



**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 16, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

Natural Resources Building, First Floor Auditorium  
715 P Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Board meeting will also be available via Zoom. A recording will be posted after the meeting.

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Conference code: 506989

\*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](mailto:Mary.Ahern@wildlife.ca.gov) prior to the day of the meeting.

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- Attachment A – Map of February 2023 Projects
- Attachment B – WCB Acronyms
- Attachment C – WCB Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

**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](mailto: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  
Gayle Miller, Member  
Chief Deputy Director, Policy, Department of Finance  
Damon Nagami, Public Member  
Fran Pavley, Public Member  
Kathryn Phillips, Public Member  
Samantha Murray, President  
Fish and Game Commission

Joint Legislative Advisory Committee

Senator *Vacant*  
Senator Nancy Skinner  
Senator Henry Stern  
Assemblymember Luz Rivas  
Assemblymember Laura Friedman – Alternate  
Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan  
Assemblymember Miguel Santiago – Alternate  
Assemblymember Steve Bennett  
Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia – Alternate

Executive Director

John P. Donnelly



**2. Discussion and Selection of Board Chair**

**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:

<b>GENERAL FUND (0001)</b>	<b>\$734,921,997.00</b>
February 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(47,210,646.00)
Total Project Development:	(202,499,087.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	<b>\$485,212,264.00</b>
 <b>HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND (0262)</b>	 <b>\$52,828,375.22</b>
February 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(3,424,962.00)
Total Project Development:	(9,535,543.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	<b>\$39,867,870.22</b>
 <b>WILDLIFE AND COASTAL PROTECTION ACT OF 1988 (0786))</b>	 <b>\$3,778,917.00</b>
February 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(0.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance	<b>\$3,778,917.00</b>
 <b>GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION FUND (3228)</b>	 <b>\$3,438,441.68</b>
February 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(2,010,000.00)
Total Project Development:	(365,000.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	<b>\$1,063,441.68</b>
 <b>CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND (Proposition 40) (6029)</b>	 <b>\$2,969,265.33</b>
February 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(7,500.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	<b>\$2,961,765.33</b>
 <b>WATER SECURITY, CLEAN DRINKING WATER, COASTAL AND BEACH PROTECTION FUND OF 2002 (Proposition 50) (6031)</b>	 <b>\$10,907,900.86</b>
February 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(5,631,000.00)
Total Project Development:	(0.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	<b>\$5,276,900.86</b>

<b>SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006 (Proposition 84) (6051)</b>	<b>\$6,919,412.11</b>
February 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(50,000.00)
Total Project Development:	(3,150,000.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	<b>\$3,719,412.11</b>
 <b>WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND (Proposition 1) (6083)</b>	 <b>\$47,834,782.76</b>
February 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(0.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	<b>\$47,834,782.76</b>
 <b>THE CALIFORNIA DROUGHT, WATER, PARKS, CLIMATE, COASTAL PROTECTION, AND OUTDOOR ACCESS FOR ALL ACT OF 2018 (Proposition 68) (6088)</b>	 <b>\$90,436,326.22</b>
February 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(875,021.00)
Total Project Development:	(8,042,321.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	<b>\$81,518,984.22</b>
 <b>TOTAL – ALL FUNDS</b>	 <b>\$954,035,418.18</b>
Grand Total – February 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(59,201,629.00)
Grand Total - Project Development:	(223,599,451.00)
Grand Total Projected Unallocated Balance:	<b>\$671,234,338.18</b>

## **5. Herbicide Presentation**

Caroline Cox (retired Senior Scientist, Center for Environmental Health) will discuss “Examples of Glyphosate’s Hazards: Growing Evidence of Impacts to Wildlife and Ecosystems”.

## **Consent Items**

Items 6-17 are part of the Consent Calendar

## 6. Recovery of Funds, Thursday, February 16, 2023

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*

<b>Fund Name</b>	<b>Amount</b>
General Fund	\$14.31
Habitat Conservation Fund	\$17,867.08
Wildlife Restoration Fund	\$0.00
Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund	\$1,509.32
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund	\$2,769.19
Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002	\$121,631.04
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006	\$43,976.36
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014	\$545,386.96
The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018	\$466,184.70
<b>Total Recoveries for All Funds</b>	<b>\$1,199,338.96</b>

*Table 2 - General Fund*

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Expended</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Recovering and Sustaining Monarch and Pollinator Populations	\$750,000.00	\$749,985.69	\$14.31
<b>Total Recoveries to General Fund</b>			<b>\$14.31</b>

*Table 3 - Habitat Conservation Fund*

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Expended</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Chatsworth Reservoir Connector	\$2,200,000.00	\$2,200,000.00	\$0.00
San Diego County MSCP – Crestlake	\$940,000.00	\$936,975.00	\$3,025.00
Strategies to Alleviate Flood Effects in the Eel River Estuary	\$106,000.00	\$103,746.42	\$2,253.58
Temescal Ranch, Expansion 1	\$3,520,000.00	\$3,507,411.50	\$12,588.50
<b>Total Recoveries to Habitat Conservation Fund</b>			<b>\$17,867.08</b>

*Table 4 - Wildlife Restoration Fund*

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Expended</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Cullinan Ranch Tidal Restoration	\$1,576,853.00	\$1,576,853.00	\$0.00
North Table Mountain Ecological Reserve Public Access Improvements	\$440,000.00	\$440,000.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Recoveries to Wildlife Restoration Fund</b>			<b>\$0.00</b>

*Table 5 - Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund*

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Expended</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Sierra Meadow Wetland and Riparian Area Monitoring Plan Development	\$181,000.00	\$179,490.68	\$1,509.32
<b>Total Recoveries to Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund</b>			<b>\$1,509.32</b>

*Table 6- California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund*

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Expended</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration, Augmentation	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$0.00
North Monterey County Amphibian Habitat Enhancement	\$347,000.00	\$344,230.81	\$2,769.19
San Joaquin River Parkway, Sumner Peck Ranch	\$3,400,000.00	\$3,400,000.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Recoveries to California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund</b>			<b>\$2,769.19</b>

*Table 7- Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002*

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Expended</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Cullinan Ranch Tidal Restoration	\$6,650,000.00	\$6,528,617.31	\$121,382.69
Cullinan Ranch Tidal Restoration Enhancement	\$399,000.00	\$398,915.51	\$84.49
Sears Point Wetland Restoration	\$5,000,000.00	\$4,999,836.14	\$163.86
<b>Total Recoveries to Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002</b>			<b>\$121,631.04</b>

*Table 8- Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006*

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Expended</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Carrizo Plains Ecological Reserve, Expansion 6 (Stewart)	\$1,440,000.00	\$1,435,625.50	\$4,374.50
Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration, Augmentation	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$0.00

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<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Expended</b>	<b>Balance</b>
San Joaquin River Parkway, Sumner Peck Ranch	\$210,000.00	\$202,945.00	\$7,055.00
Santa Cruz Integrated Watershed Restoration, Watsonville Slough	\$340,000.00	\$338,323.77	\$1,676.23
Yolo County HCP/NCCP Development, Phase IV	\$275,000.00	\$244,129.37	\$30,870.63
<b>Total Recoveries to Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006</b>			<b>\$43,976.36</b>

*Table 9- Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014*

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Expended</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Battle Creek, Tompkins Water Right Acquisition	\$550,250.00	\$7,506.50	\$542,743.50
Outlet Creek Streamflow Enhancement	\$354,729.00	\$352,085.54	\$2,643.46
<b>Total Recoveries to Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014</b>			<b>\$545,386.96</b>

*Table 10- The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018*

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Expended</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Outlet Creek Streamflow Enhancement	\$4,742,600.00	\$4,729,404.00	\$13,196.00
Lindmore Multi-Benefit Recharge Basin	\$434,000.00	\$0.00	\$434,000.00
Peninsular Bighorn Sheep-Recovery Land Acquisition, Mesquite Ridge	\$20,000.00	\$6,804.00	\$13,196.00
Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander Connectivity Planning	\$172,000.00	\$166,207.30	\$5,792.70
<b>Total Recoveries to The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018</b>			<b>\$466,184.70</b>

## Consent Items

### 7. (CAL FIRE) Mattole Headwaters

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approve this project as proposed; approve the acceptance of a conservation easement (Easement) by CAL FIRE over 1,163± acres; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and CAL FIRE to proceed substantially as planned. CAL FIRE is purchasing the Easement under the California Forest Legacy Program Act of 2007, with funding provided by the U. S. Forest Service (USFS) and the California Climate Investment Fund.

Project Title:	(CAL FIRE) Mattole Headwaters
Project Type:	Conservation Easement (1,163± acres)
Amount Recommended:	\$0
Funding Partners:	CAL FIRE
County:	Humboldt
Program:	California Forest Legacy Program Act of 2007

#### LOCATION

The property (Property) is located approximately one mile east of the community of Whitehorn near the southern boundary of Humboldt County. The Property may be accessed via Stanley Creek Road. In the vicinity of the Property are the Mattole Ecological Preserve, Vanauken Creek Conservation Easement, John B. Dewitt Redwoods State Reserve, Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, and Richardson Grove State Park.

Humboldt County has an area of approximately 2.3 million acres, more than 80 percent of which is forested, protected redwood forests, or recreation areas. Humboldt County has an economic base centered on timber production, fishing, and agriculture. Humboldt County is consistently the largest log-producing county in the state, producing more than 20 percent of California's logs. The timber industry has been in a steady decline over the past several decades, due mainly to a dwindling supply of high-volume timber, particularly from Forest Service lands, as well as concerns over the environmental impacts caused by industrial timber harvesting. However, recent timber prices, especially for good quality redwood, have increased significantly over the past several years.

The Property is not classified as a Disadvantaged Community (based on the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Mapping Tool).

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property consists of 25 APNs that total 1,163± acres. If approved, the Easement will conserve the Property's forest habitat and prevent conversion into cannabis production sites.

The Property has 70 acres of 1,000-year-old redwood trees, five Mattole River tributaries comprised of 3.57 miles of Coho salmon spawning habitat, and an additional 5.6 miles of summer salmon habitat.

Both the California Coho Recovery Strategy and the Federal Southern Oregon Northern California Coast Coho Recovery Plan identify the Property and its anadromous streams as top priorities for protection. The Property provides 11 percent of all Mattole River tributary streams listed in the California Coho Recovery Strategy. The Property provides an important link of The Redwoods to the Sea Wildlife Corridor, which provides habitat connectivity between Eel River Corridor State Redwood Parks and the King Range National Conservation Area.

The Property provides ideal nesting habitats for many species of old-growth and other forest dependent wildlife, such as northern spotted owl, golden eagle, and other birds of prey. Also found on the Property are mountain and valley quail, grouse, pileated woodpecker, Dunn's Southern torrent, Pacific giant salamander, red bellied newt, Pacific martin, Pacific fisher, Sonoma tree vole, Townsend's big eared bat, pallid bat, Point Arena mountain beaver, riparian brush rabbit, yellow-legged frog, Shasta crayfish, California coastal Chinook, Northern California steelhead, Northern spotted owl, California red legged frog, and green sturgeon.

This project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 3: Increase Voluntary Conservation Easements.

The State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) designates this Property in the North Coast and Klamath Province. This acquisition will advance statewide conservation goals: Goal 1.1 (Ecosystem Distribution), Goal 1.2 (Native Species Range and Distribution), Goal 2.1 (Connectivity); Goal 2.2 (Community Structure and Composition); Goal 3.1 (Successional Dynamics); Goal 3.2 (Disturbance Regime) and Goal 3.3 (Hydrological Regime).

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

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

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The Department of General Services (DGS) approved fair market value is \$8,730,000. The landowner has agreed to sell the Easement for \$5,765,000. CAL FIRE will reimburse WCB for indirect costs related to the project. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
California Climate Investment Fund	\$4,200,000
USFS Forest Legacy Program	\$1,565,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$5,765,000

## PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

### Support:

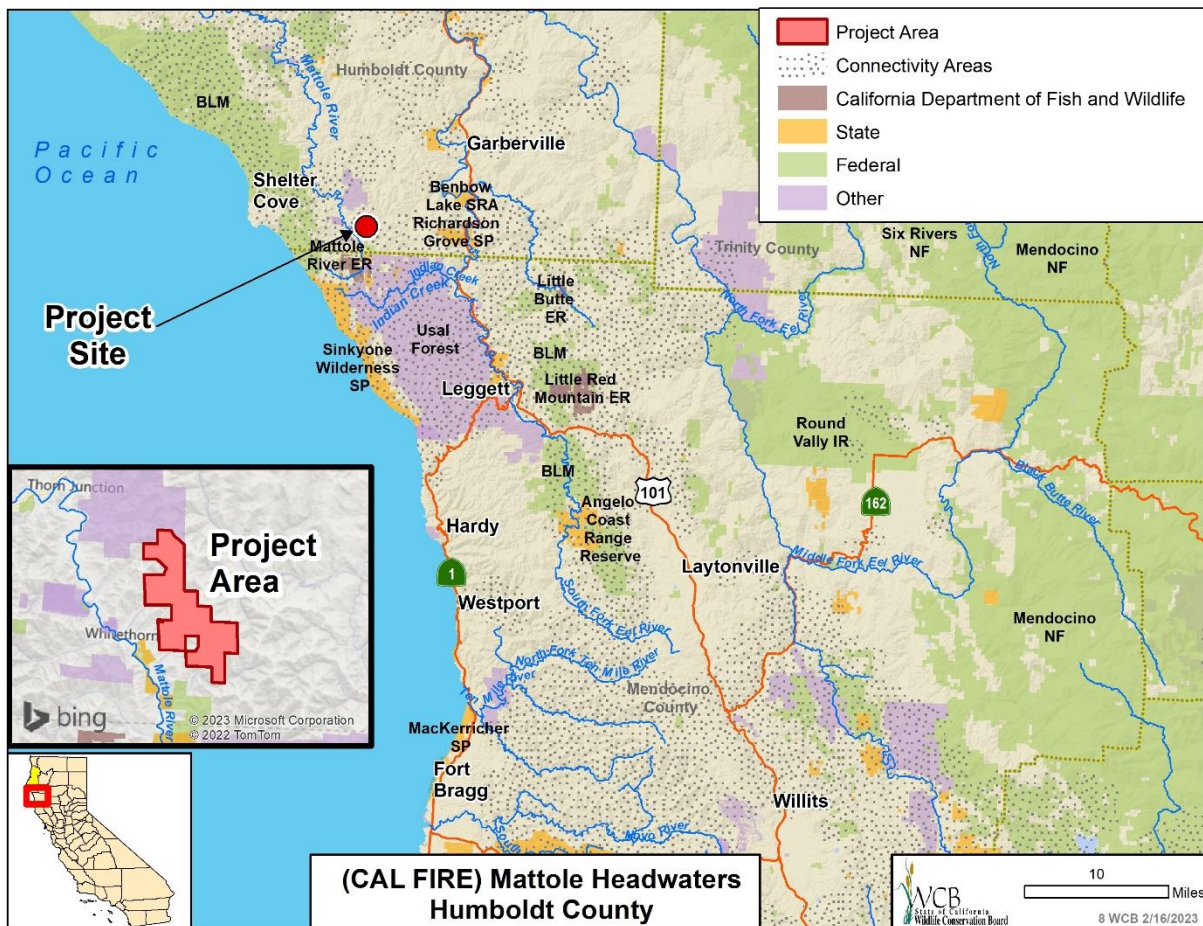
- None received

### Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Public Resources Code 21080.28, Acquisition of an Interest in Land by a Public Agency, as an acquisition of an interest in land by a public agency for preservation of natural conditions existing at the time of transfer, including plant and animal habitats. Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file the appropriate Notice of Exemption (NOE) with the State Clearinghouse and the county clerk.





## 8. Kramer Ranch Conservation Easement

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,346,788 from the General Fund, Budget Act of 2021 (Water Supply for Environmental Flows), for a grant to California Rangeland Trust (CRT); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Kramer Ranch Conservation Easement
Project Type:	Conservation Easement (4,922± acres)
Grantee:	California Rangeland Trust
Amount Recommended:	\$1,346,788
Funding Partners:	Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Counties:	Lassen and Modoc
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.2, E.1 Objectives: SI 2.1

### LOCATION

The property (Property), known as the Kramer Ranch, is located approximately two miles north of the community of Bieber, in Lassen and Modoc Counties. Approximately 75 percent of the Property is in Lassen County with the balance in Modoc County.

The Property lies along the eastern slope of the Big Valley Mountains at the west edge of Big Valley. The Property is situated north of Bieber and southwest of the community of Lookout. Primary access to the Property is from Kramer Road. The far north tip of the Property can also be accessed from County Road 94/Widow Valley Road. Kramer Road is asphalt paved from Bieber to the Lassen/Modoc County line, proceeding as graveled north through the Modoc County portion of the Property.

The Property is within one mile of CDFW's Ash Creek Wildlife Area. The Property also borders federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management and several other private lands which are protected by conservation easements under the NRCS Wetlands Reserve Program (NRCS-WRP). Approximately 342 acres of Kramer Ranch is excluded from the proposed conservation easement because the excluded acreage is already encumbered by an NRCS-WRP conservation easement.

The Property is located within a Disadvantaged Community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool).

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is irregular in shape with similarly irregular shaped fields. Topography ranges from flat on the eastern portion of the Property, at 4,000± feet

elevation, to rolling/undulating foothills in the west with elevation upwards of 4,500± feet above mean sea level.

The Property is comprised of a combination of flat irrigated pasture/cropland, wet meadows, and undulating/sloping timbered/sagebrush rangeland. The western portion of the Property mostly consists of lower pine-studded foothills bisected by natural meadows and creeks meandering southward with a large, irrigated pasture in the south end. The eastern portion of the Property generally consists of flat irrigated pasture/cropland along the bank of the Pit River.

Most of the Property is winter and spring pasture grazed by cattle as part of a rotational grazing regime. Livestock grazing is an important component of the rural economy. The conservation easement (Easement) will allow grazing to continue and ensure that future land uses do not impair the conservation values of the Property.

The Property contains a diversity of habitat types including: 1,796± acres of forested uplands and rangelands that include Ponderosa pine, oak, and juniper; 937± acres of seasonally wet rangeland acres; 176± acres of unirrigated wet meadows; and 1,490± acres of irrigated pastures/wet meadows. The Easement will protect these habitats from incompatible land uses including changes to more intensive agricultural practices. Pasture lands, including all irrigated and non-irrigated wet meadows, will continue to be managed for perennial grasses, sedges, and forbs, thereby ensuring continued seasonal wetland habitat function and soil carbon storage. Wet meadows on the Property are primarily located within the floodplains of the Pit River, Widow Valley Creek, and Bull Run Slough, which are prone to seasonal flooding. The Easement will prevent development of these acres and provide a safe area for the natural dispersal of flood waters, providing a means for groundwater recharge. Habitats on the Property provide food sources, breeding, foraging areas, water, and shelter for wildlife. Diverse plant communities and varying topographic features promote diverse wildlife populations within the Easement area. Water sources available to wildlife include springs, streams, and riparian corridors. The Intermountain West Joint Venture (IWJV) has identified Big Valley as a critical staging area for waterbirds and waterfowl during the Pacific Flyway spring migration and for breeding. The Property is also located within the Southern Oregon-Northeastern California (SONEC) region identified by IWJV as a high priority for waterfowl conservation in the Pacific Flyway.

SWAP designates the area surrounding the Property as the Cascades and Modoc Plateau Province. This acquisition will help advance CDFW's land conservation policies and wildlife protection goals in the SWAP by conserving sustainable plant and animal communities that support multiple species of interest.

This project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 3: Increase Voluntary Conservation Easements.

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, and d) preserving the open space character and scenic qualities of the Property. The project is designed to have minimal impact on property tax income for Lassen and Modoc counties, while still furthering county goals and land use policies.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CRT will hold, monitor, and enforce the terms of the conservation easement, which provide that the Property will be used primarily as an open space working landscape supporting cattle ranching and wildlife habitat. CRT 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 monitoring protocol will be provided to WCB prior to the close of escrow.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The DGS approved fair market value is \$2,960,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$1,346,788
SNC	\$500,000
NRCS	\$1,113,212
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$2,960,000

#### PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

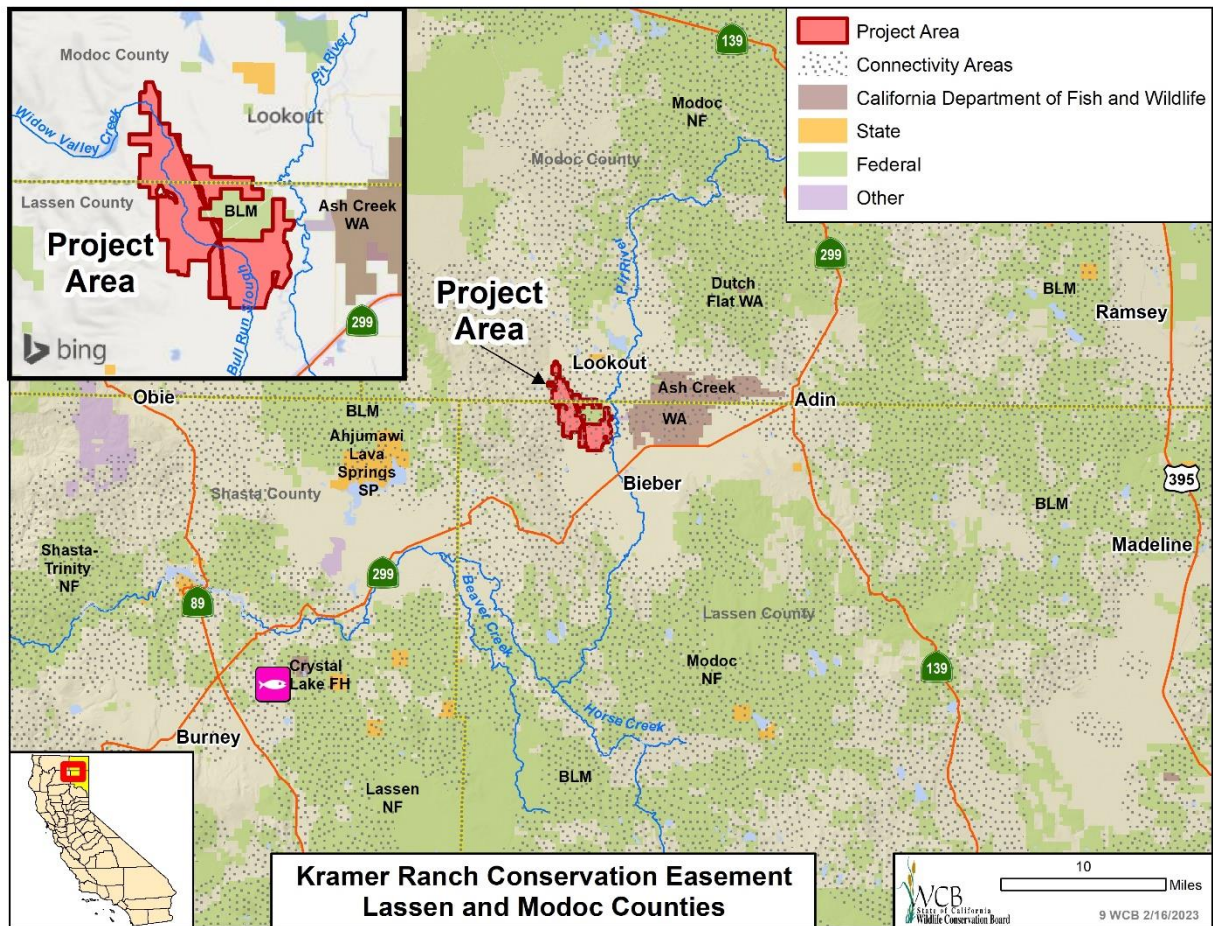
- None received

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. Monitor Island Transfer

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed for a no cost transfer of land by CDFW to Lake County Land Trust; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Monitor Island Transfer
Project Type:	CDFW Disposal/Sale
Transferee:	Lake County Land Trust
Amount Recommended:	\$0
County:	Lake
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.5 Objectives: SI 3.4

### LOCATION

The property (Property) is an island of land within Clear Lake, located in central Lake County. The Property is within the city limits of the city of Clearlake and is located approximately 300 yards offshore of the tip of Monitor Point, in an area known as Clearlake Park Estates.

Lake County has a population of just over 68,000, according to the 2020 census, and includes an area of roughly 1,329 square miles. Most of the population is centered around Clear Lake, the largest natural lake, in whole, in California.

The general neighborhood is rural in nature and the local economy is based primarily on agriculture, tourism, and the geothermal power industry. The main thoroughfares serving the neighborhood are Lakeshore Drive and San Joaquin Avenue. Highway 20, running east-west, and State Highway 53, running north-south are the main arterials serving the area.

The Property is located within a Disadvantaged Community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool).

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Acquired by CDFW in 1991 as a donation from The Nature Conservancy, the Property serves as habitat for fish rearing and dry land refugia for birds and important invertebrates that make up the base of the lake's biological significance. The Property consists of a single 4± acre island parcel that is entirely surrounded by Clear Lake.

The original purpose of acquisition was to conserve fish nursery habitat, foraging habitat for wading birds, and some waterfowl brooding habitat. The Property contains lacustrine and freshwater emergent wetland habitat with several large stunted willows. These habitats and features have the potential to support state threatened Clear Lake hitch and two species of special concern, the prickly sculpin

and tule perch, as well as provide nesting habitat for osprey. The island itself is surrounded by tule perch habitat where depths allow.

The Property is available for boat-in public recreation. Fishing around the island is common and the island itself has been used as a rest stop for the public although no facilities are present.

The proposed transfer of this Property is being considered under WCB's Land Acquisition Program. Under Fish and Game Code Section 1348(c)(2), WCB may authorize the transfer of real property or rights in real property held under the jurisdiction of CDFW. These activities are carried out in conjunction with CDFW, which prepared a Land Conversion Evaluation (LCE) report to provide justification for the transfer. The LCE must be approved by subdivisions within CDFW, including the land acquisition coordinator in the Regional Office, as well as the Lands Program, Regional Manager, and Deputy Director for the Wildlife and Fisheries Division. The LCE is then submitted to the Director for final approval and submitted to WCB for consideration and final approval. CDFW approved the Monitor Island LCE on August 11, 2021, and recommends the proposal for approval.

This project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 2: Execute Strategic Land Acquisitions.

SWAP designates the area surrounding the Property as the North Coast and Klamath Province. This acquisition will help advance CDFW's land conservation policies and wildlife protection goals in the SWAP by conserving sustainable plant and animal communities that support multiple species of interest.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Management activities on the Property will include regular patrols for improper use and trash cleanup to maintain the island in good condition for wildlife and fish. CDFW lacks the capacity to adequately maintain the Property and meet the objectives of the original acquisition. Specifically, CDFW North Central Region does not have a boat readily available and lacks staff time to commit to regular visits and trash pickup.

Lake County Land Trust (LCLT) has the capacity and ability to further the acquisition objectives and is an ideal local and conservation-oriented fee title owner. LCLT is a member of the California Council of Land Trusts and the Land Trust Alliance. LCLT is committed to protecting wildlife habitats and native plants, using resources wisely, and making the natural environment accessible for all, through guided hikes, field trips, special events, and designated public access areas. LCLT owns and/or manages six properties covering 790± acres for wildlife-oriented recreation and education. Its membership is spread throughout Lake County, and it regularly maintains a presence at all of its managed properties. Many of its members are active boaters and will monitor for misuse of Monitor Island. No loss of habitat, recreation, or public access will occur as a result of the



proposed transfer. CDFW and LCLT are agreeable to a conversion of this Property and CDFW will transfer the property to LCLT at no cost.

A Right of Reversion will be placed in the Grant Deed that will ensure, if at any point in the future LCLT fails to manage the Property for free public access, public recreation, and habitat preservation, the state will have the ability to retake title to the Property.

## PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

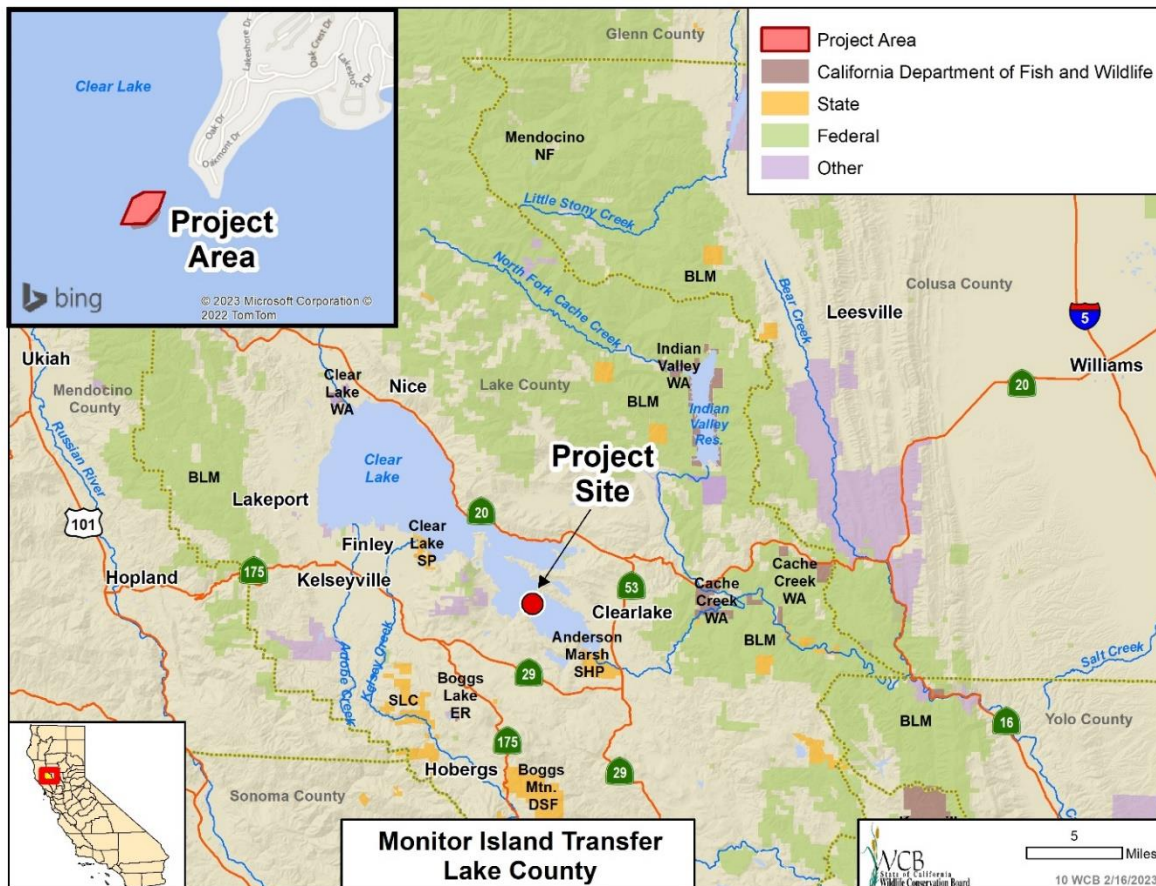
- None received

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.



## 10. Yanci Ranch

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; approve the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$1,300,000 and approve the subgrant of federal funds to the Yolo Habitat Conservancy; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Yanci Ranch
Project Type:	Conservation Easement (795± acres)
Grantee:	Yolo Habitat Conservancy
Amount Recommended:	\$1,300,000, USFWS Section 6
Funding Partners:	U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
County:	Yolo County
Program:	Land Acquisition
Funding:	\$0 from WCB and \$1,300,000 from USFWS
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.3 Objectives: SI 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4

### LOCATION

The 795± acre Yanci Ranch (Property) is located on County Road 27 in rural Yolo County approximately 6 miles north of the city of Winters and approximately 5 miles south of the community of Esparto. The Property is in a predominately agricultural area of Yolo County where grasslands and rangelands are being converted to orchards and other more intensified agricultural uses. The development of orchards has increased over 300 percent in Yolo County over the past 10 years. A property immediately north and another property just south were recently converted to nut orchards. Some development of rural residential housing has also occurred in the region.

The Property is immediately adjacent to two existing conservation easements. Acquisition of a conservation easement on Yanci Ranch and enrollment of the site in the Yolo Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (Yolo HCP/NCCP) reserve system would extend the corridor of connected protected lands approximately 1 mile northward and ½ mile eastward, thereby extending the corridor of protected lands across elevational and ecological gradients that extend from the edge of the valley floor and up along the foothills of the interior coast range. Conservation of the Property will create an approximately 3,900-acre block of protected habitat, which is likely to be expanded further as the Yolo HCP/NCCP enrolls additional properties into the Yolo HCP/NCCP reserve system.

The Yolo HCP/NCCP was completed in 2018 and commits to conserving at least 33,362 acres of land. It is a countywide conservation plan to provide Endangered Species Act permits and associated mitigation for infrastructure and development activities over the next 50 years in Yolo County. The primary objective of the NCCP program is to conserve natural communities at the ecosystem scale, while accommodating planned land uses. The Yolo HCP/NCCP coordinates mitigation to



maximize benefits to species as well as conserve habitat for 12 identified species: Palmate-bracted bird's beak, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, California tiger salamander, western pond turtle, giant garter snake, Swainson's hawk, white-tailed kite, western yellow-billed cuckoo, western burrowing owl, least Bell's vireo, bank swallow, and tricolored blackbird.

SWAP designates this property in the southeast corner of the North Coast and Klamath Province, near the intersection with the Bay Delta and Central Coast and the Central Valley and Sierra Provinces. This acquisition will advance statewide conservation goals: Goal 1.2 (Native Species Range and Distribution), Goal 1.3 (Native Species Abundance and Richness), Goal 2.1 (Connectivity); Goal 1.4 (Ecosystem Richness), Goal 2.1 (Connectivity), and Goal 3.2 (Disturbance Regime).

The Property is not located within a Disadvantaged Community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool).

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is located within the Central Valley in Yolo County, California. The ranch is along the eastern side of the interior coast range and includes elevations and aspects that support an ecological gradient of blue oak woodland in the upper portions of the site, grasslands in the middle and lower elevation portions of the site, and a riparian corridor along Union School Slough as it traverses the site.

The Property has primarily been used as grazing lands for cattle, sheep, and horses and currently is managed as rangeland for cattle. It also contains a single homestead that is currently in use and historically had a small orchard adjacent to the homestead that has since been removed. The current landowners have conducted extensive habitat enhancement and restoration activities on the site including riparian plantings along Union School Slough, habitat for tricolored blackbird within a constructed pond, and invasive species management and the planting of native grasses in selected portions of the grasslands on the site. Cattle are prevented from entering the pond and Union School Slough through exclusion fencing in order to protect habitat and nesting activities within the restored riparian zone. These activities have been conducted in partnership with a variety of organizations including NRCS, the Yolo RCD, Point Blue, and others.

The conservation easement and associated site-specific management plan will ensure the site is protected and managed to maintain the conservation values of the site, which include four different natural community types and six of the twelve Yolo HCP/NCCP covered species. The natural communities include grassland, blue oak woodland, valley foothill riparian, and fresh emergent wetland. These natural community types provide habitat for valley elderberry longhorn beetle, western pond turtle, Swainson's hawk, white-tailed kite, burrowing owl, and tricolored blackbird. In addition to providing important habitat for Yolo HCP/NCCP covered species and other wildlife, the Yanci Ranch also provides other elements of broader ecological importance. The ranch is at the interface between the

intensively farmed valley floor of the Central Valley and the upland habitats of the interior Coast Ranges. This area provides important natural ecological systems and native habitats that are substantially less common on the valley floor as well as movement corridors for a variety of resident and migratory wildlife.

The proposed conservation easement on the site would prohibit future development or subdivision of the Property and would require that the site is managed and maintained for the preservation of the habitat types and species identified above. There is a single 6.8-acre development envelope for existing infrastructure and homesite.

This project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 2: Execute Strategic Land Acquisitions and Pathway 8: Align Investments to Maximize Conservation Benefits.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Easement will be held by the Yolo Habitat Conservancy. The Yolo Habitat Conservancy has prepared a Yolo HCP/NCCP site-specific management plan for the Property that has been reviewed and approved by USFWS, CDFW, and the landowner. This management plan documents the current condition of the Property and how the Property will be managed to protect the conservation values of the Easement. The Yolo Habitat Conservancy will provide WCB with a baseline condition report prior to the close of escrow and will conduct annual compliance monitoring.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The DGS approved fair market value is \$1,300,000 The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
USFWS Section 6 Grant	\$1,300,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$1,300,000

The entire purchase price of the Easement will be funded by the USFWS Section 6 grant. The Yolo Habitat Conservancy will use separate funds to purchase a separate 158± acre conservation easement on the Woodland Regional Park Preserve. USFWS agreed that the Woodland Regional Park Preserve acquisition will count as match funding for the Yanci Ranch acquisition. A WCB notice of unrecorded grant agreement will encumber both properties to protect the state's interests.

#### PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

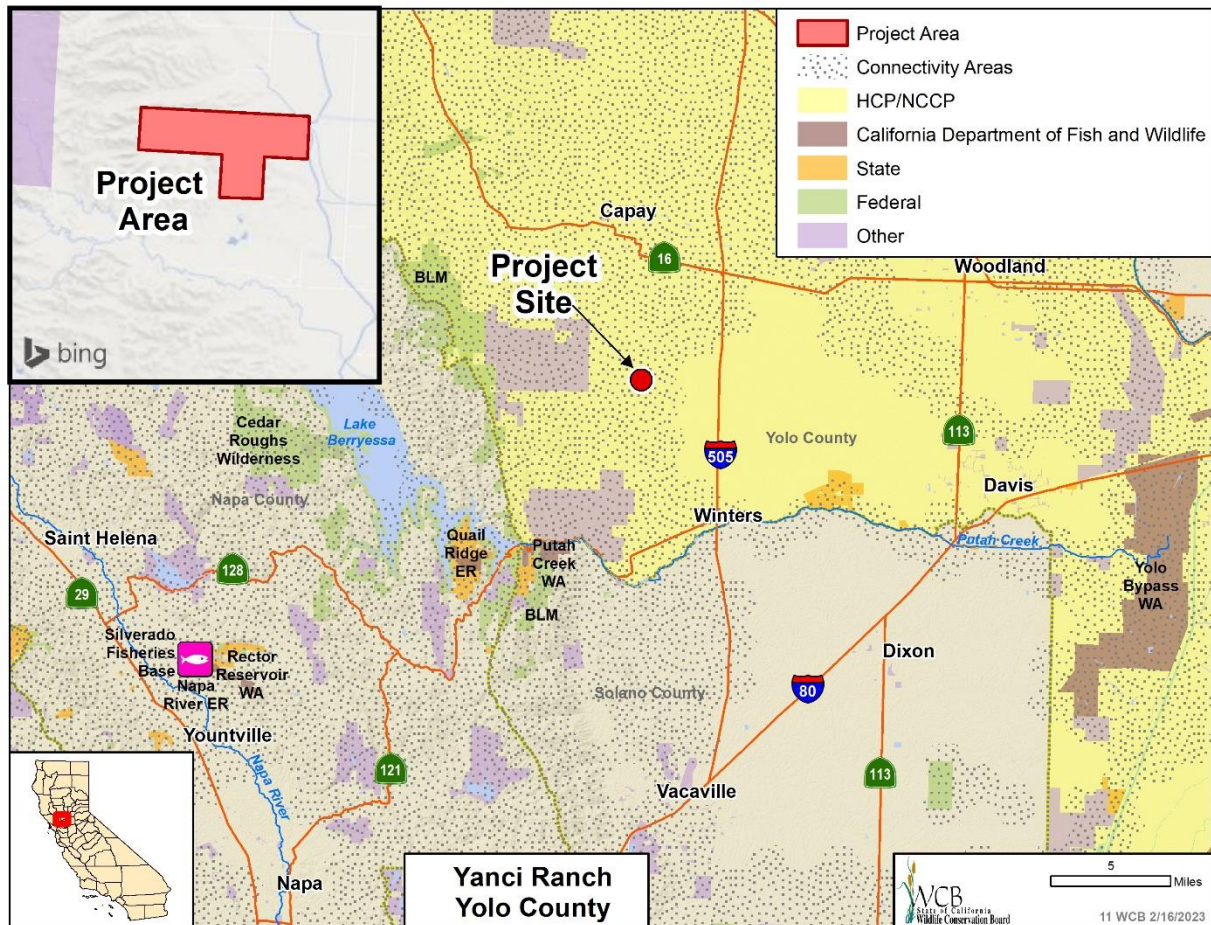
- None received

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.



## 11. Barber Creek

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$240,000 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(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:	Barber Creek
Project Type:	Fee Title (66± acres)
Amount Recommended:	\$240,000
County:	Alpine
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 1.3, 2.4

### LOCATION

The property (Property) is located on the southeastern portion of the California and Nevada state line, approximately six miles southeast of South Lake Tahoe, near the community of Fountain Place. The subject area is bounded on the north by Luther Pass, and the towns of Minden and Gardnerville, on the east by US Highway 395, on the south by Pleasant Valley and Monitor Pass, and on the west by Carson Pass and Blue Lakes.

The 66-acre Property is bordered on the south and west by the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. The Property includes canyons and drainages with one perennial stream, Barber Creek, which contains riparian vegetation and wildlife habitat.

Acquisition of the Property will preserve corridors that provide for transitional habitat in the face of climate change by allowing for wildlife movement between the Property and the higher elevation peaks in the surrounding area. This will protect the wildlife migration by providing a non-impacted migration corridor.

The Property is not located within a Disadvantaged Community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool).

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is composed of a single parcel with access provided by the neighboring 359-acre CDFW-owned parcels to the north and east, Fay Canyon Expansion 1, which was acquired by WCB in 2019. The topography ranges from gradual to moderate slopes and rugged terrain and includes mature conifer forest and high desert shrub that provides habitat for the mule deer winter range. Barber Creek bisects the Property from the southwest corner to the northeast corner.

The mule deer herd occupying the Property originates from the Carson River herd numbering roughly 450 head. The deer summer in Hope Valley and Jobs Peak on the California side, and winter in a narrow band of habitat between the steep slopes of the Sierra and Carson Valley in Nevada. Habitat loss due to residential

and commercial development is a major reason for decreasing mule deer habitat on these important wintering grounds. The Property's protection is an important addition to protected wintering grounds in the area. The Property is located within an area designated for residential expansion with several new subdivisions directly to the east.

There are several other species of special concern that can be found on the Property such as the Sierra Nevada red fox, wolverine, Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, northern goshawk (whose nest sites are located on the northwest edge of the Property), California spotted owl, mountain quail, and both bald and golden eagles.

The Property is of interest to the local community due to its proximity to the Fay-Luther and Jobs Peak trail systems and potentially can be used to connect a large portion of the Carson Valley Legacy Trail loop in the future. There are a series of peaks in the area, Jobs Peak, Jobs Sister, and Freel Peak, which range in elevation from 10,633 to 10,866 feet, and are the highest peaks in the Carson Range. These peaks are within about three miles southwest of the Property and are very popular hiking destinations from Hope Valley to the Tahoe Basin. The Carson Valley Trails Association would like to expand the trail across the Property in cooperation with local residents, CDFW, and USFS.

SWAP designates the area surrounding the Property as the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada Province. This acquisition will help advance CDFW's land conservation policies and wildlife protection goals in the SWAP by conserving sustainable plant and animal communities that support multiple species of interest.

This project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 2: Execute Strategic Land Acquisitions.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CDFW will manage and monitor the Property. The management objectives will be similar to that in the Fay Canyon Land Management Plan which will include maintaining the property as critical deer winter range, conducting wildlife surveys, and continuing coordination of population surveys.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The DGS approved fair market value is \$240,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$240,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$240,000



## PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

### Support:

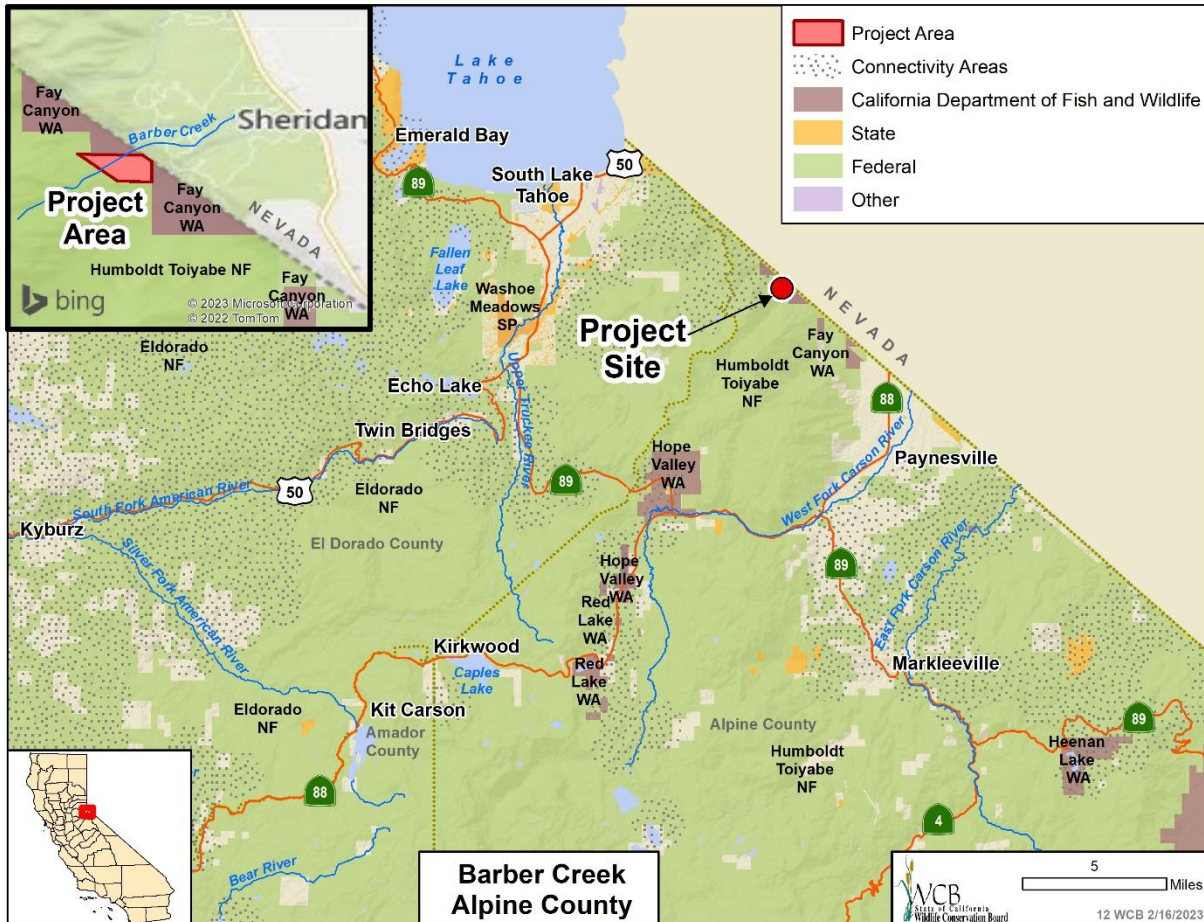
- None received

### Opposition:

- While no specific letter of opposition was received, Alpine County did submit a letter of concern regarding the conversion of private property to public property and the loss of property tax revenue.

## CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code 21080.28, Acquisition of an Interest in Land by a Public Agency, as an acquisition of an interest in land by a public agency for preservation of natural conditions existing at the time of transfer, including plant and animal habitats. Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file the appropriate NOE with the State Clearinghouse and the county clerk.



## 12. Pescadero and San Gregorio Creek Large Wood Placement

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve these projects as proposed; allocate \$602,000 from the General Fund, (Budget Act of 2021 [Section 54], Water Supply for Environmental Flows); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish these projects; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Pescadero and San Gregorio Creek Large Wood Placement
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	San Mateo Resource Conservation District
Amount Recommended:	\$602,000
Funding Partners:	U.S. Department of Commerce, San Mateo County Parks
Landowner(s):	San Mateo County Parks, Repetto's Nursery and Florist
County:	San Mateo
Program:	Stream Flow Enhancement
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.4, SI 4.3

The Pescadero and San Gregorio Creek Large Wood Placement Projects (Projects) will enhance creek habitat to benefit federally threatened steelhead and federally endangered coho salmon, as well as other native aquatic species. The Projects will improve creek habitat through installation of natural habitat features using large woody debris (LWD) to increase complexity. The Projects will benefit approximately 2.6 miles of habitat at 49 sites in two local watersheds. Feature installation will involve a combination of anchored (San Gregorio Creek Work Site) and unanchored (Pescadero Creek Work Site) methods, with the intent to utilize on-site materials where possible. Increasing the amount of wood in the creeks interrupts and decreases water velocities during winter high flows and provides the diversity of habitat fish need to forage, rest, rear, and spawn. The two work sites are considered separate projects under CEQA; therefore, each is presented separately below. However, they will be managed as one Project under a single grant agreement.

### PESCADERO CREEK WORK SITE

#### LOCATION

The Pescadero Creek Work Site (PWS) is located within Pescadero Creek County Park. Pescadero Creek meets Butano Creek in the 320-acre Pescadero Marsh Complex, which is one of the most significant coastal wetlands on the Central California Coast.

The surrounding area is not classified as a Disadvantaged Community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool). San Mateo RCD has built strong relationships with local tribes and tribal groups and is committed to engaging with the appropriate tribes for both work sites as needed. The Project was developed through a Technical Advisory

Committee which includes representatives from tribal groups such as the Association of Ramaytush Ohlone. It is not anticipated that cultural resources will be found or disturbed at the PWS, as the Project involves little disturbance, and no heavy equipment will be used.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The two-mile project reach contains sections of straightened, incised channel with a lack of complexity, referred to as “bowling alleys”. These “bowling alleys” create reaches that are difficult for fish to navigate during high flows due to the lack of resting pools and the potential for increased water velocities due to the lack of bends. There are several pools within the project with minimal cover, which can lead to warm water conditions not suitable for salmonids, especially coho salmon.

At the PWS, approximately 125 pieces of large wood will be used to create 35 habitat structures through directional felling. This approach is also known as Accelerated Recruitment. Trees are cut strategically to fall directly into the channel, with no anchoring or heavy equipment used. Individual structures are designed to encourage a particular physical process, such as facilitating gravel sorting. This more closely mimics natural recruitment processes, allowing the creek to be more dynamic. Substrate size, gradient, bank conditions, and physical habitat elements inform the design phase and final placement. Generally, low-gradient, gravel-dominated alluvial stream reaches are targeted for this method. Key pieces may be placed at different angles depending on the goals of the structure. These pieces have lengths at least 1.5 times the bankfull width and/or are pieces that are wedged for retention. Wedging opportunities are generally sought among existing features such as stumps, trees, and large boulders. Best management practices are implemented to minimize impacts on canopy cover and shading.

Accelerated Recruitment is an ideal large wood installation method to use in spaces where the following criteria are met: 1) a good selection of redwood and Douglas-fir trees along the riparian and top of bank areas, 2) no nearby infrastructure or private property that would make engineered structures necessary, and 3) the property owner is supportive of the methodology. Pescadero Creek County Park meets all of these criteria. All trees will be sourced onsite and are composed primarily of Douglas-fir and redwood, with additional alders and tanoaks included in some structures. Trees were selected through multiple site visits by the San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD), County Parks, and a registered Forester. Use of the direct felling method minimizes disturbance to the site and also reduces costs compared to engineered structures which require heavy equipment and importing of materials from off-site. Avoidance measures will be implemented during construction to minimize disturbance to wildlife. The PWS is located in marbled murrelet (MAMU) habitat, and therefore construction activities will be limited to taking place outside of the MAMU nesting season at this site.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.



No herbicide will be used in the completion of this Project.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The San Mateo RCD has prepared a Long-Term Management and Maintenance Plan that defines Project success and guides management actions for the Project improvements. If at any time during the 20-year life of the Project, San Mateo RCD 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 PWS is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	\$38,547	\$5,228	\$43,775
Design	\$14,830	\$16,659	\$31,489
Monitoring	\$7,380	---	\$7,380
Construction	\$60,789	---	\$60,789
Indirect Costs	\$7,116	---	\$7,116
Contingency	\$12,338	---	\$12,338
Total	\$141,000	\$21,877	\$162,887

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Project administration, construction bids and contracts, interagency communication.
- Design and Permitting: Obtaining final permits.
- Monitoring: Biological Resources Evaluation, photo and vegetation monitoring.
- Construction: Direct felling of trees to create 35 large wood habitat features.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

#### PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

- David K. White, California Supervisor, Pacific Region, NOAA Restoration Center
- Hannah Ormshaw, Assistant Parks Director, San Mateo County Parks

Opposition:

- None received

#### CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The PWS project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to the Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (SERP), Public Resources Code section 21080.56, as a project that meets all of the following conditions: (1) the project is

exclusively to conserve, restore, protect, or enhance, and assist in the recovery of California native fish and wildlife, and the habitat upon which they depend; or is exclusively to restore or provide habitat for California native fish and wildlife; (2) the project may have public benefits incidental to the project's fundamental purpose; (3) the project will result in long-term net benefits to climate resiliency, biodiversity, and sensitive species recovery; and includes procedures and ongoing management for the protection of the environment; and (4) project construction activities are solely related to habitat restoration. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse

## **SAN GREGORIO CREEK WORK SITE**

### **LOCATION**

The San Gregorio Creek Work Site (SGWS) covers a reach of approximately 2,700 feet on private agricultural property in the lower San Gregorio Watershed. The project area consists of riparian habitat next to a large field that is primarily used to grow pumpkins, hay, and flowers. It is also an active ranch, and an above-ground pond built in 2017 acts as an off-stream water reservoir.

The surrounding area is not classified as a Disadvantaged Community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool). San Mateo RCD has built strong relationships with local tribes and tribal groups and is committed to engaging with the appropriate tribes for both work sites as needed. The Project was developed through a Technical Advisory Committee which includes representatives from tribal groups such as the Association of Ramaytush Ohlone. The SGWS will involve some ground disturbance for installation via anchoring methods, and because of this San Mateo RCD will continue to seek tribal input throughout construction.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project site consists of long sections of plane-bed geometry with some pools forming on creek bends. Rare locations of existing large wood can be found. In the San Gregorio Creek watershed, the most critical threats to salmonid freshwater life stages are the lack of winter habitat and unembedded substrate, as well as low flows and reduced pool volume in the summer and fall. Displacement or mortality caused by high winter flows frequently limits production of juvenile coho salmon that do not have access to velocity refuges. LWD installation creates winter habitat for coho and steelhead, and helps form deep pools that are more likely to withstand the dry months.

In contrast to the PWS, implementation at the SGWS will install 14 engineered, anchored structures. This will provide more assurance for the private landowner that the structures will remain in place. Accelerated recruitment is not feasible at this site, as there are no redwood or Douglas-firs on the property to direct-fell. While on-site eucalyptus may be utilized for some structures, these would be felled and then placed strategically in the creek. Wood will be sourced from onsite, non-riparian standing trees where possible. Log size, number, and spacing are designed to reflect natural stream dynamics and to help restore the stream's original heterogeneous nature.

To reduce potential impacts to the aquatic environment and control project costs, wood placement will be done from either the top of bank or stable dry gravel bars along the toe of the banks. There will be no grading or earthmoving work conducted in the wetted channel for construction of any of the proposed structures, which avoids the need for dewatering. All work along the banks will be conducted with a rubber-tired tractor to reduce soil impacts. Large wood structures at the SGWS will be anchored with hardware as described in CDFW's California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual. The Project will utilize the techniques of log pinning with rebar, stream bank anchors using rebar, and bedrock and boulder anchors using threaded rebar. A certified engineer was employed during the planning process to complete designs and ensure that they met the highest standards.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

No herbicide will be used in the completion of this Project.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The San Mateo RCD has prepared a Long-Term Management and Maintenance Plan that defines Project success and guides management actions for the Project improvements. If at any time during the 20-year life of the Project, San Mateo RCD 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 SGWS is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	\$38,803	---	\$38,803
Design	\$23,330	---	\$23,330
Monitoring	\$7,380	---	\$7,380
Construction	\$204,290	---	\$204,290
Indirect Costs	\$16,605	---	\$16,605
Contingency	\$29,592	---	\$29,592
Total	\$320,000		\$320,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Project administration, construction bids and contracts, interagency communication.
- Design and Permitting: Obtaining final permits, completion of 100% designs.
- Monitoring: Biological Resources Evaluation, photo and vegetation monitoring.
- Construction: Installation of 14 large wood habitat features.

- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

## PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

### Support:

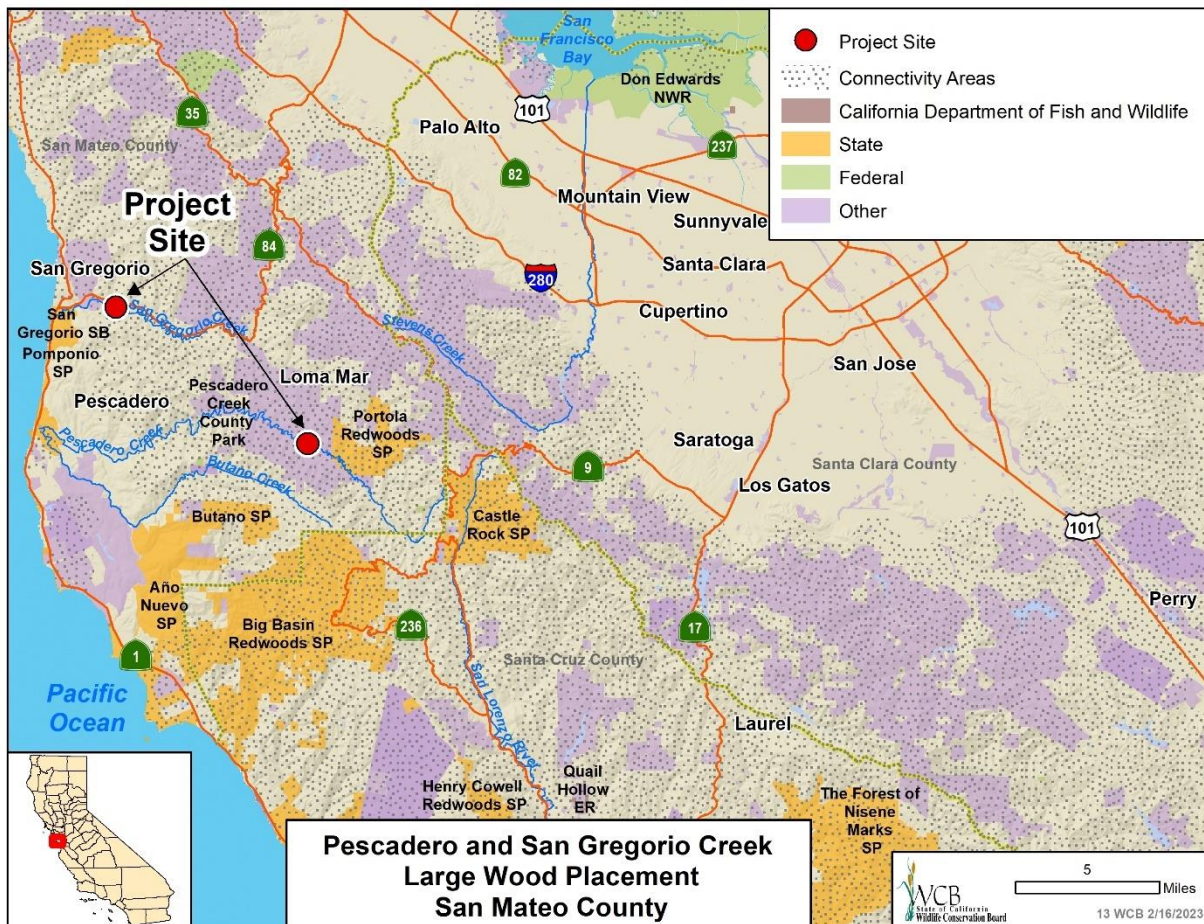
- David K. White, California Supervisor Pacific Region, NOAA Restoration Center
- Hannah Ormshaw, Assistant Parks Director, San Mateo County Parks

### Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The SGWS project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines, Section 15333, Class 33, Small Habitat Restoration Projects as a project not to exceed five acres in size to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of habitat for fish, plants, or wildlife that meets the criteria of Section 15333, subdivisions (a) through (c). Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



### 13. Bufford Ranch Conservation Easement, Expansion 2

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$75,000 from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80111(d) for the grant to California Rangeland Trust; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Bufford Ranch Conservation Easement, Expansion 2
Project Type:	Conservation Easement (65± acres)
Grantee:	California Rangeland Trust
Amount Recommended:	\$75,000
Funding Partners:	California Rangeland Trust
County:	Kern
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.2, A.4 Objectives: SI 1.2, 2.1, 2.4, 4.1

#### LOCATION

The property (Property) is located north of Pine Tree Road, approximately 12 miles south of Lake Isabella, and 50 miles east of Bakersfield on the north side of Walker Basin. The Walker Basin is a unique upper alpine basin in the southern Sierra Nevada Mountain range which contains a number of rare and sensitive alpine-dependent species. Adjoining the Property is the original 575± acre Bufford Ranch conservation easement acquired with a grant from WCB in 2013 and a 261± Bufford Ranch conservation easement acquired with a grant from WCB in 2016. These three properties form the Bufford Ranch. To the north of the Property are lands managed by the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Property and BLM areas are also linked and surrounded by U.S. National Forest lands. To the south of this Property is the Parker Ranch, a 9,500-acre conservation easement funded by WCB in 2007. Next to Parker Ranch and further west is the 15,000-acre Rudnick Ranch conservation easement which is held by the Nature Conservancy and was funded by WCB in 2011. These properties support a protected wildlife corridor and linkage from the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains into the Tehachapi Mountain Range and the 62,000-acre Tejon Ranch conservation project that WCB funded in 2010.

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

Grapevine hydrologic unit. Thompson Creek, a perennial stream, and two intermittent streams flow through the entirety of Bufford Ranch, through Walker Basin, and into the Kern River.

The Property is not located within a Disadvantaged Community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool).

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is comprised of 65± acres of varied vegetation. The majority of Bufford Ranch is open savannahs of blue oak and canyon live oak with areas of California juniper, buckbrush, and gooseberry. The Property's topography ranges from hilly to steeper sloped areas of the ranch, with some benches at the southern portion of the Property and steeper ravines in the north. Elevations range from approximately 3,600 to 4,600 feet. There are approximately 15 springs on the entire Bufford Ranch property. Annual grasses, forbs, and scattered native perennial bunchgrasses, including purple needlegrass and blue wildrye, are found on the Property.

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

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

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

Current and historic management of the Bufford Ranch, including grazing, has played an essential role in maintaining habitat for wildlife species, including the state and federally endangered California condor. California condors have been observed foraging on the original conservation easement, in which this project will add an additional 65 acres of habitat connectivity and suitable, preserved foraging habitat in perpetuity. Furthermore, potential roost sites are present in the snags



along the ridge that forms the north border. Grazing has prevented accumulation of thatch and establishment of nonnative weedy plants, which would otherwise outcompete desirable grasses and forbs. Soil management practices, such as managed grazing, not only increase drought resiliency, but they can also sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce sediment erosion and dust. It should be noted that the landowner is currently not grazing the 65-acre Property to let the rangelands “rest” for a few years and to not overgraze the ranch.

SWAP designates the area surrounding the Property as the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada Province. This acquisition will help advance CDFW’s land conservation policies and wildlife protection goals in the SWAP by conserving sustainable plant and animal communities that support multiple species of interest.

This project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 2: Execute Strategic Land Acquisitions.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

When establishing a new agricultural conservation easement, the grantee, California Rangeland Trust (CRT), works closely with the landowner to address the protection of a property’s natural habitat and agricultural resources. The purpose of the Conservation Easement is to ensure that both the agricultural and wildlife habitat values are recognized and conserved in balance with one another. CRT has prepared an initial baseline assessment of the existing development and the agricultural and natural resources on the Property and provided this report to WCB. The continuation of the current grazing regime will provide high quality habitat in the future, while rangeland conditions will be monitored annually for comparative analysis across CRT’s 365,000± acres conservation easement portfolio. This will afford further research related to grazing and its relationship with various habitat types.

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

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

### PROJECT FUNDING

The DGS approved fair market value is \$100,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$75,000
California Rangeland Trust	\$25,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$100,000

### PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

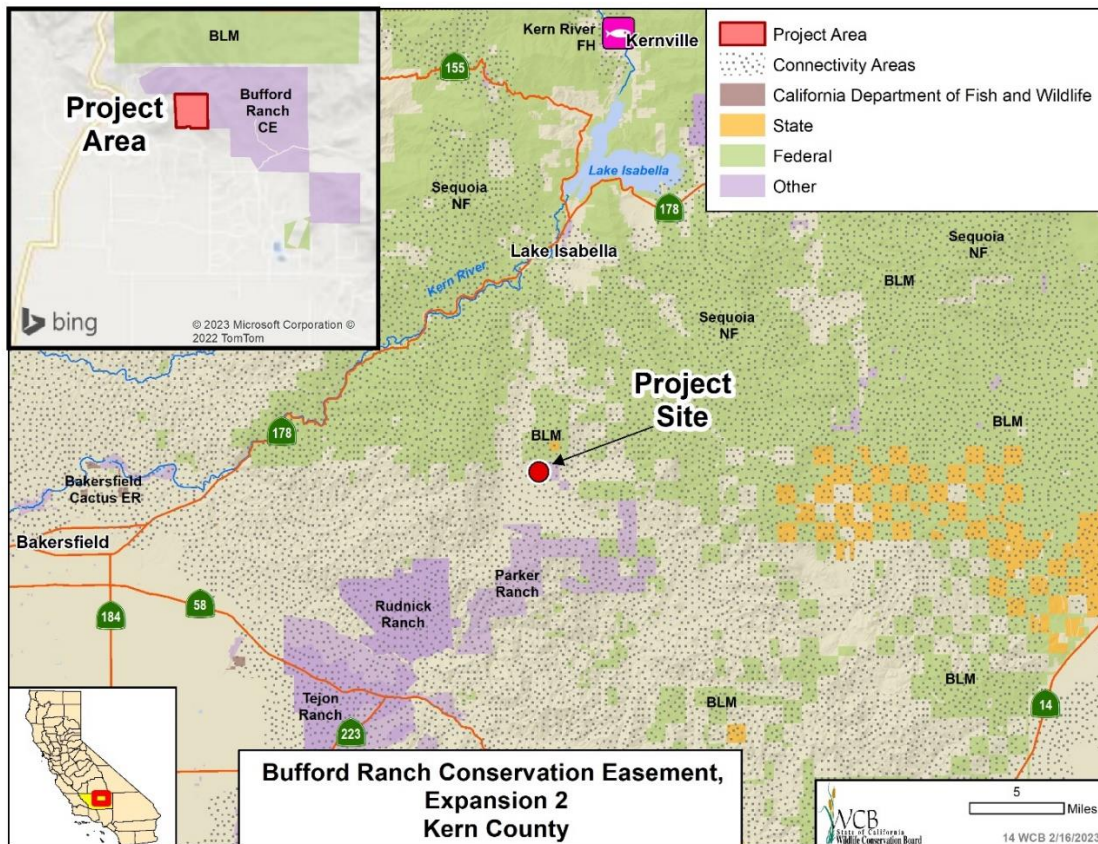
- None received

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, a NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.





#### 14. Escondido Falls

##### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,500,000 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) 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:	Escondido Falls
Project Type:	Fee Title (88± acres)
Grantee:	Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
Amount Recommended:	\$1,500,000
Funding Partners:	Natural Resources Agency, Private landowner, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
County:	Los Angeles
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, C.1 Objectives: SI 2.4, 3.4

##### LOCATION

The Escondido Falls property (Property) is located in northern, unincorporated Los Angeles County. The Property is at the northerly terminus of Murphy Way and is adjacent to the city of Malibu's northern border. The subject area is located in the North Santa Monica Bay watershed and is within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA), the largest urban national park in the United States. MRCA will incorporate the Property into the adjacent Escondido Canyon Park.

Prior WCB acquisitions in the surrounding area include Puerco Canyon (2014; 703 acres) and Santa Monica Bay, Rancho Corral Canyon (2008; 148 acres).

The Property is not located within a Disadvantaged Community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool).

##### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property includes 4 contiguous parcels and approximately 88± acres. At present, the Property is privately-owned, undeveloped open space with high habitat values. It is currently zoned RC-20, which is rural coastal, and it is under threat of private home development due to its buildable parcels with excellent views.

The Property consists of oak woodland, grassland, chaparral, coastal sage scrub (including purple sage), and riparian habitat along 340 yards of Escondido Creek and the Upper Falls of Escondido Falls. It provides habitat for species, including pallid bat, Cooper's hawk, Allen's hummingbird, oak titmouse, and Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow. The Catalina mariposa lily, a California Rare Plant Rank 4.2, has been observed on the Property. Upper Escondido Falls is

identified as a part of the Santa Monica Mountains Significant Ecological Area, as designated by Los Angeles County, and as an environmentally sensitive habitat area by the Local Coastal Program under the California Coastal Act.

The oak woodlands and chaparral communities were impacted by the 2018 Woolsey fire, though they are recovering quickly. Species native to the Southern California chaparral and oak woodland environments are well adapted to fire and post-fire conditions. With the reestablishment of fire-adapted vegetation, it is expected that wildlife, including mountain lion, gray fox, bobcat, coyote, badger, and deer, will be present. This corridor also provides wildlife refugia for climate impacts.

While visitors can access the lower Escondido Falls using the 4.2-mile Escondido Falls Trail, there is currently no formal trail to the Middle and Upper Falls, just an informal one that is located on the Property. Once acquired, the acreage will become publicly accessible open space, and MRCA expects to complete a segment of the California Coastal Trail (Coastal Slope Trail) which will provide a new, safe access point to the falls. MRCA's proposed project improvements include installation of a safety barrier to ensure the safety of hikers who visit the waterfall. Additionally, the Property will support new connections between the current Escondido Falls trail and a network of nearby trails as well as to the Ramirez Canyon Park campground, the only lower-cost coastal accommodation along the 21-mile Malibu coast.

There is a substantial regional need for parks and outdoor recreation opportunities in the greater Los Angeles area and adding this subject area to the Escondido Canyon Park will enhance public access opportunities. The popularity of SMMNRA continues to grow according to a 2018 count. The current Escondido Canyon Park users are representative of the diverse communities within the greater Los Angeles Metropolitan Area. A National Park Service survey found that most visitors came from Los Angeles and Ventura counties, demonstrating the importance of SMMNRA as a regional destination for residents.

SWAP designates the area surrounding the Property as the Southern California Coast ecoregion, a conservation unit in the South Coast Province. American Southwest riparian woodland, which can be found on the Property, is a conservation target. This project aligns with the objective of SWAP Conservation Strategy 1 (Land Acquisition/Easement/Lease).

This project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 2: Execute Strategic Land Acquisitions and Pathway 8: Align Investments to Maximize Conservation Benefits.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

MRCA will own and manage the Property as part of the Escondido Canyon Park, balancing the protection of habitat with providing safe access to the site. Upon acquisition, MRCA will undertake resource assessments and a master planning

process. MRCA is a local government public entity established in 1985 by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), Conejo Recreation and Park District, and Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District pursuant to the Joint Powers Act. MRCA manages more than 80,000 acres owned by MRCA or the SMMC.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The DGS approved fair market value is \$4,835,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$1,500,000
California Natural Resources Agency	\$1,000,000
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy	\$1,350,000
Landowner Bargain Sale (Donation)	\$985,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$4,835,000

#### PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

##### Support:

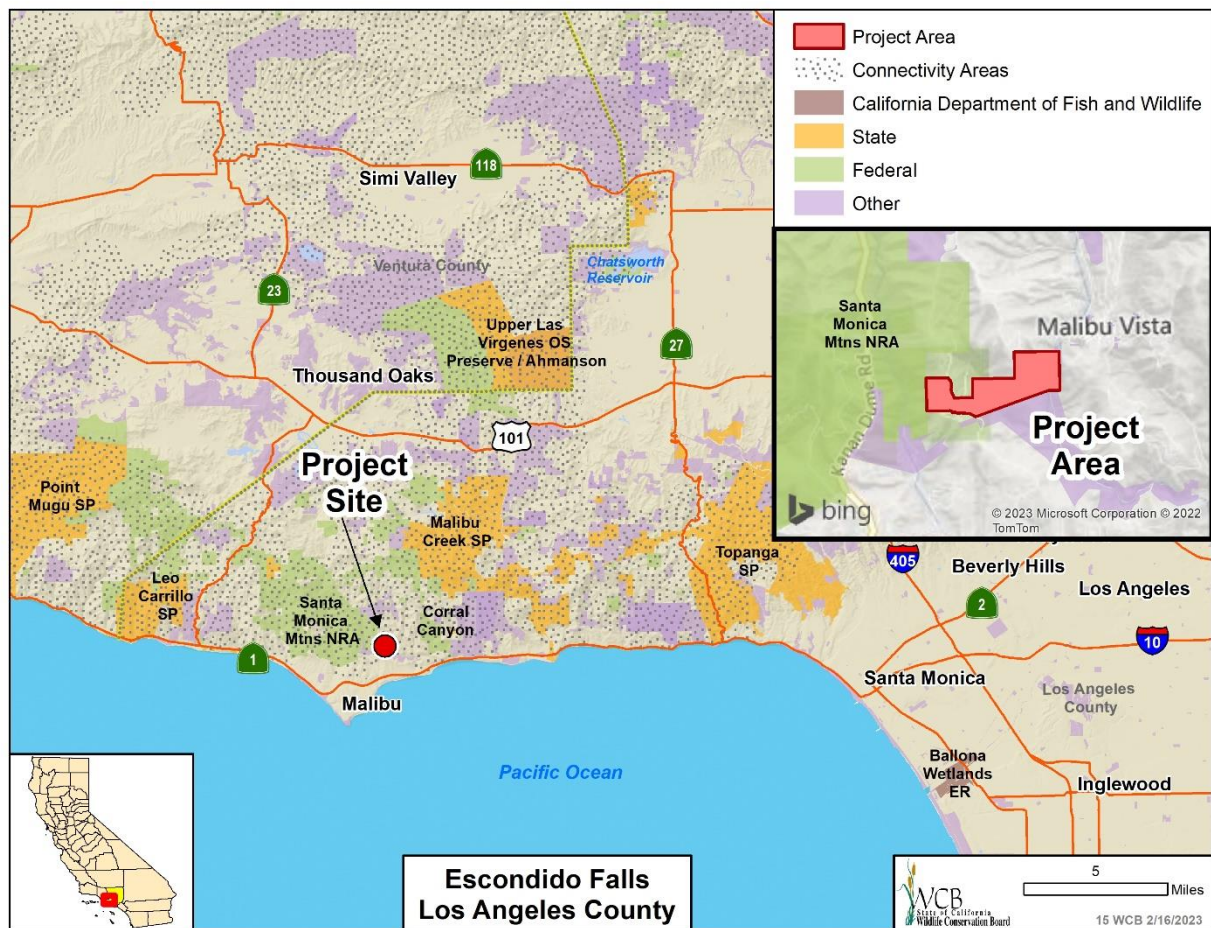
- Amy Hutzler, Executive Officer, California State Coastal Conservancy
- Michelle Warren, Co-founder, Black Girls Trekkin'
- Irma Munoz, Executive Officer, Mujeres de la Tierra

##### Opposition:

- None received

#### CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code 21080.28, Acquisition of an Interest in Land by a Public Agency, as an acquisition of an interest in land by a public agency for preservation of natural conditions existing at the time of transfer, including plant and animal habitats. Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file the appropriate NOE with the State Clearinghouse and the county clerk.



## 15. James Reserve Infrastructure Improvements

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$206,147 from 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 CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	James Reserve Infrastructure Improvements
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	University of California, Riverside
Amount Recommended:	\$206,147
Funding Partners:	University of California, Riverside
Landowner(s):	University of California, Riverside
County:	Riverside
Program:	The University of California, Natural Reserve System
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.5 Objectives: SI 1.3

### LOCATION

The James Reserve Infrastructure Improvements project (Project) is located at the James San Jacinto Mountains Reserve (Reserve), approximately nine miles north of Idyllwild, in the San Jacinto Mountains, Riverside County. The property is operated as a Reserve within the University of California Natural Reserve System and encompasses 30 acres of university-owned land within a remote wilderness setting surrounded by the San Bernardino National Forest. The entire watershed is protected for research by the USFS.

The Project is located within a Disadvantaged Community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool).

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project will increase the Reserve's fire resilience and energy efficiency with the installation of a new metal roof, double-paned windows, and four pvc doors. In 2009, WCB contributed \$248,000 to the Reserve for the installation of five new manufactured cabins and two existing building renovations. As part of these renovations, Lolomi Lodge received a new asphalt shingle roof.

Due to the increased wildfire danger and harsh environment, a new metal roof will be installed on the Lolomi Lodge, which serves as the director's cabin. To increase the use, capacity, and efficiency of the Trailfinder Lodge, new double paned windows and four new doors will be installed. These upgrades are expensive and are not considered regular maintenance. The improvements would enable year-round access to overnight visits to the Reserve, which is having a rise in demand for research and training. Interest in utilizing the Reserve during the winter is also increasing, especially from researchers and K-12 programs that are studying

climate change. The upper floor of the Trailfinder Lodge is unusable during the winter (too cold) or in the summer (too hot) but would serve as an additional dormitory (capacity of 30) once the windows are installed allowing the Reserve to run year-round.

The Reserve brings STEM education to surrounding underserved populations. The Reserve is situated near tribal lands and has begun working closely with Dr. Amy Whipple (Northern Arizona University) who has successfully established a National Science Foundation program to support students from Tribal and Community Colleges to become scientists.

No herbicide will be used during this Project.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The University of California, Riverside 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, University of California, Riverside 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 Development		\$8,380	\$8,380
Lolomi Lodge Roof	\$149,598	\$49,866	\$199,464
Trailfinder Lodge Improvements	\$56,549	\$18,850	\$75,399
Total	\$206,147	\$77,096	\$283,243

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Development: Planning and construction bid evaluation for project tasks.
- Lolomi Lodge Roof: Removal and disposal of existing roof, roof preparation, and installation of metal roof.
- Trailfinder Lodge Improvements: Removal and disposal of existing windows and doors and installation of dual-paned windows and pvc doors.

#### PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

- None received

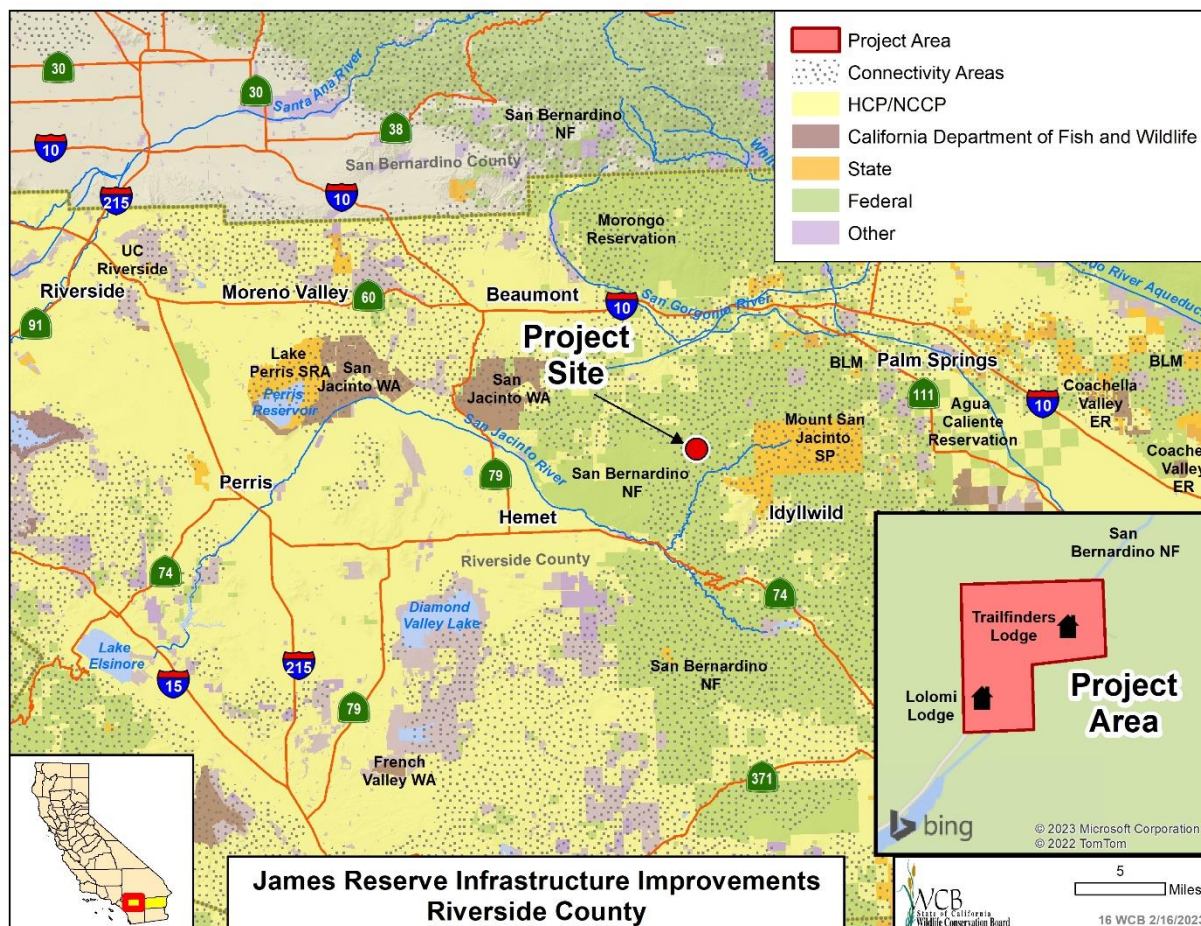


Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is proposed as exempt from the CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.





## 16. Motte Rimrock Reserve Facilities Upgrade

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$573,874 from 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 CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Motte Rimrock Reserve Facilities Upgrade
Project Type:	Infrastructure
Applicant/Grantee:	University of California, Riverside
Amount Recommended:	\$573,874
Funding Partners:	Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency, University of California, Riverside
Landowner(s):	University of California, Riverside
County:	Riverside
Program:	The University of California, Natural Reserve System
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.5 Objectives: SI 1.3

### LOCATION

The Motte Rimrock Reserve (MRR) Facilities Upgrade project (Project) is located 15 miles south of Riverside, California, and occupies a rocky plateau overlooking the Perris Valley. Encompassing 736 acres at a mean elevation of 1,800 feet, MRR lies in the middle of a climatic gradient between the influences of the warm dry inland desert and the cool moist coast. Dominant vegetation communities found on MRR include Riversidean coastal sage scrub, inland annual grassland, and willow riparian thicket.

The Project is located in a severely Disadvantaged Community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool) with a median income of less than \$47,203. It is also considered a disadvantaged community based on the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 (SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities).

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

MRR's biological importance stems from the fact that it is an "island" of natural habitat in a "sea" of ongoing suburban development. During the last several decades, western Riverside County has experienced a rapid expansion in housing and commercial development as the inland southern California population grows. MRR protects a sizable tract of coastal sage scrub, giving students and researchers the opportunity to study the ecology, geology, and hydrology of this increasingly rare habitat.

Currently, MRR does not have dedicated lab space or desk space available to visiting researchers. The room designated to house an on-site lab now must be used to store the books and journals that comprise the Mayhew/Vasek Library.

The Project will add two buildings and one bathroom building to the existing MRR infrastructure: a new administration building to replace the aging administration trailer, a classroom building to provide much needed classroom space for K-12 and University-level classes, and one restroom outbuilding with two unisex ADA complaint bathrooms for researchers and classes.

The administrative building will contain four rooms to provide office and other administrative space for the Reserve Director and MRR stewards. Additional space would include a small common area (to be used as a meeting/conference room), copy room, bathroom, and kitchenette. Currently, MRR administration offices are housed in an on-site trailer that is proving increasingly costly to maintain and lacks facilities for small group meetings relating to reserve management and business issues.

The classroom building will provide a large one-room structure to provide space for approximately forty occupants while serving as a teaching and conference facility for K-12 classes, college courses, and small group conferences. Other amenities such as bathroom and closet space are also a part of the overall floor plan. Currently, MRR completely lacks classroom or conference space and has had to turn away such potential users. This is a particularly critical need for K-12 outreach.

No herbicide will be used during this Project.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The University of California, Riverside has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of MRR. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, University of California, Riverside 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 Design	\$202,648	\$291,477	\$494,125
Earthwork, Demolition and Construction	\$371,226	\$533,948	\$905,174
Total	\$573,874	\$825,425	\$1,399,299

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management and Design: Contracts, permitting, and compounded site costs, including design and work plan, completed permits, hiring contractors, and finalizing contracts.
- Earthwork, Demolition, and Construction: Demolition and earthwork to prepare, demolish, removal of old trailers, and clearing and grading areas, installation, safety and utility hookups, and completion.

#### PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

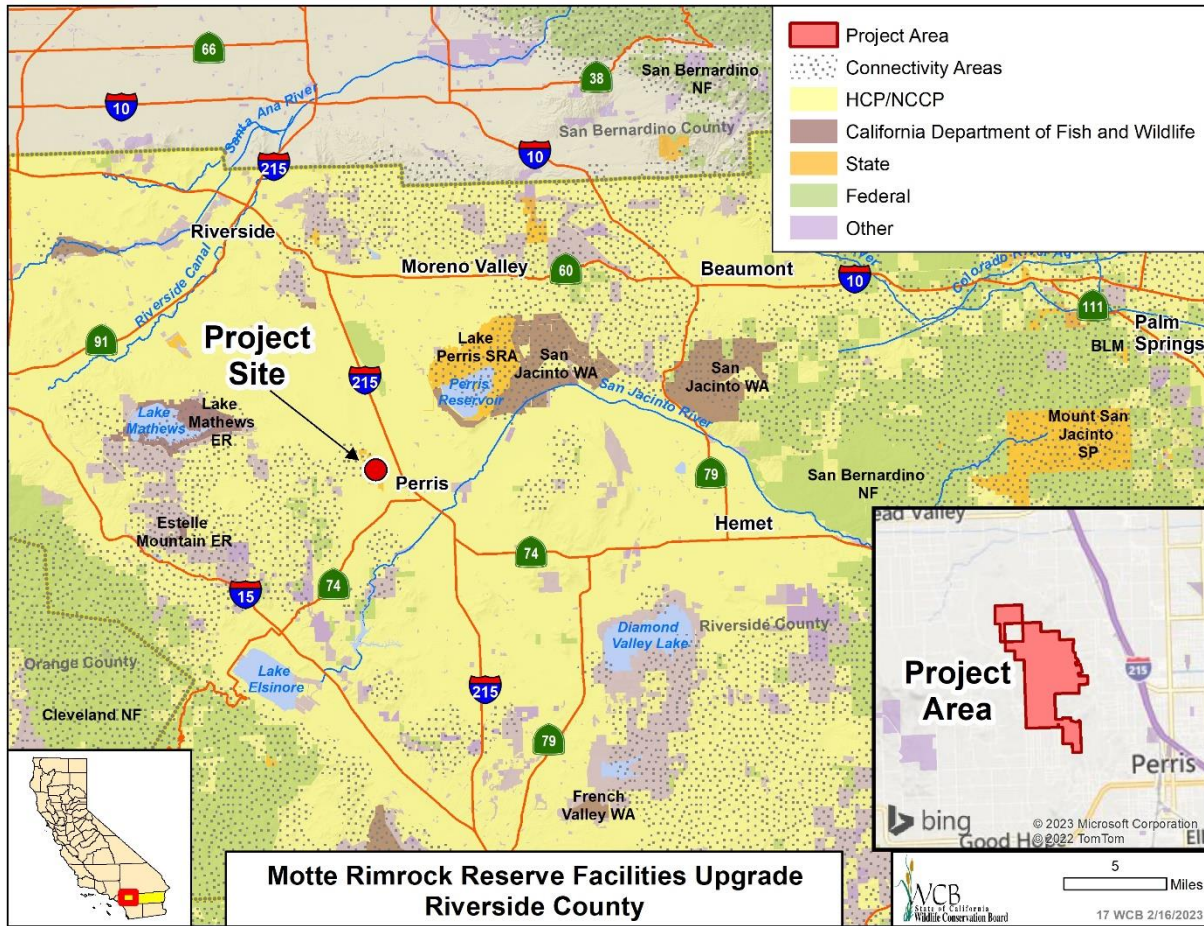
- None received

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 or maintenance of public facilities, Section 15302, Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction, consisting of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures or facilities located on the same site, Section 15303, Class 3 New Construction, as construction of a limited number of new small facilities or structures, and 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, consisting of 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.



## 17. San Felipe Valley Wildlife Area, Expansion 6 (Geis)

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$413,000 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(b/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:	San Felipe Valley Wildlife Area, Expansion 6 (Geis)
Project Type:	Fee Title (50± acres)
Amount Recommended:	\$413,000
County:	San Diego County
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.2, A.4, C.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 2.4, 3.4

### LOCATION

The property (Property) is located in the Volcan Mountain-San Felipe Valley area of northeastern San Diego County, four miles north of the community of Julian and five miles east of rural Highway 79, which begins in the San Diego city of Oceanside, providing primary access to this area. This mountainous area is rural in nature with a mixture of private and public protected lands which include the CDFW San Felipe Valley Wildlife Area (SFVWA). Primary historic land uses in this area included cattle and sheep ranching along with vineyards, orchards, and agricultural crops.

The Volcan Mountains contain the headwaters of the San Dieguito River and San Felipe Creek which have been a conservation priority for CDFW dating back to the early 1990s. Major habitat types in the Volcan Mountain-San Felipe Valley area include coastal sage, coastal chaparral, oak woodlands, interspersed with conifer and riparian forests along the western slopes of the mountains that transition drastically to arid, high desert areas found on the eastern slopes.

SFVWA is characterized by north and south units. This proposed acquisition will increase an area of the south unit's northern section. In 1995 WCB approved the initial SFVWA acquisition, consisting of 766± acres. In 2014 WCB approved acquisition of the 177± acre SFVWA Expansion 5, which increased the total acreage of SFVWA to 17,800± acres. SFVWA offers year around public recreational opportunities in the form of hunting, hiking and wildlife viewing.

CDFW has identified this Property as a high priority for protection in their San Felipe Valley Wildlife Area Conceptual Area Protection Plan, and Areas of Conservation Emphasis plan. These plans have identified private lands adjacent to the wildlife area, that if acquired would expand the area's existing preserve system, increase wildlife connectivity, and permanently protect important wildlife refuge habitat in the face of climate change.

SWAP designates the area surrounding the Property as the Southern California Coast ecoregion, a conservation unit in the South Coast Province. American

Southwest riparian woodland, which can be found on the Property, is a conservation target. This project will achieve the objective of SWAP Conservation Strategy 1 - Land Acquisition/Easement/Lease. This proposed acquisition also supports the SWAP required conservation action of identifying, prioritizing, protecting, and managing wildlife corridors necessary to complete regional protected area networks across the entire region.

The Property is located within a Disadvantaged Community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool).

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is an irregular 50± acre undeveloped parcel consisting of rolling to steep topography that supports hardwood conifer forest habitat consisting of various communities of oak and fir trees. Although it is currently unimproved and utilized for recreational purposes, it is zoned to allow one dwelling per 40 acres along with permitted agricultural uses. Adjacent land uses to the west, east, and south are private lands, while to the north are the SFVWA and protected lands owned by the San Dieguito River Valley Open Space Park. Access to the Property is provided through the protected lands north of the Property along with a dirt road easement that enters its western boundary.

Acquisition of the Property will provide protected habitat for mountain lion, southern mule deer, bobcat, grey fox, and San Diego Mountain king snake. The Property will also help enhance habitat connectivity and improve landscape linkages to coastal, valley, desert, and mountain ecosystems. Landscape-level connectivity will allow wildlife species with large home ranges, such as mountain lions, to maintain natural movement and habitat use patterns while adjusting to climate change.

The project also contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 2: Execute Strategic Land Acquisitions.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Once acquired, the Property will be managed as part of SFVWA, expanding open space and habitat areas for wildlife species and potential future public use opportunities. SFVWA is well known in southern California for superb hunting, wildlife viewing, hiking and wildlife research. The Property will help support additional habitat and species diversity, as well as offer the potential for increased public access opportunities. CDFW feels because of the remote and unimproved condition of the Property, staff will be able to easily absorb the addition of the Property within the current management, operations, and budget of SFVWA.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The DGS approved fair market value is \$413,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$413,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$413,000



## PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

### Support:

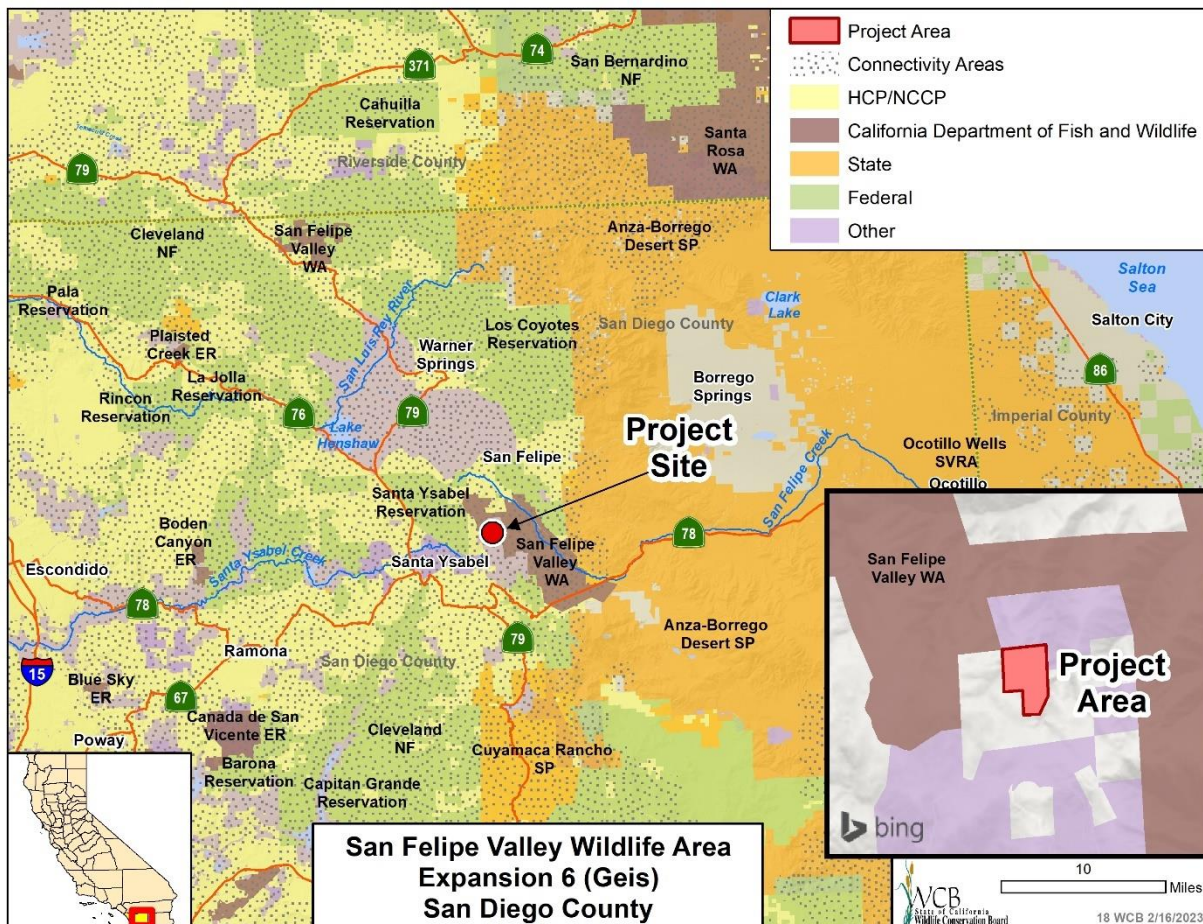
- None received

### Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code 21080.28, Acquisition of an Interest in Land by a Public Agency, as an acquisition of an interest in land by a public agency for preservation of natural conditions existing at the time of transfer, including plant and animal habitats. Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file the appropriate NOE with the State Clearinghouse and the county clerk.



## Presentation Items

### 18. WCB Appraisal Policy Amendment

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This proposal is to consider an amendment to the Wildlife Conservation Board Appraisal Review and Disclosure Policy as adopted in 2012 and amended in 2013.

#### BACKGROUND

On January 1, 2005, Public Resources Code section 5096.500, *et seq.* (the Laird Bill) became operative which governed appraisals for acquisitions of land, or interests in land, funded the Wildlife Conservation Board and other state agencies and conservancies. Initially, the Laird Bill set a threshold for additional appraisal requirements for a “major acquisition” which was defined as “an acquisition where an agency proposes to spend more than twenty-five million dollars (\$25,000,000) of state funds” (former Public Resources Code section 5096.501(c)). For major acquisitions, the acquisition agency was required to contract for an independent appraisal of the fair market value of the land, or interest in land, to be acquired and also contract for an independent appraisal review.

At the February 24, 2011, and September 13, 2011, meetings of the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), discussions were held regarding acquisition project appraisals. Members of the public offered comments and Board members asked questions concerning the appraisal review process and public disclosure of appraisal information. In response to the discussions at both meetings, on September 13, 2011, the Board directed staff to continue working on recommendations regarding appraisal reviews and public disclosure of appraisal information for acquisition projects involving large acreages of land and high dollar value acquisitions.

At the May 31, 2012, Board meeting, staff presented the Wildlife Conservation Board Appraisal Disclosure Policy (the Appraisal Policy) for adoption by the Board. The Appraisal Policy introduced an independent appraisal requirement for a “substantial acquisition” which was defined as “the grant or use of State bond funds to acquire an interest in real property comprising 5,000 acres or more or for which the WCB proposes to allocate five million dollars (\$5,000,000) or more of State funds.” This requirement did not apply to grants under the California Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Program which has its own independent appraisal requirement (Public Resources Code section 10338 (b)). In addition to the independent appraisal requirement, for either a major acquisition or a substantial acquisition, WCB was required to contract for an independent appraisal review of the appraisal and post the independent appraisal review on the WCB website not less than 30 days in advance of WCB holding a public hearing to consider the acquisition project. All appraisals are still required to undergo review and approval by the Department of General Services.

Effective January 1, 2013, Public Resources Code section 5096.501(c) was amended to define major acquisition as “an acquisition for which one or more

agencies propose to spend more than fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000) of state funds” (SB 1266 (2012)). The Public Resources Code was also amended to delete the requirement that a state agency is required to contract for an independent appraisal for a major acquisition (former Public Resources Code section 5096.511). Instead, the law allowed for either the state agency or the project partner to contract for the independent appraisal when there was over \$150,000 in state funds proposed for expenditure or grant. In addition, SB 1266 added Public Resources Code section 5096.512(d)(2)(E) which states that “An acquisition agency shall not utilize property acreage as a categorical threshold to impose an independent review of an appraisal pursuant to this section.” In response to SB 1266, at its March 11, 2013, meeting, the Board amended the Appraisal Policy to delete the 5,000-acre threshold in the definition of a “substantial acquisition.” Other amendments were made to the Appraisal Policy to conform to requirements in SB 1266, including requirements related to appraiser qualifications. However, the Board retained requirements relating to WCB being required to contract for an independent appraisal for any projects where over \$5,000,000 in state funds was proposed for expenditure. The Appraisal Policy remains unchanged since it was last amended in 2013.

#### INFORMATION REGARDING APPLICATION OF THE APPRAISAL POLICY

Since 2020, WCB had five projects defined as a “*Substantial Acquisition*” that required WCB staff to obtain a State contracted appraisal and independent appraisal review. On average, these extra layers of appraisal and independent review added between 5-8 months onto the projects’ timelines, for a total 30 months onto these projects collectively. An extra 30 months to these projects may seem insignificant, however, when WCB has limited staffing available (at present, six Right of Way Agents state-wide), the additional work involved in contracting for an appraisal and an independent appraisal review, takes time away from other conservation projects the Right of Way Agents could be working on. This policy, while well intentioned, has significantly slowed down WCB’s ability to deliver land protection in an era of increasingly more expensive land deals.

#### PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE APPRAISAL POLICY

*WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD  
APPRAISAL REVIEW AND DISCLOSURE POLICY  
(AMENDED MARCH 2013)  
(AMENDED FEBRUARY 2022)*

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) is authorized by statute to acquire, and make grants for the acquisition of, interests in real property to preserve and protect fish and wildlife and provide suitable recreation throughout the State. The purchase price for the real property must not exceed fair market value as established by an approved appraisal.

To ensure public confidence in amounts paid and procedures used for the acquisition of real property, while also ensuring that transactions can proceed

efficiently and expeditiously, before approving an acquisition project where an agency proposes to spend more than \$215 million of State funds, WCB must also have the appraisal reviewed by a qualified independent appraiser and make the independent review report available to the public.

~~Chapter 394, Statutes of 2012 (SB 1266) extends the independent appraisal review requirement to any acquisition for which one or more agencies propose to spend more than \$15 million of State funds and makes other changes to existing law, all of which became effective on January 1, 2013.~~

To continue to ensure public trust and confidence in the WCB acquisition process, provide additional transparency in the purchase of real property, and conform to the requirements of the Public Resources Code ~~SB 1266~~, independent review and disclosure of appraisal information as provided for in the following policy is deemed appropriate.

Therefore, it is the policy of the Wildlife Conservation Board that:

For proposed projects involving a ~~“Substantial Acquisition” (as defined below)~~ or a “major acquisition” of “conservation lands” (as defined in Public Resources Code section 5096.501<sup>1</sup>),

- ~~1. WCB staff shall contract for an independent appraisal of the fair market value of the property or interest to be acquired (unless the project is a proposed grant under the California Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Program<sup>2</sup>).~~

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<sup>1</sup> As of January 1, 2013, a “*Major acquisition*” is defined in Public Resources Code section 5096.501 (c) as an acquisition for which one or more agencies propose to spend more than fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000.00) of state funds. “*Conservation lands*” is defined in Public Resources Code section 5096.501 (b) as any land or interest therein to be acquired by an acquisition agency, or that is owned by the state. (“*Acquisition agency*” is defined in Public Resources Code section 5096.501 (a) as the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Department of Parks and Recreation, or a state conservancy.)

~~<sup>2</sup>Under Public Resources Code section 10338 (b) each application for a grant under the California Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Program must include “an independent and impartial appraisal prepared by a real estate appraiser who is licensed pursuant to the Real Estate Appraisers’~~

~~The independent appraisal must:~~

~~(a) — be prepared by a licensed appraiser<sup>3</sup> in good standing pursuant to the Real Estate Appraisers' Licensing and Certification Law<sup>4</sup> who does not have a financial interest in the property being appraised and is qualified to appraise the specific property<sup>5</sup>; and~~

~~Conform to the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP); the Department of General Services ("DGS") regulations in California Code of Regulations, Title 2, Section 1880; and any other applicable State laws and policies including, without limitation, any applicable requirements of Chapter 1.695 (beginning with Section 5096.500) of Division 5 of the Public Resources Code (together, "Applicable Requirements").~~

~~For purposes of this policy, "Substantial Acquisition" means the grant or use of State bond funds to acquire an interest in real property for which the WCB proposes to allocate five million dollars (\$5,000,000.00) or more of State funds.~~

1. WCB staff shall contract for an independent technical review ("*independent review*") of the appraisal for each ~~Substantial Acquisition~~ and major acquisition of conservation lands unless, in the opinion of staff, the appraisal fails to meet Applicable Requirements. The independent review must be performed by a qualified independent appraiser who is licensed pursuant to the Real Estate Appraisers' Licensing and Certification Law,<sup>2</sup> did not conduct the appraisal under review and has no financial interest in the proposed project.<sup>3</sup>

The independent review must include a field review<sup>4</sup> and meet the requirements of Standard 3 of USPAP and written instructions issued by staff. The written instructions shall call for an independent review consistent with this policy that includes the reviewer's opinions about the quality of the entire appraisal report under review (without the reviewer's own opinion of value), the reasonableness of the fair market value conclusion and whether or not the appraisal conforms to Applicable Requirements, all of which must be provided in a written narrative report. The narrative review report shall contain at least the information and opinions in *Appendix A* to this policy, including a summary of the appraisal, a statement of the basis on which the value of the land was established, the conclusion of highest and best use, a description of the

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~~Licensing and Certification Law (Part 3 (commencing with Section 11300) of Division 4 of the Business and Professions Code)."~~

~~<sup>3</sup>Fish and Game Code section 1348.2~~

~~<sup>4</sup>Public Resources Code section 5096.517(b)~~

~~<sup>5</sup>Public Resources Code Section 5096.510 (b)(3) and (c)~~

<sup>2</sup> Public Resources Code section 5096.512 (a)(2)

<sup>3</sup> Public Resources Code section 5096.512 (a)(1)

<sup>4</sup> A "*field review*" must include a field inspection of the subject property (and, if improved, an inspection of the exterior and interior of the improvements) as well as independent verification and analysis of the appropriateness and completeness of market and other data. Such verification and analysis may also require field inspection of properties used as comparable sales.

standards used to prepare the appraisal, and a determination of whether or not the appraisal meets the relevant standards established under USPAP.<sup>5</sup>

2. WCB staff shall provide the independent review report to the DGS during its review and evaluation of the appraisal for any ~~Substantial Acquisition~~ or major acquisition of conservation lands that staff anticipates recommending to the WCB for approval. If DGS approves the appraisal and staff will be recommending the proposed project to the WCB for approval, then not less than 30 days in advance of the WCB holding a public hearing to consider such recommendation, staff shall post the independent review report on the WCB website ([www.wcb.ca.gov](http://www.wcb.ca.gov)). The independent review report may omit any proprietary information provided by or on behalf of the seller or that is otherwise exempt from public disclosure pursuant to the California Public Records Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 6250) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code).

~~Public Resources Code section 5096.511—5096.513.~~

~~3. This policy is intended to provide additional appraisal review and public disclosure of appraisal information for 6—10 percent of the total number of acquisition projects approved by WCB, representing 40—50 percent of the acquisition funding allocated by WCB. If implementation of this policy does not meet these goals, subject to approval of the Board, the Executive Director may recommend changes to assist in achieving these policy goals.~~

~~WCB staff shall report to the WCB on the effectiveness of the appraisal review process after this policy has been in effect for at least 12 months, but no longer than 18 months. At a minimum, the report shall include data such as the number of projects impacted by the policy represented as a percentage of WCB acquisition projects approved during the 12—18 month time period and the WCB dollar allocations impacted by the policy represented as a percentage of the total dollars allocated by the Board during the 12—18 month time period.~~

~~The report shall also include a cost benefit analysis of the policy and include at a minimum, such information as the cost associated with implementing the policy, any impact the policy has had on staff workload necessary to complete a project, any impact the policy has had on the appraisal industry and availability of WCB to commission appraisers and independent reviewers and any indicators of public satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the nature of the appraisal reviews.~~

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<sup>5</sup> Public Resources Code section 5096.512 (b)



## *Appendix A*

### Appraisal Review Report Contents

The independent review report shall be a written narrative report that meets the requirements of Standard 3 of USPAP, including certification, and contains at least the information and opinions set forth in this *Appendix A*. The independent review report shall also include an explanation or supporting rationale for any opinions rendered by the reviewer.

1. **IDENTIFICATION OF APPRAISAL PROBLEM:** Identification of the appraisal report under review, the appraiser who performed the appraisal under review, the property and ownership interests appraised, the date of the report under review and the effective date of the value estimate reported.
2. **REVIEW APPRAISER QUALIFICATIONS:** Statement of the knowledge and experience that qualifies the review appraiser to perform the scope of work performed in the review. These qualifications may include, depending on the review assignment's scope of work and without limitation, familiarity with the specific type of property or asset, regional real estate market, geographic area, analytic method, appraisal process and laws, regulations and guidelines.
3. **REVIEWER'S SCOPE OF WORK:** Description of the scope of work performed in the independent review and a reasoning for why the scope of work is sufficient to produce credible assignment results in accordance with USPAP Standards Rule 3-1 (c).
4. **APPRAISAL SUMMARY:** Summary of the appraisal report.<sup>6</sup> The summary shall be a synopsis that addresses significant data, facts and conclusions, including the conclusion of the highest and best use and the opinion of fair market value in the appraisal under review. If the appraisal under review includes proprietary information provided by or on behalf of the seller (e.g., trade secrets or confidential income, lease or other financial data) or information that is otherwise exempt from public disclosure pursuant to the California Public Records Act, the review report may omit such information.
5. **COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS:** Description of the standards used to prepare the appraisal under review<sup>7</sup> and the reviewer's opinion as to whether or not the appraisal under review meets the relevant standards established under USPAP<sup>8</sup>; the Department of General Services regulations in California Code of Regulations, Title 2, Section 1880; and any other applicable State standards.

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<sup>6</sup> Public Resources Code § 5096.512 (b)(1)

<sup>7</sup> Public Resources Code § 5096.512 (b)(3)

<sup>8</sup> Public Resources Code § 5096.512 (b)(4)

6. **APPRAISER'S ANALYSIS:** The reviewer's opinion as to whether or not the appraiser properly identified and inspected the subject property, researched sufficient relevant data, and analyzed and applied the data to arrive at credible and reasonable opinions or conclusions.
7. **APPRAISAL METHODS:** The reviewer's opinion as to the appropriateness of the appraisal methods and techniques used, including an explanation of the reason(s) for any disagreement(s).
8. **ADEQUACY AND QUALITY OF APPRAISAL:** Within the scope of work applicable to the appraisal review assignment, the reviewer's opinion as to the adequacy and quality of the entire appraisal report under review, including the completeness of the appraisal report under review, given the laws, regulations, and client instructions and specifications applicable to the report under review. The independent review report shall include a copy of the client instructions and specifications for the appraisal under review.
9. **SPECIALTY INTERESTS:** An appraisal report that attributes more than a nominal value to specialty interests, such as but not limited to timber, water or minerals, may require a separate review prepared and signed by a certified or registered professional qualified in the field of the specialty interest.
10. **DATA QUALITY:** The reviewer's opinion as to the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the comparable sales, lease and other data on which the appraiser's estimate of fair market value was based, including the accuracy of mathematics.
11. **BASIS OF VALUE:** Statement of the basis on which the value of the land or interest was established, including the conclusion of highest and best use and the actual comparable sales data (including ranges for sales price and acreage and other comparable sales information the review appraiser deems appropriate and necessary) but excluding any matrices or tables showing adjustments to comparable sales.
12. **APPRAISAL CREDIBILITY:** The reviewer's opinion as to the appropriateness, reasonableness and credibility of the analysis, opinions and conclusions in the appraisal report including the reason(s) for any disagreement(s).
13. **AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT:** Discussion of any area(s) of disagreement including the reason(s) for any disagreement(s).
14. **CONTACT WITH APPRAISER:** Discussion of any contact with the appraiser to answer any questions the independent reviewer may have.
15. **CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES:** If during the appraisal review process the independent reviewer became aware of circumstances arising after the date of value of the appraisal under review that might have changed the actual current

value of the subject property, the review report should note the outcome of any communications between the review appraiser and the appraiser (either directly or through the client) regarding such circumstances and possible impacts to the opinion of value as well as any additional analysis on the part of the appraiser that was performed or might be needed to revise or update the appraisal as a result of any such changed circumstances.

As shown below, Table 1 compares the type of information currently required for appraisals and from an appraisal review report (Public Resources Code Section 5096.512 (b)), the current appraisal policy, and what would be required under the WCB appraisal policy as amended by this proposal.

