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

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

August 24, 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

Please click the link below to join the webinar.

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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 prior to the day of the meeting.

Wildlife Conservation Board Meeting, August 24, 2023

Attachments

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) 902-9097 or EEO@wildlife.ca.gov. Please make any such requests at the earliest possible time to help ensure that accommodations can be in place at the time of the meeting. 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
- Alina Bokde, Chair, Public Member
- Charlton H. Bonham, Vice Chair
  Director, Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Michele Perrault, Member
  Legislative Director, Department of Finance
- Damon Nagami, Public Member
- Fran Pavley, Public Member
- Kathryn Phillips, Public Member
- Eric Sklar, President
  Fish and Game Commission

Joint Legislative Advisory Committee
- Senator *Vacant*
- Senator Nancy Skinner
- Senator Henry Stern
- Assemblymember Luz Rivas
- Assemblymember Buffy Wicks – Alternate
- Assemblymember Rick Zbur
- Assemblymember Miguel Santiago – Alternate
- Assemblymember Steve Bennett
- Assemblymember Marc Berman – Alternate

Acting Executive Director
- Rebecca Fris

2. 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)

3. Funding Status - Information

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

GENERAL FUND (0001)	**$809,989,058.00**
August 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(151,756,842.00)
Total Project Development:	(216,331,065.26)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$441,901,150.74**
HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND (0262)	**$67,723,201.44**
August 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(4,261,500.00)
Total Project Development:	(8,421,392.25)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$55,040,309.19**
WILDLIFE AND COASTAL PROTECTION ACT OF 1988 (0786))	**$3,778,917.00**
August 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(3,778,917.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance	**$0.00**
GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION FUND (3228)	**$1,446,225.00**
August 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(0.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$1,446,225.00**
CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND (Proposition 40) (6029)	**$175,012.00**
August 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(0.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$175,012.00**
WATER SECURITY, CLEAN DRINKING WATER, COASTAL AND BEACH PROTECTION FUND OF 2002 (Proposition 50) (6031)	**$7,075,449.43**
August 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(5,231,066.74)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$1,844,382.69**

SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006 (Proposition 84) (6051)	**$6,897,684.97**
August 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(74,104.39)
Total Project Development:	(2,520,000.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$4,303,580.58**
WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND (Proposition 1) (6083)	**$48,551,577.40**
August 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(0.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$48,551,577.40**
THE CALIFORNIA DROUGHT, WATER, PARKS, CLIMATE, COASTAL PROTECTION, AND OUTDOOR ACCESS FOR ALL ACT OF 2018 (Proposition 68) (6088)	**$82,093,893.11**
August 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(6,993,000.00)
Total Project Development:	(4,944,244.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$70,156,649.11**
TOTAL – ALL FUNDS	**$1,027,731,018.35**
Grand Total – August 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(163,807,266.39)
Grand Total - Project Development:	(240,555,685.25)
Grand Total Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$623,368,067.10**

4. Starr Ranch Presentation

Dr. Sandy DeSimone, Director, Research and Education will present information on Audubon's 4,000-acre Starr Ranch Preserve in southeast Orange County. The focus will be on adaptive management approaches and how they use experimental techniques to remove weeds without herbicides and restore native habitat.

Consent Items

Items 5-28 are part of the Consent Calendar

5. Recovery of Funds, Thursday, August 24, 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

Fund Name	**Amount**
General Fund	$36,563.00
Habitat Conservation Fund	$126,965.63
Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund	$19,652.88
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund	$132,732.00
Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002	$12,874.00
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006	$3,715.31
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014	$122,564.31
The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018	$257,186.28
Total Recoveries for All Funds	***$712,253.41***

Table 2 - General Fund

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
China Hill, Expansion 4	$70,750.00	$42,975.00	$27,775.00
Sans Topo Ranch Conservation Easement	$670,000.00	$661,212.00	$8,788.00
Total Recoveries to General Fund			***$36,563.00***

Table 3 - Habitat Conservation Fund

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Agoura Hills -Santa Monica Mountains Gateway	$2,320,000.00	$2,300,000.00	$20,000.00
Butte Valley Wildlife Area Wetland Enhancement	$872,*000*.00	$843,045.58	$28,954.42
Genga/Banning Ranch	$6,020,000.00	$6,000,000.00	$20,000.00
Jamul Creek Watershed Riparian Restoration	$1,696,000.00	$1,696,000.00	$0.00
Jamul Creek Watershed Riparian Restoration, Augmentation	$375,000.00	$375,000.00	$0.00
North Table Mountain, Exp. 3 (Donation)	$30,000.00	$26,690.00	$3,310.00
South Central Coast Invasive Weed Eradication	$354,500.00	$299,798.79	$54,701.21
Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area Engineering Study	$590,000.00	$590,000.00	$0.00
Total Recoveries to Habitat Conservation Fund			***$126,965.63***

Table 4 - Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Enhancing Wildlife Habitat and Carbon Sequestration on Working Lands	$1,036,442.00	$1,029,285.68	$7,56.32
Lacey Meadows Restoration Planning	$293,000.00	$283,657.27	$9,342.73
Pereira Ranch Conservation Easement	$427,190.00	$427,190.00	$0.00
Planning For Predicted Sea Level Rise Within The Salinas Valley	$248,020.00	$248,006.17	$13.83
Procter Ranch Conservation Easement	$368,000.00	$364,860.00	$3,140.00
Total Recoveries to Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund			***$19,652.88***

Table 5- California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Sierra Valley Conservation Area, Expansion 7 (Bates Ranch)	$2,392,268.00	$2,286,819.00	$5,449.00
Tuolumne River Educational Center, Reeves Property (La Grange)	$140,000.00	$12,717.00	$127,283.00
Total Recoveries to California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund			***$132,732.00***

Table 6 - Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Genga/Banning Ranch	$6,090,000.00	$6,077,126.00	$12,874.00
Total Recoveries to Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 Fund of 2014			***$12,874.00***

Table 7- Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
China Hill, Expansion 4	$14,544.80	14,544.80	$0.00
Glen Deven Native Habitat Restoration	$255,000.00	$254,464.69	$535.31
Quail Ridge UC Davis Natural Reserve System, Expansion 1	$110,000.00	$106,820.00	$3,180.00
South Central Coast Invasive Weed Eradication	$50,500.00	$50,500.00	$0.00
Total Recoveries to Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006			***$3,715.31***

Table 8 - Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Dos Rios Section 1707 Project	$75,000.00	$75,000.00	$0.00
Lower Bear Creek Slough Enhancement	$249,598.00	$241,013.12	$8,574.88
Reconnecting Stream Flows in the Lower Eel River Delta	$2,629,826.00	$2,522,393.43	$107,432.57
Southern California Coastal Watersheds Arundo Eradication	$2,307,585.00	$2,301,028.14	$6,556.86
Ventura Watershed Flow Enhancement and Water Resiliency Regional Framework	$1,783,345.00	$1,783,345.00	$0.00
Total Recoveries to Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014			***$122,564.31***

Table 9- The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Anza Borrego Desert Research Center Solar Array Project	$57,000.00	$57,000.00	$0.00
Genga/Banning Ranch	$3,500,000.00	$3,500,000.00	$0.00
Grasslands Water Efficiency Improvement Project Phase II	$514,000.00	$510,893.01	$3,106.99
Greenwood Creek Conservation Area (Lewis Ranch)	$1,155,000.00	$970,000.00	$185,000.00
Lone Pine Ranch, Phase I	$4,940,000.00	$4,918,832.50	$21,167.50
Luffenholtz Beach Park Public Access and Safety Improvements	$74,000.00	$50,218.22	$23,781.78
Salt River Public Access, Planning	$61,000.00	$60,999.99	$0.01
Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander (Hasan)	$960,000.00	$925,870.00	$24,130.00
Total Recoveries to The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018			***$257,186.28***

6. Klamath Meadows Partnership

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,459,757 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Water Supply for Environmental Flows, Stream Flow Enhancement Program Provision (SB170, Sec. 54); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Klamath Meadows Partnership
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Watershed Research and Training Center
Amount Recommended:	$1,459,757
Funding Partners:	Mid Klamath Watershed Council, North Coast Resource Partnership, Salmon River Restoration Council, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Forest Service
County:	Trinity, Del Norte, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Shasta
Program:	California Forest Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.1, 2.1, 2.4

LOCATION

Klamath Meadows Partnership (Project) is a landscape-level collaborative planning project seeking to increase the pace, scale and efficacy of scientifically based meadow restoration in the Klamath, Southern Cascades, and Coast ranges. The planning area encompasses more than 28 million acres of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) land in Siskiyou, Trinity, Del Norte, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Shasta counties, and includes the watersheds of the Klamath River and its tributaries (Trinity River, Salmon River, Scott River, and Shasta River), Smith River, Eel River, Mad River, and Russian River.

The Project area contains DWR Disadvantaged Communities and several Severely Disadvantaged Communities within Humboldt, Mendocino, Siskiyou, and Trinity counties.

The Karuk and Yurok tribes are current participants in the Klamath Meadows Partnership. The Karuk Tribe has provided a letter of support for the application and will participate as a sub-awardee for several Project tasks.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Klamath Meadows Partnership (KMP) began in 2020 as a volunteer undertaking to bring attention and resources to the montane meadows of north-western California. To date, KMP efforts have been steered by representatives from several core organizations including the Karuk Tribe, Mid Klamath Watershed Council, Pacific USFS Southwest Research Station, Salmon River Restoration Council, Scott River Watershed Council, Stillwater Sciences, UC Davis, USFS

Region 5, and The Watershed Research and Training Center. In addition to the listed organizations, KMP collaborates with over 20 governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, and scientists engaged in the research, education, and conservation of meadows in the region.

Meadows make up a relatively small portion of the KMP landscape but have an outsized role in stream flow regulation, fire resilience, wildlife habitat, water filtration, cold water storage, carbon storage, and cultural importance. Montane meadows act as “sponges” that store and meter water downstream during the spring baseflow recession and summer. Many streams in the KMP region contain at-risk salmonids and this cold water provides essential refugia habitat. Unfortunately, many meadow systems within California have been disturbed by livestock grazing, ditch draining, clear cut logging, road and trail building, fire suppression, high-intensity wildfires and climate change. Stream incision, conifer encroachment and colonization by invasive plants are common geomorphic and ecological responses to these types of disturbances. These disturbances often drastically alter meadow hydrology in ways that reduce water storage and negatively impact the supply of cold water to downstream reaches during critical periods. Meadow systems form over thousands of years, and once they become impaired, they may be exceedingly slow in recovering natural functions. This slow recovery process, combined with the changes imposed by ongoing climate change, creates an immediate need for direct action to disrupt or reverse these negative effects in meadows and the associated downstream aquatic ecosystems.

This Project will significantly increase the rate of watershed scale restoration projects by filling important information gaps regarding the location, functions, and best management of meadow systems in the biologically diverse KMP region. This will be accomplished by adapting established geospatial models and assessment methodologies developed for the Sierra Nevada and Cascade ranges (i.e., SM-WRAMP by the Sierra Meadows Partnership, Lost Meadows Model by the Pacific Southwest Research Station) to suit the KMP region. Geospatial modeling will be paired with field validation and calibration to create an inventory of meadows within the KMP footprint. The meadow inventory will then be used to generate a prioritized list of restoration sites, five of which will be selected for additional planning and environmental compliance resulting in shovel ready projects to enable future implementation.

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	$419,928	$41,363	$461,291
Meadow Inventory	$352,496	$97,293	$449,789

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Development	$496,930	$19,365	$516,295
Indirect Costs	$190,403	$38,006	$228,409
Total	$1,459,757	$196,027	$1,655,784

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Grant administration including invoicing and reporting, stakeholder engagement, KMP meetings, subcontractor management, and travel.
- Meadow Inventory: geospatial analysis, field validation and classification of meadows within the KMP focal area.
- Project Development: Strategic Action Plan with priority restoration site matrix, and development of 90% project designs for five projects.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION

Support:

- Christine Howell, Research Supervisor, USFS Pacific Southwest Research Station
- Kari Otto, Acting Forest Supervisor, USFS Pacific Southwest Region Six Rivers National Forest
- Luke Decker, Deputy Forest Supervisor, USFS Shasta-Trinity National Forest
- Kris Sexton, Deputy Forest Supervisor, USFS Klamath National Forest
- Wade McMaster, Forest Supervisor, USFS Mendocino National Forest
- Russell Attebery, Tribal Chairman, Karuk Tribe
- Will Harling, Executive Director, Mid Klamath Watershed Council
- Karuna Greenberg, Restoration Director, Salmon River Restoration Council
- Betsy Stapleton, Project Development Specialist, Scott River Watershed Council
- Sapna Khandwala, President/CEO, Stillwater Sciences
- Ryan Burnett, Director Sierra Nevada Group & Chair Sierra Meadows Partnership, Point Blue Conservation Science

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (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 Notice of Exemption (NOE) will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

7. LuginBuhl Ranch

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $500,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision (SB170, Sec. 53.5) and General Fund Budget Act of 2021, Drought Resilience and Response Provision [AB211, Sec. 35(h)(1)][*], for the grant to Siskiyou 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:	LuginBuhl Ranch
Project Type:	Fee Title Acquisition (320± acres)
Grantee:	Siskiyou Land Trust
Amount Recommended:	$500,000
Funding Partners:	Sierra Nevada Conservancy
County:	Siskiyou
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 1.3, 2.4, 3.4

LOCATION

The LuginBuhl Ranch (Property) is located at the base of Mount Eddy on the Upper Sacramento and Shasta River watershed boundary, at the terminus of Deetz Road, northwest of the city of Mount Shasta in Siskiyou County.

Historic land use on the property dates back to 1857 and was primarily focused on cattle raising with some forest management activities. However, as the current owners aged, ranching and timber harvest practices have phased out and now beekeeping is the most recent agricultural activity on the ranch. The Property's current land use is rural residential and open space, including forest management activities to support fuels reduction and the beginnings of a transition from an active cattle ranch into a natural preserve.

The Property is located within a Severely Disadvantaged Community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool). This proposed project will provide permanent, professional natural resource-based jobs and has direct involvement from Tribal representatives in the region.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is comprised of three contiguous land parcels which total approximately 320± acres and is a former livestock ranch commonly referred to as the LuginBuhl Ranch. The Property lies at 4,000 to 4,200 feet and is mostly forested in gentle rolling hills with prominent natural features such as mountain meadows and fens. Two large meadows are located to the north and southeast of the homestead.

[*]Updated due to a typo in the original posting

With its proximity to Interstate 5 and in a desirable location within commuting distance of Mount Shasta and Weed, the Property is at high risk of conversion to rural residential subdivision. This conversion would result in the loss of valuable natural resources and degrade the Property's exceptional conservation values.

Situated strategically in the Upper Sacramento watershed in Siskiyou County, the ranch hosts diverse habitats such as springs, old growth and mature second-growth mixed conifer forest, mountain meadow, fens, riparian woodland, and stream ecosystems. It serves as a crucial conservation anchor to a wildlife corridor between large blocks of public land on Mount Eddy and Mount Shasta. With 80 percent of the purchase price already secured through funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, the Siskiyou Land Trust (SLT) is seeking funding from WCB to bridge the funding gap and swiftly complete the acquisition. The purpose of the project is consistent with SLT’s conservation strategy for the Shasta, Scott, and Upper Sacramento rivers headwaters.

The Property’s unique combination of serpentine soils, high water tables, and volcanic ash and pyroclastic materials from Black Butte and Mount Shasta contribute to diverse and exceptional vegetation types deserving conservation. The Property contributes to essential ecosystem services like water quality, flood control, wildfire resistance, carbon sequestration, and local economic support. A fen, located on the Property, supports large populations of California pitcherplant and shooting star, and the wetlands and streams have potential of harboring a variety of rare species.

The long-term management and stewardship of the Property will be structured around four core objectives: Protect and Restore Mountain Meadow Ecosystems, Manage Headwaters for Multiple Benefits, Large-scale Wildfire Prevention, and Provide Community Access to Natural Resources Education. To achieve these goals, SLT will develop a comprehensive management plan over the next two years in consultation with the community, including wildlife biologists, foresters, Shasta-Trinity National Forest, CAL FIRE, CDFW Northern Region, and the indigenous tribes with traditional ties to the area. The long-term management plan will prioritize the maintenance and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat while also providing safety training and education.

Conservation of the LuginBuhl Ranch will help mitigate many of the risks facing the state and meet the state’s sustainability goals stated in a number of regional and statewide plans, including WCB Strategic Plan, CA Wildlife Action Plan, CA Essential Habitat Connectivity, Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast Coho Salmon Recovery Plan, CA Forest Carbon Plan, CA Water Plan, Upper Sacramento, McCloud, and Lower Pit Watersheds IRWMP, Siskiyou County General Plan, Mount Shasta City General Plan, and City of Weed General Plan.

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
This project aims to safeguard the current land use and enhance the wildlife, carbon sequestration, and water quality benefits the land provides. The forest and meadow areas will be protected against development or conversion to other uses. Forest vegetation will be maintained by periodic thinning to reduce fuel loads, and pines will be kept from encroaching into the meadows and fen. SLT anticipates reintroducing fire onto the landscape as part of the vegetation management program. The existing homes, barn, and outbuildings will continue to serve their intended uses for residential, light commercial, and agricultural activities on the property.

SLT intends to retain fee title to the property in perpetuity, although partnering entities will likely be involved in community education and outreach, vegetation management, and scientific research to ensure that the Property's habitat and water values are preserved.

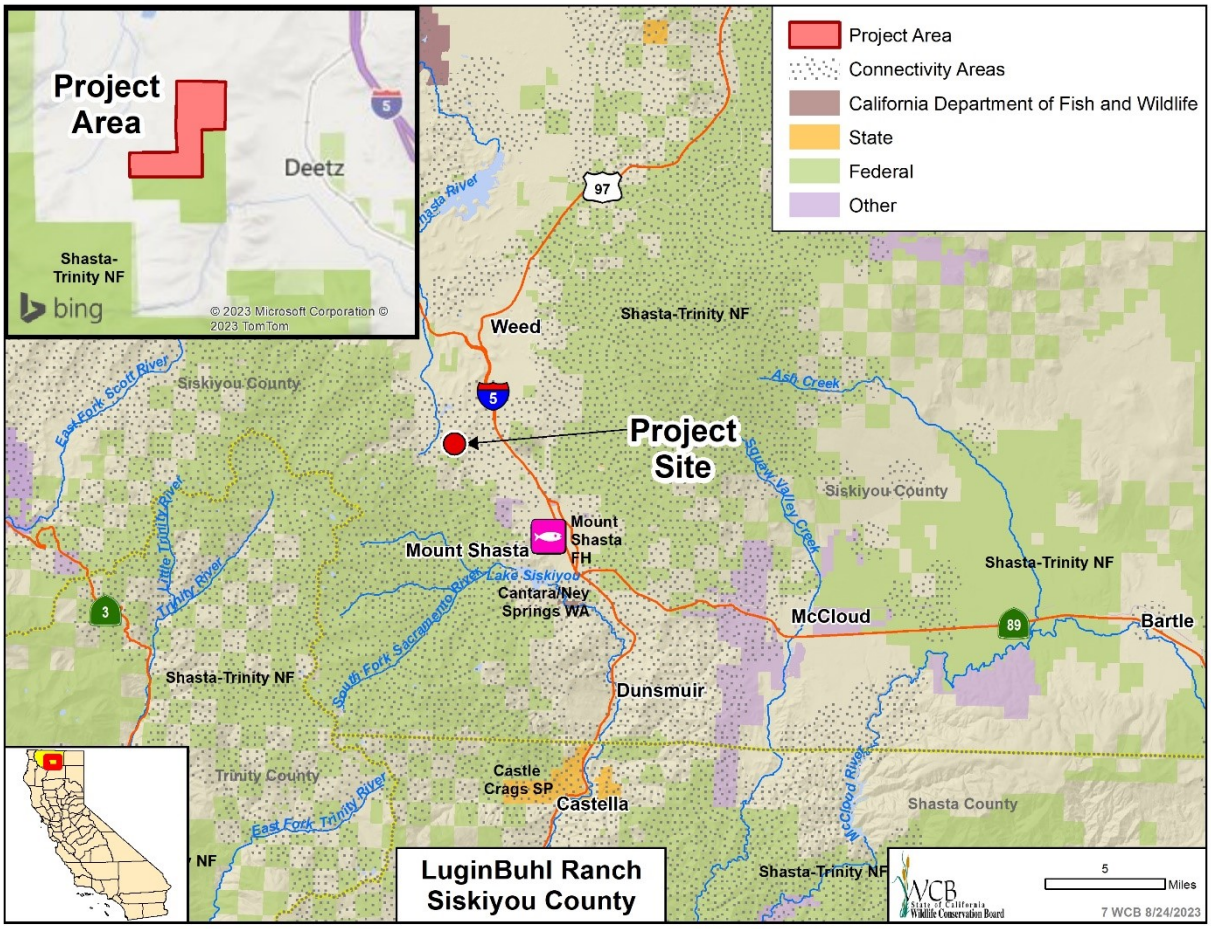
PROJECT FUNDING
The DGS approved fair market value is $2,500,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$500,000
Sierra Nevada Conservancy	$2,000,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$2,500,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:
- Angela Avery, Executive Officer, Sierra Nevada Conservancy

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.


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
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Other
Project Area
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Shasta-Trinity NF
Siskiyou County
Project Site
Mount Shasta
Mount Shasta FH
Lake Siskiyou
Cantara/Ney Springs WA
McCloud
Bartle
Dunsmuir
Castle Crags SP
Castella
Trinity County
Shasta County
LuginBuhl Ranch
Siskiyou County
5
Miles
7 WCB 8/24/2023

8. Mt. Shasta Headwater Forest Enhancement

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,838,385 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Nature Based Solutions – Cascades and High Sierra Upper Watersheds Program Provision [AB102, Sec. 85(3)(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:	Mt. Shasta Headwater Forest Enhancement
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Pacific Forest Trust
Amount Recommended:	$1,838,385
Funding Partners:	Pacific Forest Trust
Landowner(s):	Schroll Timberlands, LLC
County:	Siskiyou
Program:	California Forest Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 1.3, 2.1

LOCATION

The Mt. Shasta Headwater Forest Enhancement (Project) is located on the McCloud-Soda Springs Working Forest property approximately one mile from the town of McCloud in the heart of the McCloud River watershed. The privately-owned 1,396-acre Project site contains significant habitats, including 1.5 miles of fish-bearing streams, multiple springs, a series of beaver ponds, meadows, and diverse timberlands including oak, aspen, and conifer species. The property is permanently protected by a conservation easement held by the Pacific Forest Trust (PFT) and funded by WCB, CDFW, California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and others.

The Project area comprises a significant portion of the wildland-urban interface adjacent to a severely disadvantaged community and falls within a severely disadvantaged census tract per the DWR Mapping Tool.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overall ecological health and biodiversity function of the site have been dramatically reduced over the last 100+ years and are being stressed further by the impacts of climate change. Historic land management on the site has included fire suppression, introduction of plantation-oriented forestry, and water diversion resulting in densely stocked conifer stands. Meadow, aspen, and riparian habitats are becoming denuded through increased competition with encroaching conifers and non-native invasive plants. While the site includes a variety of forest types, lack of disturbance has led to a simplification of forest structure resulting in increased vulnerability to environmental stressors including higher temperatures, drought, extreme wildfire behavior and epidemic levels of pests.

The Project will increase habitat quality and resilience by applying a variety of vegetation treatments to the site to increase heterogeneity. Using a combination of mechanical and hand treatments, followed by controlled burning, the Project will enhance approximately 741 acres of Sierran mixed conifer stands, 537 acres of ponderosa pine plantations, 24 acres of wetland and riparian meadows (including riparian woodlands), 22 acres of native grassland, and 7 acres of California black oak woodlands. The Project will include burn unit preparation to allow the application of fire as a management tool for biomass processing and facilitation of cultural burning techniques in collaboration with the Quartz Valley Indian Reservation and other local tribes as available.

The Project will have multiple benefits including increased biodiversity function, habitat resilience, water quality improvements in a headwaters basin, wildfire risk mitigation for the town of McCloud, and engaging diverse stakeholders for the return of controlled burning to the site.

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

The grantee has consulted with the Quartz Valley Indian Reservation during Project development and will continue to work with them for cultural monitoring during Project implementation, particularly for prescribed burning tasks.

The Project will not use herbicides.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
The PFT has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the Project. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, PFT 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	$28,135	$82,172	$110,307
Meadow Enhancement	$78,820	---	$78.820
Forest Thinning	$148,250	---	$148,250
Controlled Burning	$1,201,016	---	1,201,016
Indirect Costs	$215,038	---	$215,038
Contingency	$167,126	---	$167,126
Total	$1,838,385	$82,172	$1,920,557

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Grant administration, stakeholder engagement, subcontractor management and permit acquisition.
- Meadow Enhancement: Vegetation management consisting of manual/mechanical removal of nonnative invasive shrubs and encroaching native trees from meadows.
- Forest thinning: Various vegetation treatments correlated to forest type including meeting the objective of overall forest health improvements.
- Controlled Burning: Complete a prescribed burn plan, burn unit preparation including containment line installation, and application of controlled burning on approximately 1,300 acres.
- 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.

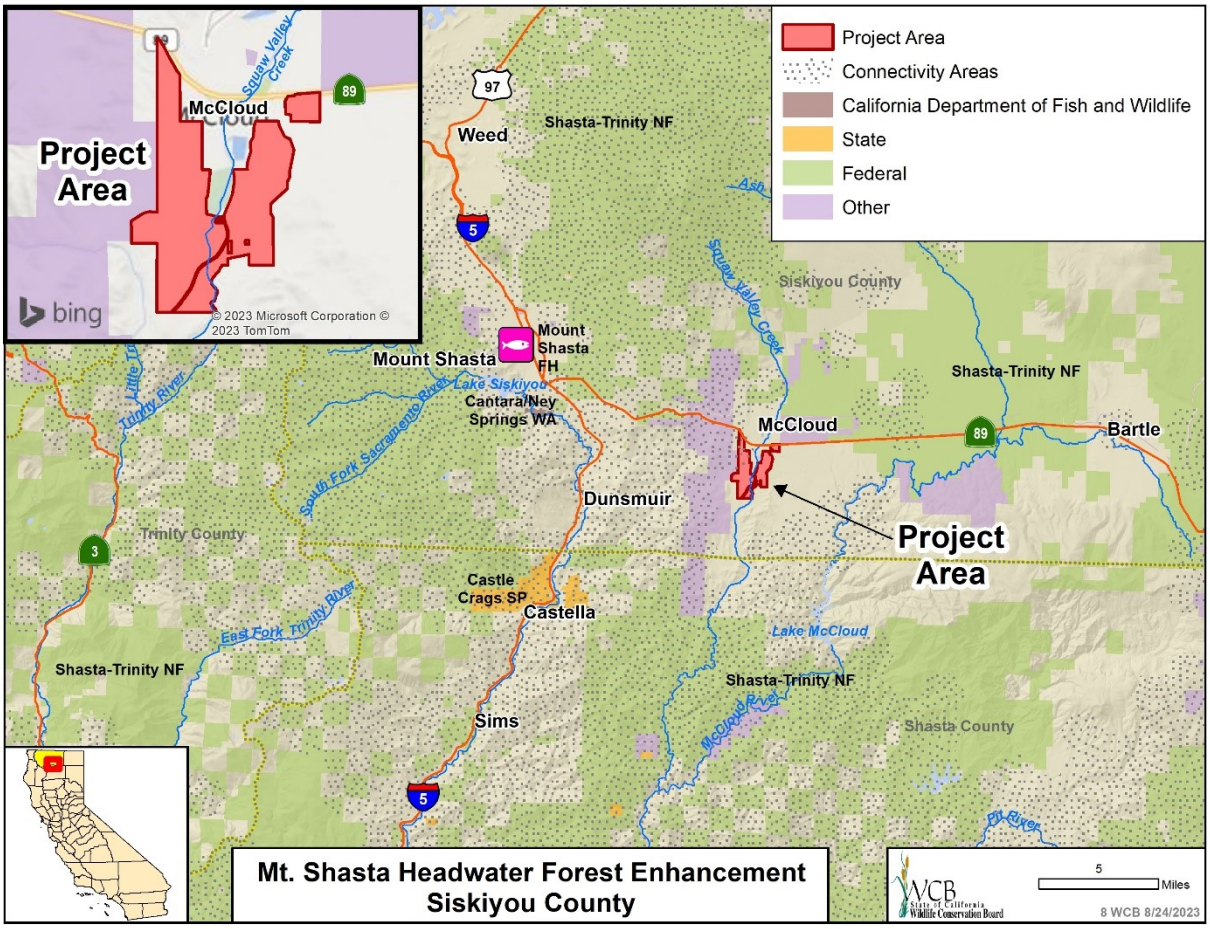
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Darryl Laws, Unit Chief, CAL FIRE Siskiyou Unit
- Lyndsey Lascheck, Forestry & Fuels Project Manager, Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
As lead agency, CAL FIRE prepared a Nonindustrial Timber Management Plan (NTMP) 2-15-NTMP-003-SIS for the Project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA. Staff has considered the NTMP 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.


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Project Area
McCloud
Squaw Valley Creek
89
97
Weed
Shasta-Trinity NF
Ash
5
Siskiyou County
Mount Shasta
Mount Shasta FH
Lake Siskiyou
Cantara/Ney Springs WA
Little Trinity River
Trinity River
South Fork Sacramento River
Dunsmuir
Bartle
Trinity County
3
Castle Crags SP
Castella
East Fork Trinity River
Lake McCloud
Shasta-Trinity NF
Sims
McCloud River
Shasta County
Pit River
Mt. Shasta Headwater Forest Enhancement
Siskiyou County
5
Miles
WCB
State of California
Wildlife Conservation Board
8 WCB 8/24/2023
bing
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9. Hart Ranch Conservation Easement - Rabbit Hill

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,475,000 from General Fund Budget Act of 2021, Drought Resilience and Response Provision [AB211, Sec. 35(h)(1)][*], for the grant to American Farmland 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:	Hart Ranch Conservation Easement - Rabbit Hill
Project Type:	Conservation Easement (3,355± acres)
Grantee:	American Farmland Trust
Amount Recommended:	$1,475,000
County:	Siskiyou
Program:	California Forest Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.2 Objectives: SI 1.6

LOCATION

The Hart Ranch Conservation Easement - Rabbit Hill (Property) is located off Harry Cash Road, east of the community of Montague, in an unincorporated area of Siskiyou County. The subject Property is north and east of the approximately 5,000-acre Shasta Valley Wildlife Area, west of the Klamath National Forest and northwest of Shasta-Trinity National Forest.

The Little Shasta River transverses the northernmost portions of the Property as well as the Hart Ranch Conservation Easement – Soda Springs property, also on the August agenda. The Property is in the upper watershed lands of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountains.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is of irregular shape and consists of 11 Assessor Parcel Numbers. The Property's zoning is AG-1 and AG-2 with maximum elevations ranging from 2,670 to 3,500 feet above sea level.

The Property is a mixture of emergent wetland, wet meadow, pasture, riparian, agricultural, and upland habitats. Approximately 1.7 miles of the Little Shasta River winds its way through both the Hart Ranch Rabbit Hill and Hart Ranch Soda Springs (collectively, the Ranches), creating an oasis for avian, aquatic, and terrestrial species. The working Ranches are an active cow-calf operation.

The acquisition of these Ranches will create a large wildlife corridor, providing a connection to the Klamath National Forest and the Cascade Mountains. Additionally, the Ranches are home to numerous avian and terrestrial species, many of which are listed as threatened or endangered or of conservation concern at the state or federal level. Such species include tundra swans, northern pintails, American wigeon, cinnamon teal, greater sandhill cranes, Virginia rails, willets,

[*]Updated due to a typo in the original posting

Wilson's phalaropes, Wilson's snipe, bald eagles, golden eagles, Swainson's hawks, ferruginous hawks, northern harriers, short-eared owls, yellow-headed blackbirds, willow flycatchers, bank swallows, coho salmon, coyote, porcupines, mountain lions, and black-tailed deer.

The Ranches play a critical role in improving and protecting the Shasta River Watershed as a migration corridor for aquatic species, particularly coho salmon, identified as a threatened species at the state and federal levels. The stretch of river through the Ranches has been specifically identified by UC Davis watershed scientists as some of the most significant coho salmon rearing habitat in the Shasta River system. Salmon rely on sufficient stream flow and a corridor for migration, to reach their spawning grounds. This stretch of river provides cool oxygenated water during the summer rearing season and facilitates outmigration to the ocean. The property owners have voluntarily dedicated 1.5 CFS of priority water right flows to the Little Shasta River which improves stream flow within the Little Shasta River and contributes to higher populations of salmon. Management practices include flash grazing which prevents cattle from damaging willow and alder shrubs along riparian areas. Riparian areas are important for nesting birds and shade the stream to lower summertime temperatures for coho. Further, the minimal amount of time that cattle have access to the Little Shasta River reduces the introduction of pathogens, nutrients, and sediments, which not only protects water quality, but also preserves the insect prey base that willow flycatchers and coho rely on.

Greater sandhill cranes are state-threatened species that utilize the wet meadow habitat. These wet meadows make up approximately 500 acres of the Ranches. The cranes use emergent wetlands for nesting and adjacent wet meadows for foraging. Greater sandhill cranes have been observed on the Ranches since the 1970s and CDFW confirmed nesting pairs in several locations across the Ranches. The cattle graze in certain fields during December and January to remove dead plant matter and make way for arriving birds. The cattle are removed by the beginning of February and remain excluded from the meadow areas until the cranes have finished nesting and fledging their young. To further protect the birds, the Ranches avoid pesticide and herbicide use.

The farming practices on the Ranches provide resilience in the face of climate change. While the threat of wildfire may increase with a changing climate, the managed grazing of cattle cuts down on fuel for fires through the removal of undergrowth and invasive species. As drought conditions occur, cattle can be shifted to different pastures to increase field rest periods as needed. The Ranches' environmentally friendly approach to the agricultural operation improves water supply and quality, reduces wildfire danger, and protects and restores riparian and aquatic resources.

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
American Farmland Trust (AFT) will manage the Conservation Easement on the Ranches. AFT is a charitable and educational non-profit organization whose mission is to save the land that sustains us by protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices, and keeping farmers on the land. As one of the nation's first land trusts, AFT has been a pioneer in the development of agricultural conservation easements and has a long history of holding, monitoring, and enforcing easements. Since its inception, AFT has permanently protected 200 properties in 25 states, totaling over 70,000 acres. In California alone, AFT holds 27 conservation easements. A baseline conditions report will be provided before the close of escrow and a management plan has been completed for the Ranches. AFT will monitor the Ranches annually and will protect the conservation purposes of the easement and uphold the terms of the grant agreement. AFT is receiving Forty-Eight Thousand One Hundred Sixty-Four Dollars ($48,164.00) from the landowners as an endowment to steward both easements, including the perpetual management, monitoring, and any possible enforcement.

