual monitoring visits. This workload will be combined with existing CDFW management activities in the vicinity.

#### TERMS

The Town agreed to grant the Easement to CDFW. Staff of the WCB will review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, the Easement, and instruments of conveyance.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal 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; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and to authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*9. Wheeler Ridge, Expansion 6**

**Mono County**

**\$305,000**

To consider the acquisition in fee of 10± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the protection of deer and mountain lion habitat, to maintain a migration corridor for the Round Valley mule deer herd, and to provide future wildlife oriented public use opportunities.

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property) is located south of the community of Swall Meadows, in the southern part of Mono County. Swall Meadows is west of State Route 395 and is approximately 20 miles north of the city of Bishop and 25 miles south of the Town of Mammoth Lakes. More specifically, the Property is located approximated one third of a mile south of the southerly terminus of Ridgeview Drive.

To the north and east of the Property is private land protected by conservation easements held by the Eastern Sierra Land Trust (ESLT). The western boundary of the Property borders 203± acres of CDFW property, while the southern boundary borders a privately owned 10± acre vacant parcel.

The community of Swall Meadows is comprised primarily of one to two acre single-family residential lots. Larger parcels in the area are primarily encumbered by conservation easements held by ESLT. The outlying areas are in close proximity to federal public lands administered by Bureau of Land Management or the United States Forest Service. Both federal agencies recognize the importance of maintaining the viability of the Round Valley deer herd migration corridor in their management plans.

The Property is in CDFW's Wheeler Ridge Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The primary purpose of the Wheeler Ridge CAPP area is to acquire property to preserve, maintain, and enhance critical Round Valley mule deer winter range holding areas, and migration habitat. The secondary purposes of the Wheeler Ridge CAPP are to maintain and enhance opportunities for deer hunting and wildlife viewing and preserve habitat for the numerous other species that utilize this region. The Property is part of a known migration and holding area for mule deer of the Round Valley herd. The Wheeler Ridge area once supported over 6,000 deer. Currently, mule deer numbers reflect a significant decrease, down to approximately 2,000 animals.

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

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Property is a square shaped parcel and is vacant and unimproved. Access to the site is from a private dirt road beginning at the terminus of Ridgeview Drive. The land use designation of the Property is ER2, which has the legally permissible potential for a single home site.

The Property is bisected by a small drainage supporting wet meadow and willow riparian vegetation. The surrounding upland vegetation is sagebrush-bitterbrush scrub. The migration corridor running near and through the Property serves as a temporary holding area important to deer during the spring and fall migrations. Having these open spaces allows the herd the necessary flexibility to survive annual variability in weather. With a very small winter range available to the herd, the lower elevations of the holding area and migration corridor become even more critical. Furthermore, the threat of development within this narrow migration corridor is considered a significant threat to the long-term stability of the herd.

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

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition is being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to WCB's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Code Section 1300, et seq.), authorizing 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 or subgrant 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 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 WCB with a recommendation to fund.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

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

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

Acquisition of the Property will preserve corridors for the migration and movement of wildlife species and provide for habitat connectivity between habitat areas with varying elevations.

*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 identified as a parcel for protection in CDFW's Wheeler Ridge CAPP.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Following the acquisition, CDFW will own and manage the Property as an addition to existing CDFW property in Swall Meadows. Currently CDFW owns 203± acres of undesignated lands located in Swall Meadows and within the boundaries of the Wheeler Ridge CAPP. Costs associated with managing the Property will be minimal as the main purpose of the acquisition is to retain the site in its natural state for continued deer use. Site visits will be required from time to time to monitor the Property. These site visits will be included with other surrounding parcels in State ownership and management. The Property has the potential for wildlife viewing and day hiking. This site is situated within a no-shooting zone around Swall Meadows; no hunting will be allowed at this time.

#### TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$275,000. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the Property for its approved appraised fair market value of \$275,000. The terms and conditions of the proposed acquisition provide that WCB staff must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. Once approved by the WCB, the transaction must also be reviewed and approved by the DGS.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The Proposed funding breakdown for this project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	275,000
Total Purchase Price	275,000
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	30,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$305,000</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$30,000 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs including the environmental assessment, appraisal, DGS appraisal and transaction reviews, and escrow and title insurance costs.

#### WCB FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the acquisition and protection of deer and mountain lion habitat. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)]

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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 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 WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. CDFW has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by WCB.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$305,000.00 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.

**\*10. Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve, Expansion 3  
San Diego County  
\$25,000**

This proposal is to consider the acquisition in fee of 40± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the protection of threatened and endangered species, to preserve biological communities supporting sensitive species, to enhance wildlife linkages, and to provide potential future wildlife oriented public use opportunities. The proposed acquisition would be an expansion of CDFW's Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve and is within the San Diego County Multiple Species Conservation Program plan area (MSCP), a joint Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP).

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property) is located south of the community of Jamul, in the southern part of San Diego County. It is situated approximately one third of a mile south of Proctor Valley Road, one and one half miles west of Campo Road, and four miles north of the Otay Lakes.

CDFW's Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve (Reserve) borders the northern, eastern, and southern sides of the Property. Located roughly 15 miles from downtown San Diego, the Reserve is a core area within the MSCP and preserves linkages between CDFW's Hollenbeck Canyon Wildlife Area, Otay Mountain Ecological Reserve, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's San Diego National Wildlife Refuge, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Otay Mountain Wilderness Area. Other protected lands in the Property's vicinity are CDFW's Crestridge Ecological Reserve, Sycuan Peak Ecological Reserve, and McGinty Mountain Ecological Reserve.

Multiple residential subdivisions exist within one mile of the Property and the potential for additional development in the immediate area remains high. Last year, a casino opened for business about a mile northeast of the Property.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Property is rectangular in shape and unimproved, lying on the north-facing slope of the Jamul Mountains. The landscape is level in some areas, with rolling terrain elsewhere. Vegetation communities on and adjacent to the Property include coastal sage scrub, chaparral, native and non-native forb and grasslands. Special status MSCP-covered species targeted to benefit from this acquisition include Quino checkerspot butterfly (federally endangered), California gnatcatcher (federally threatened, California State Species of Special Concern), golden eagle, mountain lion, orange-throated whiptail, San Diego horned lizard, northern harrier, Cooper's hawk, and burrowing owl.

The proposed acquisition will augment the MSCP, a comprehensive long-term HCP/NCCP 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 and loss of native species and habitats by preserving a network of habitat and open space. It provides a framework in which 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 plan area.

Acquisition of the Property will help preserve key regional wildlife linkages between existing preserved core resource areas. Core resource areas are areas of high concentration of sensitive biological resources, which, if lost, could not be replaced or mitigated elsewhere.

This acquisition will contribute to the MSCP's ability to address the effects of climate change by enhancing species' opportunities to utilize suitable habitat and/or expand their ranges as necessitated by changing environmental conditions.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition is being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to WCB's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Code Section 1300, et seq.), authorizing 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 or subgrant 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 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 WCB with a recommendation to fund.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

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

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

Acquisition of the Property will preserve wildlife corridors and habitat linkages for threatened and endangered species. Range shifts and migration of species, as necessitated by climate change or temporary loss of habitat due to catastrophic fires or drought, will be preserved by protecting and maintaining these corridors and linkages between major core habitat areas.

*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. CDFW recommended the project under its NCCP program.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Following the acquisition, CDFW will own and manage the Property as an addition to CDFW's approximately 5,600-acre Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve. CDFW will absorb any costs associated with managing the Property into its existing Reserve budget. Any additional costs will be minimal since the main purpose of the acquisition is to retain the site in its natural state. Site visits will be required from time to time to monitor the Property. CDFW will include these site visits with other surrounding parcels in State ownership and management.

The Property has the potential for future public use opportunities such as wildlife viewing, day hiking, bird watching, and photography.

#### TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$150,000. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the Property for \$10,000. The terms and conditions of the proposed acquisition provide that WCB staff 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.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The Proposed funding breakdown for this project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	10,000
Total Purchase Price	10,000
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	15,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$25,000</i>

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

#### WCB FUNDING SOURCE

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

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The 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 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 WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. CDFW has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by WCB.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$25,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c), for the acquisition and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.



**\*11 Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve, Expansion 4  
San Diego County  
\$0**

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of 3± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as an expansion to CDFW's Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve to satisfy a mitigation requirement from the State Route 94 highway safety improvement and widening project (Highway Project).

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property) is located approximately 16 miles west of downtown San Diego, just south of the community of Jamul in the southern part of San Diego County. It is situated approximately a half-mile south of Proctor Valley Road, a half mile west of Campo Road, and five miles north of the Otay Lakes.

