



Gavin Newsom, Governor
NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD
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Final Meeting Agenda

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

February 24, 2022, 10:00 a.m.

The public and Board members will participate in the meeting via Zoom. Public comment will be accepted per the agenda*. A recording will be posted after the meeting.

Please click the link below to join the webinar.

[Join the webinar](#)

If you can only join via telephone, email Mary.Ahern@wildlife.ca.gov for a phone number or call WCB at 916-445-8448.

*If you anticipate commenting during the Public Comment period or on a particular agenda item and would like to register your name ahead of time, please complete this [Speaker Card \(Word\)](#) and email to Mary.Ahern@wildlife.ca.gov prior to the day of the meeting.

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Attachment A – Map of February 2022 Projects

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PERSONS WITH DISABILITES

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. Accommodation requests for facility and/or meeting accessibility and Requests for American Sign Language Interpreters should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event. Requests for Real-Time Captioners should be submitted at least four weeks prior to the event. These timeframes are to help ensure that the requested accommodation is met. If a request for an accommodation has been submitted but is no longer needed, please contact the EEO Officer immediately

1. Roll Call

Wildlife Conservation Board Members

Charlton H. Bonham, Chair
Director, Department of Fish and Wildlife
Alina Bokde, Vice Chair, Public Member
Keely Bosler, Member
Director, Department of Finance
Damon Nagami, Public Member
Fran Pavley, Public Member
Kathryn Phillips, Public Member
Vacant
President Fish and Game Commission

Joint Legislative Advisory Committee

Senator Andreas Borgeas
Senator Nancy Skinner
Senator Henry Stern
Assemblymember Luz Rivas
Assemblymember Laura Friedman – Alternate
Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia
Assemblymember Miguel Santiago – Alternate
Assemblymember Steve Bennett
Assemblymember Marc Levine – Alternate

Executive Director

John P. Donnelly

2. Discussion and Selection of new Board Chairman

3. Public Forum for Items not on this Agenda

This item provides an opportunity for the general public to share comments or concerns on topics that are not included in this agenda. Speakers shall be limited to two minutes. The Board may not discuss or take action on any matter raised during this item, except to decide whether to place the matter on the agenda of a future meeting. (Sections 11125, 11125.7(a), Government Code)

4. Funding Status – Informational

The following funding status depicts total Capital Outlay and Local Assistance appropriations by fund source and fund number:

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND (0262)	\$69,508,520.73
February 2022 Board Meeting Allocation:	(19,903,695.00)
Total Project Development:	(10,649,442.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$38,955,383.73

SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND (Proposition 12) (0005)	\$845,790.00
February 2022 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(0.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$845,790.00

CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND (Proposition 40) (6029)	\$6,702,767.98
February 2022 Board Meeting Allocation:	(1,568,863.00)
Total Project Development:	(4,082,635.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$1,051,269.98

WATER SECURITY, CLEAN DRINKING WATER, COASTAL AND BEACH PROTECTION FUND OF 2002 (Proposition 50) (6031)	\$14,764,900.86
February 2022 Board Meeting Allocation:	(560,000.00)
Total Project Development:	(4,413,955.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$9,790,945.86

SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006 (Proposition 84) (6051)	\$8,454,610.88
February 2022 Board Meeting Allocation:	(213,484.00)
Total Project Development:	(6,609,145.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$1,631,981.88
WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND (Proposition 1) (6083)	\$57,607,178.07
February 2022 Board Meeting Allocation:	0.00
Total Project Development:	0.00
Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$57,607,178.07
THE CALIFORNIA DROUGHT, WATER, PARKS, CLIMATE, COASTAL PROTECTION, AND OUTDOOR ACCESS FOR ALL ACT OF 2018 (Proposition 68) (6088)	\$131,678,324.72
February 2022 Board Meeting Allocation:	(13,718,587.00)
Total Project Development:	(41,902,576.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	76,057,161.72
GENERAL FUND (0001)	\$176,167,250.00
February 2022 Board Meeting Allocation:	(28,575,000.00)
Total Project Development:	(26,238,128.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$121,354,122.00
GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION FUND (3228)	\$5,541,386.00
February 2022 Board Meeting Allocation:	0.00
Total Project Development:	(4,494,600.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$1,046,786.00
TOTAL – ALL FUNDS	\$471,270,729.24
Grand Total - February 2022 Board Meeting Allocation:	(64,539,629.00)
Grand Total - Project Development:	(98,390,481.00)
Grand Total Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$308,340,619.24

Consent Items

Items 5-18 are part of the Consent Calendar

5. Recovery of Funds, Thursday, February 24, 2022

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.

Table 1 - Recoveries by Fund

Fund Name	Amount
Habitat Conservation Fund	\$150,781.92
Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund	\$11,655.67
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund	\$46,645.54
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006	\$6,865.43
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014	\$423,011.89
The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018	\$17,601.00
Total Recoveries for All Funds	\$656,561.45

Table 1 - Habitat Conservation Fund

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Calmas/Hayes (North Carrizo Ecological Reserve)	\$100,000.00	\$34,637.00	\$65,363
Grasslands Water Improvement Efficiency Project	\$688,000.00	\$688,000.00	\$0.00
Grasslands Water Improvement Efficiency Project Augmentation	\$172,500.00	\$172,498.40	\$1.60
Pilgrim Creek Ecological Reserve (Foss Lake)	\$1,616,000.00	\$1,611,941.75	\$4,058.25
Pintail Ranch Habitat Enhancement	\$310,000.00	\$303,642.73	\$6,357.27
Santiago Creek Riparian Restoration	\$162,000.00	\$86,998.20	\$75,001.80
Total Recoveries to Habitat Conservation Fund			\$150,781.92

Table 2 - Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Climate Resilience at the Clover Valley Ranch	\$120,000.00	\$119,974.33	\$25.67
Lightning Canyon Ranch Conservation Easement	\$815,000.00	\$803,370.00	\$11,630.00
Total Recoveries to Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund			\$11,655.67

Table 3 - California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Knights Landing Boat Launch Facility Construction	\$1,435,000.00	\$1,434,204.25	\$795.75
Shasta Valley Wildlife Area Fishing Access, Augmentation	\$150,000.00	\$104,150.21	\$45,849.79
Total Recoveries California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund			\$46,645.54

Table 4 - Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Boyd Deep Canyon Desert Research Center Improvements	\$1,182,000.00	\$1,181,997.19	\$2.81
Carpinteria Salt Marsh Infrastructure Improvement Project	\$91,700.00	\$91,700.00	\$0.00
Carpinteria Salt Marsh Infrastructure Improvement Project Augmentation	\$32,300.00	\$32,300.00	\$0.00
Granite Mountain Desert Research Center Improvements	\$1,785,000.00	\$1,781,768.77	\$3,231.23
Peabody East Ranch	\$193,360.00	\$190,025.00	\$3,335.00
Peabody West Ranch	\$183,360.00	\$183,360.00	\$0.00
Sedgwick Reserve Infrastructure and Facilities Project: Phase 2	\$1,380,000.00	\$1,379,703.61	\$296.39
Total Recoveries to Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006			\$6,865.43

Table 5- Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Lower Battle Creek Scoping Study	\$113,654	\$111,693.00	\$1,961.00
Mill Creek Watershed Flow Enhancement Study	\$364,603.00	\$352,321.93	\$12,281.07
San Joaquin River Parkway, Weed Management and Job Creation Project	\$959,934.00	\$861,731.70	\$98,202.30
San Lorenzo Watershed Conjunctive Use Plan	\$481,313.00	\$421,063.48	\$60,249.52
Williams Creek Restoration Planning	\$250,318.00	\$0.00	\$250,318.00
Total Recoveries to Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014			\$423,011.89

Table 6- The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All, Act of 2018

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Hidden Canyon	\$623,750.00	\$621,500.00	\$2,250.00
Middle Fork of the American River, Chapman Canyon (FCP)	\$445,000.00	\$441,031.00	\$3,969.00
Shasta Valley Wildlife Area Steamboat Lake Pipeline	\$196,000.00	\$190,278.00	\$5,722.00
Stookey Ranch Preserve	\$750,000.00	\$744,340.00	\$5,660.00
<i>Total Recoveries to The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All, Act of 2018</i>			<i>\$17,601.00</i>

6. Quail Ridge UC Davis Natural Reserve System, Implementation

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approve this project as proposed; allocate \$224,100 from Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)(3), and the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80111(c); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Quail Ridge UC Davis Natural Reserve System, Implementation
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	The Regents of the University of California, Davis
Amount Recommended:	\$224,100
Funding Partners:	The Regents of the University of California, Davis
Landowner(s):	The Regents of the University of California, Davis
County:	Napa
Program:	The University of California, Natural Reserve System
Funding:	Proposition 68 and Proposition 84
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.5 Objectives: SI 1.2, 2.1, 2.4
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Quail Ridge UC Davis Natural Reserve System, Implementation (Project) is located northeast of the community of Moskowite Corner, in the eastern part of Napa County. It is on Quail Ridge between Wragg and Markley canyons and is approximately nine miles west of the city of Winters and less than a mile south of Lake Berryessa.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project will improve three areas of infrastructure: the road system, energy efficiencies, and fire-resistant facility upgrades. These improvements will enhance the user experience, reduce maintenance demands, and reduce costs. This will make the ongoing success of the Quail Ridge UC Davis Natural Reserve's (Reserve) mission of research and teaching more sustainable into the future.

The Reserve road system is the result of hasty land speculation and historic ranch paths creating 18 miles of unimproved, clay-soil roads that are steep and winding. The system was largely unmaintained for decades before the creation of the Reserve. The Project will improve much of the Reserve's East and Ridge roads – regrading, compacting, and creating rolling dips to direct water run-off.

The 2020 Hennessey Fire burned the entire understory of the Reserve. It also destroyed research infrastructure and buildings. Fortunately, not all the Reserve's structures were lost. In 2019, other buildings were re-roofed and cement board siding was added, which greatly contributed to it surviving the Hennessey Fire. The Project will fund the installation of metal roofing and cement board siding on the Reserves' Research House to increase its resiliency to future wildfires.

The Project will also improve energy efficiency at the Research House and the Field Station by installing solar panels to both buildings and replacing the single-pane windows at the Research House with energy efficient models.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Regents of the University of California, Davis has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the Reserve. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, The Regents of the University of California, Davis does not manage and maintain the Project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Road Work	\$98,500	---	\$98,500
Solar Installation	\$38,100	---	\$38,100
Roof Installation	\$42,000	---	\$42,000
HVAC	\$29,500	---	\$29,500
Siding/Window Materials	\$16,000	\$25,000	\$41,000
Land Donation	---	\$335,000	\$335,000
Total	\$224,100	\$360,000	\$584,100

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Road Work: Road improvements to regrade, compact, and create rolling dips.
- Solar Installation: Install solar panels to outfit the two buildings with solar power.
- Roof Installation: Install metal roofing on the Research House.
- HVAC: Replace various inefficient wall AC units with a mini-split system.
- Siding/Window Materials: Install cement board siding and replace single pane windows with more energy efficient models.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

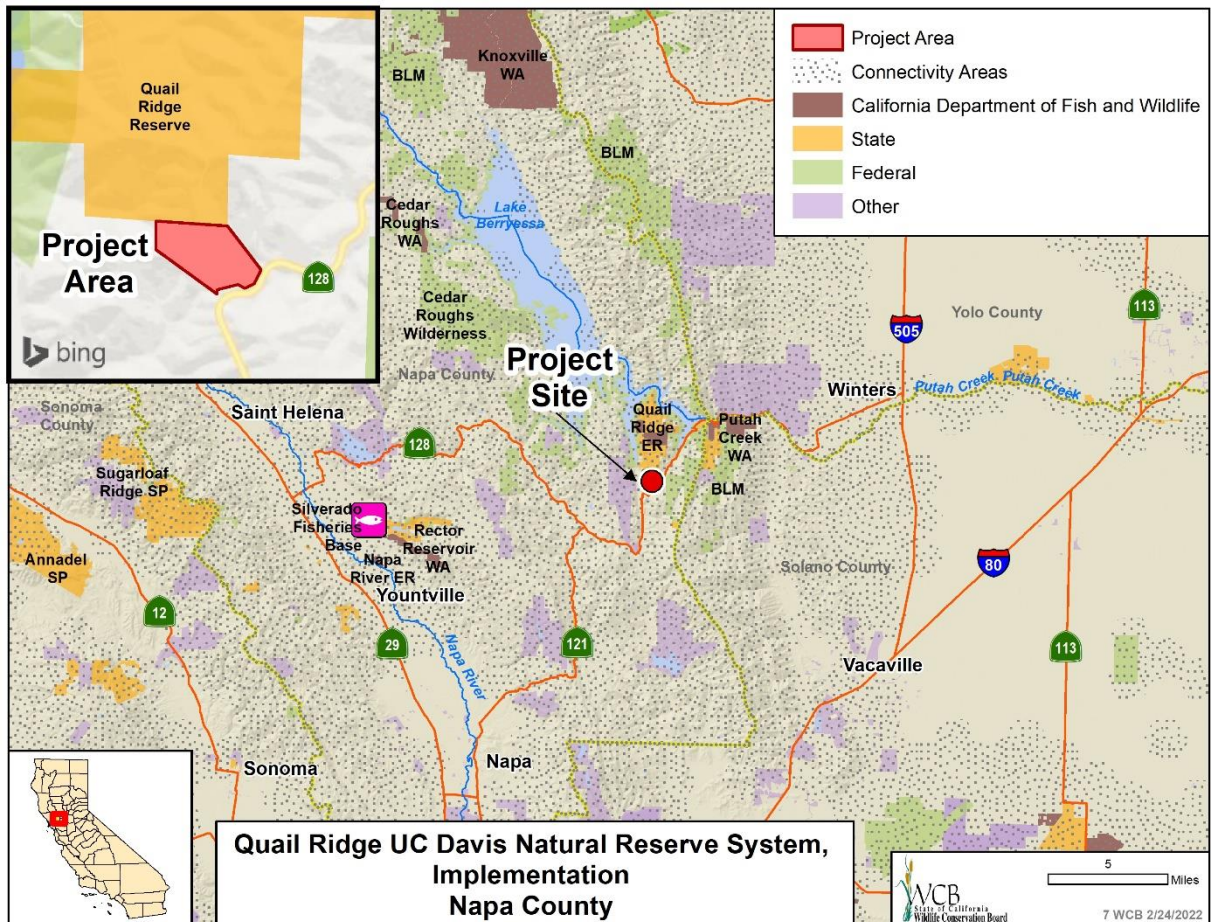
- Peggy L. Fiedler, Ph.D., Executive Director, UC Natural Reserve System

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is proposed as exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities as repair, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing public structures and facilities, Section 15302 Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction, replacement or reconstruction of existing utility systems and/or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of capacity, and Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, as minor public alterations in the condition of land. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption (NOE) will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



7. Grizzly Island Wildlife Area Waterfowl Breeding Habitat

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,300,000 from Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d)(IWCP), and the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80132(c); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Grizzly Island Wildlife Area Waterfowl Breeding Habitat
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	California Waterfowl Association
Amount Recommended:	\$1,300,000
Funding Partners:	California Waterfowl Association, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Landowner(s):	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
County:	Solano
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Funding:	Habitat Conservation Fund and Proposition 68
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.5, 2.5
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Grizzly Island Wildlife Waterfowl Breeding Habitat (Project) is located on the CDFW owned Grizzly Island Wildlife Area (GIWA), in Suisun City within Solano County. GIWA lies in the heart of the Suisun Marsh and has been managed for wildlife habitat since CDFW acquired the property in 1931. GIWA contains approximately 5,800 acres of wetlands, all of which are open to public hunting, except for the Pond 12 sanctuary.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Waterfowl nesting effort and success have been monitored and studied on GIWA since 1985. In the 1990s, surveys on GIWA recorded the highest documented waterfowl nest densities anywhere in North America. Since then, waterfowl production has experienced a long-term decline. The largest block of upland habitat on GIWA is located in Fields 13 and 14 and is traversed by linear ditches and levees which are relics of previous farming infrastructure. These features divide the fields into a series of 30 to 65-acre subunits functionally fragmenting what would otherwise be a large contiguous block of upland nesting habitat.

The Project will restore upland waterfowl nesting habitat in Fields 13 and 14 and restore semi-permanent wetland habitat in Pond 14. Most of Fields 13 and 14 have become invaded by non-native perennial and annual plants, reducing habitat quality and diversity for native wildlife. These non-natives established after the

fields were burned by an intense wildfire in October 2019 that killed most perennial grasses and annual grass seeds.

To improve the upland habitat quality and productivity in Fields 13 and 14, the Project will defragment and restore the area to native upland grasses and forbs. The Project will remove the linear artificial ditches/levees, control invasive weeds, and replant native perennial grasses and forbs to restore a 300-acre block of contiguous native uplands, which will be the largest contiguous block of native upland habitat on GIWA.

To assure success of the Project, areas to be seeded or planted will need invasive weeds removed. For broad spectrum field clearing a tank-mix of glyphosate (without manufacture-added surfactant), Telar XP and adjuvants known to be environmentally safe (such as Agri-Dex) will be applied. For post planting weed removal, a broadleaf specific herbicide treatment consisting of Milestone, Telar XP and appropriate adjuvants will be applied. For both phases of herbicide application, the exact tank mix and rate will be provided by CDFW's Pest Control Advisor at the time of application based on site conditions.

Adjacent to the upland restoration site is an existing semi-permanent wetland unit (Pond 14) that was constructed several decades ago with the intent to provide summer-flooded waterfowl brood rearing habitat. In subsequent years, the pond was consumed by invasive phragmites, and was unable to be managed as a brood pond. In 2020, a WCB funded project successfully removed the phragmites from Pond 14, allowing the pond to be managed as a brood pond once again. The Project will install new water management infrastructure, replacing old non-functioning infrastructure. The new infrastructure will create new water management options resulting in better habitat quality, a reduction in energy costs, and a reduction in water diversions through improved water-use efficiency.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CDFW has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the Project. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, the Grantee does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	\$77,800	---	\$77,800
Upland Restoration	\$837,000	\$48,000	\$885,000
Wetland Restoration	\$247,000	---	\$247,000
Indirect Costs	\$138,200	\$17,800	\$156,000
Total	\$1,300,000	\$65,800	\$1,365,800

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Management of subcontracts, invoicing, payroll tracking, materials purchasing, and operating expenses.
- Upland Restoration: Herbicide application and planting of uplands using native grass seed mixes and forbs.
- Wetland Restoration: Earthwork and purchase/installation of water control structures.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 20 percent of the total direct WCB award, minus subcontractor and equipment costs.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

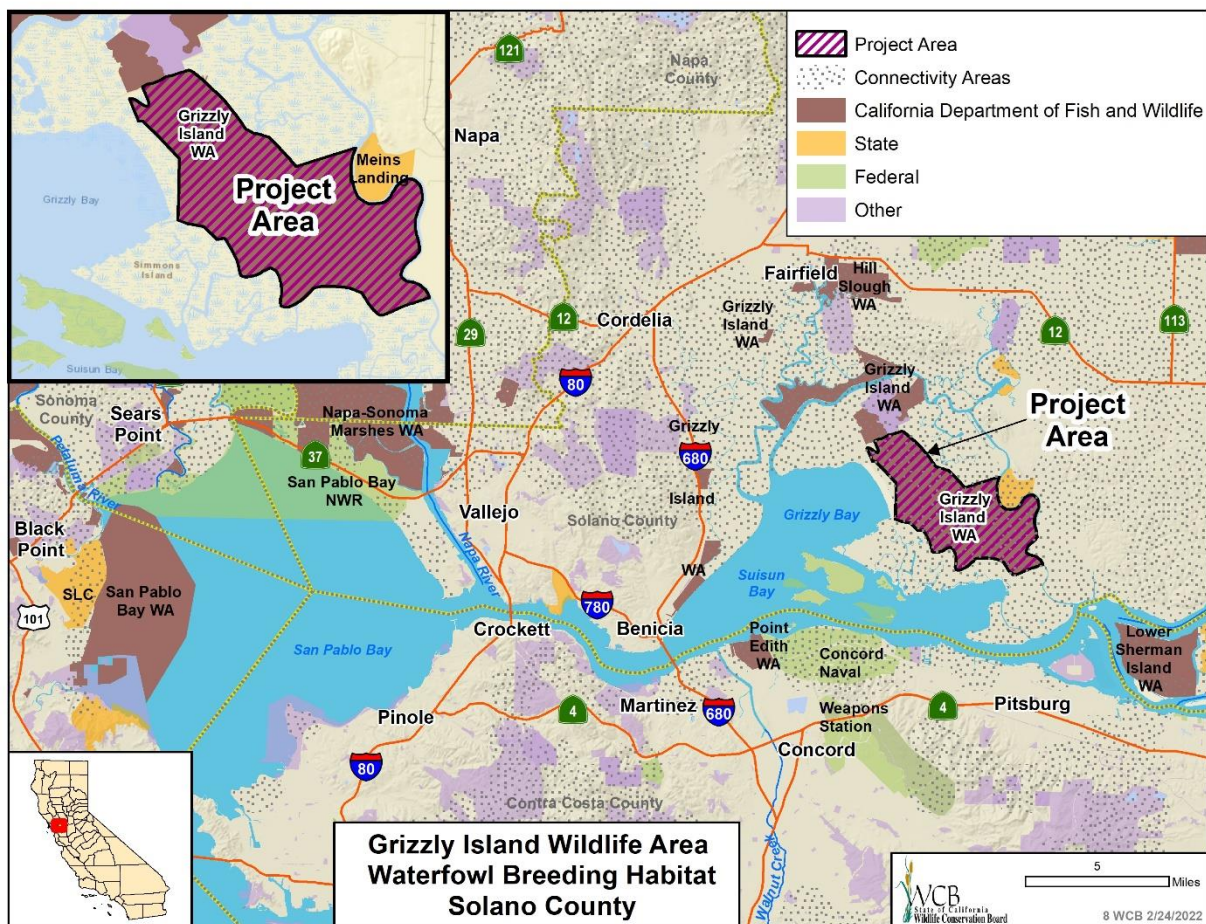
- James Cogswell, Coordinator, Central Valley Joint Venture
- Steven Chappell, Executive Director, Suisun Resource Conservation District
- Jean-Phillippe “JP” Marie, President, California Native Grass Association
- Chris Rose, Executive Director, Solano Resource Conservation District

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities, as repair, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing public facilities and topographical features, Section 15302, Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction, as replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities, and Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, as minor public alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



8. Centennial Point Ranch

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$978,750 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) for the grant to Eastern Sierra Land Trust (ESLT); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Centennial Point Ranch
Project Type:	Conservation Easement (1,741± acres)
Grantee:	Eastern Sierra Land Trust
Amount Recommended:	\$978,750
Funding Partners:	California Department of Conservation (DOC)
County:	Mono
Program:	Land Acquisition
Funding:	Habitat Conservation Fund
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.2, A.4, E.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 2.1
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The property (Property) is located in Bridgeport Valley on the lower eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada, approximately nine miles northeast of Yosemite National Park. Access is provided via U.S. Highway 395 and Twin Lakes Road. The nearest communities are Bridgeport (adjoining the Property) and Lee Vining (22 miles south). Other significant features include the Bodie Hills located to the east, Mono Lake located to the southeast, and Bridgeport Reservoir located to the north.

The Property is one mile east of the 2,040± acre CDFW-owned Summer Meadows Unit of the Green Creek Wildlife Area and is largely surrounded by other conservation easement-protected private ranches, including Hunewill Ranch which WCB approved for funding in May of 2020. The Property is identified within CDFW's Bodie Greater Sage-Grouse Conceptual Area Protection Plan.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Most of the Property is summer pasture grazed by cattle as part of a larger ranch operation. Livestock grazing is an important component of the rural economy. More than a century of agricultural practices including irrigation on the Property have resulted in extensive wetlands that, in addition to being productive pasture, support a number of species of special concern. The Property's water, foraging habitat, and connectivity between surrounding upland areas make it an Eastern Sierra hot spot for biological diversity. The conservation easement (Easement) will ensure that future land uses do not impair the habitat values of the Property.

Habitat areas on the Property include wet and dry montane meadow, sagebrush, bitterbrush, and montane riparian habitats. Wetlands, the East Walker River, and significant reaches of its tributaries of Green, Summers, and Virginia creeks are found on the Property. The Property also has approximately 1,700 acres of

irrigated and sub-irrigated meadow. Numerous irrigation ditches are used to irrigate the extensive meadows on the Property for livestock operations. Species observed on the Property that will benefit from its protection include raptors like Swainson's hawk, rough-legged hawk, Northern harrier, bald eagle, and barn owl. Deer, bobcat, coyote, and mountain lion are known to use the Property as well. The Property is likely to contain suitable habitat for western white-tailed jackrabbit, yellow rail, Morrison bumblebee, North American porcupine, mountain whitefish, mountain sucker, and black-crowned night heron, as well as rare plants including American manna grass and Lavin's milk-vetch.