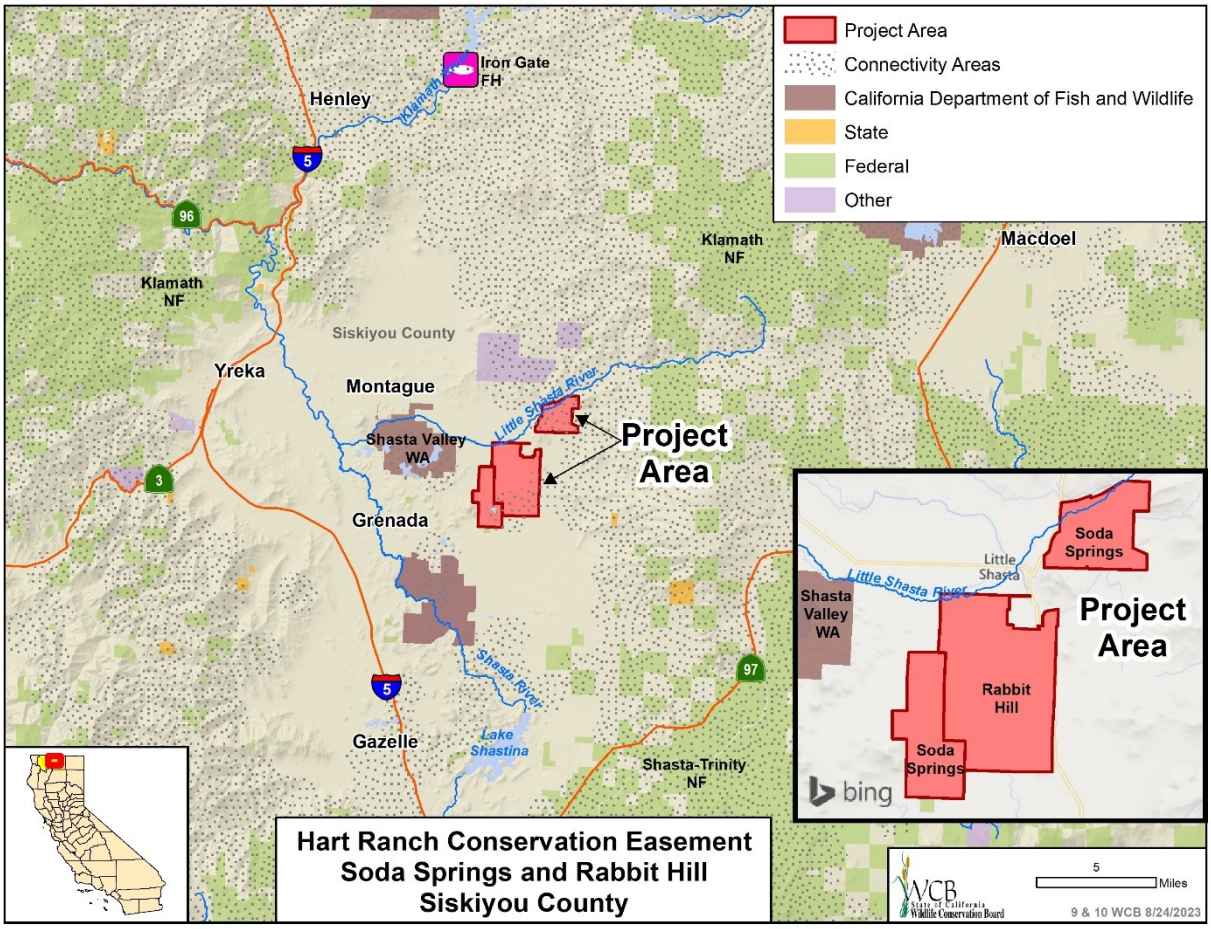
PROJECT FUNDING
The Department of General Services (DGS) approved fair market value is $1,475,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$1,475,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$1,475,000

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.


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Iron Gate FH
Henley
Klamath River
5
96
Klamath NF
Klamath NF
Macdoel
Siskiyou County
Yreka
Montague
Little Shasta River
Shasta Valley WA
Project Area
3
Grenada
Shasta River
97
5
Gazelle
Lake Shastina
Shasta-Trinity NF
Little Shasta
Soda Springs
Shasta Valley WA
Project Area
Rabbit Hill
Soda Springs
bing
Hart Ranch Conservation Easement
Soda Springs and Rabbit Hill
Siskiyou County
WCB State of California Wildlife Conservation Board
5
Miles
9 & 10 WCB 8/24/2023

10. Hart Ranch Conservation Easement - Soda Springs

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,250,000 from General Fund Budget Act of 2021, Drought Resilience and Response Provision [AB211, Sec. 35(h)(1)][*], for the grant to American Farmland 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:	Hart Ranch Conservation Easement - Soda Springs
Project Type:	Conservation Easement (2,578± acres)
Grantee:	American Farmland Trust
Amount Recommended:	$1,250,000
County:	Siskiyou
Program:	California Forest Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.2 Objectives: SI 1.6

LOCATION

The Hart Ranch Conservation Easement – Soda Springs (Property) is located off Harry Cash Road and Big Springs Road, east of the community of Montague, in an unincorporated area of Siskiyou County. The subject Property is north and east of the approximately 5,000-acre Shasta Valley Wildlife Area, west of the Klamath National Forest and northwest of Shasta-Trinity National Forest.

The Little Shasta River transverses the northern most portions of the Property as well as the Hart Ranch Conservation Easement – Rabbit Hill property, also on the August agenda. The Property is in the upper watershed lands of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountains.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is of irregular shape and consists of 7 Assessor Parcel Numbers. The Property's zoning is AG-1 and AG-2 with maximum elevations ranging from 2,600 to 3,000 feet above sea level.

The Property is a mixture of emergent wetland, wet meadow, pasture, riparian, agricultural, and upland habitats. Approximately 1.7 miles of the Little Shasta River winds its way through both the Hart Ranch Rabbit Hill and Hart Ranch Soda Springs (collectively, the Ranches), creating an oasis for avian, aquatic, and terrestrial species. The working Ranches are an active cow-calf operation.

The acquisition of these Ranches will create a large wildlife corridor, providing a connection to the Klamath National Forest and the Cascade mountains. Additionally, the Ranches are home to numerous avian and terrestrial species, many of which are listed as threatened or endangered or of conservation concern at the state or federal level. Such species include tundra swans, northern pintails,

[*]Updated due to a typo in the original posting

American wigeon, cinnamon teal, greater sandhill cranes, Virginia rails, willets, Wilson's phalaropes, Wilson's snipe, bald eagles, golden eagles, Swainson's hawks, ferruginous hawks, northern harriers, short-eared owls, yellow-headed blackbirds, willow flycatchers, bank swallows, coho salmon, coyote, porcupines, mountain lions, and black-tailed deer.

The Ranches play a critical role in improving and protecting the Shasta River Watershed as a migration corridor for aquatic species, particularly coho salmon, identified as a threatened species at the state and federal levels. The stretch of river through the Ranches has been specifically identified by UC Davis watershed scientists as some of the most significant coho salmon rearing habitat in the Shasta River system. Salmon rely on sufficient stream flow and a corridor for migration to reach their spawning grounds. This stretch of river provides cool oxygenated water during the summer rearing season and facilitates outmigration to the ocean. The property owners have voluntarily dedicated 1.5 CFS of priority water right flows to the Little Shasta River which improves stream flow within the Little Shasta River and contributes to higher populations of salmon. Management practices include flash grazing which prevents cattle from damaging willow and alder shrubs along riparian areas. Riparian areas are important for nesting birds and shade the stream to lower summertime temperatures for coho. Further, the minimal amount of time that cattle have access to the Little Shasta River reduces the introduction of pathogens, nutrients, and sediments, which not only protects water quality, but also preserves the insect prey base that willow flycatchers and coho rely on.

Greater sandhill cranes are a state-threatened species that utilize the wet meadow habitat. These wet meadows make up approximately 500 acres of the Ranches. The cranes use emergent wetlands for nesting and adjacent wet meadows for foraging. Greater sandhill cranes have been observed on the Ranches since the 1970s and CDFW confirmed nesting pairs in several locations across the Ranches. The cattle graze in certain fields during December and January to remove dead plant matter and make way for arriving birds. The cattle are removed by the beginning of February and remain excluded from the meadow areas until the cranes have finished nesting and fledging their young. To further protect the birds, the Ranches avoid pesticide and herbicide use.

The farming practices on the Ranches provide resilience in the face of climate change. While the threat of wildfire may increase with a changing climate, the managed grazing of cattle cuts down on fuel for fires through the removal of undergrowth and invasive species. As drought conditions occur, cattle can be shifted to different pastures to increase field rest periods as needed. The Ranches' environmentally friendly approach to the agricultural operation improves water supply and quality, reduces wildfire danger, and protects and restores riparian and aquatic resources.

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
American Farmland Trust (AFT) will manage the Conservation Easements on the Ranches. AFT is a charitable and educational non-profit organization whose mission is to save the land that sustains us by protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices, and keeping farmers on the land. As one of the nation's first land trusts, AFT has been a pioneer in the development of agricultural conservation easements and has a long history of holding, monitoring, and enforcing easements. Since its inception, AFT has permanently protected 200 properties in 25 states, totaling over 70,000 acres. In California alone, AFT holds 27 conservation easements. A baseline conditions report will be provided before the close of escrow and a management plan has been completed for the Ranches. AFT will monitor the Ranches annually and will protect the conservation purposes of the easement and uphold the terms of the grant agreement. AFT is receiving Forty-Eight Thousand One Hundred Sixty-Four Dollars ($48,164) from the landowners towards the Ranches as an endowment to steward both easements, including the perpetual management, monitoring, and any possible enforcement.

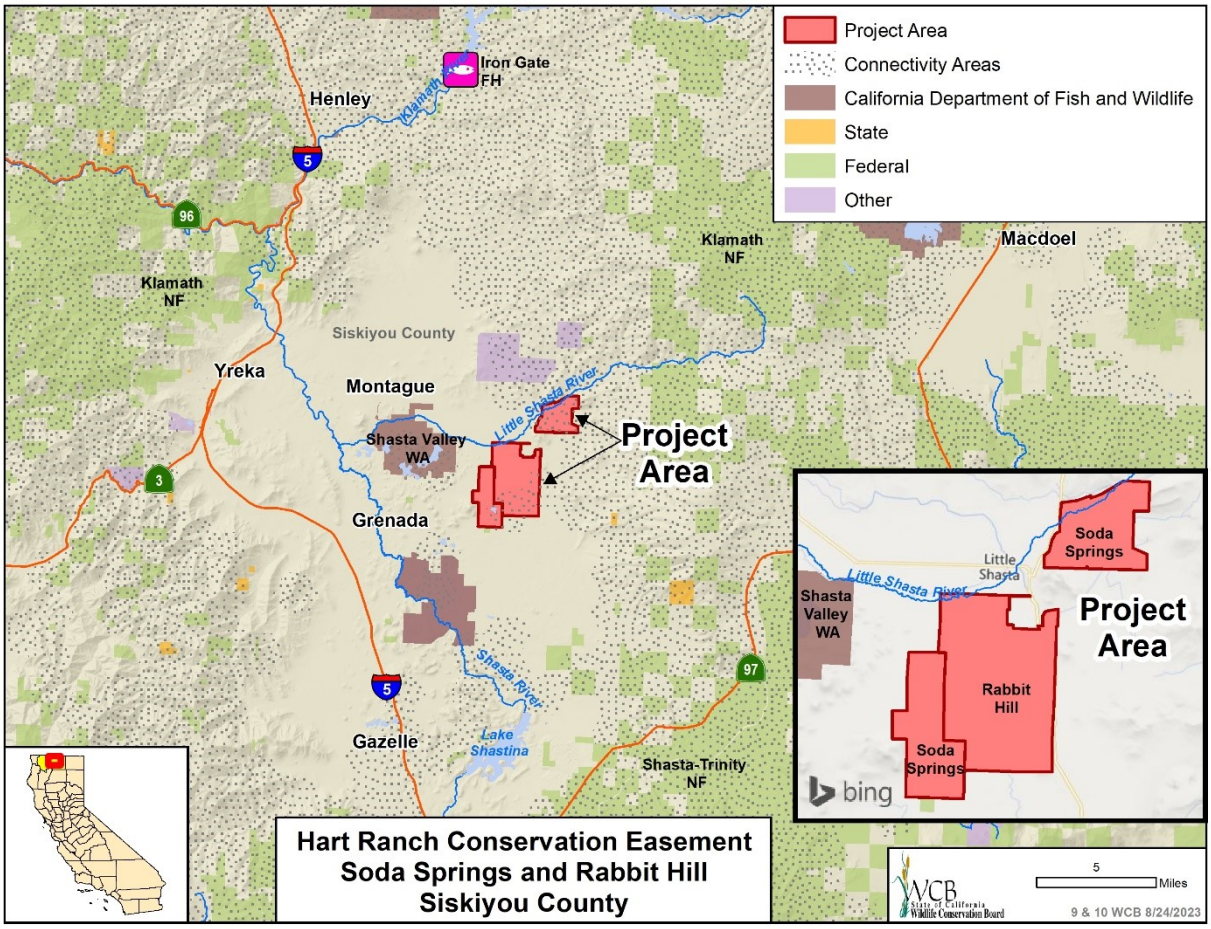
PROJECT FUNDING
The DGS approved fair market value is $1,250,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$1,250,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$1,250,000

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.


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Iron Gate FH
Henley
Klamath River
5
96
Klamath NF
Klamath NF
Macdoel
Siskiyou County
Yreka
Montague
Little Shasta River
Shasta Valley WA
Project Area
3
Grenada
Shasta River
97
5
Gazelle
Lake Shastina
Shasta-Trinity NF
Little Shasta
Soda Springs
Shasta Valley WA
Project Area
Rabbit Hill
Soda Springs
bing
Hart Ranch Conservation Easement
Soda Springs and Rabbit Hill
Siskiyou County
WCB State of California Wildlife Conservation Board
5
Miles
9 & 10 WCB 8/24/2023

11. Mill Creek Fish Passage Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $966,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Water Supply for Environmental Flows, Stream Flow Enhancement Program Provision (SB170, Sec. 54); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Mill Creek Fish Passage Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	City of Fortuna
Amount Recommended:	$966,000
Funding Partners:	City of Fortuna
County:	Humboldt
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.1, 2.4

LOCATION

Mill Creek Fish Passage Planning (Project) is located along Mill Creek, a tributary to the Lower Eel River via Strongs Creek, in the city of Fortuna. The planning area is comprised of four sites on Mill Creek at Weber Street, Rohnerville Road, Mill Street, and Mountain View Road.

The Project is within and benefits a Severely Disadvantaged Community (SDAC) Census Tract (per the DWR DAC mapping tool). The Project will benefit the SDAC through community engagement between the City of Fortuna and the Fortuna school district to develop educational opportunities surrounding the watershed. Additionally, it will include the design of interpretive signage to be installed at the Weber Street and Rohnerville Road crossings explaining the importance of fish passage at the watershed scale to increase ecological literacy throughout the community.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Both adult and juvenile Environmental Species Act (ESA), California Environmental Species Act (CESA), and special-status aquatic species have been observed in Mill Creek, including steelhead trout, coho salmon, brook lamprey, and costal cutthroat trout. Access to the upstream watershed is limited by culvert crossings at Weber Street, Rohnerville Road, Mill Street, and Mountain View Road. Consequently, aquatic species are largely confined to the lower portion of Mill Creek, which is located within a predominantly developed portion of Fortuna.

The Weber Street culvert crossing is the most downstream crossing and is a barrier to juvenile fish passage, lamprey passage, and is limiting adult passage to a narrow window of opportunity. The Rohnerville Road culvert crossing, which is upstream of Weber Street, is categorized as a partial barrier to fish passage and is a complete barrier to juvenile salmonids. The upstream culverts at Mill Street and Mountain View Road appear to also be partial fish barriers. Each crossing consists

of two reinforced concrete pipes that are perched or have shallow flow. All four culvert crossings are complete barriers to juvenile fish.

The Project will create shovel-ready plans to remove and replace the four culverts that are considered barriers to fish migration with fish-friendly culverts that will benefit aquatic species, particularly ESA and CESA listed salmonids which are known to occur and utilize the Lower Eel River watershed. Expected outcomes include future fish access to approximately 4,550 feet of upstream habitat and 6,315 feet of intermittent stream habitat.

The Project will include: (1) the completion of topographic, geotechnical, hydraulic and environmental surveys, (2) production of a Geotechnical Report, Biological Technical Memo, and Cultural Resources Report, (3) 30%, 65%, and 100% construction design plans, (4) a Basis of Design Report, (5) completion of CEQA compliance, and (6) completion of permit applications to create a shovel-ready Project.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathway 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 and Operating Expenses	$15,499	$10,000	$25,499
Supporting Technical Studies	$319,523	---	$319,523
Design	$588,604	---	$588,604
CEQA and Permitting	$42,374	---	$42,374
Total	$966,000	$10,000	$976,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management and Operating Expenses: Provide technical and administrative services associated with performing and completing the work for this Project.
- Supporting Technical Studies: Complete design and permitting-dependent data collection and technical studies.
- Design: Complete engineering designs and associated Basis of Design Report in coordination with City of Fortuna and local CDFW technical staff.
- CEQA and Permitting: Submit all required permits and CEQA analysis to further support a shovel-ready Project.

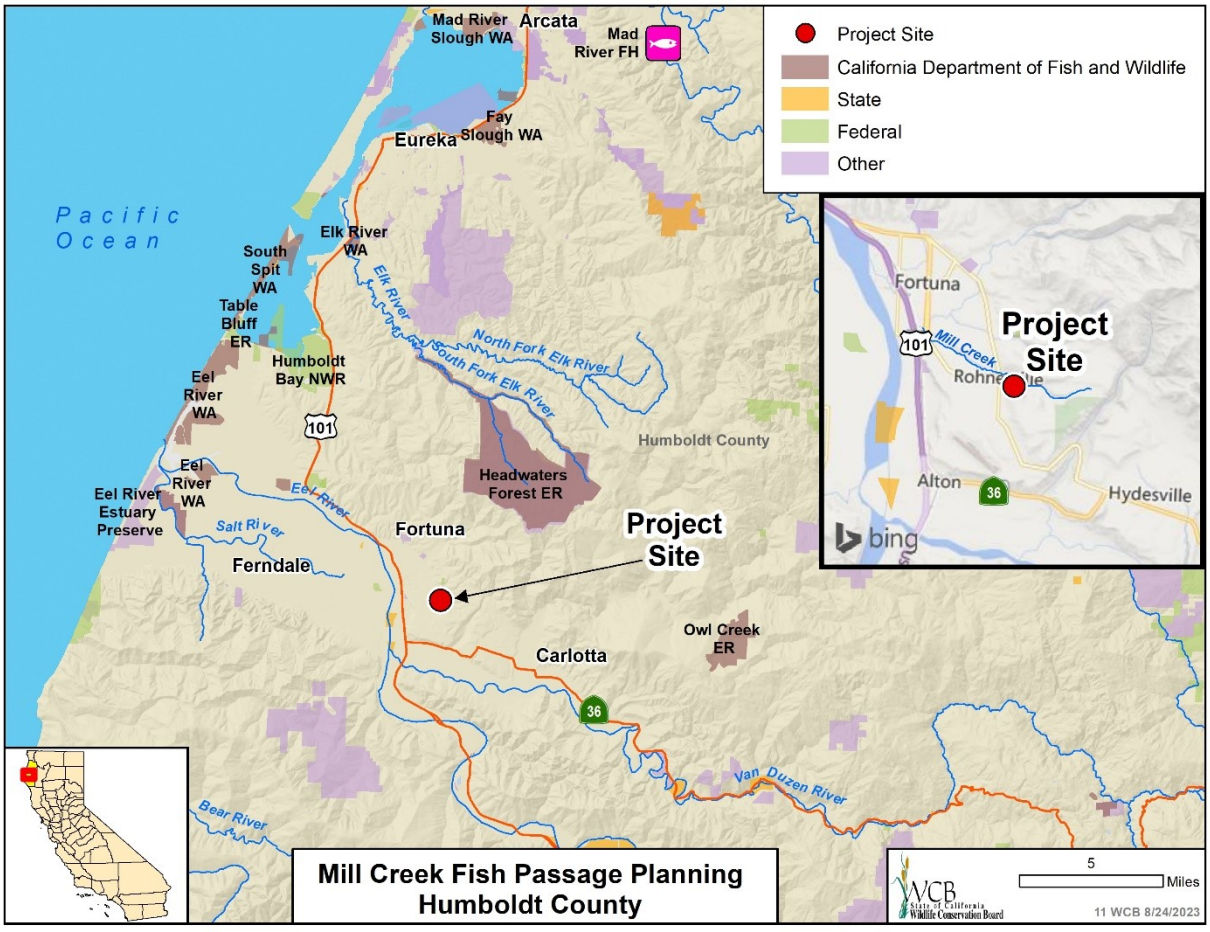
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Jim Wood, Assemblymember, 2nd District
- Michelle Bushnell, 2nd District Supervisor, County of Humboldt
- Patrick Higgins, Managing Director, Eel River Recovery Project

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



12. United States Highway 395 Wildlife Overpass Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $5,375,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Drought Package Provision [SB129, Sec. 89(3)]; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	United States Highway 395 Wildlife Overpass Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Lassen County Transportation Commission
Amount Recommended:	$5,375,000
Funding Partners:	None
Counties:	Lassen and Sierra
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.1, 1.2

LOCATION

The United States Highway 395 Wildlife Overpass Planning (Project) is located along U. S. Highway 395 (US 395) from Susanville to the California-Nevada border. This portion of US 395 is approximately 70 miles long and acts as a barrier to wildlife movement from the Sierra Nevada to the west of the roadway to the high plains east of the highway.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The eastern side of the Sierra Nevada mountain range near Honey Lake, with its high mountain habitat to the west and the low-lying sage brush to the east, has an abundance of wildlife. The area currently supports some of California's most significant populations of migratory deer, black bears, mountain lions, badgers, gray fox, bobcats, elk, and pronghorn antelope. All these species, to one degree or another, depend on migrating between these habitats on a daily or seasonal basis.

Historically, this has not been a problem because the area benefited from a combination of protected lands and low-density road and land development. Unfortunately, increasing vehicle traffic on US 395, the area's main transportation artery, has bisected seasonal migration corridors and interrupted critical wildlife movement. A major driver of this is the growing truck-borne freight traffic between northern California and western Nevada which has increased the frequency of wildlife-vehicle collisions. Oftentimes, truck drivers do not stop for wildlife because it does not pose a significant hazard to drivers, will not result in substantial vehicle damage, or swerving is difficult or dangerous.

The section of US 395 that runs from the CA-NV border to Susanville now has such a high occurrence of wildlife-vehicle collisions that CDFW lists three of its segments on its 2022 Wildlife Movement Barriers Priority list. Two of these segments, US 395 near Janesville and US 395 near Doyle, are considered "Top

Priority" which places them among the 12 barriers most in need of improvement throughout the entire state.

To improve permeability and restore wildlife movement across US 395, the Project will investigate and plan for the construction of overcrossing and/or undercrossing structures and directional fencing. The type and location of these structures will be determined based on site characteristics, such as roadway location, topography, and landscape ecology. This will require studies of wildlife movement patterns along with technical studies of the Project area's archeology, geology, and hydrology. This information will then be used to identify locations that provide the greatest benefit to migratory wildlife while balancing maintenance and land ownership considerations.

The Project will be carried out under the auspices of Caltrans' typical project delivery process. Using project funds from WCB, the project team will develop a Project Initiation Document (PID). PIDs are required by the California Transportation Commission to program transportation projects into the State Highway Operation and Protection Program. The PID will be based on a Project Study Report and Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report.

Following the PID process, Caltrans will enter the Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED) phase. At this stage, any necessary environmental documents pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and CEQA will be developed. The Project will then utilize the results of the technical studies to develop conceptual plans for up to four wildlife overpass alternatives. From these four options, a preferred alternative will be chosen for which the Project will develop 35% and 65% design plans along with engineering specifications and estimates.

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	$843,243	---	$843,243
Technical Studies and Designs	$2,497,506	---	$2,497,506
Environmental Review and Project Documentation	$1,940,926	---	$1,940,926
Outreach	$93,325	---	$93,325
TOTAL	$5,375,000	---	$5,375,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Oversight of Project tasks, grant administration, facilitating Project team meetings, and coordination with stakeholders.
- Technical Studies and Designs: Any necessary technical or environmental studies and 35% and 65% designs for the preferred crossing alternative.
- Environmental Review and Project Documentation: CEQA and NEPA documentation and development of a Caltrans PID and PA&ED.
- Outreach: Coordination and facilitation of any necessary stakeholder meetings and landowner outreach.

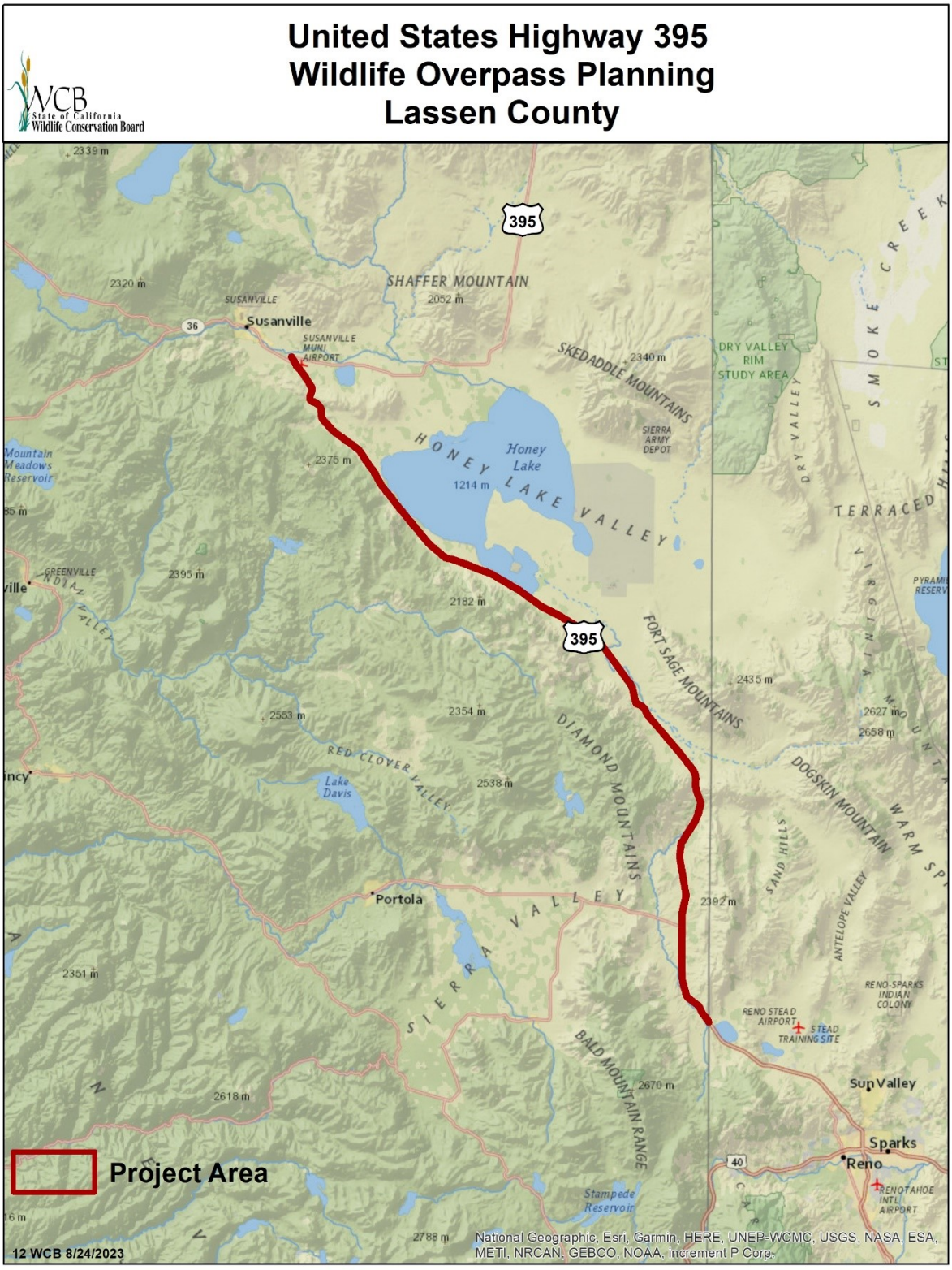
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Senator Brian Dahle, California State Senate, 1st District
- Assemblymember Megan Dahle, California State Assembly, 1st District
- Gary Bridges, Chairman, Lassen County Board of Supervisors
- Neal Sharma, California Wildlife Program Senior Manager, Wildlife Conservation Network
- John Trammell, Eastern Sierra Nevada Regional Director, The Wildlands Conservancy
- Mari Galloway, California Program Director, Wildlands Network
- Devin O'Dea, California Chapter Coordinator, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Kay Ogden, Executive Director/CEO, Eastern Sierra Land Trust
- Beth Pratt, California Regional Executive Director, National Wildlife Federation
- James Gatzke, Environmental Manager, Washoe Environmental Protection Department
- Tanya Diamond, Co-Principal, Pathways for Wildlife

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


United States Highway 395
Wildlife Overpass Planning
Lassen County
WCB
State of California
Wildlife Conservation Board
395
SHAFFER MOUNTAIN
2052 m
SUSANVILLE
Susanville
36
SUSANVILLE MUNI AIRPORT
SKEDADDLE MOUNTAINS
2340 m
DRY VALLEY RIM STUDY AREA
SMOKE CREEK
SIERRA ARMY DEPOT
Honey Lake
1214 m
HONEY LAKE VALLEY
Mountain Meadows Reservoir
2375 m
TERRACED
GREENVILLE
2395 m
2182 m
395
FORT SAGE MOUNTAINS
2435 m
2627 m
2658 m
2553 m
2354 m
DIAMOND MOUNTAINS
RED CLOVER VALLEY
Lake Davis
2538 m
DOGSKIN MOUNTAIN
WARM SP
Portola
2392 m
SAND HILLS
ANTELOPE VALLEY
SIERRA VALLEY
2351 m
RENO-SPARKS INDIAN COLONY
RENO STEAD AIRPORT
STEAD TRAINING SITE
BALD MOUNTAIN RANGE
2670 m
Sun Valley
2618 m
Sparks
40
Reno
RENO-TAHOE INTL AIRPORT
Stampede Reservoir
2788 m
Project Area
12 WCB 8/24/2023
National Geographic, Esri, Garmin, HERE, UNEP-WCMC, USGS, NASA, ESA, METI, NRCAN, GEBCO, NOAA, increment P Corp.

13. Erikson Ranch Wetland and Nesting Habitat Enhancement

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $671,000 from Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786dIWCP; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Erikson Ranch Wetland and Nesting Habitat Enhancement
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	California Waterfowl Association
Amount Recommended:	$671,000
Funding Partners:	Private landowner, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Landowner(s):	Private landowner
County:	Butte
Program:	Inland Wetlands Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.1

LOCATION

The Erickson Ranch Wetland and Nesting Habitat Enhancement (Project) is located on private property one mile north of the town of Honcut in Butte County. The property was historically managed for agricultural use. The property was protected by a WCB funded conservation easement in 1998 and is also enrolled in CDFW's California Waterfowl Habitat Program, which provides technical assistance to manage wetland habitat for the benefit of wetland dependent species. The Project area is managed to provide high quality wetland, upland, and riparian habitat within the Central Valley Joint Venture's American Basin.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project will provide resources for wildlife species that utilize wetland and upland habitats in the Sacramento Valley. The Project is composed of four tasks including development of new wetland units, establishment of a secure water supply through drilling a new well, establishment of perennial nesting cover, and installation of a lift pump/pipeline that will serve as a water recovery system improving water use efficiency. These four tasks will greatly improve water conservation efforts, provide new wetland habitat, perennial nesting cover, and secure an additional water supply to ensure that wetlands will be flooded for years to come.

Habitat conditions within the Project area varies considerably. Existing wetland units are very small and have water control structures that are undersized and in some cases nonfunctioning. Units have drainage issues and water movement is limited due to a lack of established swales. The property has three existing wells that provide some water for management; however, it is not enough to conduct moist soil management practices across the property. The three wells are old and need to be refurbished to ensure they function dependably for management. The

Project site holds water extremely well when it is flooded but lacks the ability to move water unit to unit, this will be resolved by infrastructure upgrades.

To increase water use efficiency and improve habitat quantity and quality, the Project will complete four main tasks:

1. Create 88 acres of new seasonal wetland units (through conversion of relic agricultural fields), including construction of levees, islands, swales, and new water control structures to maximize water use efficiency.

2. Develop a new deep well and pump that will provide a secure water source for habitat management. The three existing wells are over 50 years old and are at the later stages of their dependable life span. The Project will refurbish the three existing wells and tie all four wells together with pipelines allowing for direct supply of water to 125 acres of seasonal wetlands, and to the 17.5-acre semi-permanent wetland/storage unit.

3. Develop and undertake the planting and establishment of 70± acres of perennial upland grasses. This upland component of the Project will provide adequate cover resources for nesting waterfowl and other ground nesting bird species. The planting effort will greatly complement the semi-permanent wetland unit and will help to increase local waterfowl production.

4. Install a recovery lift pump/pipeline system that will enable all water on the property to be recovered and pumped back into the semi-permanent wetland. The ability to recover and store water will enable efficient water delivery to habitat units while maintaining management flexibility.

In addition to providing habitat for migratory birds along the Pacific Flyway, the Project will improve managed water supplies, protect, and create high quality habitats while increasing resource diversity for a variety of species. Keynote listed species that are known to use the region include: western yellow billed cuckoo, greater sandhill crane, and Swainson's hawk. The increased footprint of freshwater wetlands in the Sacramento Valley will also increase available habitat for a host of bird species that are being impacted by the loss of habitat in the surrounding communities.

The Project area is located in the Wyandotte Creek Subbasin, within the larger Sacramento Valley Groundwater Basin. The Wyandotte Creek Subbasin is a medium-priority Subbasin and is managed by the Wyandotte Creek Groundwater Sustainability Agency (Wyandotte Creek GSA) to meet Sustainable Groundwater Management Act requirements. To comply with Executive Order N-3-23, which revises sections of Executive Order N-7-22, the grantee will coordinate with Butte County to obtain written verification from the Wyandotte Creek GSA that construction and operation of the new and refurbished wells will be consistent with the Wyandotte Creek GSA's Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) and will not

decrease the likelihood of achieving a sustainability goal for the subbasin covered by the GSP.