**Table 1**  
**Comparison of**  
**Independent Appraisal Review Requirements**

<b>Threshold Requirements</b>	<b>Public Res. Code Sec. 5096.512</b>	<b>WCB Policy</b>	<b>Proposed WCB Policy Changes</b>
WCB must maintain independent review appraiser	✓	✓	✓
\$15 million or more in State funds	✓	✓	✓
\$5 million or more WCB allocation		✓	
<b>Review Appraiser Requirements</b>			
Did not prepare original appraisal	✓	✓	✓
Licensed pursuant to Business & Professions Code	✓	✓	✓
No interest in proposed project	✓	✓	✓
Desk review allowed	✓		
Field review of subject property (& comps in appropriate) required		✓	✓
Confirm data contained in appraisal report is accurate & complete		✓	✓

<b>Appraisal Review Report Requirements</b>	<b>Public Res. Code Sec. 5096.512</b>	<b>WCB Policy</b>	<b>Proposed WCB Policy Changes</b>
Narrative format required	✓	✓	✓
Summarize appraisal	✓	✓	✓
Describe standards used to prepare appraisal	✓	✓	✓
State basis on which land value was established	✓	✓	✓
State appraiser's conclusion of highest & best use		✓	✓
Comply with USPAP Standard 3		✓	✓

<b>Appraisal Review Report Requirements</b>	Public Res. Code Sec. 5096.512	WCB Policy	Proposed WCB Policy Changes
If applicable, review of specialty interest valuation such as timber, water or mineral rights		✓	✓

<b>Opinions Required of Appraisal Reviewer</b>	Public Res. Code Sec. 5096.512	WCB Policy	Proposed WCB Policy Changes
Appraisal compliance with USPAP	✓	✓	✓
Appraisal compliance with DGS & State standards		✓	✓
Adequacy & quality of appraisal		✓	✓
Reasonableness or analysis & conclusions		✓	✓
Comprehensiveness & accuracy of researched data		✓	✓
Appropriateness, reasonableness and credibility of appraisal		✓	✓

#### JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDATION TO AMEND THE APPRAISAL POLICY

WCB would like to amend its appraisal policy to better facilitate landscape scale conservation. The recent California State budgets and corresponding legislation have entrusted WCB with nearly 1 billion dollars in conservation funding. While WCB does both restoration and acquisition, much of that state funding will be spent on landscape scale acquisitions. This is an exciting time to be a land protection practitioner in California. WCB staff, working with the support of Executive Director Donnelly, are requesting the Board amend the Appraisal Policy for the following reasons:

**Cutting the Green Tape.** To “cut the green tape” and make the acquisition process less time consuming for CDFW and grantees like land trusts, other state agencies, universities, special districts, federal agencies, tribes, and local governments, WCB staff is asking for this minor change to the appraisal policy. This minor change would allow WCB to rely on 3<sup>rd</sup> party appraisals for projects over \$150,000, consistent with Public Resources Code section 5096.510. In addition, this change would also apply to independent appraisal reviews and only require them when a project reaches the 15-million-dollar threshold identified in Public Resources Code section 5096.512. This will speed up the acquisition process in some cases by 8 months. This time savings is based on the typical time it takes WCB to create requests for appraisal bids, score all the potential proposals, interview prospective appraisers, write state contracts, and ultimately award the appraisal contract. Relying on 3<sup>rd</sup> party appraisals will remove this timing constraint and allow WCB to deliver acquisitions in a manner that is timelier. Furthermore, it will allow WCB to deliver more projects each year. In

addition, private sellers often have timing constraints in purchase and sale agreements within which they will sell their property to conservation buyers, and delays in the appraisal process can endanger these conservation transactions to the detriment of habitat conservation. Due to the time necessary for state contracting, WCB has lost significant conservation opportunities that would have added substantial acres to the conservation goals outlined in WCB's strategic plan and the State 30 x 30 goals.

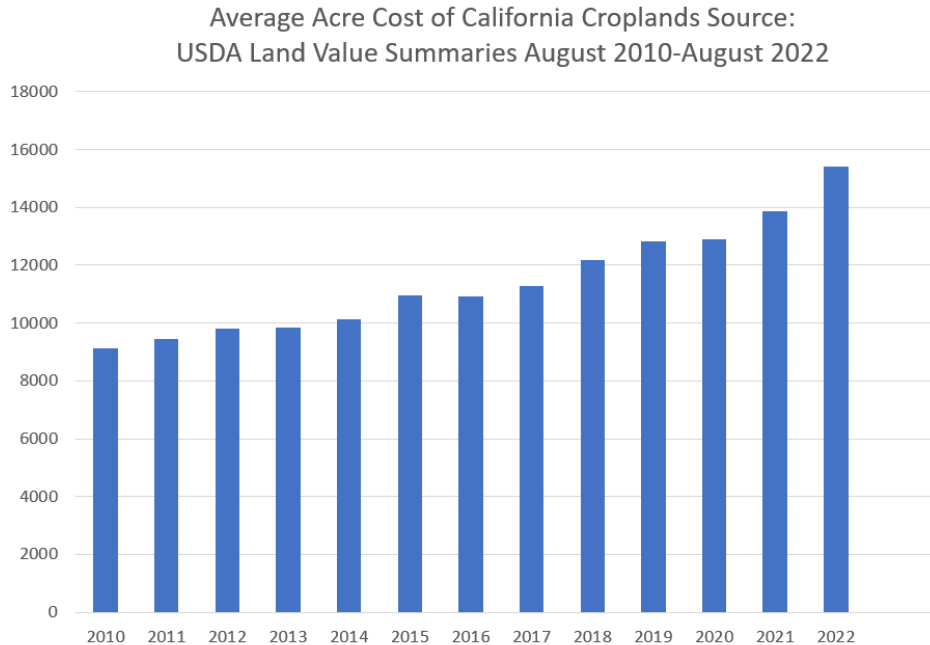
**No Substantial Benefits.** Since instituting the appraisal policy there has not been a significant benefit from the extra independent appraisal review nor has WCB contracting for its own appraisal made any difference in a project's success or valuation. The added reviews and delays have contributed to projects' failure rate which has been seen with multiple projects recently, both of which needed to move much faster to be successful. Ultimately, projects are still approved and time and money are spent on redundancy of unnecessary reviews. The Department of General Services (DGS) continues to provide WCB, and other state agencies, appraisal reviews and it has the experience to give objective reviews based on the expertise of its staff. For example, WCB staff and grantees often communicate and compare appraisals. More often than not, the valuation differences are minor or the values are the same. Furthermore, there are so few appraisers experienced with DGS review, often the same appraiser will appraise the same particular parcel for both the State and the Grantee. Currently, according to DGS, WCB appraisals have a less than 15% rejection rate. Most often these rejections by DGS are overcome within the text of the appraisal, because DGS needed more information about access to the subject property, the appraisal did not contain an updated title report, or some small technicality. It is rare that a rejection is made and a valuation subsequently changed.

**Minimal Staff and Maximum Benefits.** Since 1947, WCB has delivered important habitat conservation to the people and wildlife of California and done it in a manner that has garnered trust from the Legislature, CDFW, and WCB's project partners. From 2012 to 2021 WCB has delivered 456 acquisition projects often with minimal staffing. WCB's small, dedicated staff have built a foundation of trust with all our conservation partners. With this change to the appraisal policy, it will allow WCB to continue the tradition of delivering landscape scale conservation in a state with more than 40 million people while alleviating additional work for staff and allowing important conservation projects to proceed expeditiously.



**Inflationary Environment.** The Appraisal Policy was last amended in March 2013, nearly 10 years ago. At that time, the 5-million-dollar threshold for WCB independent appraisal and appraisal review seemed appropriate. In the succeeding 10 years, the average price of an acre of land has risen substantially. For example, in 2016 WCB purchased the Cherokee Farms for CDFW for \$2,440,000, or about \$9,000 an acre. Cherokee Farms is now part of the Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area. Today, just 6 years later, a property similar to Cherokee Farms, the Anatra Duck Club, recently sold for nearly \$13,000 an acre. These properties are very similar, high quality wetland duck clubs located in Butte County. This upward trend in the real estate is nothing new and marks a 30% increase over a 6-year period. While market fluctuations are nothing new in real estate, it is anticipated that property values will continue to trend upward in the long-term, despite some temporary short-term drops that may occur. Over the same time period, the cost of rice ground and row crops with surface water has often doubled in value. Corresponding increased valuations in conservation easement appraisals have also been realized.





**State Agency Continuity in Appraisal Policy.** To work better with our other state agency partners, including State Parks, the State Coastal Conservancy, the California Department of Conservation, CAL FIRE, the Department of Water Resources, DGS, and Caltrans, it would help if WCB’s appraisal policy was closer to the standard DGS policy that governs all state acquisitions and defines a “major acquisition” as anything over \$15,000,000. Having a separate appraisal policy that is more restrictive causes unnecessary delays for WCB especially when other state agencies that are often spending from similar sources of funds do not have the same restrictions. Having a policy that is in line with other state agencies makes for a unified process for grantees across all state agencies funding an acquisition process. Staff reached out to all the above state agencies, has found none of them have any internal appraisal policies above and beyond current state law.

**Future Projects.** Since WCB moved to the new application process, and due to the high levels of state general funds available for the next 5 years, WCB has experienced a flood of important conservation project applications. Many of these projects are landscape size and are considered “*Substantial Acquisitions*” under the current appraisal policy. During budgeting exercises and communications with potential grantees, mostly in the form of pre-applications and full applications, WCB identified 12-15 projects that are requesting more than \$5 million in state funds. These 12-15 projects make up \$210,645,000 of WCB allocated funding. Under the current appraisal policy, it is estimated each of these projects will be burdened by an additional 5-8 months of appraisal contracting and independent review.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board approve the policy as amended.

## 19. Audubon Conservation Ranching Program, Phase 2

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,707,000 from the General Fund, Budget Act of 2022 ([Sec. 53.5], Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Audubon Conservation Ranching Program, Phase 2
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Audubon Society
Amount Recommended:	\$2,707,000
Funding Partners:	Audubon Society
Landowner(s):	Multiple
County:	Multiple
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.4, 2.1

### LOCATION

The Audubon Conservation Ranching (ACR) Program, established in California through a previous WCB grant, would expand its conservation operations throughout the roughly 41 million acres of rangelands in the state through the Audubon Conservation Ranching Program, Phase 2 (Project) project. The ACR Program was established in California using Bobcat Ranch, a 6,800-acre blue oak woodland property, as a primary demonstration site in Yolo County. This area, as defined by Caltrans' and CDFW's California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project, is considered an essential habitat connectivity area. Bobcat Ranch would continue to serve as a demonstration site for ranchers interested in the program and seeking a successful case study. The overall intent is for an additional 30 ranches to enroll as the Project progresses building momentum for incorporating these management recommendations at larger scales over time.

The Project will expand the ARC Program throughout California and particularly the Central Valley, where Project activities overlap with Disadvantaged Communities (DAC). When considering candidate ranch operations for ACR certification, Audubon CA prioritizes underserved producers and will evaluate benefits to underserved communities identified through Cal EnviroScreen, utilizing screening tools offered by project partners such as Point Blue Conservation Science. Implementation projects resulting from the ACR certification process could benefit disadvantaged communities by employing local residents and businesses. Audubon CA has also actively sought participation from women-owned ranches, resulting in four women-owned ranches receiving certification through the ACR Program. The Project also includes the creation of an internship program for students from disadvantaged communities.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Grassland ecosystems provide food production, open space, water infiltration, wildlife habitat, and carbon sequestration. However, not all rangelands are managed with the goal of protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat, optimizing carbon sequestration, or improving soil health. Climate change, invasive species, aquifer depletion, and poor grazing practices currently degrade large portions of grasslands, increasing economic and ecological vulnerability.

In May 2019, WCB approved a \$512,000 grant to Audubon California to address these issues through establishing its ACR Program in California. The ACR Program was first developed in the Midwest and Great Plains to slow grassland loss on working ranches while improving the climate-resilient management of these lands for birds and wildlife. The ACR Program includes developing ranch-specific habitat management plans (HMPs) and a third-party certified set of regenerative grazing practices to increase climate-driven drought resiliency, rebuild soil organic matter, enhance plant diversity and cover, increase water infiltration and carbon sequestration, and increase overall biodiversity. All HMPs are modeled after the Natural Resources Conservation Service farm plans. Increased ecological resilience is intended to translate to economic resilience, as participating producers will then be able to use the Audubon certification logo on their product, providing a market incentive to landowners to enroll in this program through increased sales or revenue. Examples of implementation activities to achieve HMP goals include, but are not limited to, the following: Managed grazing to optimize plant diversity, reduce soil compaction, minimize bare ground cover, and control invasive plant species; maintain residual dry matter for forage production and plant species richness; maintain, and where necessary, conduct active restoration of degraded critical habitat areas. This program has had demonstrated success, where pilot sites had three times more biodiversity after enrollment in the program and a fivefold increase in bird density. The previous WCB grant sought to establish the ACR Program and certify three ranches. These expectations were exceeded, as six ranching operations were certified once the program was developed, covering over 80,000 acres. Through this grant, the ACR Program seeks to increase the pace and scale of rangeland restoration and conservation by certifying an additional 30 ranches, covering an estimated 250,000 acres.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

## MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The ACR Program includes development of a Habitat Management Plan for each participating ranch to guide management actions for the property. To ensure that participating land managers continue to implement recommendations and to measure progress, Audubon works with a third-party certifier to complete assessments. If the landowner does not comply with the habitat management plan, they cannot use the Audubon certification on their product and are removed from the program. This compliance assessment will continue annually for the first two

years of participation of a ranch and then at an interval of every three years to ensure continued compliance and maintenance of improvements. With this process, Audubon is able to ensure that the positive benefits funded through this grant continue and that the integrity of the certification and label is maintained.

If at any time during the fifteen-year life of the Project, Audubon Society does not manage and maintain the improved grassland ecosystems purveyed through the ACR Program under this grant, 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 Implementation	\$1,481,700	\$497,777	\$1,979,477
Habitat Management Plans and Certification	\$105,000	---	\$105,000
Technical Assistance	\$127,500	---	\$127,500
Ecological Monitoring	\$255,000	---	\$255,000
Outreach, Education and Monitoring	\$411,803	---	\$411,803
Indirect Costs	\$325,997	\$89,129	\$415,126
Total	\$2,707,000	\$586,906	\$3,293,906

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Implementation: Includes all Audubon staff time, expenses, and costs to implement the following four tasks described below.
- Habitat Management Plans and Certification: Complete Audubon certification on 30 additional ranches during the project span. Costs are associated with subcontractor expenses to serve as independent, third-party certifier.
- Technical Assistance: Provides technical assistance to ranchers, including assistance in implementing practices to meet the requirements of their specific HMPs. Costs include grants to RCDs to assist ranchers with ACR certification.
- Ecological Monitoring: Subcontractor expenses needed to conduct ecological monitoring on all enrolled ranches.
- Outreach, Education and Monitoring: Planning and implementing events (workshops/field tours), presentations at conferences, and working with retail partners including stores and buyers to promote the program.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.

## PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

### Support:

- Nancy Wahl-Scheurich, Program Manager, Pollinator and Wildlife Habitat/Co-Interim Executive Director, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
- Susan Edinger Marshall, Emeritus Professor of Rangeland Resources and Wildland Soils, Cal Poly Humboldt
- Jennifer C. C. Neale, Ph.D., Chair, Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Science & Engineering, American River College
- Michael M. Delbar, Chief Executive Officer, California Rangeland Trust
- Bonnie Eyestone, Partnership and Rangeland Monitoring Network Coordinator, Working Lands Group, Point Blue Conservation Science
- Melissa Dabulamanzi, Central Valley Regional Director and Daisy Carillo, Wind Wolves Preserve Manager, The Wildlands Conservancy
- Joe and Julie Morris, Owners, T.O. Cattle Company (dba Morris Grassfed Beef)
- Kay Cornelius, General Manager, Panorama Organic Meats, Inc.

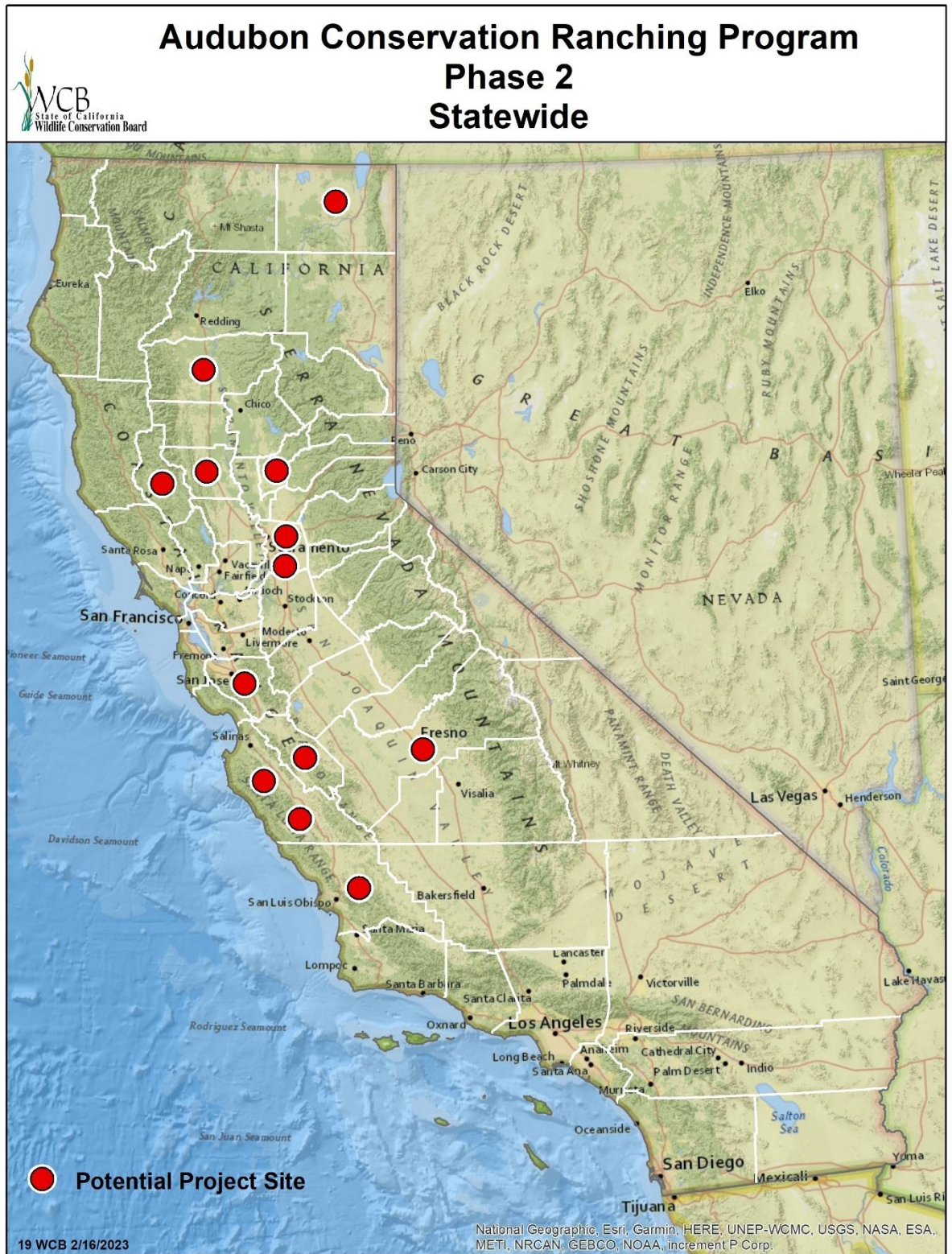
### Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15304(d), Minor Alterations to Land). Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file the appropriate NOE with the State Clearinghouse.







**20. Lake Earl Wildlife Area Coastal Dune and Estuary Restoration, Phase 2**  
**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,969,820 from the General Fund, Budget Act of 2022 ([Sec. 53.5], Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife); 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 Earl Wildlife Area Coastal Dune and Estuary Restoration, Phase 2
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Friends of the Dunes
Amount Recommended:	\$1,969,820
Funding Partners:	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Landowner:	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
County:	Del Norte
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.1, 2.4, 4.3

**LOCATION**

The Lake Earl Wildlife Area Coastal Dune and Estuary Restoration, Phase 2 (Project) project is located approximately ten miles north of Crescent City on the western edge of the Lake Earl Wildlife Area (LEWA). The LEWA is a 6,144-acre Wildlife Area managed by CDFW that includes the Lake Earl coastal lagoon and surrounding lands, consisting of wet meadows, coastal prairies, freshwater and estuarine wetlands, coastal forests, and open dunes.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

At the August 2018 WCB Board meeting, WCB approved Phase 1 of this project to restore 58 acres of coastal dunes within the LEWA, primarily through removal of European beachgrass. This second phase would continue these restoration efforts over an additional 18 acres, to connect over 100 acres of habitat. This work is outlined in the Lake Earl Wildlife Area Coastal Dune Restoration Plan through the removal of exotic and invasive plants, focusing on European beachgrass.

European beachgrass was introduced to California in the late 1800s to stabilize coastal dune environments and facilitate development and agriculture. Beachgrass tends to form steep continuous foredunes parallel to the shore as a monoculture, essentially freezing previously mobile dune systems by stopping or reducing sand movement. These conditions are undesirable, as sand movement is an important component for natural maintenance of ecologically intact dune environments. Once it develops into a monoculture, European beachgrass drastically reduces biodiversity and offers little value to most wildlife. This Project would focus restoration on remaining portions of the Project area carried over from Phase 1, with the ultimate goal of removing beachgrass from the entire LEWA. The Project will accomplish this through manual removal, supported by mechanical burial of invasive plant biomass. Herbicide will not be used for this restoration project.

According to the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment's socioeconomic indicators poverty map, Del Norte is, on average, in the 56th percentile for low educational attainment, the 52nd percentile for those with housing burdens, the 60th percentile for unemployment, and in the 73rd percentile for poverty. The Project area is surrounded by multiple severely disadvantaged communities and provides abundant recreational activities to locals from these communities. Aside from serving as an outdoor classroom location for events, the Project also restores and enhances a public access point within the LEWA for local tribes to practice their cultural and subsistence traditions. Additionally, it enhances various public recreational pursuits. The area is accessible and is host to beachgoers, agate hunters, surfers, anglers, birders, waterfowl hunters, boaters, and local indigenous people who utilize the area for traditional, cultural, and subsistence practices. The habitat enhancement from this Project will only strengthen the draw to this area.

A combination of local personnel, volunteers, Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation Tribal Resources field crew, Northwest Youth Corps crews, CAL FIRE crews, CCC crews, and other local crews will be employed for manually removing European beachgrass. Nearly all of the land in what is now called Del Norte County is the traditional and unceded territory of the Tolowa Dee-ni'. The grantee has a close working relationship with the Tolowa Dee-ni', and prefers to use their crews whenever possible. Once the beachgrass is removed, native plants will repopulate from the existing seed bank and native population sources on adjacent restored lands. Expanding the restored area will provide greater resiliency and increase habitat refugia and biodiversity, strengthening the area in the face of climate change and providing valuable and lasting benefits to the surrounding community.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Long term management of the project area is guided by the Lake Earl Wildlife Area Management Plan. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, the Friends of the Dunes 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	419,000	---	\$419,000
Implementation	\$1,179,880	\$621,750	\$1,801,630
Indirect Costs	\$191,865	---	\$191,865
Contingency	\$179,075	---	\$179,075
Total	\$1,969,820	\$621,750	\$2,591,570

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Site preparation, oversight, coordination, work crew supervision, species monitoring, invoicing, contracting, reporting, and site maintenance.
- Implementation: Activities to restore coastal dune habitat through a combination of manual and mechanical removal of European beachgrass.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

#### PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

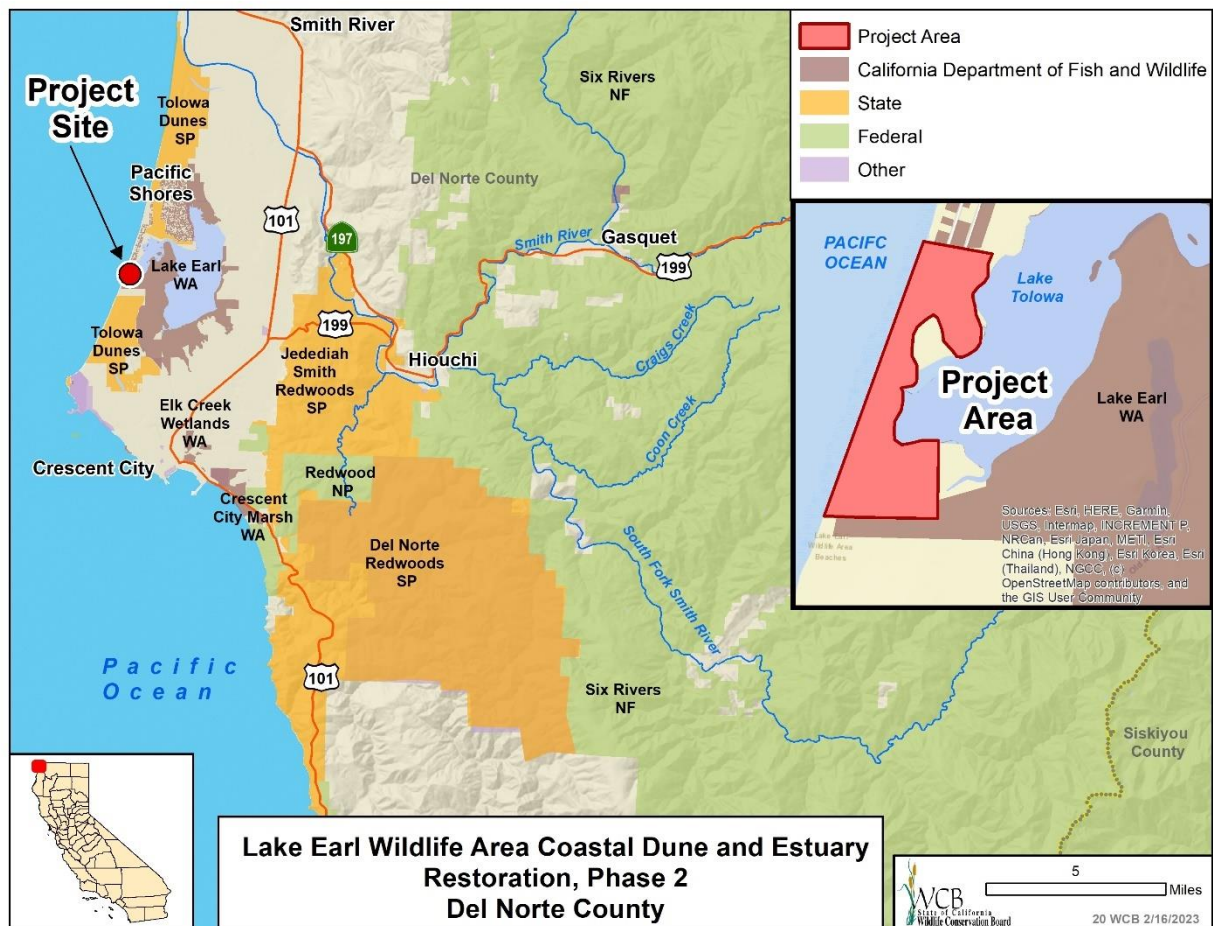
- Jenny Ericson, Acting Field Supervisor, USFWS, Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office
- Victor Bjelajac, North Coast Redwoods District Superintendent, California Department of Parks and Recreation
- Leann McCallum, Tribal Chairperson, Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation
- Gail Kenny, President, Redwood Region Audubon Society
- Megan Taylor, Executive Director, Sierra Service Project
- Jimmy Faulkner, resident, Crescent City, CA

Opposition:

- None received

#### CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

As lead agency, CDFW 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.



## 21. Klamath River Planning and Design

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,107,000 from the General Fund Budget Act of 2021 ([Section 54], Water Supply for Environmental Flows); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Klamath River Planning and Design
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Mid Klamath Watershed Council
Amount Recommended:	\$2,107,000
Funding Partners:	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Coastal Conservancy
Landowner(s):	Various
County:	Siskiyou, Humboldt, Del Norte
Program:	Stream Flow Enhancement
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.3, 2.4

### LOCATION

This project will include planning at sites throughout the mid Klamath River basin, which includes approximately 130 miles of the Klamath River from Hilt to Weitchpec, and also the tributaries that flow into this reach of the Klamath River from the surrounding land.

The project overlaps several Disadvantaged Communities in the mid Klamath River basin (DWR DAC Mapping Tool). Implementation projects that result from this planning project will benefit those communities by employing local construction companies.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Klamath River Planning and Design Project (Project) will design and plan restoration on 16 miles of prioritized stream in the mid Klamath River basin. The restoration projects that will result from this work will use a wide variety of restoration techniques including installation of large woody debris, removal of fish passage barriers, floodplain grading, and gully packing to create habitat that will benefit migratory salmonids and other aquatic species.

Fire suppression, logging associated with wildfires, beaver extirpation, timber harvest activities, mining, road building, and other human infrastructure development have all contributed to drastically reducing the number of large riparian trees in the mid Klamath River basin and the channelization of the Project area's streams. This channelization has resulted in homogenous aquatic habitat environments characterized by riffles with small amounts of spawning material. Much of the size classes of gravel used by Klamath basin fish for spawning is transported through the project streams, rather than settling out, due to high water

velocity. Reversing channel incision and re-connection to the floodplain would reduce water velocity, facilitate spawning gravel deposition, and significantly increase rearing habitat.

The habitat restoration projects that will be planned and designed under this grant will be implemented after the four dams are removed from the Klamath River in the next few years, and are independent of any mitigation requirements surrounding the removal of the dams. Conducting this planning and design now will help to inform the timing of habitat restoration projects around the dam removals to better ensure that salmonids and other aquatic species have habitat available during and after the dam removal process.