The purpose of the Easement is to ensure that the Property will be retained forever in its current state as an agricultural, scenic, habitat and open-space resource, and to prevent any conversion or subdivision of the Property that could significantly diminish or impair these values. Specifically, the Easement purposes include: a) preserving working landscapes through ranching and other agricultural activities; b) protecting the water and water rights to support sustainable agricultural uses, including ranching and grazing, as well as wildlife habitat; c) protecting fish and wildlife resources, including the processes that sustain their habitats; and d) preserving the open space character and scenic qualities of the Property. The Easement will protect a large important property, particularly in a rural county with very limited private land ownership. The project is designed to have minimal impact to property tax income to Mono County, while still furthering county goals and land use policies.

Wildlife use objectives include maintaining the irrigated wet meadow habitats as critical late summer brood rearing habitat for the Bi-State distinct population segment of greater sage-grouse (formerly proposed as a federal Threatened species). In the Bi-State Action Plan for Conservation of the Greater Sage-Grouse Bi-State Distinct Population Segment (2012), the Property is located in the Bodie Population Management Unit (PMU) for greater sage-grouse in a region specifically identified for protection with a conservation easement under the "Minimize and Eliminate Risks" section, Action 2-9: "Secure conservation easements or agreements with willing landowners for important brood meadow habitat in the Green Creek and Virginia Creek vicinities in the western portion of the Bodie PMU." The Property also provides summer range habitat for the West Walker mule deer herd as delineated through a radio telemetry study conducted by CDFW.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Easement will be owned and managed by ESLT. ESLT will be responsible for enforcing the Easement through detailed baseline conditions documentation, planned annual compliance monitoring, recordkeeping, and regular communication with the landowners. A baseline conditions report and grazing management plan will be provided to WCB prior to the close of escrow.

PROJECT FUNDING

The Department of General Services (DGS) approved fair market value is \$2,610,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$978,750
DOC	\$1,631,250
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$2,610,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

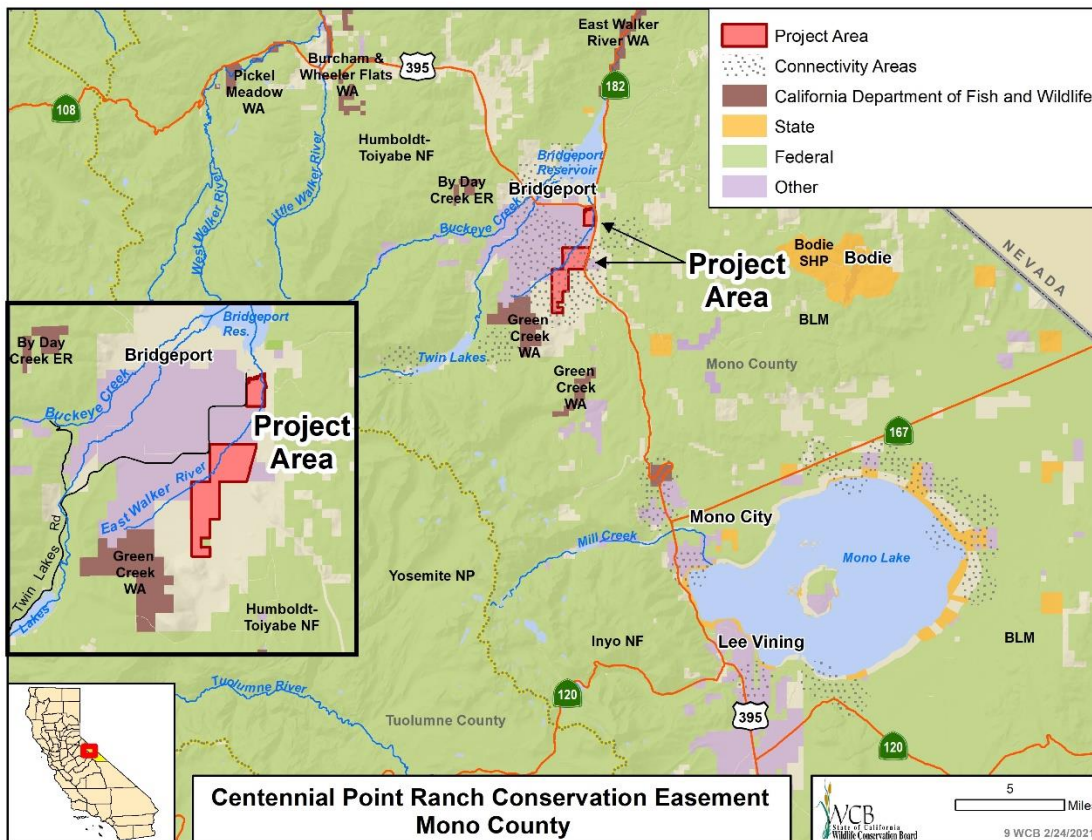
- None received

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The project has been reviewed for compliance with 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 WCB, an NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



9. **Santa Cruz Kangaroo Rat Habitat and Population Management Planning**

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$295,000 from the General Fund, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Provision; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Santa Cruz Kangaroo Rat Habitat and Population Management Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Amount Recommended:	\$295,000
Funding Partners:	None
County:	Santa Clara
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Funding:	General Fund
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.3
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The study area for the Santa Cruz Kangaroo Rat Habitat and Population Management Planning Project is within the Sierra Azul Preserve (Preserve), which protects 19,300 acres of wilderness in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The Preserve is located seven miles southeast of Los Gatos.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Santa Cruz Kangaroo Rat (SCKR) is vulnerable to extinction due to the limited number of populations, the highly fragmented nature of current suitable habitat, ecological succession, and the process of change in the species structure of an ecological community over time.

There are 23 species or sub-species of kangaroo rats found only in California. Five are listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act; an additional five are listed as Species of Special Concern by CDFW. SCKR is Critically Imperiled – at very high risk of extirpation in the state due to very restricted range, very few populations or occurrences, very steep declines, severe threats, or other factors.

SCKR require friable, sandy soil for burrowing, open space to move efficiently, and seed-producing plants for foraging. Its current confirmed range is limited to the Santa Cruz Mountains, which have been substantially altered and reduced by urbanization, fire suppression, sand mining, and fragmentation. Additionally, over past decades, open habitat in known SCKR ranges has been drastically reduced by native chaparral and knobcone pine encroachment. This rapid succession has likely been exacerbated by fire suppression practices.

To address the need for additional information on and management planning for SCKR, this project will research, assess, and monitor populations of kangaroo rat and habitat quality. The information from this work will then be used to develop a habitat and population management plan (HPMP). While recommendations from the HPMP would be implemented in a later phase, this project includes completing a CEQA review to facilitate future on-ground habitat conservation measures for SCKR.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Total Cost
Genetic Analysis	\$140,000	\$140,000
Rare Plant Surveys and Habitat Assessments	\$50,000	\$50,000
Habitat and Population Management Plan	\$45,000	\$45,000
CEQA Review	\$60,000	\$60,000
Total	\$295,000	\$295,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Genetic Analysis: Verify the historical occupancy of SCKR, assess subspecies status, population substructure and genetic diversity.
- Rare Plant Surveys and Habitat Assessments: Develop and release a detailed habitat characterization and rare plant surveys of SCKR habitat to run concurrently with the genetics research.
- Habitat and Population Management Plan: Develop a comprehensive habitat and population management plan.
- CEQA Review: Obtain all required regulatory permits and complete the CEQA review process for the implementation phase.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

- None received

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies, as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



10. Central California Water Conveyance Improvement

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,373,000 from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80132(c); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Central California Water Conveyance Improvement
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Amount Recommended:	\$1,373,000
Funding Partners:	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Landowner(s):	Grassland Water District, San Joaquin Farms, Gable Land and Cattle Company
County:	Merced and Stanislaus
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Funding:	Proposition 68
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.5
Disadvantaged Community:	Within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Central California Water Conveyance Improvement (Project) is located in the Grasslands Ecological Area (GEA) in Merced and Stanislaus counties. The wetlands within the broader GEA make up the largest remaining contiguous freshwater complex west of the Rocky Mountains and encompass over 160,000 acres of habitat and wildlife beneficial agriculture. These wetlands are designated as a critically important habitat area by two international treaties, numerous wildlife organizations, and are recognized as one of the five most important wetland ecosystems in North America.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project was selected for funding consideration in the 2020 Pacific Flyway Solicitation. The Project will complete important habitat work needed to achieve the conservation objectives of the Central Valley Joint Venture and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The southern Central Valley is one of the most altered and intensively farmed regions of the world. Large scale hydrological modifications have severed the natural hydroperiod of many of the region's wetlands and riparian corridors; thus, many are solely dependent on artificial water delivery or regulated flows from reservoirs. This landscape level conservation project incorporates the region's wetland habitats and riparian corridors, its importance to Pacific Flyway waterfowl and other wetland-dependent wildlife, and its connection with previous habitat conservation efforts in the San Joaquin Basin. The Project is part of a larger effort to enhance 6,693 acres of freshwater seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands within the GEA.

The Project will construct habitat and water conveyance improvements to benefit seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands that provide critical foraging and breeding habitat at three sites, San Joaquin Farms (SJF), Grassland Water District (GWD) and Gable Land and Cattle Company (GLCC).

Project activities at SJF will replace dilapidated concrete pipelines and open lateral ditches with new pipelines. These new pipelines will connect two existing wells on the property, further expanding seasonal wetland management capabilities.

Project activities within the GWD include construction of a pump station that will capture floodwaters of the 216 Ditch and ultimately deliver these waters through the Santa Fe Canal to a GWD re-circulation pump. These waters will then be able to be recirculated into the system, increasing water use efficiency. A second GWD component will provide independent water delivery and drainage for multiple duck clubs. These improvements include swale excavation, installation of new water control structures, and rehabilitation of a draining ditch and water delivery lateral. The Project will also construct an extension of the Britto Ditch to provide an independent water source to adjacent wetlands.

Project improvements at GLCC include the construction of swales and installation of water control structures to improve flood-up and drainage capabilities. A lift pump will be installed to increase water management capabilities of two brood ponds located on the property and enable water levels within the ponds to be managed independently, providing benefits to both habitat and management capability.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

As a deliverable of the grant, each landowner will develop a Management Plan that guides management actions for their property, including management of the Project area. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, Ducks Unlimited, Inc. does not manage and maintain the Project improvements, the grant agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	\$103,161	\$387,407	\$490,568
Engineering Plan & Survey	\$17,764	---	\$17,764
Construction	\$1,105,376	\$293,085	\$1,398,461
Indirect Costs	\$24,108	---	\$24,108
Contingency	\$122,591	---	\$122,591
Total	\$1,373,000	\$680,492	\$2,053,492

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Project management, including subcontracts management, invoicing, payroll tracking, materials purchasing, and project design.
- Engineering Plan & Survey: Development of an engineering plan and necessary topographic surveys.
- Construction: Construction of project elements, including wetland and water conveyance enhancements.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 20 percent of the total direct WCB award, minus subcontractor and equipment costs.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

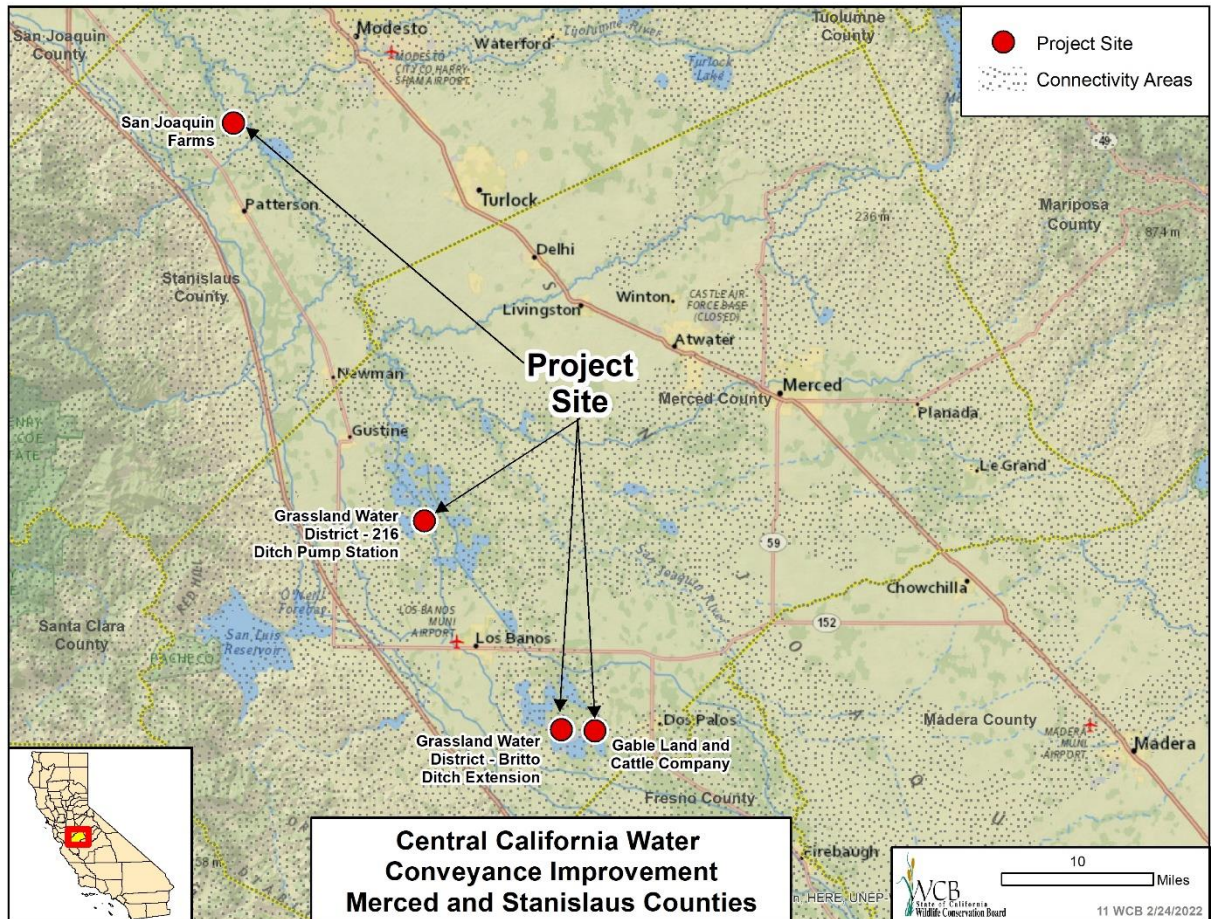
- James Cogswell, Coordinator, Central Valley Joint Venture

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines, Section 15302, Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction, as replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities and Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, as minor alterations in the condition of land, water, or vegetation. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



11. Lindmore Multi-Benefit Recharge Basin

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$434,000 from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80132(c); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Lindmore Multi-Benefit Recharge Basin
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Lindmore Irrigation District
Amount Recommended:	\$434,000
Funding Partners:	Lindmore Irrigation District
Landowner(s):	Lindmore Irrigation District
County:	Tulare
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Funding:	Proposition 68
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.3
Disadvantaged Community:	Within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Lindmore Irrigation District Multi-Benefit Recharge Basin (Project) is located on private land owned by the Lindmore Irrigation District (LID), approximately two miles southwest of the town of Lindsay. The project parcel (Property) is comprised of formerly irrigated farmland located within the critically overdrafted Kaweah Subbasin. WCB has not funded any past projects within the project area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project was selected for funding consideration through the 2020 Pacific Flyway Solicitation. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act requires groundwater users across California to balance aquifer extraction and groundwater recharge in the coming years. LID, in the critically overdrafted Kaweah Subbasin, is pursuing several projects to build groundwater recharge basins that will capture seasonally available surface water supplies for storage and future use. The San Joaquin Valley has lost most of its wetlands, impacting migratory birds that travel along the Pacific Flyway and rely on this region to rest and refuel on their journeys. The Project will design and build two multi-benefit recharge basins that will recharge depleted groundwater aquifers while simultaneously creating productive and diverse seasonal wetland habitat for migratory waterbirds in Tulare County.

Earth moving equipment will be utilized to build 30' wide berms around the edges of two, 40-acre parcels. These berms will act to retain applied water allowing it to infiltrate into the groundwater below. Basin floors will be gently sloped to retain water at a depth of 0.5' -1.5' in one basin and 1.5' - 2.5' in the other basin. By providing a range of shallow water depths, the basins will be designed to attract a diversity of waterbirds. An island will also be built in each basin to provide safe

loafing or nesting areas for waterbirds. After construction, the basin berms will be planted with native plants to help support pollinator species, exclude the establishment of noxious weeds, and help stabilize the basin berms. Additionally, these plantings may provide foraging and nesting habitat for additional resident and migratory bird species. Groundwater recharge and waterbird monitoring will be conducted throughout the Project term to quantify bird use of the wildlife-friendly recharge basins. This data will be compared to waterbird monitoring data of adjacent conventionally built recharge basins.

As California's hydrologic cycles become increasingly variable, and droughts more common and severe, migratory waterbirds that depend on reliable seasonal wetland habitat are facing mounting pressure. Wildlife friendly groundwater recharge basins can provide suitable shallowly flooded habitat that can act as a surrogate for natural floodplain wetland habitats. Tapping into this increasingly popular groundwater management technique will help increase the acreage of wetland habitat available in the Tulare Basin, a critical region along the Pacific Flyway.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

As a deliverable of this grant, LID will design and adopt a Management Plan that guides management actions for the Property, including management of the Property. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, LID does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	---	\$40,200	\$40,200
Planning and Design	\$132,750	\$76,875	\$209,625
Construction	\$263,750	\$268,750	\$532,500
Monitoring	\$37,500	\$7,500	\$45,000
Total	\$434,000	\$393,325	\$827,325

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Planning and Design: Permitting, topographic surveys, project design, and geotechnical report.
- Construction: Construction of two, 40-acre wildlife friendly groundwater recharge basins.
- Monitoring: Groundwater recharge and wildlife use monitoring, and draft of a monitoring and management plan.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

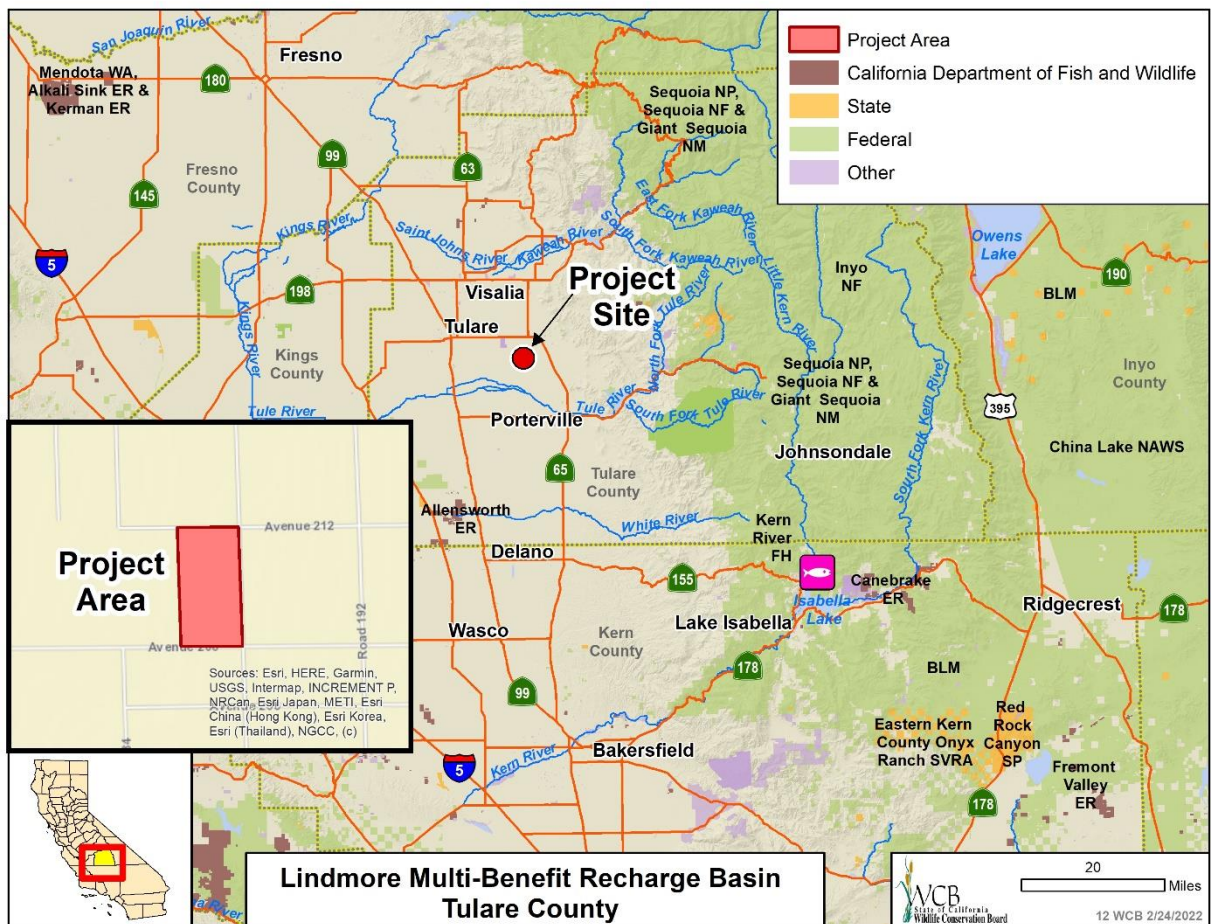
- None received

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Lindmore Irrigation District, as lead agency, prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA. Staff considered the MND and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination (NOD) will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



12. Enhancing Wetlands at Goose Lake

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$962,000 from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80132(a), and the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80132(c); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Enhancing Wetlands at Goose Lake
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	California Waterfowl Association
Amount Recommended:	\$962,000
Funding Partners:	California Waterfowl Association
Landowner(s):	California Waterfowl Association
County:	Kern
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Funding:	Proposition 68
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.5
Disadvantaged Community:	Within a severely disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Enhancing Wetlands at Goose Lake (Project) is located on the privately held Badger-Almond property (Property) approximately 7.5 miles southeast of Lost Hills. In 2014, with funding from WCB and private donations, California Waterfowl Association acquired multiple properties in the Goose Lake Basin, with the intention of developing the Property for public waterfowl hunting use. WCB contributed \$2,338,836 for fee-title purchase of the Goose Lake Basin properties, including the 926-acre Badger-Almond property.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Tulare Basin is the largest and driest basin in California's Central Valley and has lost 90-95 percent of its native habitat. This is not due to climate change or drought, but to expansive, highly productive agricultural development and associated water diversions. Prior to the construction of upstream dams and water diversions, the Tulare Basin was home to one of the largest freshwater wetland complexes in the United States. The basin used to support over 200 privately owned duck clubs (i.e., managed wetlands), but today only a fraction remains, with less than 1 percent of the historic wetland acres persisting.

Managed seasonal wetlands depend on water availability for summer irrigations to produce adequate waterfowl foods; they also require the ability to be flooded in the fall/winter to make that food available to foraging birds. For this reason, sufficient water supplies are critical for wetland dependent bird habitat. However, water supplies vary year to year and water delivery shortfalls reduce the habitat

contribution of the few privately owned wetlands that remain. This negatively impacts bird populations as well as consumptive and non-consumptive use opportunities.

The Project will create access to sustainable and reliable groundwater at the Project site by improving and completing the water conveyance system with the addition of a solar array and water delivery pipeline to deliver water to vegetation within the Project area. The Project will install a 1-acre solar array that will support the existing water conveyance system. This insulated water system will allow for reliable management of wetland habitats and provide management flexibility to create a mosaic of habitat types through the rotational application of groundwater. While the capability to pump and move water is essential to the ability to enhance and manage wildlife habitats, it also dictates to what capacity the habitat can perform ecological services. A dependable water source promotes habitat management, which assures the regular occurrence of irrigations, flood-ups, and drawdowns. This simple action contributes to a collection of environmental services including improved soil health, water quality, and nutrient cycling, while promoting groundwater recharge. The Project will install a pipeline to support irrigation of newly planted trees and shrubs that will create a riparian strip within the Project area. The revegetation of wetland units and riparian tree plantings will also aid in carbon sequestration. Together, this suite of benefits will coalesce to create an ecosystem with stronger climate change resiliency.