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 landowner has adopted a Management Plan, per the requirements of the Permanent Wetland Easement Program, 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, the landowner 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	$48,920	---	$48,920
Construction	$505,625	$103,336	$608,961
Indirect Costs	$55,455	---	$55,455
Contingency	$61,000	---	$61,000
Total	$671,000	$103,336	$774,336

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

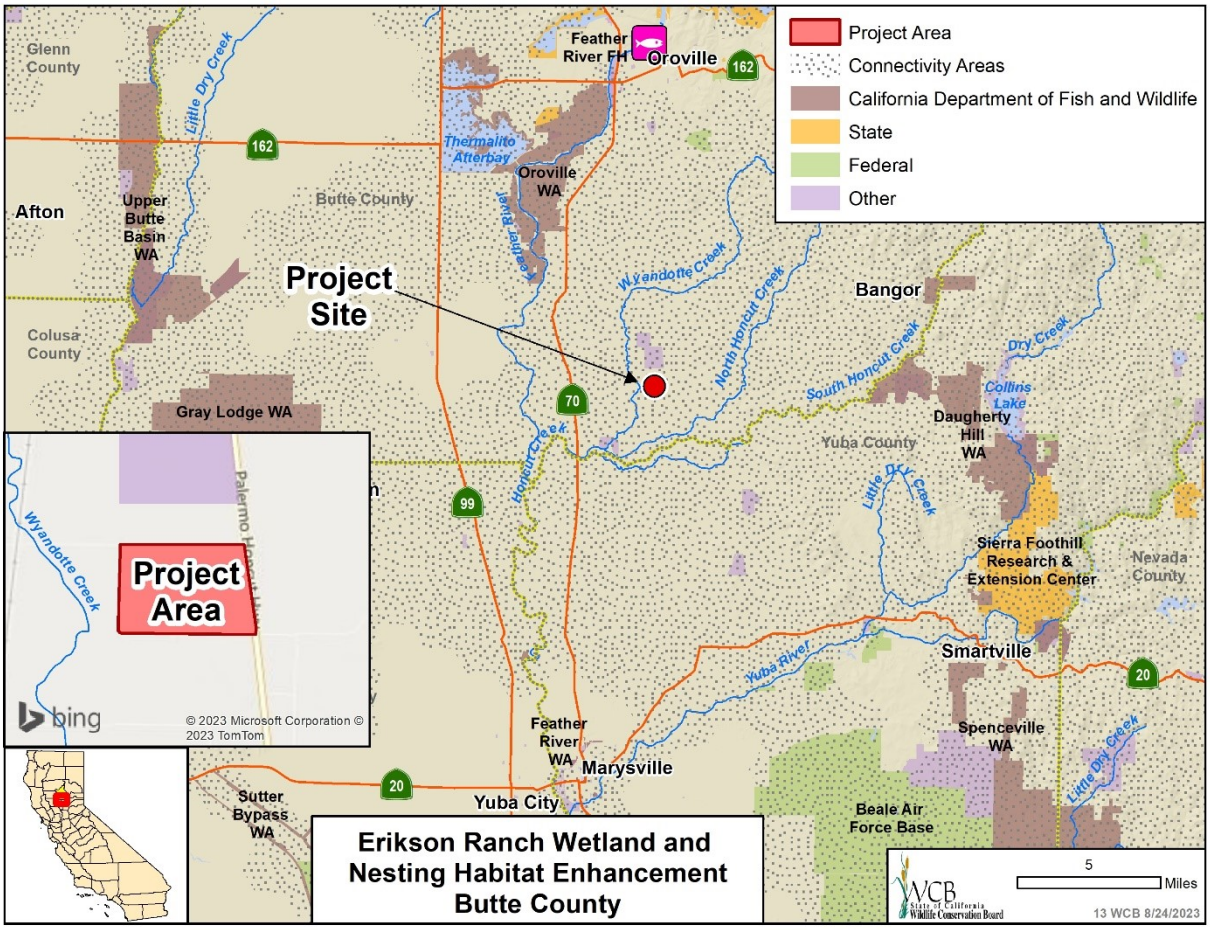
- Project Management: Construction management, invoicing, and project status updates including writing a final report.
- Construction: Construction of project improvements including earthmoving, construction of wetland including habitat features, drilling of new well and refurbishment of three additional wells, planting of upland field, purchasing and installing a lift pump and recovery pipeline and associated water control structures.
- 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:
- James Cogswell, Coordinator, Central Valley Joint Venture
- Scott Gardner, Branch Chief, Wildlife Branch, CDFW

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 minor alteration of existing private facilities or equipment involving negligible expansion of former use, Section 15302, Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction, as replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure is located on the same site and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity, Section 15303, Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, consisting of installation of small new equipment and facilities, and Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, related to road improvements that do not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



14. Feather River Wildlife Area, Shanghai Bend Unit Transfer

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed for a no cost transfer of land by CDFW to Sutter County (County) to own, operate, and maintain in perpetuity for purposes of public access, public recreation, and habitat preservation; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Feather River Wildlife Area Shanghai Bend Unit Transfer
Project Type:	CDFW Disposal/Sale (142± acres)
Transferee:	Sutter County
Amount Recommended:	$0
County:	Sutter
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: C.1, C.4 Objectives: SI 3.3

LOCATION

The property (Property) is located along the Feather River with 19± acres located within Yuba City and the remaining 123± acres located in unincorporated Sutter County.

The Property is generally bordered by Levee Road to the west and the Feather River to the east. Immediately west of Levee Road is a large single-family subdivision. Across the Feather River is Yuba County and the community of Olivehurst. Approximately 30 miles to the south lies downtown Sacramento.

A portion of the Property is located within a Disadvantaged Community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is irregularly shaped with a raised levee road, which gently slopes to level topography. Improvements include a metal gate and a gravel parking lot.

The Property was acquired in stages, beginning in 1974, to provide fishing access to a small waterfall, which concentrated salmon and shad, and provided a unique angling opportunity prior to the deterioration of the waterfall in 2012. The Property contains habitat for Chinook salmon, steelhead trout, green sturgeon; and potential habitat for Hartweg's golden sunburst, and veiny monardella. Transferring ownership and management of the Property to the County will not impact these sensitive species.

The Property has been degraded by ongoing vandalism, illegal dumping, and encampments. Over time, Yuba City and the surrounding communities have expanded towards the Property. This increase in population and associated

recreation has created management challenges that CDFW is not equipped to handle.

Transfer of the Property to County ownership would allow for the implementation of Yuba City's Feather River Parkway Strategic Plan (Plan) in the area that includes a portion of the Property. The Plan includes elements such as paved walking paths, benches, and fishing docks.

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. This transfer qualifies under Public Resources Code section 5096.516(c)(3) as a transfer to a public agency to improve conservation management and public access of conservation lands as described in the LCE. 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 Feather River Wildlife Area-Shanghai Bend Unit LCE on May 30, 2023, 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.

The State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) designates the area surrounding the Property as the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada Province. This transfer will help advance CDFW's land conservation policies and wildlife protection goals in the SWAP by improving management of 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 Property in good condition for wildlife and fish. This will in turn create safer access for anglers and a more positive experience for visitors. CDFW lacks the capacity to adequately maintain the Property and meet the objectives of the original acquisition. Specifically, CDFW North Central Region lacks staff time to commit to regular visits and trash pickup.

The County has the capacity and ability to further the acquisition objectives and is an ideal fee title owner. The County is committed to protecting wildlife habitats and native plants, using resources wisely, and making the natural environment accessible for all. No loss of habitat, recreation, or public access will occur as a result of the proposed transfer. CDFW and the County are agreeable to a

conversion of this Property and CDFW will transfer the Property to the County at no cost.

A Right of Reversion will be placed in the Grant Deed that will ensure, if at any point in the future the County 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.

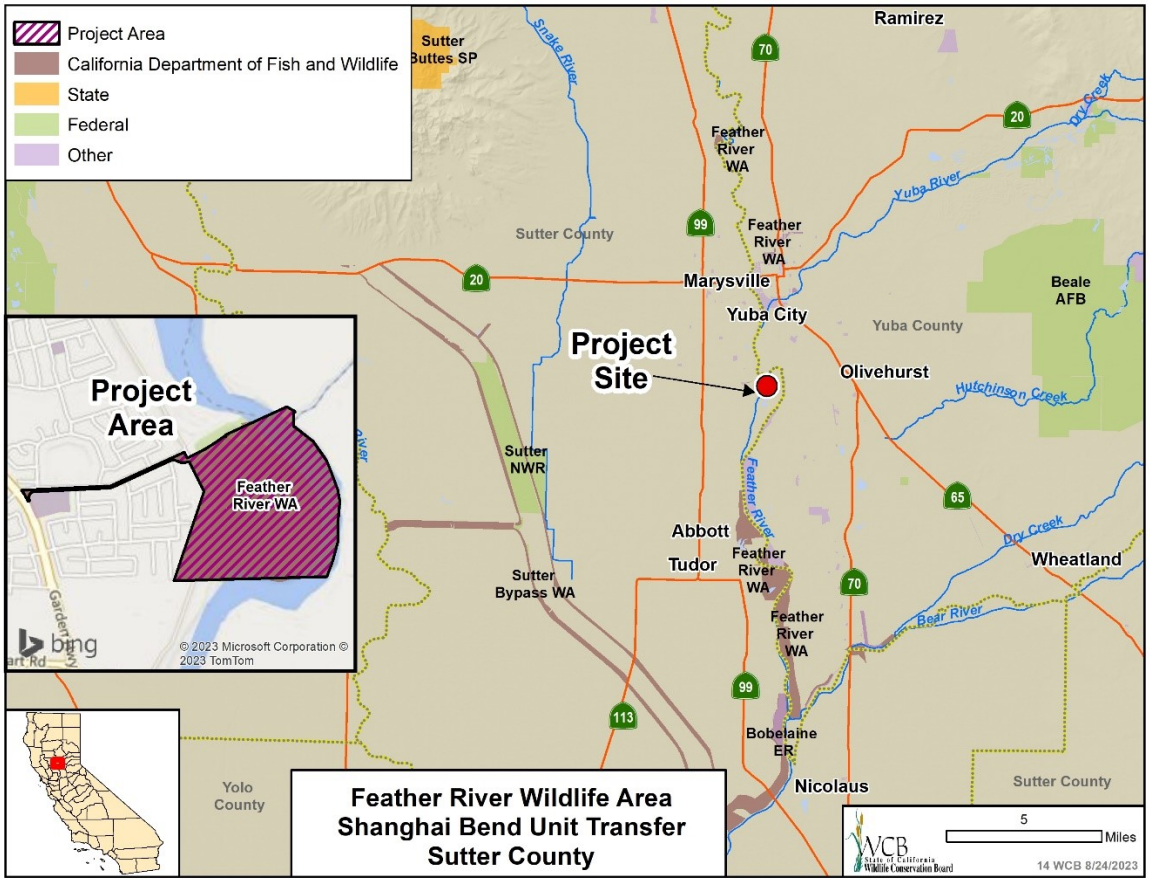
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- 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.



15. Tahoe Forest Gateway (Leidesdorff)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $2,250,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Water, Drought, and other Infrastructure Provision [AB179, Sec. 19.56 (a)(9)] for the grant to 40 Acre Conservation League; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Tahoe Forest Gateway (Leidesdorff)
Project Type:	Fee Title Acquisition (650± acres)
Grantee:	40 Acre Conservation League
Amount Recommended:	$2,250,000
Funding Partners:	Sierra Nevada Conservancy
County:	Placer
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.2, C.1, C.4 Objectives: SI 1.3, 1.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4

LOCATION

The 650-acre Leidesdorff property (Property) is located in the American River watershed along Interstate 80 between Blue Canyon and Nyack, just below Emigrant Gap. It is midway between Auburn and Truckee in Placer County and 70 miles northeast of Sacramento at about 5,000’ elevation. The Property consists of mixed conifer forest and contains Lake Putt, a human-made reservoir with a spillway that connects to and becomes Blue Canyon Creek, which flows into the North Fork of the American River. The terrain varies from gentle to steep slopes. Prior WCB funded acquisitions in the surrounding area include American River Headwaters (2015; 9,955 acres), Royal Gorge (2013; 2,520 acres), and Bruin Ranch Phase I (2010; 1,773 acres). The Property is not located within a disadvantaged community.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is owned by a consortium and is comprised of several irregularly shaped parcels. The Property is bordered by an urban subdivision to the west and a Shell gas station to the east. The Tahoe National Forest and private properties surround the property. Substantial infrastructure exists on and in proximity to the site, including a petroleum pipeline, Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) distribution lines, Emigrant Gap Mutual Water Company drinking water assets, Union Pacific’s rail line, and Lake Putt. The highest and best use of the property varies by parcel and includes rural residential development, recreation, and timber harvesting.

The property contains Sierra mixed conifer, montane hardwood conifer, montane hardwood, montane chaparral, and white fir habitats. Waterways on the property include Lake Putt, which spills into Blue Canyon Creek. The property provides habitat to the Blue Canyon deer herd.

The CDFW Areas of Conservation Emphasis study ranks the site as 3/5 for connectivity, and the site is contiguous with thousands of acres of protected land (Tahoe National Forest). The Tahoe National Forest has started implementing a comprehensive, large-scale forest improvement and fire risk reduction project along I-80 up to Echo Summit. Future forest improvements on the Property will complement this effort.

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
In the future, 40 Acre Conservation League may implement forest health treatments, which may include the removal of fuels from channels, thin forests, enhance oak woodlands, remove invasive species, and reforest over-logged parts of the forest. The 40 Acre Conservation League also hopes to develop a multi-benefit nature center that will function as a trailhead.

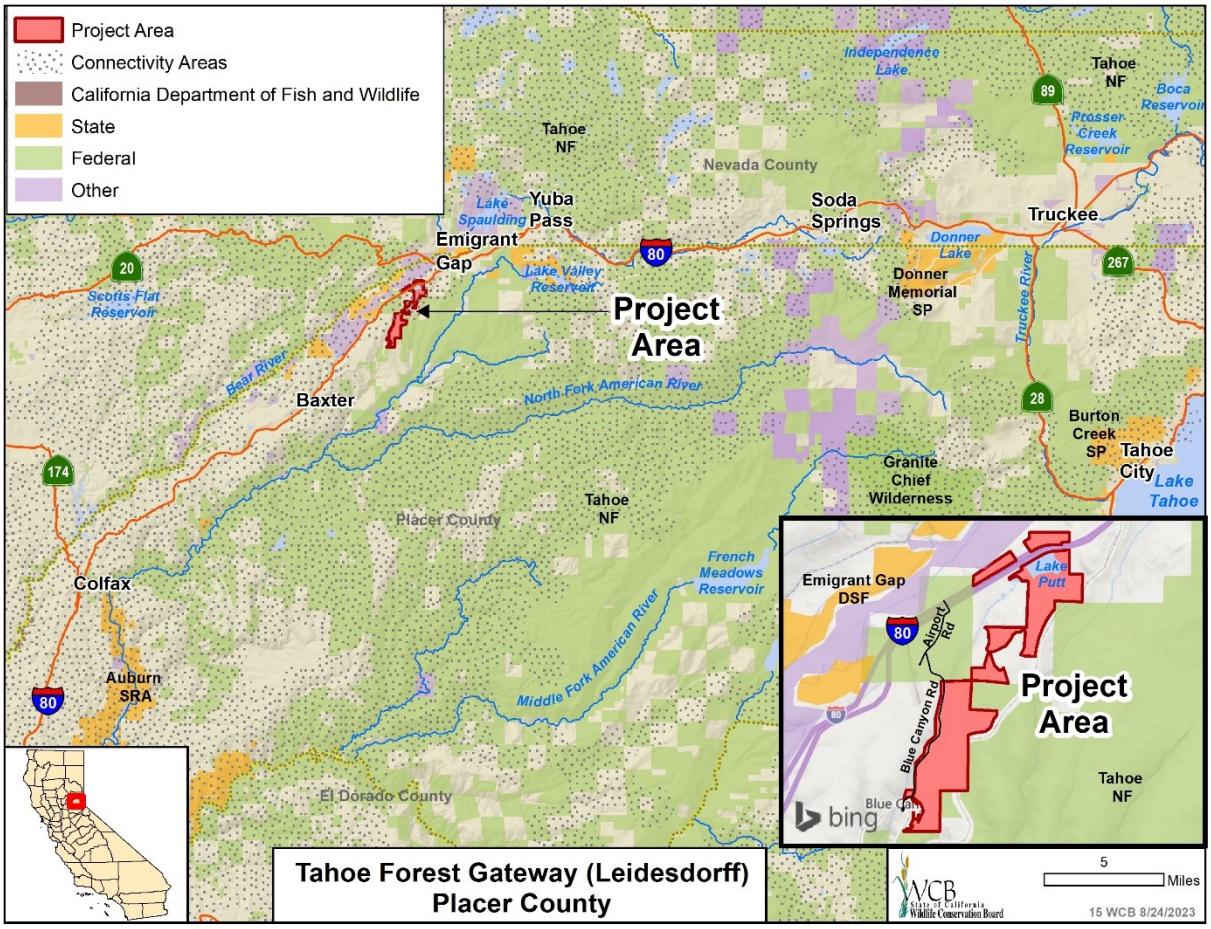
PROJECT FUNDING
The DGS approved fair market value is $3,000,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$2,250,000
Sierra Nevada Conservancy	$750,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$3,000,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:
- California Assemblymember Mike Gipson
- California Assemblymember Chris Holden
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy

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.


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Independence Lake
Tahoe NF
Boca Reservoir
Prosser Creek Reservoir
Nevada County
Lake Spaulding
Yuba Pass
Soda Springs
Truckee
Emigrant Gap
Donner Lake
Lake Valley Reservoir
Donner Memorial SP
Truckee River
Scotts Flat Reservoir
Project Area
Bear River
Baxter
North Fork American River
Burton Creek SP
Tahoe City
Lake Tahoe
Granite Chief Wilderness
Placer County
Tahoe NF
French Meadows Reservoir
Colfax
Emigrant Gap DSF
Lake Putt
Airport Rd
Blue Canyon Rd
Project Area
Auburn SRA
Middle Fork American River
Tahoe NF
El Dorado County
bing
Tahoe Forest Gateway (Leidesdorff)
Placer County
WCB State of California Wildlife Conservation Board
5
Miles
15 WCB 8/24/2023

16. Mark West Creek and Wetland Restoration Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,063,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Water Supply for Environmental Flows, Stream Flow Enhancement Program Provision (SB170, Sec. 54); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Mark West Creek and Wetland Restoration Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Sonoma County Regional Parks
Amount Recommended:	$1,063,000
Funding Partners:	Sonoma County Regional Parks
County:	Sonoma
Program:	Stream Flow Enhancement
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.4

LOCATION

Mark West Creek Regional Park and Open Space Preserve (Regional Park) is a new park within the Sonoma County Regional Parks (SCRP) system which is currently undergoing a Master Plan development before fully opening to the public. The 1,192-acre property is located in the foothills of the Mayacamas mountain range in eastern Sonoma County, three miles northeast of Santa Rosa. Mark West Creek runs through the Regional Park, where it is met by its tributaries Porter and Mill creeks. The upper Mark West Creek watershed is characterized by rural residential properties and scattered vineyards, while the lower watershed is highly urbanized and experiences frequent disconnection during the dry season.

The project location is not within a Disadvantaged Community. SCRP conducted initial outreach to seven tribes associated with the area where the Regional Park is located. During this process, the Middletown Rancheria of the Pomo Lake Miwok, the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, and the Lytton Band of the Pomo Indians expressed interest in the project and a desire to consult on the Master Plan development. The cultural resources report has been shared with tribes upon request, and a Tribal representative from the Middletown Rancheria joined staff on several field surveys. SCRP will continue to collaborate with tribes throughout the planning process.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Mark West Creek has been identified by NOAA and CDFW as critical to the recovery of California Central Coast coho salmon. Mark West Creek and Wetland Restoration Planning (Project) will accelerate recovery of the species by advancing designs for wetland and creek restoration within the Regional Park. In 2022, SCRP assessed the riparian areas on the property and identified over twenty locations to restore salmonid habitat and enhance stream flow in the park. From these

identified restoration opportunities, the following goals were developed for the Project:

1. Capture, spread out, and infiltrate flows from small watersheds to prolong stream flow.
2. Delay drying of the ephemeral tributaries to Mark West Creek and Porter Creek within the Regional Park over the late spring and early summer months.
3. Modify relic instream structures within the Regional Park to improve fish passage for juvenile salmonids to the upstream cold-water reaches of Mark West Creek and Mill Creek.
4. Increase wood loading in cold-water reaches of Mill Creek to enhance habitat conditions for juvenile salmonids.
5. Develop designs for a stormwater infiltration basin around the Regional Park's main entrance and parking lot.
6. Develop interpretation and signage plan for educating visitors and encouraging stewardship actions throughout the watershed.

This Project will develop implementation-ready designs for restoration projects, as well as interpretation and public education materials for the Regional Park, all of which will be integrated into management of the property for the coming decades to protect and enhance natural resources and critical habitat. When implemented, restoration projects will benefit the health and function of the Mark West Creek watershed through improved water quality, enhanced stream flow, improved fish passage, and enhanced habitat for salmonids, including endangered coho salmon.

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	$89,460	$20,000	$109,460
Technical Advisory Committee, Outreach and Interpretation	$40,978	$30,000	$70,978
Pre-design Studies and Modeling	$242,001	---	$242,001
Design and Engineering	$157,786	---	$157,786
Resource Surveys and Permitting	$245,255	---	$245,255
Construction Documents	$190,819	---	$190,819
Indirect Costs	---	$144,945	$144,945
Contingency	$96,701	---	$96,701
Total	$1,063,000	$194,945	$1,257,945

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Staff time for SCRP and design consultant to complete management tasks.
- Technical Advisory Committee, Outreach and Interpretation: Technical Advisory Committee participant stipends, project outreach and design fees for a park interpretation plan.
- Pre-design Studies and Modeling: Hydrologic analysis, land surveys, stream flow data collection and geotechnical engineering report.
- Design and Engineering: Design consultant fees for the restoration projects.
- Resource Surveys and Permitting: Habitat and biological assessments for compliance with CEQA, and permit fees.
- Construction Documents: Creation of the design plan sets and construction drawings.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

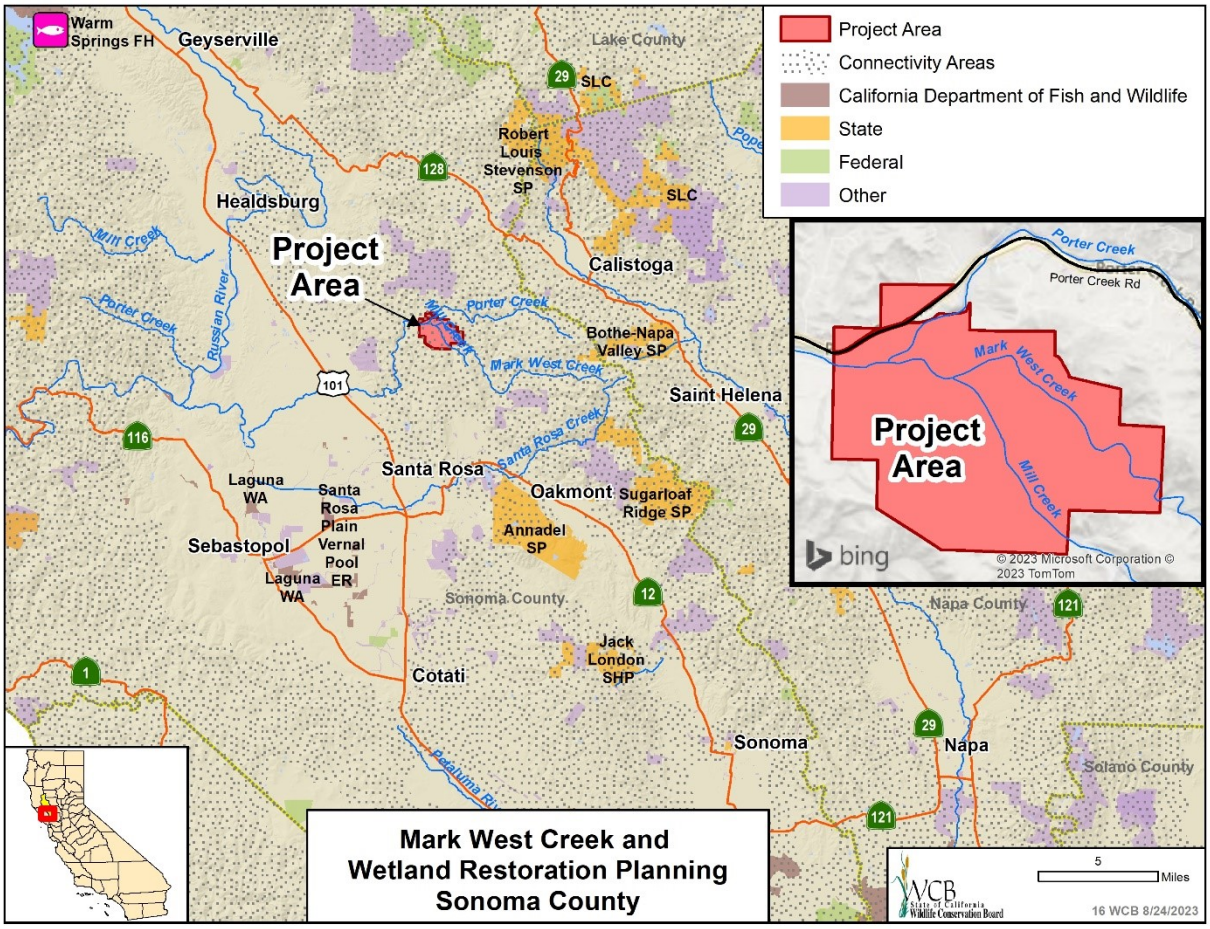
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Senator Mike McGuire, District 2
- Assemblymember Jim Wood, District 2
- Joe Pecharich, NOAA Restoration Center
- Valerie Quinto, Executive Officer, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Grant Davis, General Manager, Sonoma County Water Agency
- Sheri J. Emerson, Stewardship Manager, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
- Lynn Garric, Co-Chair, Friends of the Mark West Watershed

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.


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Warm Springs FH
Geyserville
Lake County
SLC
Robert Louis Stevenson SP
Healdsburg
Project Area
Calistoga
Bothe-Napa Valley SP
Saint Helena
Santa Rosa
Laguna WA
Santa Rosa Plain Vernal Pool Laguna WA ER
Sebastopol
Oakmont
Sugarloaf Ridge SP
Annadel SP
Sonoma County
Napa County
Jack London SHP
Cotati
Sonoma
Napa
Solano County
Petaluma Riv
Mill Creek
Porter Creek
Russian River
Mark West Creek
Santa Rosa Creek
Porter Creek Rd
bing
© 2023 Microsoft Corporation © 2023 TomTom
Mark West Creek and Wetland Restoration Planning Sonoma County
5
Miles
WCB State of California Wildlife Conservation Board
16 WCB 8/24/2023

17. Quail Ridge UC Davis Natural Reserve System, Implementation, Augmentation

STAFF RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $74,104 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, Public Resource Code Section 75055(b)(3); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Quail Ridge UC Davis Natural Reserve System, Implementation, Augmentation
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	University of California, Davis
Amount Recommended:	$74,104
Funding Partners:	The Regents of the University of California, Davis
Landowner(s):	The Regents of the University of California, Davis
County:	Napa
Program:	The University of California, Natural Reserve System
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.5 Objectives: SI 1.2, 2.1, 2.4

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

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

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

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

Reserves' Research House to match several other Reserve buildings that survived the fire.

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

The Project was approved by the Board in February 2022 and is on track to complete grant-funded work within the term of the grant, but cost overruns threaten to cause a reduction in scope without additional funding. The augmentation is necessary due to a significant increase in costs since the original quotes were submitted. These increases are due to inflation, supply chain issues, and scarcity of contractors willing to work in the site area.

The Project will not use herbicides.

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

PROJECT FUNDING
The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	WCB Augmentation	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Road Work	$98,500	$34,504	---	$133,004
Solar Installation	$38,100	$26,467	---	$64,567
Roof Installation	$42,000	---	---	$42,000
HVAC	$29,500	$5,236	---	$34,736
Siding/Window Materials	$16,000	$7,897	$25,000	$48,897
Land Donation	---	---	$335,000	$335,000
Total	$224,100	$74,104	$360,000	$658,204

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Road Work: Road improvements to regrade, compact, and create rolling dips.
- Solar Installation: Install solar panels to outfit the two buildings with solar power.
- Roof Installation: Install metal roofing on the Research House.
- HVAC: Replace various inefficient wall AC units with a mini-split system.

- Siding/Window Materials: Install cement board siding and replace single pane windows with more energy efficient models.

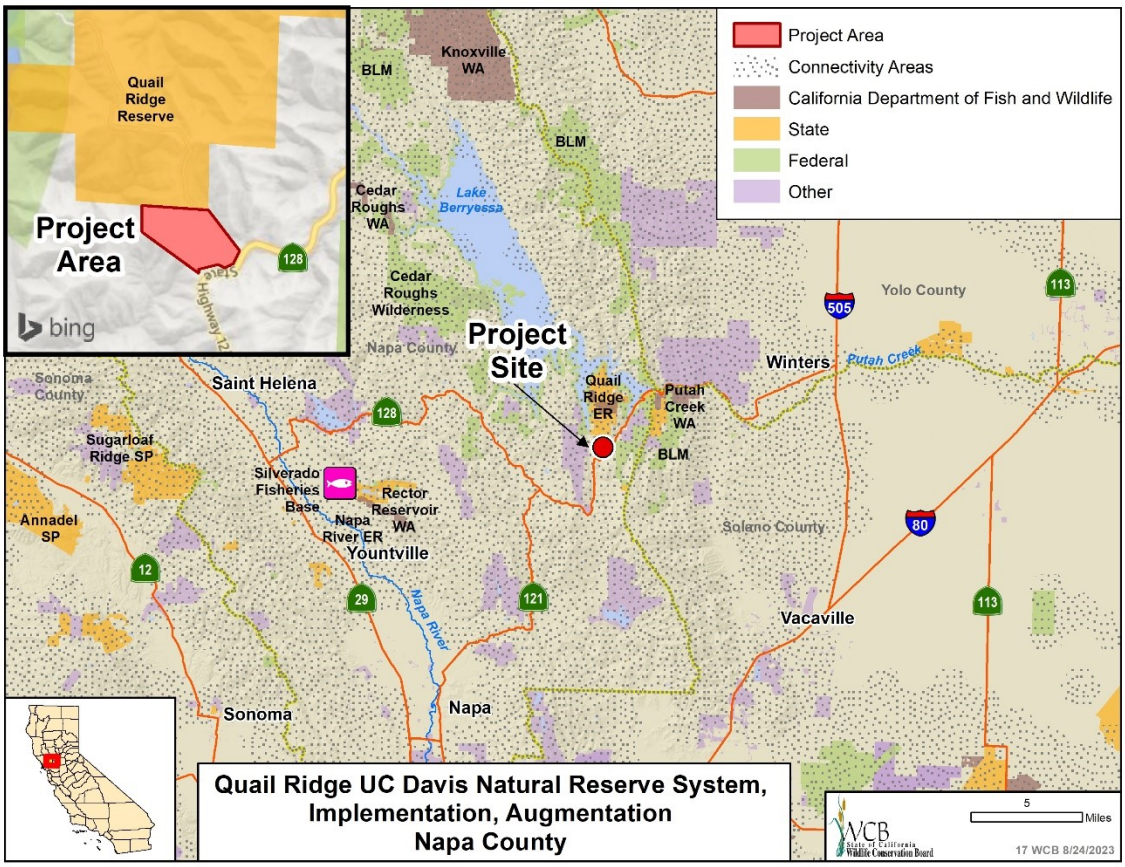
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Michael W. Kisgen, M.E.M., J.D., Associate Director, UC Natural Reserve System

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
The Project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities, as repair, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing public structures and facilities, Section 15304 Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction, replacement or reconstruction of existing utility systems and/or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of capacity, and Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, as minor public alterations in the condition of land that does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



18. RiverArc Project Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $5,121,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2021, Water Supply for Environmental Flows, Stream Flow Enhancement Program Provision (SB170, Sec. 54); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	RiverArc Planning Project
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Placer County Water Agency
Amount Recommended:	$5,121,000
Funding Partners:	City of Sacramento, Sacramento County Water Agency, California American Water Company
County:	Placer and Sacramento
Program:	Stream Flow Enhancement
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.1b, 2.4

LOCATION

RiverArc Project Planning (Project) is located on the Sacramento River approximately ten miles from the proposed site of the RiverArc Water Treatment Plant. The planning area will include the current Pritchard Lake Diversion Facility on the Sacramento River, the Raw Water Pump Station, and several other parcels under private and public ownership.

The Project is within and benefits several Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) Census Tracts (per the DWR DAC mapping tool). The Project will benefit the DACs by providing reliable, high quality water supply and will also enhance the Lower American River and recreational opportunities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The RiverArc Project will provide a foundational, regional approach to help address the growing impacts of climate change in the American River watershed and will protect both the Lower American River and the biodiversity it supports. RiverArc will enhance stream flow by creating plans, permits, and other documents. The documents developed under this grant will allow for a future implementation project to be enacted that will strategically shift water supply diversions from the American River to the much larger Sacramento River and substantially reduce groundwater withdrawals in wet and normal years. This Project, an outgrowth of The Water Forum’s studies, projects and partnerships, will provide climate resiliency, conserve unique habitat and biodiversity, and protect critical access of the region’s diverse public to nature and recreation at one of the only urban waterways in the United States to be designated as a “Wild and Scenic River”.

The Project will include: (1) completion of the CEQA process, corresponding NEPA documents, and other environmental permits; (2) the completion of technical surveys including biological, cultural, and wetland delineations; (3) development of

a Right-of-Way Management Plan in preparation for right-of-way acquisition for the raw water facilities and the finished water transmission mains; (4) confirmation of the water rights to be used for RiverArc, determination of specific modifications required, consultations with water right approving entities, and submission of water rights modification applications; (5) develop a Section 1707 change petition to allow for beneficial use of water for fish and wildlife if determined to be necessary based on the water rights review in (4); and (6) development of a Benchmark Design Report that will serve as the basis for final project design and construction and will include design documents for the raw water pump station, raw water transmission main, Water Treatment Plant, and finished water transmission mains, as well as technical studies to support these design efforts.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathway 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	---	$200,000	$200,000
Environmental Documentation and Permitting	$3,046,000	$975,000	$4,021,000
Land Acquisition Planning	$204,000	---	$204,000
Water Rights	$93,000	---	$93,000
Final Planning, Design, and Technical Support	$1,240,000	---	$1,240,000
Indirect Costs	---	---	---
Contingency	$538,000	---	$538,000
Total	$5,121,000	$1,175,000	$6,296,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Provide technical and administrative services associated with performing and completing the work for this Project.
- Environmental Documentation and Permitting: Submit all required CEQA and NEPA documents, other permits, and biological, cultural, and wetland delineation technical studies.
- Land Acquisition Planning: Develop a Right-of-Way Management Plan in preparation for right-of-way acquisition for the raw water facilities and the finished water transmission mains.
- Water Rights: Review and report on the existing water rights and contracts that may need to be modified and development of a Section 1707 change petition.
- Final Planning, Design, and Technical Support: Benchmark Design Report.