This Project is a collaborative effort between the Mid Klamath Watershed Council, the Karuk Tribe, the Klamath National Forest, and the Six Rivers National Forest.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

No herbicide will be used during this project.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management and Administration	\$150,322	---	\$150,322
Outreach	\$29,516	---	\$29,516
Final Designs and Plans	\$1,276,408	\$750,000	\$2,026,408
Environmental Compliance and Permitting	\$208,904	---	\$208,904
Indirect Costs	\$249,772	---	\$249,772
Contingency	\$192,078	---	\$192,078
Total	\$2,107,000	\$750,000	\$2,857,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management and Administration: Project coordination, hire engineering contractor, provide staff supervision, contractor oversight, and contract management, coordinate with landowners and partners, and prepare invoices, reports, and all supporting documentation.
- Outreach: Outreach to landowners to identify willing participants in this landscape-level restoration project. Outreach to landowners will be done by letters, phone communication, and a minimum of one public event.
- Final Designs and Plans: Grantee will develop restoration plans for 16 miles of waterway in the Klamath River basin to benefit fish and other aquatic species.



A final set of plans will be produced which will include 100% design for 12 miles of waterway and at least 65% design for an additional 4 miles of waterway.

- Environmental Compliance and Permitting: Complete all environmental compliance documents and permits for restoration activities along 16 miles of waterway in the Klamath Basin.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

#### PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

##### Support:

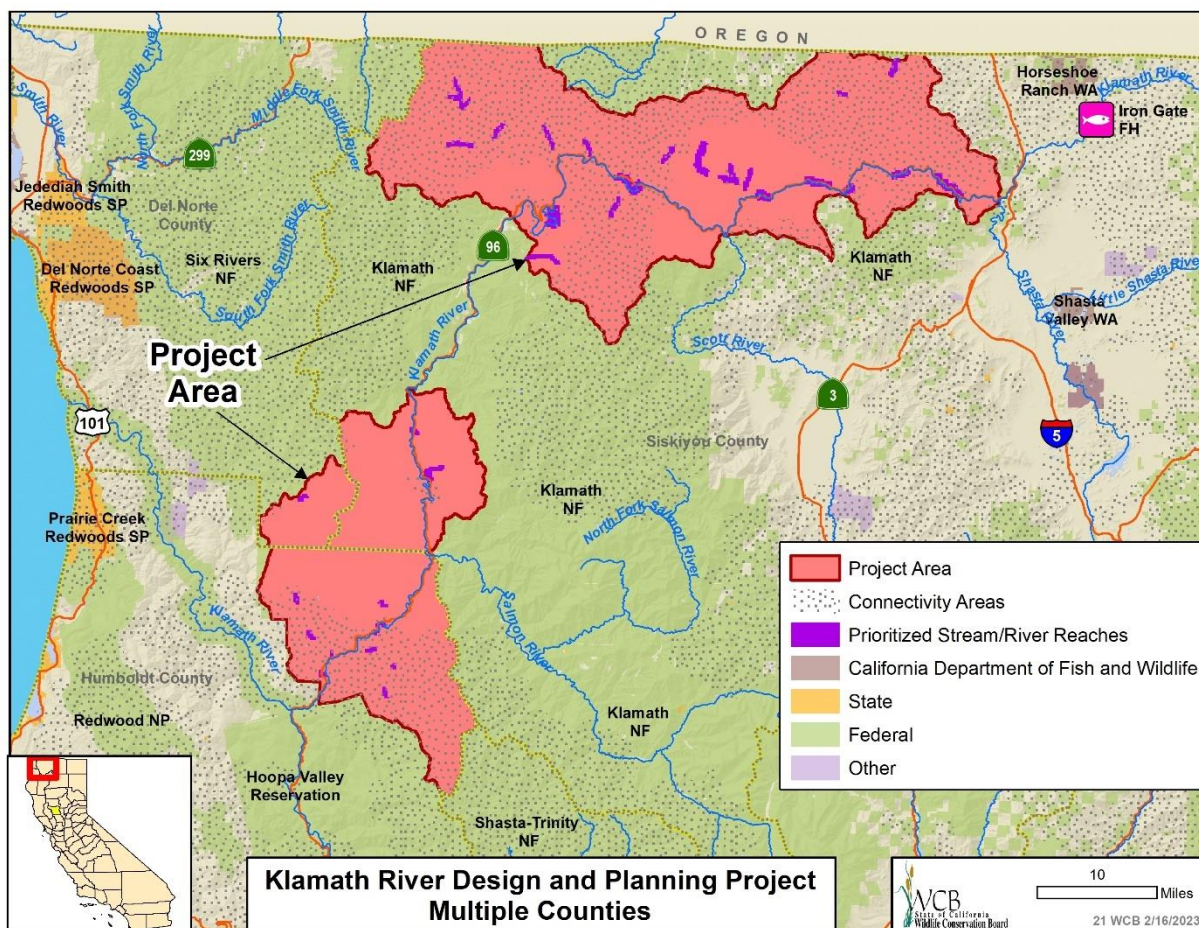
- Brian Anderson, Acting District Ranger, U.S. National Forest Service – Klamath National Forest
- LeRoy Cyr, District Fish Biologist, U.S. National Forest Service – Six Rivers National Forest
- Russell A. Attebery, Karuk Tribal Chairman, Karuk Tribe
- Matthias St. John, Executive Officer, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

##### 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.



## 22. Montague Canal Lining

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,270,000 from the General Fund (Budget Act of 2021 [Section 54], Water Supply for Environmental Flows) ; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Montague Canal Lining
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Montague Water Conservation District
Amount Recommended:	\$1,270,000
Funding Partners:	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Landowner(s):	Montague Water Conservation District
County:	Siskiyou
Program:	Stream Flow Enhancement
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.3, 2.4

### LOCATION

The Montague Main Canal is 19.4 miles long and delivers water from Dwinnell Reservoir approximately 10 miles southeast of the town of Montague on the Shasta River to the northern edge of the Montague Water Conservation District boundary.

The project is within the Disadvantaged Community of Montague (DWR DAC Mapping Tool). It will benefit that community by employing local construction companies and increasing efficiencies of water deliveries to agricultural consumers. Communication with the Karuk and Yurok tribes on canal lining has occurred for the past ten years. This has included outreach related to the archeological survey of the construction footprint, information on the instream flow benefits of the project, and an in-person site visit.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Montague Canal Lining Project (Project) will line 1.19 miles of the Montague Main Canal with concrete over a geo-membrane liner. This lining is needed because the Montague Main Canal, which is owned and operated by the Grantee, is an open earthen ditch for most of the 19.4 miles of total length. This earthen ditch suffers from significant leakage loss. The amount of water lost to ditch leakage, measured in acre feet per year (af/y), varies depending on the water year type and consequent pumping rates.

Ditch leakage losses have been calculated for water year types and have been multiplied by the 1.19 miles of canal to be lined under this grant, to yield the following amounts: very dry = 366 af/y, dry = 573 af/y, normal = 718 af/y, wet = 1,010 af/y, and very wet = 1,320 af/y. These leakage loss amounts are the amounts of water that will be saved by lining this reach of the Main Canal.

The Grantee will permanently dedicate water under a Section 1707 change petition consistent with the above water savings from Dwinnell Reservoir that is 16°C or less in temperature, annually to the Shasta River for instream benefit. This increased flow will benefit salmonids and other aquatic species

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

No herbicide will be used during this Project.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Montague Water Conservation District has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the Montague Main Canal and Dwinnell Dam. If at any time during the 20-year life of the Project, Montague Water 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	\$19,500	---	\$19,500
Survey and Engineering	\$34,000	---	\$34,000
Construction	\$1,033,060	\$975,000	\$2,008,060
Erosion Control	\$9,100	---	\$9,100
Monitoring	\$58,000	---	\$58,000
Contingency	\$116,340	---	\$116,340
Total	\$1,270,000	\$975,000	\$2,245,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Project oversight, subcontractor coordination, invoicing and reporting, construction management, and data management and submission.
- Survey and Engineering: Canal survey and data collection.
- Construction: Improved site access; canal grubbing; canal shaping, grading, and rock lining installation; geo-membrane lining; and concrete lining.
- Erosion Control: Clearing of treatment area and seeding of raw soil areas.
- Monitoring: Flow meter installation.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

## PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

### Support:

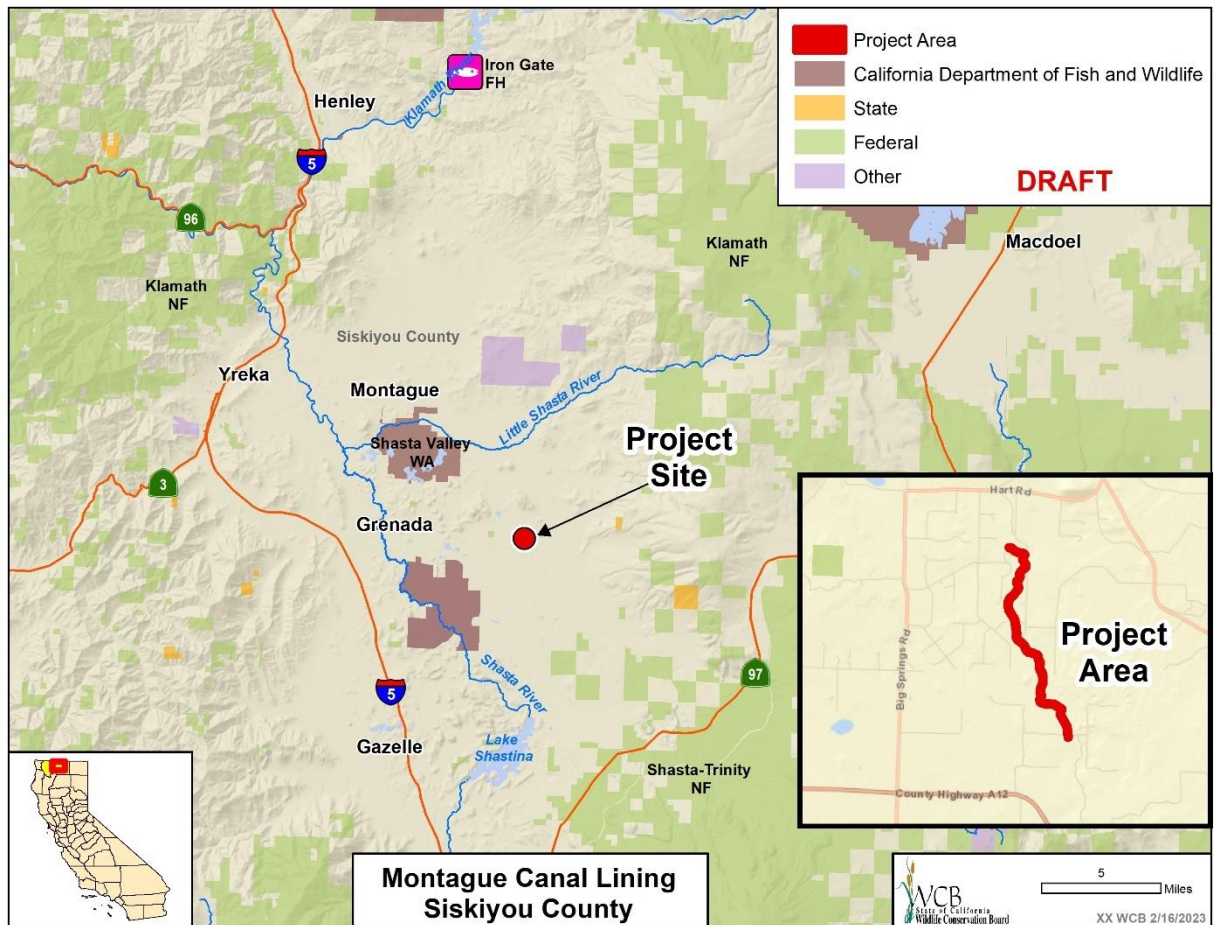
- Jim Simondet, Klamath Branch Chief, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Brandon A. Criss, Chair, Siskiyou County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

### Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines, Categorical Exemption 15301(b) – Existing Facilities. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.





## 23. Redwoods Rising Forest Restoration, Phase 2

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$11,000,000 from the General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, AB 179 (Sec. 83[a]), Nature Based Solutions, DAC; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Redwoods Rising Forest Restoration, Phase 2
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Save the Redwoods League
Amount Recommended:	\$11,000,000
Funding Partners:	National Park Service, CAL FIRE
Landowner(s):	National Park Service, California State Parks
County:	Humboldt and Del Norte
Program:	Forest Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1, C.1, C.4 Objectives: SI 1.2, 2.1

### LOCATION

The Redwoods Rising Forest Restoration project (Project) is located in Redwood National and multiple State Parks (Redwood National Park, Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park, Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park, and Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park) in Humboldt and Del Norte counties. The 1,200-acre Project area is comprised of two work sites in separate watersheds: Greater Prairie Creek (10,300-acre watershed within Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park and Redwood National Park) and Greater Mill Creek (34,080-acre watershed within Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park and Redwood National Park). The Great Prairie Creek work site is four miles north of Orick in Humboldt County and the Greater Mill Creek work site is six miles east of Crescent City in Del Norte County.

In 2021, WCB contributed \$1,500,000 to Save the Redwoods League for implementation of forest restoration work in the larger Redwoods Rising strategic footprint.

Based on the DWR Mapping Tool, the portion of the Project in the Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park is identified as a Severely Disadvantaged Community, with a median household income below \$47,203. The section in Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park is considered a Disadvantaged Community with a median household income below \$62,938.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Redwoods Rising is an innovative, multiyear, public-private partnership among the National Park Service, California Department of Parks and Recreation, and Save the Redwoods League to restore up to 70,000 acres of redwood ecosystems in Redwood National and multiple State Parks over the coming decades. Most of the Project area was intensively harvested (extensive clear-cutting) between 1908 to 2000. Today, nearly the entire area proposed for restoration is comprised of



second-growth redwoods and Douglas-fir, spruce, and alder that were seeded at extremely high densities (more than ten times the density typical of mature forests) in anticipation of harvesting timber in the future. A network of access roads, forestry roads, and skid trails reflect many decades of intensive timber management as well.

The Redwoods Rising partnership launched a pilot phase in winter 2019-2020 and has been implementing full restoration treatments from 2020-2022. The Project would continue this work by implementing forest restoration treatments across 1,200 acres, removing 15 miles of roads, and placing large wood to enhance fish habitat along one mile of stream. In addition, the Project includes a Monitoring task to evaluate Project effects as well as a Technical Assistance task that will support the Redwoods Rising Apprenticeship Program, an effort to train new restoration professionals.

Broader Project goals include:

- Advance late-seral conditions in previously logged coast redwood forests through strategic thinning and restoration of natural geomorphic and hydrologic hillslope processes, supporting habitat for aquatic, avian, and terrestrial species;
- Enhance the forest's ability to sequester and store carbon by thinning younger trees and promoting the growth of larger, healthier trees, while reducing the risk of catastrophic fire;
- Improve salmonid habitat and water quality by reducing the input of sediment into watercourses, floodplains, and riparian forests; and
- Improve the visitor experience within Redwood National and multiple State Parks while supporting the public health and the local economy.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

Both watersheds within the Project area are located within the ancestral territories of the Yurok Tribe and the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation. Staff from Redwood National and multiple State Parks have regular intergovernmental communications with these groups and Redwoods Rising has a current contract with the Yurok Tribe for restoration activities through 2024. Redwoods Rising also incorporates strategies from the Yurok Tribe Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Water and Aquatic Resources.

No herbicide will be used during this Project.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

National Park Service and California State Parks have adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the Project area. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, 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
Restoration	\$9,220,000	\$2,660,000	\$11,880,000
Monitoring	\$415,000	---	\$415,000
Technical Assistance	\$365,000	---	\$365,000
Contingency	\$1,000,000	---	\$1,000,000
Total	\$11,000,000	\$2,660,000	\$13,660,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Restoration: Project implementation per the design plan and oversight of restoration activities.
- Monitoring: Evaluation of Project effects on ecologically relevant indicators like vegetation, wildlife, geomorphology, and hydrology.
- Technical Assistance: Activities to assess, monitor, study, and report on impaired habitat and associated restoration opportunities.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

#### PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

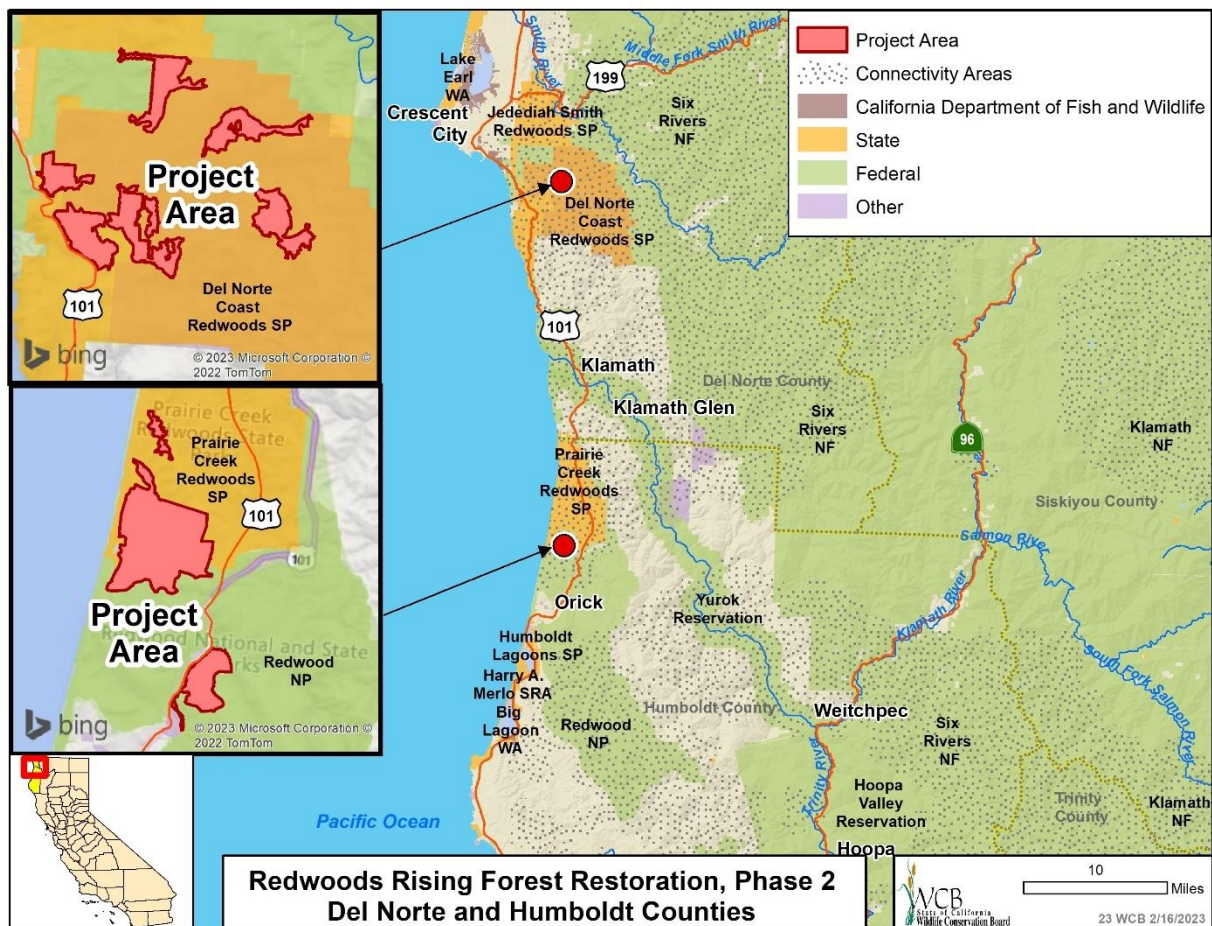
- Jared Huffman, Member of Congress, U.S. House of Representatives
- Mike McGuire, State Senator, California State Senate
- Steven Mietz, Superintendent of Redwood National Park, U.S. Department of Interior
- Victor Bjelajac, North Coast Redwoods District Superintendent, California Department of Parks and Recreation

Opposition:

- None received

#### CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The California Department of Parks and Recreation, as lead agency, prepared Negative Declarations (ND) for the Project pursuant to the provisions of the CEQA. Staff considered the NDs 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.



## **24. Riverside Ranch Levee and Public Access Improvements**

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,182,000 from the General Fund, Budget Act of 2022 (Sec. 53.5), Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Riverside Ranch Levee and Public Access Improvements
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Humboldt County Resource Conservation District
Amount Recommended:	\$3,182,000
Funding Partners:	None
Landowner(s):	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
County:	Humboldt
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.1, 3.1

### **LOCATION**

The Riverside Ranch Levee and Public Access Improvements project (Project) is located within CDFW's Eel River Wildlife Area – Salt River Unit. The Project area is located 2.5 miles northwest of the town of Ferndale in Humboldt County.

The Project is located within a Disadvantaged Community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool).

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

In 2007, the Riverside Ranch parcel was purchased by WCB, on behalf of CDFW, in partnership with USFWS and the State Coastal Conservancy, and added to the Eel River Wildlife Area. In 2013, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District (HCRCD) completed a 300-acre tidal estuary restoration project on Riverside Ranch, restoring habitat for coho, Chinook, steelhead, tidewater goby, and avian species such as Aleutian geese, Brant geese, egrets, and plovers. The project constructed a 2-mile setback levee that protected surrounding agricultural lands from tidal inundation, while restoring 300 acres of tidal estuary.

In 2016, adjacent agricultural landowners expressed concerns that the 2-mile setback levee was adversely affecting their properties. Surface water impoundment surrounding the berm was lasting longer and draining slower during and after major flood events compared to before the berm was constructed. During flood or large rain events, the pastures in these areas are either under water or are so oversaturated that pasture grass becomes degraded. Not only does that affect forage for cattle, but it also degrades short grass habitat that Aleutian Geese rely on for foraging. Hydraulic studies were performed and, with funding from WCB in 2020, an alternatives analysis was completed that built upon the previous studies to improve flood control at the site.

The alternatives analysis modeled various flood events and 19 different levee modification scenarios, and a preferred alternative was selected. The Project will implement construction of the preferred alternative, which includes:

- Lowering the elevation of two sections of the setback levee by approximately three feet to allow flood flow to overtop from the agricultural side of the setback levee to the restored estuary.
- Installing two, 60-inch diameter gated culverts to improve drainage.
- Re-grading an associated drainage ditch running adjacent to the setback levee to allow for increased surface water storage.

The Project will also implement public access improvements including a 10-vehicle parking area and turn-around, with accommodation for a standard school bus. A non-motorized boat launch will be created for the public to utilize the restoration area's Salt River channel, slough channels, and larger Eel River estuary. The existing levee will have an ADA compliant, 4-mile out-and-back foot trail with two lookout areas constructed along with benches and picnic tables. Existing structures, such as a historic barn and remnants of a milking parlor will be protected from access using permanent fencing. Interpretive signage will be created in collaboration with CDFW staff and the local Wiyot and Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria tribes, to include bilingual language and content narrative.

The modification of the Riverside Ranch setback levee will provide significant hydrologic improvement and flood control across 500 acres of working lands surrounding the levee and provide public access to 300 acres of a restored coastal estuary property in the lower Eel River Estuary. Public access opportunities created through the Project will include hiking, non-motorized boating, and wildlife viewing. Enhancing the levee will provide greater resiliency, strengthening the area in the face of climate change and providing valuable and lasting benefits to the surrounding community.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship. This project also meets a key objective to expand access to nature.

No herbicide will be used during this Project.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CDFW has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the Project area. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, Humboldt 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	\$83,873	---	\$83,873
Construction	\$2,789,700	---	\$2,789,700
Indirect Costs	\$19,162	---	\$19,162
Contingency	\$289,265	---	\$289,265
Total	\$3,182,000	---	\$3,182,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: General project management, reporting, bid document preparation, subcontractor selection, field surveys, construction monitoring, invoicing, and acquiring necessary permits.
- Construction: Subcontractors will be selected to construct project improvements per restoration design and construct public access improvements.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

## PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

- Adam Canter, Natural Resources Director, Wiyot Tribe Natural Resources Department
- Justin Mora, Adjacent Landowner

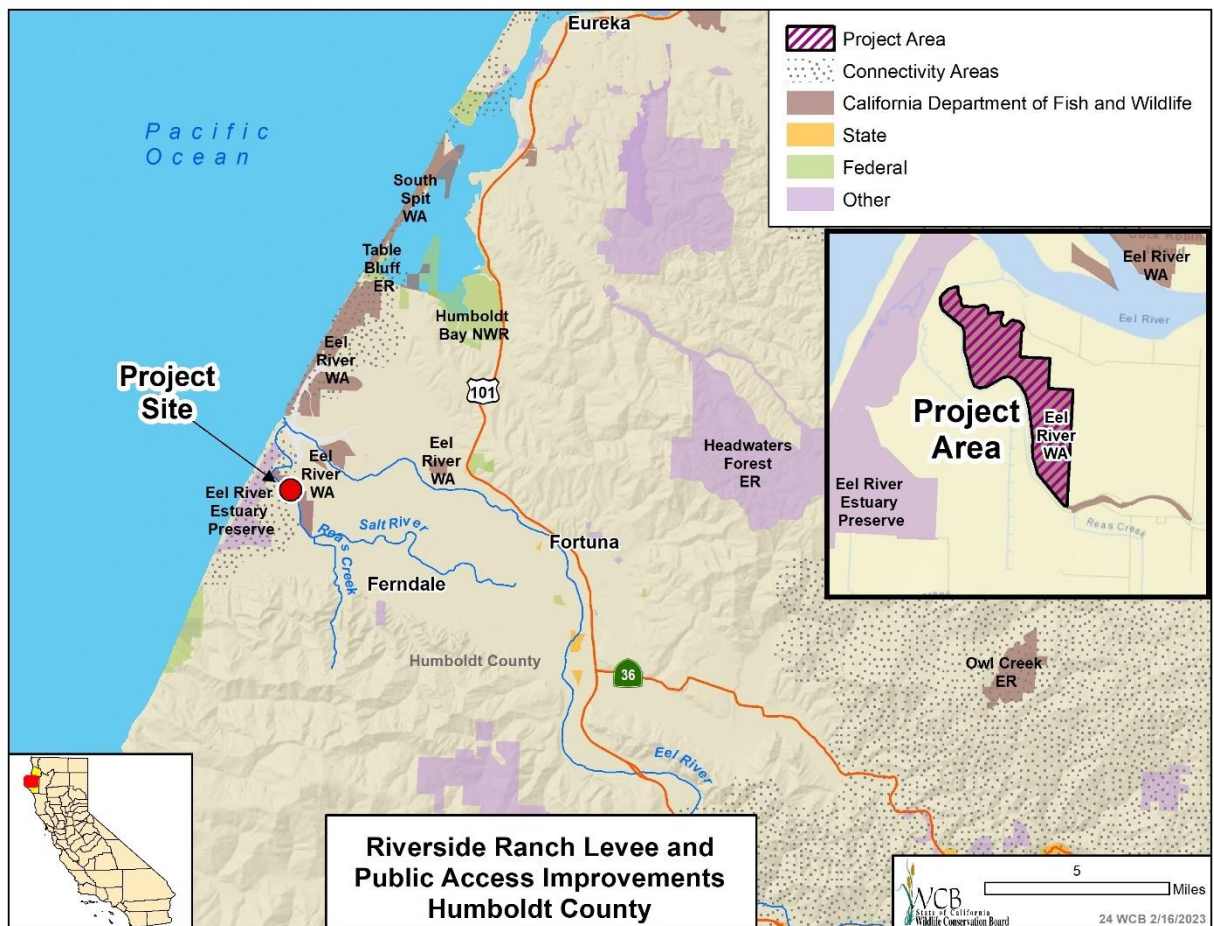
Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Humboldt County Resource Conservation District, as lead agency, prepared an Environmental Impact Report (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.





## 25. Truckee River Watershed Resiliency Planning

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,976,000 from the General Fund (Budget Act of 2021 [Section 54], Water Supply for Environmental Flows); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Truckee River Watershed Resiliency Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Truckee River Watershed Council
Amount Recommended:	\$1,976,000
Funding Partners:	County of Nevada, Tahoe Donner Association, Tahoe National Forest Service, Truckee Donner Recreation and Park District, Truckee River Fund, Truckee Sanitary District
County:	Nevada, Sierra
Program:	Forest Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.6, 2.3

### LOCATION

Truckee River Watershed Resiliency Planning (Project) completes planning activities across seven work sites in the Middle Truckee River watershed. The selected work sites were identified through scientifically-based watershed assessments and are high priorities for stakeholders. The Truckee River watershed has been subjected to over 150 years of intense human disturbance, including logging, gravel mining, recreational development, and transportation corridor construction. Present day land uses such as development and unsustainable recreation also stress the system. The net result is degraded stream, meadow, and forest systems that are highly vulnerable to future climate conditions. The Project area spans Sierra and Nevada counties, primarily occurring on federal lands within the Tahoe National Forest, though assessments may also occur on some private properties and local government lands. Individual site locations vary from 0 to 15 miles north of Truckee.