CDFW's Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve (Reserve) borders the western, eastern, and southern sides of the Property, while the northern boundary abuts private undeveloped land. The Reserve is within the San Diego County Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), a joint Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP). The Reserve preserves linkages between CDFW's Hollenbeck Canyon Wildlife Area (HCWA), Otay Mountain Ecological Reserve, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's San Diego National Wildlife Refuge, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Otay Mountain Wilderness Area. Other protected lands in the Property's vicinity are CDFW's Crestridge Ecological Reserve, Sycuan Peak Ecological Reserve, and McGinty Mountain Ecological Reserve.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Last year, the Hollywood Casino Jamul opened for business about a quarter mile northeast of the Property. Due to the development of the casino, State Route 94 required safety improvements and widening to accommodate the future impact of increased public traffic. The Highway Project required a 1± acre portion of right of way from the western boundary of the HCWA. An environmental document prepared by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for the Highway Project concluded that the mitigation requirement for the 1± acre portion of HCWA right of way would be a 3± acres of replacement land containing sensitive habitat approved by the CDFW. Transfer of the Property to CDFW satisfies the mitigation requirement identified in Caltrans' environmental document.

The unimproved Property is rectangular in shape and is positioned on the northern slope of the Jamul Mountains. The landscape is level in some areas, with rolling terrain elsewhere. Vegetation communities on and adjacent to the Property include coastal sage scrub, chaparral, native and non-native forb and grasslands. Special status MSCP-covered species targeted to benefit from this acquisition include Quino checkerspot butterfly (Federally Endangered), California gnatcatcher (Federally Threatened, California State Species of Concern), golden eagle, mountain lion, orange-throated whiptail, San Diego horned lizard, Northern harrier, Cooper's hawk, and burrowing owl.

The acceptance of the Property will support the MSCP, a comprehensive long-term HCP/NCCP 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 and loss of native species and habitats by preserving a network of habitat and

open space. It provides a framework in which 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 plan area.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acceptance of Property is being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, *et seq.*). Under Fish and Game Code section 1348, the WCB may authorize acquisition of real property or rights in real property by the CDFW. These activities are carried out in conjunction with the CDFW, which evaluated the biological values of Property Natural Community Conservation Plan.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CDFW will own and manage the Property as an addition to the 5,600-acre Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve. CDFW will absorb any costs associated with managing the Property into its existing Reserve budget. Site visits will be required from time to time to monitor the Property. CDFW will include these site visits with other surrounding parcels in State ownership and management. The Property has the potential for future public use opportunities such as wildlife viewing, day hiking, bird watching, and photography.

#### TERMS

The property owner agreed to transfer the Property to CDFW. Staff of the WCB will review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, and instruments of conveyance.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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 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 WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**\*12. County of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan 2015 (Brown)  
San Diego County  
\$83,850**

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 Endangered Habitats Conservancy (EHC), as well as to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to EHC, to acquire fee title to 9± acres of land. This is a cooperative project with USFWS and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) 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 generally located within the San Diego River watershed within the City of Santee. The Property is situated to the northeast of the terminus of Princess Joann Road in an unimproved, rugged and hilly area. Land to the north and northwest is mostly mountainous and undeveloped.

The city of Santee is a suburban community situated approximately 18 miles northeast of downtown San Diego and is considered one of the newest cities in the county. Santee is bordered by the City of El Cajon to the south, the City of San Diego to the west and unincorporated areas of the county to the east and northeast. The eastern boundary of the Property adjoins a sparsely developed area of Lakeside, an unincorporated San Diego County community. Most of the surrounding land uses include residential subdivision, with larger estate developments and intermittent commercial development along the major thoroughfares. Not protecting this strategically located Property and allowing further development and encroachment would result in a fragmented landscape precluding connectivity between already protected areas

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed acquisition focuses on land that will greatly enhance 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.

The Property contains a variety of landscapes and habitats, including coastal sage scrub habitat for the federally threatened Coastal California gnatcatcher, and habitat for other sensitive and protected species. MSCP target species found or expected on site include the Least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, San Diego thornmint, and the Quino checkerspot butterfly.

The proposed Property will conserve core habitat and unique linkage areas where naturally occurring ecological processes necessary to maintain a fully functioning ecosystem are still intact. Additionally, the Property will also provide refugia habitat from fire. Much of the surrounding conserved lands were burned as a result of the 2003 and 2007 fires in the area. The Property will provide a place for population re-occupancy of wildlife species

affected by the fire. The Property is adjacent to two other conserved properties totaling 138 acres that were funded by WCB and USFWS and closed in January 2016.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed subgrant and grant are being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to WCB's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, *et seq.*) authorizing the WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of the CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property, and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. Under the Program, the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities. The Property has been reviewed and approved by the CDFW under its NCCP program, substantiating the biological values of the Property and recommending it for funding. The USFWS grant proposed 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 Property contains habitat and wildlife corridors for threatened and endangered species. In addition to the gnatcatcher and the Quino checkerspot butterfly, the Property supports habitat for the following six federally listed threatened and/or endangered species: southwestern willow flycatcher, least Bell's vireo, San Diego thornmint, 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. 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 has been reviewed and approved by CDFW as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition grant selection and review process.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

EHC's management team will conduct annual surveys and monitoring of MSCP plant and animal target species, invasive species, and rare plants. Monitoring data will be integrated into the regional NCCP management and monitoring program. Possible future public use opportunities that may be considered for the Property include hiking, photography, and bird watching.

## TERMS

The Property was appraised as having a fair market value of \$211,000.00. The WCB reviewed the appraisal and submitted it to the Department of General (DGS) and USFWS for review. DGS and USFWS both approved the appraisal. The landowner has agreed to sell the Property for the approved fair market value of \$211,000.00.

The proposed USFWS subgrant requires a non-federal match. WCB will provide the nonfederal match. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and subgrant of USFWS funds to EHC 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 WCB or another approved holder and seek reimbursement of funds.

## PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board– subgrant of USFWS Funds	137,150
Wildlife Conservation Board non-federal match	73,850
<i>Total Purchase Price</i>	<i>\$211,000</i>
Other Project Related Administrative Costs	10,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$83,850</i>

It is estimated that project-related administrative costs will include DGS appraisal review. The grantee will fund all appraisal, escrow and title insurance 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) which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species and that implements or assists in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans.

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

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

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the WCB approve the project as proposed; allocate \$83,850.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c) for the grant to the Endangered Habitats Conservancy and to cover project-related expenses; accept the USFWS Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$137,150.00 and authorize the subgrant of these funds to the Endangered Habitats Conservancy; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

### **13. Pintail Ranch Habitat Enhancement Project**

#### **Butte County**

**\$310,000**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association (CWA) for a cooperative project, with the North American Wetlands Conservation Council to construct water conveyance infrastructure and restore wetlands and upland habitats on 507 acres of privately owned property in Butte located approximately seven miles south of the city of Oroville.

#### **LOCATION**

Pintail Ranch is located seven miles south of the city of Oroville and four miles east of the Feather River in Butte County, CA. The 507-acre property supports wetlands, uplands and wildlife friendly agriculture. The Pintail Ranch is protected by a conservation easement, held by CDFW, which was secured in 2000 with funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board. Historically, the property was farmed in both rice and dry land crops. In 2001, restoration efforts were conducted on the northern portion of the property with WCB funding to CWA. This property contributes to protection of a wildlife habitat corridor containing 3,400 acres across nine different properties.

The Pintail Ranch has two distinct habitat sections. The northern 160 acres contains 128 acres of seasonal wetlands, 23 acres of wildlife friendly agriculture and nine acres of uplands. The southern section encompasses a total of 347 acres, and is composed of 23 acres of seasonal wetlands, 40 acres of wildlife friendly agriculture, and 284 acres of uplands. This proposal will implement improved wetland management capabilities along with perennial upland restoration.

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project will enhance and restore wetland and upland habitat for waterfowl on the southern section of the property. The project will significantly expand wetland habitat availability and upland nesting cover for ground nesting bird species. Migratory birds including waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, raptors, and neotropical migrants would also benefit. Wetland enhancement and restoration efforts will provide a significant expansion of the habitat base that will be used for foraging, roosting, and nesting.

A new highline delivery ditch, deep well, and pipeline will supply pumped ground water into the two wetland complex areas. Currently, a narrow overgrown ditch supplies water to two lateral ditches, which feed both the northern and southern portions of the property. The ditch is very inefficient and was not constructed for long-term use. Development of a permanent highline ditch system will allow water to be efficiently delivered to each of the main wetland complexes. Exterior levees will be drivable, and new water control structures will be installed so appropriate head pressure can be built up and delivered to the units. This highline system will allow all recovered water and pumped water supplies to be delivered to the entire property providing significant flexibility during management.