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

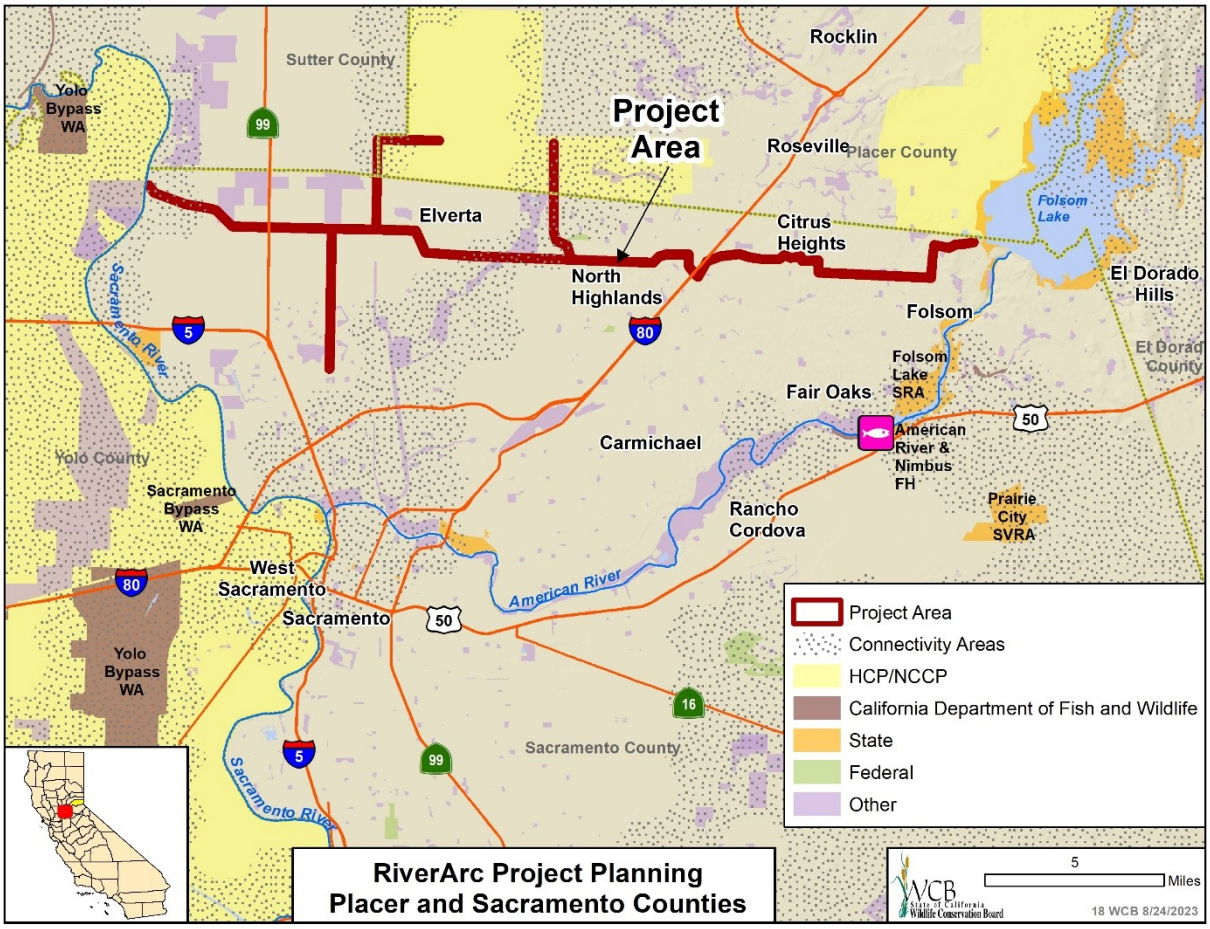
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Nathan Dietrich, Associate Vice President, California State University, Sacramento.
- Jeff Harris, Councilman, City of Sacramento.
- Susan Herre, President of the Board of Directors, Environmental Council of Sacramento.
- James Peifer, Executive Director, Regional Water Authority
- Stephen Green, President, Save the American River Association.
- Jay Ziegler, Director of External Affairs and Policy, The Nature Conservancy.
- Jessica Law, Executive Director, The Water Forum

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.


Project Area
Rocklin
Sutter County
Yolo Bypass WA
Roseville
Placer County
Folsom Lake
Elverta
Citrus Heights
North Highlands
El Dorado Hills
Folsom
Sacramento River
Folsom Lake SRA
Fair Oaks
El Dorado County
American River & Nimbus FH
Carmichael
Yolo County
Sacramento Bypass WA
Rancho Cordova
Prairie City SVRA
West Sacramento
Sacramento
American River
Yolo Bypass WA
Sacramento County
Project Area
Connectivity Areas
HCP/NCCP
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
RiverArc Project Planning
Placer and Sacramento Counties
5
Miles
18 WCB 8/24/2023

19. Restoring Connectivity for East Bay Ranges: Wildlife Overpass Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $7,094,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2021, Drought Package Provision [B129, Sec.89(3)]; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Restoring Connectivity for East Bay Ranges: Wildlife Overpass Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Alameda County Resource Conservation District
Amount Recommended:	$7,094,000
Funding Partners:	None
County:	Alameda
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B1 Objectives: SI 1.1, 1.2

LOCATION
The Restoring Connectivity for East Bay Ranges: Wildlife Overpass Planning (Project) is located in the portions of Interstates 580 and 680 and State Route 84 that bisect the East Bay Hills and the Diablo Mountain Range in the eastern portion of the San Francisco Bay Area near the town of Livermore in Alameda County.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The protected wildlands of the San Francisco Bay Area support a wide range of wildlife and ecologically significant habitat. Unfortunately, Bay Area roads and highways are well documented sources of mortality and barriers to the movement of these wildlife. This has adversely impacted species whose lifecycle depends on daily or seasonal migration between increasingly isolated pockets of foraging, hunting, and/or breeding habitat. These barriers are particularly troublesome in the eastern portion of the Bay Area where Interstates 580 and 680 and State Route 84 bisect the East Bay Hills and the Diablo Mountain Range.

In this region, the three highways separate highly suitable habitat for mule deer, tule elk, badger, bobcat, gray fox, and mountain lion. The locations and relative impassibility of the highways means that wildlife and habitat north of the highways are isolated from large areas to the south. This results in habitat fragmentation, which diminishes its value, and presents a vehicle collision risk to wildlife occupying these areas. Connectivity across these highways will also be critical for climate adaptation for all native taxa in the East Bay Hills and Diablo Range, as there is no possible connectivity north and eastwards across the Delta. The degradation of such significant habitat has led to CDFW listing the roadways as three separate priority barriers on its 2022 Wildlife Movement Barrier Priorities list.

To improve permeability and restore wildlife movement, the Project will investigate and plan for construction of at least one and up to three overcrossing structures. In the event the investigation determines an overcrossing to be unworkable for any of the three barriers, the Project will evaluate using an undercrossing structure to reestablish habitat connectivity. The nature of these structures will be determined based on site characteristics, such as roadway location, topography, and landscape ecology. Whichever form of crossing is decided upon, the Project will develop plans and designs for any necessary associated fencing and wildlife escape ramps.

Determination of the precise location for any structure may require additional studies of current landscape conditions of the surrounding areas and environmental studies (e.g., archeology, geology, wetland delineations) may be needed to inform where the proposed structures will be sited without impacting protected attributes. The Project will use this data to choose a location(s) that addresses isolation of the East Bay hills and Diablo Range wildlife and their habitat, while concurrently balancing maintenance and land ownership considerations.

The Project will be carried out under the auspices of Caltrans' typical project delivery process. This will include the development of a PID. PID documents are required by the California Transportation Commission to program transportation projects into the State Highway Operation and Protection Program. The PID will be based on a Project Study Report and Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report that will also be developed as part of the Project.

Following the PID process, Caltrans will enter the PA&ED phase. During this phase, the Project will also develop environmental documents pursuant to NEPA and CEQA as part of the necessary environmental review. This review will include utilizing the results of the technical studies to determine what project alternatives will be the least environmentally damaging. Finally, the Project will develop 35% design plans for review by Caltrans, then 65% design plans, specifications and estimates, and Design-Level Engineering Technical Reports.

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	$953,672	---	$953,673
Environmental Review and Project Documentation	$2,765,093	---	$2,765,093
Technical Studies	$2,968,784	---	$2,968,784

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Outreach and Operating Expenses	$273,228	---	$273,228
Indirect Costs	$67,381	---	$67,381
Contingency	$65,842	---	$65,841
TOTAL	$7,094,000	---	$7,094,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Oversight of Project tasks, grant administration, facilitating Project team meetings, and coordination with stakeholders.
- Environmental Review and Project Documentation: CEQA and NEPA documentation and development of a Caltrans PID and PA&ED.
- Technical Studies: Any necessary technical or environmental studies and 35% and 65% designs for the preferred crossing alternative.
- Outreach and Operating Expenses: Coordination and facilitation of any necessary stakeholder meetings and landowner outreach.
- 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.

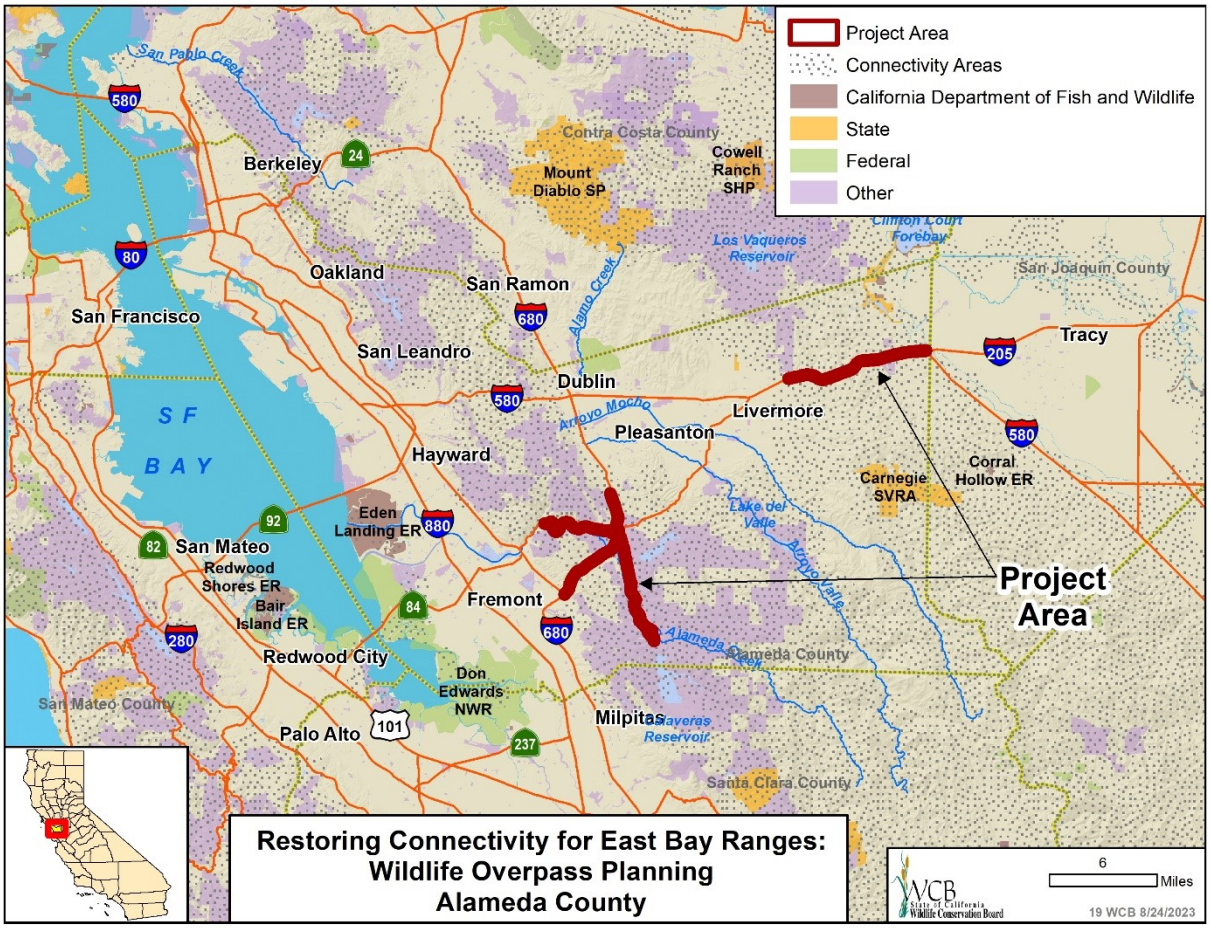
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Senator Aisha Wahab, 10th District, California State Senate
- Assemblymember Liz Ortega, 20th District, California State Assembly
- Assemblymember Alex Lee, 24th District, California State Assembly

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.


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
San Pablo Creek
Berkeley
Contra Costa County
Mount Diablo SP
Cowell Ranch SHP
Los Vaqueros Reservoir
Clifton Court Forebay
San Joaquin County
Oakland
San Ramon
Alamo Creek
San Francisco
San Leandro
Tracy
Dublin
Arroyo Mocho
Livermore
Pleasanton
S F
B A Y
Hayward
Carnegie SVRA
Corral Hollow ER
Lake del Valle
Eden Landing ER
San Mateo
Redwood Shores ER
Bair Island ER
Fremont
Arroyo Valle
Project Area
Alameda Creek
Alameda County
Redwood City
Don Edwards NWR
San Mateo County
Milpitas
Palo Alto
Calaveras Reservoir
Santa Clara County
Restoring Connectivity for East Bay Ranges:
Wildlife Overpass Planning
Alameda County
6
Miles
WCB
State of California
Wildlife Conservation Board
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20. Blue Oak Ranch Reserve Infrastructure Improvement

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $233,000 from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80111(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:	Blue Oak Ranch Reserve Infrastructure Improvement
Project Type:	Infrastructure
Applicant/Grantee:	University of California, Berkeley
Amount Recommended:	$233,000
Funding Partners:	University of California, Berkeley
Landowner(s):	University of California, Berkeley
County:	Santa Clara
Program:	The University of California, Natural Reserve System
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.5, C.1 Objectives: SI 1.3

LOCATION

The Blue Oak Ranch Reserve Infrastructure Improvement (Project) is located at the Blue Oak Ranch Reserve (BORR), six miles east of San Jose in Santa Clara County. The BORR is a 3,280-acre property that operates a field station with facilities to house and support researchers and educational users throughout the year. This property is operated as a Reserve within the University of California Natural Reserve System.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

BORR offers excellent opportunities for universities and colleges throughout the country to study oak woodland and savannah habitats that are threatened throughout California. BORR operates an extensive land stewardship program that works in collaboration with researchers and trains interns, land steward assistants, and students in responsible land management practices. BORR serves its users' safety, scientific, and logistical needs by providing access, facilities, laboratory space, overnight accommodations, wireless and networking support, and staff support. The Project will benefit research, training, and wildlife resources by improving physical access to the reserve, meeting the field station's energy needs, and ensuring safety and functionality of the facilities.

Year-round access to the reserve is provided by a five-mile gravel road that extends through the reserve from State Highway 130 to Alum Rock Park. Maintaining this road for all vehicle types and weather conditions is critical to providing safe and reliable access to reserve users. Large climatic events are becoming more common with more frequent damage to road infrastructure that restricts access to BORR. The Project will pave problematic sections of the five-

mile entrance road, replace two culverts, as well as shape and contour other gravel sections. These infrastructure enhancements will improve year-round access to the reserve. Users will be able to enter and leave the reserve safely during bad weather conditions in 2WD vehicles and, importantly, users will be able to plan trips in advance without the uncertainty of the weather limiting access. Additionally, improved roads will allow large passenger vans and small busses access to the reserve, thereby increasing access to a wider range of student and community groups.

Reliable power is critical to operating the field station and the research and training needs of its users. BORR is not connected to the power grid and runs off solar power. BORR requires additional power as more people use the reserve facilities. Field courses now utilize the reserve for up to eleven weeks per year and researchers and other users have increased as well. Additionally, BORR's solar battery storage bank has passed the number of duty cycles it was rated for and needs to be replaced. This Project will replace the degraded lead acid solar storage bank with longer-lasting lithium iron phosphate batteries that will improve power storage and reliability and are more economical over the lifetime of the batteries. Additionally, this Project will replace the solar panels and an inverter associated with the Commons Building.

Lastly, this Project will enhance the communal space. The Commons Building deck is highly utilized and needs to be replaced as it is approximately 30 years old. The deck holds seven picnic tables and is used for dining, classwork, and small group activities. Replacing the deck will ensure the safety and vital function of this space for field station users.

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

The Project will not use herbicides.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

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

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Road Improvements	$50,000	$50,000	$100,000
Update Off-Grid Solar	$180,000	---	$180,000

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Commons Deck Replacement	$3,000	$10,500	$13,500
Total	$233,000	$60,500	$293,500

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Road Improvements: Grade and resurface the entire entrance road, replace two failing culverts, and pave 1,400 linear feet of roadway.
- Update Off-Grid Solar: Remove and replace battery storage bank, Commons solar panels, roof mounts, and roof-mounted electrical parts.
- Commons Deck Replacement: Remove the existing deck and rebuild it with new pressure-treated wood framing and recycled material composite decking.

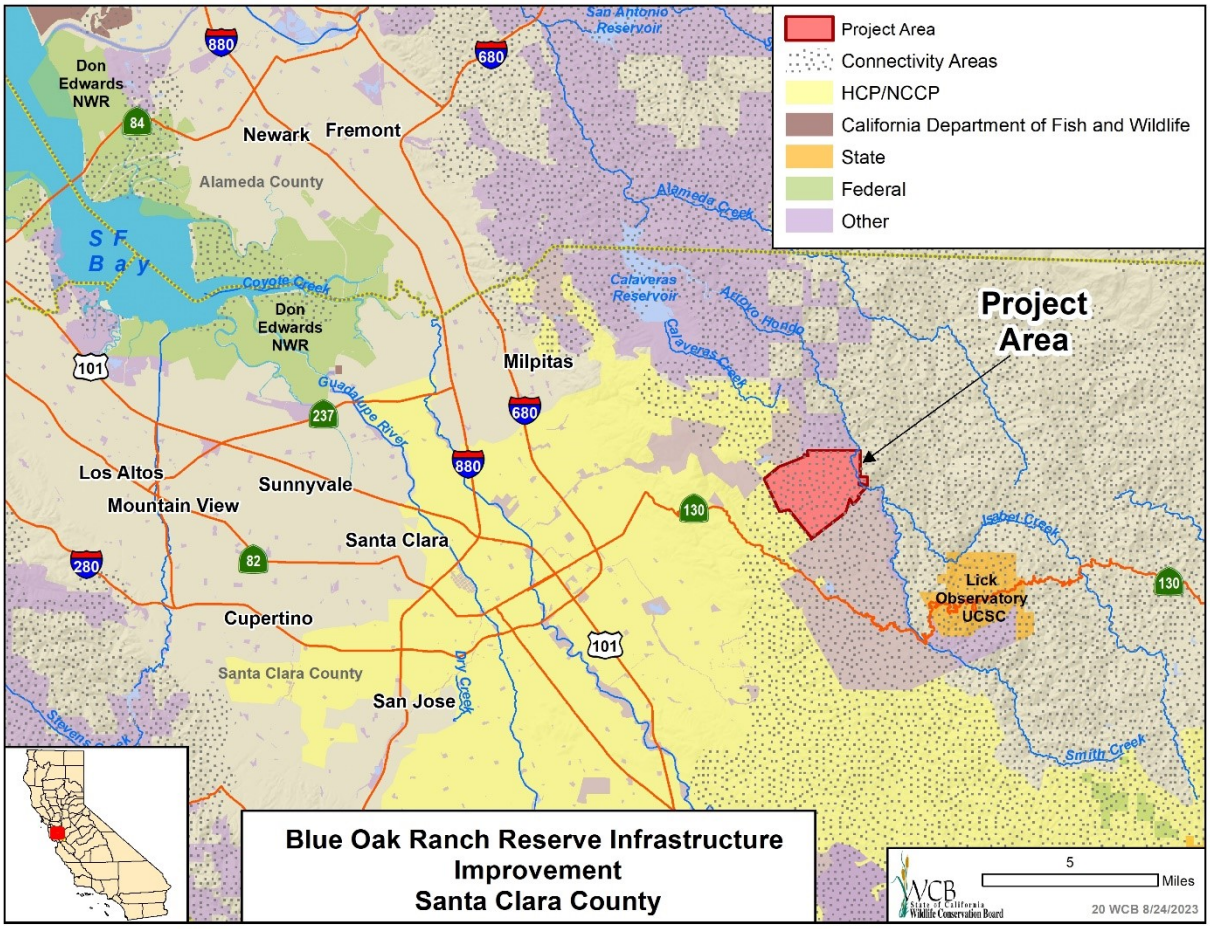
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Michael W. Kisgen, Associate Director, UC Natural Reserve System.

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 minor alteration of existing public facilities or equipment involving negligible expansion of former use, Section 15302, Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction, as replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure is located on the same site and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity, Section 15303, Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, consisting of installation of small new equipment and facilities, and Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, related to road improvements that do not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
HCP/NCCP
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Project Area
Don Edwards NWR
Newark
Fremont
Alameda County
S F Bay
Coyote Creek
Don Edwards NWR
Milpitas
Guadalupe River
Los Altos
Mountain View
Sunnyvale
Santa Clara
Cupertino
Santa Clara County
San Jose
Calaveras Reservoir
Arroyo Hondo
Calaveras Creek
Alameda Creek
San Antonio Reservoir
Isabel Creek
Lick Observatory UCSC
Smith Creek
Bay Creek
Blue Oak Ranch Reserve Infrastructure Improvement
Santa Clara County
5
Miles
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21. Merced Vernal Pools and Grassland Reserve Field Education Center

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate $920,000 from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80111(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:	Merced Vernal Pools and Grassland Reserve Field Education Center
Project Type:	Infrastructure
Applicant/Grantee:	University of California, Merced
Amount Recommended:	$920,000
Funding Partners:	University of California, Merced
Landowner(s):	University of California, Merced
County:	Merced
Program:	The University of California, Natural Reserve System
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1, C.4 Objectives: SI 1.3, 3.1

LOCATION

The Merced Vernal Pools and Grassland Reserve Field Education Center (Project) is located at the northeast section of the University of California, Merced (UC Merced) Campus directly adjacent to the Merced Vernal Pools and Grassland Reserve (MVPGR) in Merced. The MVPGR is 6,500 acres of mitigated conservation lands that supports research, teaching, and public service for scholars from UC Merced. This property is operated as a Reserve within the University of California Natural Reserve System.

The Project is within and benefits a Severely Disadvantaged Community (SDAC) Census Tract (per the DWR DAC mapping tool). The MVPGR serves SDAC K-12 and community college students through a variety of field educational outreach opportunities at MVPGR. With construction of the Project, the MVPGR will be able to expand access to additional K-12 students. UC Merced has begun tribal consultation with the Yokut and Miwuk people with the purpose to tell their history and embrace their continued connection to this region.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project will provide critically needed infrastructure to access the MVPGR. Currently, only rudimentary infrastructure, including a narrow dirt road and well used for watering cattle, exist at the site. The addition of infrastructure will provide protection from the elements, additional educational opportunities, and improve access.

The MVPGR contains one of the highest concentrations of vernal pools in the Central Valley and protects hundreds of ephemeral pools and swale wetlands. Its

ephemeral pools provide wetland habitat for migratory waterfowl and wading birds, and are home to many rare, endemic, threatened, and endangered species. A seasonal cattle grazing program helps maintain the viability of pools by controlling invasive non-native plant species and allows for grassland research related to grazing. Grazing is the main weed control management for this site; no herbicides are or will be used. Most of the research on MVPGR investigates the physical and biological diversity of this unique ecosystem. The MVPGR is also encouraging emerging work on conservation grazing and grassland management. The lack of existing facilities and adequate infrastructure has limited accessibility to MVPGR in the past. The Project will provide a convenient, ADA accessible location for researchers and educators to launch their field research, training, and education activities.

The Project will construct a 2,400 square foot open-air pavilion where students, researchers, land stewards, and the public can convene in an area protected from the elements. Additionally, the access road will be enhanced to support increased vehicle and pedestrian access, provide a parking area with seven parking spaces, and a loading zone for buses and cars which will improve flow and circulation through the field education center. The total amount of new or improved road area, including the parking, is estimated at 87,105 square feet. The Project will be developed with a net-zero design to minimize the impact of project operations on the environment.

Next to the Project area, WCB previously funded five conservation easements for vernal pool conservation. In total, WCB helped acquire 20,673 acres of vernal pool and grasslands habitat.

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

The Project will not use herbicides.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
The University of California, Merced has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the Project. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, University of California, Merced 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	---	$74,900	$74,900
Project Initiation	---	$155,315	$155,315
Project Scoping	$200,000	$280,000	$480,000
Approval and Compliance	$720,000	$2,097,911	$2,817,911
Total	$920,000	$2,608,126	$3,528,126

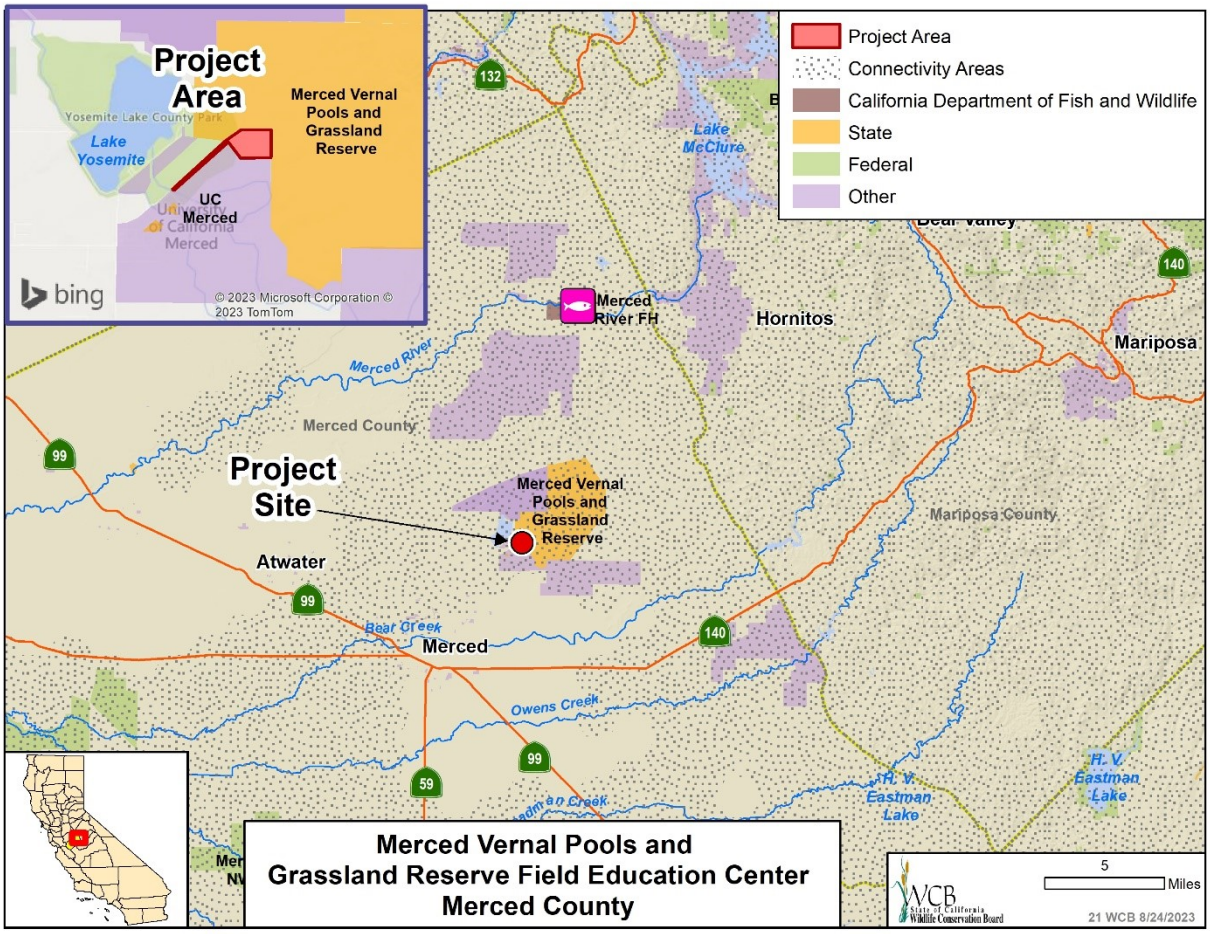
Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Scoping: Complete conceptual design drawing and cost estimates. Complete conceptual design implementation, including Project cost alternatives for budget maintenance.
- Approval and Compliance: Environmental compliance, permitting, and ADA compliance. Construction of pavilion and roadwork. Development of long-term maintenance plan.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:
- Michael W. Kisgen, Associate Director, UC Natural Reserve System.

Opposition:
- None received

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


Project Area
Merced Vernal Pools and Grassland Reserve
Yosemite Lake County Park
Lake Yosemite
UC Merced
bing
© 2023 Microsoft Corporation © 2023 TomTom
Project Area
Connectivity Areas
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Lake McClure
Merced River FH
Hornitos
Mariposa
Merced River
Merced County
Project Site
Merced Vernal Pools and Grassland Reserve
Mariposa County
Atwater
Bear Creek
Merced
Owens Creek
H. V. Eastman Lake
Merced Vernal Pools and Grassland Reserve Field Education Center
Merced County
5
Miles
WCB State of California Wildlife Conservation Board
21 WCB 8/24/2023

22. Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Enhancement, Augmentation

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate $4,736,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Water Supply for Environmental Flows, Stream Flow Enhancement Program Provision (SB170, Sec. 54); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Enhancement, Augmentation
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	County of Monterey
Amount Recommended:	$4,736,000
Funding Partners:	Department of Water Resources, State Coastal Conservancy, Department of Transportation, Big Sur Land Trust
Landowner(s):	Big Sur Land Trust, California State Parks, Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District
County:	Monterey
Program:	California Riparian Habitat Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.4, 4.3

LOCATION

The Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Enhancement (Project) is located at the northern terminus of a large complex of over 19,400 acres of protected open space lands conserved by the Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT), California Department of Parks and Recreation, and Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District. The Project is situated in the California Coastal Zone on the southern side of the lower Carmel River between river mile 0.5 and river mile 1.5 in Monterey County. The 135-acre Project area flanks both sides of State Route 1 (SR-1) immediately upstream of the Carmel River Lagoon and river mouth at Stewart's Cove, south of Carmel Bay. The Project area is approximately one mile south of Carmel-by-the-Sea. In 2010, WCB contributed approximately $718,000 to BSLT for the planning and environmental review for the Project. In 2017, WCB approved $2,500,000 to Monterey County for Project implementation.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Historical land use and development in proximity to the lower Carmel River, along with levee construction and the elevated embankment supporting SR-1, have limited the river's ability to flow across its natural floodplain in the lower watershed. This has dramatically altered the hydrologic function of the floodplain, restricting the movement of water, reducing critical coastal habitat connectivity, and increasing the risk of severe flooding to residents and businesses north of the river's channel.

The goals of the Project are to restore hydrologic connectivity between the river's channel, floodplain and coastal lagoon; reduce flood risks; restore coastal riparian habitat and wildlife movement corridors; and improve climate resiliency in the lower Carmel River watershed. WCB is only funding work associated with the floodplain restoration portion of the County's larger Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Environmental Enhancement (CRFREE) project. The portion of the project that includes construction of a new causeway on State Route 1 is being funded separately by other partners.

The Project proposes to meet the floodplain restoration goals by removing sections of the south bank levee to redirect flood flows into the adjoining floodplain, reconnecting the south bank floodplain with the Carmel River Lagoon by allowing water to flow through a new causeway along SR-1, and restoring more than 100 acres of floodplain habitat in a former agricultural field where ruderal vegetation now dominates.

To complete the Project, an augmentation has become necessary due to a cost increase of $6 million. Monterey County initially applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)/California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) for $22.9 million in Hazard Mitigation grant funds in 2019, based on a 60% design cost estimate from 2017. Based on the 2022 90% design cost estimate, Monterey County submitted an increased request to FEMA/CalOES for $35,245,055. CalOES has indicated that other projects have also had cost escalations and submitted increased requests and that they have set aside all remaining funds in their Disaster Fund, a total of $29.6 million for the CRFREE project. This leaves a shortfall of $6 million of the $56 million total project cost that must be filled before FEMA/CalOES will award the Hazard Mitigation grant funds. Monterey County also asked the State Coastal Conservancy if they can provide an additional to $2 million. These two augmentations will bring the Project to a fully funded status.

The augmentation would cover cost escalations and additional construction actions identified in the 90% design plans related to floodplain construction and habitat restoration including development and installation of a temporary irrigation system, biological monitoring, and sourcing plant material for habitat restoration. WCB funds previously granted for the Project and the proposed augmentation funds will not be used to purchase or apply herbicide.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship and Pathway 7: Strengthen Coordination Among Governments.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
The County of Monterey has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the Project. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, County of Monterey 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 Augmentation	Original WCB Grant	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	---	---	$47,491	$47,491
Floodplain Designs	---	$357,443	---	$357,443
Floodplain Construction	$2,797,726	$1,655,507	$5,525,569	$9,978,802
Habitat Restoration	$1,506,927	$487,050	$899,950	$2,893,927
Contingency	$431,347	---	---	$431,347
Total	$4,736,000	$2,500,000	$6,473,010	$13,709,010

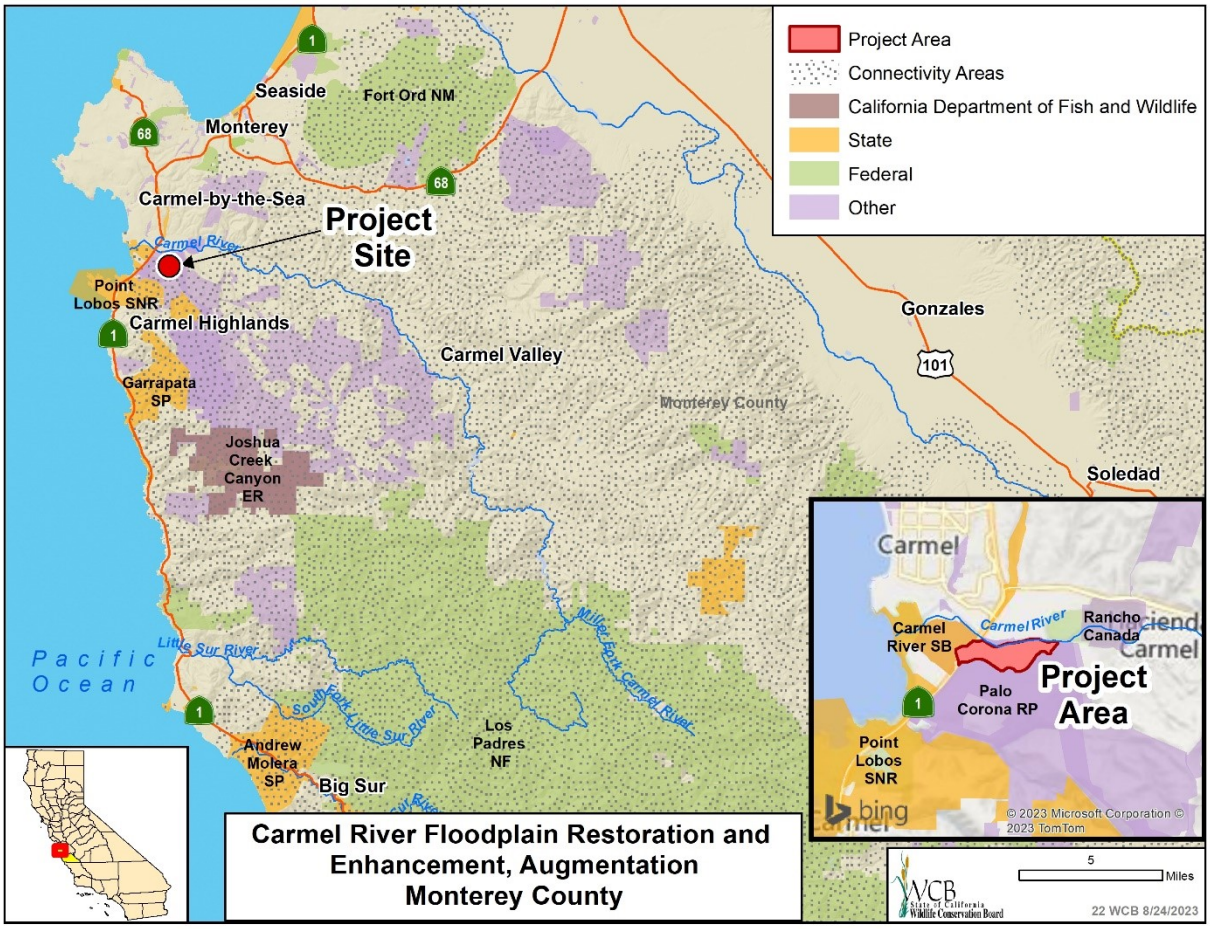
Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Floodplain Designs: Complete 100% designs, construction plans, specifications, and estimates for floodplain restoration construction.
- Floodplain Construction: Grading and excavation of the historic floodplain. Approximately 100 acres of fallow farmland will be graded to create the topographic characteristics necessary to restore hydraulic connectivity and native floodplain habitats, along with an elevated 23-acre agricultural preserve.
- Habitat Restoration: Prepare habitat management plan for at least 80 acres of revegetation. Install native plants on the floodplain east of SR-1 to accelerate vegetation establishment. Install an irrigation system, implement non-chemical weed control, and maintenance.
- 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 County of Monterey, as lead agency, prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project pursuant to the provisions of the 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.