This portion of Sierra County is considered a Disadvantaged Community census tract (DWR DAC Mapping Tool). It is heavily used for dispersed camping, scenic driving, OHV use, bicycling, wildlife viewing, and bird watching. The Project will preserve, restore, and enhance publicly accessible sites within this area, providing some benefits to Sierra County residents.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This planning effort will result in seven implementation-ready restoration projects. A total of 8,210 acres will be assessed through the Project, and expected habitat gains include: 200 acres of meadow and wetland, 9.5 acres of riparian habitat, 3 acres of aspen stands, and 5,500 acres of forest restored. Planning activities are generally the same at each work site; however, there are differences in monitoring

intensity, types of environmental compliance needed, and design complexity. The specific problems addressed at each of the seven work sites include:

**Upper Hoke Meadow:** The stream channel through the 35-acre Upper Hoke Meadow is heavily incised and the meadow has converted to sagebrush-dominated upland habitat. The site is complex, with constraints imposed by utility corridors, existing roads, and archaeological resources. Hydrologic degradation also appears to have impacted an aspen stand adjacent to the meadow, where conifer encroachment is prevalent.

**Boca – Little Truckee River Tributaries:** There are several impaired tributary streams that drain the east side of the Boca watershed to the Little Truckee River. The three highest priority sites are impacted by legacy routes in or adjacent to the drainages, and excess erosion from present-day roads. Past stabilization efforts have failed, further increasing stream channel erosion and loss of riparian habitat.

**Prosser/Boca Restoration:** Several meadows and streams are impacted by poorly sited roads in the area between Prosser and Boca reservoirs. These areas were identified through watershed assessments and are too complex to be addressed through standard maintenance. Additionally, upland forested areas are impacted and have been prioritized in a forest health assessment.

**Davies/Merril – Phase 2:** Meadow and stream corridors throughout the Davies and Merrill creek watersheds were impacted through grazing, logging, and the building of roads and railroads. A large restoration effort led by Truckee River Watershed Council and the USFS occurred between 2003 and 2010, and successfully addressed many of the impacts; however, resources and land ownership limited some of the work. This second phase would expand and leverage the existing restoration – potentially also including private lands in addition to Forest Service land. Planning would also include consideration of upland/forested areas that were prioritized in a forest health assessment.

**Hobart Tributary:** Substantial hydrologic alterations have occurred in this tributary to Prosser Creek. The former Hobart Mills Reservoir impacted a 6-acre meadow in the headwaters and road building and present-day reservoir operations (Prosser Creek Reservoir) have impacted a 20-acre meadow. Historically this site provided excellent willow flycatcher habitat but does not currently support this species. The forested area surrounding the meadows would also be evaluated for restoration as this area was also prioritized through a forest health assessment.

**Euer Valley:** Euer Valley supports a 650-acre meadow that has been significantly impacted by historic and present-day land uses such as grazing, road building, and recreation. Four substantial stream crossings along the south fork of Prosser Creek are causing impacts to stream and meadow function. The crossings are critical links in the public recreation network;

however, they were not properly sited or constructed. This Project would replace the failing crossings with a more appropriate and durable design.

**Truckee River Riparian Restoration:** Much of the historic floodplain and riparian vegetation along the mainstem of the Truckee River has been impacted by past and current land use. Public access can be challenging, and as a result user-created trails have helped to accelerate erosion and loss of riparian vegetation. This Project would address three separate impacted wetland and riparian areas adjacent to the Truckee River.

Project monitoring follows the Sierra Meadow Wetland and Riparian Area Monitoring Plan (SM-WRAMP). The SM-WRAMP was developed by the Sierra Meadows Partnership to develop a framework to assess pre- and post-restoration conditions for mountain meadows in the Sierra Nevada. The SM-WRAMP follows the California WRAMP structure of Level 1, 2, and 3 data. Level 1 data will be assembled for all work sites. As appropriate, Level 2 and Level 3 data collection will be added once design is advanced enough to anticipate ecosystem benefits attained at each site. Project tasks include consultation and engagement with technical advisors and stakeholder groups, including the Washoe Tribe.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

No herbicide will be used for this Project.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	\$21,940	\$20,000	\$41,940
Planning and Design (All Sites)	\$1,704,600	\$27,500	\$1,732,100
Indirect Costs	\$69,070	---	\$69,070
Contingency	\$180,390	---	\$180,390
Total	\$1,976,000	\$47,500	\$2,023,500

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Grant administration and reporting, contract development, coordination of public outreach.
- Planning and Design: Project development for seven sites within the Truckee River watershed (Design, baseline monitoring, environmental compliance, stakeholder engagement, and technical management).
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.



- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

## PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

### Support:

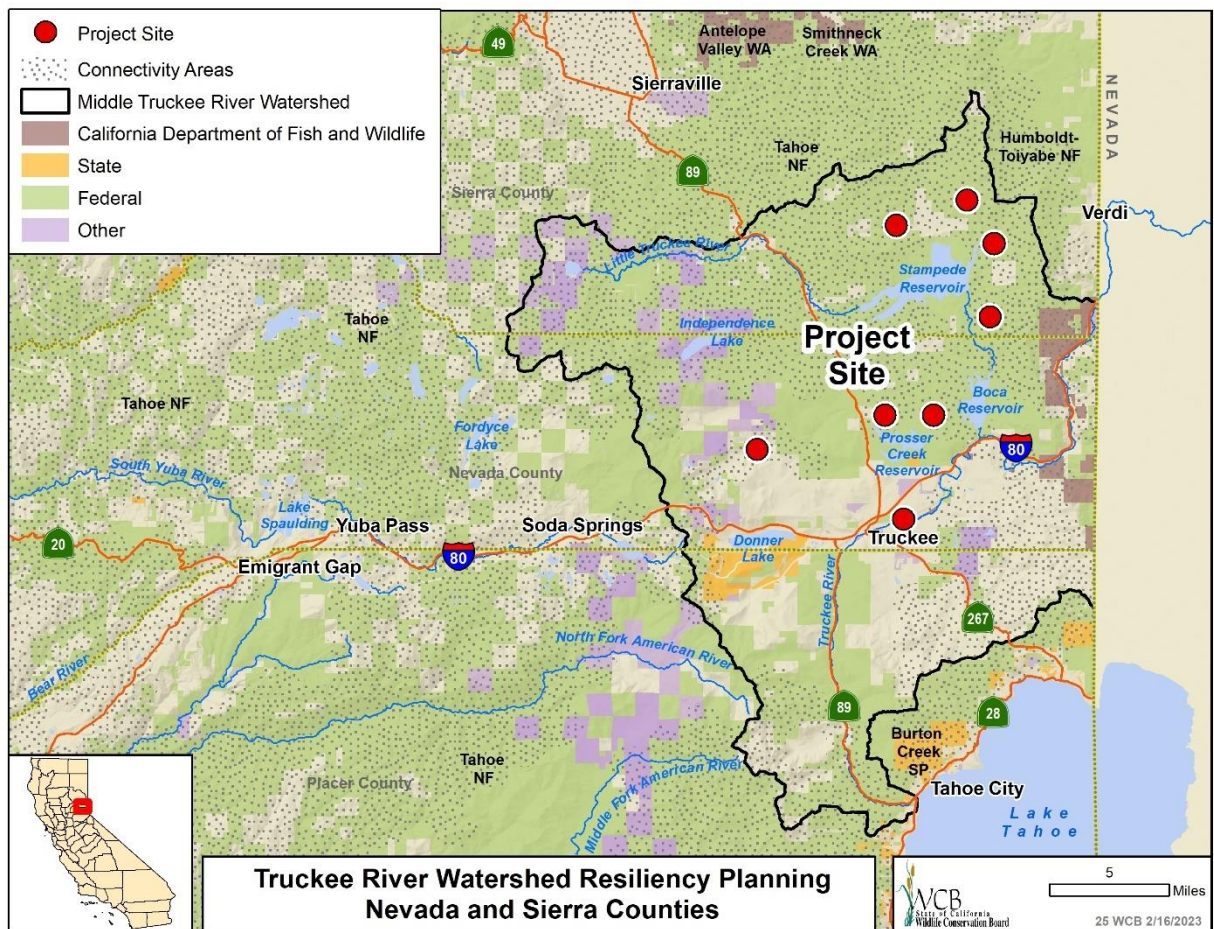
- Jonathan Cook-Fisher, Truckee District Ranger, USDA Forest Service
- Rachel Hutchinson, Sierraville District Ranger, USDA Forest Service
- John Groom, Director of Land Management, Tahoe Donner Association

### 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



## 26. Butano Creek Backfield Floodplain and Flow Enhancement

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$6,052,000 from General Fund (Budget Act of 2021 [Section 54], Water Supply for Environmental Flows); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Butano Creek Backfield Floodplain and Flow Enhancement
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	San Mateo Resource Conservation District
Amount Recommended:	\$6,052,000
Funding Partners:	U.S. Department of Commerce, Peninsula Open Space Trust
Landowner(s):	Peninsula Open Space Trust
County:	San Mateo
Program:	Stream Flow Enhancement Program
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.3

### LOCATION

The Butano Creek Backfield Floodplain and Flow Enhancement project (Project) is located on a 25-acre organic farm adjacent to Butano Creek, approximately two miles upstream of the Pescadero Marsh Complex in coastal San Mateo County. The complex is one of the most significant wetlands on California's Central Coast and has been the focus of numerous multi-agency efforts to improve habitat conditions for coho salmon and steelhead trout. The property is owned by Peninsula Open Space Trust and operated by tenant farmer Fifth Crow Farm, which grows organic produce, dry beans, flowers, and pasture-raised eggs. The Project will specifically occur on the portion of the property known as the "Backfield", which is subject to frequent flooding from Butano Creek and contains an existing defunct and leaky storage reservoir.

The nearby town of Pescadero is a rural farming and ranching community in unincorporated San Mateo County. Pescadero is not classified as a Disadvantaged Community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool), though a subset of the community has a median household income of \$45,500 and is the area most impacted by flooding of Pescadero Creek Road. The San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD) conducted extensive outreach to neighboring landowners, resource management agencies and the Association of Ramaytush Ohlone. Project proponents have committed to further engagement with the Association of Ramaytush Ohlone and contracted an archaeological/cultural resources consultant to conduct a cultural resources investigation within the area of potential effect.



## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Although abundant coho were reported in the Pescadero-Butano watershed as recently as the late 1950s, they are now at extreme risk of extirpation with only sporadic observations in the last two decades. A primary driver of coho and steelhead declines in the watershed are historic agriculture and timber harvest practices, rerouting and straightening creek channels, and flood management such as wholesale large woody debris removal that have resulted in lasting impacts to both stream form and function. These changes have caused chronic channel incision throughout the alluvial reaches of Butano Creek where the Project is located. Additionally, drought and low dry-season stream flow have been a major factor limiting coho and steelhead recovery.

The Project includes two main components in a comprehensive approach to restoring floodplain habitat, improving instream complexity, and enhancing dry-season instream flows in Butano Creek. First, the floodplain and riparian habitat component will create 4.2 acres of inset floodplain, increase connectivity to 100 acres of historic floodplain in the Pescadero-Butano watershed, and increase channel complexity along an 1,800-foot stretch of Butano Creek. Second, the infrastructure component will repair and expand an existing off-channel reservoir, allowing the landowner to cease diversions from the creek during critically dry summer months. Together these components have been designed to achieve the Project goals, which are:

- Improve chronic dry season low stream flow conditions in Butano Creek, particularly during periods of drought.
- Improve channel complexity in Butano Creek to bolster habitat for steelhead and coho salmon, California red-legged frog, San Francisco garter snake, western pond turtle, and riparian nesting birds.
- Increase the extent, frequency and duration of floodplain inundation.
- Restore more natural sediment transport dynamics in Butano Creek.
- Provide a more secure water supply for the landowner and tenant farmer while protecting instream flow.

A 4.2-acre “stage zero” inset floodplain will be excavated out of an existing farm field directly adjacent to Butano Creek (Backfield). The current floodplain surface will be lowered several feet, allowing the stream to inundate the lowered floodplain during winter baseflow conditions. A 2.1-acre transitional floodplain area at the margins of the new surface will improve the stream’s connection to an additional 100 acres of historic floodplain. This will allow for inundation 2.5 times as frequently as current conditions allow, and offer low velocity aquatic habitat for juvenile coho salmon and steelhead. Construction of the floodplain and expansion of the pond and berm will reduce the size of the existing Backfield. However, the reduced farmable area is expected to be far more viable under post-project conditions, as it will sit at a higher elevation relative to the floodplain. Currently this field is rarely used for crop production, due to the frequency of inundation during the growing season. The Project has been designed with consideration to the neighboring property, Oku Farm. Modeling shows that the Project will maintain or

improve flood resilience for the property and is not anticipated to result in any impacts to existing infrastructure. Additionally, the Project design includes the placement of 15 to 20 habitat structures within the newly created floodplain surface and the Butano Creek channel, including one engineered logjam and several post-assisted log structures. The native vegetation that is removed during grading will be reused in planting, except for senescent alders which will be used to add roughness in select bank and floodplain areas. Together these features will increase habitat complexity, disperse energy during high flows, help arrest and reverse historic channel incision, and restore geomorphic processes such as aggradation and floodplain storage of sediment. This is expected to help increase the longevity of the downstream Butano Creek Reconnection and Resilience Project by collecting sediment in the newly created inset floodplain and reducing the amount that continues downstream to be deposited in the Marsh Complex.

The Project's second objective is to increase dry season flows in Butano Creek. Restoring flow during this critical window and meeting the farm's existing irrigation needs requires a substantial change in water diversion practices, from the current regime of dry-season withdrawals to wet-season diversion and storage for subsequent dry-season irrigation. The Project will facilitate this transition by expanding capacity of the existing storage reservoir from 3.6 acre-feet (AF) to 14 AF, and establishing a forbearance agreement that institutes this new regime. Stream flow will increase significantly over baseline conditions during the driest summer months with mandatory forbearance from August through September. Outside of this mandatory diversion period, a tiered diversion approach will be instituted to protect bypass flows. Therefore, during dry years, flow benefits may occur much earlier. The pumping rate will be informed by data from the Butano Creek stream gauge, and pumping will cease if stream flow drops below 2 cubic feet per second (cfs). Instream flow benefits will be dedicated, pursuant to the California Water Code Section 1707, to the next downstream point of diversion (POD) which is located 0.19 miles downstream at Oku Farms. Although this POD is close in proximity to the Project, the diversion is seldomly operated in the summer or fall, and the two known active diversions on Butano Creek downstream of the Project site have storage ponds and diversion seasons of December 1 to April 1 and December 1 to June 1, respectively. Because of this, stream flow benefits from this Project are expected to be realized all the way downstream and into the sensitive Pescadero Marsh Complex.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

No herbicide will be used for this Project.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The San Mateo RCD has adopted a Long-Term Management and Maintenance Plan which describes success criteria, monitoring, and adaptive management

approaches. If at any time during the 20-year life of the Project, San Mateo RCD 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. The Project's flow enhancement benefits will be ensured into the future via a 20-year forbearance agreement that will be signed by the landowner, San Mateo RCD, and Trout Unlimited before Project implementation. The forbearance agreement will be registered with San Mateo County and recorded against the property.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	\$120,416	---	\$120,416
Design and Permitting	---	\$25,000	\$25,000
Construction	\$4,880,058	\$100,000	\$4,980,058
Monitoring and Adaptive Management	\$189,658	---	\$189,658
Indirect Costs	\$311,408	---	\$311,408
Contingency	\$550,460	---	\$550,460
Total	\$6,052,000	\$125,000	\$6,177,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Project reporting, invoicing, subcontracting and oversight.
- Construction: Floodplain excavation, installation of the pond and instream habitat structures.
- Monitoring and Adaptive Management: Project evaluation, permit compliance, and minor adjustments or repairs as needed following construction.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

#### PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

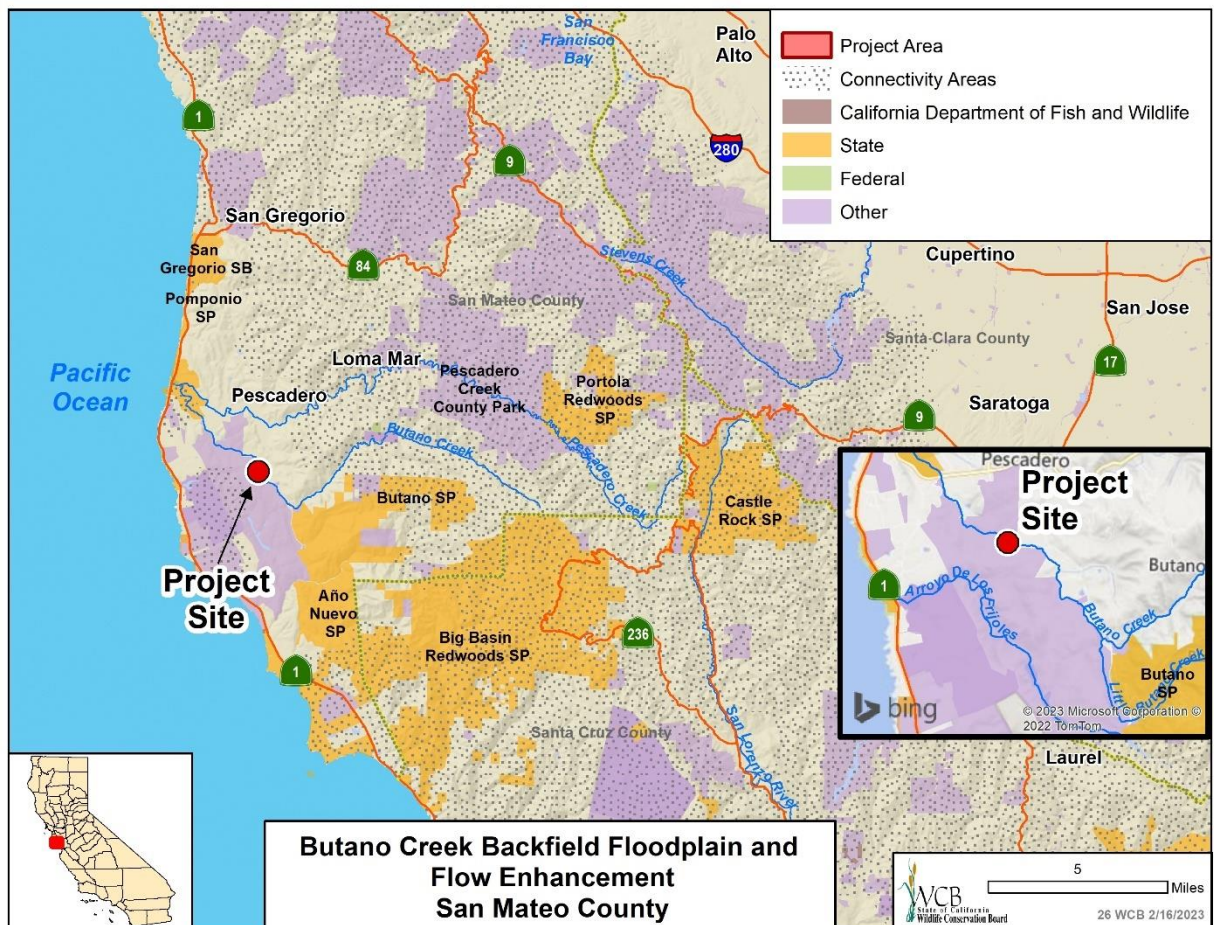
- Marc Berman, State Assemblymember, 24<sup>th</sup> District
- Josh Becker, State Senator, 13<sup>th</sup> District
- David K. White, California Supervisor Pacific Region, NOAA Restoration Center
- Damion Ciotti, Coastal Program Manager, USFWS
- Walter T. Moore, President, Peninsula Open Space Trust

Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to the Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (SERP), Public Resources Code section 21080.56, as a project that meets all of the following conditions: (1) the Project is exclusively to conserve, restore, protect, or enhance, and assist in the recovery of California native fish and wildlife, and the habitat upon which they depend; or is exclusively to restore or provide habitat for California native fish and wildlife; (2) the Project may have public benefits incidental to the Project's fundamental purpose; (3) the Project will result in long-term net benefits to climate resiliency, biodiversity, and sensitive species recovery; and includes procedures and ongoing management for the protection of the environment; and (4) Project construction activities are solely related to habitat restoration. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



## **27. Moss Landing Wildlife Area Shoreline Resilience and Habitat Enhancement**

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,672,000 from the General Fund, Budget Act of 2022 (Sec. 53.5), Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Moss Landing Wildlife Area Shoreline Resilience and Habitat Enhancement
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Amount Recommended:	\$3,672,000
Funding Partners:	None
Landowner(s):	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
County:	Monterey
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan	Goals: B.1, C.1 Objectives: SI 1.3, 3.3, 3.4

### **LOCATION**

The Moss Landing Wildlife Area Shoreline Resilience and Habitat Enhancement project (Project) is located within the Moss Landing Wildlife Area (MLWA), just east of Highway 1 on Elkhorn Slough, about nine miles south of Watsonville, in Monterey County. MLWA consists of 872 acres of tidally influenced land and retired salt evaporation ponds owned and managed by CDFW as wildlife habitat and for wildlife-oriented public recreational uses. The Project area encompasses 158 acres within the broader MLWA, consisting of managed ponds (former salt ponds), north coast salt marsh or pickleweed habitat, slough habitat, levees, parking area, and other uplands.

WCB has a long history at this site, beginning in 1984 with the initial purchase of 554 acres from Western Salt Works Company for habitat conservation. In the years since, WCB has partnered with CDFW to accomplish additional acquisitions leading to MLWA's current configuration. In addition, WCB partnered with CDFW, Ducks Unlimited, and others on prior restoration (e.g., reconfiguring the former salt ponds and water distribution systems) and public access (e.g., new viewing platform, pedestrian crossing, and parking lot improvements) projects, which have substantially improved both habitat quality and public access opportunities within the Project area. In 2016, WCB awarded funding to Ducks Unlimited to support the planning, design, and environmental compliance necessary to implement this Project.

While not located within a Disadvantaged Community (CalEnviroScreen 4.0, SB535 Disadvantaged Communities and DWR DAC Mapping Tool), the Project will provide benefits to one or more disadvantaged communities through enhancement

of public recreational opportunities (e.g., fishing and bird watching) at a site located less than one mile from a disadvantaged community.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The former salt ponds within the Project area are particularly important to the Monterey Bay breeding population of western snowy plover (plover) (federally listed as threatened). The ponds provide low disturbance nesting habitat throughout the breeding season, with the unique advantage of also being protected from high tide events. In years where weather and storm events result in severe beach erosion, such as 2017, 2020, and 2023, the Project area serves as one of a few early season nesting locations available to plover. The number of breeding adult plovers counted in the Project area between 2013 and 2019 ranged from 4.7 percent to 19.6 percent of the Monterey Bay region's total.

The Project area is particularly vulnerable to erosion due to its proximity to the artificial mouth of the slough and the combined effects of ocean waves and increased tidal prism, which results from ongoing tidal scour and the loss of tidal marsh. About 850 feet of the bank along Elkhorn Slough is eroding north into the Project area at an average rate of approximately two feet per year. At the current rate of erosion, the existing perimeter levee is likely to fail (i.e., breach or be otherwise compromised) within 7-10 years. Tidal inundation of the managed salt ponds resulting from a failure of this levee would dramatically compromise the ability for plover to successfully breed in the Project area. Erosion along the bank also contributes sediments to the slough, which affects water quality and may affect downstream navigability by redistributing fine silt and sediments towards the harbor mouth.

Limited public access is available in the Project area, where a parking lot, interpretive signs, a levee trail, and raised viewing platforms are available for public use. This access is being extensively used for wildlife viewing, walking, and fishing along Elkhorn Slough. Fishing has become increasingly popular among visitors to the Project area—this is the only publicly accessible shore fishing area along Elkhorn Slough. Informal dispersed use by the public along the bank of Elkhorn Slough is contributing to bank erosion and degradation of marsh vegetation. Bank erosion in the vicinity of the western-most viewing platform is encroaching towards the footings of the platform. Based on the current rate of erosion, it is estimated these footings will be exposed within the next 1 to 2 years which would make public access to the platform unsafe. Enhancing and relocating the levee will provide greater resiliency and increase habitat refugia and biodiversity, strengthening the area in the face of climate change and providing valuable and lasting benefits to the surrounding community.

The purposes of the Project are to: (1) preserve habitat for western snowy plover, (2) reduce ongoing erosion of the bank of Elkhorn Slough along the southern boundary of the Project area, (3) provide continued safe and sustainable public recreational access within the Project area, and (4) implement targeted actions aimed at improving plover habitat and water management capabilities within the



managed ponds. The Project will implement the following actions to achieve these purposes.

1. A new 920-foot-long setback levee will be constructed about 150 feet north of the current levee alignment. After the new setback levee is constructed, approximately 520 feet of the existing perimeter levee that currently separates Elkhorn Slough from the project area will be removed and the footprint restored to high marsh elevation. The remaining portion of the existing levee (about 550 feet) will be incorporated into the public trail system.
2. The vertical slope of Elkhorn Slough along the 850-foot length where it is actively eroding will be recontoured (laid back) to reduce ongoing erosion and sluffing. After recontouring is complete, the area between Elkhorn Slough and the new setback levee (outside of the trail alignments) will be restored as high marsh.
3. Eelgrass will be transplanted into Elkhorn Slough, adjacent to the Project area, where existing stands of eelgrass are presently fragmented and patchy. This action will expand the fringing beds alongside the reconstructed bank and hasten the recovery of eelgrass within Elkhorn Slough.
4. Public access improvements will include improving the parking area and access road, providing a trail along the top of the setback levee, constructing a new loop trail in the location of the existing perimeter levee, and installing near-shore, fishing areas adjacent to Elkhorn Slough. The western viewing platform will be relocated, while the eastern viewing platform will be maintained in place. New multi-lingual interpretive signage will be constructed, and fencing will be installed around the trails to limit recreational use to designated areas. Reconfiguring the trail system to provide fishing areas closer to the slough will improve the recreational experience of the public while better protecting sensitive habitats.
5. Finally, several activities will be implemented to improve water management capabilities and plover habitat within the managed ponds, including:
  - Removing accumulated silt from select inlet and outlet structures.
  - Improving existing swales in select ponds by excavating channel constrictions.
  - Cleaning and repairing water control structures in all ponds.
  - Removing levee vegetation in selected areas to enhance pond connectivity for flightless chicks.
  - Adding gravel or oyster shells to Pond 1 to enhance habitat for plovers.
  - Enhancing the walkway support structure over the main intakes in Pond 6.

No herbicide will be used during this Project.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

In September 2020, in association with the CEQA process, CDFW initiated the AB52 consultation process with California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area that the Project is within. No comments were received as of the date of the adopted MND. Local tribal entities will be consulted during the design process for multi-lingual interpretive signage, with the intention of telling a more inclusive story of the MLWA. The Project includes funding to reimburse tribal members for their participation in interpretive design process.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CDFW implements its draft Moss Landing Wildlife Area Habitat Management Plan that guides management actions for the property. 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	\$488,008	---	\$488,008
Construction	\$2,603,053	---	\$2,603,053
Indirect Costs	\$247,285	---	\$247,285
Contingency	\$333,654	---	\$333,654
Total	\$3,672,000	---	\$3,672,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Grant administration, contractor coordination, construction oversight, monitoring, invoicing, and reporting.
- Construction: Construct project improvements.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

#### PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

- Monique Fountain, Tidal Wetland Program Director, Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Carleton Eyster, Avian Ecologist

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

As lead agency, CDFW prepared an 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.



## 28. Silacci Ranch Conservation Easement

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,000,000 from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund for the grant to California Rangeland Trust; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Silacci Ranch Conservation Easement
Project Type:	Conservation Easement (9,418± acres)
Grantee:	California Rangeland Trust
Amount Recommended:	\$2,000,000
Funding Partners:	California Department of Conservation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
County:	Monterey and San Benito
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.2 Objectives: S1 1.3, 2.1, 2.4

### LOCATION

The Silacci Ranch (Property) is a 9,418-acre property spanning from the Salinas Valley floor in Monterey County to the peaks of the Gabilan Mountains in San Benito County. Access to the property is from Old Stage Road and Williams Road. The western edge of the property borders the city limits of Salinas.

The Santa Cruz Mountains Linkages Conceptual Area Protection Plan was adopted in 2012. The Property is located within the Gabilan Range to Santa Cruz Mountains landscape linkage, which is part of a 315-mile-long latitudinal gradient between the Transverse Range Mountains and the tip of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Species can migrate north to stay within their climatic envelopes in a future hotter and likely drier climate.