Water supplies for current wetland management arrive from three different wells, which are old and shallow. The highline system will be fed by an existing onsite well and the proposed new deep well. Supplies from the new deep well will be piped and discharged directly into the new highline system. The 325' deep well should be very productive because it is at a proven stratum that should provide twice the water that is currently produced by any one of the other three wells. The ability to increase the property's water supply will help improve management of the wetland units during flood up and irrigations. The reduction in the

amount of time needed to accomplish management tasks helps reduce overall loss of water due to evaporation and transportation. Improved water availability and efficiency will lead to better overall moist soil plant production.

The project will also construct manageable seasonal wetland units and plant perennial grasses. Development of the southern portion of the Pintail Ranch allows for expansion of the existing wetland units. There are currently small units that were developed by simply constructed levees that allowed for flooding of the low topographic areas. Little management for moist soil plant production is possible due to lack of infrastructure. The topographic relief will allow for the development of several units that will provide for an expansion of the flooded acreage while also increasing the capabilities for management. The increased management capabilities resulting from the infrastructure development will provide increased seed production from moist soil plants, and also enhance waterfowl production.

Each existing wetland unit will be linked to the new highline delivery system allowing for water to be directly fed into the wetland complex from two different directions. Unit to unit delivery will be possible, and will recapture 100% of the used water supplies at the end of the wetland system. All water from the southern portion of the property will be recaptured and put within a recovery ditch that will lead back to the lift pump station, which is part of the complimentary North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) funded project. The units will be designed for seasonal wetland feed production, and also designed to function as semi-permanent wetlands for brood rearing production. Infrastructure will allow flexibility to undertake both options in any given year.

Each unit will have a swale system developed to allow water to be moved efficiently through a unit, or drawn down completely. Swale material will be used to construct perimeter levees and allow for field grading in order to level out the existing units. This will allow for maximum acreage to be flooded, with less water. The acreage is conducive to wetland management due to the fact that the elevations are extremely flat and adjacent to a water source. Bordering upland fields will aid perennial grass development and promote nesting access. All units will have islands and loafing bars developed and water control structures installed. All units will be tied into the recovery system which will drive water to the (recovery) lift pump station and allow for storage of water within the brood rearing units, or in a storage unit allowing for moist soil plant irrigations and brood pond maintenance.

The southern complex area will have 160 acres of upland nesting habitat restored to benefit ground nesting species. Quality perennial grass establishment will allow for increased waterfowl and other ground-nesting bird production on a large scale. Preferred grasses will include but not limited to intermediate wheatgrass, western wheatgrass, Paiute orchard grass and prosper tall fescue, which have proven to be prolific in these soil types and are beneficial for ground-nesting birds.

#### 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 wetlands and associated habitats, as identified in the CVJV Implementation Plan, within the American 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 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 and recreation.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Landowner is currently responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the Property pursuant to the WCB-funded conservation easement. The design work and construction practices will have specifications and features that will allow for management with existing Landowner equipment and personnel which will be maintained for the 25-year life of the construction project. The improved water management capabilities associated with this wetland enhancement will allow the Landowner 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 and the Landowner do not assure that the project improvements are managed according to the Management Plan, the Grant Agreement requires that the Grantee refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

Item	WCB	NAWCA	Landowners	Totals
Earthwork (levees, swales, islands)	81,750	37,800	20,000	139,550
Water Efficiency	130,150	20,000	41,000	191,150
Perennial Grass Prep/Planting	41,250			41,250
Tule Transplants	9,600	3,200		12,800
Contingencies	12,250			12,250
Project Management	35,000	13,300		48,300
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$310,000</b>	<b>\$74,300</b>	<b>\$61,000</b>	<b>\$445,300</b>

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, well 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 has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is proposed as exempt Class 4 Categorical Exemptions, California Code of Regulations, Title 4, Section 15304, as a minor alteration to land and vegetation that does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. 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 \$310,000.00 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 and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

**14. Hammill Meadows Restoration Project**  
**Tuolumne County**  
**\$385,000**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the United States Forest Service (USFS) for a cooperative project with the Department of Water Resources and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to restore five montane meadows located on Stanislaus National Forest (STF) lands seven miles northeast of Pinecrest in Tuolumne County.

**LOCATION**

The project site comprises approximately 80 acres divided between five Sierra meadows: Bloomer Lake (14 acres), Bluff (15 acres), Groundhog (9 acres), Upper Three (17 acres), and Middle Three (25 acres) Meadows. Bluff, Upper Three, and Middle Three Meadows are located on intermittent tributaries to Willow Creek in the Upper South Fork Stanislaus River Watershed. Bloomer Lake and Groundhog Meadows are located on intermittent and perennial tributaries to Herring Creek in the same watershed. The sites are on federally owned public lands managed as part of the Summit Ranger District of the Stanislaus National Forest.

The South Fork Stanislaus River watershed is the municipal water supply for 80% of water customers in Tuolumne County. In addition, over 95% of the Tuolumne Utilities District water is supplied through a contract with Pacific Gas & Electric from waters, which originate in the Upper South Fork Stanislaus River watershed.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Historical grazing practices, road construction, and logging-related activities have led to current degraded and/or at risk conditions in the meadows. Meadow degradation is of particular concern, because the project site is known to be occupied by Yosemite toad, a threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act and a state Species of Special Concern. Wet montane meadows provide the primary breeding habitat for Yosemite toads who lay their eggs in very shallow warm water. These shallow water habitats are particularly sensitive to meadow degradation. Lowered water tables can eliminate breeding areas or lead to shorter hydroperiods, which can reduce successful recruitment.

All five meadows were assessed using the US Forest Service (USFS) "Meadow Hydrologic Function Rapid Assessment" methodology. The channels in Upper and Middle Three Meadows proposed for rehabilitation generally were rated as being in "Poor" condition. Channels in the meadows have been degraded and incised, leading to lost connectivity with the floodplain, lowered water tables, reduced streambank stability, and a reduction in the deep-rooted hydric soil associated plant communities. While the Rapid Assessment methodology identified Bloomer Lake Meadow, Groundhog Meadow, and the main channel below the Yosemite toad breeding area in Bluff Meadow as ranging from "Fair" to "Desired Condition," the assessment noted that these meadows are at risk of future degradation. Headcuts are erosional features in the channel which result in a steep vertical drop in the streambed. This erosion is actively downcutting and advancing upstream at Bloomer Lake, Bluff, and Groundhog Meadows. If no action is taken, the erosion will continue to advance, causing the channels to incise and the water table to drop. All three meadows have degraded channels located downstream of Yosemite toad breeding areas.

The Hammill Meadows Restoration Project is designed to stabilize and/or restore hydrologic function on 80 acres in five meadows with a combination of meadow restoration treatments listed below.

- Remove encroaching conifers within and adjacent to meadow boundaries and utilize the downed trees as large woody debris for meadow surface and stabilizing wood in stream channels.
- As needed, block access of motorized vehicles to meadows by placing boulders or bollards around meadow boundary and associated project staging areas.
- Hand-treat non-native plants in meadows, staging areas, and access routes by pulling/digging.
- Collect and spread native seeds/plants.
- Construct a temporary fence around the restoration site and maintain the fence for two years or until vegetative recovery occurs, whichever is longer.
- Stabilize headcuts and stream banks in meadows using wood, rock, and/or vegetative plantings and sloping back streambanks to a stable angle of repose.
- Fill sections of eroded stream channel with soil to bring the streambeds back to their original elevation, allowing the streams to re-access their floodplains. Fill or partially fill other sections of eroded stream channel up to the level of the floodplain so that water flows in nearby shallower remnant channels.
- Reinforce previous rock stabilization treatment and stabilize additional headcuts with wood, rock, and/or vegetative plantings.

The proposed action will stabilize headcuts to prevent their continued advancement as well as fill sections of incised stream channel to restore channel form, floodplain connectivity, streambank stability, water table levels, and vegetation in the meadows. These restoration actions will benefit several native amphibians, including the at-risk Yosemite toad, which is in decline partially due to degraded meadow conditions. The Hammill Meadows Restoration Project is designed to ensure that locations where Yosemite toad currently breed are maintained and to improve hydrologic conditions in degraded sections of meadows. Restoration not only can restore hydrologic processes in the meadows, but also has the potential to increase available breeding locations for the Yosemite toad.

Grazing and management practices have been improved to provide for successful restoration and avoid future negative impacts to habitat. Upper and Middle Three Meadows are fenced and currently excluded from grazing. Cattle grazing allowed on the allotment has been reduced so that standard metrics such as minimum stubble heights can be attained. No new road construction is proposed in the project area, so there will be no installation of culverts that have the potential to impact stream stability. In addition, skid trails are believed to have caused some of the degradation seen in Upper and Middle Three Meadows. Logging practices have changed over time, and Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines and Best Management Practices would not permit skid trails closely paralleling stream channels in the meadows in the future. Therefore, the risk of a channel intercepting a skid trail is much reduced.