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Seaside
Fort Ord NM
Monterey
Carmel-by-the-Sea
Project Site
Carmel River
Point Lobos SNR
Carmel Highlands
Garrapata SP
Joshua Creek Canyon ER
Carmel Valley
Monterey County
Gonzales
Soledad
Pacific Ocean
Little Sur River
South Fork Little Sur River
Miller Fork Carmel River
Los Padres NF
Andrew Molera SP
Big Sur
Carmel
Carmel River SB
Rancho Canada
Palo Corona RP
Project Area
Point Lobos SNR
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Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Enhancement, Augmentation
Monterey County
5
Miles
WCB State of California Wildlife Conservation Board
22 WCB 8/24/2023

23. Enhancing Wetlands at Goose Lake Augmentation

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $127,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision (SB170, Sec. 53.5); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Enhancing Wetlands at Goose Lake Augmentation
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	California Waterfowl Association
Amount Recommended:	$127,000
Funding Partners:	California Waterfowl Association
Landowner(s):	California Waterfowl Association
County:	Kern
Program:	Inland Wetlands Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.3

LOCATION

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

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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

Managed seasonal wetlands depend on water availability for summer irrigations to produce adequate waterfowl foods; they also require the ability to be flooded in the fall/winter to make that food available to foraging birds. For this reason, sufficient water supplies are critical for wetland dependent bird habitat. However, water supplies vary year to year and water delivery shortfalls reduce the habitat contribution of the few privately owned wetlands that remain. This negatively impacts bird populations as well as consumptive and non-consumptive use opportunities.

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

To provide much-needed public waterfowl hunting access, the Project will purchase and install six concrete blinds with dog boxes (4 hunter capacity each), one ADA accessible blind, parking lots, gravel blind paths, and a hunter check-in kiosk. Signage would be designed and installed, showing driving routes, parking lots, and blind areas. These improvements will open the Badger-Almond property to new public waterfowl hunting opportunities. The property would be operated as part of the very successful California Waterfowl Association's California Waterfowl Hunt Program.

The augmentation will support the purchase and installation of the solar array. The solar array will support flood up and water conveyance of almost 600 acres of wetland habitat. Inflation costs, and the need to install the array in a different location than originally scoped have created the need for the augmentation. In the spring of 2023, it was determined that the array needed to be installed in a different area of the property to comply with PG&E engineering designs, and to avoid an area that flooded when an adjacent landowner's levee breached.

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

The Project is in a severely disadvantaged community (DWR DAC Mapping Tool). It is also considered a disadvantaged community based on the CalEnviroScreen 4.0.

The Project will not use herbicides.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
In consultation with CDFW, the California Waterfowl Association has adopted a California Waterfowl Habitat Program Site Specific Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the Project. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, California Waterfowl Association

does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

PROJECT FUNDING
The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Augmentation	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	---	---	$95,380	$95,380
Solar Array	$810,000	$127,000	---	$937,000
Water Conveyance Improvement	$80,000	---	---	$80,000
Trees/Shrubs	---	---	$15,000	$15,000
Tree Installation	$12,000	---	---	$12,000
Public Access Improvements	$60,000	---	$14,000	$74,000
Indirect Costs	---	---	$15,389	$15,389
Total	$962,000	$127,000	$139,769	$1,228,769

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Solar Array: Solicit bids to construct an approximately 1-acre solar array.
- Water Conveyance Improvement: Purchase and construct a water pipeline to supply irrigation water to planted trees and shrubs.
- Tree Installation: Source tree cuttings from local sources, purchase potted plants from local nurseries, and plant a 14-acre riparian strip along the west side of the Project area.
- Public Access Improvements: Purchase and install six concrete hunting blinds (4 hunter capacity) with dog boxes, one ADA accessible hunting blind, gravel parking lot with gravel blind trails, and one hunter check-in kiosk, including public access signage for all improvements.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

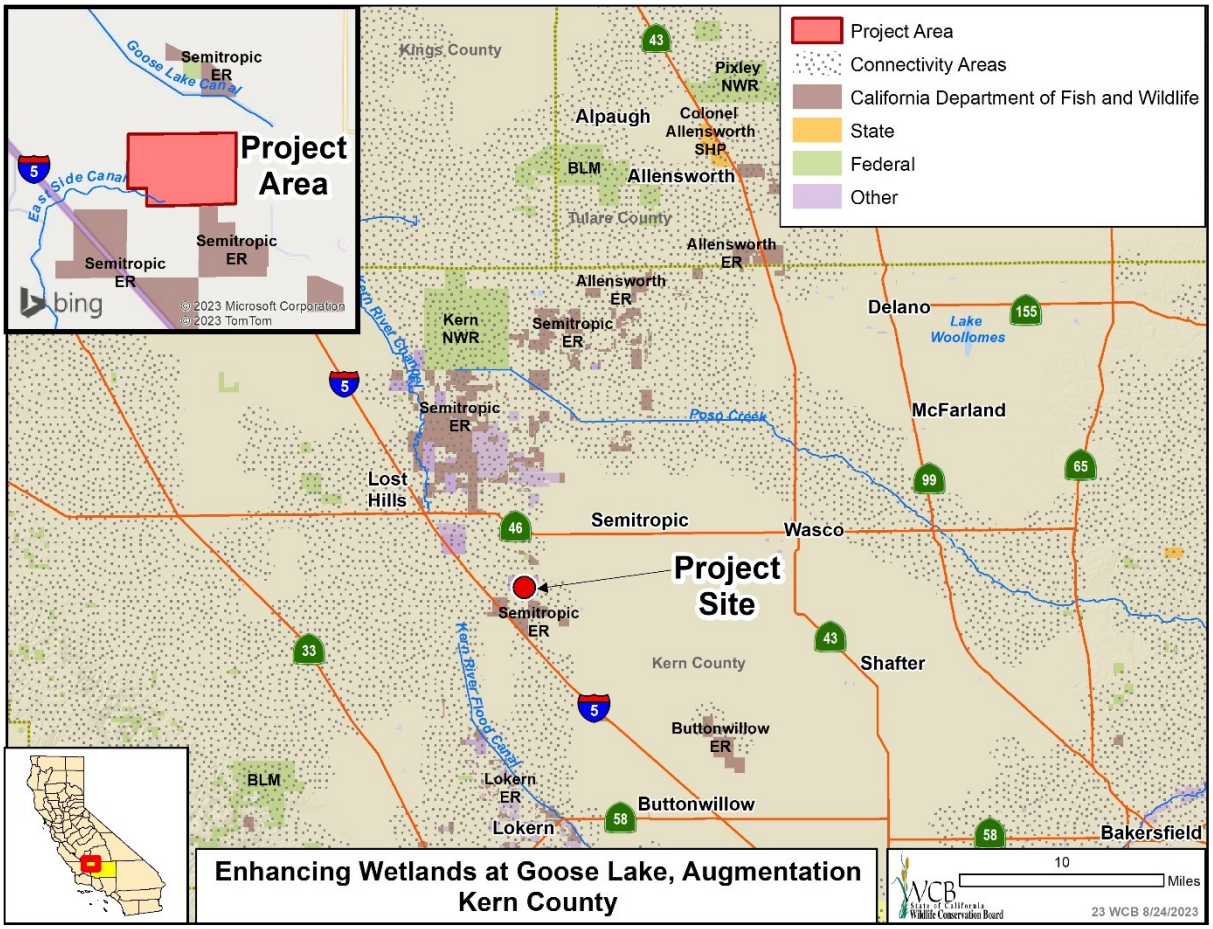
- James Cogswell, Coordinator, Central Valley Joint Venture
- Tim Ashlock, Manager, Buena Vista Water Storage District
- Karl Kraft, Wildlife Biologist, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Robert B. Hansen, Board President, Tulare Basin Watershed Partnership
- Xeronimo Castaneda, Conservation Project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

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15333, Class 33, Small Habitat Restoration Projects, consisting of a project not to exceed five acres in size to assure maintenance, restoration, enhancement, and protection of habitat for plants and wildlife, and Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, consisting of minor private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



24. Big Morongo Canyon Springs

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,850,000 from Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the grant to the Native American Land 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:	Big Morongo Canyon Springs
Project Type:	Fee Title Acquisition (60± acres)
Grantee:	Native American Land Conservancy
Amount Recommended:	$1,850,000
Funding Partners:	Native American Land Conservancy
County:	San Bernardino
Program:	Land Acquisition Program
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.2, C.4 Objectives: SI 2.1, 2.3, 3.1

LOCATION

Big Morongo Canyon Springs (Property) is located in southern, unincorporated San Bernardino County, two miles northwest of Morongo Valley in the Big Morongo Creek watershed. The Property is 17 miles northwest of Palm Springs and 16 miles southwest of Joshua Tree and is accessible via Big Morongo Canyon Springs Road from the Twentynine Palms Highway.

Morongo Valley, including the Property, is located in a disadvantaged community, per DWR maps. Moreover, this is an ancestral land return acquisition, where fee title will be held by the Native American Land Conservancy (NALC), a Native American-controlled, intertribal nonprofit. The Property is part of a linkage that allows for wildlife passage between the Mojave Desert and the San Bernardino Mountains. Prior WCB funded acquisitions in the surrounding area include Mission Creek Ecological Reserve (1994; 2,229 acres) and Upper Mission Creek/Big Morongo Conservation Area (2011-2016; 1,206 acres).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is rectangular in shape, with level to rolling topography ranging from 3,500 to 4,000 feet and generally sloping upward to the north. The zoning supports rural residential and incidental agricultural uses, and the Property is currently used for private recreation. Improvements include an 860 square foot single-family residence built in 2002 and an ancillary wood storage shed.

The Property is located in upper Big Morongo Canyon in a transition zone between the Mojave Desert and the San Bernardino Mountains. It hosts a spring that is said to run continuously, even in the driest of drought years. The spring supports a stand of large Fremont cottonwoods, willow, and lower riparian plants such as mule fat and yerba mansa. The spring-fed riparian habitat attracts black bear, mountain lion, mule deer, and rare birds including vermillion flycatcher, yellow-

breasted chat, least Bell's vireo, brown crested flycatcher, southwest willow flycatcher, and summer tanager.

Conservation of the Property advances several goals in SWAP, which prioritizes protection of American Southwest riparian forests and woodlands, springs, spring brooks, and wetlands, all of which are represented on the Property, as well as many of the target species listed in the SWAP including those listed above.

The parcel is bounded on the north and south by the San Gorgonio Wilderness, within the Bureau of Land Management section of the Sand to Snow National Monument and is a critical wildlife linkage across the Big Morongo Canyon. It is also an essential part of a habitat linkage across the Morongo Valley identified by the South Coast Missing Linkages Project, linking the eastern unit of the Sand to Snow National Monument and Joshua Tree National Park with the San Gorgonio Mountains and the western unit of the Sand to Snow National Monument. The Property ranks three out of five in CDFW's Areas of Conservation Emphasis mapping tool for providing habitat with connection/linkage flexibility.

This project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway1: Accelerate Regionally Led Conservation and Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
NALC will manage the Property with local tribal communities, especially the Serrano people, whose ancestors lived in and cared for the Big Morongo Canyon Springs area. NALC's purchase of the Property will ensure access to the land is available to local tribal communities. NALC will restore the Property through implementation of traditional ecological practices, as well as implement its Learning and Healing Landscapes program, which connects tribal families and people to the land and their culture, provides opportunities to learn from elders and culture bearers, and heal in a variety of ways.

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

Partners	Amount
WCB	$1,850,000
Native American Land Conservancy	$150,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$2,000,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION:
Support:

- Assemblymember James C. Ramos
- The Summer Tree Institute

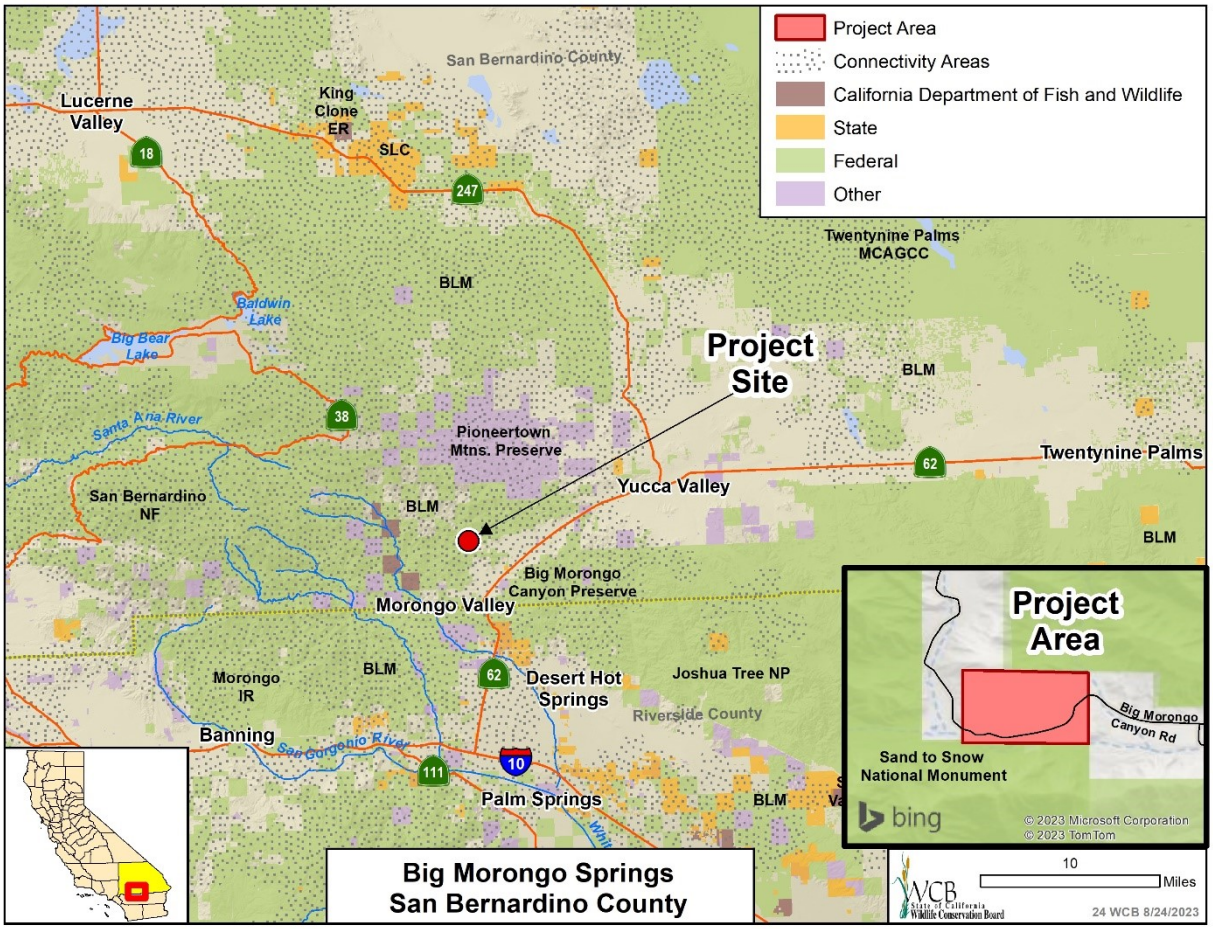
- Endangered Habitats League
- Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

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



25. The Thacher School Instream Flow Resiliency and Dormitory Conservation Project, Augmentation

Withdrawn from consideration at this time.

26. Steelhead Preserve

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,625,000 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the grant to Ojai Valley Land 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:	Steelhead Preserve
Project Type:	Fee Title (20± acres)
Grantee:	Ojai Valley Land Conservancy
Amount Recommended:	$1,625,000
County:	Ventura County
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.2 Objectives: SI 1.2

LOCATION

The Steelhead Preserve property (Property) is located in western unincorporated Ventura County along the east side of Santa Ana Road, about seven miles north of the city of Ventura between Lake Casitas and State Route 33. The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (OVLC) will incorporate the Property into its adjacent Ventura River Steelhead Preserve (Preserve), which will expand the Preserve by 30 percent to approximately 85 acres along the Ventura River.

The Property lies in the Ventura River watershed, on the western terrace of the Ventura River, and is comprised primarily of grassland with localized patches of chaparral and scattered woodland. The terrain is generally level (terrace on west side of Ventura River, and bluff top) with moderately-sloped hillside north and northwest of a small ranch stead area comprised of a small house and barns that OVLC intends to use for its restoration programs. The Property is not located within a Disadvantaged Community.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is listed as a high priority in CDFW's Ventura River Watershed Conceptual Area Protection Plan. The Ventura River and its tributaries provide critical habitat for numerous wildlife species, such as the federally endangered Southern California steelhead trout, as well as potential habitat for other federally endangered species including the Southwestern willow flycatcher, California red-legged frog, and least Bell's vireo. Southwestern pond turtles are routinely documented at the adjacent Preserve. The river provides a key migration corridor for wildlife (mountain lion has been documented on the Property) and provides essential habitat linkages within the watershed. This acquisition would bolster conservation holdings east of Santa Ana Road next to the existing Preserve that conserves a known holding pool for anadromous Southern California steelhead trout.

This acquisition is also in close vicinity to two other preserves managed by OVLC along the confluence of the Ventura River and San Antonio Creek, both of which provide riparian habitat for endangered species. The Property is directly adjacent to a mapped Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem that is the focus of monitoring and management by the Upper Ventura Groundwater Sustainability Agency. Acquisition of the Property would protect a portion of both county and state designated wildlife corridors. The varied topography creates a range of microclimates that can convey resilience in the face of climate change, as climate models highlight the importance of river bottom lands due to their cooler microclimates. The Property includes a range of habitat as the river transitions to grassland and hillside, which increases wildlife corridor connectivity, expands the buffer zone for wildlife to withstand varying climate impacts and serves as refugia during more extreme climate events.

The Property habitat is identified as California Annual and Perennial Grassland, which is a selected macro-group for conservation strategy development in the SWAP. OVLC plans to further restore the land to its natural state with native grasses and enhanced pollinator habitat. The Property expands access to the riparian habitat along the river, providing additional opportunity for benefit to American Southwest Riparian Forest and Woodland, as well as South Coast Native Aquatic Herp Assemblage, both of which are named conservation targets in the SWAP. The Property is also located within the Sierra Madre-Castaic Connection linkage, identified as a connection between the Los Padres and Angeles national forests in the South Coast Missing Linkages Report, a plan for a regional network that would maintain and restore critical habitat linkages between existing reserves.

The Property's ranch stead includes a small house and two barns. These structures will increase OVLC's capacity to lead riparian restoration efforts in the Ventura River watershed. OVLC plans to use the barns to store equipment and tools for various restoration projects, as well as to host community volunteer restoration days and other wildlife-oriented public events. The residential structure may serve as employee housing or additional office/administrative space depending on the greatest need. OVLC has hosted several visits by members of the local Barbareño/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians and intends to work with the tribe to fully document, record, and explore the many dimensions of historic Chumash use of the Property.

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
OVLC will retain the Property permanently as an expanded part of the existing Preserve and will be managed and maintained by OVLC staff. OVLC intends to fundraise privately in the community for a stewardship endowment, though they expect Property maintenance costs to be low. Once added to the existing Preserve, plans for the Property include native grassland restoration, pollinator

habitat creation, and riparian habitat restoration. Founded in 1987, OVLC currently manages over 2,400 acres of open space and is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, which recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever.

PROJECT FUNDING
The DGS approved fair market value is $1,625,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$1,625,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$1,625,000

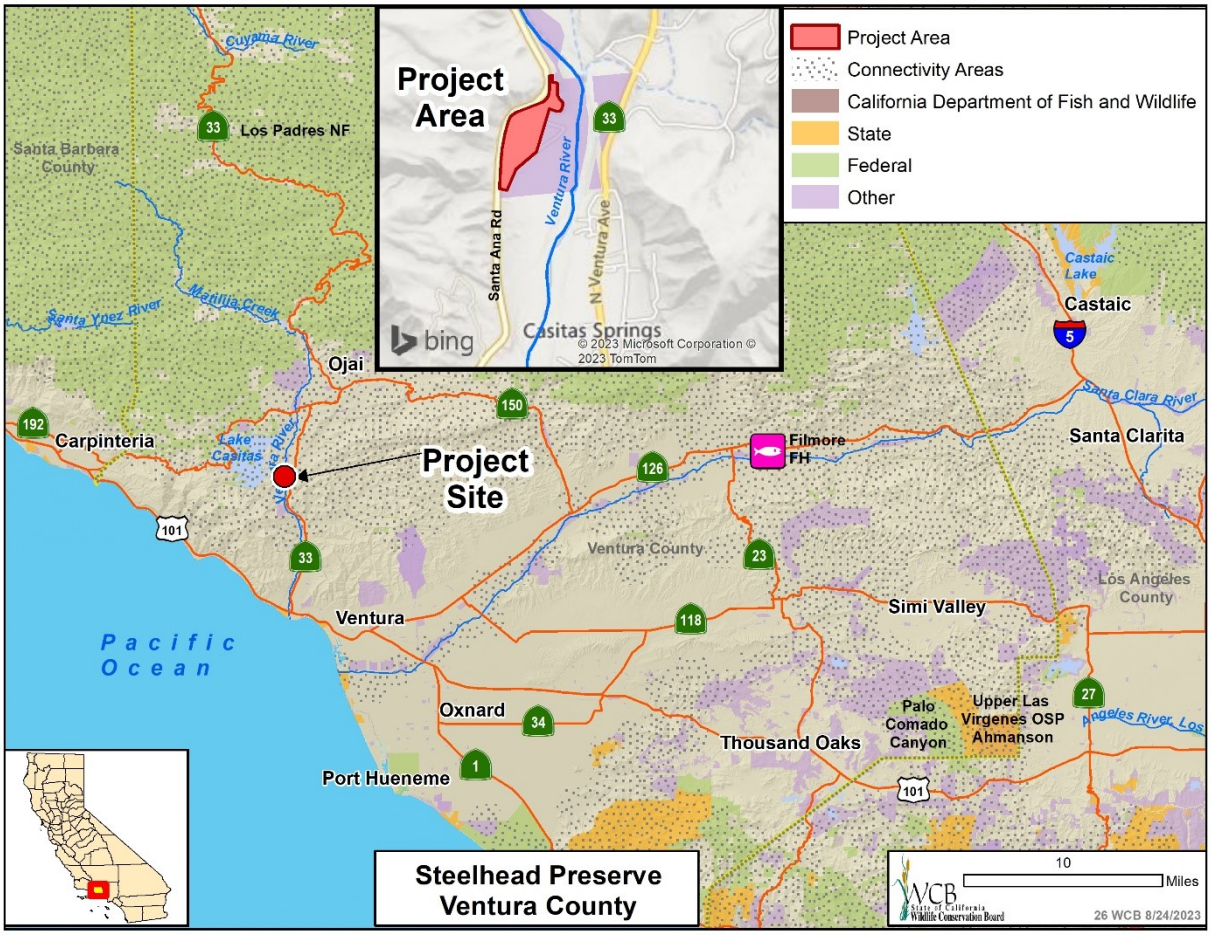
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Senator Monique Limón
- Assemblymember Steve Bennett
- County of Ventura Supervisor Matt LaVere
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Upper Ventura River Groundwater Agency
- California Trout
- Endangered Habitats League
- Concerned Resource and Environmental Workers
- Surfrider Foundation

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.


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Project Area
Santa Ana Rd
Ventura River
N Ventura Ave
Casitas Springs
bing
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Cuyama River
Los Padres NF
Santa Barbara County
Santa Ynez River
Matilija Creek
Ojai
Carpinteria
Lake Casitas
Project Site
Ventura River
Ventura
Ventura County
Pacific Ocean
Oxnard
Port Hueneme
Filmore FH
Castaic Lake
Castaic
Santa Clara River
Santa Clarita
Simi Valley
Los Angeles County
Palo Comado Canyon
Upper Las Virgenes OSP Ahmanson
Thousand Oaks
Angeles River, Los
Steelhead Preserve
Ventura County
10
Miles
WCB
State of California
Wildlife Conservation Board
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27. Western Riverside MSHCP Barth

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $115,500 from Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the grant to Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (WRCRCA); approve the acceptance of the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in the amount of $214,500 and approve the subgrant of the federal funds to WRCRCA; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Western Riverside MSHCP Barth
Project Type:	Fee Title Acquisition (20± acres)
Grantee:	Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (WRCRCA)
Amount Recommended:	$115,500
Funding Partners:	USFWS, WRCRCA
County:	Riverside
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.3 Objectives: SI 1.2, 1.3, 2.2

LOCATION

The Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Barth property (Property) is located at the western edge of the city of Temecula in unincorporated Riverside County, and west of Interstate 15, along the south side of Rancho California Road.

The Property is critical in contributing to the protection of north to south connectivity along the elevational transition zone from the floodplain of Murrieta Creek onto the foothills of the Santa Ana Mountains and the Cleveland National Forest. The transition zone is essential in maintaining the viability of the listed and unlisted species covered in the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan (Western Riverside MSHCP/NCCP) by providing for species and ecosystem responses to climate change through the protection of elevational gradients which will allow species and vegetation communities to shift in elevation over time. The Property is not located within a Disadvantaged Community.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Acquisition of the Property will result in permanent protection of approximately 20 acres of conservation land that is highly developable, but essential habitat. The Property consists of an upland connection comprised of dense chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and grassland habitats between the Santa Rosa Plateau and the Santa Margarita Ecological Preserve. The upland connection is complementary to the riparian linkage provided between these areas by Murrieta Creek. The Property provides habitat for species; including southern California rufous-crowned sparrow, grasshopper sparrow, Bell's sage sparrow, turkey vulture, mountain quail, bobcat,

mountain lion, California black walnut, and Engelman oak. This linkage provides essential corridor movement for bobcats and mountain lions. The Property supports connectivity and populations of listed covered species, including the threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, threatened thread-leaved brodiaea, and at-risk western spadefoot toad.

The Property is vacant land, somewhat triangular in shape, and the area west of the Property transitions to mountainous terrain with scattered single-family residences. The Property is on the fringe of development on its east side, adjacent to the city of Temecula at lower elevation. The current highest and best use of the property is to hold for future development with a single-family residence.

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
WRCRCA will manage the Property as part of the Western Riverside County MSHCP reserve system, which provides permanent habitat protection for populations of federal and state-listed endangered and threated species that occupy the reserve and increases wildlife habitat cores and linkages that will connect existing habitat reserve areas through western Riverside County. As part of its obligation under the Western Riverside County MSHCP, WRCRCA retains a reserve manager to ensure that management actions are consistent with the plan. Management costs for parcels acquired under the MSHCP will be provided by WRCRCA'S operating funds. WRCRCA's County Parks team will manage the Property, including conducting annual inspections.

PROJECT FUNDING
The DGS approved fair market value is $340,000 and the landowner has agreed to sell at a reduced price of $330,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

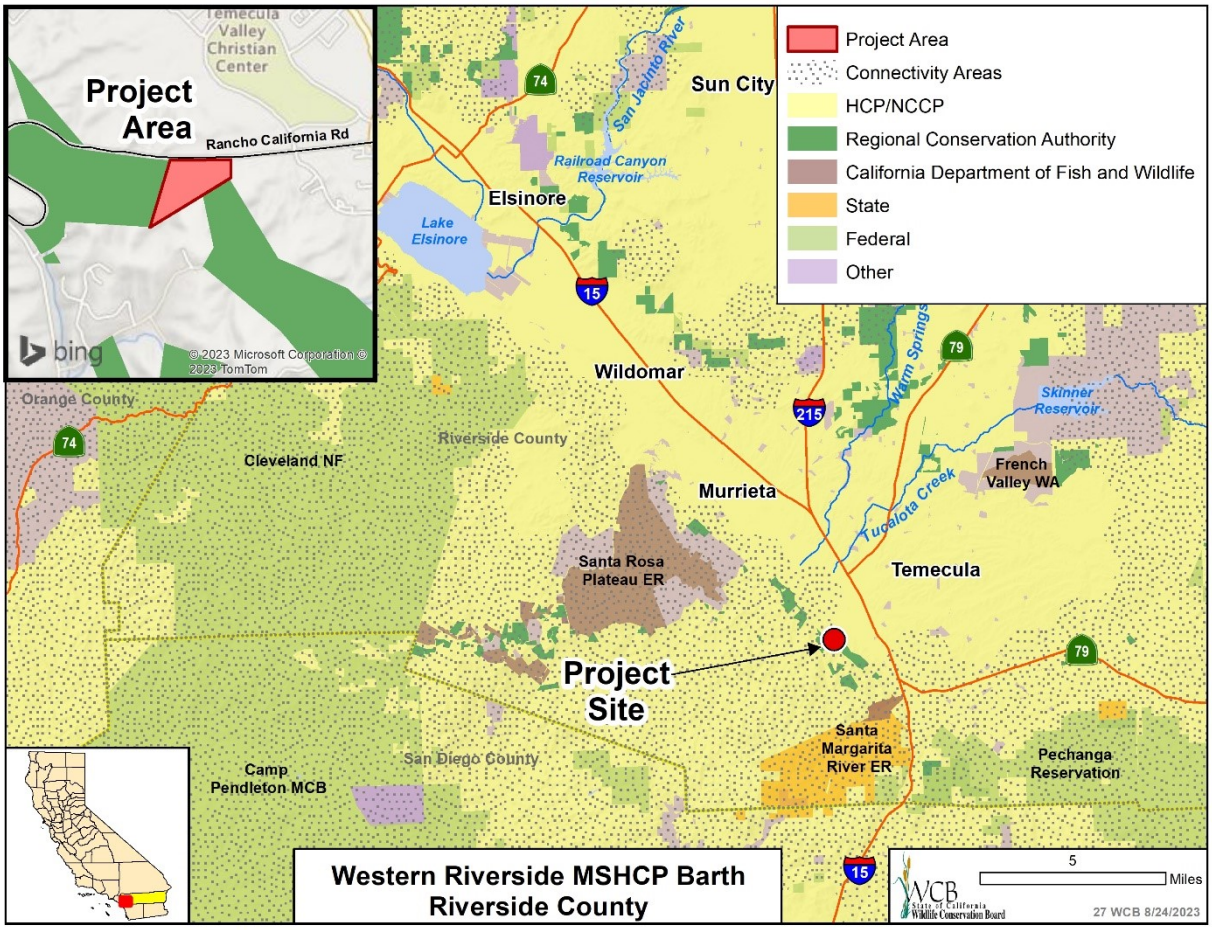
Partners	Amount
WCB	$115,500
USFWS	$214,500
TOTAL Purchase Price	$330,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League

Opposition:
- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
The project has been reviewed for compliance with CEQA requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an

acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by WCB, an NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



28. Western Riverside MSHCP Johnson
Withdrawn from consideration at this time.

Presentation Items

29. Remediation of Tongva Land for Traditional Ecological Knowledge

STAFF RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $779,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Nature Based Solutions, DAC Provision [AB179, Sec. 83(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:	Remediation of Tongva Land for Traditional Ecological Knowledge
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Tongva Taraxat Paxaavxa Conservancy
Amount Recommended:	$779,000
Funding Partners:	Tongva Taraxat Paxaavxa Conservancy, Tree People
Landowner(s):	Tongva Taraxat Paxaavxa Conservancy
County:	Los Angeles
Program:	Oak Woodlands Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B 1 Objectives: SI 1.6, 4.1

LOCATION
The Remediation of Tongva Land for Traditional Ecological Knowledge (Project) is located on land which overlooks the Eden Canyon Natural Area in the community of Altadena in Los Angeles County.

The Project site, known to the Tongva as either Huhuunga or Huunar ne'ke'inga (the place of the bear), is the first community-owned gathering space for the Tongva community to revitalize culture, language, and traditional land stewardship since the Spanish mission system was imposed on the tribe in 1771.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The primary purpose of the Project is to restore the native habitat of the only land owned by the Tongva people in their homeland. As native people, the Tongva rely on native plants for traditional foods, tools, spiritual fulfillment, and medicines. In Los Angeles County, most green spaces do not contain native plants, and the few green spaces that do have native species are often hard to access or gather from. When Huhuunga was returned to the Tongva, it became the only area of land the Tongva people can grow and gather indigenous plants without asking for permission.

Currently, the plant species typical of coastal sage scrub habitat that historically characterized Huhuunga have been almost completely replaced by invasive species. The Project will correct this by removing 187 non-native trees and clearing an understory dominated by popular drought-tolerant decorative species. The removal of the invasive pants will allow the Tongva to restore native habitat with

indigenous-based scientific methods that will be used for Tongva cultural use while teaching the Tongva community how to restore habitat for future projects in other areas of southern California.

A professional tree service will remove the non-native trees, resultant logs, and debris from the property. Treatment of the remaining stumps will involve use of a non-chemical stump treatment technique that relies on fire to kill stumps. Because fire will be employed, this work will also occur during winter/early spring under extremely specific weather conditions. The stump burning will be implemented by cultural burn experts within the Tongva community with input from the Los Angeles County Fire Department. This process will be used as an opportunity to teach Tongva people how to remove eucalyptus without herbicides and the lessons learned about eucalyptus stump removal will be published to support other native-led transformations of sites throughout California.