The conservation of the Property is consistent with the 2021 California Climate Adaptation Strategy priority to Accelerate Nature-Based Climate Solutions and Strengthen Climate Resilience of Natural Systems. More specifically, the project advances the goals of the Natural and Working Lands Strategy, part of the Nature-Based Solutions effort, by avoiding future increases in emissions and continuing the climate smart practices employed by the owners. The ranch's conservation will avoid future increases in emissions and continue to store carbon and protect watersheds and water supply .

SWAP designates this property in the Bay Delta and Central Coast Province. This acquisition will advance statewide conservation goals: Goal 1.2 (Native Species Range and Distribution), Goal 2.1 (Connectivity); and Goal 3.2 (Disturbance Regime). The Property is in the Central California Coast ecoregion and supports the conservation goals for the Bay Delta and Central Coast Province: conservation of California Grassland/Vernal Pool and Flower fields.

At the northern end of the Gabilan Range is Rocks Ranch owned by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, which was funded in part by a WCB grant.

The Property is not located within a Disadvantaged Community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool).

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 9,418-acre Property spans from the Salinas Valley floor to the Gabilan Range peaks, from 181 to 2,556 feet above sea level. The Property is zoned and used for agricultural use and resource conservation. Under these designations, the minimum parcel size is 40 acres. The majority of the Property is in Monterey County and enrolled in a Williamson Act Land Conservation Agreement.

The topography of the Property is characterized by moderate to steep mountainous terrain, typical of the Gabilan Range. Ravines and hillsides/mountainsides drain into Dunn Canyon and Alisal Canyon. Dunn Canyon drains to the northwest to its confluence with Alisal Creek, which flows generally to the southwest. Alisal Creek drains most of the ranch from the Gabilan crest southwest to the valley floor. A relatively flat-lying, lower-elevation alluvial plain is present in the northwestern portion of the Property where Alisal Creek exits the Gabilan range.

Approximately 315 acres on the valley floor are leased for intensified agriculture. Strawberries, bush berries, and leafy green vegetables are grown on a rotational basis. The irrigated farmland has prime soils and level topography, representative of the Salinas Valley. The proposed conservation easement (Easement) will prohibit further agricultural intensification and limit the irrigated crops to the existing acreage. The proposed easement limits use of the intensified agricultural area to food-based crops such as strawberries, raspberries, grapes, nuts, citrus trees, and olives.

The remainder of the ranch is used for seasonal cattle grazing. Depending on conditions, up to 800 cattle are grazed from October through June. The cattle are rotationally grazed on 15 pastures throughout the ranch.

Developed areas are limited. There are eight reserved building envelopes for residences, agricultural employees, barns and other agricultural buildings, and recreational facilities/hunting cabins. In total, these building envelopes do not exceed 25 acres. The remainder of the 9,418 acres will remain as open space.

The Property encompasses the upper reaches of Alisal Creek and two of the tributary drainages support riparian woodland as well as multiple ponds and other wetlands. Riparian woodland is integral to maintaining the integrity of soils and water quality as well as for providing refugia for wildlife within and downstream of the Property.

The Property's considerable elevation range, varied topography, and soil types support an exceptional diversity of plant communities. Plant communities include

open land with annual grasses, clover, and scattered shrubs. Steeper portions feature coastal oak woodland, chaparral, coastal scrub, montane hardwood-conifer, and valley foothill riparian. A significant number of blue and coastal live oak trees are present across the ranch. Other tree species include bay, pines, alder, sycamore, manzanita, and tanoaks. Riparian plants, including cottonwood, willow trees, and cattails, are present in vegetated spring and creek banks.

Three special-status plants have been documented on the Property. Special status plant species documented on site include: Pinnacles buckwheat, California false lupine, California Rare Plant Ranks List 1B.3), and coastal biscuitroot.

The Property's high quality, undisrupted habitats support a number of special status animal species including: California tiger salamander, western pond turtle, bald eagle, golden eagle, American badger, and tri-colored blackbird. Habitat suited to California red-legged frogs is also present. Tule elk, mountain lion, coyote, and bobcat are present. The Property provides connectivity for species movement on an elevational gradient and latitudinal gradient, providing connectivity to the north south from the valley floor to the Gabilan peaks.

Rotational grazing and off-stream water sources limit livestock impacts to wildlife habitat. There are a total of 11 stock ponds, 10 water tanks, and 52 water troughs distributed throughout the Property to benefit both cattle and wildlife. Research supports rotational grazing is beneficial to California tiger salamander (CTS) habitat. CTS relying on vernal pool habitat benefit from grazing. These ephemeral pools are wet only during the winter/spring rainy season, and too much vegetation in and around their edges can cause drying pools to lose depth too quickly. Because grazing reduces this vegetation, it can keep the pools wet longer, giving salamander larvae more time to grow up. Removing grazing could reduce habitat availability for CTS, particularly in a drier climate. (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2017. Final Recovery Plan for the Central California Distinct Population Segment of the California Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*). Also, while the property has perimeter and cross fencing, that fencing has several "elk gates" that allow elk to pass over traditional barbwire fencing.

Seep stock ponds support native herpetofauna as well as provide critical water for terrestrial animals including black-tailed deer, tule elk, and mountain lion. Seeps and springs support wetland vegetation including freshwater marsh, willows, and cottonwoods, which can be used by nesting avian species such as tri-colored blackbirds and golden eagles. Protection of the Property will contribute to climate change adaptation and resiliency goals. For example, protection of streams and riparian areas provide a source of perennial water for wildlife, feature cooler microclimates, and facilitate animal movement. As part of a state-wide analysis, the Gabilan Range was determined to have a high to very high density of seeps and springs (Howard and Merrifield 2010). The occurrence of abundant springs may reflect greater groundwater supplies, which support resiliency to climate change.



Conservation through the proposed easement will prohibit fragmentation of the property and maintain a large, contiguous block of habitat. Additionally, the proposed conservation easement will prohibit development of vineyards. Rural residential development, fragmentation of large properties, and vineyard development threaten connectivity between the Santa Cruz and Gabilan ranges (CAPP, 2012.) Vineyard development and rural residential development, along with increased growth pressure from Salinas and Watsonville areas, have contributed to habitat loss in the region.

The undeveloped natural habitats on the Easement Area are valuable as open space and scenic viewsheds as well as wildlife habitat. Scenic views of the Pacific Ocean and Salinas Valley are afforded from multiple locations throughout the Easement Area, and the undeveloped hill slopes contribute to the viewshed from the heavily trafficked U.S. Highway 101 through the city of Salinas and Salinas Valley in general.

This project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 3: Increase Voluntary Conservation Easements.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

When establishing a conservation easement, California Rangeland Trust works closely with the landowner to address protection of the Property's natural habitat and agricultural use. The purposes of the proposed easement are to ensure that natural resources, agriculture, and wildlife habitat are conserved in balance and harmony with each other. The grant agreement requires California Rangeland Trust to monitor the Property at least once a year to ensure the Easement terms are being honored, as well as to prepare and submit a written monitoring report documenting the visit and noting any significant changes to the resources or any compliance issues. If necessary, corrective action must be recommended and noted in the report.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The DGS approved fair market value is \$14,900,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$2,000,000
Department of Conservation	\$6,255,000
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	\$376,000
Landowner Donation	\$6,269,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$14,900,000

#### PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

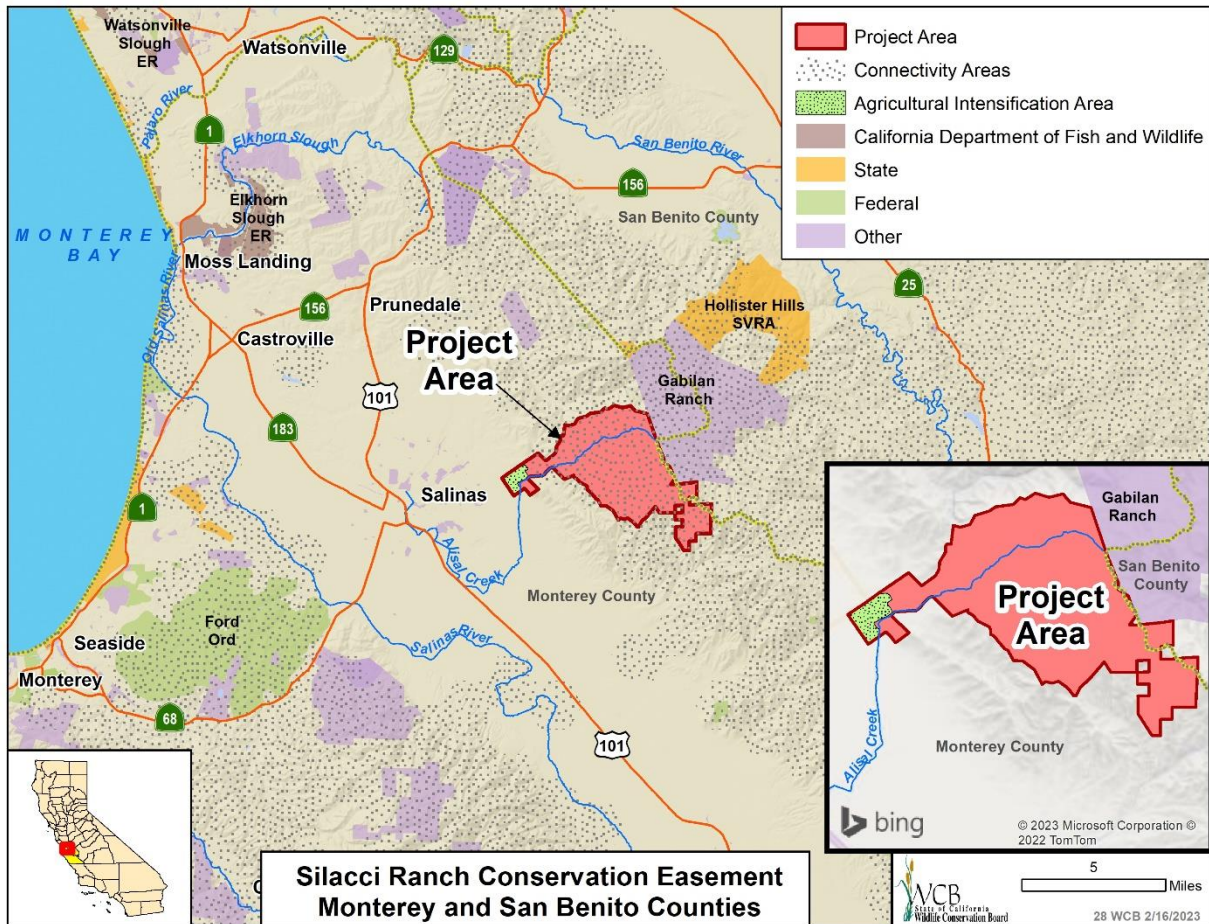
- None received

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.



**29. Fay Creek Ranch**

Withdrawn from consideration at this time.

### **30. Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Planning, Augmentation**

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$4,331,000 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:	Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Planning, Augmentation
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Ventura County Watershed Protection District
Amount Recommended:	\$4,331,000
County:	Ventura
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 4.1, 4.3

#### **LOCATION**

Matilija Dam is an aging concrete arch dam located about 16.3 miles from the Pacific Ocean and just over half a mile from the Matilija Creek and North Fork Matilija Creek confluence which creates the Ventura River in western Ventura County, approximately 80 miles northwest of Los Angeles. Downstream of the Dam and the Matilija Creek/North Fork confluence, the Ventura River flows south past the western edge of the city of Ojai and continues through the Robles Diversion Dam (part of the federal Ventura River Project), the community of Meiners Oaks, and the unincorporated areas of Oak View and Casitas Springs. In its lower reaches, the Ventura River flows through the city of Ventura until it reaches the Ventura River Estuary near Surfers Point.

Portions of the project are located within a Disadvantaged Community with median household incomes below \$62,938 based on the (DWR DAC Mapping Tool).

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The accumulation of more than 8 million cubic yards of sediment behind Matilija Dam since 1947 renders it functionally obsolete for water supply, flood protection, and recreational use. The dam continues to negatively impact aquatic and terrestrial habitats, deprives Ventura County beaches of much needed sands and cobbles, and blocks the migration of endangered Southern California steelhead to some of the watershed's most productive and resilient spawning and rearing habitat. The National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Steelhead Recovery Plan identifies the removal of Matilija Dam as a priority recovery action for the species.

Matilija Dam is owned by the Ventura County Watershed Protection District (VCWPD). Since 1999, VCWPD has pursued efforts to remove Matilija Dam as the central feature of the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project (MDERP). This watershed-scale initiative was the subject of a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Feasibility Study and Final EIS/EIR completed in 2004 (USACE 2004a-

b). The Final EIS/EIR identified the MDERP's fundamental components, and the need to complete modifications to downstream bridges, levees, and water diversion structures to address flood risk and water supply concerns prior to implementing the dam removal project.

In 2016, a locally driven stakeholder-based Design Oversight Group determined that a natural sediment transport approach to sediment management would avoid the impacts from the slurry pipeline method proposed by USACE while greatly reducing overall cost. The locally preferred approach would utilize targeted storm events and natural river flows to erode and transport much of the fine sediment accumulated in Matilija Reservoir downstream through two twelve-foot diameter orifices to be constructed at the base of Matilija Dam, with Dam removal to follow. This offers the most cost-effective alternative for MDERP implementation, presents the lowest risks, minimizes floodplain impacts, compares favorably to other recent and successful dam removal efforts, and yields the most significant associated community and environmental benefits.

The natural transport method still requires completion of a variety of downstream improvements to address flood protection and water supply concerns prior to the release of accumulated sediment. These include three levee construction or rehabilitation projects near the communities of Meiners Oaks, Live Oak Acres, and Casitas Springs, upgraded and improved management of flow and sediment bypass capabilities at the Robles Diversion Dam, new bridges at existing river crossings at Camino Cielo Road and Santa Ana Boulevard, and a variety of supporting efforts such as strategic property acquisitions and adaptive management.

In May 2020, WCB approved the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Planning project which will complete final (up to 95%) design plans for Matilija Dam removal and for the three levee projects. The goal of developing final designs was based on the belief that a prior grant from CDFW would develop 65% designs and the cost of CEQA updates, not only for dam removal but also for each proposed WCB final design project component. The need for an augmentation to the original grant became clear after public CEQA scoping was completed in late 2020 and it was realized that the CDFW 65% design grant budget would not be sufficient for the completion of subsequent EIRs for dam removal or for any other Project component. Without the 65% designs and CEQA updates for each WCB final design component, it will not be possible to complete final design plans as envisioned by the original grant.

This project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

## PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Project Task	Current WCB Augmentation	Original WCB Grant	Total Cost
Project Management and Grant Administration	\$1,246,600	\$1,005,000	\$2,251,600
Matilija Dam Removal	\$300,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,800,000
Meiners Oaks Levee	\$810,586	\$835,000	\$1,645,586
Live Oak Acres Levee	\$704,423	\$950,000	\$1,654,423
Casitas Springs Levee	\$869,186	\$735,000	\$1,604,186
Contingency	\$400,205	---	\$400,205
Total	\$4,331,000	\$5,025,000	\$9,356,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management and Grant Administration: Project Management, supervision of subcontractors, community outreach, and procurement of all necessary encroachment, access, and traffic control permits.
- Matilija Dam Removal: Design plans and environmental review for the removal of Matilija Dam.
- Meiners Oaks Levee: Design plans and environmental review for the Meiners Oaks Levee.
- Live Oak Acres Levee: Design plans and environmental review for the Live Oak Acres Levee.
- Casitas Springs Levee: Design plans and environmental review for the Casitas Springs Levee.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

## 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





### 31. Topanga Lagoon Restoration Planning

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$4,946,000 from the General Fund, Budget Act of 2022 (Sec. 19.56(e)(7)), Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Topanga Lagoon Restoration Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains
Amount Recommended:	\$4,946,000
Funding Partners:	Caltrans, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Parks and Recreation, State Coastal Conservancy
County:	Los Angeles
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 4.3

#### LOCATION

Topanga Lagoon is located where Topanga Creek enters the Pacific Ocean. The creek's watershed covers 18-square miles and contains almost 12,000 acres of protected open space in Topanga State Park. The Lagoon lies approximately ten miles east of Malibu and ten miles west of Santa Monica in Los Angeles County.

The project is not located within a Disadvantaged Community.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The bar-built estuary at Topanga Lagoon is an important natural resource both locally and regionally. It is at the mouth of the third largest watershed that drains into the Santa Monica Bay and maintains, a natural hydrologic regime that supports three native fish species and over 20 native amphibians. Topanga Creek still has a population of endangered tidewater goby and is the only watershed left in the Santa Monica Bay that supports southern steelhead. The Lagoon also contains coastal wetlands which is an ecosystem that has faced intense development pressure over the last century and only cover a fraction of their former extent in Southern California.

Southern steelhead trout is a federally endangered species whose management is governed by the National Marine Fisheries Service's Southern California Steelhead Recovery Plan. The Plan has designated the steelhead in the Topanga system as a Core 1 population, which means it has the highest potential to contribute to the recovery of the species. The plan also identifies restoration of Topanga Lagoon as a critical element of improving the resiliency of Topanga steelhead because it will provide additional opportunities for anadromous adults to access up to four miles of good to excellent habitat upstream.

The Topanga Lagoon Restoration Planning Project (Project) will provide the planning and environmental review necessary to achieve measurable benefits for federally listed endangered southern steelhead trout and tidewater goby by:

- Expanding the lagoon from 0.56 acres to between 7-10 acres by replacing the 79 ft long Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) culvert bridge with a 200 ft main span, plus 130 ft side spans (total 460 ft), and removing legacy fill placed in the Lagoon;
- Restoring and enlarging the floodplain/beach area from 29 degraded acres to 35-36 restored acres to increase diversity, quantity, and quality of beach, wetland, fish, and upland habitat;
- Improving water quality by reducing wastewater impacts;
- Increasing community and ecosystem resiliency to sea level rise; and
- Improving visitor and emergency services.

The Project will complete the engineering reports and technical studies necessary for the identification of a preferred project alternative that meets the needs of Caltrans, State Parks, and the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors. The preferred alternative will then be used to complete the CEQA final certification and the Caltrans Project Approval and Environmental Document (PAED) process.

Beyond the habitat benefits of the Project, co-benefits resulting from this process-based restoration include improved low impact visitor services, expanded access and recreational opportunities, increased interpretation of Gabrielino-Tongva history at the site, improved emergency access, and increased community and ecosystem resilience to climate impacts such as current coastal erosion and sea level rise to the beaches, PCH embankment, and lifeguard headquarter building. Improvements to available parking and more welcoming bus stops will also make the area more appealing and accessible to a greater range of visitors.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	\$11,350	---	\$11,350
Technical Studies	\$1,341,952	\$1,987,000	\$3,328,952
Environmental Review	\$3,024,246	\$365,000	\$3,389,246
Outreach	\$85,000	\$10,350	\$95,350
Indirect Costs	\$33,830	---	\$33,830
Contingency	\$449,622	---	\$449,622
Total	\$4,946,000	\$2,362,350	\$7,308,350

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Project partner and TAC coordination, coordination of project deadlines, deliverable and partner roles, and contractor solicitation, selection, and management.
- Technical Studies: Biological, geotechnical, and or technical studies needed to fill in data gaps and inform designs.
- Environmental Review: Complete the Caltrans Project Engineering Report and associated technical studies, and Caltrans PAED.
- Outreach: Implement the Public Outreach Plan for the Project to engage a wide range of stakeholders and inform the public of timely updates.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

#### 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





### 32. Palo Verde Ecological Reserve Restoration

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,805,000 from the General Fund, Budget Act of 2022 (Sec. 53.5), Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife (\$505,000), and Proposition 50, Water Code Section 79568 (\$1,300,000); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Palo Verde Ecological Reserve Restoration
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	California Waterfowl Association
Amount Recommended:	\$1,805,000
Funding Partners:	None
Landowner(s):	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
County:	Riverside
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1, C.1 Objectives: SI 1.3, 2.1, 3.3, 3.4

#### LOCATION

The Palo Verde Ecological Reserve Restoration project (Project) is located at CDFW's Palo Verde Ecological Reserve (Ecological Reserve). The Ecological Reserve is an approximately 1,900-acre property, consisting of sandbar cottonwood, willow, and mesquite riparian habitat along the Colorado River, near the city of Blythe. The property was designated as an ecological reserve by the Fish and Game Commission in 2007 and protects an important riparian habitat linkage from the Colorado River to the Colorado Desert. Recreational opportunities on the property include deer, upland game bird and waterfowl hunting, and wildlife viewing.

The Project is located within a severely Disadvantaged Community based on the DWR DAC Mapping Tool.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Most of the Ecological Reserve has seen native cottonwood-willow and mesquite forested riparian habitats ( $\pm 1,010$  acres) restored along the Colorado River's edge. The restored riparian habitats have allowed populations of upland dependent birds, mammals, and reptiles along with rare, endangered, and fully protected species to flourish within this floodplain. Keynote listed species that are known to use the Ecological Reserve include: California black rail, Yuma ridgeway rail, western yellow-billed cuckoo, Gila woodpecker, southwestern willow flycatcher, and the desert tortoise. The 500-acre Project area is managed to provide upland and wetland habitat for wildlife and for public use. Of this acreage, CDFW is able to manage 260 acres as irrigated food plots for upland wildlife species and an additional 45 acres as seasonal wetland habitat for migratory waterbirds. The remaining 195 acres is not actively managed as habitat, as it is not currently possible to deliver water to these acres. The Project area provides a significant



birding and hunting opportunity for the public ( $\pm 36,000$  visitors a year) but has significant water delivery infrastructure issues that contribute to low quality habitat/resources and highly inefficient water deliveries. Much of the water delivery infrastructure is decades old and is a relic of the previous owner's farming operations.

The Project will complete three tasks to enhance 413 acres of upland food plots, 45 acres of seasonal wetlands, and 42 acres of riparian habitat. The first task will complete leveling and grading of 413 acres of food plot fields. This will allow for efficient irrigation and drainage of the fields and maximize plant growth to provide improved foraging resources for wildlife. Additionally, the existing dirt parking lot will be graded and graveled.

The second task will complete the removal of 9,000 feet of concrete delivery canals that are decades old and are in various stages of dysfunction and decay. The canals will be replaced with underground pipelines and equipped with valves that will improve irrigation and drainage capabilities. The pipelines guarantee no ditch loss, no annual maintenance costs, reduced invasive plant growth, and will allow precise application of water to desired locations. Results will also provide flexibility for the farming and management of the habitats and provide efficient water management to support efforts during a warming climate.

The third task will complete riparian and wetland enhancements at the Ecological Reserve. This includes planting 42 acres of riparian habitat with native honey mesquite, cottonwood, willow, and Palo Verde trees. The planting locations will be designed to allow for efficient irrigations to be prescribed by CDFW staff to maximize the growth of native potted stock and seedlings. In addition, swales, levees, and slopes will be refurbished and several islands created, providing improved water movement through each of the wetland units to increase wetland diversity and habitat quality. These improvements will reestablish moist soil management capabilities aiding CDFW in resource propagation for wintering migratory birds.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

No herbicide will be used during this Project.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CDFW adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the Ecological Reserve. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, CDFW does not manage and maintain the Project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that California Waterfowl Association 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	\$176,880	---	\$176,880
Construction	\$1,263,000	---	\$1,263,000
Native Plant Revegetation	\$85,000	---	\$85,000
Indirect Costs	\$149,120	---	\$149,120
Contingency	\$131,000		\$131,000
Total	\$1,805,000	---	\$1,805,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Engineering survey, restoration design, construction management, and invoicing.
- Construction: Mobilization/site prep, construction of swales/islands, field grading of wetland and food plot units, and purchase and installation of water delivery pipelines and water control structures. Grading and gravel of the 12-vehicle parking lot.
- Native Plant Revegetation: Purchase and installation of native plants.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

## PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

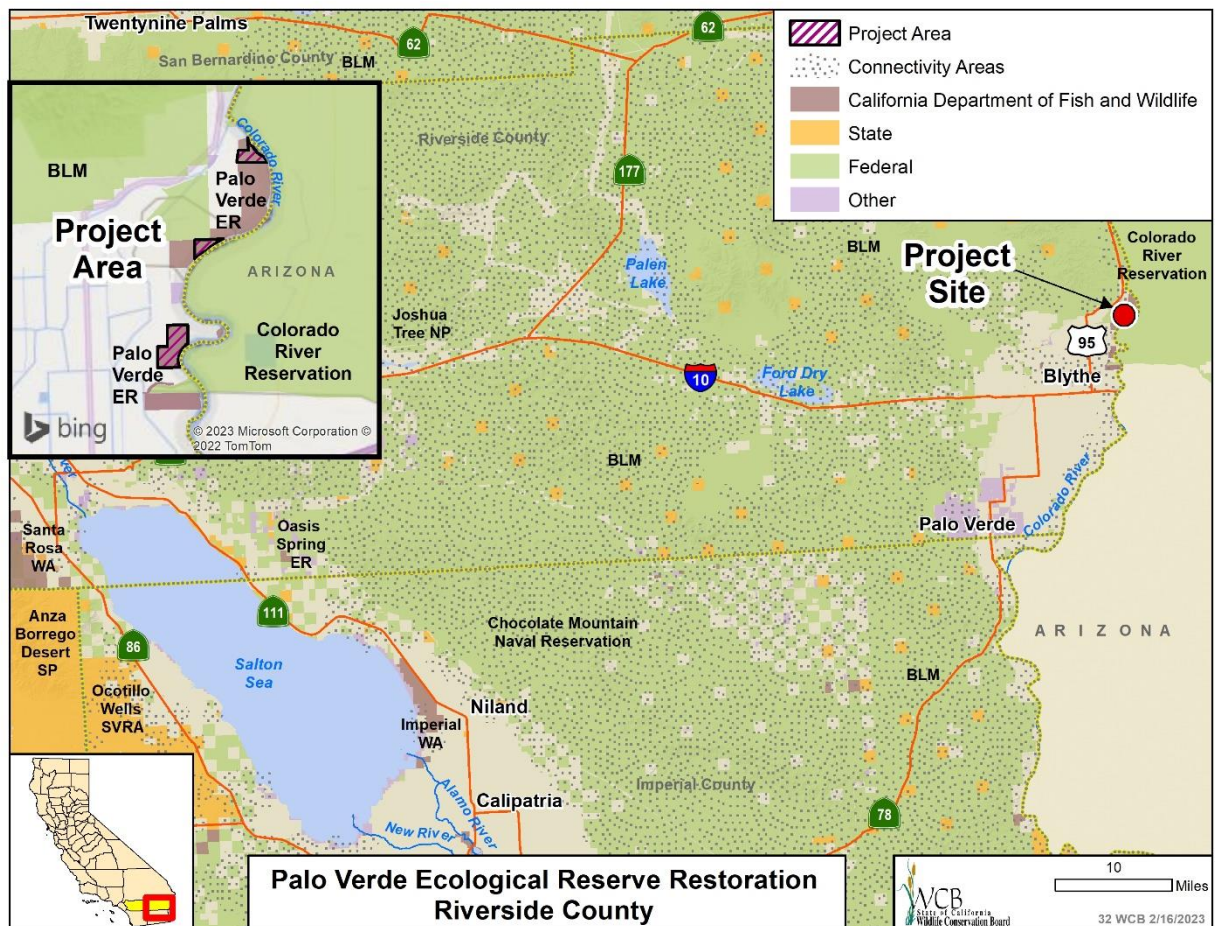
- Jennifer Duberstein, Coordinator, Sonoran Joint Venture

Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the state CEQA Guidelines, Section 15202, Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction, consisting of replacement or reconstruction of existing facilities located on the same site, Section 15303, Class 3, New Construction of Conversion of Small Structures, as conversion of a small structure from one use to another, and Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, as minor 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.



**33. Subcommittee Recommendations on DAC Definitions**

A Subcommittee of the Board has been evaluating different tools and definitions for identifying underserved communities and will provide a recommendation on a set of definitions for WCB to follow.

**34. Executive Director's Report**

- 2022 Year in Review

**35. Executive Session (Not Open to the Public)**

The Board may meet in closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 11126(a)(1) to discuss the appointment, employment, evaluation of performance, or dismissal of a public employee. After closed session, the Board will reconvene in public session, which may include announcements about actions taken during closed session.

**Adjourn**

**ATTACHMENT A – MAP OF FEBRUARY 2023 PROJECTS**