To provide much-needed public waterfowl hunting access, the Project will purchase and install six concrete blinds with dog boxes, one ADA accessible blind, parking lots, gravel blind paths, and a hunter check-in kiosk. Signage will be designed and installed, showing driving routes, parking lots, and blind areas. These improvements will open the Property to new public waterfowl hunting opportunities. The Property will be operated as part of California Waterfowl Associations' very successful California Waterfowl Hunt Program.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

In consultation with CDFW, the California Waterfowl Association has adopted a California Waterfowl Habitat Program Site Specific Management Plan that guides management actions for the Property, including management of the Property. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, California Waterfowl Association does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Solar Array	\$810,000	---	\$810,000
Water Conveyance Improvement	\$80,000	---	\$80,000
Tree Installation	\$12,000	---	\$12,000
Public Access Improvements	\$60,000	\$14,000	\$74,000
Total	\$962,000	\$14,000	\$976,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Solar Array: Solicit bids to construct an approximately 1-acre solar array.
- Water Conveyance Improvement: Purchase and construct a water pipeline to supply irrigation water to planted trees and shrubs.
- Tree Installation: Source tree cuttings from local sources, purchase potted plants from local nurseries, and plant a 14-acre riparian strip along the west side of the Project area.
- Public Access Improvements: Purchase and install six concrete hunting blinds with dog boxes, one ADA accessible hunting blind, gravel parking lot with gravel blind trails, and one hunter check-in kiosk, including public access signage for all improvements.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

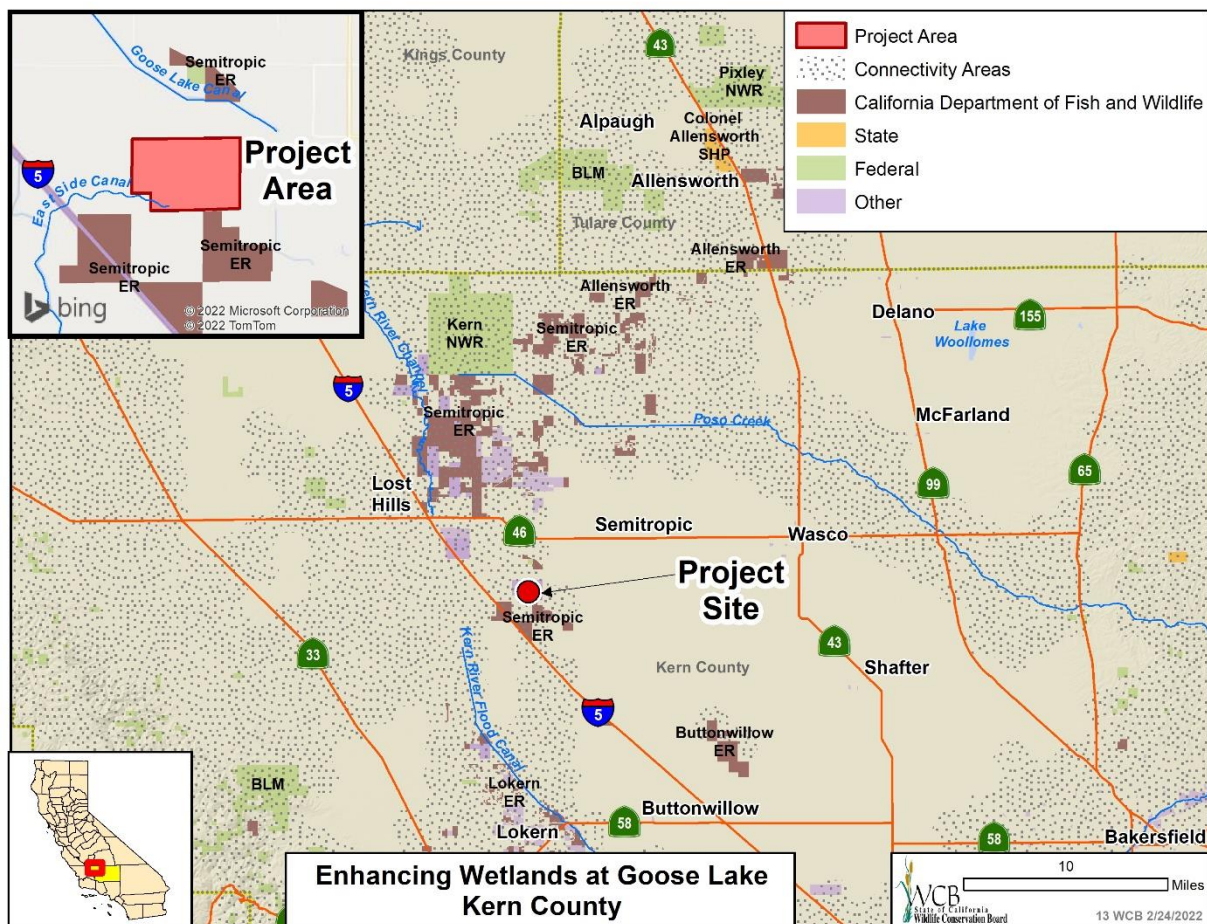
- James Cogswell, Coordinator, Central Valley Joint Venture
- Tim Ashlock, Manager, Buena Vista Water Storage District
- Karl Kraft, Wildlife Biologist, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Robert B. Hansen, Board President, Tulare Basin Watershed Partnership
- Xeronimo Castaneda, Conservation Project Manager, Audubon California
- John Meriwether, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- Nick Stanley, Project Leader, United States Fish and Wildlife Service

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines, Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, which consists of minor alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



13. Santa Clara River Riparian Habitat Restoration Planning - Santa Paula to Sespe Conservation Area

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$355,917 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e)(f); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Santa Clara River Riparian Habitat Restoration Planning - Santa Paula to Sespe Conservation Area
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Ventura County Resource Conservation District
Amount Recommended:	\$355,917
Funding Partners:	California State Coastal Conservancy, Integrated Regional Water Management, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Stillwater Sciences, United Water Conservation District, University of California Santa Barbara
County:	Ventura
Program:	California Riparian Habitat Conservation
Funding:	Habitat Conservation Fund
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 4.3
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Santa Clara River Riparian Habitat Restoration Planning - Santa Paula to Sespe Conservation Area project (Project) is focused on riparian lands along the lower portion of the Santa Clara River, in Ventura County. The nearest town is Saticoy, an unincorporated community adjacent to the northwest section of the Project area. The land use surrounding the Project area is largely rural and agricultural. The Project area is of mixed ownership, consisting of private lands, conservation properties held by United Water Conservation District and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), TNC-acquired conservation easements, and publicly owned parcels. The Project area contains parcels within the 100-year floodplain of the Santa Clara River mainstem and is approximately 5.5 miles in length.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A major stressor to the Santa Clara River watershed is infestation by invasive plants, arundo in particular, which poses wildfire and flood hazards, and degrades wildlife habitat for nesting birds. Special status species known to occur at the site include least Bell's vireo, yellow-breasted chat, yellow warbler, and southwestern willow flycatcher.

Previously, the Project area was partially evaluated for restoration potential in a prior assessment for the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) in 2011. In the last

decade, the Project area has experienced substantial alteration in channel morphology and vegetation composition, including increased abundance of arundo. Additionally, climate change is further altering environmental attributes.

The overarching goal is to create and enhance native riparian woodlands to support protected wildlife species with the Santa Clara River watershed, while enhancing beneficial ecosystem services in an ecologically important river reach. The Project goal is to develop an ecohydrological assessment of the 5.5-mile reach that will guide subsequent invasive plant and restoration management efforts and to secure regulatory documentation, including CEQA and permitting. The objectives of this phase are:

- Develop a comprehensive plan to remove arundo and other California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) designated noxious weeds, which will include evaluating various methods of control for invasive species.
- Evaluate the ecological and hydrological status of the reach to construct a restoration and management framework (Strategic Restoration Plan).
- Develop CEQA documentation and environmental permitting.
- Develop landowner agreements with willing partners.

It is estimated that 185 acres of habitat will be actively restored upon implementation of the Strategic Restoration Plan. The following phases (2 and 3) will implement control measures for invasive plants and active and passive restoration of the Project area, informed by this initial phase.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Site Assessment and Survey	\$155,769	\$151,300	\$307,069
Landowner Coordination	\$11,782	\$25,000	\$36,782
Permitting Development and Regulatory Compliance	\$42,078	\$20,000	\$62,078
Habitat Restoration, Monitoring and Management Plan	\$107,302	\$22,000	\$129,302
Project Management	\$24,913	\$30,000	\$54,913
Indirect	\$14,073	---	\$14,073
Total	\$355,917	\$248,300	\$604,217

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Site Assessment and Survey: Field surveys (vegetation, fauna, and soils), hydrology/shallow groundwater, mapping and remote sensing in GIS platform, parcel boundaries.
- Landowner Coordination: Landowner access and implementation agreements, public/stakeholder meetings and sustained networks platform, printed and online information materials for stakeholders and community, cooperative permit development.
- Permitting Development and Regulatory Compliance: Regulatory and permitting needs for implementation will be developed.
- Habitat Restoration, Monitoring and Management Plan: Invasive plant control, native plant restoration, implementation access and feasibility, monitoring and adaptive management strategy.
- Project Management: Grant administration, invoicing, reporting, coordinating with project team and consultants, and overseeing all aspects of the Project.
- Indirect: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 20 percent of the total direct WCB award, minus subcontractor and equipment costs.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

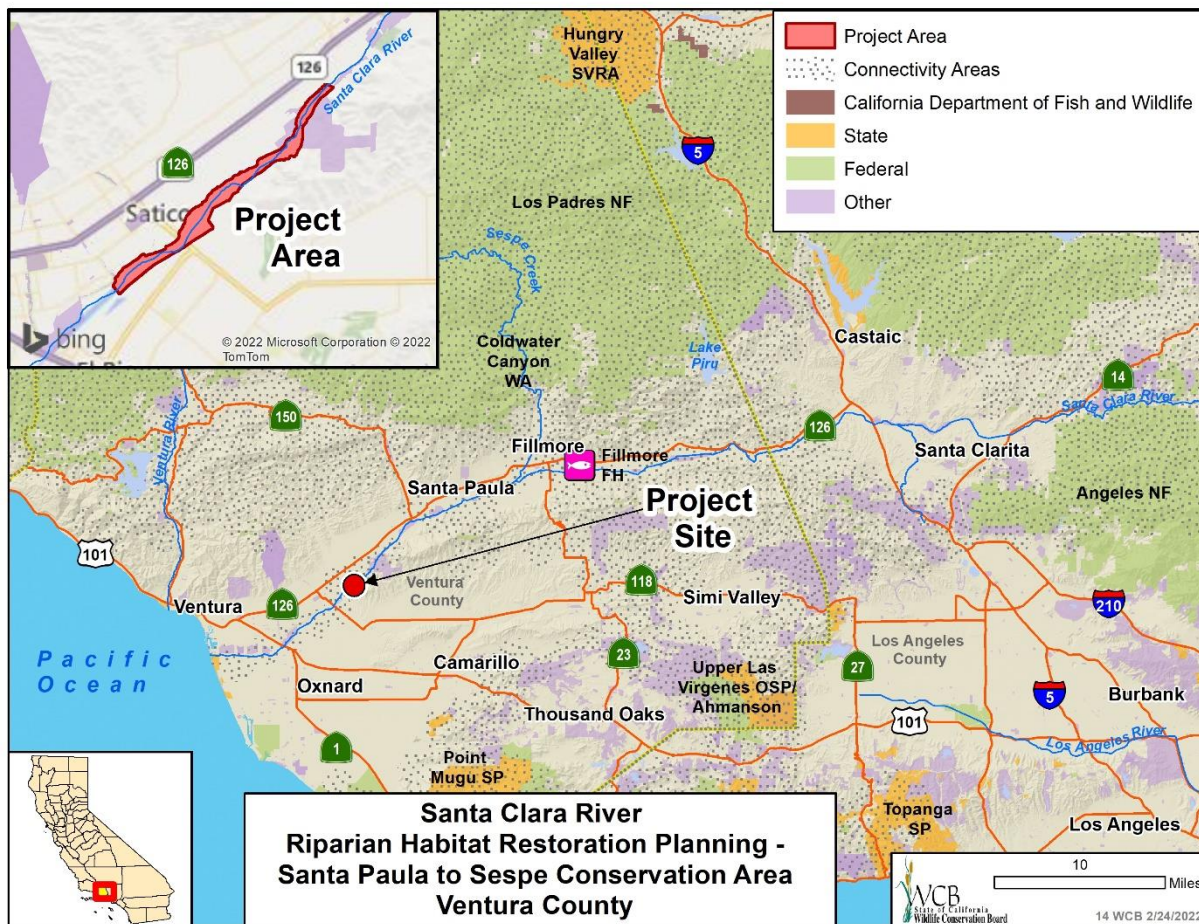
- Steve Bennett, Assemblymember, 37th Assembly District
- Matt LaVere, First District, Ventura County Board of Supervisors
- Kelly Long, Supervisor, Third District, Ventura County Board of Supervisors
- Carmen Ramirez, Fifth District, Ventura County Board of Supervisors
- Glenn Shephard, Director, Ventura County Public Works Agency
- John R Beall, Deputy Agricultural Commissioner, Ventura County
- Mauricio E. Guardado, Jr., General Manager, United Water Conservation District
- Shawn Kelly, Executive Director, Santa Clara River Conservancy
- John Krist, Chief Executive Officer, Farm Bureau of Ventura County
- Linnea Hall, Ph.D., Executive Director, Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology
- Thomas Oreña Lloyd-Butler, Rancho Santa Clara del Norte
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies, as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



14. Community Wetlands Restoration Grant Program, Phase III

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$560,000 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Community Wetlands Restoration Grant Program, Phase III
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	California State Coastal Conservancy
Amount Recommended:	\$560,000
Funding Partners:	California State Coastal Conservancy, California Ocean Protection Council, and Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
Landowner(s):	Various
County:	Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Ventura
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Funding:	Proposition 50
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.5 Objectives: SI 4.3
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Community Wetlands Restoration Grant Program, Phase III (Project) will provide support for the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project's (WRP) Community Wetlands Restoration Grant Program (CWRGP), which encompasses the Southern California coastal region from Point Conception in Santa Barbara County to the United States border with Mexico. This region includes Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego counties.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The CWRGP is a broad-based partnership of 18 state and federal agencies working in concert with scientists, local governments, environmental organizations, business leaders, and educators.

The Project will be administered and managed by SCC and will provide funding to CWRGP annually for community-based wetland and riparian enhancement and restoration projects in coastal wetlands and watersheds in the Southern California region. Over the course of the past 20 years, WRP has provided CWRGP funding for 169 community-based restoration projects in southern California coastal wetlands and watersheds.

The purpose of the Project is to further the goals of the WRP Regional Strategy and CWRGP; build local capacity to plan and implement wetland restoration projects; promote community involvement in wetland restoration activities; and

foster education about wetlands ecosystems. Projects funded through CWRGP must include strong educational and community involvement elements.

Because it seeks to recover functioning systems, WRP does not limit its preservation and restoration activities to “wetlands” as defined by regulatory agencies, but includes within its ambit historic wetlands, areas fringing wetlands, and uplands integrally related to a healthy wetland ecosystem. Typical projects funded through CWRGP often include the removal of invasive species, planting of native plant species, trash abatement, trail decommissioning, trail and interpretive element construction, and other efforts to restore or enhance wetland habitats.

To achieve the objective to support community-based restoration projects, CWRGP will prioritize funding for projects that:

- Engage CWRGP Priority Communities to restore or enhance coastal wetlands and coastal stream corridors.
- Implement restoration projects that have strong community benefits such as community engagement, education, workforce development, career development, leadership development, or community celebrations.
- Demonstrate community-led planning and implementation of desired projects that are anchored in community expertise such as community leaders, community-based organizations, tribal members, local planners, or local and state government officials.
- Increase organizational capacity to plan and implement habitat restoration projects.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

SCC will be responsible for all implementation activities. SCC will manage and monitor all grants during the construction period. After the construction period concludes, the landowner or land manager will be responsible for maintaining the habitat improvements for the remainder of the Project life.

If at any time during the life of the sub-awarded projects, the Project improvements are not maintained, the Grant Agreement requires that SCC refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Program/Project Management	\$60,000	\$160,000	\$220,000
Sub-Project Implementation	\$500,000	\$600,000	\$1,100,000
Total	\$560,000	\$760,000	\$1,320,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Program/Project Management: Management of subgrants, invoicing, payroll tracking, materials purchasing, and operating expenses.
- Sub-Project Implementation: Restoration costs awarded to subgrants.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(4), the grant of funds to SCC for a project to administer subgrants to a broad-based partnership of 18 state and federal agencies to provide funding for community-based restoration projects in coastal wetlands and watersheds is not a project subject to the requirements of CEQA, because it is a government fiscal activity which does not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment. Prior to commencement of any project funded by SCC from this grant, any necessary environmental review required by CEQA shall be completed by the appropriate lead agency and documentation of that compliance shall be provided to WCB per the terms of the Grant Agreement.



15. Lake Elsinore Aquatic Ecosystem Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$750,000 from the General Fund (Budget Act of 2021), Lake Elsinore Restoration Provision; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Lake Elsinore Aquatic Ecosystem Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	City of Lake Elsinore and Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District
Amount Recommended:	\$750,000
Funding Partners:	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
County:	Riverside
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Funding:	General Fund
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 4.1
Disadvantaged Community:	Within a severely disadvantaged community

LOCATION

Lake Elsinore Aquatic Ecosystem Planning (Project) will determine the most effective design and approach to restore aquatic and riparian habitat at Lake Elsinore, southern California's largest natural, freshwater lake and the terminus of the San Jacinto River in Riverside County.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Lake Elsinore is classified as a warmwater fishery. It provides habitat for over 260 bird species and supports birds migrating along the Pacific Flyway. Due to effects of climate and watershed hydrology, water levels in the lake can fluctuate dramatically, ranging from dry lakebed to extreme flood conditions. Periods of low rainfall and runoff result in shallow lake depths and higher nutrient and salt concentrations that can lead to harmful algae blooms and fish die offs.

The water level in Lake Elsinore evaporates at a rate of 4.5 feet per year. Only a few feet of water enter the lake each year through rainfall, runoff, and recycled water. Inflow from the San Jacinto River brings nutrient rich water and sediments that impact water quality and wildlife. As a result of the above, the Regional Water Quality Control Board has categorized Lake Elsinore as an impaired water body due to excessive nutrient levels.

The Project will develop a Lake Elsinore Aquatic Restoration Feasibility Study to determine how best to restore Lake Elsinore's aquatic ecosystem and riparian habitat. The cost for this feasibility study is to be shared equally between federal (USACE) and local government (Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District, the City of Lake Elsinore and the Riverside County Water Conservation and Flood Control District).

The ultimate goal is to implement the Lake Elsinore Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Project as a United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) project under the Continuing Authority Program (CAP) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (Section 206). That implementation project will involve the study, design, and construction of aquatic ecosystem and riparian habitat restoration.

The Project is a state budget appropriation (State Budget Act of 2021, Senate Bill 129) to cover the local cost share for the feasibility study.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$300,000
Planning	\$322,500	\$600,000	\$922,500
Indirect Costs	\$277,500	---	\$277,500
Total	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$1,500,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Project team coordination, stakeholder communications and outreach, and grant reporting.
- Planning: Project design, environmental review, preparation of permit applications, etc.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs calculated as a negotiated percentage of the total direct WCB award, minus subcontractor and equipment costs.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

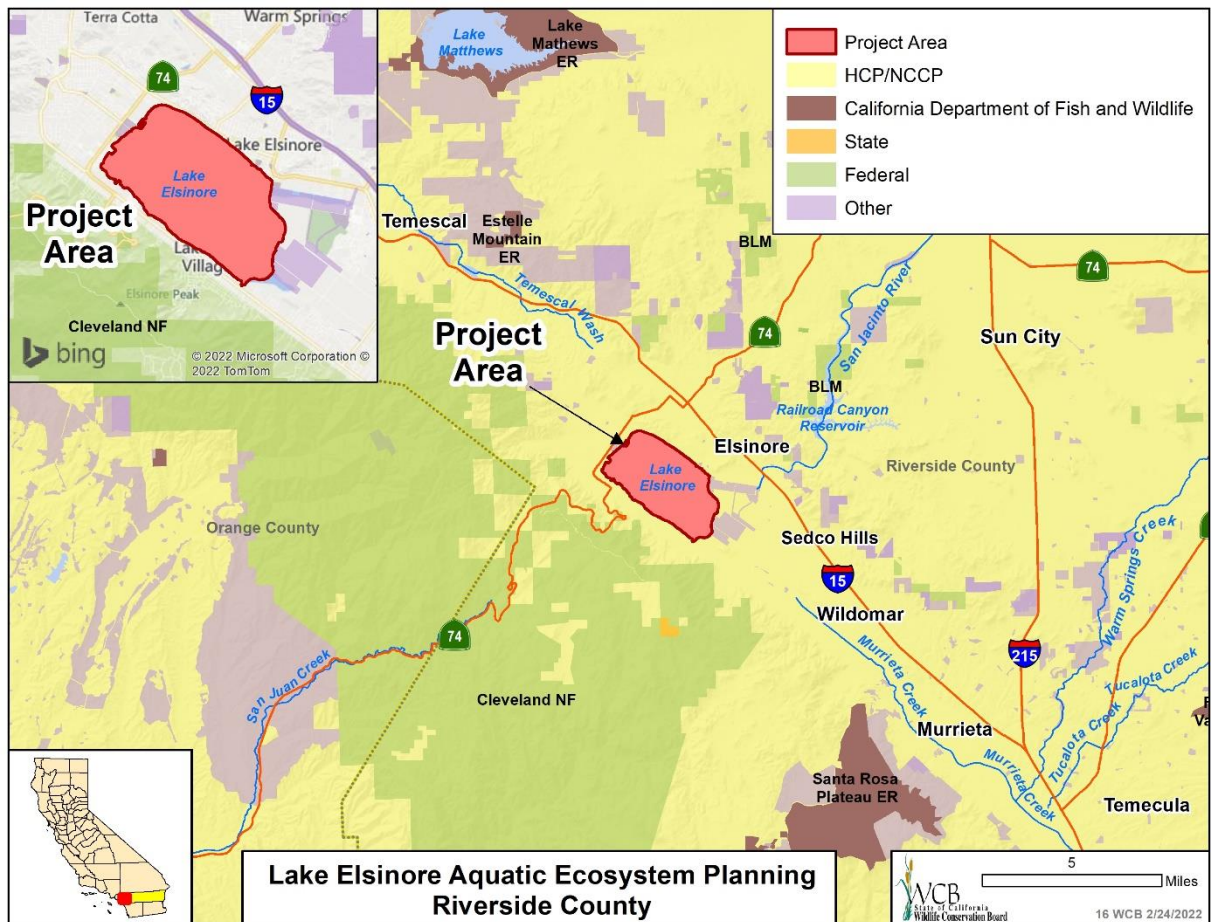
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies, as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



16. Cháchaany Hamuk Trailhead Improvement

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$398,720 from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80132(a)(9); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Cháchaany Hamuk Trailhead Improvement
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	National Forest Foundation
Amount Recommended:	\$398,720
Funding Partners:	National Forest Foundation, United States Forest Service
Landowner(s):	United States Forest Service
County:	San Diego
Program:	Public Access
Funding:	Proposition 68
Strategic Plan:	Goals: C.1 Objectives: SI 3.4
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Cháchaany Hamuk Trailhead Improvement (Project) is located in the Palomar Ranger District near the Cleveland National Forest. The hike to Three Sisters Falls includes chaparral and riparian habitats, waterfalls, and beautiful mountain views. The trailhead is in the vicinity of the Boulder Creek drainage and Eagle Peak, which are located between Santa Ysabel and Descanso, California. The trailhead would be constructed at the junction of Boulder Creek Road and Cedar Creek Road, an area known locally as the "Turntable." It is located approximately 40 miles from El Cajon and 54 miles from San Diego.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Cháchaany Hamuk Trailhead to the Three Sisters Falls is a very popular recreation site for National Forest visitors seeking to experience the outdoors and connect with nature. The high number of visitors during the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated impacts on popular trails and increased demands for services like trash collection and restroom maintenance. The Project, a partnership between the National Forest Foundation and the Cleveland National Forest, will include the following activities: clearing and grubbing, installing aggregate surface on loop road and parking areas, installing two new double vault restrooms, installation of a new, ten-panel bulletin board, construction of day use areas, installation of picnic tables, installation of parking lot features, installation of interpretive and wayfinding signage, and construction of a new aggregate surface entrance road.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The National Forest Foundation has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the property. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, National Forest Foundation does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	\$35,600	\$51,098	\$86,698
CEQA Compliance	---	---	---
Soil Exploration	---	---	---
Site Preparation	\$75,000	\$122,498	\$197,498
Construction	\$281,000	\$581,384	\$862,384
Indirect Costs	\$7,120	\$51,424	\$58,544
Total	\$398,720	\$806,404	\$1,205,124

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: This includes coordination, procurement, contract management, reporting, and site visits.
- Site Preparation: Prepare site for construction.
- Construction: Construct site as described. Purchase and install amenities such as restrooms, kiosks, shade structures, etc.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 20 percent of the total direct WCB award, minus subcontractor and equipment costs.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