Wildlife benefits of the proposed meadow restoration projects include improved habitat for mule deer, Yosemite toad, great gray owl, and Pacific fisher. All meadows proposed for restoration in this project will likely be utilized by mule deer for summer forage and as fawning habitat. By improving and protecting this habitat, reproduction rates of local mule deer populations and genetic diversity may be enhanced. In addition to this contribution to mule deer population health, restoring these important habitats will allow for viable mule deer populations and sustainable hunting opportunities into the future.

## WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Forest Conservation Program and meets the program's goal of promoting the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests for all their public benefits through forest conservation, preservation and restoration of productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas, redwood forests and other forest types, including the conservation of water resources and natural habitat for native fish and wildlife and plants found on these lands.

The project 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:*

- Provide resilience in the face of climate change by the stabilization of headcuts at Bloomer Lake, Bluff, and Groundhog Meadows to prevent the drying of these meadows and the loss of carbon storage. Re-wetting of Upper Three and Middle Three Meadows would increase carbon storage. Carbon sequestration is essential in stabilizing current, and reducing future, atmospheric levels of CO<sub>2</sub> and mitigating impacts of climate change.
- The project will enhance water resources for fish and wildlife by improving floodplain connectivity and should result in improved flood attenuation capacity.
- Enhance habitats on working lands for both Yosemite toad and Great Gray Owl. Both species are identified as “climate vulnerable” in the California State Wildlife Action Plan. As such, activities that can mitigate the impact of climate change are particularly important to these species.

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

*Improve habitat for threatened or endangered species:* Yosemite toad, a federally listed threatened species and a state Species of Special Concern, as well as great gray owl, a Region Five Forest Service sensitive species and a state listed endangered species.

## MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The project will occur on public lands managed following the Stanislaus National Forest Plan Direction (2017), which presents the current Forest Plan management objectives. In addition, the previous 2004 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA) outlined adaptive management and monitoring of Forest Plan projects. Specifically, these projects are directed to use adaptive management coupled with management goals and objectives. In order to ensure monitoring is occurring and appropriate adaptive management is implemented, the SNFPA institutes specific reporting and monitoring requirements for all projects.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Item	WCB Funding Request	IRWM (DWR)	USFS	NFWF	Totals
Final Design & Permits		77,100			\$77,100
Construction Management		51,950	3,750		\$55,700
Construction (Labor & Materials)	385,000	129,550			\$514,550
Monitoring			22,500	150,000	\$172,500
Project Management		2,400	2,600		\$5,000
<i>Totals</i>	<i>385,000</i>	<i>261,000</i>	<i>28,850</i>	<i>\$150,000</i>	<i>\$824,850</i>

Project costs will be for contracted construction work.

**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 AND CDFW/CALFIRE REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION**

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection have reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15333, Class 33, as the restoration, enhancement, or protection of small habitat restoration projects of less than five acres in size. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

**Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$385,000.00 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 planned.

**15. San Joaquin River Parkway (County of Madera)**

**Madera County**

**\$340,000**

To consider the acquisition in fee of 12± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and a Transfer of Jurisdiction of the land by CDFW to the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) for the protection of riparian habitat and to provide future wildlife-oriented public use opportunities, within the San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway). The SJRC Board approved the acquisition of the Property on August 9, 2017.

**LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES**

The property (Property) is located east of Highway 41, west of the San Joaquin River, and south of Children's Boulevard in the unincorporated south-central portion of Madera County. It is approximately 16 miles southeast of the City of Madera, and approximately 11 miles north of the Fresno downtown business district.

The Property is within the planning area for the Parkway, a natural and recreational area in the San Joaquin River floodplain that begins at Friant Dam and extends roughly 22 miles along the San Joaquin River to State Route 99. The Parkway includes portions of Madera County, Fresno County, and the City of Fresno, and the planning area varies in width from a narrow wildlife corridor where the river bluffs are steep and close to the river, to extensive floodplains of several hundred acres.

The Property fronts and is adjacent to the San Joaquin River. SJRC owns multiple properties that are located along both sides of the San Joaquin River and are near the Property. These SJRC properties comprise parts of the San Joaquin River Parkway holdings that include the Gibson, Cagila, Jenco, Jensen River Ranch, Wildwood Native Park, and River West properties.

The Property is also within the County of Madera's Rio Mesa Area Plan, and near the Gunner Ranch West and Village of Gateway area plans. Furthermore, the Property is in the vicinity of properties planned for large scale development such as the Riverstone and Tesoro Viejo planned communities.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Property is an irregular shaped parcel and is vacant and unimproved. Current access is by a private dirt and asphalt-paved road that links the Property to Cobb Ranch Road. Legal access to the Property was reserved by the County of Madera in a grant deed of the private parcel adjacent to the west that links the Property to Cobb Ranch Road. The land use designation of the Property is A-20 (Agricultural Rural Valley). Permitted uses on the site include agriculture, two single family dwellings, and a guest house.

The Property has mostly level topography that slightly descends from a steeply sloping river bluff on the parcel adjacent to the west, which is approximately 100 feet in elevation above the Property, to a mostly level riparian zone along the San Joaquin River adjacent to the east of the Property. The steeply sloping bluff on the west provides visual and sound barriers to State Route 41, a four-lane highway with heavy traffic situated approximately 500 feet west of the Property.

The Property's attributes include high quality riparian habitat within a floodplain. Resident wildlife consists of deer, small mammals, coyotes, songbirds, and raptors that live or forage on the site. The Property also meets SJRC's criteria for high-priority Parkway land acquisitions

that include: protection of habitat values, connectivity and protection of wildlife movement corridors, and need for conservation in the path of development.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition is being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to WCB's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Code Section 1300, et seq.), authorizing 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 or subgrant 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 for suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities.

The WCB assists with the administration of project funding for SJRC. WCB, represented by its Executive Director, holds a position on the SJRC Board along with CDFW, which is represented by the Regional Manager of the Central Region. The SJRC Board reviews and approves projects to ensure they are viable and consistent with the goals of the current SJRC Parkway Master Plan, prior to consideration by WCB. As indicated above, the SJRC Board approved this acquisition on August 9, 2017. Under this transaction, WCB would acquire the Property on behalf of CDFW and then complete a Transfer of Jurisdiction to SJRC.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

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

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

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

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

This County-owned Property is situated in close proximity to other properties currently owned by the State that are under the jurisdiction of CDFW and SJRC. The Property is near large developer-owned properties. The County wishes to sell this asset, if not to the State then to a private party. State acquisition of the Property eliminates the possibility of development, thereby protecting and conserving the Property's conservation values that include Sycamore/Valley oak woodlands, riparian, and floodplain habitat that extends to the San Joaquin River.

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

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



#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Following the acquisition, SJRC will manage the Property as an addition to existing Parkway properties. Costs associated with managing the Property will be minimal as the main purpose of the acquisition is to retain the site in its natural state and to provide access to supervised stewardship groups until partnerships, programs, and features can be developed for general public access. Site visits will be performed from time to time to monitor the Property. These site visits will be included with other surrounding parcels in SJRC's ownership and management. The Property has the potential for high-value public access from the highly traveled Highway 41, and activities such as wildlife viewing and non-motorized boating.

#### TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$310,000. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the Property for its approved appraised fair market value of \$310,000. The terms and conditions of the proposed acquisition provide that WCB staff must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. Once approved by the WCB, the transaction must also be reviewed and approved by the DGS.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The Proposed funding breakdown for this project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	310,000
Total Purchase Price	310,000
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	30,000
<i>Total WCB Allocation</i>	<i>\$340,000</i>

It is estimated that an additional \$30,000 will be needed to cover project-related administrative costs including the environmental assessment, appraisal, DGS appraisal and transaction reviews, and escrow and title insurance costs.

#### WCB FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the acquisition and protection of riparian habitat within the Parkway. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2007 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75050(f)]

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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 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 WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. CDFW has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by WCB.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that WCB 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 2007 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75050(f), for the acquisition and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize the Transfer of Jurisdiction to SJRC; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**16. San Joaquin River Parkway, Spano River Ranch Habitat Enhancement  
Project Augmentation  
Fresno County  
\$275,000**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for an augmentation to an existing grant to the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust (Trust) for a cooperative project with the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) to improve and restore upland, riparian, and wetland habitat on 51± acres of the SJRC Spano River Ranch property, located 1± mile downstream of the State Route 41 bridge within the Fresno City limits and the County of Fresno.