The Tongva Taraxat Paxaavxa Conservancy (TTPC) will hire and train a Tongva community member to oversee removal of the non-native understory plants. An onsite, open-air nursery will also be established that will grow native plant stock for the Project site's revegetation and for future offsite restorations. TTPC staff will oversee volunteers who will help with collection of native seeds, installing the nursery, and the propagation and labeling of plants.

The Project will not use herbicides.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 1: Accelerate regionally led conservation, Pathway 6: Expand and accelerate environmental restoration and stewardship, and Pathway 7: Strengthen coordination among governments.

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

PROJECT FUNDING
The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	$26,731	$92,000	$118,731
Invasive Species Removal	$639,644	---	$639,644
Restoration	$8,120	---	$8,120
Indirect Costs	$33,711	---	$33,711
Contingency	$70,794	---	$70,794
TOTAL	$779,000	$92,000	$871,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Invoicing, reporting, and any necessary outreach.
- Invasive Species Removal: Removal of non-native trees and understory plants.
- Restoration: Nursery construction and propagation 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.

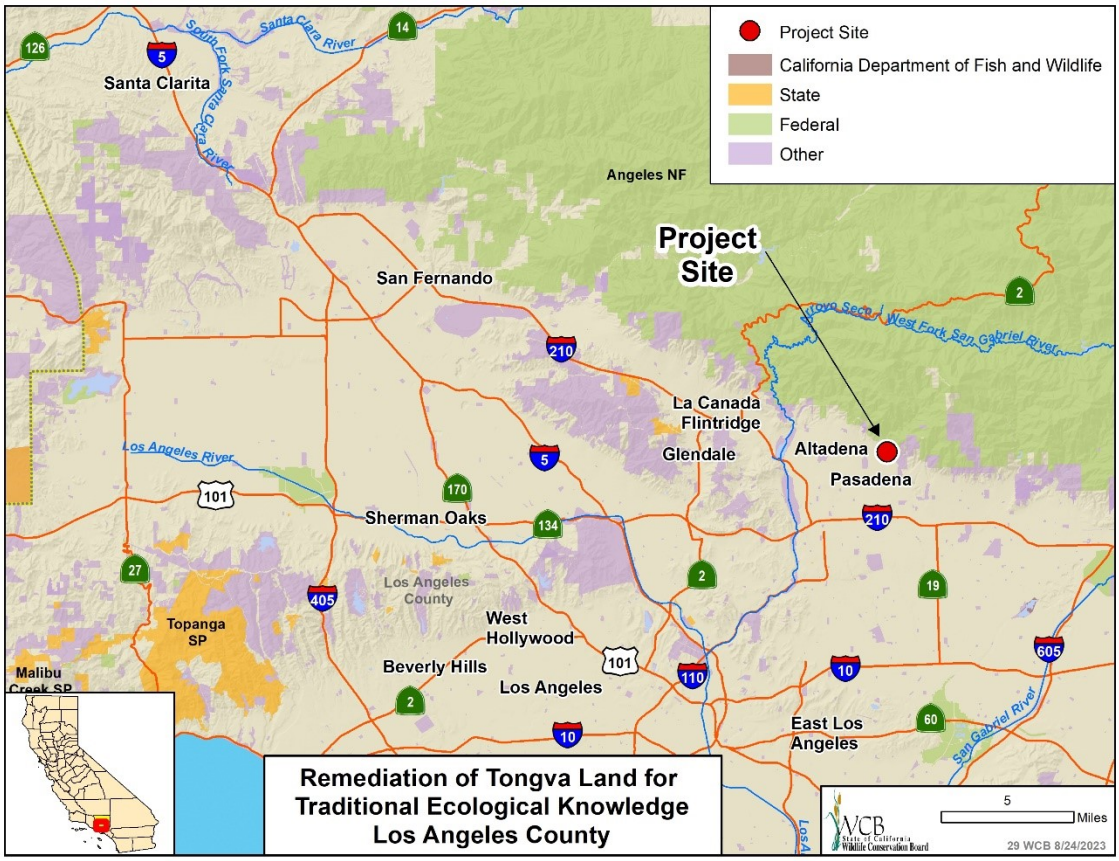
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Charles Thomas, Executive Director, Outward Bound Adventures
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
The Project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15333, Class 33, Small Habitat Restoration Projects, consisting of a project not to exceed five acres in size to assure maintenance, restoration, enhancement, and protection of habitat for plants and wildlife. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.


Project Site
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Project Site
Santa Clarita
San Fernando
Angeles NF
La Canada Flintridge
Glendale
Altadena
Pasadena
Sherman Oaks
Los Angeles County
West Hollywood
Beverly Hills
Los Angeles
Topanga SP
Malibu Creek SP
East Los Angeles
Santa Clara River
South Fork Santa Clara River
Los Angeles River
Arroyo Seco / West Fork San Gabriel River
San Gabriel River
Remediation of Tongva Land for Traditional Ecological Knowledge Los Angeles County
5
Miles
WCB
29 WCB 8/24/2023

30. Russ Creek and Centerville Slough Restoration

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate $10,000,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2002, Nature-Based Solutions – DAC Provision [AB179, Sec. 83(a)], and General Fund Budget Act of 2002, Nature-Based Solutions Grant Program Provision [AB179, Sec. 83(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:	Russ Creek and Centerville Slough Restoration
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Humboldt County Resource Conservation District
Amount Recommended:	$10,000,000
Funding Partners:	National Resource Conservation Service
Landowner(s):	The Wildlands Conservancy and Russ Ranch & Timber, LLC
County:	Humboldt
Program:	Climate Adaptation and Resiliency
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B1, C1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.4

LOCATION

The Russ Creek and Centerville Slough Restoration project (Project) is located on the coast in the lower Eel River estuary, approximately four miles west of the city of Ferndale. The Project area is approximately 1,480 acres and includes tidal slough channels, freshwater streams, estuarine habitats, and diked former tidal lands converted to working agricultural lands. The Project area includes the Eel River Estuary Preserve owned by The Wildlands Conservancy and various parcels privately owned by Russ Ranch and Timber, LLC. The Natural Resources Conservation Service, recognizing the opportunity to restore wetlands and agricultural viability, has acquired five agricultural and wetland conservation easements totaling 1,240 acres in the Project area.

The Project is within a disadvantaged community (DWR Mapping Tool) and within one mile of a severely disadvantaged community. The project provides community benefits that include public access to boating (kayaking) and non-consumptive wildlife recreation, including access improvements for mobility-impaired community members to participate in hiking, birdwatching, wildlife viewing and wildflower viewing.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The entire Eel River Estuary, including the Project area, has been extensively altered over the last 150 years to convert the land into agricultural production and provide flood protection. In 1870, the tidal area of the Eel River Estuary was estimated to be 6,525 acres; by 1970, it was reduced to an estimated 2,200 acres. Like much of the Eel River Estuary, the Project area was converted to agricultural production by the construction of levees, draining of marshes, ditching, and alteration of tidal and freshwater stream networks. This large scale and rapid

habitat conversion has reduced rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids migrating through the Eel River Estuary, limited migration passage for adult salmonids to the upper watershed, and diminished estuarine habitat for other aquatic species, shorebirds, waterfowl, and other wildlife in the Project area and the larger Eel River Estuary.

Within the Project area, these modifications have led to significant levels of sedimentation and channel infill. Centerville Slough, once approximately 300 feet wide and over 20 feet deep, was entirely filled in due to these sediment inputs and lack of tidal flushing, leaving only a remnant swale where the historic channel once existed. Russ Creek was fully channelized, straightened, and altered from its historic configuration, resulting in sediment deposition and significantly altered drainage patterns within the Project area. The sediment has spread many feet over a broad area, creating productive agricultural lands but rendering the areas south and east of Russ Creek highly susceptible to flooding and ponding. Some areas are permanently flooded, poorly drained, or otherwise no longer suitable for agricultural production. Wave overwash events from the Pacific Ocean have compounded the flooding and ponding in the Project area. Overwash deposits have filled drainage ditches and former channels. Levee deterioration and ultimately sea level rise contribute to the flooding and ponding, creating unsuitable conditions for agricultural production and degrading habitat values.

To address these issues, the Project will enhance existing tidal wetlands and restore marginal, diked pasture to a mosaic of natural habitats including estuarine and tidal slough channels, freshwater streams, and sustainably managed agricultural pastures, to promote the resilience of the Project area as well as the viability of adjacent agricultural lands. Project components include (but are not limited to) the following: Excavate and realign approximately 1,500 linear feet of Russ Creek and establish an adjacent riparian corridor; excavate approximately four miles of Centerville Slough to re-connect the Eel River Estuary to restored tidal wetlands and tributary streams; reconnect tidal exchange to approximately 500 acres of former estuarine habitat and construct inter-tidal lagoons; lower approximately 3,000 feet of existing levee that currently separates the outer and inner marshes; elevate existing and construct a new, 4-mile earthen set-back berm to separate tidal wetlands from agricultural lands; repair an existing tide gate structure along the set-back berm; construct approximately 8,000 linear feet of back dune berms to enhance dune building processes; and lower up to 40 acres of existing agricultural uplands to create agricultural wetlands. The Project also includes public access improvements and continued control of dense-flowered cordgrass (Spartina) using mowing, grinding, excavation, and flaming.

The Project will result in enhanced tidal channels, salt marsh, and dunes. New berms will protect agricultural land uses from tidal inundation. Sediment excavated during construction will be beneficially reused within the Project area.

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

The Project will not use herbicides.

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

PROJECT FUNDING
The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Administration	$123,292	$25,000	$148,292
Design/Construction Management	$363,815	$119,375	$483,190
Construction	$9,261,741	$5,911,259	$15,173,000
Monitoring	$90,000	---	$90,000
Indirect Costs	$30,823	$5,625	$36,448
Contingency	$130,329	---	$130,329
Total	$10,000,000	$6,061,259	$16,061,259

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Administration: Project coordination; staff supervision, contractor oversight, contract management, field work, project documentation and project monitoring/reporting.
- Design/Construction Management: Finalize 100% plans, specifications and estimate. Construction management and inspection.
- Construction: Surveying, mobilization, preparation, earthwork/construction/ installation, demobilization, and revegetation.
- Monitoring: Post-construction surveys and necessary repairs.
- 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:
- Senator Mike McGuire, California State Senate, Northern California Second Senate District.
- Assemblymember Jim Wood, California Assembly, Second District

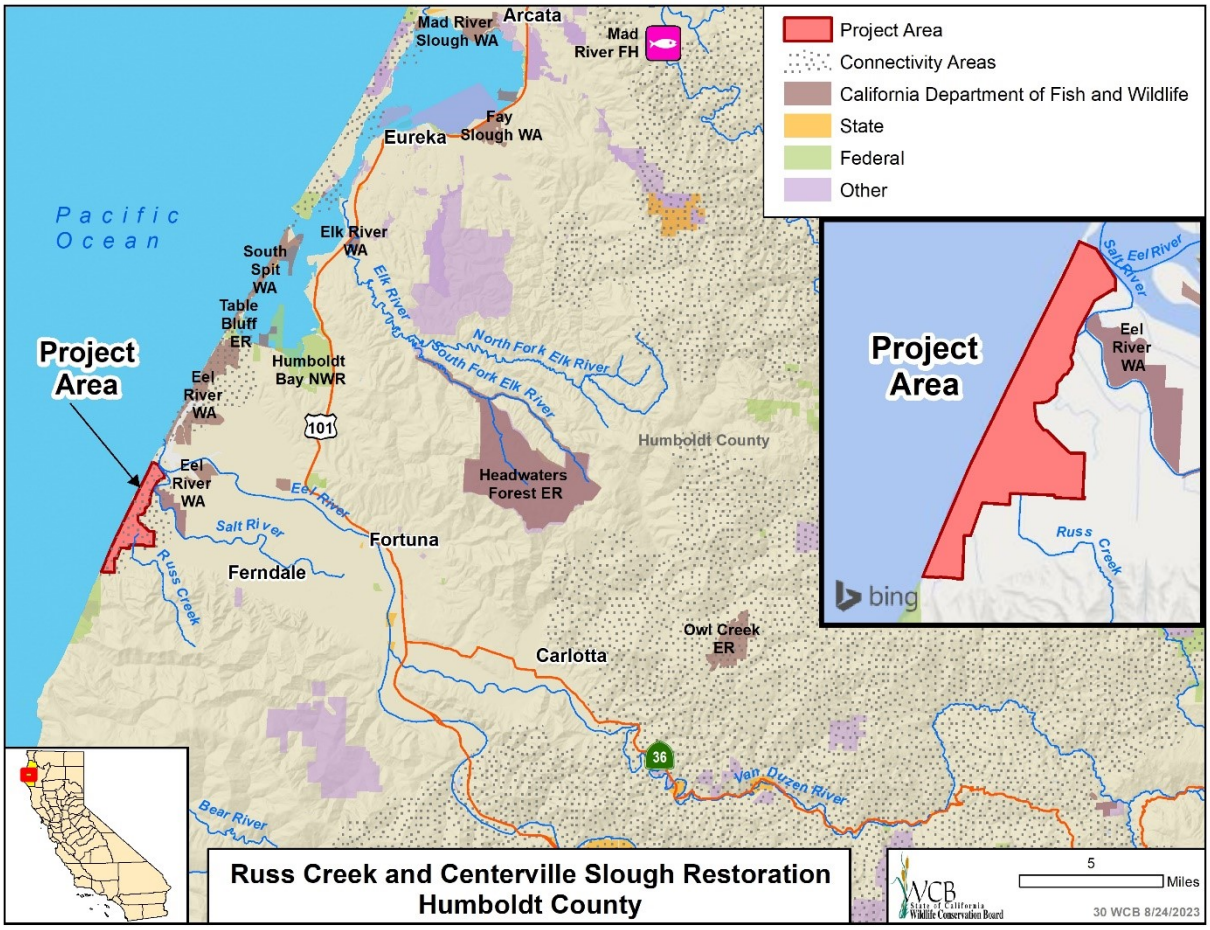
- Frazier Haney, Executive Director, The Wildlands Conservancy
- Jay Russ and Lane Russ, Russ Ranch & Timber, LLC

Opposition:

- None

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 the WCB, the appropriate NOD will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



31. Cortina Ridge Sawato Kamitlitarro Wildlife Crossing

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate $9,900,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Drought Package Provision [SB129, Sec.89(3)]; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Cortina Ridge Sawato Kamitlitarro Wildlife Crossing
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Caltrans
Amount Recommended:	$9,900,000
Landowner(s):	Caltrans
County:	Colusa
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.1, 1.2

LOCATION

The Cortina Ridge Sawato Kamitlitarro Wildlife Crossing (Project) is located along State Route 20 (SR 20), 12 miles west of the city of Williams in Colusa County. This area is within the Antelope Valley section of the greater Bear Valley. The Project site is adjacent to or connected by contiguous open space to the following WCB acquisitions:

- In 2002, WCB contributed $1,115,000 to the American Land Conservancy for a 128,896-acre conservation easement.
- In 2006, WCB contributed $880,000 to the American Land Conservancy for a 3,140-acre conservation easement.
- In 2019, WCB contributed $764,000 to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation for a 2,607-acre conservation easement.
- In 2020, the WCB contributed $508,000 to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation for a 2,415-acre conservation easement.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Cache Creek Tule Elk Herd (Herd) is the oldest free ranging herd of elk in California. The Herd was reintroduced in 1922 after suffering a near genetic extinction in the late 1800s due to unregulated market hunting. As few as 2-4, and possibly only a single breeding pair, remained in 1922. The Herd was set to range near what is now the intersection of State Routes 16 and 20, northwest of Cortina Ridge at the south end of the Bear Valley near the Cache Creek Wilderness.

Over the next 40 years the Herd repopulated as the region remained largely uninhabited and remote with SR 20 nothing more than oil on a gravel road. In 1964 the highway was paved and widened as a connecting route between the North Sacramento Valley, Lake County, and Mendocino County with increasing highway traffic as population centers became denser. The highway gradually became a physical barrier between Cortina Ridge and Bear Valley. This subdivided the

Cache Creek herd into the Cortina Ridge subherd to the south and east, and the Antelope Valley subherd to the north and west.

The Project will facilitate connectivity of the subherds by building a dedicated wildlife overpass across the highway to bridge the Cortina Ridge habitat with the Bear Valley habitat, thereby remediating the near-full direct barrier effect the highway presents. This will improve seasonal and daily movement across the highway and increase herd fitness as it relates to mating and consumption of resources necessary to maintain a healthy herd and the habitats that support them.

It is expected that by creating a safe crossing opportunity for elk as an umbrella species, the Project would have additional connectivity benefits to all other species that could use the overcrossing in the same manner, thereby creating equitable benefits to those species and their ecological roles. This includes deer, mountain lion, coyote, bear, badger and other small mammals that reside in the vicinity and have the potential to use the crossing.

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

The Project will not use herbicides.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
Caltrans has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the Project. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, Caltrans 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	$679,800	---	$679,800
Environmental Clearance and Project Delivery	$986,660	---	$986,660
Technical Studies	$291,150	---	$291,150
Construction	$7,089,000	---	$7,089,000
Contingency	$853,390	---	$853,390
Total	$9,900,000	---	$9,900,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Grant management and construction support.
- Environmental Clearance and Project Delivery: Acquisition of any necessary permits, establishment of site control, and developing and implanting traffic and safety measures.

- Technical Studies: Geotechnical investigations necessary to start construction.
- Construction: Installation of a wildlife overcrossing.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

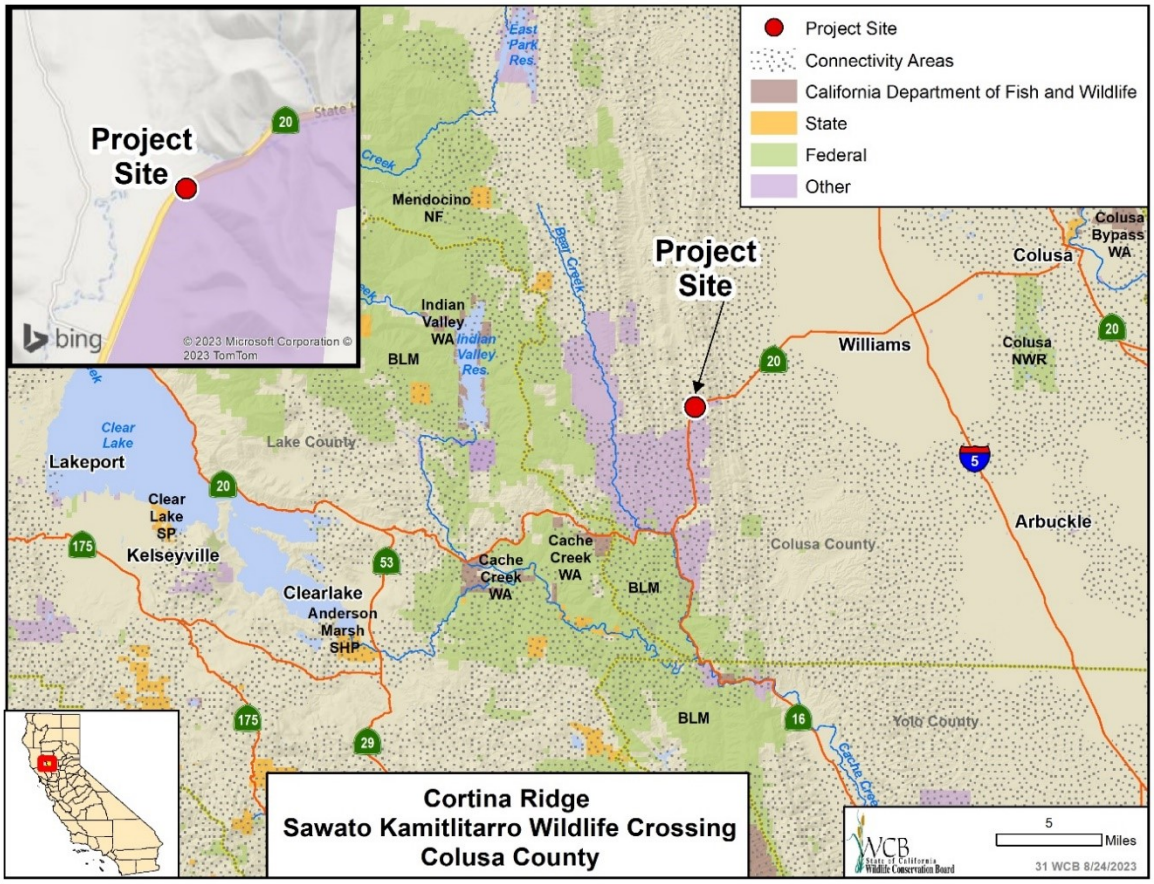
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Anthony Roberts, Tribal Chairman, Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation
- Kari Decker, Director of Habitat Stewardship, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
Caltrans, as lead agency, prepared a Negative Declaration (ND) for the project pursuant to the provisions of the CEQA. Staff considered the ND and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate NOD will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



32. Dos Rios Norte

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $22,665,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2021, Water Supply for Environmental Flows, Stream Flow Enhancement Program Provision (SB170, Sec. 54) for a grant to River Partners; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Dos Rios Norte
Project Type:	Fee Title Acquisition (1,522± acres)
Grantee:	River Partners
Amount Recommended:	$22,665,000
County:	Sutter
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.2
Objectives:	SI 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 4.3

LOCATION

The Dos Rios Norte (Property) is located within the Sutter Bypass east of Kings Landing in Sutter County and is bordered to the east by the Feather River, west by Butte Creek, and to the south by the Sacramento River. The Sutter Bypass bisects Sutter County in a northwest-southeast direction running from the Butte Sink in the north to the Sacramento River at the confluence with the Feather River in the south.

The Property is adjacent to the Sutter Bypass Wildlife Area, north of Fremont Weir Wildlife Area, and downriver from the Feather River Wildlife Area, each managed by CDFW. The Sutter National Wildlife Refuge, managed by USFWS, is to the north. Private, agricultural land uses predominate the region.

The Property is in a disadvantaged community census tract according to DWR Disadvantaged Communities Mapping Tool. River Partners intends to conduct habitat restoration of the Property in the future which restoration funding will be put back into the economy as River partners works to acquire local labor, supplies, and services. River Partners routinely works with local communities to establish volunteer opportunities associated with restoration. The Property will be open to the public for everyone’s use and enjoyment after restoration and eventually owned by public agency and managed as a wildlife area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is irregularly shaped and consists of approximately 1,522± assessed acres currently zoned for open space and agricultural uses. The topography is level. A small 15-acre developed area, located outside the bypass, includes several buildings and infrastructure to support agricultural uses.

The Property contains large areas of riparian habitat and intensive agriculture. The riparian habitat consists of mature stands of cottonwoods, oaks, and willows. Agricultural use includes organic rice, tomatoes, and other row crops. Within the Sutter Bypass, permanent crops, orchards, and infrastructure are prohibited. The Property includes important water rights to the Sacramento River, including pre- and post-1914 appropriative rights and riparian rights. These water rights are being conveyed with acquisition of the Property. When Oroville Dam was built in 1968, the state executed an agreement specifically guaranteeing water to the Property and restricting transfer of this right to any other property. Today, the Property uses approximately 7,000 acre-feet of water annually. In accordance with the funding, a condition of the grant is that River Partners will dedicate the water rights to instream flow to benefit fish and wildlife following habitat restoration.

The Property is host to high biodiversity. According to the CDFW Areas of Conservation Emphasis database, the target acquisition ranks from 4-5 in terms of species biodiversity, with a ranking of 3 for terrestrial species biodiversity and a ranking of 5 for aquatic species biodiversity. The Property seasonally hosts snow geese, sandhill cranes, ducks, and many other waterfowl species. The current landowners also report frequent sightings of deer, coyote, fox, eagles, and owls.

Restoration of the riparian areas will focus on sensitive species known to require riparian habitat including Swainson's hawk, bank swallow, Sacramento splittail, Central Valley spring-run Chinook salmon, Central Valley fall-run Chinook salmon, Central Valley steelhead, giant garter snake, and valley elderberry longhorn beetle. Restoration will provide vital habitat and conditions for migratory birds, western yellow billed cuckoos, and other riparian-dependent avian species including special status species least Bell's vireo and willow flycatcher.

Numerous studies and plans, including the CDFW Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) Conservation Strategy for Restoration of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, Sacramento Valley and San Joaquin Valley Regions (CDFW, 2014) have identified the importance of inundated floodplain for juvenile Chinook salmon, a host of other aquatic and terrestrial species, and the food web resources they depend upon. The ERP Conservation Strategy prioritizes management of floodplains, and specifically names the Sutter Bypass as one of four priorities for restoring habitat in the Central Valley "*CONSERVATION PRIORITY 4: Manage floodplain habitats to enhance seasonal shallow water benefits for native fish and wildlife, including the Yolo and Sutter bypasses."*

Other plans identify conservation, restoration, and enhancement of riparian habitats and floodplains as critical for restoring ecosystem health, supporting salmonid populations, and improving the safety and reliability of the state's flood control system in an era of increased severe flooding due to climate change. These plans include the SWAP, NMFS 2014 Recovery Plan, Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP) Conservation Strategy/Final Restoration Plan for the Anadromous Fish Restoration Program (AFRP), Lower Feather River Corridor

Management Plan (DWR 2014), and Feather River Region Regional Flood Management Plan (2014).

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
Upon acquisition, River Partners will own and manage the Property. River Partners will commence a long-term planning and restoration project to restore the floodplain, wetland, and riparian habitats. The goal is to maximize the climate resiliency of the habitats for the long-term benefit of wildlife and public use. Public uses will be hunting, fishing, birding, and wildlife viewing. Agricultural uses will be accommodated but phased out as restoration is undertaken. Following habitat restoration of the Property, the water rights will be dedicated to in-stream flow to benefit special status salmonid species and ecosystem health. Once restoration is complete, River Partners plans to transfer ownership and management to a yet-to-be-identified public agency which will be required to assume the obligations of the WCB grant agreement.

PROJECT FUNDING
The DGS approved fair market value is $22,665,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$22,665,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$22,665,000

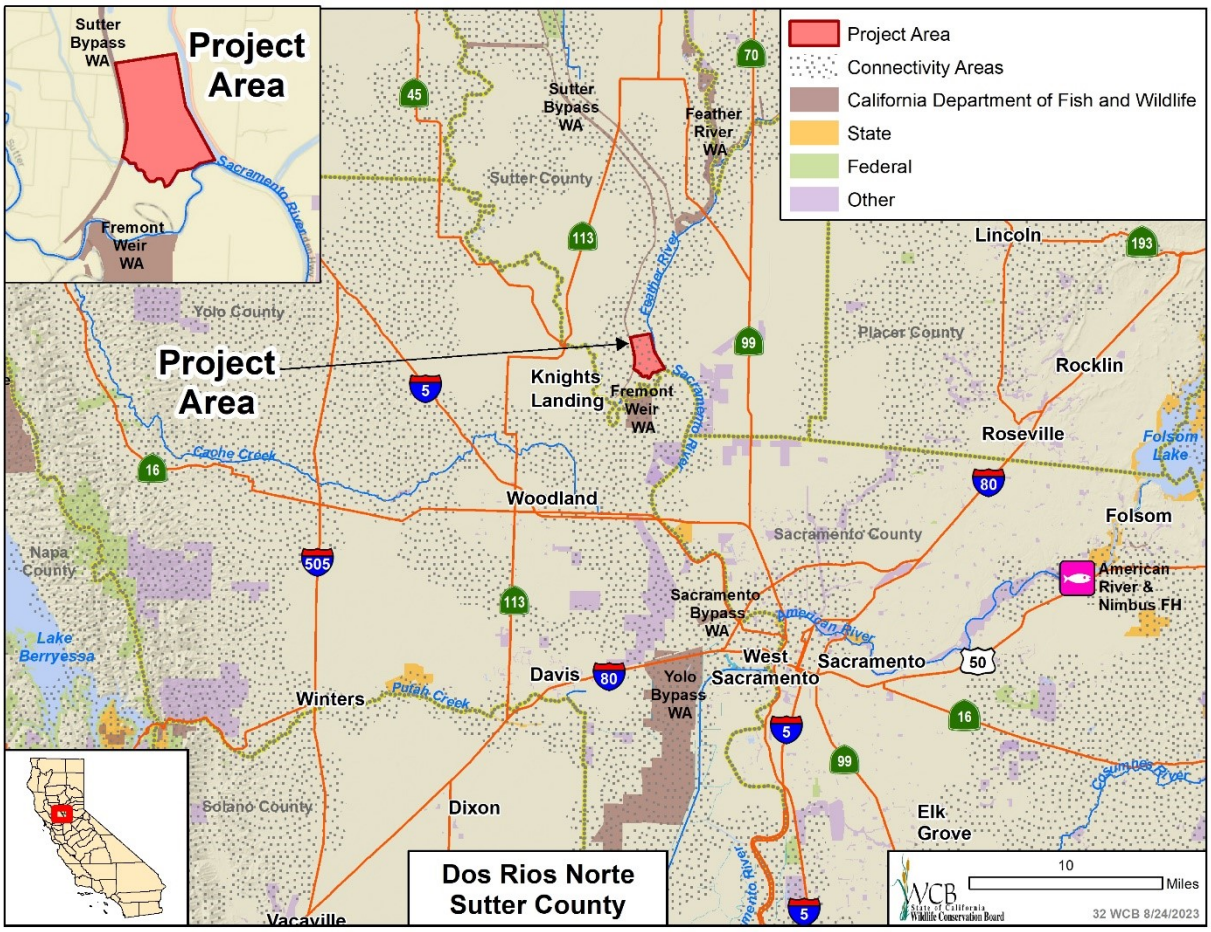
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION (this section needs to be completed)
Support:

- None Received

Opposition:

- Nove 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.


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Sutter Bypass WA
Project Area
Fremont Weir WA
Sacramento River
Yolo County
Project Area
Knights Landing
Fremont Weir WA
Sutter Bypass WA
Feather River WA
Sutter County
Feather River
Sacramento River
Lincoln
Placer County
Rocklin
Roseville
Folsom Lake
Folsom
Cache Creek
Woodland
Napa County
Sacramento County
American River & Nimbus FH
Lake Berryessa
Sacramento Bypass WA
American River
West Sacramento
Sacramento
Davis
Yolo Bypass WA
Putah Creek
Winters
Solano County
Dixon
Elk Grove
Mokelumne River
Dos Rios Norte
Sutter County
10
Miles
WCB
32 WCB 8/24/2023

33. Middle Truckee Watershed Forest Health

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $8,272,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Nature Based Solutions – Cascades and High Sierra Upper Watersheds Program Provision [AB102, Sec. 85(3)(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:	Middle Truckee Watershed Forest Health
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	National Forest Foundation
Amount Recommended:	$8,272,000
Funding Partners:	U.S. Forest Service
Landowner(s):	U.S. Forest Service
County:	Nevada, Placer, Sierra
Program:	California Forest Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2

LOCATION

The Middle Truckee Watershed Forest Health (Project) project area is comprised of approximately 5,924 acres on three USFS properties within the Middle Truckee River watershed: the Cabin Creek property located approximately two miles south of Truckee in Placer County, the Boca property located approximately five miles northeast of Truckee in Nevada County, and the Sayles property located approximately ten miles southeast of Loyalton in Sierra County.

Two of the three project sites (Boca and Sayles) are within and benefit a DAC by allowing public access and hosting a significant level of recreation activity. Once complete, the Project will provide additional benefits of wildfire hazard reduction and habitat preservation in the wildland urban interface near Loyalton (a DAC census tract) and Truckee.

The Project is located within the historical territory of the Washoe people. The National Forest Foundation (NFF) is committed to involving Tribal members early in the planning processes and to engage in meaningful consultation with the Washoe Tribe to ensure the protection, care, access, and stewardship of the Tribes culturally affiliated territory.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The past 100-plus years of fire suppression in the 315,000-acre Middle Truckee River (MTR) watershed has resulted in increased forest stand density, lower fire frequency, and greater fire severity. These conditions caused significant impacts on the watershed's natural resources including forests, meadows, and streams, and have changed the composition, structure, and overall balance of these important ecological systems. The Project area is adjacent to several recent catastrophic wildfires including the Dixie Fire to the north, the Caldor Fire to the south, and the Mosquito Fire to the west. NEPA analysis has also concluded that

without intervention, historically high levels of tree mortality will continue to increase and vital ecological features including meadows and aspen will continue to disappear from across the watershed.

Landscape-level analysis and modeling of the current conditions, conducted by the Middle Truckee River Watershed Forest Partnership and Tahoe National Forest, indicate that the forest and other habitats in the MTR watershed are not resilient to a variety of disturbances. Forest conditions in the watershed are creating an increased risk to wildlife, especially sensitive species which depend on mature forests such as California spotted owl and northern goshawk.

The Project will allow forest health implementation on approximately 1,924 acres on the Cabin Creek property and planning on approximately 4,000 acres of the Boca and Sayles properties. The prioritization of these sites has been guided by the recently drafted 10-year Vegetation and Watershed Management Plan. This plan identifies and prioritizes existing “shovel-ready” projects for implementation and creates a road map for the environmental planning projects needed to support systematic landscape-scale restoration work in future years.

Cabin Creek forest health implementation treatments will include approximately 1,800 acres of mastication, 1,600 acres of commercial timber thinning (paid for with timber value), 75 acres of thin, grapple pile and fire line construction, 45 acres of hand thin and chip, and 13 acres of meadow restoration through conifer removal.

The proposed treatments have been designed to build a foundation of ecological resilience with the objectives of restoring the balance of tree species, reducing ladder fuels, creating varied forest stand densities, reconnecting hydrology within and across meadow and upland habitats, and providing or improving wildlife habitat for sensitive species. These treatments will add to California’s commitment to treating one million acres of forest annually and the USFS commitment of treating 500,000 of those acres within California. The Project’s secondary benefits include reduced wildfire hazard in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) across the watershed, protecting homes, important municipal drinking and agricultural water infrastructure, and critical ingress and egress routes for emergency evacuation.

The Sayles project area is located just north of Stampede Reservoir and east of the Highway 89 corridor in Sierra County. Large meadow complexes are found within the Project site, providing the opportunity to significantly enhance high-quality wildlife habitat conditions, while at the same time, reducing the potential wildfire severity and restoring forest health conditions. After planning, the Project size is expected to be 2,000-3,000 acres.

The Boca project area is located just west of Boca Reservoir and north of Highway 80. Significant road networks have bisected existing meadow areas and disrupted the natural flow of surface and ground waters. The Project assessment will examine opportunities to reduce wildfire severity and restore forest and meadow

wildlife habitat. After planning, the Project size is expected to be 2,000-3,000 acres.

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

This Project will not use herbicide.