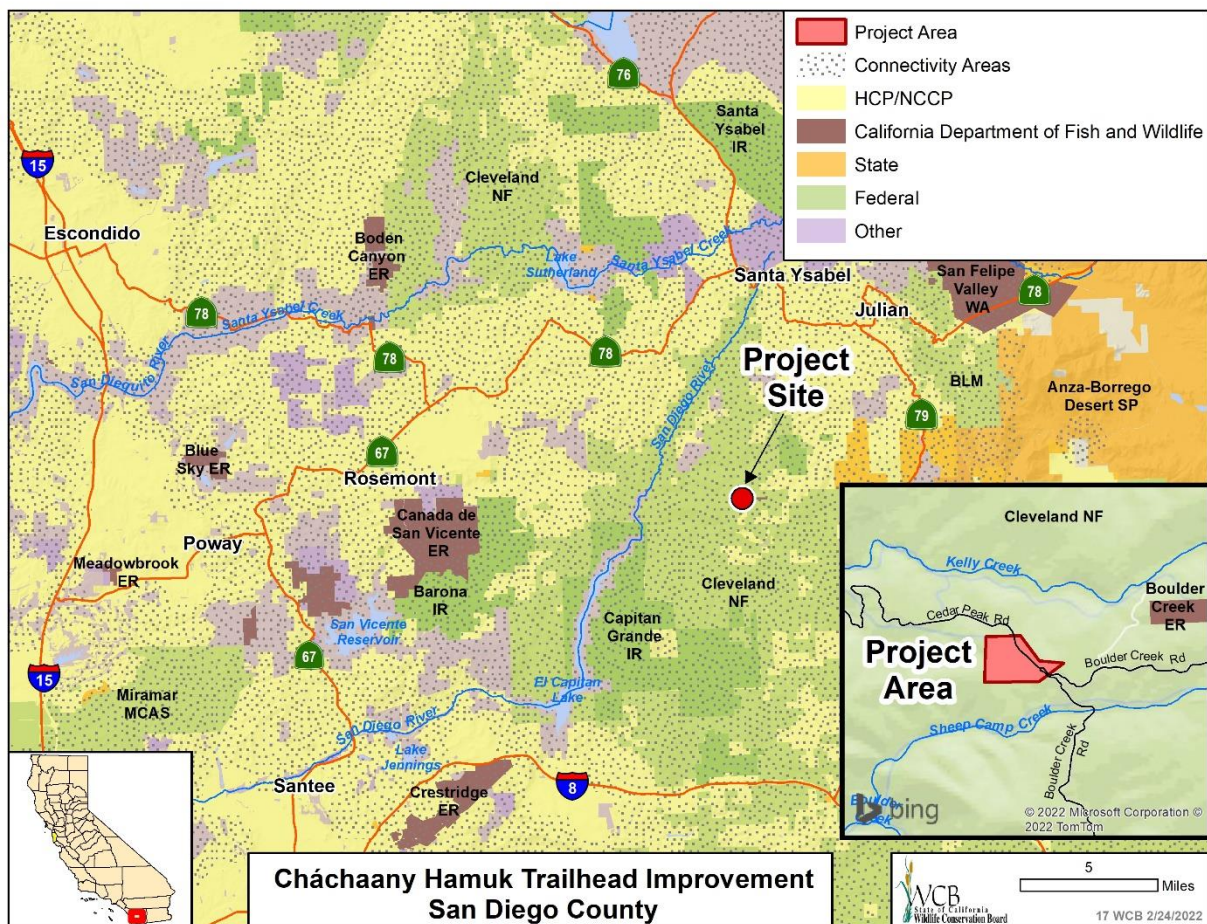
- Scott Tangenberg, Forest Supervisor, Cleveland National Forest
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, as lead agency, prepared an Negative Declaration (ND) for the project pursuant to the provisions of the CEQA. Staff considered the ND and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate NOD will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



17. Oceanside Harbor Fishing Pier and Non-motorized Vessel Launch

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$267,200 from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80132(a)(9); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Oceanside Harbor Fishing Pier and Non-motorized Vessel Launch
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	City of Oceanside
Amount Recommended:	\$267,200
Funding Partners:	City of Oceanside
County:	San Diego
Program:	Public Access
Funding:	Proposition 68
Strategic Plan:	Goals: C.1 Objectives: SI 3.2
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Oceanside Harbor Fishing Pier and Non-motorized Vessel Launch project (Project) is located in the City of Oceanside, in northern San Diego County. The Oceanside Harbor is in the northern extent of the city, bordering the Camp Pendleton Military Base. Within the harbor, the reconstructed and expanded fishing pier, and the future non-motorized vessel launch ramp are to be situated facing the main harbor entrance channel.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The existing fishing pier was built between 1978-1980 and was recently found to be affected by advanced corrosion and is structurally deficient. In July 2021, the pier was closed to the public due to safety concerns. The pier previously provided 24-hour, 365-day a year access and supported a growing fishing community. On a typical weekend, the pier supported over 30 people for fishing. When capacity was met, the overflow anglers would fish from the shore. This had the potential to cause safety hazards and impacts to nearby boating activities. Additionally, the adjacent non-motorized dock just north of the fishing pier is highly used. However, it is not ADA accessible and has a relatively short gangway that becomes steep at low tide.

The Project will address fishing and boating access at the site by planning for an improved, extended fishing pier, an ADA accessible non-motorized boat launch, an ADA restroom, and an additional ADA parking stall. The new pier will allow for 200 linear feet of available pier railing space, extending out slightly from its current footprint.

The project will consist of:

- Geotechnical surveys
- Complete plans and specifications
- Full suite of environmental compliance documents

Successful completion of the Project will allow for future implementation, which will consist of the following items:

- Replacement and expansion of the existing fishing pier
- Addition of new ADA non-motorized vessel launch dock with 80-ft gangway
- Addition of an ADA restroom
- Addition of an ADA parking stall

The Project will benefit local and visiting fishing communities, paddleboard and kayak communities, and wildlife observers. The nearby community within the city of Oceanside and South Camp Pendleton are considered severely disadvantaged and disadvantaged communities. These communities represent a large portion of the user group for the pier and launch dock. This Project would enable restored and improved fishing access for these communities. The pier will not require access or use fees.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	\$23,800	\$5,000	\$28,800
Supporting Engineering Studies	\$35,000	\$11,600	\$46,600
Engineering and Design	\$107,900	\$37,300	\$145,200
Supporting Environmental Studies	\$29,800	\$9,900	\$39,700
Regulatory Compliance and Permitting	\$70,700	\$23,500	\$94,200
Total	\$267,200	\$87,300	\$354,500

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Grant administration, invoicing, reporting, coordinating with project team and consultants, and overseeing all aspects of the Project.
- Supporting Engineering Studies: Complete geotechnical studies, topographic and bathymetric survey, and sea level rise assessment.
- Engineering and Design: Complete 30%, 60%, 90%, and final design plans for fishing pier and launch dock.
- Supporting Environmental Studies: Complete biological resources report, construction noise technical study on wildlife, and limited asbestos survey and report.
- Regulatory Compliance and Permitting: Complete permitting and compliance documents, including but not limited to: CEQA, USACE Section 404 permit,

Section 10 Applications and Alternatives Analysis, RWQCB 401 Water Quality Certification, Coastal Development Permit, Section 7 of Endangered Species Act, and Marine Mammal Protection Act Compliance.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

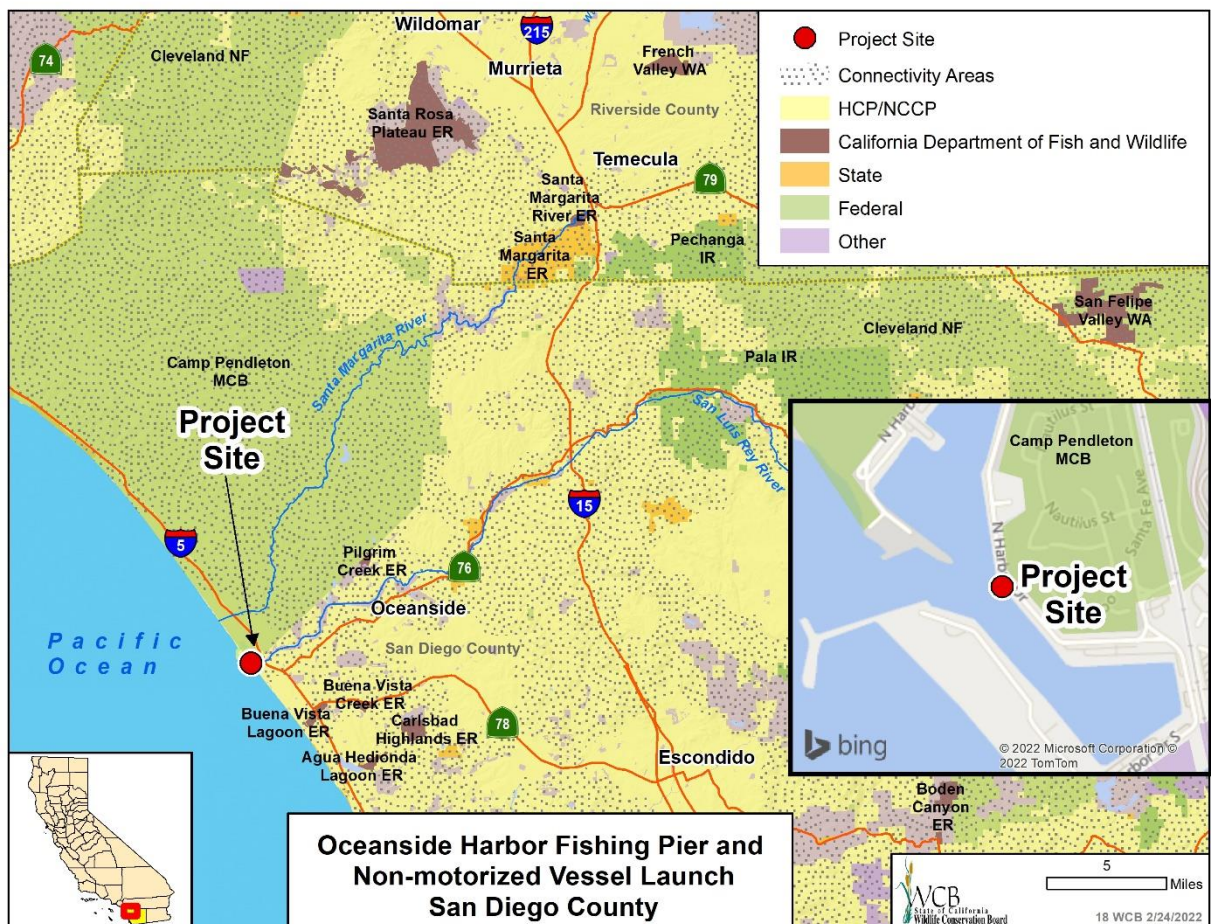
- Esther C. Sanchez, Mayor, City of Oceanside
- Scott M. Ashton, Chief Executive Officer, Oceanside Chamber of Commerce
- Leslee Gaul, Chief Executive Officer and President, Visit Oceanside
- Ernest A. Preto, Managing Partner, Oceanside Sea Center
- Brandon Paciotti, President, Oceanside Anglers Club

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies, as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



18. Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve, SDG&E Power Line Re-Route
STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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

Project Title:	Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve, SDG&E Power Line Re-Route
Project Type:	CDFW Easement
Grantee:	San Diego Gas and Electric Company
Amount Recommended:	\$0
County:	San Diego

LOCATION

The property (Property) is located within CDFW's Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve (Reserve), 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 just west of Campo Road and five miles north of the Otay Lakes.

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, USFWS' San Diego National Wildlife Refuge, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) 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

The project entails CDFW accepting the quitclaim of a powerline easement from the San Diego Gas and Electric Company (SDG&E) and then granting SDGE a powerline easement (exchange) that is in a preferable location on the Reserve.

The project would allow SDG&E to replace existing wooden powerline poles with fire resistant, weatherized steel poles that closely resemble wood. The pole replacement is expected to increase safety and reliability of the electric infrastructure that currently serves the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), emergency service facilities, campgrounds, homes, businesses, and other customers within the surrounding areas. According to CDFW, the location of the new easement is preferable to the old easement location and SDG&E agreed to leaving the existing wooden power line poles in place so that raptors can utilize them as a perch.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CDFW will continue to own and manage the Property as part of the Reserve. The Property and the exchange will have no additional impacts to CDFW costs associated with managing the Property. Public access will be available consistent with the Reserve's existing access practices.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

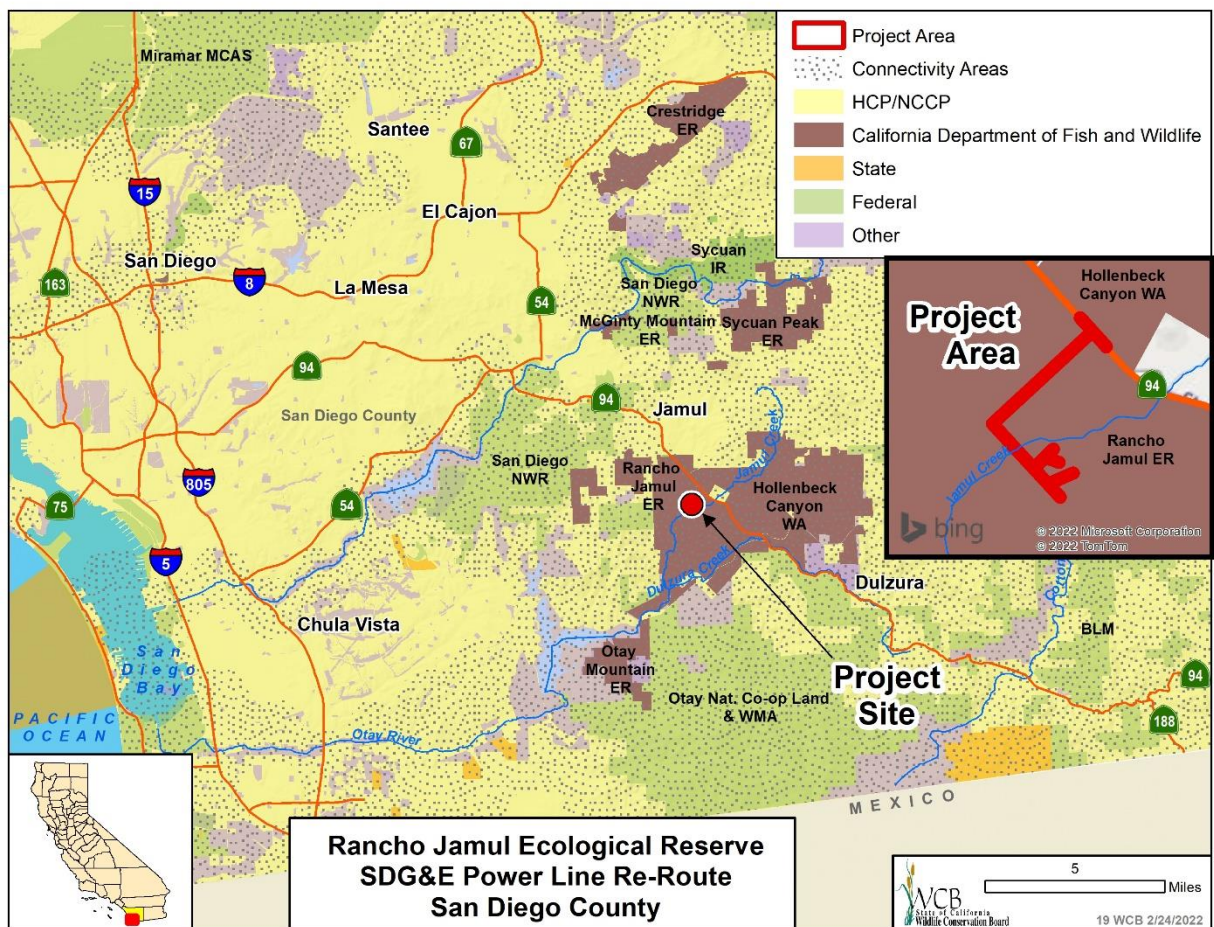
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The project has been reviewed for compliance with CEQA requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4, as a minor alteration in the condition of land and/or vegetation that does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file the appropriate NOE with the State Clearinghouse and the county clerk.



Presentation Items

19. Lone Pine Ranch, Phase II

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$10,000,000 from Senate Bill 129: General Fund, Budget Act of 2021, Section 19.57, Chapter 69 for the grant to The Wildlands Conservancy (TWC); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Lone Pine Ranch Phase II
Project Type:	Fee Title (10,848± acres)
Grantee:	The Wildlands Conservancy
Amount Recommended:	\$10,000,000
Funding Partners:	None
County:	Trinity
Program:	Land Acquisition
Funding:	General Fund
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.2, A.4, C.1 Objectives: 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.4, 2.5, 3.4
Disadvantaged Community:	Within a severely disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The subject property (Property), known as Lone Pine Ranch, Phase II, is located in southwestern Trinity County, approximately 25 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean and just south of the community of Alderpoint. Primary access to this area is provided by State Route 101, which is approximately 15 miles west of the Property. Alderpoint Road, off State Route 101, provides access to Lone Pine Road which leads into the northern boundary of the Property.

The Property and the surrounding area are rural in nature, with a landscape consisting of rolling hills, deep valleys, waterways, and forested mountains that host smaller scale private ranches, primarily dedicated to cattle grazing, agriculture, and timber uses. Just one mile west of the Property is the Six Rivers National Forest, which borders the Mendocino National Forest. Approximately 12 miles north is TWC's 3,000-acre Emerald Waters Reserve, and its 5,800-acre Spy Rock Reserve is less than five miles to the south.

At the August 2021 WCB board meeting, the Board approved the 7,480± acre Lone Pine Ranch, Phase I acquisition that borders the entire southern boundary of the Property. Immediately abutting the Property's northern and western boundary is the remaining portion of Lone Pine Ranch consisting of 8,273± acres that will be acquired by TWC in separate acquisition transactions. Upon the completion of all purchases, TWC will protect over 18 miles Eel River frontage. This frontage will protect the viewshed from the envisioned 320-mile Great Redwood Trail that will run along the former line of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad from Larkspur to Arcata. The trail will meander through portions of the Eel River watershed. The

Property is targeted to act as a strategic access point to the trail, which will provide the public recreational opportunities in the form of hiking, bicycling, and equestrian activities.

This acquisition is supported by a CDFW Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE). The LAE validates this proposed Property acquisition as a major conservation benefit that will provide the greatest ecological lift through management of invasive species, wetland and stream enhancement, and improved forest management, along with anchoring an area of essential habitat connectivity with the Pacific Coast. The Property is also identified in the California Statewide Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) associated within the North Coastal and Montane Riparian Forest and Woodland Ecoregion. The SWAP states that the protection of this ecologically intact Property will allow the diverse habitats and species to persist through time even in the face of climate change.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 10,848-acre undeveloped Property is the central portion of the larger 26,600 Lone Pine Ranch. The Property consist of 26 contiguous undeveloped legal parcels forming an irregular tract of land with topography characterized as gently rolling to steeply sloping terrain with elevation ranges of 400 feet along the Eel River frontage to 4,200 feet on the mountain ridges that traverse the eastern portion of Property. The Property does not contain any improvements, except for some developed water sources provided by natural springs. A series of well-maintained unpaved roads provide easy vehicle access from county roads into the interior of the Property. The Property has been under the same ownership since the 1920s and has been historically used for timber harvesting, but has since transitioned to cattle grazing and recreation.

The Property is characterized by a variety of habitats including oak woodlands, grasslands, meadows, riverine habitat, and conifer forests. There are several perennial creeks that run through the Property and drain into the main stem of the Eel River. From north to south, these include Kekawaka Creek, Boulder Creek, Tunnel Creek, and Willow Creek. These creeks further enhance the 18 miles of river frontage that border the western and southern boundaries of the Lone Pine Ranch. This river frontage is a natural barrier to encroachment from vehicle trespass while also providing natural connectivity to surrounding lands via the river corridors. Water resources on the Property are important to the region and anadromous fish in the Eel River watershed. Efforts by TWC to monitor water quality and flow conditions throughout the water year will support understanding the critical function and management of this Property's precious water resources. Initial reconnaissance surveys, habitat inventories, biological surveys, and ongoing monitoring of spawning activity, including but not limited to nest and carcass surveys and summer water quality, will be used to determine how water resources can be improved. These improvements could include fish passage obstruction removal, restoration of riparian trees to provide shade for pools, and installation of large woody debris.

Designated as a National Wild and Scenic River in 1981, the 196-mile Eel River is the third largest watershed in California, draining more than 3,500 square miles across five counties. Ninety percent of the land along the Eel River is in unprotected private ownership. The Eel River ecosystem supports over 75 mammal species, 400 bird species, and 15 species of fish. This includes coho salmon and steelhead trout which have seen dramatic population declines because of impacts to water quality, overfishing, water diversion, and dams.

The protection of the Property will not only support both the state and federally threatened coho salmon and steelhead trout, but it will also benefit other wildlife species including the state and federally threatened northern spotted owl, state threatened fisher, and the federally threatened plant species water howellia. Additionally, there are many state species of special concern that will benefit from this project, including the southern torrent salamander, foothill yellow-legged frog, northwestern pond turtle, northern red-legged frog, northern goshawk, and the yellow warbler, along with the common species of mountain lion and deer.

Protection of the Property will also allow TWC to establish public recreation opportunities that are currently limited due to most of the land along the Eel River watershed being privately owned. To the extent compatible with the Property's conservation management, TWC will develop and deliver much needed passive recreation and interpretive education opportunities for the public, potentially including new hiking trails, bicycling, horseback riding, camping, and kayak put-ins on the Eel River.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

TWC will own, manage, and monitor the Property as a protected nature preserve ensuring that natural resources remain undisturbed and restored for compatible public access and public recreation. Near term conservation will include improvements to sustainable cattle grazing and ensuring timber harvest only occurs to improve ecological conditions. Other anticipated conservation efforts include invasive species management, wetland and stream restoration, erosion control, improved forest management, and native tree planting. Established in 1995, TWC created a nature preserve system comprised of 21 preserves encompassing 163,000 acres of diverse mountain, valley, desert, river, and oceanfront landscapes in California. These preserves are open to the public for passive recreation including camping, hiking, birding, and other compatible uses.

PROJECT FUNDING

The Budget Act of 2021 provided a \$10 million allocation to support TWC's acquisition of the Lone Pine Ranch. Timing was such that TWC was contractually obligated to close escrow no later than November 18, 2021, or lose the opportunity to acquire the property. This timing did not provide the time needed for WCB to complete its necessary due diligence and appraisal work, consequently TWC secured private financing which provided the necessary money needed to close the transaction within the option period. WCB's grant will provide the funding

necessary to pay off the financing and allow TWC to own the property free and clear, subject to restrictions on future uses of the Property through recording of WCB's Notice of Unrecorded Grant Agreement.