**LOCATION**

The San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway) is defined by California 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 State Route (SR) 99 to the west, in Fresno and Madera Counties (Public Resources Code Section 32510). The SJRC was created in 1992 to acquire and manage public lands within the Parkway and 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 is to implement the current SJRC Parkway Master Plan (2000) (Parkway Master Plan), including providing public access and restoring habitat within the planned Parkway.

Spano River Ranch is located at the approximate mid-point of the linear footprint of the San Joaquin River Parkway and within the historic floodplain of the San Joaquin River. Agricultural operations characterize the bluffs to the north in Madera County and residential housing is located on the bluffs to the south just above the project site in Fresno County. Most native riparian vegetation in the floodplain is limited to remnant stands along the river channel. The approximately 51-acre project site is located on Spano River Ranch and surrounds an abandoned gravel pit called H Pond, named for its shape. H Pond, which is hydrologically connected to the river, is approximately 45-50 acres in size depending upon its water level. The pond fluctuates with the river level, rainfall, and runoff.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The original Spano River Ranch Habitat Enhancement Project (Project) was approved by the SJRC Board at its June 17, 2015, meeting and by the Wildlife Conservation Board at its September 3, 2015, meeting. The Project includes enhancement of existing and restoration of upland, riparian, and wetland habitats along the reach of the San Joaquin River corridor just below Friant Dam. Additionally, the Project connects patches of native habitat located within the Parkway. Once planted vegetation has matured, the Project will improve visitors' experiences by providing natural areas for wildlife viewing and environmental education opportunities.

The Project was designed to benefit Parkway wildlife, in particular sensitive species such as least Bell's vireo, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, western yellow-billed cuckoo, and Swainson's hawk. The site is relatively large for Parkway projects, and will contain native habitats that will range from open to densely planted forest and scrub.

Project tasks undertaken to date have consisted of site preparation, irrigation installation, plant installation, plant establishment tasks such as weed management and irrigation, and project management. The Trust has dedicated staff to conduct project work and has contracted with the California Conservation Corps and Fresno Economic Opportunities Local Conservation Corps, which have worked on the Project. Additionally, 263 volunteers contributed 870 hours to site preparation and planting tasks in 2016, and 218 volunteers have contributed 874 hours to plant installation and plant establishment in 2017. The Trust will continue to utilize these resources to complete on-site work for the remainder of the grant term.

The Trust budgeted time for site work under normal conditions, but challenges arose during Winter 2016-2017 when unprecedented precipitation prevented staff from crossing the site or using standard construction equipment. The heavy rains, resulting saturated soils, and muddy conditions caused on-site work to take longer to complete and resulted in faster, denser and recurrent weed growth and unanticipated rodent damage to new plant stems. As a result, the Trust has expended most of the Project funding for the plant installation, plant establishment, and project management tasks. The unforeseen challenges have resulted in the Trust's inability to complete the Project within the original budget identified in the WCB grant agreement.

The purpose of the proposed funding augmentation is to replace plants that have died due to oversaturated soils, inundation, and stem girdling by voles; provide ongoing irrigation and weed management activities; and project management through March 1, 2020. The augmentation will ensure that the Trust establishes self-sustained habitat, improving both habitat quality at Spano River Ranch and habitat connectivity and wildlife use along the river corridor. The Trust has requested the funding augmentation for the following ongoing work:

**Plant Installation:** Plant installation includes initial planting, which the Trust completed late in 2016, and any necessary re-planting. The Trust originally installed over 14,000 native trees and shrubs at the project site. Due to wet conditions and the girdling of stems by voles in spring and summer 2017, over half of the plants died. The Trust proposes to replace these plants during autumn 2017 and winter 2018. Replacements will include container stock, pole cuttings, and oak acorns. To reduce the chances of stem girdling by voles, the Trust will place short, plastic plant protectors around the stems of newly planted container stock and oak seedlings that germinate from planted acorns. Cages will protect the larger pole cuttings.

**Irrigation and Plant Establishment:** The Trust budgeted for staff time to operate and repair the irrigation system through project completion, to mow seasonal weeds once yearly, and to monitor plant survival. The Trust will continue repairing irrigation lines as needed and irrigating plants on a seasonal basis. Extensive weed growth after winter 2016-2017 shaded out new plantings and provided habitat for the voles. Due to muddy conditions, much of the necessary mowing had to be conducted using handheld trimmers rather than using a tractor-mounted mower as budgeted. Thus, mowing costs for 2017 were more than double the budgeted yearly cost. The Trust also evaluated several wildlife-friendly methods of controlling voles on site. With the additional mowing, weekly trapping, and installation of perches for raptors, one of the voles' major predators, the Trust has gained control of the rodent population.

**Project Management:** The Trust has provided oversight and management of the Project throughout the grant term, including additional time for assessing issues and implementing adaptive management related to muddy conditions, dying plants, weeds, and vole herbivory. This augmentation will provide funds for management to continue to supervise project staff and report on time and expenses.

#### WCB PROGRAM

WCB assists with the administration of project funding for the SJRC. The WCB, represented by its Executive Director, holds a position on the 15-member SJRC Board along with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), represented by the Central Region Manager. The SJRC Board reviews and approves projects to ensure they are viable and consistent with the goals of the Parkway Master Plan, prior to consideration by the WCB. The SJRC Board approved this project augmentation and submittal to WCB on October 4, 2017.

The proposed project augmentation 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.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Trust has the expertise in habitat enhancement and restoration to complete this Project. The proposed project augmentation is consistent with the SJRC statutory mission (Public Resources Code Section 32533) and complies with the fundamental goals and policies of the San Joaquin River Parkway Master Plan. Once the Project is complete, operations and maintenance of the new grant-funded facilities will be the responsibility of the SJRC. The Project is consistent with the following Parkway Master Plan goals, objectives, and programs:

##### 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 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 Programs (NRP)

- NRPV1. Restore and enhance riparian and wetland habitats along the San Joaquin River. Many of these areas have undergone biological, physical, and hydrological changes that are primarily the result of human interference. Restoration and enhancement of this portion of the river is intended to increase habitat value and recreate a continuous wildlife corridor by creation of riparian habitat, enhancement of degraded riparian habitat, and enhancement of pond edges with freshwater marsh species.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the Spano River Ranch Habitat Enhancement Project Augmentation is as follows:

Task	Original WCB Cost	2017 Grant Augmentation	Total
Site preparation.	25,000		25,000
Irrigation installation.	170,000		170,000
Plant installation and revegetation.	166,000	87,590	253,590
Irrigation and establishment of plants.	97,900	174,315	272,215
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>458,900</i>	<i>261,905</i>	<i>720,805</i>
Project management.	45,550	13,095	58,645
Contingency.	45,550		45,550
<i>Totals</i>	<i>\$550,000</i>	<i>\$275,000</i>	<i>\$825,000</i>

The purpose of the proposed funding augmentation is for plant replacement, continuation of plant establishment work including weed management, irrigation, and monitoring, and for project management through March 1, 2020.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The purposes of this project augmentation are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75050(f), which provides for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of land and water resources located within the boundaries of the Parkway.

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

The Project is included among the high priority projects recommended by the Interagency Project Development Committee, whose role is to evaluate projects to be considered by the SJRC Board. The SJRC Board reviews and approves projects to ensure they are viable and consistent with the goals of the Parkway Master Plan, prior to consideration by the WCB. The SJRC Board approved this project augmentation on October 4, 2017.

The proposed project augmentation is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15304, Class 4, as a minor alteration to land, water and/or vegetation, which does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project augmentation as proposed; allocate \$275,000 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75050(f); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this Project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

**17. Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration, Augmentation  
Monterey County  
\$400,000**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for an augmentation to an existing grant to the Elkhorn Slough Foundation for a cooperative project with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), California State Coastal Conservancy, California Department of Water Resources, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Santa Cruz County Public Works Department, to restore 46+ acres of tidal marsh and five acres of perennial grasses on the CDFW's Elkhorn Slough National Marine Estuarine Research Reserve, located two miles east of Moss Landing in Monterey County.

**LOCATION**

This project is located within the tidal wetlands and uplands of the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (Reserve), an estuary that empties into Monterey Bay in the town of Moss Landing in Monterey County. The Reserve, which extends inland for seven miles from Monterey Bay, is owned by the CDFW and managed in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Elkhorn Slough contains approximately 2,690 acres of distinctive habitat types including subtidal channels, tidal creeks, mudflats, salt marshes, and tidal brackish marshes, and provides some of the most important freshwater and brackish marsh habitat for wildlife in California. These habitats provide a rich ecosystem essential for over 340 bird, 550 marine invertebrate, and 102 fish species. The estuary also provides many beneficial uses for humans such as recreational boating, hiking, and bird watching.