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

PROJECT FUNDING
The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	$201,775	$75,000	$276,775
Forest Health Implementation	$4,902,000	---	$4,902,000
Planning & NEPA Compliance	$1,528,272	---	$1,528,272
Indirect Costs	$888,185	---	$888,185
Contingency	$751,768	---	$751,768
Total	$8,272,000	$75,000	$8,347,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Grant administration, including invoicing and reporting, stakeholder engagement, subcontractor management, and permit acquisition.
- Forest Health Implementation: Vegetation management treatments on 1,924 acres for forest resilience and habitat enhancement.
- Planning and NEPA Compliance: 4,000-6,000 acres of planning and NEPA compliance for the Boca and Sayles properties including biological and cultural resource surveys.
- 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:
- Ed Scofield, Chair, Nevada County Board of Supervisors
- Kerri Timmer, Regional Forest Health Coordinator, Placer County

- Kevin McKechnie, Fire Chief Truckee Fire Protection District President, Easter Placer County Fire Chiefs Joint Powers Authority
- Ed Ilana, Forest Supervisor, Tahoe National Forest, USFS

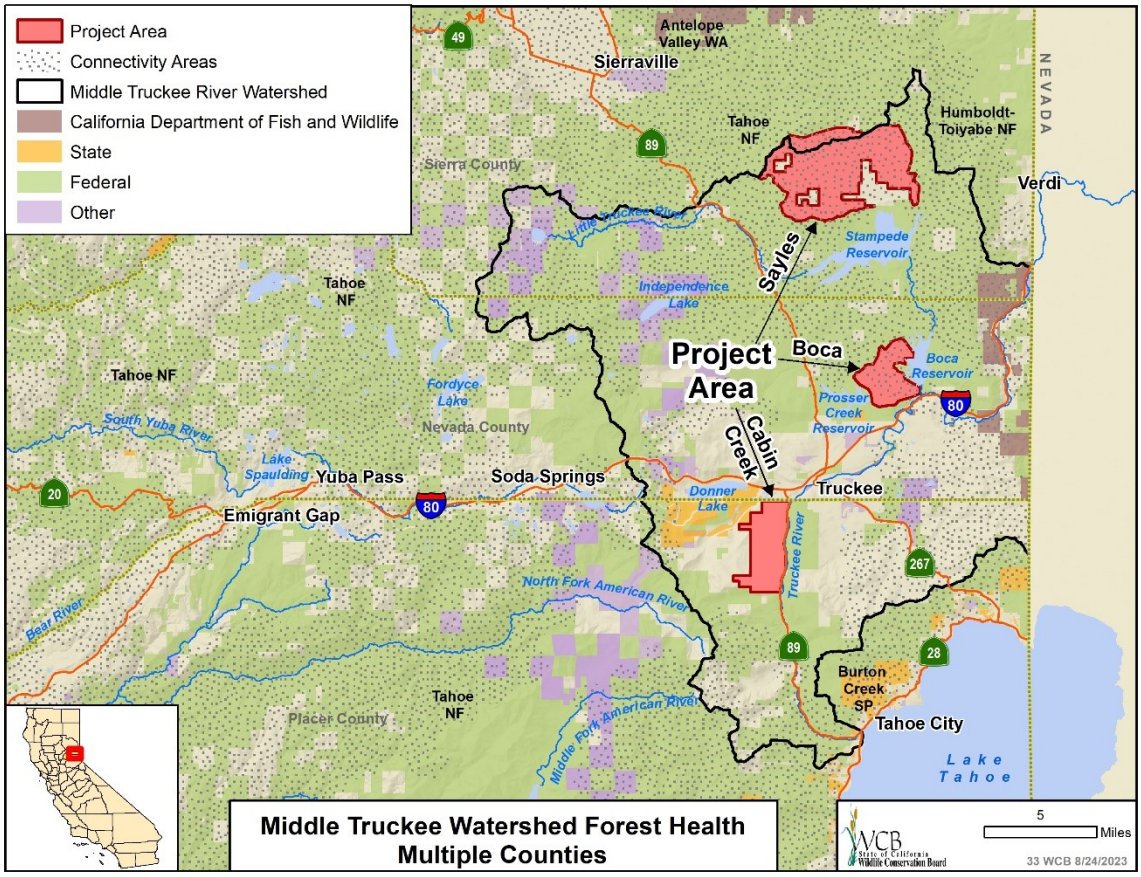
Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Governor Jerry Brown signed Senate Bill 901, on September 21, 2018 which addressed a number of wildfire-related items including the creation of Public Resources Code 4799.05 (d)(1) Division 13 (Commencing with Section 21000), which provides that CEQA does not apply to projects that include prescribed fire, thinning, or fuel reduction actions undertaken on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildlife that have been reviewed under the federal National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

The planning projects are 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.



34. Walt Ranch

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $7,000,000 from the General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision (SB170, Sec. 53.5) for the grant to Land Trust of Napa County; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Walt Ranch
Project Type:	Fee Title Acquisition (2,300± acres)
Grantee:	Land Trust of Napa County
Amount Recommended:	$7,000,000
Funding Partners:	California State Coastal Conservancy, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, The Conservation Fund, Landowner Donation
County:	Napa
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan	Goals: A.1, A.2, A.3, C.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.4, 2.5

LOCATION

Walt Ranch (Property) is located in southeastern, unincorporated Napa County. The Property is located on Monticello Road, near the intersection of State Routes 121 and 128, in the Napa River and Putah Creek watersheds. The Property is located within two important wildlife corridors, the Marin Coast (Point Reyes National Seashore) to Mendocino National Forest corridor and the Blue Ridge corridor, and abuts over 5,500 acres of protected land, including a reservoir for the City of Napa. Prior WCB-funded acquisitions in the surrounding area include Montesol conservation easement (2017; 7,266 acres), Wildlake conservation easement (2012; 3,029 acres), and Pacific Union College conservation easement (2018; 864 acres). The Property is a critical addition to the wildlife corridor that extends from the San Francisco Bay Area to the Oregon border. The Property is not located within a disadvantaged community.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is a scenic, 2,300± acre ranch, irregular in shape, with mildly rolling contours to very steep terrain at the highest elevations. There has been very little use of the Property for decades, there are no structures and, other than 5.5 acres of vineyards, the Property is completely undeveloped. The zoning is Agriculture Watershed District, there is an approved erosion control plan that would permit development of approximately 215 acres of additional vineyards, and there are 34 discrete legal building site entitlements, all indicating threat of vineyard and estate home development. Grant funding from California State Coastal Conservancy was conditioned with an offer to dedicate the land, permanently protecting 465 acres of the 2,300-acre property. If approved, this proposed acquisition would remove the

threat of development over the remaining acreage and ensure permanent conservation.

The Property is within two watersheds, Napa River and Putah Creek/Lake Berryessa, and contains multiple water resources: seeps, seasonal wetlands, and several streams including Milliken Creek, a municipal water source for the 80,000 residents of the city of Napa. The Property is forested, with mixed hardwood and oak woodlands, but a complex geology, varied soil types, and a broad range of elevations and slopes have led to a wide range of additional vegetation types including chamise, chaparral, serpentine meadows, montane hardwood, and extensive open grasslands.

This mosaic of natural features has led to a high ranking for biodiversity. Rare plants identified on the Property include Jepson's leptosiphon, hollyleaf, Napa bluecurls, narrow-flowered California brodiaea, dwarf calicoflower, and Northern California black walnut. Priority species include foothill yellow-legged frog, western red bat, pallid bat, and western pond turtle.

The elevational gradient and the Property's water resources will provide refugia during climate change thereby providing the opportunity for animals and plants to move upwards as well as along the larger corridors. The area has sufficient elevation to provide a haven for wildlife and plants escaping sea level rise. While much of Napa Valley could be affected by sea level rise, if the most severe projections become reality, this site, and the priority wildlife corridor extending through it, will be high enough to remain unaffected.

The Property is within the Bay-Delta Bioregion and is consistent with the SWAP goals of increasing conservation of oak woodland, riparian, and grassland habitats. The Property ranks high to medium priority for significant habitats in CDFW's Areas of Conservation Emphasis study and contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathways 1: Accelerate Regionally Led Conservation, 2. Execute Strategic Land Acquisitions, and 8: Align Investments to Maximize Conservation Benefits.

CDFW's Areas of Conservation Emphasis ranks the property at 5, the highest ranking, for State Biodiversity Rank, Terrestrial Biodiversity Rank, Terrestrial Irreplaceability Rank, and Terrestrial Connectivity Rank. Additionally, the Property helps meet the goals of the California Water Action Plan, Safeguarding California Plan, Bay Area Conservation Lands Network, Bay Area Critical Linkages Project, Plan Bay Area, and Bay Area Greenprint.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
Once acquired, the Property with be owned by Land Trust of Napa County as a nature preserve. Although the management plan is pending development, initial assessments point to the need for reshaping old ranch roads to reduce erosion, and prescribed burns and rotational grazing to restore native vegetation. Long-term monitoring will be provided per the grant agreement. The future management plan

will identify opportunities for public access that are compatible with the protection of natural values.

Land Trust of Napa County currently owns and manages over 16,000 acres of preserves. Land Trust of Napa County science and stewardship staff, with assistance from a network of volunteers, partners, and contractors, carry out a wide range of stewardship activities on these properties.

PROJECT FUNDING
Land Trust of Napa County closed escrow on the purchase of the Property with grant funding from California State Coastal Conservancy and a combination of grant funding and loans from Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and The Conservation Fund. The Land Trust of Napa County is requesting $7,000,000 pay off the loans. Without this grant from WCB, repaying the loans and permanent protection of the Property would be jeopardized.

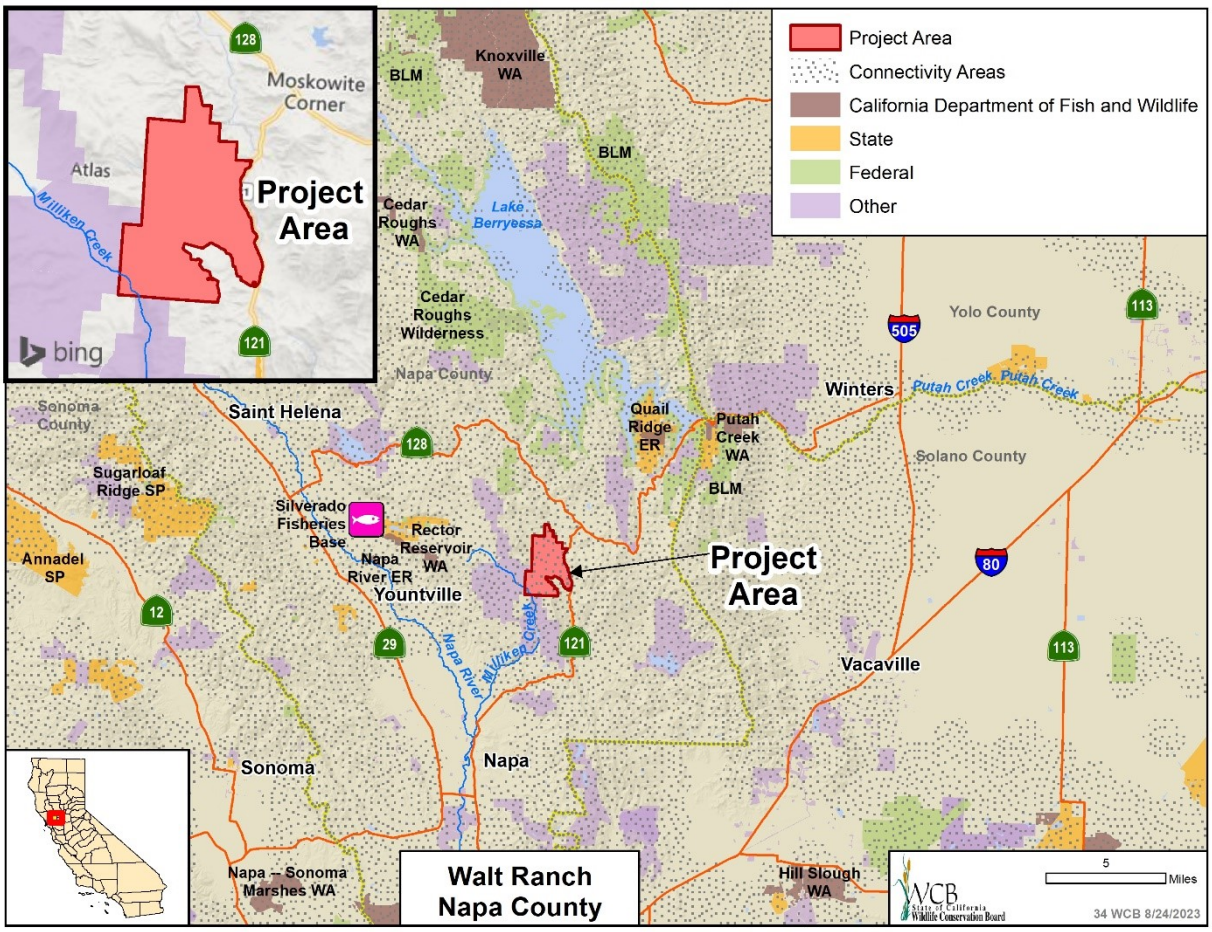
The DGS approved fair market value is $24,500,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$7,000,000
Property Owner Bargain Sale	$6,500,000
California State Coastal Conservancy	$7,000,000
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation	$4,000,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$24,500,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:
- United States Congressman Mike Thompson
- California Senator Bill Dodd
- California Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry

Opposition:
- None

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.


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Moskowite Corner
Atlas
Milliken Creek
Project Area
bing
Knoxville WA
BLM
Lake Berryessa
Cedar Roughs WA
Cedar Roughs Wilderness
Napa County
Sonoma County
Saint Helena
Sugarloaf Ridge SP
Annadel SP
Silverado Fisheries Base
Rector Reservoir WA
Napa River ER
Yountville
Napa River
Milliken Creek
Quail Ridge ER
Putah Creek WA
BLM
Project Area
Yolo County
Winters
Putah Creek
Solano County
Vacaville
Sonoma
Napa
Napa – Sonoma Marshes WA
Walt Ranch
Napa County
Hill Slough WA
128
121
29
12
505
80
113
WCB
State of California
Wildlife Conservation Board
5
Miles
34 WCB 8/24/2023

35. San Joaquin and Tulare Basin Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $13,138,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Nature Based Solutions, San Joaquin Valley Floodplain Restoration Provision [AB179, Sec. 19.58(b)(2)]; 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 Joaquin and Tulare Basin Planning Project
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	River Partners
Amount Recommended:	$13,138,000
Funding Partners:	None
Landowner(s):	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, State Parks, City of Bakersfield, Bureau of Reclamation, and other private lands
County:	Fresno, Kern, Merced, Stanislaus
Program:	Riparian Program
Strategic Plan:	Goals : B.1 Objectives: SI 2.2

LOCATION

The San Joaquin and Tulare Basin Planning (Project) will occur on a combination of public and private lands between Modesto and Bakersfield. The Project is focused on floodplains associated with the San Joaquin River and its tributaries (Tuolumne River and Bear Creek), and the Lower Kern River. With such a large project boundary, the Project aims to identify areas to reconnect river corridors, provide space for water to safely spread, improve water quality and flood safety for valley communities most at risk.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

River Partners was awarded a $40 million allocation from the state budget under SB 179 to deliver multi-benefit floodplain reconnection, habitat restoration, and habitat maintenance projects in the San Joaquin and Tulare basins. This Project seeks to accelerate the pace and scale of floodplain restoration in the San Joaquin Valley and Tulare Basin. Planning activities will enhance existing habitat and expand corridors for terrestrial species. In cases where there is flexibility and the site conditions are appropriate, plans will design opportunities for floodplain reconnection to provide more rearing habitat for targeted fish species. Two project components have the power to advance this and deliver conservation outcomes at scale: 1) Results-driven planning and permitting for new projects, 2) Scientific research of factors affecting restoration today.

Floodplain restoration at scale is dependent on the ability to set the vision for habitat establishment and meet multiple regulatory hurdles before suspending or modifying existing land uses, expand river corridors, and put native plants in the ground. Planning and permitting through this Project would queue between 3,000

and 6,000 acres for floodplain restoration implementation in parallel and future agreements.

The San Joaquin Valley and Tulare Basin are highly modified landscapes that are challenged by climate change. With a small fraction of native riparian ecosystems present as compared to historic conditions and extensive groundwater overdraft, there is limited natural resilience to cycles of drought, flood, and fire. Groundwater dependent ecosystems in this area are severely degraded, presenting wildlife with fragmented migration corridors, reduced food, and limited habitat availability. Floodplain restoration is limited by availability of native seed of known genetic origin, science-based outcomes to inform improved design, required compliance and permitting hurdles, as well as strong collaborations generating projects and sustaining large-scale restoration vision.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 1: Accelerate Regionally Led Conservation, 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	$1,782,936	---	$1,782,936
Planning and Permitting	$5,010,009	---	$5,010,009
Restoration Monitoring and Research	$4,631,446	---	$4,631,446
Indirect	$1,713,609	---	$1,713,609
Total	$13,138,000	---	$13,138,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: This specific task includes managing the grant agreement, communicating with agency partners and stakeholders on project progress, administering subcontracts, invoicing, quarterly progress and final reports, and data management.
- Planning and Permitting: Applicant will develop restoration plans, complete environmental compliance documents, and submit permit applications required to implement multiple floodplain restoration projects in the San Joaquin Valley and Tulare Basin.
- Restoration Monitoring and Research: Biological outcomes resulting from restoration will be assessed using a Before After Control Impact design (BACI). Through strategic research partnerships, apply emerging methodologies to assess restoration sites, facilitate analysis of multi-benefit outcomes, and develop and test production methods of new ecotypes of native seed to use in future restoration projects in the San Joaquin Valley and Tulare Basin.

- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.

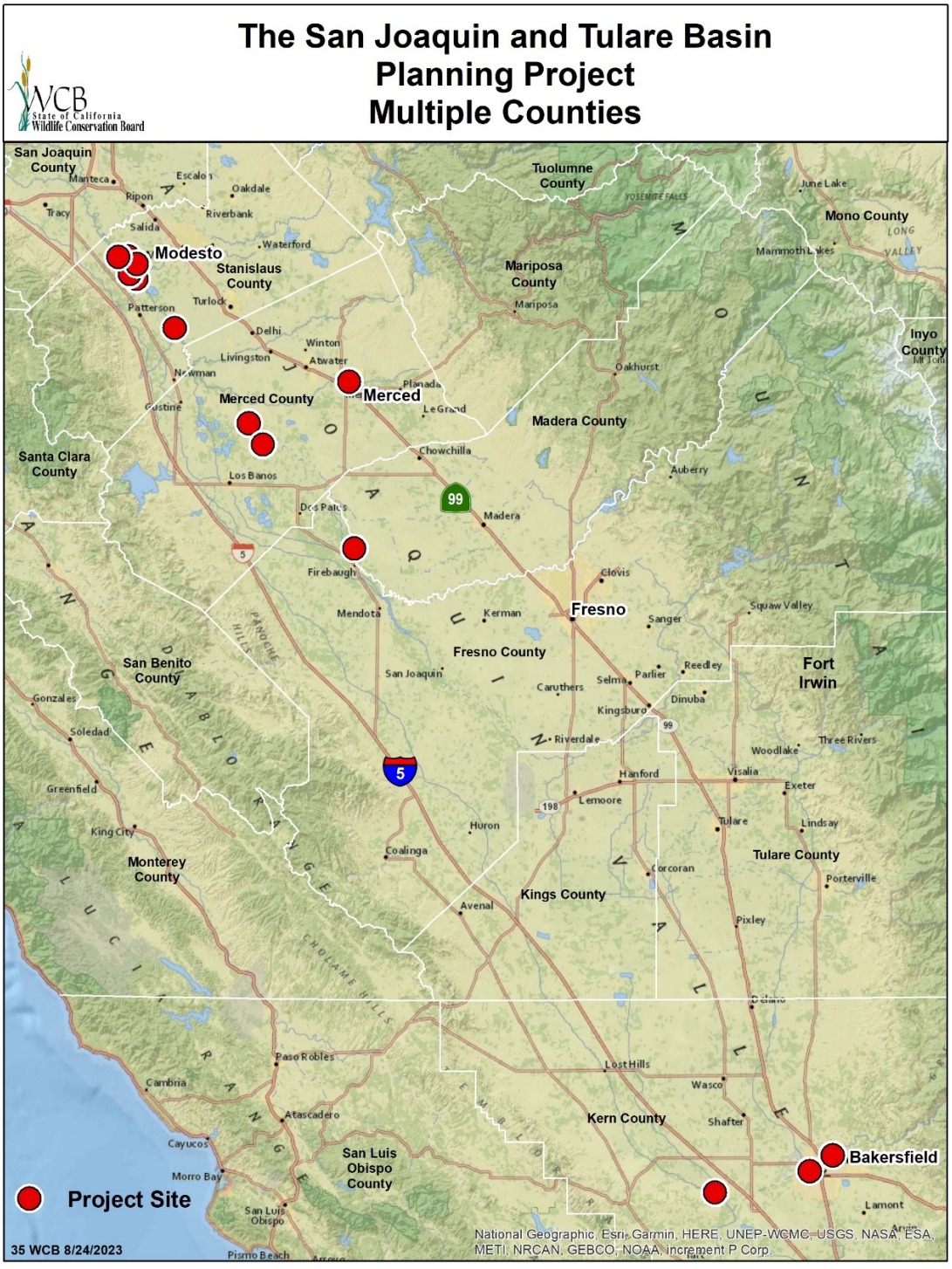
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- 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.


The San Joaquin and Tulare Basin
Planning Project
Multiple Counties
WCB
State of California
Wildlife Conservation Board
San Joaquin County
Tuolumne County
Mono County
Modesto
Stanislaus County
Mariposa County
Merced
Merced County
Madera County
Inyo County
Santa Clara County
Fresno
Fresno County
San Benito County
Fort Irwin
Tulare County
Kings County
Monterey County
San Luis Obispo County
Kern County
Bakersfield
Project Site
35 WCB 8/24/2023
National Geographic, Esri, Garmin, HERE, UNEP-WCMC, USGS, NASA, ESA, METI, NRCAN, GEBCO, NOAA, increment P Corp.

36. San Joaquin River Floodplain Restoration Complex

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings for three separate projects under CEQA and approve each project as proposed; allocate $7,158,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Nature Based Solutions, San Joaquin Valley Floodplain Restoration Provision [AB179, Sec. 19.58(b)(2)]; 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 Joaquin River Floodplain Restoration Complex
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	River Partners
Amount Recommended:	$7,158,000
Funding Partners:	California Department of Water Resources, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Landowner(s):	River Partners, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
County:	Stanislaus
Program:	Riparian Program
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.5

LOCATION

The San Joaquin River Floodplain Restoration Complex (Project) consists of three distinct projects at three separate sites along the San Joaquin River in Stanislaus County. From north to south, these sites include the 1,603-acre Dos Rios River Ranch (Dos Rios) that is five miles west of Modesto, the 285-acre Grayson Riverbend Preserve (Grayson) that is one mile northeast of the town of Grayson, and the 251-acre Crows Landing River Ranch (Crows Landing) that is five miles east of the town of Patterson. Dos Rios and Crows Landing are owned by River Partners and Grayson is owned by the USFWS.

Dos Rios and Grayson are on the southern border of the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge (SJRNWR) and are part of one of the largest contiguous block of riparian habitat restoration in the Central Valley. These sites are separated by the San Joaquin River and together have approximately 10.5 miles of river frontage and over 100 acres of remnant riparian habitat. Dos Rios is in an ecologically critical location at the confluence of the San Joaquin River and its largest tributary, the Tuolumne River, and is immediately adjacent to the 497-acre Hidden Valley Dairy that WCB helped acquire in 2013.

Crows Landing is situated on the San Joaquin River between SJRNWR and the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge (SLNWR) and was formerly the Mendonca Dairy. USACE levees protect 78 acres of the property, while 135 acres are protected by private berms created by farmers, and the rest of the property is active floodplain. It is comprised of a diversity of natural features, including 1.75 miles of river frontage, approximately 50 acres of remnant riparian forests, a 5-acre lake on the wet side of the federal levee, and a 3.5-acre lake on the dry side of the federal levee. Adjacent properties comprise full-time farming operations centered

on the production of almonds, walnuts, cherries, alfalfa, and irrigated crops. River Partners acquired the property in 2018 to conserve primary floodplain lands within the river's designated floodway and to convert the property to high-quality floodplain habitat.

All three sites are within a DAC or SDAC according to DWR maps and CalEnviroScreen. Furthermore, CalEnviroScreen indicates that each site is in a climate-vulnerable community with drinking water, groundwater threats, and pesticide values being in the top 25 percentile. In terms of public parks and outdoor recreational facilities, Crows Landing has been identified as one of the most underserved communities in California. The Project will benefit these communities by reducing flood risk, recharging groundwater, and reducing the amount of chemicals applied at these sites over time. Additionally, once all habitat restoration is completed at Crows Landing, the intent is to transfer ownership and management of the property to USFWS to incorporate it into their refuge system and have it be open for public access.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
River Partners was awarded a $40 million allocation from the state budget under SB 179 to deliver multi-benefit floodplain reconnection, habitat restoration, and habitat maintenance projects in the San Joaquin and Tulare basins. The Project will expend the first installment of this allocation on floodplain restoration benefiting dwindling wildlife and habitat maintenance, as described below.

Dos Rios has been a priority for conservation and restoration since 2012 when WCB helped acquire the property for wildlife habitat preservation, restoration, and management. Following its acquisition, DWR funded the planning and development of habitat restoration and in 2013 WCB funded the first phase of this multi-phase restoration project. More recently, WCB's Stream Flow Enhancement program funded a water rights petition to the State Water Resources Control Board to dedicate up to 5,400-acre feet of the property's riparian water rights to the confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin rivers. In spring 2021, River Partners planted the final 211 acres of restoration (Phase 4) with funding from CDFW. Recent flooding triggered by this winter's atmospheric rivers has drowned a significant portion of the site's new plantings at Phase 4 and compromised the success of common reed control along Steenstrup Slough.

Grayson was acquired in 2016 with funding from WCB's Stream Flow Enhancement program for the purposes of wildlife habitat preservation, restoration, improved flood management, improved groundwater recharge potential, and improved water quality. In 2016, the Stream Flow Enhancement program also funded the planning and development of habitat restoration of the property with the overarching goal to re-establish a functioning and dynamic riparian corridor that provides multiple benefits to people and wildlife in the area. In 2022, River Partners received a DWR grant to implement the habitat restoration and installed the new plants by early summer. Like Dos Rios, Grayson was inundated by floodwaters

and the young plants did not survive being under water for several months and the property's infrastructure was also compromised.

The Project goal for Dos Rios and Grayson is to help these sites recover from flood damage and achieve their original goals of creating habitat for multiple bird species, expanding suitable habitat for special status species including the riparian brush rabbit, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, riparian woodrat, least Bell's vireo, Swainson's hawk, and Chinook salmon, and ensuring the habitat can serve as flood protection for downstream communities and is resilient to climate change. To achieve this goal the Project will repair essential infrastructure at Grayson, replant up to 330 acres of riparian vegetation (150 acres at Dos Rios and 180 acres at Grayson), enhance the edges of Steenstrup Slough to prevent reinvasion by common reed, and add an additional 2.5 years of maintenance and monitoring to ensure successful establishment of native vegetation.

For over a century Crows Landing was operated as a dairy farm and much of its native riparian habitat was removed to support row crops and dairy operations. Federal levees and farmer-constructed berms further degraded the site by preventing floodwaters from spreading across the river's historical floodplain. In 2018, River Partners acquired the property with funding from CDFW, DWR, and Reclamation District 2092 for the purpose of conserving primary floodplain lands located within the designated floodway of the San Joaquin River and to subsequently convert these lands to high-quality floodplain habitat benefiting native species of fish, mammals, birds, and insects. The Project goal for Crows Landing is to begin the first phase of restoration and provide suitable habitat for endangered and threatened wildlife species and native pollinators. This goal will be accomplished by removing the dairy buildings and cleaning a dairy lagoon to prepare and plant approximately 75 acres of native riparian habitat on the dry side of the federal levee. Restoration on the riverside of the levee is pending planning and permitting and is not part of the Project.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship; and Pathway 10: Evaluate Conservation Outcomes and Adaptively Manage.

The Project plans to use tilling and mowing will as the main weed control mechanism at all three sites. Chemical control will be reserved for larger infestations following tillage and mowing. Non-glyphosate products will be used including Glufosinate, Imazapyr, Triclopyr, and Chlorsulfuron to treat perennial pepperweed, black mustard, stinkwort, poison hemlock, and ripgut brome. Glyphosate will not be used. Manual and mechanical methods will be used initially to remove above ground biomass and to reduce the amount of chemical used. Any chemical applications within 25 feet of water will use aquatically approved formulas and applicators will spray away from the water (i.e., standing at water's edge spraying towards land). Best management practices will be used around other

sensitive resources including elderberry plants, areas adjacent to flowing water, high water tables, and sandy soils.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
River Partners has adopted a Management Plan for each site that guides management actions for the property, including management of each Project. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, River Partners 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	$111,827	$1,168	$112,995
Permitting & Design	$82,909	---	$82,909
Site Preparation	$1,142,679	---	$1,142,679
Earthwork & Infrastructure	$329,873	---	$329,873
Revegetation	$794,326		$794,326
Maintenance & Monitoring	$3,174,416	$1,221,982	$4,396,398
Indirect	$871,291	---	$871,291
Contingency	$650,679	---	$650,679
Total	$7,158,000	$1,223,150	$8,381,150

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Contracting, administering subcontracts, project coordination, scheduling, procurement, invoicing, and reporting.
- Permitting and Design: Finalize dairy lagoon remediation plan and associated permits and finalize designs for irrigation system and river pump fish screens.
- Site Preparation: Control invasive plants using an integrated pest management approach, prepare berms for planting, install new irrigation system.
- Earthwork and Infrastructure: Remove dairy builds, clean dairy lagoon, repair roads, clear flood debris, replace river pumps, and repair existing irrigation systems.
- Revegetation: Replant native riparian vegetation at Dos Rios and Grayson, plant up to 8,000 sedge plugs along Steenstrup Slough, and install new native plants, including cuttings, potted stock, and seed at Crows Landing.
- Maintenance and Monitoring: Mowing, herbicide application, native plant protection measures, rogation system inspections and repairs, and annual qualitative and quantitative project performance monitoring for plants, wildlife, and insects.
- 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

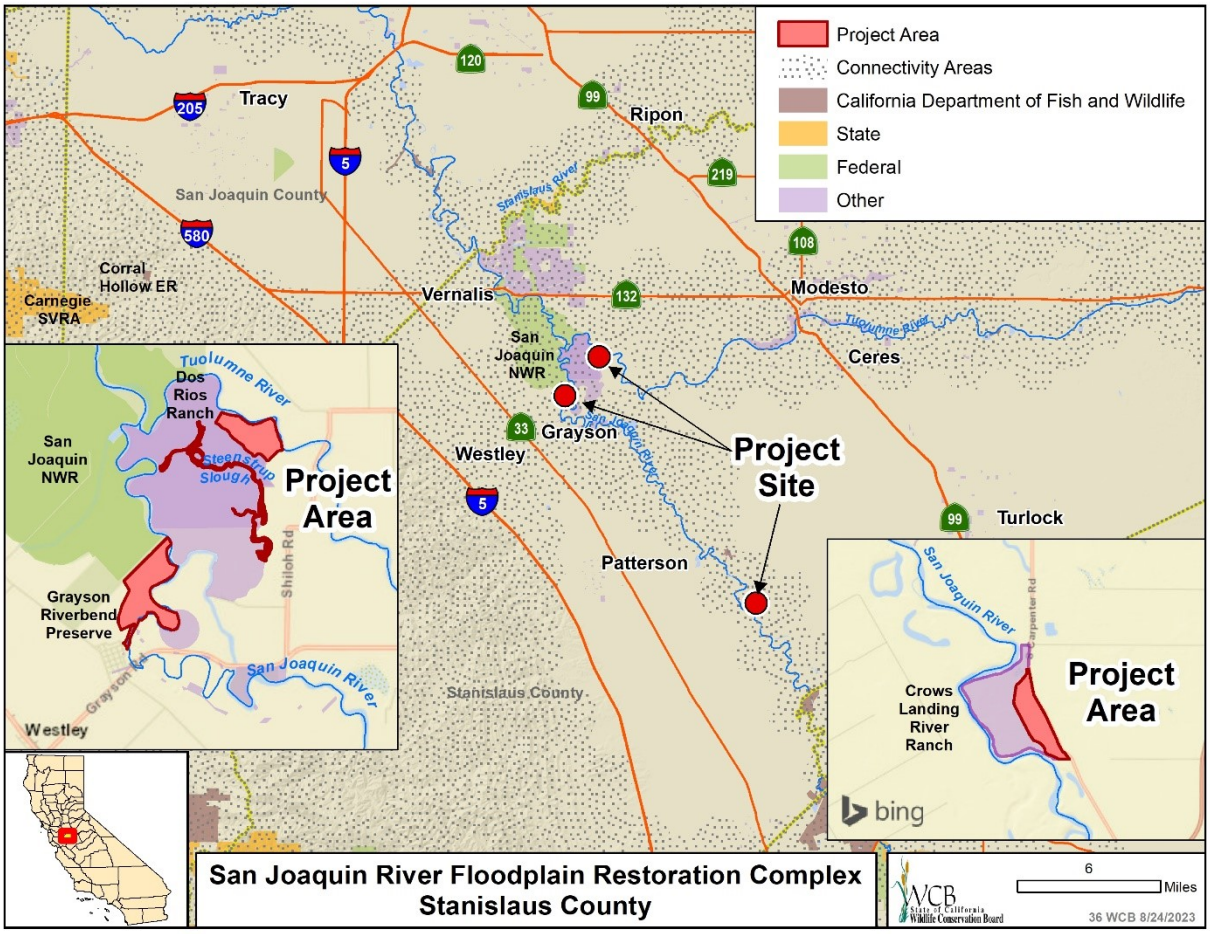
Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
Reclamation District 2092, as lead agency, prepared an ND for the Dos Rios project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA. Staff considered the ND 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.

Reclamation District 2092, as lead agency, prepared an ND for the Grayson project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA. Staff considered the ND 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.

Reclamation District 2092, as lead agency, prepared an ND for the Crows Landing project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA. Staff considered the ND 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.


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Tracy
Ripon
San Joaquin County
Corral Hollow ER
Carnegie SVRA
Vernalis
Modesto
Ceres
San Joaquin NWR
Grayson
Westley
Project Site
Patterson
Turlock
Stanislaus County
Tuolumne River
Dos Rios Ranch
Steenstrup Slough
Project Area
Shiloh Rd
Grayson Riverbend Preserve
San Joaquin River
Crows Landing River Ranch
Project Area
bing
San Joaquin River Floodplain Restoration Complex
Stanislaus County
6
Miles
36 WCB 8/24/2023

37. Madera County Weed Control

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,060,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Nature Based Solutions, San Joaquin Valley Floodplain Restoration Provision [(AB179, Sec. 19.58(b)(2)]; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Madera County Weed Control
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	River Partners
Amount Recommended:	$1,060,000
Funding Partners:	None
Landowner(s):	Various
County:	Madera, Merced
Program:	Riparian Program
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 4.3

LOCATION

The Madera County Weed Control (Project) includes locations in both Madera and Merced counties along the Ash Slough, Berenda Slough, Chowchilla River, Dry Creek, and Fresno River. These sites are primarily riparian habitat with a high occurrence of invasive Arundo. The Madera sites are located throughout the county, within 10 miles of the communities of Chowchilla, El Nido, and Madera.