The DGS approved fair market value is \$10,000,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$10,000,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$10,000,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

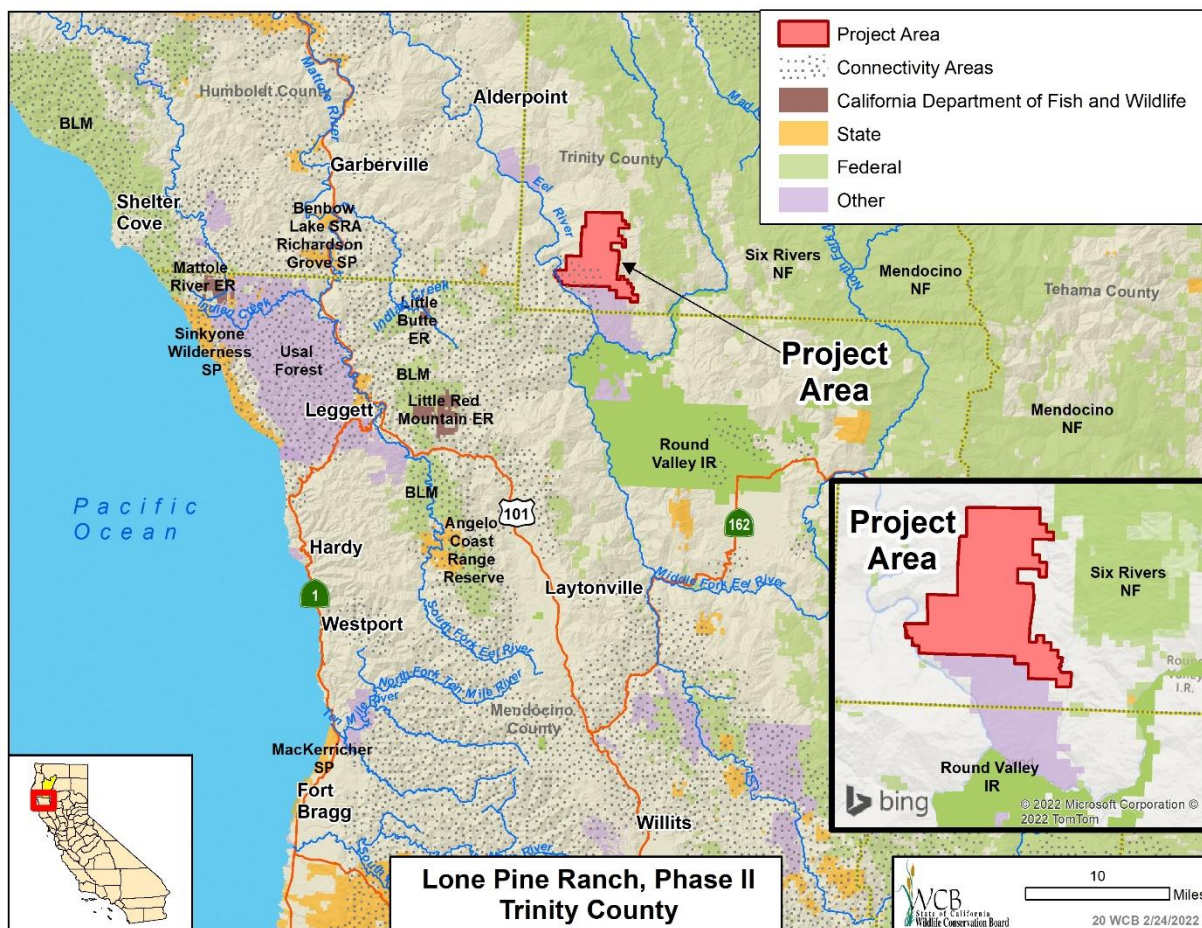
- None received

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The project has been reviewed for compliance with 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 WCB, an NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



20. Hemphill Diversion Structure Fish Passage

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,500,000 from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80132(e)(1); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Hemphill Diversion Structure Fish Passage
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Nevada Irrigation District
Amount Recommended:	\$1,500,000
Funding Partners:	Nevada Irrigation District
Landowner(s):	Private landowner
County:	Placer
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Funding:	Proposition 68
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 2.1
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Hemphill Diversion Structure Fish Passage (Project) is located at the Hemphill Diversion Structure (HDS) in Auburn Ravine, two miles east of the city of Lincoln.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Auburn Ravine is an important anadromous salmonid tributary to the Sacramento River. Stream flows in Auburn Ravine are augmented by current water management practices that provide much higher quantity and quality of anadromous fish habitat than would have occurred historically. These practices provide higher than normal flows annually from April through October with cooler water temperatures. Unfortunately, instream fish passage barriers prevent most anadromous fish from accessing much of this enhanced habitat. Restoring this access has been identified as a priority action for recovery of Central Valley fall-run Chinook salmon and California Central Valley Distinct Population Segment steelhead in numerous recovery plans and programs.

Previous barrier removal projects have successfully extended anadromous fish access to habitat in the ravine past the city of Lincoln to where it is currently blocked by the HDS and its associated dam. The HDS is a water supply diversion owned and operated by the Nevada Irrigation District (NID). Studies conducted over the past decade have determined that the HDS is a complete barrier to migration of anadromous salmonids and lamprey during the spring to fall irrigation period.

The Project will remove the dam and other instream elements of the HDS and construct in its place a roughened rock ramp that will allow fish passage to the

upstream reach while maintaining service to NID raw water customers. The newly installed ramp will allow fish passage at both high and low flows. Screening on the Hemphill Canal will also be installed to prevent entrapment of fish in the water supply canal.

Removal of the HDS will restore year-round access to approximately six miles of quality spawning and rearing habitat for anadromous salmonids and lamprey. This newly available portion of Auburn Ravine is designated as critical habitat under the federal Endangered Species Act for California Central Valley steelhead and essential fish habitat under the 1976 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act for Pacific salmon (i.e., Chinook salmon).

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

NID has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the Project, including management of the Property. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, NID does not manage and maintain the Project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	---	\$66,410	\$66,410
Permitting	---	\$385,000	\$385,000
Monitoring and maintenance	---	\$180,270	\$180,270
Construction	\$1,500,000	\$1,604,500	\$3,104,500
Total	\$1,500,000	\$2,236,180	\$3,736,180

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Construction: Remove existing diversion, construct roughened rock ramp, install fish screen, canal grading, and bank stabilization.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

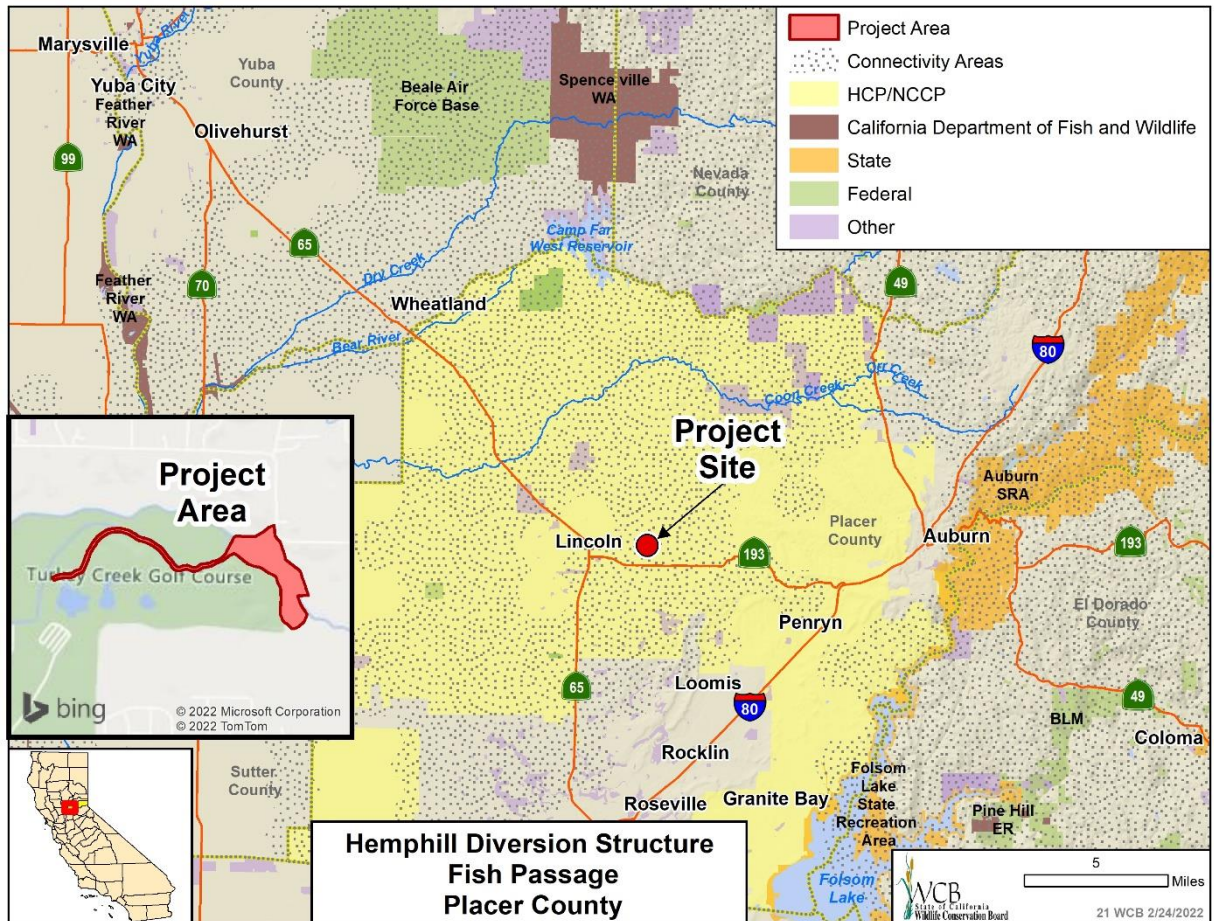
- The Honorable Doug LaMalfa, Member of Congress, United States House of Representatives
- The Honorable Kevin Kiley, Assemblymember, California State Assembly
- James Haufler, President, Friends of Auburn Ravine
- Robert Hane, Board Member, Save Auburn Ravine Salmon and Steelhead

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

NID, as lead agency, prepared an EIR for the Project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA. Staff considered the EIR and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOD will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



21. Green Oaks Wetland and Riparian Restoration

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,124,485 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(f); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Green Oaks Wetland and Riparian Restoration
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	San Mateo County Resource Conservation District
Amount Recommended:	\$1,124,485
Funding Partners:	California Department of Parks and Recreation, San Mateo County Resource Conservation District
Landowner(s):	California Department of Parks and Recreation
County:	San Mateo
Program:	California Riparian Habitat Conservation
Funding:	Habitat Conservation Fund
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 2.1, 2.4
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Green Oaks Wetland and Riparian Restoration project (Project) is in Año Nuevo State Park on approximately 235 acres on the former Steele Ranch property (Property). Historically, the Steele family used the Property for cattle grazing and dairy farming but sold it in the mid-1960s for conventional row crop agriculture. The Property was farmed until the mid-2000s. In 2013, the Property was transferred to the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) as mitigation for the federally and state-listed San Francisco garter snake (SFGS) and federally listed California red-legged frog (CRLF), both species are known to occur on the Property.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property was heavily modified through past intensive agricultural activities and related hydrological changes for water management infrastructure. The Project's goals are to directly restore over 17 acres of historic wetland and riparian habitats and enhance ecosystem function across the entire Property by restoring hydrology to a natural and sustainable condition to support habitat for SFGS and CRLF.

Prior to any construction, all Project permits will be secured, including a Streambed Alteration Agreement, 401 certification, 404 permit, Biological Opinion, Coastal Development Permit, and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). WCB funds will be used to develop, acquire, and implement the SWPPP. Partner funds will be used to secure the other permits and approvals listed above.

Habitat restoration will be completed in two phases as described in the 100% Engineering Designs. Site preparation will include temporary facilities and controls

for mobilization and demobilization, clearing and grubbing, winterizing disturbed areas between construction phases, and removing existing man-made features including an access road, culverts, propane tanks, electrical systems, pipes, and other debris.

Earthen berms that surround the eastern perennial pond will be lowered to restore hydrologic connectivity with the surrounding meadow. Water depth within the pond will remain adequate to provide suitable breeding habitat for CRLF. Lowering and widening these berms will also improve upland basking habitat for SFGS. The agricultural ditch network will be modified to restore natural sheet flow conditions, create open water enhancement areas, and reactivate the historic shallow swale that drains the meadow into Green Oaks Creek. Ditch treatments include filled, mounded, and open water areas that will raise the seasonal groundwater table and create a mosaic of open water, riparian, and upland areas.

The dominant vegetative cover will be shifted from non-native, ruderal species to a mosaic of native riparian and coastal prairie species. Active invasive species management will be led and funded by DPR using integrated pest management practices including manual techniques when targeting small patches, cultural techniques (fire, grazing, and out-planting) when managing at the plant community level, and herbicide when initially targeting a larger population that is fiscally infeasible to control manually. Any herbicide used will follow the recommendation of a Pesticide Control Advisor and will use the lowest possible herbicide concentrations based on label rates. DPR will document and report the type of invasive plant treatments used and the type and quantity of any chemical used to control invasive plants. The Project's outcomes will include the creation of 5 acres of riparian habitat and 2 acres of marsh habitat, control of invasive plants to less than 15 percent cover, reactivation of 12 acres of historic swale, creation of 6 open water enhancement areas, seasonally elevate groundwater levels, establishment of vegetation communities that support SFGS and CRLF, and increased habitat complexity around the eastern pond and open water areas.

Invasive plant removal will not be funded by the WCB grant. California State Parks will be funding and implementing this work as part of their cost-share. Within a 30-foot buffer from riparian areas, tank mixes of 1.5% Round-Up Custom with 0.5% Hasten Oil EA will be used to spot treat exotic annual grasses and forbs to enhance existing, native habitat. Areas to be seeded and planted will experience extensive ground disturbance (clearing, grubbing, and earthwork) prior to planting. DPR will use early detection rapid response practices in these areas to control invasive weeds before they expand in area and density to limit herbicide use. When in smaller densities, annual grasses and forbs will be manually removed with hand tools such as McLeod, Pulaski, and weed wrench. All herbicide applications follow DPR's Pesticide Control Advisor's recommendation.

Project monitoring will include vegetation surveys, focused species surveys for SFGS and CRLF, groundwater monitoring at existing wells, time-lapse photo

monitoring during two+ year storm events, and engineer inspections to ensure the restored Property is functioning as designed.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

DPR has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the Property, including management of the Property. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, San Mateo County Resource Conservation District does not manage and maintain the Project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management and Permitting	\$59,820	\$6,027	\$65,847
Habitat Restoration	\$1,014,117	\$200,000	\$1,214,117
Monitoring	\$24,070	---	\$24,070
General Expense, Field Supplies, and Travel	\$3,400	---	\$3,400
Indirect	\$23,078	\$26,412	\$49,490
Total	\$1,124,485	\$232,439	\$1,356,924

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management and Permitting: Execute and manage subcontracts, prepare invoices and project reporting, coordinate with project team, manage SWPPP, and install project sign.
- Habitat Restoration: Site preparation, invasive plant control, grading and earthwork, seed and plant collection and procurement, and native plant installation and maintenance.
- Monitoring: Photo monitoring, flora and fauna surveys, and as-built surveys.
- General Expenses: Mileage, GIS software, personal protective equipment, and field survey supplies.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 20 percent of the total direct WCB award, minus subcontractor and equipment costs.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

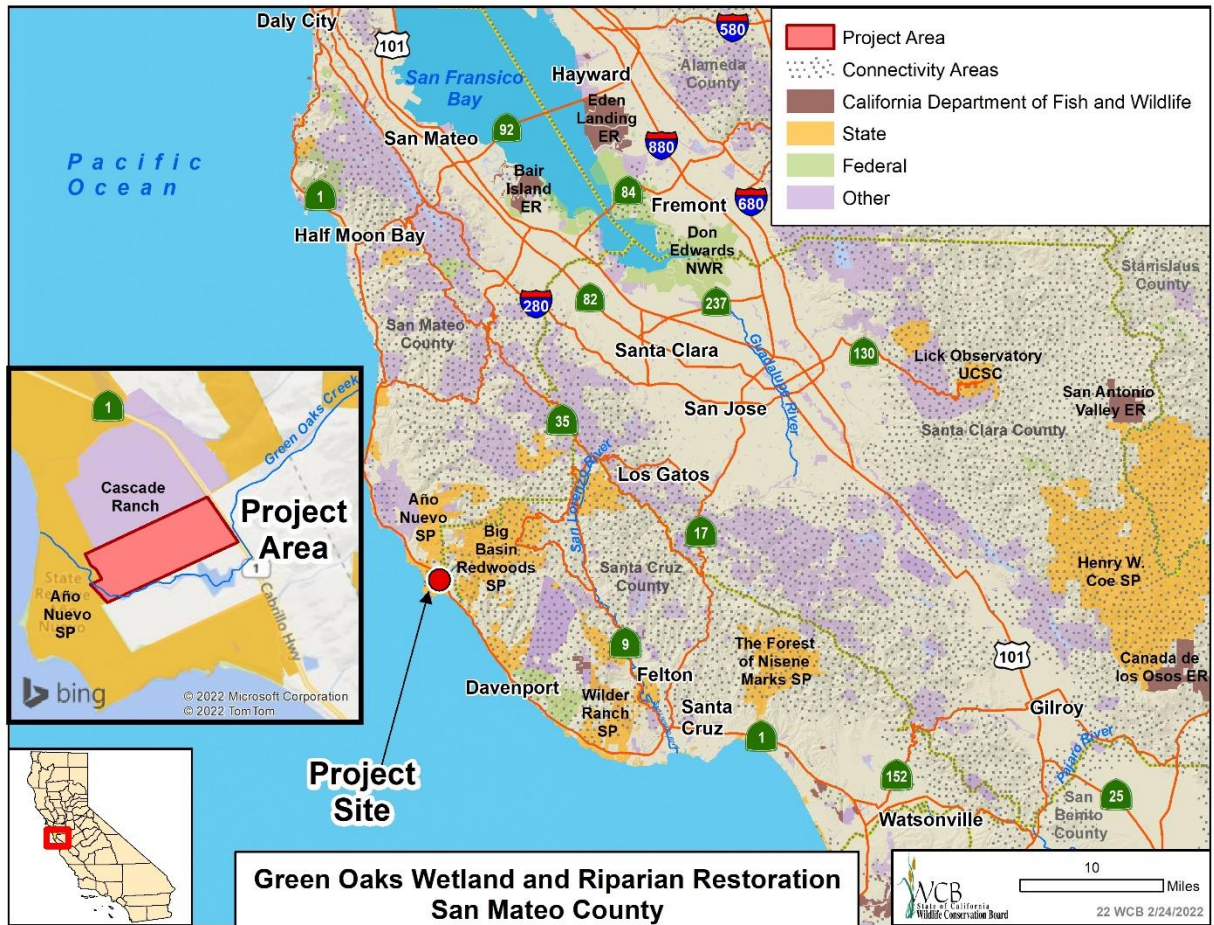
- Anna G. Eshoo, Member of Congress, 18th District, House of Representatives
- Chris Spohrer, District Superintendent, Santa Cruz District, DPR
- Valentin Lopez, Chairman, Amah Mutsun Tribal Band
- Reed Holderman, Interim Executive Director, Amah Mutsun Land Trust

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

DPR, as lead agency, prepared an MND for the project pursuant to the provisions of the CEQA. Staff considered the MND and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOD will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



22. YMCA Camp Jones Gulch Conservation Easement

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,000,000 from Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) for the grant to Sempervirens Fund; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	YMCA Camp Jones Gulch Conservation Easement
Project Type:	Conservation Easement (915± acres)
Grantee:	Sempervirens Fund
Amount Recommended:	\$2,000,000
Funding Partners:	California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Peninsula Open Space Trust, Sempervirens Fund
County:	San Mateo
Program:	Land Acquisition
Funding:	Habitat Conservation Fund
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.4, C.1 Objectives: 1.2, 3.4
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The property known as the YMCA Camp Jones Gulch (Property) is located on both sides of Pescadero Creek Road about 5 miles northeast of the community of Pescadero and about 2 miles south of La Honda in San Mateo County. Primary access to the Property is from Jones Gulch Road, a county maintained paved road. In addition, several established gates and access points provide direct access from Pescadero Creek Road.

Located in the Santa Cruz mountains, the Property is situated between the Pacific Ocean about 5 miles to the west and the Santa Clara Valley to the east. The Property is crossed by Jones Gulch and McCormick creeks, both drain toward Pescadero Creek to the south. The Property is within the Pescadero watershed which drains into a large marsh at the confluence of Butano and Pescadero creeks, adjacent to the Pacific Ocean, near the town of Pescadero.

The Property is identified as a high priority for protection in the CDFW Santa Cruz Mountains Redwoods Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The CAPP identifies ecologically significant lands within the coastal redwood forest and associated communities of the central Santa Cruz Mountains. Implementation of the CAPP will help conserve biodiversity in the Santa Cruz Mountains bioregion and protect important biological systems and species in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The California State Wildlife Action plan designates the area surrounding the Property as the Central Coast region. Land protected through the CAPP will help implement several key recommendations for the region including protecting habitat linkages between large wildland areas by promoting connectivity between existing

protected lands, protecting ecological community types, protecting sensitive species and important wildlife habitats, including streams and watersheds, and restoring fish passage in aquatic systems important for anadromous and wide-ranging fish populations.

The Property is adjacent to nearly 7,000 acres of open space, connecting over 10,000 acres and the largest patch of intact habitat in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Pescadero Creek County Park borders the Property to the east and south. Portola Redwoods State Park is to the east, and several other notable State-owned properties are in the immediate vicinity including Big Basin Redwoods State Park.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is 915± acres and consists of three contiguous assessor parcels that form an irregular tract of land consisting of a wide mixture of vegetation types. The Property's topography varies from level/gentle 5 percent to quite steep 70 percent slopes with elevation from a low of 500' within the lower McCormick Creek drainage up to 1,200' at the upper peak of the Property along the northeasterly border. The Property is zoned Resource Management District and Timberland Preserve Zone (RM/TPZ). About 10 percent of the Property is intensively developed as a campground with support facilities. The Property also harbors extensive onsite timber. For over 80 years the Property has been used as a YMCA camp and recreation retreat.

The YMCA Camp Jones Gulch conservation easement (Easement) will preserve natural, ecological, scenic, open space, and forest resources as well as ensure long-term sustainability as a resource for youth development, environmental education, recreation, and community service. The Property boasts 39 acres of rare old growth redwood forest, 668 acres of young growth redwood, Douglas fir, and hardwood forests, mature oak woodlands and riparian woodlands. Additional vegetation communities on the Property include coastal scrub and coastal grasslands. Located in the headwaters of the Pescadero Creek Watershed, the Property features nine miles of watercourses and streams of value for endangered coho salmon and threatened steelhead trout.

Special status species known to occur on the Property include marbled murrelet, San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat, and California red-legged frog. Similar habitat in the region is known to host an additional 21 identified rare animals. Additional species expected to benefit from this project include the western pond turtle, San Francisco Garter snake, loggerhead shrike, northern harrier, white-tailed kite, olive-sided flycatcher, and several bat species including Townsend's big-eared bat, hoary bat, pallid bat, deer, and mountain lion.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Easement will be held in perpetuity by Sempervirens Fund, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation. The objective of permanently protecting the conservation values of the Property as outlined in the Easement will be met by the perpetual monitoring, enforcement, and defense of the terms of the Easement by

Sempervirens Fund, including the implementation of the Stewardship Plan, which is required by the Easement and must be approved in consultation with CDFW. The Stewardship Plan governs the restoration and stewardship of the Property. Sempervirens Fund is committed to carrying out the Stewardship Plan with YMCA Camp Jones Gulch to enhance and restore the Property's forest health, reduce the threat of wildfire, and promote climate resiliency across multiple wildlife habitats. The Stewardship Plan will include consultation with the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District, as well as indigenous consultation with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band and Muwekema Tribal Band. Sempervirens Fund will monitor the Easement and implementation of the Stewardship Plan no less than once a year.