The project will take place in the Minhoto and Hester's Marsh areas of the Reserve, a portion of a property acquired by the Elkhorn Slough Foundation in 2009 with assistance from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). The property was subsequently donated to CDFW and made part of the Reserve. The Minhoto site had cropland running from the hilltop to the edge of the estuary until 2009. After acquisition, the footprint of the existing agricultural fields was reduced from 140 to 105 acres to decrease direct agricultural runoff into Elkhorn Slough's wetlands. That 35-acre buffer was planted with annual grasses for erosion control.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

On September 3, 2015 the WCB approved the Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration project (Project) to restore up to 46 acres of tidal wetlands and establish perennial grasses on five acres of buffer between the wetlands and the uplands. The Project is part of a larger plan to restore at least 104 acres of tidal marshes and to restore 35 acres of existing buffer to perennial grassland in Elkhorn Slough. The initial phase of this Project has consisted of land acquisition, planning, permitting, and obtaining sediment for the overall restoration work.

The project site was historically a rich coastal ecosystem, with grasslands and oak woodlands transitioning to extensive salt marshes drained by narrow, meandering tidal creeks. By the 1930s and 40s all of the salt marsh in the project area had been diked and drained for agricultural use. The act of draining the wetlands led to sediment compaction and land subsidence, from 12 to 30 inches. Decades later, the dikes began to fail, reintroducing tidal waters to the reclaimed wetlands. Rather than converting back to salt



marsh, the area converted to intertidal mudflat, as the lowered landscape was inundated too frequently to support tidal marsh vegetation.

The mudflats that occupy these sites do not serve the valuable ecologic function of other mudflats in the estuary because they lack the abundance and diversity of invertebrates of nearby undisturbed mudflats. In addition, the mudflats at the project site host expansive mats of green algae which, together with shallow water depths typical of these degraded wetland mud pans, have been associated with nighttime hypoxia (low dissolved oxygen concentrations), which can cause fish kills.

Another problem that the Project seeks to address is water quality impairment in the Elkhorn Slough. The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board lists 14 distinct impairments in the Elkhorn Slough watershed warranting TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Limits). One of these, runoff-containing fertilizers, can lead to seasonal dead zones in estuaries like Elkhorn Slough.

Restoration of the impaired marsh will begin by adding sediment to the subsided mudflat areas to raise the elevation of the land surface in order for the tidal marsh plant community to become reestablished in the area. Once the former marshes are raised to the correct elevation, marsh plants should naturally recolonize the wetland, producing biomass and trapping sediments, thus allowing the assemblage to build elevation and keep pace with future sea level rise. Adding sediment to the subsided former marshes will not only restore tidal marsh directly but will increase the resilience of other tidal marshes in the estuary. Raising the marsh elevation with sediment will reduce the “tidal prism,” the volume of water moving in and out of the estuary each day, and help reduce the erosion of the slough’s benthic habitats and tidal creeks.

The Project will increase the extent of tidal marsh in Elkhorn Slough for the first time in 60 years and demonstrate innovative approaches that will result in an 8-10 percent increase in tidal marsh in the estuary. If extended to other parts of the estuary, this approach could increase the extent of marsh by 50 percent over existing acreage, approaching the historic footprint.

In addition, the Project will address nonpoint source stormwater runoff and improve water quality in the Elkhorn Slough. Wetlands provide numerous water quality improvement functions related to sedimentation, filtration, and the transformation of nutrients and pesticides. Wetlands can process the nutrient inputs of farmland at a ratio of one acre of wetland to more than 25 acres of farmland. By that ratio, this Project is predicted to offset the nutrient inputs from about 1,525 acres of cropland. The Project will also provide a perennial grass buffer between existing cropland and the wetlands in the project area. This buffer will intercept agricultural runoff from adjacent lands, resulting directly in improved water quality in the marshlands below.

The purpose of the proposed augmentation is to provide an increase in budget and some modifications to the project schedule. Several issues caused the need for schedule changes and the increased budget:

- Construction in tidal vs contained conditions  
Permitting agencies required plan alterations to block tidal action during construction with construction of a containment berm. This change resulted in delays and increased costs associated with incorporating the added containment berm.
- Hillside excavation  
Originally, 200,000 cubic yards of sediment for the project were anticipated to be available for this project from the Santa Cruz Public Works Department (SCPWD). However, only approximately 50,000 cubic yards are now available from SCPWD. To gain the needed sediment, the Project will acquire additional soil from an adjacent agricultural field. This field was farmed for 40 years and is currently fallow. After excavation, the area will be cover cropped and gradually restored to a native dominated perennial grassland. The additional excavation, design and permitting changes, and additional testing and surveys increased overall project costs.
- Additional geotechnical studies  
Initial geotechnical analysis was done to anticipate how much the overlying soil would consolidate the underlying marsh mud. Additional geotechnical studies are needed to better understand consolidation and determine the extent of marsh fill. These modeling studies will be performed during onsite construction, in order to provide data for precisely managing the fill elevation.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project augmentation 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 is consistent with 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 establish tidal marsh at an elevation relatively high in the tidal frame that will optimize the growth rate of the marsh plants. This is expected to produce robust stands of tidal marsh vegetation, which will maximize sediment accretion, giving these landscapes the greatest potential to rise with the projected sea level rise. In addition, as the marsh rises, it is projected that carbon will be sequestered in the soil as new vegetation grows on previous generations of salt marsh vegetation.

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

*Improve habitat for threatened or endangered species:*

At least 14 threatened, endangered or state species of special concern utilize the slough or its surrounding uplands including: Santa Cruz long-toed salamanders, California red-legged frogs, Ridgeway's rail (locally extinct but a potential re-colonizer from nearby populations in the San Francisco Bay), peregrine falcons, California least terns, burrowing owl, American brown

pelican, northern harrier, Lawrence’s goldfinch, large-billed savannah sparrow, yellow-headed blackbird, tricolored blackbird, tidewater goby, and southern sea otters. Additionally, the slough is on the Pacific Flyway, providing an important feeding and resting ground for many types of migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. Once restored, the project site and surrounding marsh areas will once again support historical rich tidal marsh plants and animals, including habitat for the threatened, endangered, and special status species listed above.

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS**

Long-term project maintenance will be conducted by the Reserve and CDFW staff, which presently maintain the property as part of the larger 1,700-acre Reserve. Operation and maintenance is anticipated to be minimal and will include weed management in the perennial grass buffer. Maintenance costs are conservatively estimated at \$5,000 per year, which are unchanged from the existing maintenance requirements of the project site. There are no anticipated long-term maintenance costs for the tidal marsh restoration area. Past marsh restoration projects in Elkhorn Slough have shown that if the sediment height is within the marshplain, wetland plants will recruit to the area usually within nine months and pickleweed within 12 months. Primary and secondary tidal creeks will be left intact or will be excavated. The monitoring plan consists of two types of monitoring: implementation monitoring and ecological effectiveness. Once construction is complete the primary focus will be on monitoring the ecological effectiveness of the new marsh.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration Project Augmentation is as follows:

Item	WCB Sept. 2015	WCB (proposed)	SSC	DWR	NCWC	CDFW - GHG	Totals
Planning/ Design			565,517	425,970	40,000	140,000	1,171,487
Construction	772,995	363,637		443,877	709,845	2,163,768	4,454,122
BMP's	65,000				46,822	55,000	166,822
Monitoring	40,000				20,000	475,124	535,124
Contingency	12,915						12,915
Admin	89,090	\$36,363	\$34,483	43,492	163,333	162,876	529,637
<i>Totals</i>	<i>\$980,000</i>	<i>\$400,000</i>	<i>\$600,000</i>	<i>\$913,339</i>	<i>\$980,000</i>	<i>\$2,996,768</i>	<i>\$6,870,107</i>

Project costs will be for earthmoving, water control structures, implementation of best management practices, hydrological and biological monitoring, and project administrative costs.

#### FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding sources for this project augmentation are 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 provides funding for the development, rehabilitation, restoration, acquisition and protection of habitat that accomplishes one or more of the following objectives: promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species, protects habitat corridors, protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems, or implements the recommendations of the California Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy, and the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a) which provides funding for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of habitat to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, to provide corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent habitat fragmentation, and to protect significant natural landscapes and ecosystems and other significant habitat areas

#### CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

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

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$200,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a) and \$200,000.00 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 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.

**18. Trabuco Creek Fish Passage Design**  
**Orange County**  
**\$523,000**

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to California Trout for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to complete environmental permitting and to construct a physical model of a proposed fish passage structure in Trabuco Creek, located in Orange County (County).