PROJECT FUNDING

The DGS approved fair market value is \$10,470,000. The landowner has agreed to a bargain sale of \$9,625,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$2,000,000
Sempervirens Fund	\$3,225,000
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation	\$2,400,000
Peninsula Open Space Trust	\$2,000,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$9,625,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

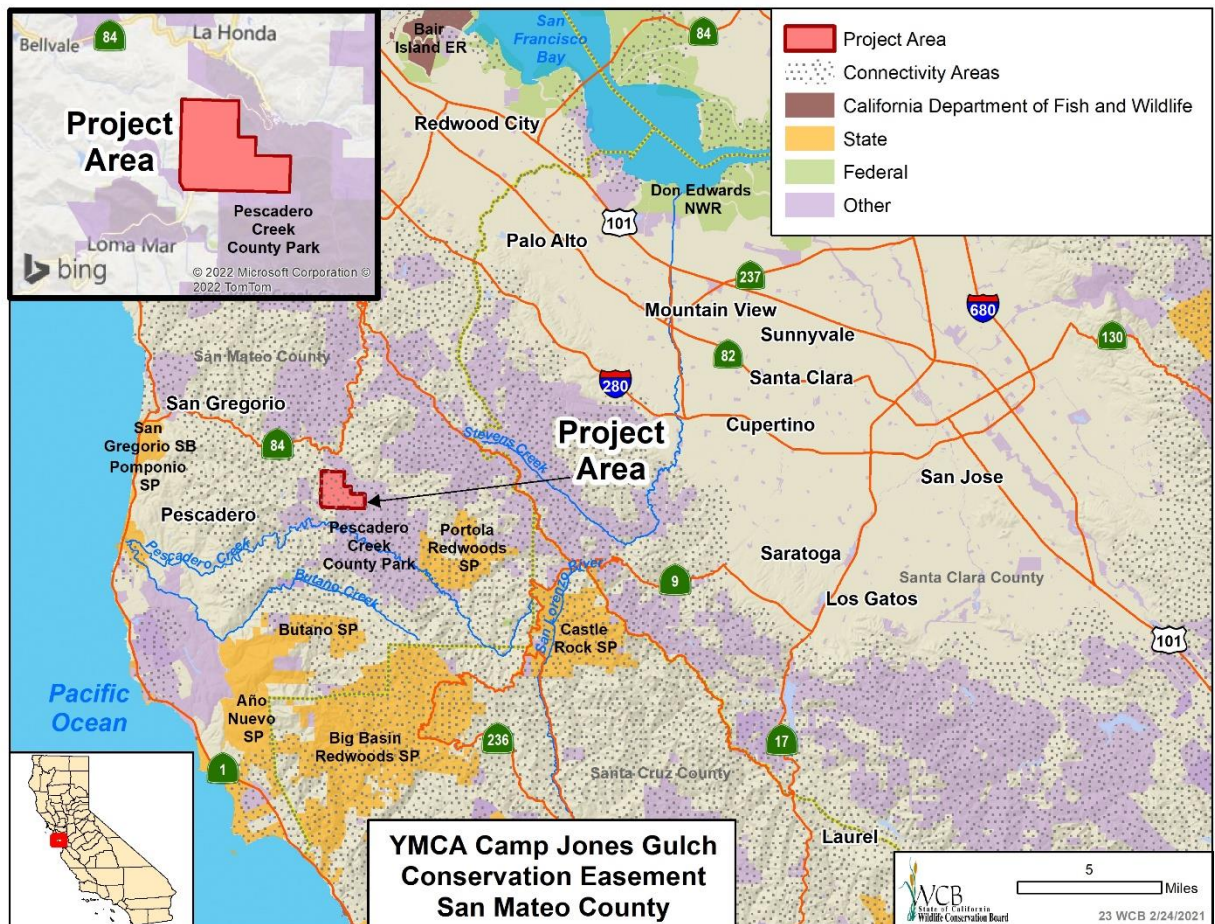
- Senator Josh Becker, 13th District
- Assemblymember Marc Berman, 24th District

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The project has been reviewed for compliance with 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 WCB, an NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



23. Pacheco Pass Wildlife Overcrossing Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,125,000 from the General Fund (Budget Act of 2021, Chapter 21); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Pacheco Pass Wildlife Overcrossing Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency
Amount Recommended:	\$3,125,000
Funding Partners:	Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency
County:	Santa Clara
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Funding:	General Fund
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.1, 1.2
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Pacheco Pass Wildlife Overcrossing Planning project (Project) is located east of the city of Gilroy in Santa Clara County along State Route 152 (SR 152) in an area known as Pacheco Pass. The highway in the Pass bisects the Diablo Range-Inner Coast Linkage which is identified as an important wildlife migration corridor by the Bay Area Critical Linkages Project. The Project site is listed in CDFW's 2020 Wildlife Movement Barrier Priorities list and is also identified as a priority for connectivity by the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan, California State Wildlife Action Plan, California Essential Habitat Connectivity Plan, and the draft Santa Clara County Regional Conservation Investment Strategy.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Pacheco Pass is an established wildlife corridor that is essential to connectivity between the Diablo and Inner Coast Range, and is a conservation priority for local, state, and federal agencies. Since 2012, wildlife connectivity studies have documented SR 152 as a major hazard with high wildlife mortality. Small, medium, and large mammals have been detected traveling through SR 152 underpasses; however, the same species are also found dead on the highway in large numbers. Restoration projects in Pacheco Pass, including an underpass enhancement project funded by WCB in February 2021, have improved connectivity through Pacheco Pass, but SR 152 remains a barrier.

Pacheco Pass represents a substantial barrier to the movement of mountain lions, other medium sized carnivores, and tule elk. Along SR 152, a 6-mile-long median barrier stretches from Bell Station to the Santa Clara/Merced county line. There are only three breaks in this barrier, each about 50 feet wide. These three breaks provide some opportunities for wildlife to cross the highway, but given the high volume of traffic, the likelihood of wildlife successfully using these breaks is low.

The Project will develop a Feasibility Study Report, supported by technical studies, that considers the development of a wildlife overpass project across SR 152. The goal of the Feasibility Study is to assess the wildlife overpass opportunities and constraints, develop a conceptual plan, and obtain stakeholder input and consensus. Four sites will be assessed for a wildlife overpass and two sites will be advanced to 35% design. A Project Initiation Report or equivalent will be completed in collaboration with and for submittal to Caltrans. The 35% design will be developed and used as the basis for CEQA compliance. Permitting and 65% designs will be developed once CEQA has been completed.

Once implemented, the wildlife overpasses developed by the Project will enhance biodiversity and working landscapes by increasing the permeability of the landscape to allow for species movement through and within the Pacheco Pass area. The increased landscape connectivity and permeability will allow for species migration to occur across the landscape. This will provide the opportunity for wildlife and natural communities within the study area to migrate in response to climate change, allowing for shifts in range and distribution, and access to climate-resilient refugia and water sources. The Project will also consider interactions with extant and future water related projects, such as Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project and Pacheco Creek Reserve Restoration Project.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	\$64,950	\$64,950	\$129,900
Feasibility Study	\$112,520	\$135,580	\$248,100
Project Documentation	\$249,800	\$249,800	\$499,600
Environmental Review	\$497,520	\$55,280	\$552,800
Designs	\$2,134,960	\$237,140	\$2,372,100
Outreach	\$65,250	\$7,250	\$72,500
Total	\$3,125,000	\$750,000	\$3,875,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Implementation oversight, invoicing, reporting, and agency communications.
- Feasibility Study: Biological evaluation of the Pacheco Pass corridor and identifying potential overpass locations.
- Project Documentation: Developing a cooperative agreement with Caltrans and a Project Initiation Report that will be submitted to Caltrans.
- Environmental Review: Completing CEQA documentation.

- Designs: Creating 35% and 65% designs for a wildlife overcrossing.
- Outreach: Hosting stakeholder meetings and conducting landowner outreach.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

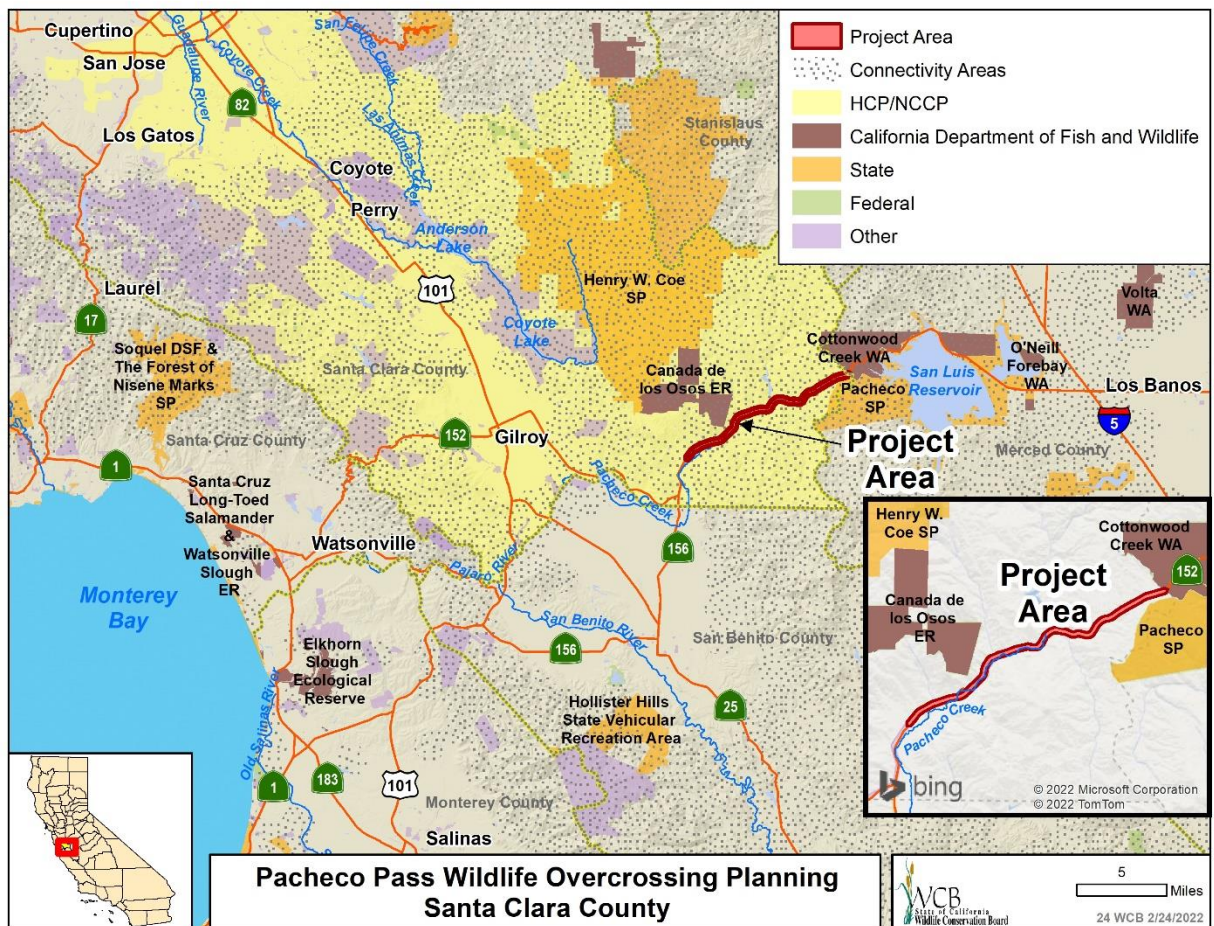
- The Honorable Dave Cortese, Senator, California State Senate
- The Honorable John Laird, Senator, California State Senate
- The Honorable Robert Rivas, Assemblymember, California State Assembly
- Melanie Brent, Deputy District Director, California Department of Transportation
- Andrea Mackenzie, General Manager, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority
- Matthew Dodder, Executive Director, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
- David W. Poeschel, Open Space Committee Chair, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter
- Neal Sharma, California Wildlife Program Senior Manager, Wildlife Conservation Network
- Mari Galloway, California Program Manager, Wildlands Network

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies, as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse



24. Rocks Ranch

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$4,000,000 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) (Proposition 1E) and California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a), for the grant to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Rocks Ranch
Project Type:	Fee Acquisition (2,613± acres)
Grantee:	Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
Amount Recommended:	\$4,000,000
Funding Partners:	California Department of Conservation (DOC) and Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
Counties:	Monterey and San Benito
Program:	Land Acquisition
Funding:	Habitat Conservation Fund and Proposition 40
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.2, A.4, E.1 Objectives: SI 1.1, 1.2, 2.1
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The property (Property) is located near the northern tip of the Gabilan Range Mountains, just east of the community of Prunedale and west of the city of San Juan Bautista. Access is provided via Rocks Road, a two-way paved road.

The Property lies within the CDFW Santa Cruz Mountains Linkages CAPP which establishes criteria to prioritize parcels based on their conservation values to increase or enhance habitat, migration corridors, and connectivity. Protecting Rocks Ranch will lead to important wildlife conservation benefits. In its current natural state, the Property supports both local and migratory species that traverse these corridors.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is approximately 2,613± acres and has been used as an active cattle ranch for more than a century. The Property supports extensive intact grassland, coastal scrub, live oak savannas, and woodlands, which have been maintained through grazing as part of a cow-calf operation.

The Property is overall irregular in shape. From north to south, the Property is approximately 4.5 miles in length. There are numerous scenic meadows and wide pastures located throughout the Property. Agricultural uses are carefully managed in concert with maintaining high-quality wildlife habitat and natural land cover throughout the Property.

The Property provides extensive, high-quality habitat for wildlife residing in and migrating through the region. Habitats present on the Property include coast live oak woodland, freshwater wetlands, annual grasslands, extensive riparian woodland, and chaparral. These habitats support several important animal species including deer, golden eagle, mountain lion, and California condor among many other species. Species of special concern potentially occurring on the Property include the burrowing owl, California tiger salamander, and California red legged frog.

Protection of the Property is critical to safeguarding connectivity between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Gabilan Range, two diverse ranges containing expansive intact habitat that is essential to biodiversity conservation in California's Central Coast Ecoregion. The Property abuts a 2.5-mile-long stretch of US Highway 101. Caltrans is working with conservation partners to study infrastructure improvements to facilitate wildlife passage through the highway corridor which currently presents a barrier to wildlife movement.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be managed and owned by LTSCC. Shortly after acquisition of the Property, LTSCC intends to develop a management plan that will balance the agricultural and wildlife values of the Property with outdoor education and guided recreation opportunities, including hiking on many of the roads and trails that exist on the Property as well as working with CDFW to develop potential hunting opportunities.

PROJECT FUNDING

The DGS approved fair market value is \$17,640,045 and the landowner has agreed to sell at a reduced price of \$17,000,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$4,000,000
DOC	\$4,000,000
LTSCC	\$9,000,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$17,000,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

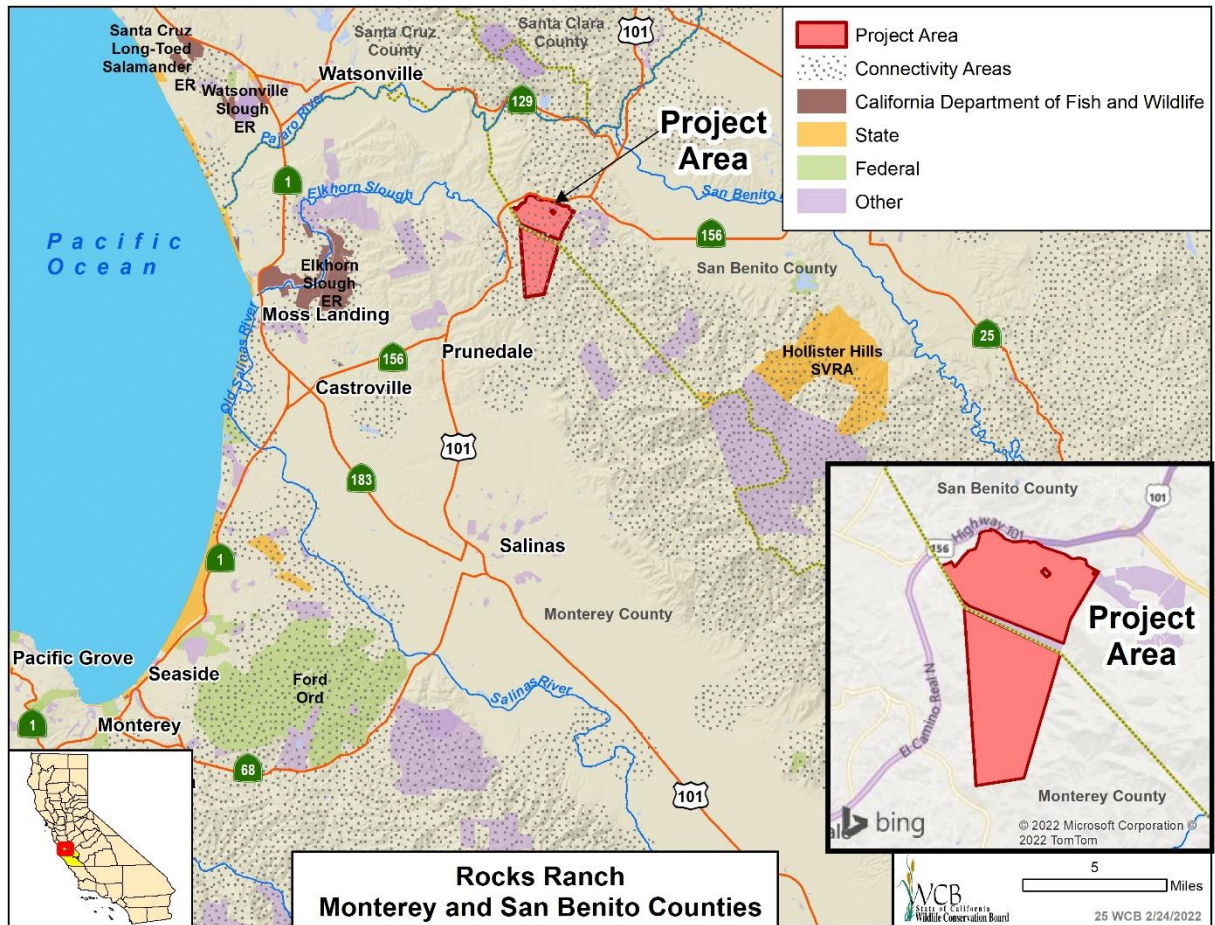
- The Honorable Robert Rivas
- The Honorable Anna M. Caballero

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The project has been reviewed for compliance with 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 WCB, an NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



25. Las Piletas Ranch

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$4,722,600 from Proposition 68, Public Resources Code Section 80111(d) for the grant to TNC; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Las Piletas Ranch
Project Type:	Fee Acquisition (13,527± acres)
Grantee:	The Nature Conservancy
Amount Recommended:	\$4,722,600
Funding Partners:	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
County:	San Luis Obispo
Program:	Land Acquisition
Funding:	Proposition 68
Strategic Plan	Goals: A.1, C.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 1.3, 2.4, 3.4
Disadvantaged Community:	Within a severely disadvantaged community

LOCATION

Las Piletas Ranch (Property) is located on the west side of Branch Mountain Road, which runs south to intersect with Highway 58 near Santa Margarita in eastern San Luis Obispo County. The Property is one mile south of Highway 58.

The Property is located within the North Carrizo CAPP. The CAPP lies between the Carrizo Plains National Monument (CPNM) to the south and privately-owned conservation lands to the north. Existing conservation lands to the north include the 5,093-acre Palo Prieto Conservation Bank (a kit fox bank) and conservation easements recorded on adjacent Hearst Corporation property to mitigate kit fox and California tiger salamander impacts from a solar project outside of the Carrizo Plain.

The CAPP forms a linkage between two core habitat areas for San Joaquin Valley species: the Carrizo Plain and the western edge of the San Joaquin Valley. These are two of the three core areas for San Joaquin Valley species identified in the Recovery Plan for San Joaquin Valley Upland Species (USFWS 1998). The Recovery Plan specifies maintaining these core areas, and the connectivity between them, as recovery criteria and tasks. Additionally, the linkage connects the two core areas to a Cholame Valley persistent kit fox population.

The linkage is comprised of arid grasslands in low-relief terrain following the San Andreas fault zone. The linkage heads northward from the CPNM to the Bitterwater Valley area, intersecting a finger of flatlands on the western edge of the San Joaquin Valley at Bitterwater Valley Road. To the west, the linkage is confined by rugged terrain, chaparral communities and, increasingly development and vineyard conversion. The Temblor Range confines the eastern edge and is the dispersal barrier between the Carrizo Plain and the San Joaquin Valley.

WCB funded the acquisition in fee title of the nearby American Ranch in 1989, the south Chimineas Ranch property in 2001, and the north Chimineas Ranch in 2004. These areas are just south of the focus area of this CAPP and represent a linkage of contiguous conserved land from the Central Valley to the coast. These acquisitions comprise over 30,000 acres.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is located along the western edge of the Carrizo Plain as it transitions into the Caliente-La Panza Mountain Range. The terrain includes open to gently rolling land, becoming steeper and more vegetated to the southwest. It is configured in two distinct portions separated by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Freeborn Mountain Allotment. The northeastern portion of the ranch mostly includes level to gentle sloping grassland terrain typical of the Carrizo Plain, becoming steeper to the southwest. Topography of the southwestern portion of the ranch includes mostly sloping to steep terrain, with mixed heavy vegetation, open grassland, and scattered oak trees. This area includes the scenic San Juan Creek Valley that meanders through the ranch in a generally northwestern/southeastern direction. Access is by an unpaved ranch road that crosses the intervening BLM land.

The landscape of Las Piletas Ranch is ecologically intact and encompasses parts of three areas identified as high priorities for conservation: the Carrizo Plain, La Panza Mountains, and San Juan Creek. In addition to its rolling foothills, extensive grasslands, and oak woodlands, the Property includes a seasonal waterfall and more than 24 miles of streams.

Protecting the Property creates a climate-resilient wildlife corridor, protects vital water resources and prevents solar development from disrupting important ecosystems. It includes habitat for many sensitive species, including the California Condor, pronghorn antelope, and San Joaquin kit fox and is an important area for connectivity for these species and tule elk. The surrounding habitat forms connections to the Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve, CPNM, Bitter Creek Wildlife Refuge, and Wind Wolves Preserve.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

TNC plans to own and manage the Property, monitoring the conservation values while working with BLM and USFS associated grazing allotments/leases. Coordination of such activities will be carried out in conjunction with CDFW and others, such as the Carrizo Plain Conservancy. In the future, TNC may offer the Property for sale to a conservation buyer requiring approval of WCB. An acceptable Conservation Easement will be required to be placed on the Property.

PROJECT FUNDING

The DGS approved fair market value is \$13,500,000. The landowner has agreed to a bargain sale of the Property, where they will donate \$1,000,000 of its value. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$4,722,600
CDFW	\$1,000,000
The Nature Conservancy	\$6,777,400
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$12,500,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

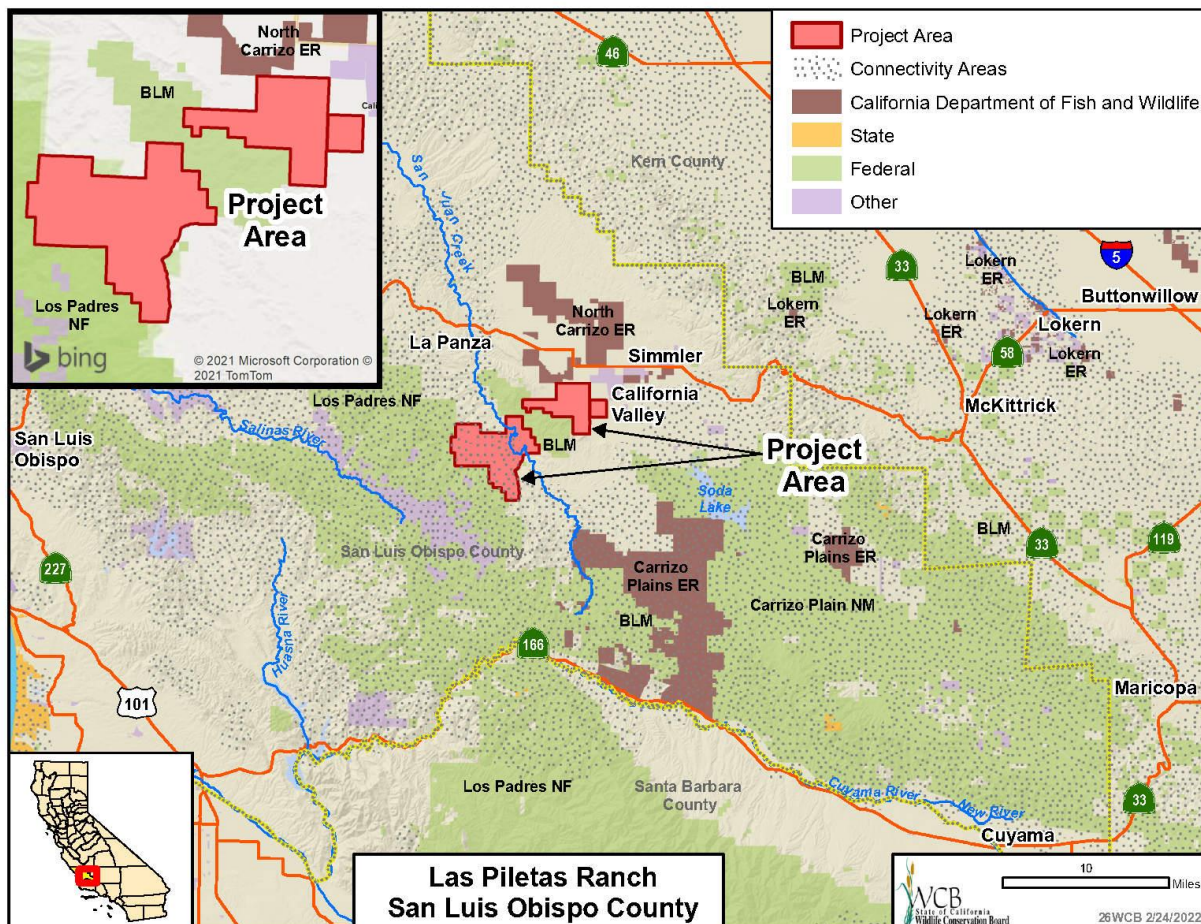
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The project has been reviewed for compliance with 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 WCB, an NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



26. Habitat Assessments and Restoration for Monarch Butterflies

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,551,407 from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80111(b); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Habitat Assessments and Restoration for Monarch Butterflies
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Ventura County Resource Conservation District
Amount Recommended:	\$1,551,407
Funding Partners:	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Landowner(s):	Camp Arnaz Girl Scouts, Concerned Resource and Environmental Workers, Ojai Land Conservancy, Ojai Valley Inn, Sterling Hills Golf Course, The Thacher School, Ventura County Resource Conservation District
County:	Santa Barbara and Ventura
Program:	Monarch Butterfly and Pollinator Rescue
Funding:	Proposition 68
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.3, 2.4, 4.2
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Habitat Assessments and Restoration for Monarch Butterflies (Project) will be implemented at nine restoration sites throughout Santa Barbara and Ventura counties, all located within western monarch butterfly breeding and overwintering priority zones. Project restoration sites range in area from 0.5 to 3.3 acres within the Ventura River, Santa Clara River, Calleguas Creek, Carpenteria Creek, and Santa Monica Bay watersheds.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The western monarch (monarch) is one of the most well-known butterflies in North America. This is particularly true along the central and southern California coast, where monarchs cluster to seek shelter from the inland cold during the winter. Historically, monarchs were often seen in gardens, on agricultural edges, and in natural settings. However, populations have declined by 99 percent over the last several decades due to multiple stressors including climate change, disease, habitat degradation and loss, urban sprawl, and a decline in native milkweed and nectar plants.