**LOCATION**

The project location is five miles upstream from the San Juan Creek estuary at Doheny State Beach in Dana Point. San Juan Creek has a Core 1 designation in the National Marine Fisheries Services Southern California Steelhead Recovery Plan (Recovery Plan). Core 1 areas are identified as the highest priority (as opposed to lower priority areas in Cores 2 and 3) for recovery based on threats to existing populations of Southern California Steelhead and/or the capacity of the watershed to respond to recovery actions. The San Juan Creek watershed, which includes Trabuco Creek as its main tributary, is one of the most pristine watersheds in the County. The upper reaches of the watershed contain large tracts of undeveloped land and high quality habitat. The urbanized coastal area however, is hampered by the total barrier to fish passage in two separate areas. One barrier being the Metrolink railroad bridge, and the second the upstream Interstate 5 (I-5) bridge array. The two barriers are less than a mile from each other.

This project will develop engineering designs for a future project to enable passage of endangered Southern California steelhead through a total barrier in a flood control channel beneath a five bridge array comprised of two I-5 bridges and three bridges owned by the city of San Juan Capistrano (bridge array), all of which cross Trabuco Creek within County boundaries.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Fish passage barrier removal is one of the highest priority actions in the Recovery Plan. It is a critical mechanism to increase access of listed species to new habitats and to regain access to native spawning and rearing areas. The I-5 bridge array is the largest and most challenging barrier in the region. The planned removal would address one of the most significant threats for recovery of steelhead. This proposal builds on previous efforts to resolve fish passage barriers in Trabuco Creek.

Trout Unlimited (TU), partially funded by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), initiated a comprehensive strategy in 2005 to address the fish passage problems created by the Metrolink and I-5 crossings on Trabuco Creek. In 2008, WCB awarded \$773,000 to TU to begin first-phase design planning for Metrolink, knowing that I-5 and Metrolink must both be fixed to achieve the objective of restoring steelhead passage to historic habitat.

The I-5 barrier is at an earlier stage of design development. In 2005, WCB awarded \$336,000 for Phase I of the I-5 project to produce 30% design plans for approval by the Orange County Flood Control District (OCFCD) and CDFW. Hydraulic analysis and design for the fishway/ladder was prepared in accordance with the California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual and the County of Orange engineering guidelines and standards. Engineering design to the 65% level for the removal of the barrier at the I-5 bridge array was funded in 2017 by a CDFW Proposition 1 grant and a National Fish and Wildlife (NFWF) IDEA grant. This proposed project will utilize the 65% design to a) construct and test large-scale

physical models of the preferred alternative, and b) pursue environmental documentation and permitting that tracks the project into construction in 2021.

#### Physical Model Construction

Model construction work is anticipated to be done at the Northwest Hydrological Consultant's Seattle, Washington laboratory. Two different scale physical models will be constructed and tested to fully address study objectives. The first model will be a relatively small scale, encompassing nearly the entire project reach (about 1,500 feet of it), and is required to evaluate the performance at high discharges; and a second model, at a much larger scale encompassing a critical section of the proposed fishway complex, is required to evaluate low flow and fish passage questions.

The overall objective of the physical hydraulic model study is to verify and refine the design of the proposed fishway passage to ensure there will be no negative impacts to Orange County's existing flood control channels under the I-5 bridges. Specific objectives include:

- Evaluate and refine the proposed fishway design at the I-5 bridge array to ensure the design meets fish passage requirements throughout the juvenile and adult fish passage windows
- Evaluate the influence of the fishway on flood capacity in the flood control channels
- Mitigate impacts of the proposed fishway to the bridge structures
- Estimate the flow split between the proposed fishway and the existing flow control channels and refine the fishway exit design to provide acceptable fish passage flows
- Assess movement of sediment into the fishway exit and flood control channels and adjust the design to keep the fishway clear of excessive sediment depositions
- Provide a hands-on demonstration of the design concept to project stakeholders

#### ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION AND PERMITTING

Funding from this grant will also go towards the preparation of a joint NEPA/CEQA document to comply with federal and state regulations. The County of Orange will be CEQA lead agency for the I-5 project in the context of their projected plans in San Juan Creek. The NEPA lead on federal review is expected to be the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). For CEQA, updated technical analyses and evaluations will be prepared for traffic and circulation, air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, land use and planning, aesthetics, agriculture, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous utilities, recreation, project-specific and cumulative impacts, and mitigation measures to reduce impacts to less than significant levels where possible.

When these analyses are complete, the Grantee will prepare permit applications and submit design documents and environmental analyses to permitting agencies for review and comment. The scope of the current proposal covers permit applications and response to agencies within the context of 65% design level for the Metrolink and I-5 fishway projects. A permitting matrix will also be prepared that includes a timeline for securing permits from the Corps, NMFS/FWS, CDFW, RWQCB, OCFCD (channel improvements), and Moulton Niguel Water District.

## WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and meets the program's goal of providing for native fisheries restoration and in-stream restoration 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 is a necessary step to removing a fish passage barrier in a watershed with the potential to support endangered Southern California steelhead.

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

*Improve habitat for threatened or endangered species by restoring a riparian corridor that will benefit a number of endangered species including the arroyo toad, Coastal California gnatcatcher, Least Bell's vireo, and Western snowy plover.*

This project directly addresses goals and strategies presented in several State and Federal Plans, including: CDFW Statewide Priorities List for Fish Passage Barrier Removal (Updated 2012), the National Marine Fisheries Service - Southern California Steelhead Recovery Plan which considers the project's watershed as among its highest priority areas for restoration, the California Statewide Wildlife Action Plan which prioritizes removing dams, diversions, or other obstacles to sediment transport and fish passage and which also prioritizes restoration of native fish species, the California Water Action Plan and its goal of coastal watershed restoration, and the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Strategy for Conserving a Connected California which recommends activities to mitigate the effects of various impediments to connectivity, such as in-stream barriers.

## MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The project design is based on present and future predicted conditions within the project reach. The methods and technologies being employed are well-proven technologies that have been previously used on other projects. The design incorporates steelhead specific fish passage and habitat criteria, stakeholder input and other technical criteria (i.e. regulatory floodplain requirements), infrastructure impacts, and geomorphic stability. The project will be designed to be self-maintaining with minimal long-term management needs for sediment removal.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

Project Task	WCB	CDFW <sup>1</sup>	NFWF <sup>2</sup>	OC <sup>3</sup>	OCCF <sup>4</sup>	CalTrout	Total
Project Management	11,000					12,558	\$23,558
Model Construction	328,000	399,730	173,873	2,880	16,656		\$921,139
Environmental Permitting	184,000						\$184,000
<i>Totals</i>	<i>\$523,000</i>	<i>\$399,730</i>	<i>\$173,873</i>	<i>\$2,880</i>	<i>\$16,656</i>	<i>\$12,558</i>	<i>\$1,128,697</i>

<sup>1</sup> California Department of Fish and Wildlife: \$383,890 from Proposition 1 funds and \$15,840 in in-kind services

<sup>2</sup> National Fish and Wildlife Federation

<sup>3</sup> Orange County

<sup>4</sup> Orange County Community Foundation - Warne Family Endangered Species Fund

Project costs will be for the construction and testing of large-scale physical models of the preferred fish passage design alternative, the pursuit of environmental documentation and permitting, and project administration.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund, Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f), which allows for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of aquatic habitat for spawning and rearing of anadromous salmonid and trout resources and the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of riparian habitat.

**CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION**

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

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$523,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.



**19. Wildlife Conservation Board Strategic Plan  
Informational/Action**

Staff will provide an update on the ongoing implementation of the WCB Strategic Plan. Specifically, the status of planning efforts that are underway in cooperation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the development of a monitoring plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the Board's programs.

**IMPLEMENTATION GOALS.**

In August 2017, the Wildlife Conservation Board staff presented their proposal for identifying and prioritizing the goals for acquiring property for conservation, which are outlined below:

*Goal 1, Biodiversity: at least 50% of all acquisitions will accomplish one or more of the following:*

- ✓ Protects three or more habitats identified at the macrogroup level.
- ✓ Directly benefits Species of Greatest Conservation Need, as identified in the SWAP, that are known to occur on the property.
- ✓ Contains at least one viable rare vegetation habitat type at the alliance level, as identified in the most current Natural Communities List in CDFW's VegCAMP.
- ✓ Supports NCCPs.

*Goal 2, Climate Change Resiliency and Connectivity: at least 50% of all acquisitions will protect one or more of the following:*

- ✓ Connections between ecological areas with moderate to high natural resource values that are protected in-perpetuity and that total 25,000 acres or more.
- ✓ New protected areas of 10,000 acres or more.
- ✓ Species identified as vulnerable to climate change.
- ✓ Habitats identified as highly vulnerable to climate change.
- ✓ Possible climate change refugia.
- ✓ Land facets that support biodiversity.
- ✓ Resilience to sea level rise.