In 2020, through a block grant funded by WCB and administered through the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, habitat assessment and restoration work were started to mitigate the precipitous decline in monarch

numbers through restoration and enhancement of overwintering sites. Through the Project, the Ventura County Resource Conservation District (VCRCD) will continue and expand on this work by assembling a broad coalition of local, state, and federal partners and incorporating a wide assortment of assessment, restoration, and educational activities, addressing a critical leg in the monarch migration. The overarching goal of the Project is to enhance areas within Ventura and Santa Barbara counties to support the migratory monarch's life cycle by reducing flying distances between foraging and breeding sites, increasing and diversifying the necessary floral resources at those sites, and by enhancing overwintering sites through strategic planting and canopy management. Specific Project objectives include restoring 11 acres of breeding and migratory habitat at nine different sites and creating detailed habitat management plans at three overwintering sites. This project will also provide a framework of adaptable mitigation measures that other organizations can emulate when planning and implementing monarch restoration projects throughout California.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

As part of the Project, VCRCD will facilitate, create, and implement 13 Habitat Restoration/Management Plans. Two of the thirteen plans have already been created, and this effort will continue implementation of those plans. In addition, VCRCD will work to create and implement restoration plans for the remaining ten project locations. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, VCRCD does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds*	Total Cost
Habitat Restoration Planning & Implementation	\$1,078,763	\$133,683	\$1,212,446
Habitat Restoration Materials	\$211,937	\$60,283	\$272,220
Permits	\$41,184	---	\$41,184
Travel	\$153,784	---	\$153,784
Indirect	\$65,739	---	\$65,739
Total	\$1,551,407	\$193,966	\$1,745,373

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Habitat Restoration Planning & Implementation: Administration, review and finalize Habitat Management Plans, restoration work, site monitoring, materials, plan and coordinate outreach, develop restoration plans, permitting, develop monarch alert system, facilitate monarch regional advisory committee, facilitate volunteer planting days, facilitate annual butterfly counts.

- Habitat Restoration Materials: Materials to support restoration work, monitoring, outreach, plant propagation, irrigation, and travel expenses.
- Permits: Support preparation of and fees for necessary regulatory permits.
- Travel: Expenses for logistics to restoration sites and necessary meeting/event locations.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 20 percent of the total direct WCB award, minus subcontractor and equipment costs.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

- Representative Salud Carbajal, U.S. House of Representatives
- Linda Parks, Second District Supervisor, Ventura County Board of Supervisors
- Emma Pelton, Senior Conservation Biologist, Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation
- Lisa Stratton, Ph.D., Director of Ecosystem Management, UC Santa Barbara Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration
- Irma Munoz, Chairperson, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
- Laura Lukens, National Monitoring Coordinator, Monarch Joint Venture
- Glenn Shephard, Watershed Protection Director, County of Ventura Public Works
- Marcus Gray, Executive Director, Sustainable Monarch
- Karen Buhr, Executive Director, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
- Brian Stark, Administrator, Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency
- Anna Olsen, Executive Director, Cachuma Resource Conservation District
- David R. White, PhD, Executive Director, Center for Regenerative Agriculture
- Derek Poultney, Executive Director, Ventura Land Trust
- Georgia Goldfarb, Malibu Monarch Project
- Paula Perotte, Mayor, City of Goleta
- Nancy O'Connor, Director, City of Ventura Parks and Recreation
- Darin Seegmiller, Environmental Services Manager, City of Santa Clarita
- James Vega, City Manager, City of Ojai
- Alexander Nguyen, City Manager, City of Oxnard
- Rosemary Allison, Chair, Santa Rosa Valley Municipal Advisory Council
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League
- Roberto V. Garcia (no organizational affiliation)

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines, Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land. Subject to approval

of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



27. Cienega Springs Ecological Reserve Wetland and Riparian Restoration, Phase 2

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$6,476,450 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(f); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Cienega Springs Ecological Reserve Wetland and Riparian Restoration, Phase 2
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	University of California Santa Barbara
Amount Recommended:	\$6,476,450
Funding Partners:	Santa Clara River Conservancy, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, University of California, Santa Barbara
Landowner(s):	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
County:	Ventura
Program:	California Riparian Habitat Conservation
Funding:	Habitat Conservation Fund
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1
Disadvantaged Community:	Within a severely disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Cienega Springs Ecological Reserve Wetland and Riparian Restoration, Phase 2 project (Project) is located at CDFW's Cienega Springs Ecological Reserve (CSER) and covers approximately 232 acres on the Santa Clara River (Property). In 2015, WCB acquired the Property for CDFW to protect threatened and endangered species, riparian and floodplain habitat, and to provide future wildlife-oriented, public-use opportunities. The Property is adjacent to CDFW's Fillmore Fish Hatchery and TNC's 129-acre Sommers/Shiells properties.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property currently consists of abandoned agricultural fields and watercress beds that are dominated by nonnative invasive plants including shortpod mustard, tamarisk, castor bean, and annual grasses and forbs. Remnant earthen berms, culverts, and access roads left over from past farming operations interfere with the site's natural hydrology. Previous CDFW and WCB Proposition 1 grants have readied the Property for restoration by completing an extensive planning project that produced the Project's 100% design plans and permitting pathways and removed significant stands of arundo. More recently, in 2021, WCB's Pacific Flyway program funded 20 acres of migratory bird habitat restoration in the middle of the Property. The goals of the Project are to actively restore 232 acres of degraded river channel and floodplain to a mosaic of wetland and riparian habitat types, improve the site's hydrology for surface water retention and groundwater recharge, and provide a wildlife-oriented recreational opportunity for the

surrounding disadvantaged communities. The Project goals will be achieved by completing site preparation, revegetation and adaptive management, and robust monitoring.

Site preparation will include invasive plant management that will employ an integrated pest management strategy that includes mechanical and manual removal, tarping, flaming, mowing, and herbicide treatments following the CDFW pesticide control advisor's recommendation. Chemical use will be minimized to the greatest extent possible, and the final project report will include a section dedicated to the scope and intensity of herbicide applications, what avoidance and minimization measures were employed, and other weed management techniques that were used. Site preparation will also include berm breaching, culvert improvements and removals, access road removal, and bridge upgrading to retain surface water and improve surface water flow and wildlife passage across the site. An on-site plant nursery will be constructed and maintained to store and propagate most of the native plants that will be used for the habitat restoration.

To assure success of the Project, areas to be seeded or planted will need invasive weeds removed. For broad spectrum field clearing where manual methods are impractical because of the extent of the weed population, a tank mix of glyphosate, Quest (non-toxic), Agridex (non-ionic), and blue dye will be applied. This mixture is used when planting of natives will occur soon after application. For grasses and broadleaf weeds not near natives or where planting is not planned within eight months, a tank mix of imazapyr, Quest, and blue dye will be applied. For post planting weed management, mulch will be applied directly around plants with hand pulling/hoeing as needed. However, when weeds do resprout in monoculture and are difficult to remove by hand, a very directed, low concentration of glyphosate will be used. For all herbicide applications, the exact tank mix and rate will be provided by CDFW's Pest Control Advisor at the time of application based on site conditions.

Revegetation and enhancement activities will follow the Project design, plant palettes, best management practices, and protective measures described in *Restoration Planning at Cienega Springs Ecological Reserve: Final 100% Design and Technical Report* (Restoration Plan). Habitat types to be actively restored include, approximately 176 acres of riparian, 6 acres of upland, and 50 acres of wetland. Native flowering plant species that are beneficial to pollinators and locally endemic milkweed species will be planted within habitat types that have appropriate soil conditions. Vegetative buffers will be strategically established to prevent undesired property access and reduce disturbance to wildlife. Maintenance activities, including controlling invasive plants, controlling herbivores, and supplemental irrigation will continue as needed to maximize native plant cover and survival. Monitoring results will inform ongoing maintenance and adaptive management practices.

Scientifically based and standardized monitoring protocols will be used to evaluate the performance of the restoration project in accordance with the Project objectives

described in the Restoration Plan. Monitoring will include vegetation surveys, avian diversity, abundance and habitat use and nesting surveys, monthly and rain event groundwater depth measurements, and pollinator, reptile, and amphibian surveys. Data analysis of three years of monitoring data will be completed to evaluate changes over time in response to restoration treatments. All data will be made publicly available.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The University of California Santa Barbara has prepared a Management Plan that guides management actions for the Property, including management of the Property. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, University of California Santa Barbara does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	\$727,510	\$13,570	\$741,080
Site Preparation	\$1,816,262	\$20,000	\$1,836,262
Revegetation and Maintenance	\$2,010,017	\$103,862	\$2,113,879
Monitoring	\$711,255	\$24,583	\$735,838
General Expenses	\$403,249	\$90,878	\$494,127
Indirect	\$808,157	\$242,447	\$1,050,604
Total	\$6,476,450	\$495,340	\$6,971,790

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Executing subcontractor agreements, invoicing, reporting, and construction monitoring.
- Site Preparation: Invasive plant control, nursery construction, grading, and earthwork.
- Revegetation and Maintenance: Plant installation, temporary irrigation installation, and implementation of adaptive management practices.
- General Expenses: Travel, information technology, field supplies, and equipment rentals.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 20 percent of the total direct WCB award, minus subcontractor and equipment costs.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

- Kelly Long, Supervisor, Third District, Ventura County Board of Supervisors
- Shawn W. Kelly, Executive Director, Santa Clara River Conservancy

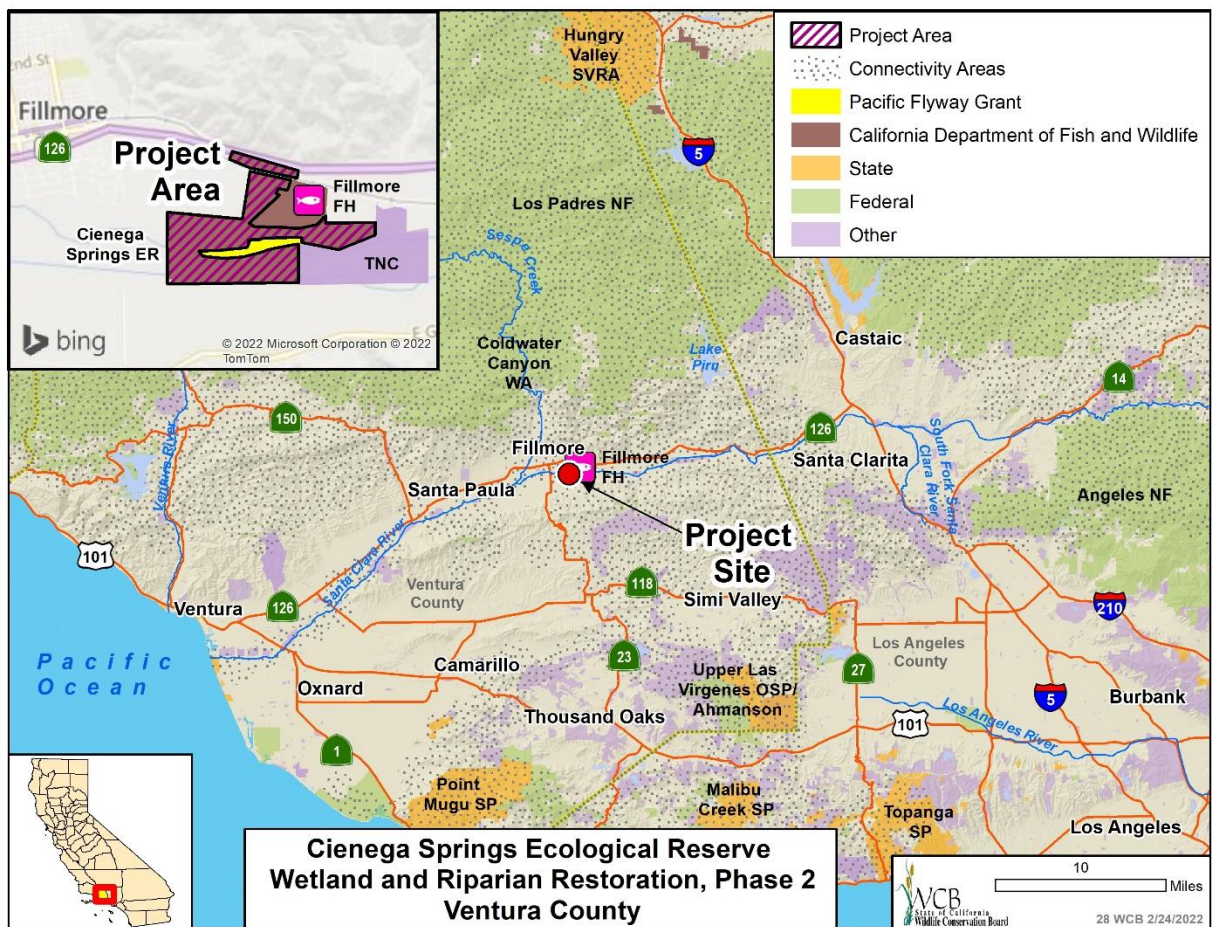
- Peter Dixon, Project Associate, Santa Clara River and Coast Restoration, The Nature Conservancy
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines, Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, consisting of minor alterations to the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



28. Wheeler Gorge Campground Fish Passage Barriers Removal

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,855,000 from the General Fund (Budget Act of 2021, Chapter 21); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Wheeler Gorge Campground Fish Passage Barriers Removal
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Earth Island Institute
Amount Recommended:	\$1,855,000
Funding Partners:	State Coastal Conservancy, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Landowner(s):	United States Forest Service
County:	Ventura
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Funding:	General Fund
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 2.1
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Wheeler Gorge Campground Fish Passage Barriers Removal (Project) is located within Wheeler Gorge Campground in Ventura County, approximately 15 miles upstream from the Ventura River mouth at the confluence of North Fork Matilija Creek and Bear Creek. The Wheeler Gorge Campground has 70 campsites and is part of the Ojai Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest (LPNF).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Ventura River once supported one of the primary historical runs of endangered Southern California Steelhead trout (SCS). This run, however, has been severely diminished by human activity altering the river's hydrology.

The headwaters of the river in the LPNF have been largely protected from the intensive development that has altered the downstream portions of the river. As a result, the LPNF now contains the majority of the spawning and rearing habitat for SCS in the area. SCS recovery efforts have focused on removing barriers and improving the ability of migrating fish to reach this habitat. The Project will build upon those efforts by removing four roadway crossings on tributaries of the Ventura River that will allow SCS access to approximately 13 miles of perennial habitat.

All four of these crossings are located within the Wheeler Gorge Campground and act as barriers to SCS migration. Two are on North Fork Matilija Creek and two are on Bear Creek. This area is part of a Core 1 (highest priority) recovery area by the

National Marine Fisheries Service's Southern California Steelhead Recovery Plan, and two of the four barriers are listed in the 2019 CDFW Fish Passage priority list.

The Project will remove the barriers along both creeks and restore the creek to a natural grade. The instream concrete crossings will be demolished and replaced with clear span vehicular bridges. The stream channel will be regraded to engineered specifications and any disturbed riparian habitat will be restored.

The removal of these barriers becomes even more critical under projected climate change scenarios. The Project will allow for SCS access to headwater refugia pools that are fed by springs and less susceptible to drying out due to droughts. These pools are currently inaccessible as a result of the barriers proposed for removal as part of this Project. More mobility through the immediate reaches of the watershed will allow for more options for fish to find refugia in times of drought and in drier water years.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Earth Island Institute has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the Project, including management of the property. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, Earth Island Institute does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	\$147,125	\$120,000	\$267,125
Permitting	\$204,595	---	\$204,595
Construction	\$1,463,080	\$1,977,543	\$3,440,623
Revegetation	\$40,200	---	\$40,200
Total	\$1,855,000	\$2,097,543	\$3,952,543

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Implementation oversight, invoicing, reporting, and agency communications.
- Permitting: Obtaining all necessary permits.
- Construction: The removal of the instream barriers and replacement with two clear span bridges.
- Revegetation: Replacing any disturbed vegetation with native riparian plant species.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

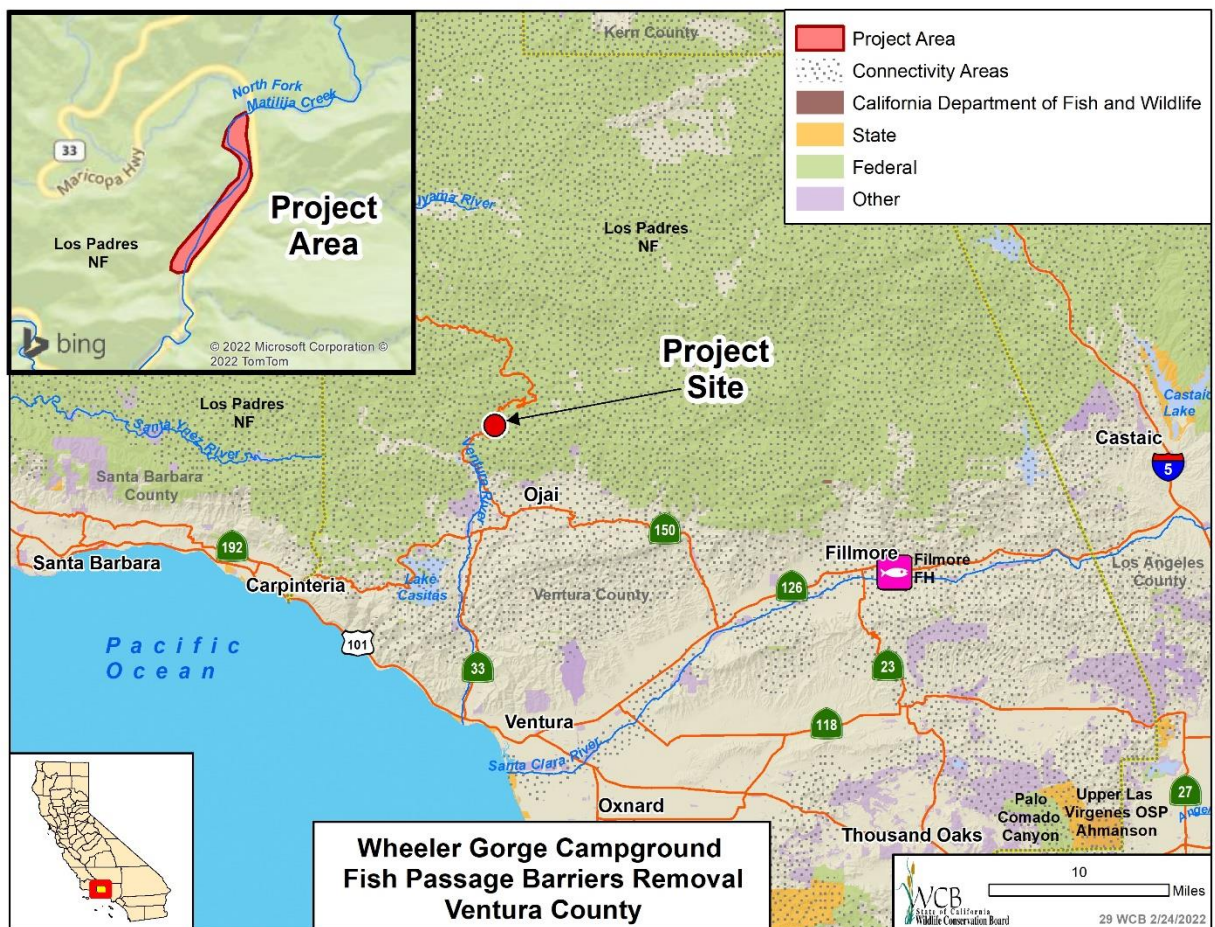
- The Honorable Monique Limon, Senator, California State Senate
- Russell Marlow, Santa Clara River Steelhead Coalition Coordinator, California Trout
- Jamie Whiteford, District Scientist, Ventura County Resource Conservation District
- Matt LaVere, Supervisor, Ventura County Board of Supervisors
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines, Section 15333, Class 33, Small Habitat Restoration Projects. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



29. Chatsworth Reservoir Connector

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,200,000 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117) for the grant to Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Chatsworth Reservoir Connector
Project Type:	Fee Acquisition (163± acres)
Grantee:	Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA)
Amount Recommended:	\$2,200,000
Funding Partners:	Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC)
County:	Los Angeles County
Program:	Land Acquisition
Funding:	Habitat Conservation Fund
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.3, A.4 Objectives: 1.3, 2.2, 2.4, 3.4
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Chatsworth Reservoir Connector (Property) is located west of Valley Circle Boulevard and south of Woolsey Canyon Road at the north end of Val Verde Drive near Chatsworth in northern Los Angeles County.

The Property consists of a single parcel with dirt road access and level to hilly topography with elevation from 1,100 to 1,250 feet, typical of the features of the Simi Hills. The Property contains two small canyons, with views of the surrounding valley and hills.

The Property is located within the Santa Monica-Sierra Madre Linkage CAPP and rated as a Tier 1 priority for acquisition. Overall, the CAPP serves to link well over 2 million acres of already conserved wildlands in the Santa Monica and Sierra Madre Ranges. The CAPP includes 166,411 acres and already has a substantial conservation investment. About 45 percent of lands in the CAPP currently enjoy some level of conservation protection. Approximately 55 percent of the land currently has no conservation status and is the primary focus of the CAPP. The CAPP also serves to connect four existing Conceptual Area Protection Plans: Big Sky, Chatsworth Simi Divide, Santa Clara River, and the Santa Clarita.

The Santa Monica-Sierra Madre Linkage is part of the South Coast Wildland Network, considered the backbone of a conservation strategy for southern California. This CAPP serves to connect land administered by several entities in the Santa Monica Mountains, such as California State Parks, National Park Service, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, and Mountain Restoration Trust, with land managed by USFS in the Sierra Madre Range of Los Padres National Forest.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Santa Monica-Sierra Madre Linkage CAPP features land of exceptional ecological value that is essential for sustaining ecological and evolutionary processes across the landscape.

The region's wetland and riparian communities are important to resident, over-wintering, and migratory birds on the Pacific Flyway, in addition to providing year-round habitat and critical resources for resident species. A number of imperiled species depend on riparian communities in the region for breeding habitat, including songbirds such as least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher as well as amphibians and reptiles like California red-legged frog, foothill yellow-legged frog, arroyo toad, and western pond turtle. Vernal pools provide essential habitat for listed species such as Riverside fairy shrimp and California orcutt grass.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be operated and maintained by MRCA and will be incorporated into the assemblage of previously protected lands. MRCA will own and operate the Property as part of its extensive land holdings in Los Angeles and Ventura counties. MRCA owns thousands of acres of open space across the region and has many years of experience in managing similar properties. Once the Property is acquired, MRCA will create a stewardship plan for the Property. The primary management objectives will be to protect and enhance existing natural communities, water resources, and the multiple species of plants and animals these habitats support.

PROJECT FUNDING

The DGS approved fair market value is \$3,255,000. The landowner has agreed to a bargain sale of the Property, where they will donate \$855,000 of its value. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$2,200,000
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy	\$200,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$2,400,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League

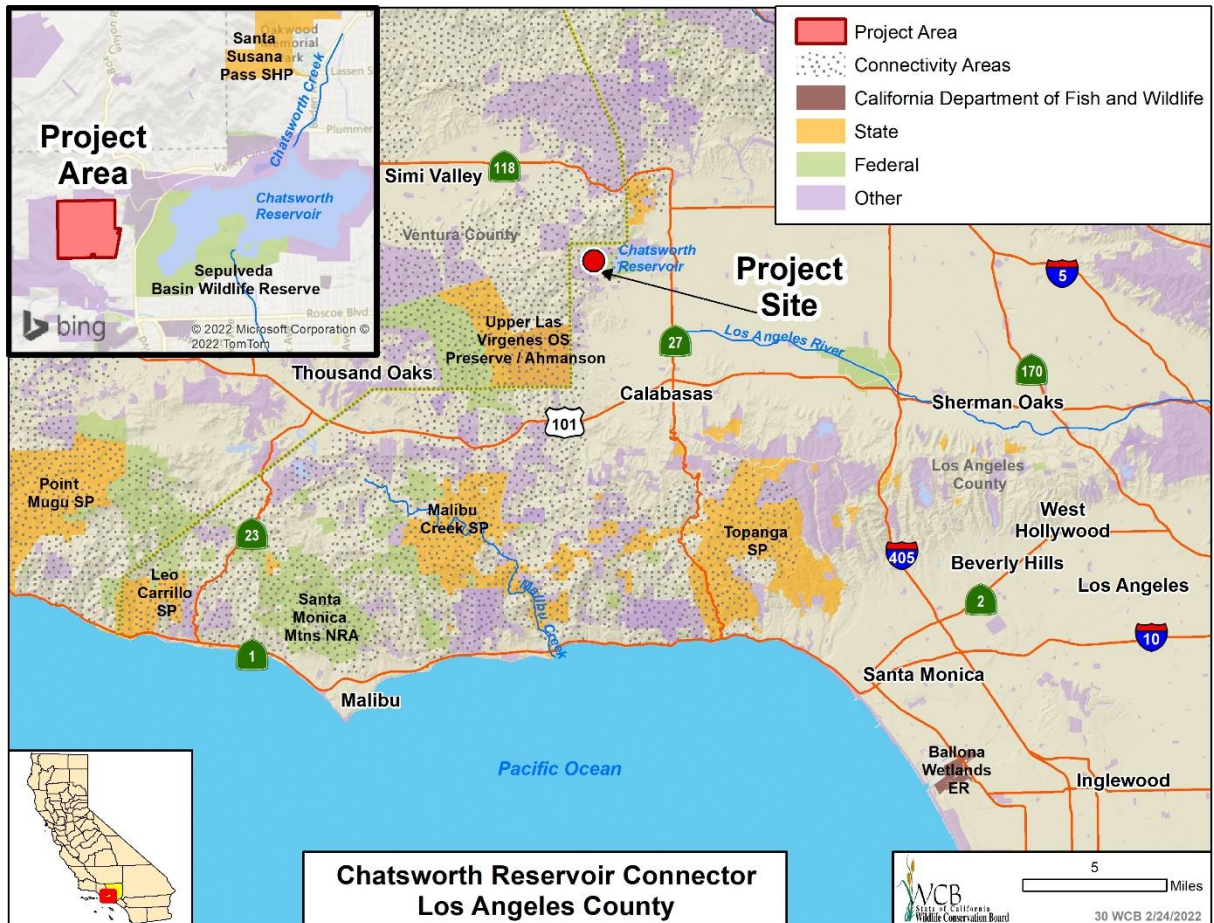
Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The project has been reviewed for compliance with 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 WCB, an NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



30. Rindge Dam Removal and Malibu Creek Ecosystem Restoration Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$12,500,000 from the General Fund (Budget Act of 2021); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Rindge Dam Removal and Malibu Creek Ecosystem Restoration Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	California Department of Parks and Recreation
Amount Recommended:	\$12,500,000
Funding Partners:	California Department of Parks and Recreation
Landowner(s):	California Department of Parks and Recreation
County:	Los Angeles
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Funding:	General Fund
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 2.1
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Rindge Dam Removal and Malibu Creek Ecosystem Restoration Planning (Project) is in the Malibu Creek watershed, three miles east of Malibu and approximately 30 miles west of downtown Los Angeles. The watershed drainage area is approximately 110 square miles and includes areas of the Santa Monica Mountains and Simi Hills. It is the largest coastal watershed in the Santa Monica Mountains and is encompassed by one of the largest areas of protected open space in southern California.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Rindge Dam is a 100-foot-high water supply dam built in 1926 that is no longer functional since it has filled with sediment. The dam was decommissioned in 1967, and the property was purchased by DPR to become part of what is now Malibu Creek State Park.

The Project will fund the completion of studies, 90% design, and all required permitting. A technical advisory committee (TAC) will convene to review studies and final design. DPR will convene a communications and outreach effort to obtain stakeholder input and public support.

The Project will lead to a shovel ready implementation project that, once implemented, will remove the Rindge Dam and modify or remove eight upstream fish passage barriers, providing fish passage for federally endangered southern steelhead to 15 miles of high-quality pools and spawning habitat, restoring migratory corridors for terrestrial wildlife, and replenishing sand and gravel to nourish the shoreline and nearshore habitats.

The Project supports the California State Wildlife Action Plan's Anadromous Fishes core principles of habitat restoration and species recovery and the conservation targets of freshwater spawning and rearing habitat, river flow, and wetland habitats by restoring, connecting, and expanding habitat. The Project is specifically listed in the Southern California Steelhead Recovery Plan, which identifies the Malibu Creek steelhead population as a Core 1 population, the highest priority for recovery actions.

PROJECT FUNDING

The Project is a state budget appropriation (State Budget Act of 2021, Senate Bill 129) to complete planning for the removal of Rindge Dam.

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	\$774,684	\$15,299	\$789,983
Technical Investigations and Surveys	\$1,322,788	---	\$1,322,788
Design	\$9,696,555	\$30,486	\$9,727,041
Permitting	\$505,973	\$3,298	\$509,271
Outreach	\$200,000	\$408,917	\$608,917
Total	\$12,500,000	\$458,000	\$12,958,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Project management, provide review/support of permitting; and review historic and archaeological concerns.
- Technical Investigations and Surveys: Complete Steelhead surveys and data review; geotechnical investigations; hydraulic, hydrologic, sediment transport modeling and geomorphic analysis; traffic study; and field investigations for 8 upstream structure removals.
- Design: Complete 90% designs, participate in steering committee and TAC meetings and document review.
- Permitting: Obtain all permits required for implementation.
- Outreach: Conduct outreach meetings, produce meeting agendas and summaries, factsheets, and presentations.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

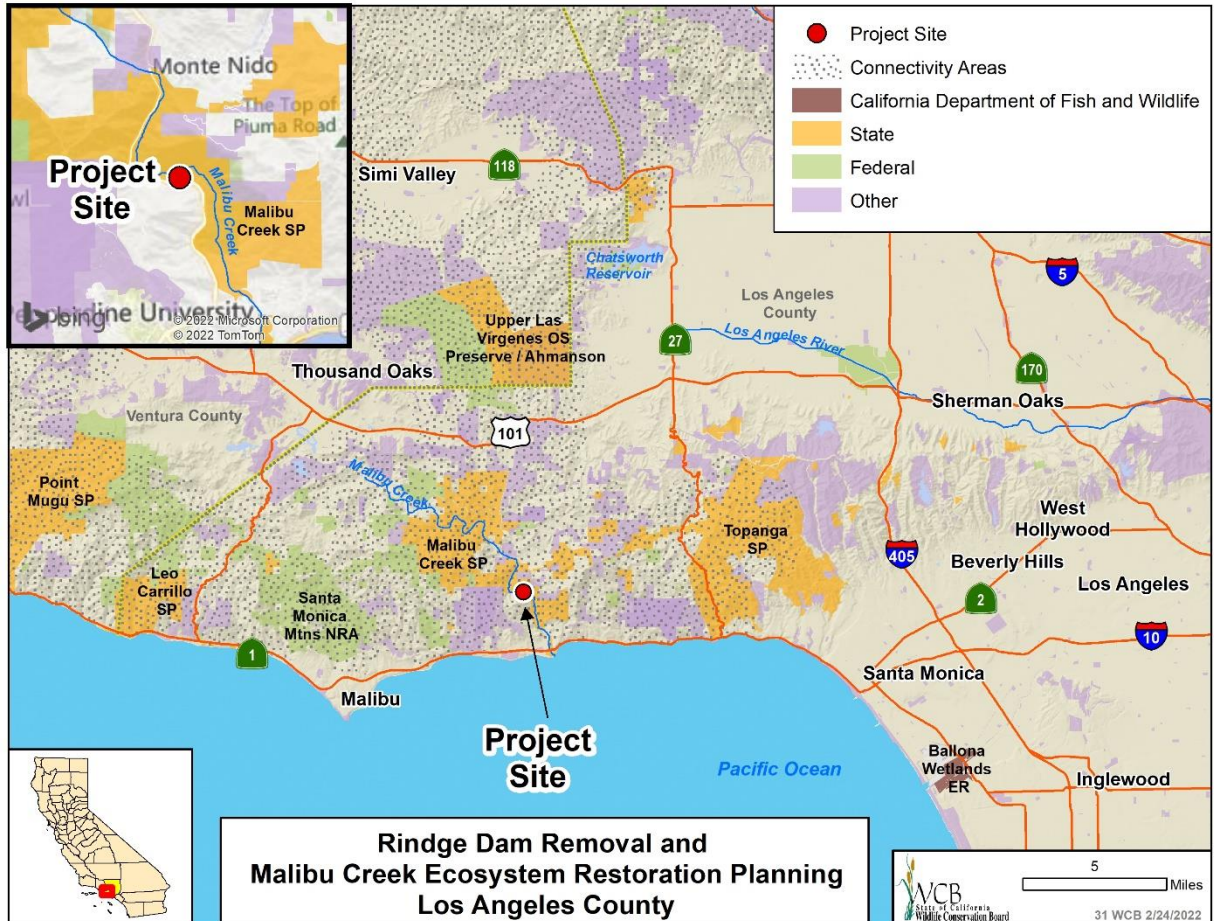
- Henry Stern, Senator, District 27, California Legislature
- Richard Bloom, Assemblymember, District 50, California Legislature
- Sheila Kuehl, Supervisor, Third District, County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies, as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



31. Temescal Ranch, Expansion 1

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; approve the acceptance of the Recovery Land Acquisition grant from USFWS in the amount of \$520,000 and approve the subgrant of the federal funds to the Trust for Public Land (Grantee); allocate \$3,500,000 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c), for the grant to the Grantee; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned. Trust for Public Land (TPL) will be the Grantee and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) will be the Successor Grantee.

Project Title:	Temescal Ranch, Expansion 1
Project Type:	Fee Acquisition (3,605± acres)
Grantee:	Trust for Public Land
Subgrantee:	Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
Amount Recommended:	\$3,500,000.00
Funding Partners:	California Department of Transportation, USFWS
County:	Los Angeles
Program:	Land Acquisition
Funding:	Habitat Conservation Fund
Strategic Plan Goals:	Goals: A.1, A.2, A.4, E.1 Objectives: SI 1.1, 1.2, 2.1
Disadvantaged Community:	Not in a Severely Disadvantaged Community

LOCATION

The property (Property) is situated in northern Los Angeles County west of Halsey Canyon Road, East of Lake Piru near Castaic, California. Presently, this region supports semi-rural residential development, and the area is experiencing expansion of rural residential and rural ranchette development on lands historically used solely for grazing.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Boasting one of the largest intact stands of coastal sage scrub and chaparral in Southern California, the Property supports a wide variety of special status species, the most critical being the California condor and Southern California steelhead. Condor foraging has been confirmed by dozens of ground-level GPS locations, largely due to the Property's proximity to the Sespe Condor Sanctuary.

Additionally, this phase contains the headwaters of two creeks, including one perennial spring, that ultimately feed steelhead habitat downstream in Piru Creek and the Santa Clara River. The Property also lies in a critical east to west linkage between the San Gabriel and Sierra Madre mountains as well as a north to south linkage between the Sierra Madre and Santa Susanna Mountains, both highlighted in the South Coast Missing Linkages Project.

The initial acquisition, which included 1,171± acres, was approved by the WCB in August of 2020. This Property will be added to the original acreage for a total of 4,776± acres of connected lands in an important wildlife linkage.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

TPL will transfer the land to MRCA, who owns and manages the balance of the original Temescal Ranch Property.

PROJECT FUNDING

The DGS approved fair market value is \$6,500,000. The landowner has agreed to a bargain sale of the property, where they will donate \$380,000 of its value. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$3,500,000
Caltrans	\$1,000,000
Los Angeles County	\$1,100,000
USFWS	\$520,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$6,120,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

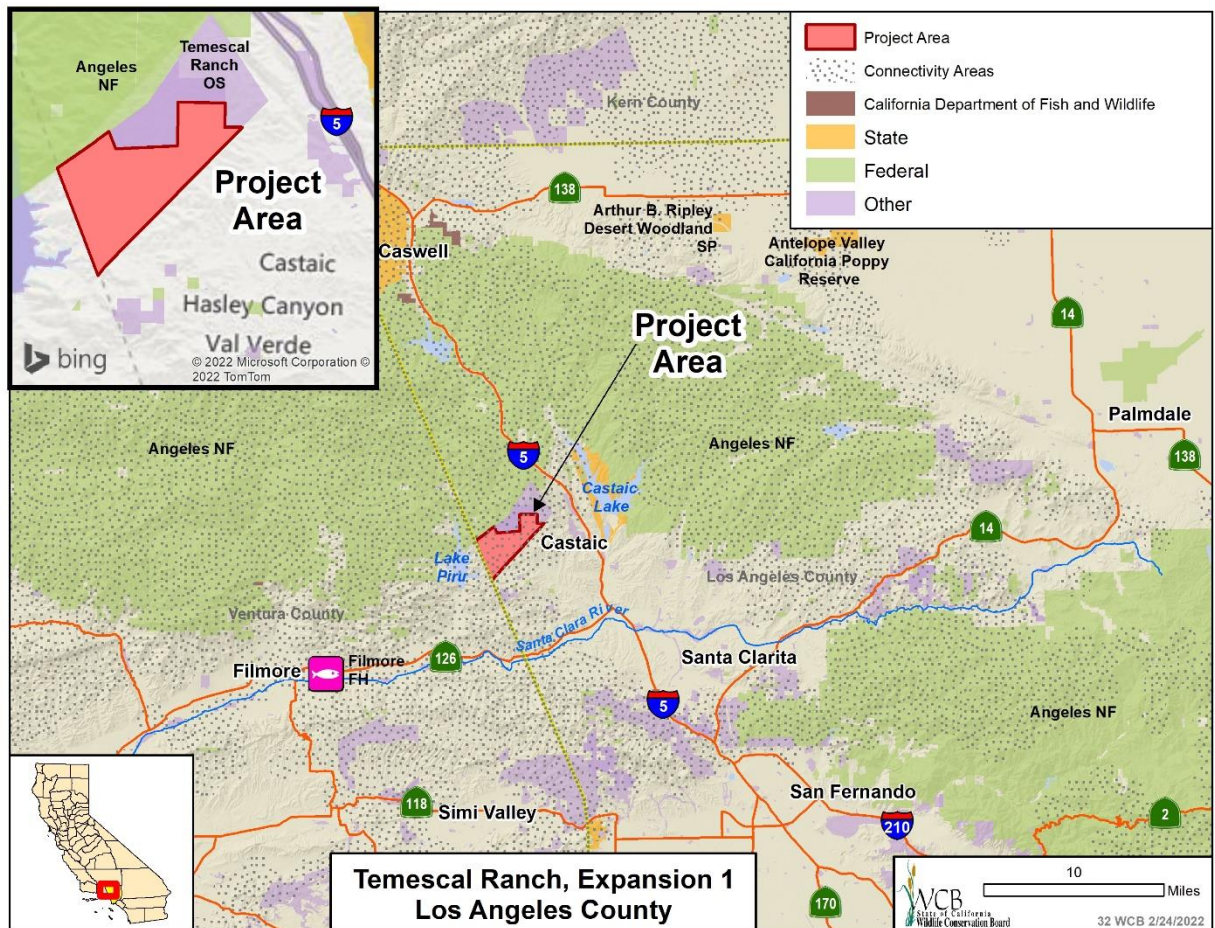
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The project has been reviewed for compliance with 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 WCB, an NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



32. Santa Margarita River Bridge Replacement and Fish Passage Barrier Removal

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,941,000 from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80132(e)(1); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Santa Margarita River Bridge Replacement and Fish Passage Barrier Removal
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	California Trout, Inc.
Amount Recommended:	\$1,941,000
Funding Partners:	California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resources Agency, State Coastal Conservancy, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Landowner(s):	Wildlands Conservancy
County:	San Diego
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Funding:	Proposition 68
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 1.6
Disadvantaged Community:	Not within a disadvantaged community

LOCATION

The Santa Margarita River Bridge Replacement and Fish Passage Barrier Removal (Project) is located at the Sandia Creek Drive bridge over the Santa Margarita River, two miles north of the city of Fallbrook in San Diego County.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Santa Margarita River offers a prime opportunity to reestablish a Southern California steelhead trout (SCS) population in its historical range. It is relatively lightly impacted by urbanization over the 29 miles from ocean to headwaters and has a spring-fed creek character in the upper watershed. This potential SCS habitat is located in the Santa Margarita Ecological Preserve and is protected from future development.

Fish passage barriers have prevented steelhead from accessing upper reaches of the river that contain good spawning and rearing habitat. The Project will remove the Sandia Creek Drive bridge which is the last of the barriers on the mainstem of the Santa Margarita River. In its place, a new bridge will be constructed over the river that will allow fish passage in a high priority endangered steelhead recovery river, as designated in the National Marine Fisheries Service's Southern California Steelhead Recovery Plan. The new 615 ft. steel bridge will also replace the aging flood-prone Sandia Creek Drive crossing about 160 ft downstream of the existing structure, which will be removed after construction.

The replacement of the bridge addresses one of the most significant threats to endangered steelhead recovery in Southern California, but its implementation is also important for the safety of local residents. The existing bridge becomes submerged during heavy rains and blocks an evacuation route and emergency responder routes to nearby metropolitan areas.

The Project is the result of a stakeholder process that spanned several years and was led by California Trout with support from a range of state and federal agencies including CDFW, SCC, the California Natural Resources Agency, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. This broad base of support indicates the Project's potential to provide a diverse array of significant benefits such as the restoration of riverine ecosystem processes, re-establishment of a steelhead population, increasing resiliency to climate change, and protecting the public from hazardous flood conditions.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

California Trout, Inc. has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the Project, including management of the property. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, California Trout, Inc. does not manage and maintain the Project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	\$224,300	\$400,776	\$625,076
Construction Management	---	\$1,732,112	\$1,732,112
Construction	\$1,716,700	\$14,832,563	\$16,549,263
Revegetation	---	\$63,000	\$63,000
Monitoring and Maintenance	---	\$302,102	\$302,102
Outreach	---	\$60,000	\$60,000
Total	\$1,941,000	\$17,390,553	\$19,331,553

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: General project oversight, invoicing, reporting, and agency communications.
- Construction: Site prep, utility relocation, and construction of the new bridge.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

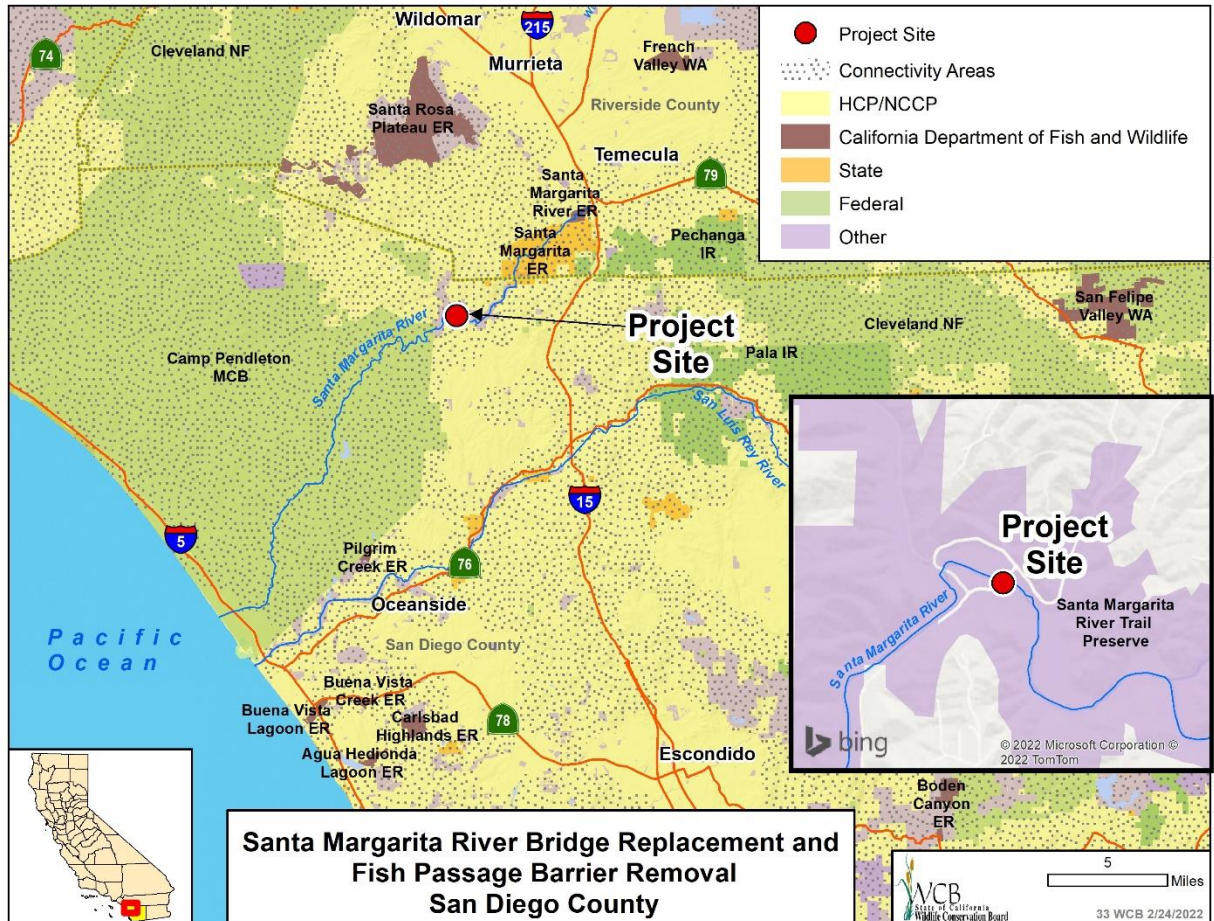
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The County of San Diego, as lead agency, prepared a MND for the Project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA. Staff considered the MND and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOD will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



33. Executive Director's Report

- [Stream Flow Enhancement Program 5-Year Report](#)

Over the past six years, the Stream Flow Enhancement Program funded by Proposition 1 has funded 128 grants for projects that will enhance the quality or quantity of stream flows throughout California. Projects have included acquisitions of land and water rights; planning and implementation of projects focused on water conservation (use efficiency, storage, and instream dedication) and habitat restoration (mountain meadow and floodplain hydrology, geomorphology, and groundwater recharge; invasive species eradication; and improved forest health); and scientific studies in support of future projects. These projects are especially important for enhancing instream habitat and water availability for anadromous fish.

Projects funded through the Stream Flow Enhancement Program are multi-year projects and some are requiring additional time to fully implement due to the scale, scope, constraints imposed by wildfires, the COVID pandemic, and other factors. As such, 33 projects have been completed to date, and of those 9 are implementation projects. Results are continuing to be reported as active projects wrap up, and ongoing monitoring will help to determine the actual increases to stream flow and other benefits from implementation projects. Some challenges faced by the program include a low number of water right acquisition projects, the length of time water rights transactions have taken, and limited information regarding existing hydrologic conditions in many of the state's streams. However, the program has funded many studies and planning projects that are filling these knowledge gaps and are expected to lead to important implementation projects over the next few years. Additionally, many projects are providing valuable local benefits as highlighted in the report.

- Streamlined Continuous Application Process/Guidelines

With an interest in streamlining our process and making it as easy as possible to access our funding, WCB staff is developing new general guidelines for all WCB grants. Currently WCB has many different grant programs, some of which have their own guidelines, application form and process. This leads to confusion and difficulty in determining which source of funding to request.

Under the new guidelines, all projects will apply for grant funding using the same pre-application, which will be submitted on a continuous basis. This is in contrast to some existing WCB programs which have used a Proposal Solicitation Notice (PSN) to receive proposals by a specific deadline. Pre-applications will be evaluated by staff, and, for projects that best fit our goals and priorities, applicants will be asked to submit a full application. Staff will determine which funding source is the most appropriate for each project, relieving applicants from having to make that decision. In addition, streamlining the process will eliminate the need for applicants to submit multiple applications in a given year for the same project. If the full application scores well according to the scoring criteria, and is selected by WCB's management team, the project will be presented to the Board for approval.

Several of WCB's existing programs already use a continuous applications process, and those programs will continue to use the same application process beginning with the one pre-application. The biggest change will be for land acquisition projects, where it had been required that the parcel(s) be within an approved CAPP or have had a LAE prepared and approved by CDFW. Under the new guidelines, applicants will need to complete the pre-application and full application as described above and will not require a CAPP or LAE. CDFW regional staff will continue to be involved in reviewing those applications and a letter of support will be required from the CDFW Regional Manager. If a CAPP or LAE already exists, that information will make completing those applications easier.

Staff expect to complete a draft of the new general guidelines in the next month, at which point they will be posted for public review. A public workshop will also be held to discuss the new guidelines. The draft guidelines and workshop will be noticed via WCB's email list.

- [2021 WCB Year In Review](#)

Adjourn

ATTACHMENT A – MAP OF FEBRUARY 2022 PROJECTS