*Goal 3, SWAP: at least 75% of all acquisitions will protect a priority macrogroup as defined by the SWAP for the ecoregion in which the project is located.*

*Goal 4, Working Landscapes: at least 25% of all acquisitions will protect ecologically important habitats on working landscapes (farms, ranches or working forests).*

*Goal 5, Water related projects: at least 50% of all acquisitions will contain wetlands or riparian habitats, or provide water for fish and wildlife.*

*Goal 6, Public Access on land acquisitions:* at least 50% of all acquisitions will provide some level of public access, and 50% of those projects that do provide public access (i.e., 25% of all projects) will benefit disadvantaged communities.

Finally, the Board supported the allowance for not more than 10% of WCB funding to be used for projects that clearly provide extraordinary ecological value but do not fit within any of the goals listed above.

WCB staff, with their partners, have determined that these criteria can be used to assure that the most critically important ecological habitats are preserved for future generations. How these properties are to be identified and evaluated will depend to a great extent on two separate tools currently being updated by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) staff: the Land Acquisition Evaluation and Conceptual Area Protection Plan (LAE/CAPP) process and the Areas of Conservation Emphasis (ACE). The description below outlines the importance of these two tools and the status of their development.

One of WCB's primary concern has always been the desire to protect those habitats that provide the greatest ecological value, but identifying those critical habitats has never been easy. Over the decades, many ways have been used to identify those high-quality habitats, evaluate their potential for loss, and provide for their long-term protection and management. For most of WCB's history, its sole purpose was to acquire, restore and provide public access for CDFW. As such, properties were identified solely by CDFW, with an analysis of which habitats were of greatest value to them, with a premium placed on their ability to maintain the property in perpetuity. Properties were evaluated by biologists who had many years of experience in specific areas in the State.

To make the process less subjective, the LAE was initially developed in the early 1980s with a series of questions specifically designed to assure that a wide range of criteria about the property were evaluated, from the number of species present to the constraints to management. These forms evolved over the years to provide the latest information about each site. Over time, it became clear that evaluating properties one at a time was time consuming and might not identify the broader areas within the State that warrant protection. As a result, Conceptual Area Protection Plans were initiated to evaluate multiple properties, our larger geographical areas, with one form.

These concepts and processes allowed for a more complete and less subjective evaluation of potential land acquisition properties, but it was clear that many areas of the State were not well understood, ecologically, either because the data did not exist, or because the data was not universally shared. To address this issue, the CDFW compiled a collection of known biological datasets for the entire State, which were then mapped in 2.5-square-mile hexagons. The datasets are updated constantly, and the information is made available every year. This tool, ACE, allowed for a visual expression of biodiversity, State-wide, using the latest information available.

ACE, version 3.0, is now nearing completion, and it expands the previous version, which focused on biodiversity (native species richness, rarity, endemism, etc.), to include connectivity, climate change resilience, and the priorities of the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), which was completed in 2015.

The LAE/CAPP application and scoring criteria have been submitted to Regional and Headquarters staff, and comments have been received. The CDFW Lands Branch is incorporating comments and expects to deliver a draft to CDFW management for final review and approval in the near future. A draft of the final ACE 3 is in review by DFW management.

These two tools, combined, will make a powerful prioritization tool for identifying those habitats that are most critical to the greatest number of native species. The latest version of the LAE/CAPP will be used to identify those properties that most closely match CDFW's and WCB's goals, including identifying habitats resilient to climate change and ways to support the SWAP. ACE 3 provides a platform to support the LAE/CAPP process and will be used to identify essential habitats in a way that can be used by WCB, DFW and all of our many partners to help pinpoint priority areas throughout the State. In addition, it will be used to help evaluate proposals as they arrive and are evaluated for Board consideration.

### MEASURING CONSERVATION EFFECTIVENESS

The full monitoring plan is still under development, but the following outlines what staff have completed to date, and the process for completion. WCB staff, in developing the goals and objectives of the monitoring program, are focusing on compliance monitoring, and have identified just over 1,600 grants for which WCB is responsible. More intensive scientific data collection monitoring for purposes of analyzing project effectiveness, species dynamics, habitat suitability modeling, etc., would require resources beyond WCB's ability, given its current staffing levels. The monitoring plan, when complete however, will identify possible solutions to satisfy those needs. Possible solutions being considered include using other existing State resources, increasing WCB staffing or developing outside contracts.

The high volume of projects with various grantees, individualized grant documents, various sizes, and remote locales across the state is not only a logistical challenge, but a cost-effective one as well. Monitoring this number of highly individualized projects statewide is impossible with current resources. Instead, the WCB has determined that the use of random sampling would be the most cost effective method. This method will allow WCB, with existing staff, to accurately estimate what percentage of WCB's projects are compliant. This information will be used to provide insight into projects that may be of higher risk of non-compliance and would help identify what resources would be needed to assure that all WCB projects are successful.

WCB staff have estimated that monitoring approximately 90 in any given year would provide the needed data. This will be the goal for WCB staff over the next calendar year. WCB has thirteen program managers and land agents who have the background and training to assess compliance. Each will need to visit seven sites during this period. This method will allow WCB to determine with a high degree of scientific confidence WCB's success rate in regards to compliance, function, and ability to meet goals of the WCB Strategic Plan.

Staff will need specific training for this exercise, which will consist of pre-monitoring, site visit, and post-monitoring procedures. Pre-monitoring procedures will include reviewing the project's purpose, permitted uses, management techniques, and previous site visit information. Post monitoring tasks will include documenting the visit details, documenting any potential or actual violations, filing the documents, and recording the information in appropriate project files. Staff training will occur in December 2016 and January 2017.

It is expected that the occasional potential non-compliance issue will arise as a result of this monitoring effort, but potential non-compliance issues can arise from a number of sources other than through the site visits performed by WCB staff. These other sources might include annual monitoring reports from grantees, monitoring reports from other funders, or information from other interested parties. The monitoring plan will have more guidance for dealing with non-compliance issues, but the basics are outlined below. The WCB Monitoring Coordinator will have primary responsibility to evaluate potential issues, and will review and research project files, site visit reports, all pertinent communications, and any other assimilated documentation to confirm or negate the non-compliance concern. During this review, there may also be a need for WCB staff and staff with other funders or the CDFW to make a site visit to gather additional information. If there is a clear violation with direct or imminent impacts to the project's conservation values, immediate action may be necessary to stop the impacts of the violation from further deteriorating or damaging the project or sensitive natural resources. All non-compliance issues will be communicated directly to the project grantee to develop a resolution plan to remediate issues of concern.

The grantee has the first level of responsibility to resolve any issues of non-compliance. If the grantee is unable to resolve the non-compliance, or if they request WCB's assistance, then WCB will work with the landowner and grantee to develop corrective actions. If necessary, WCB may take legal corrective action to enforce the terms of the grant. Until a project's non-compliance can be resolved, WCB will require written notification every six months to document and update the status of corrective action and project compliance.

The monitoring plan will also include methods to coordinate with other funders and partners in our mutual efforts to improve and protect habitats Statewide. We envision a plan that will outline a three-pronged effort to accomplish this goal. First, we will rely on our grantees, who have similar goals as WCB, to provide the first level of compliance. The monitoring plan will outline the procedures to assure that we receive any information that they generate or collect on any project we help fund. Second, we will reach out to other funders to coordinate monitoring efforts, site visits and report sharing. We have had conversations with staff from all the State Conservancies and the Natural Resources Agency, and will be developing a central repository for data sharing. And finally, we have been in contact with CDFW headquarters and some of the Regions with a commitment to share our data with them to assist them in their mission to protect and maintain California's wildlife and habitats.

The full monitoring plan is expected to be ready for review by CDFW and the Board by the spring of 2018.

**20. Eden Landing Ecological Reserve Wetland Restoration Construction Project  
Informational**

Staff presentation of a project summary and video highlighting the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve Wetland Restoration Construction Project. Approved in 2009, the WCB allocated \$8,000,000 to implement a cooperative project with the State Coastal Conservancy and the Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) leading to the restoration of approximately 230 acres of coastal wetlands and the construction of public access improvements at the CDFW's Eden Landing Ecological Reserve.

**21 2018 Board Meeting Dates**

WCB meeting dates for 2018

*Quarterly Board Meetings*

Feb 22, 2018

May 24, 2018

Aug 30, 2018

Nov 15, 2018

All quarterly meetings will begin at 10:00am in the Natural Resources Building, First Floor Auditorium. 1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Sacramento, California 95814

*Streamflow Enhancement Board Meeting*

March 22, 2018, 1:30 pm, Natural Resources Building, First Floor Auditorium. 1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Sacramento, California 95814