This Project is located within the DWR designated disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities of El Nido and Madera. The Project will also benefit the nearby SDAC and DAC communities of Chowchilla and Dos Palos. This Project will engage community organizations in the restoration process, increase green jobs, and improve flood safety for the surrounding areas. The Project proponents will work with Madera County Flood Control and Water Conservancy Agency to engage, educate and work with private landowners in reducing invasive species along major waterways. Additionally, River Partners will work within the community to create local well-paying green jobs. This Project will treat Arundo which will allow local agencies to maintain flow conveyance and flood protection, ultimately managing flood risk for susceptible communities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

River Partners was awarded a $40 million allocation from the state budget under SB 179 to deliver multi-benefit floodplain reconnection, habitat restoration, and habitat maintenance projects in the San Joaquin and Tulare basins. River Partners and Madera County will enhance up to 200 acres of riparian habitat by treating Arundo along the Ash Slough, Berenda Slough, Chowchilla River, Dry Creek, and Fresno River. The primary objective of this Project is the removal of terrestrial invasive biomass, increasing flood conveyance in the region, and lessening the strain on the critically over drafted water basin of Madera County. The Project will utilize an integrated pest management approach consisting of both the chemical

treatment of Arundo and the mechanical removal of biomass. Through the removal of this invasive species, invasive species seed distribution may decrease, protecting downstream ecosystems. Upon completion of this work, future management of these areas will be easier, keeping invasive species at bay.

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 plans to use an integrated approach to treat Arundo at project sites. First, the above-ground biomass of Arundo will be removed by mechanical methods to reduce the amount of chemical used. Glyphosate will then be applied to the leaves of the Arundo resprouts. Glyphosate will be used in conjunction with the adjuvant Agri-Dex to improve herbicide use efficiency and minimize potential adverse effects of drift on native species. Herbicide application will be limited to days with wind less than seven miles per hour to avoid herbicide wind conveyance and will take place at a safe distance away from existing elderberry plants.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
River Partners has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the Property. If at any time during the 15-year life of the Project, River Partners 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	$143,983	---	$143,983
Treatments	$622,280	---	$622,280
Monitoring and Reporting	$155,506	---	$155,506
Indirect Costs	$138,231	---	$138,231
Total	$1,060,000	---	$1,060,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Oversee Project and agency coordination, prepare invoices, deliverables, and progress reports.
- Treatments: Work with stakeholders to treat invasive plant species.
- Monitoring and Reporting: Collect detailed inventories of invasive plant density and extent.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.

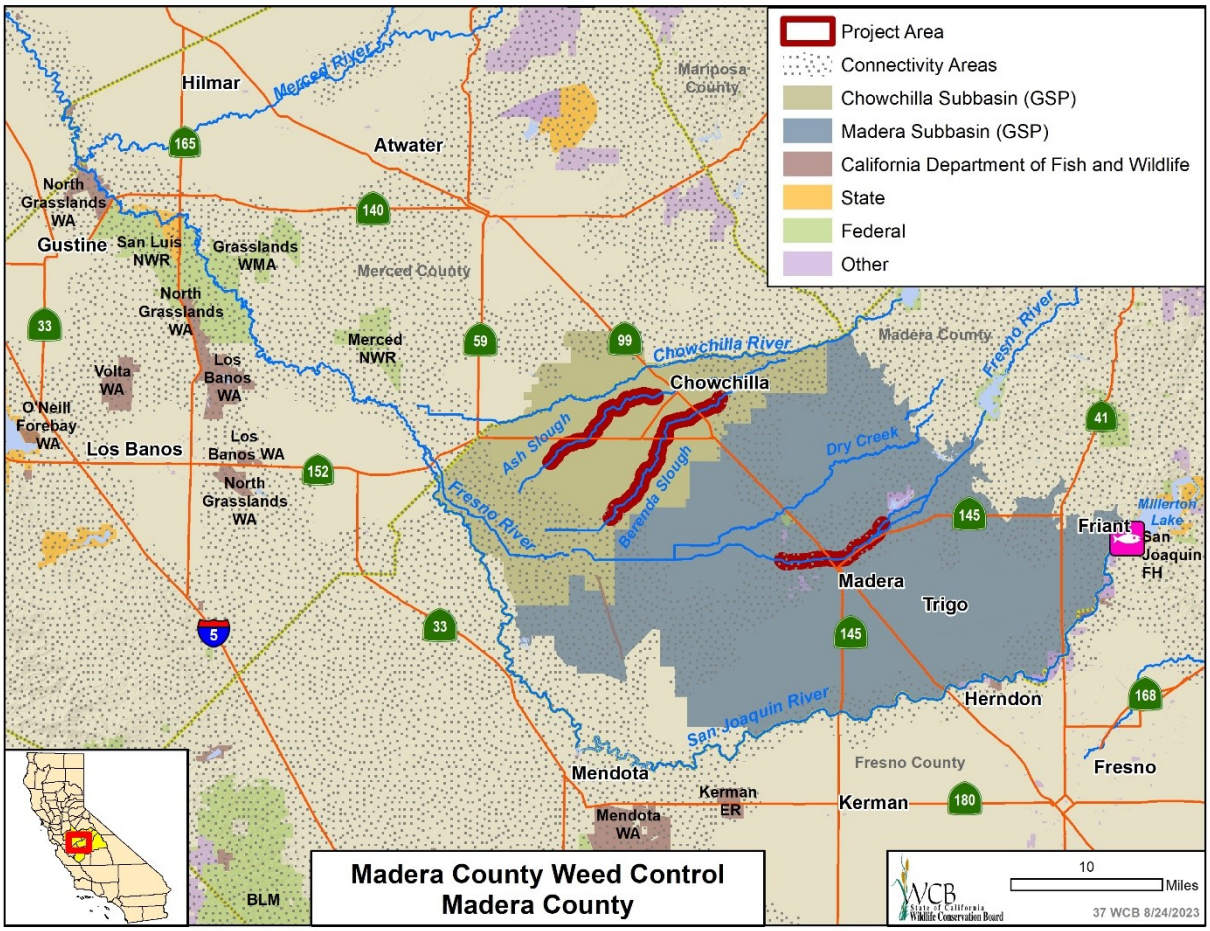
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- 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, because the activities maintain riparian vegetation and stream function, and Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



38. Ellwood Marine Terminal Restoration

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate $5,404,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision (SB170, Sec. 53.5); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Ellwood Marine Terminal Restoration
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	University of California Santa Barbara
Amount Recommended:	$5,404,000
Funding Partners:	None
Landowner(s):	University of California Santa Barbara
County:	Santa Barbara
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.3, 4.3

LOCATION

The Ellwood Marine Terminal Restoration (Project) is located on the highest point of Ellwood Mesa. The 19-acre site includes land impacted by oil and gas development in the form of a marine terminal which was decommissioned in 2014. The site is adjacent to the recently restored University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB) Upper Devereux Slough, Coal Oil Point Reserve and the City of Goleta's Sperling Preserve in Santa Barbara County.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project site is the highest and most prominent site within the larger, conserved, Ellwood-Devereux Coast area jointly managed by UCSB and the City of Goleta. It is currently fenced and dominated by two very large crude oil tanks, fire tank, ballast tank and multiple supporting structures, and pipelines on a site that was leveled and graded into multiple basins.

The site currently reflects an 85-year legacy of use by the oil and gas industry. One level of clean up occurred to adjacent facilities in the 1990s and, after years of negotiation with the former operator, the remaining facilities are slated to be demolished, removed, and the soil remediated by the previous lessor. The level of 'repair' stipulated in the remediation plan does not extend to habitat and would not restore the area to the highest and best condition warranted by the quality of the restoration of the adjacent North Campus Open Space and Coal Oil Point Reserve. The Project will commence after the remediation is completed in late 2023 and will aim to restore the site to its ecological potential through active and careful restoration and long-term management.

Specifically, the Project will:

- Restore the hydrologic connection between the historic seep on the property and the downstream dune pond feature behind the dunes at Coal Oil Point Reserve. Dammed up in the 1940s, the seep hydrology is blocked from its historic support of the dune pond feature. The goal is to remove the dam but retain a small freshwater pool at the seep as suggested in historical imagery from the area. This small, low flow pond has the potential to support multiple special status species including red-legged frog, western pond turtle and, potentially, marsh sandwort, in addition to multiple wetland plant species, marsh birds and to provide a freshwater resource for local wildlife such as coyote and bobcat.
- Restore vernal pools (1.53 ac). Soils on the northern edge of the site contain dense clays that are suitable for vernal pools which will build on the multi-pool vernal pool complex just to the north of the Project site.
- Restore perennial bunch grass and scattered southern tarplant habitat (3.63 ac) to the restored natural hilltop and north facing slope. This habitat will provide for open views, expand habitat for burrowing owls, meadow lark, lark sparrow, grasshopper sparrow, savannah sparrow, and other grassland birds, including birds of prey.
- Restore extensive coastal sage scrub (9.37 ac) along the south and west facing slopes to support diverse pollinators and birds and to remove invasive pampas grass and other weeds from those areas.
- Restore oak woodland adjacent to and in the location of a former bordering eucalyptus woodlands on the north and east sides (2.06 ac).
- Restore coastal grassland (0.5 ac) and coastal dunes (0.28 ac) in the current location of the loading line and provide coastal resilience to the site by removing infrastructure from the surf zone.

The Project will improve climate change resiliency in multiple ways. Removing infrastructure from the coastal dunes will enable them to be more resilient to sea level rise and increased storm intensity. Connecting the seep to the dune pond will increase water resources to the vulnerable dune pond, making it more resilient to longer droughts and other aberrations in the precipitation regime. Planting multiple acres of native perennial grasses, coastal sage scrub, and oak trees will sequester carbon and provide refugia for sensitive species whose habitat may be reduced by climate change.

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

Non-chemical treatments will be the first choice for invasive plant removal. It is estimated that 99 percent of the weeds on the site will be addressed through non-chemical methods. These include manual removal, flame weeding, solarization, mulching, string trimming/mowing, and applications of rock salt for salt marsh edge situations. Herbicides will only be used in a very limited scope targeting primarily

bermuda grass with glyphosate (Roundup Custom for aquatic and terrestrial use). Herbicide may also be used on the 3.6 acres of purple needle grass restoration, using the broadleaf specific herbicide Chlorsulfuron (Telar XP) to facilitate establishment in the first year or two so that the invasive broadleaf weeds do not out-compete the drill seeded grasses in the critical period of establishment.

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

PROJECT FUNDING
The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	$76,351	---	$76,351
Construction	$1,790,000	---	$1,790,000
Restoration	$2,251,273	---	$2,251,273
Monitoring	$154,405	---	$154,405
Indirect Costs	$640,738	---	$640,738
Contingency	$491,233	---	$491,233
TOTAL	$5,404,000	---	$5,404,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Contract oversight, staff administration, invoicing, and quarterly reporting.
- Construction: Surface grading and invasive plant removal.
- Restoration: Native plant installation.
- Monitoring: Project maintenance and monitoring.
- 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:

- Assemblymember Gregg Hart, 37th District, California State Assembly.
- Teresa Romero, Environmental Director, Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians,
- Linda Krop, Chief Counsel, Environmental Defense Center
- Meredith Hendricks, Executive Director, Land Trust for Santa Barbara County

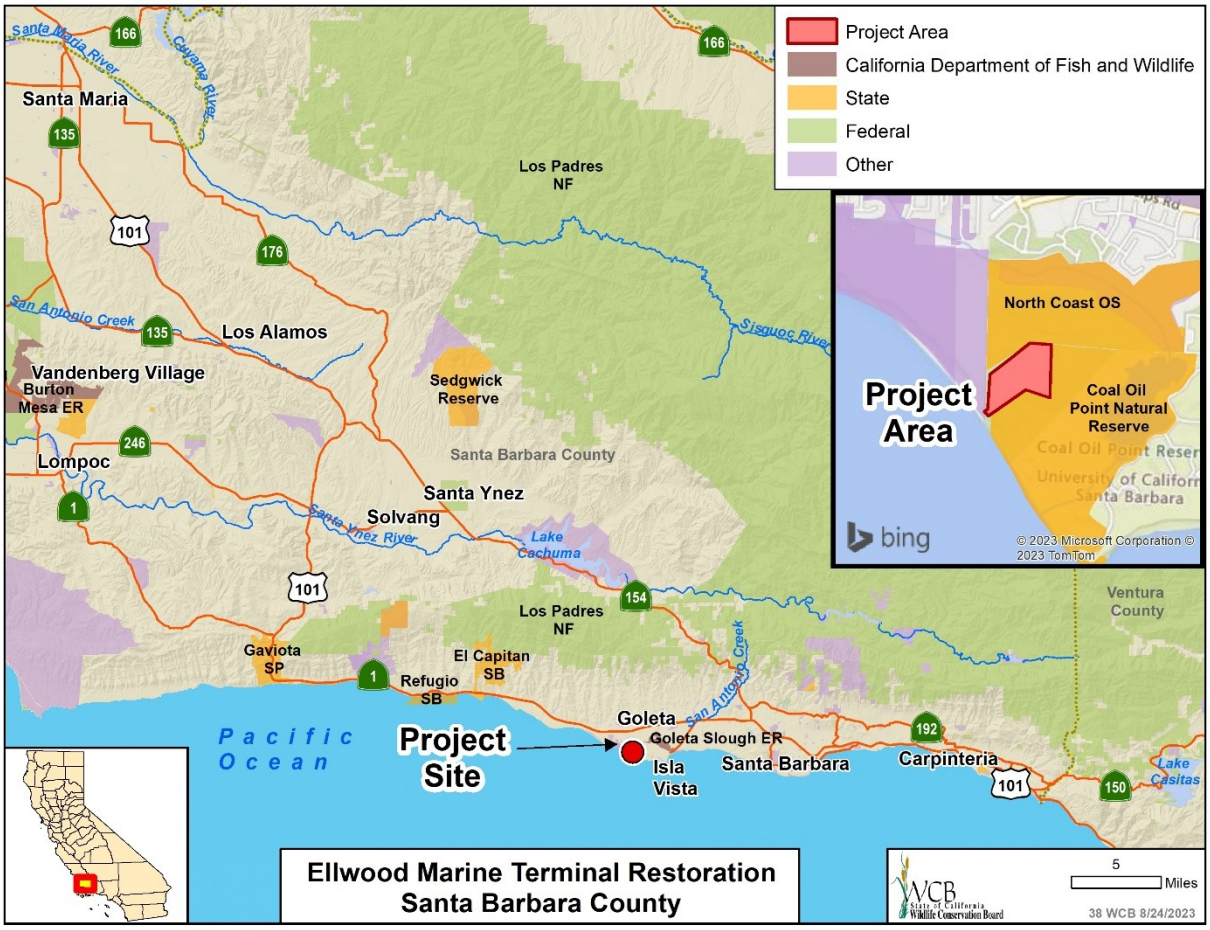
- Katherine Emery, Executive Director, Santa Barbara Audubon Society
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

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



39. Sierra Foothill Forest Climate Resilience

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $2,396,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Nature Based Solutions – Cascades and High Sierra Upper Watersheds Program Provision [AB102, Sec. 85(3)(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:	Sierra Foothill Forest Climate Resilience
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Sierra Streams Institute
Amount Recommended:	$2,396,000
Funding Partners:	None
Landowner(s):	Private and Federal government
County:	Nevada
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B1 Objectives: SI 1.6

LOCATION

The Sierra Foothill Forest Climate Resilience project (Project) covers 625 acres of multiple private and federally owned parcels located approximately five miles west of Nevada City. These parcels are all located within a very high wildfire severity zone in the Sierra Nevada Foothills. Habitat types primarily include oak woodland, mixed-conifer forest, and whiteleaf manzanita chaparral. The Project area is also adjacent to the South Yuba River and multiple tributaries, where Project activities would directly reduce fire impacts on water quality. This Project implements a previous planning effort funded by WCB (*Sierra Foothill Forest Climate Resilience Planning, approved 2/25/2021*).

The Project takes place entirely within a Disadvantaged Community (DAC) according to the DWR DAC mapping tool. Some private landowners within the Project area have managed to complete forest canopy thinning on their properties to mitigate fire risk, but many have not due to expense or time and energy involved. The Project not only benefits landowners by making their homes more defensible in the event of a fire; landowners will also receive education about the ecological benefits of specific treatments through the promotion of a “Community Toolkit,” developed with the planning grant, intended to improve the likelihood of continued maintenance.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Increased temperatures and shorter winters associated with climate change are increasing the frequency and intensity of wildfires. Dense, overstocked forest stands represent an accumulation of fuel and are particularly susceptible in a high fire risk environment. These stands also experience more stress which increases susceptibility to disease and infestation from bark beetle and other pests. Monocultures of invasive plants such as Scotch broom and Himalayan blackberry have also overtaken land on multiple properties, degrading forest habitat quality.

The Project aims to develop more climate change resilient forestland habitat through forest thinning and other management approaches which enable trees to recover after disturbances such as pest infestation, fire, and drought. Project activities would protect mature trees by clearing out brush and ladder fuels that can carry fire into their crowns.

The Project proposes to thin the forest while prioritizing habitat connectivity, leaving selected pockets of untreated forest as “climate refugia”, based on water availability analysis. Forest thinning reduces the potential for high severity wildfire, which can scorch soils, depriving the soil of nutrients and inhibiting growth altogether, or may result in habitat conversion to shrubland. Thinning of small diameter trees is a common management approach that has proven to reduce the likelihood of catastrophic wildfire and results in a forest stand with retained, larger diameter trees and clusters of vegetated habitat, interspersed with gaps of open space to reduce fuel loads while preserving habitat complexity. Forest canopy thinning will also promote natural regeneration of pine, which currently has poor recruitment on the site, and will increase understory plant species diversity. Returning prescribed burning in strategic areas following forest canopy thinning encourages nutrient cycling, forb and grass diversity, abatement of non-native invasive species, and further prevention of high-severity fire.

Areas of invasive Scotch broom and Himalayan blackberry will also be removed, followed by planting of climate-smart native tree seedlings and seed mixes, with regular site maintenance to restore native habitat. The Project is unique in its extensive incorporation of data for selection of treatment strategies, and through inclusion of educational outreach in the form of prescribed burn training, offering tours of treated sites, and student vegetation research plots.

The herbicide Triclopyr is proposed for application as 100% concentrate on cut stumps. A mix of 1-3% Triclopyr with 3-5% vegetable oil and blue marking dye will be applied on Scotch broom and blackberry monocultures as a targeted foliar spray in the spring, and on oak resprouts after hand thinning or mastication in the spring or summer. The crew applying the herbicide will be under the direction of a lead with a Qualified Applicator License (Category E, Forest Pest Control) registered with the State of California. Best management practices, such as avoidance of spray drift, will be communicated to the applicators. To avoid non-target species and soil, the chemical will be applied using backpack sprayers. Triclopyr, regardless of concentration, will not be applied on or near surface water.

The 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 Sierra Streams Institute has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the properties, including management of the Project. If at any time during the 15-year life of the Project, Sierra Streams Institute does not

manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

PROJECT FUNDING
The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	$232,869	---	$232,869
Implementation	$1,490,495	$23,654	$1,514,149
Education/Outreach	$93,500	---	$93,500
Monitoring	$77,226	---	$77,226
Indirect Costs	$284,100	---	$284,100
Contingency	$217,810	---	$217,810
Total	$2,396,000	$23,654	$2,419,654

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: All activities required to facilitate implementation work.
- Implementation: Payment for crews, operators, and equipment needed to complete the hand thinning, felling, mastication, piling/chipping, invasive species removal, prescribed burning, and planting/seeding in the project areas.
- Education/Outreach: Facilitation of site tours post-treatment, local education activities to learn about invasive species and land stewardship, and private landowner education.
- 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:

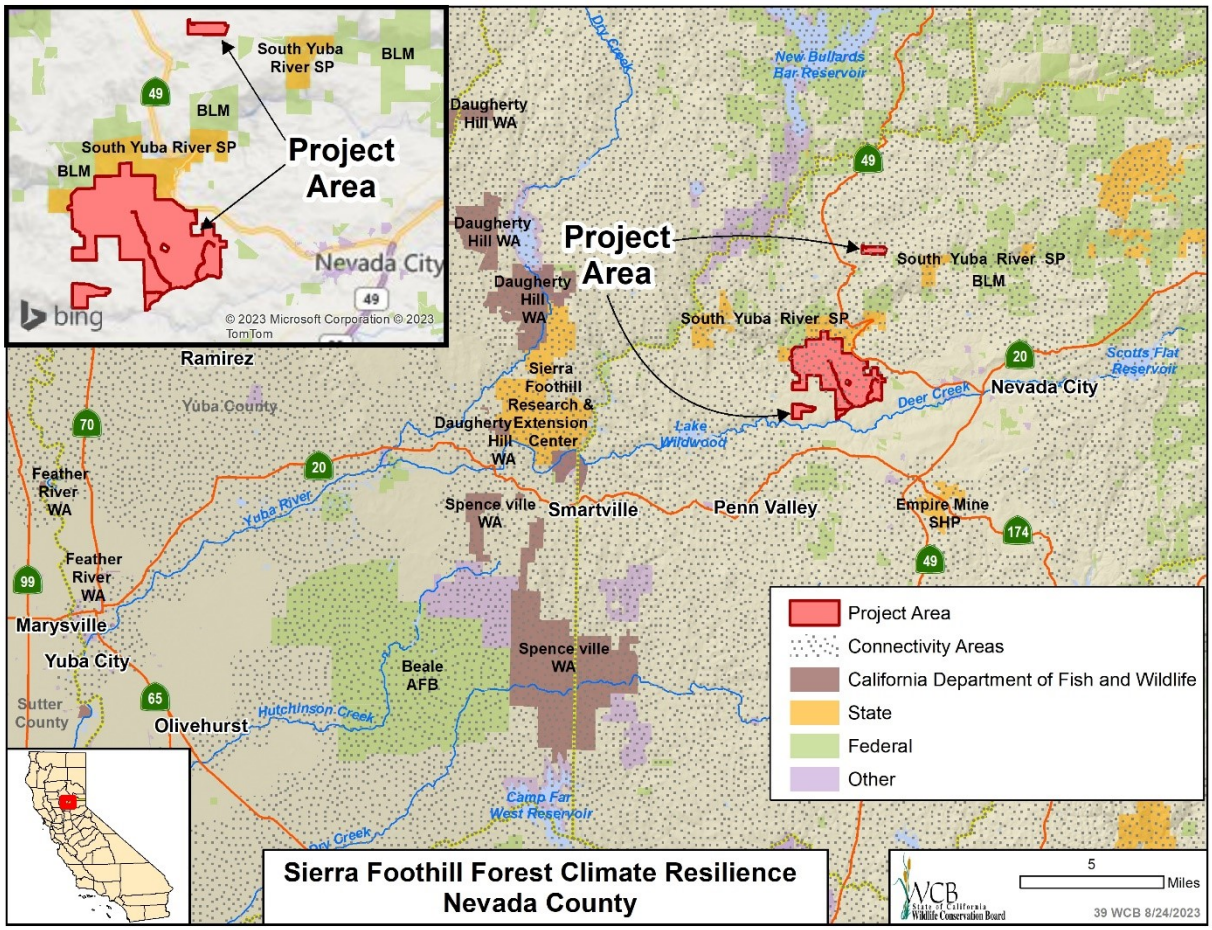
- Christopher Little, Outdoor Education Director, Shady Creek Outdoor School & Event Center
- Brian Estes, Fire Chief, CAL FIRE Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit
- Coleen Hedglin, Executive Director, Woolman at Sierra Friends Center
- Melissa Brokenshire, Business Manager, Nevada City School of the Arts

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.



40. Basin Ranch Acquisition

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $8,593,200 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2021, Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision (SB170, Sec. 53.5) and General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision (SB170, Sec. 53.5) for the grant to Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Basin Ranch
Project Type:	Fee Title Acquisition (5,105± acres)
Grantee:	Big Sur Land Trust
Amount Recommended:	$8,593,200
Funding Partners:	Big Sur Land Trust
County:	Monterey
Program:	Land Acquisition Program
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.2, C.1, C.4 Objectives: 1.2, 1.4, 3.1, 3.4

LOCATION

Basin Ranch (Property) is located approximately 30 miles southeast of the city of Monterey and 8 miles west of the city of Greenfield, 1 mile east of Carmel Valley Road and 2 miles north of Arroyo Seco Road, in unincorporated Monterey County. The Property is located in the Salinas River watershed in the Sierra de Salinas Mountains. Prior WCB acquisitions in the surrounding area include Los Vaqueros Ranch Conservation Easement (2010 and 2011; 1,140 acres) and Dorrance Ranch Conservation Easement (2007; 4,330 acres). These properties, along with Bureau of Land Management holdings and other privately held conservation easements, create a significant wildlife corridor in which the Property is a key connection along the Sierra de Salinas Mountains between the coast of Monterey Bay, southern Salinas Valley, and the rugged Santa Lucia Range. The Property is not located within a disadvantaged community.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is an irregularly shaped group of 19 parcels. The highest and best use of the Property is luxury cattle ranching and is zoned for permanent grazing with a minimum parcel size of 40 acres. However, each of the 19 parcels has a valid certificate of compliance, indicating significant development threat, and the current landowners previously intended to divide the ranch for sale as an upscale residential and hobby vineyard development. Property infrastructure includes a small cabin, perimeter fencing, three groundwater wells, and a network of ranch roads.

The influence of both coastal maritime climate and inland weather supports a mosaic of natural communities throughout the Property. The Property is characterized by rolling hills with extensive annual and perennial grasslands,

chaparral-covered hill slopes, and species-rich oak woodlands, with at least six different species of oak occurring on the Property: valley, coast live, interior live, blue, canyon live, and scrub oak. Scattered woodlands occur on north-facing slopes and in moister canyons, with occasional California juniper in open terrain. The chaparral is largely composed of manzanita, chamise, ceanothus, and black sage, with large expanses of native tarragon in sandy washes. The Property supports xeric vegetation types, as well as seasonal drainages, springs, and limited Fremont cottonwood, arroyo willow, and mulefat riparian habitat.

Preserving the Property will protect habitat for a large diversity of plant and animal species, including greater roadrunner and a disjunct population of California juniper. The next closest population of California juniper in Monterey County is approximately 75 miles to the southeast. Wildlife camera footage has documented mountain lion, American badger, bobcat, gray fox, coyote, deer, golden eagle, red-tailed hawk, great horned owl, wild pig, and many species of small mammals and birds.

The Property possesses a significant amount of native perennial and annual grasslands, which are listed as a conservation target within Central Coast Ecoregion of the State Wildlife Action Plan. Specific species, such as golden eagle and American badger, have been documented and are called out in the Central Coast Ecoregion of the State Wildlife Action Plan as species that would benefit from the conservation of native perennial grasslands.

In addition, the site ranks between 3/5 and 5/5 on CDFW's Areas of Conservation Emphasis study, with higher rankings in terrestrial significant habitats, aquatic significant habitats, and terrestrial connectivity, and with the majority of the property ranking 5/5 for terrestrial climate resiliency. The geographic location of provides a direct link to other conserved properties in the Sierra de Salinas that stretch from the Los Padres National Forest and BSLT's Arroyo Seco Ranch through various conserved properties, and ultimately to protected coastal habitat along the arc of Monterey Bay. The Ventana Wilderness in the Los Padres National Forest also occurs nearby to the south and west. Additionally, the site is located 10 miles from the 14,100-acre Rana Creek Ranch, which received WCB funding approval at the May 2023 board meeting, adding to WCB's investment in conserving the critical conservation lands in the region.

This project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 1: Accelerate Regionally Led Conservation and 2. Execute Strategic Land Acquisitions.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
BSLT will co-manage the Property with the Esselen Tribe of Monterey County. The Esselen Tribe will have access to the property for management and implementation of traditional ecological knowledge practices and cultural practices including harvesting of culturally relevant plants. A Cultural Resources Assessment commissioned by BSLT revealed that the Property was utilized by Native American

groups and early settlers as a travel route between Arroyo Seco, Paraiso Hot Springs, and the Salinas Valley. In addition, the Esselen Tribe will assist in further identifying areas of cultural importance and sensitivity on the Property as part of the ecological baseline that will be conducted after BSLT assumes ownership of Basin Ranch.

After an initial assessment period and a period of rest from active cattle grazing, grazing will be resumed in a sustainable manner based on a sustainable grazing plan that will be prepared. Riparian and grassland restoration in areas heavily impacted by cattle will potentially include prescribed fire or cultural burning with the Esselen Tribe along with drill-seeding native grasses and forbs to influence the plant composition of the Property and to combat the potential of increased invasive plant populations during the period of rest. These efforts will be supported and informed by an Ecological Baseline Documentation Report, which will include a cultural assessment component with the help of the Esselen Tribe. From this report, a Property Co-Management Plan and sustainable grazing plan will be developed that will help inform how to best manage the timing, intensity, and duration of grazing practices across the ranch. The drafting and implementation of the Baseline Report and plans will be through a collaborative process with the Esselen Tribe.

BSLT has previously worked with local tribes on a variety of projects and deeply values the collaborative process of these partnerships. Plans and agreements are drafted as a collective through Learning Circles, where tribal leaders and members meet with BSLT staff and other stakeholders to discuss vision, values, needs, expectations, and goals to reach an outcome that all parties are satisfied with. This process has been very successful in relationship development, creating strong partnerships and encouraging effective communication.

BSLT maintains a stewardship fund (the “McMahan Family Stewardship Endowment”) that currently has over $7 million, from which funds are used to support core stewardship activities of fee lands.

PROJECT FUNDING
The DGS approved fair market value is $8,680,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$8,593,200
Big Sur Land Trust	$86,800
TOTAL Purchase Price	$8,680,000

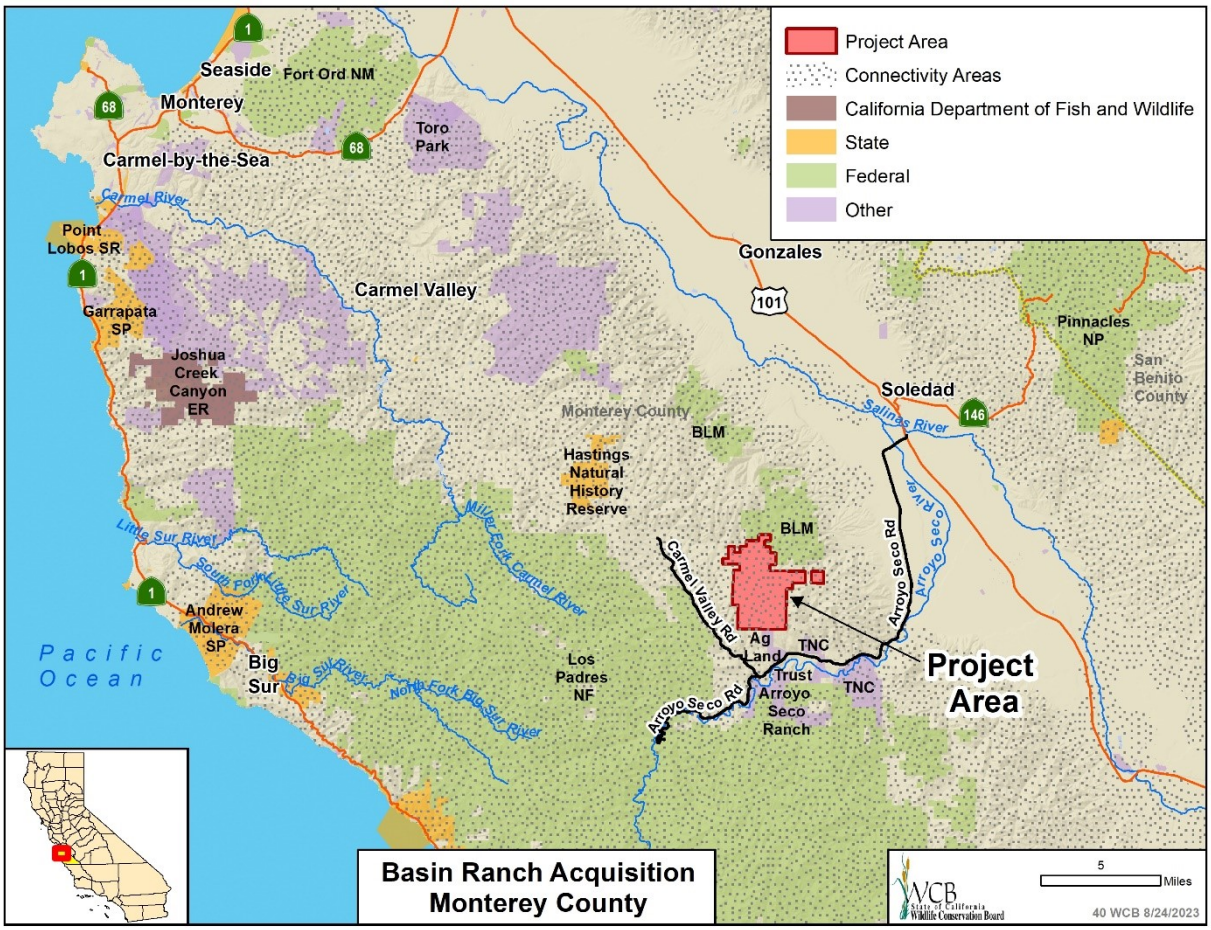
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- California Senator John Laird
- Esselen Tribe of Monterey County
- The Wildlands Conservancy
- California Native Plant Society

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.



41. Mohave Ground Squirrel Management Actions

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $4,312,320 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision [B102, Sec. 84(1)]; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Mohave Ground Squirrel Management Actions
Project Type:	Scientific Study
Applicant/Grantee:	Mohave Ground Squirrel Conservation Council
Amount Recommended:	$4,312,320
Funding Partners:	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Landowner(s):	Bureau of Land Management
County:	Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino
Program:	Desert Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.4

LOCATION

The Mohave Ground Squirrel Management Actions (Project) is a study occurring over the range of the Mohave ground squirrel (MGS) within Inyo, Kern, San Bernardino, and Los Angeles counties on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The city of Ridgecrest is located nearest to the center of species distribution.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The MGS was listed as state threatened on June 27, 1971, and to date, there has not been any development of effective, standardized, and statistically rigorous detection and survey methods for this species. Consequently, a comprehensive range-wide population monitoring program does not exist. The lack of an effective MGS demographic monitoring program, which specifically studies the characteristics of the population, severely impedes conservation decision-making and policy development.

The goal of this Project is to develop empirically tested, statistically rigorous methods for range-wide detection and monitoring of MGS population demographics and their habitats that can provide information required by resource managers for decision-making and effective policy development. The Project will meet this goal by

1) implementing a two-year pilot study of a sampling and modeling combination to estimate MGS demographic parameters that are needed for conservation and management, including density and abundance; and

2) using data obtained from the pilot study to design a long-term, range-wide monitoring program for MGS that allows detection of population declines/increases and range contraction/expansions with high confidence.

The Project will use the following methods and tools to complete these goals:

1) survey grids of camera traps to obtain detection data for estimating MGS population density and abundance and to identify habitat/landscape characteristics that influence spatial variation in MGS density;

2) establish a grid of camera-traps within a known MGS population to obtain landscape scale detection data for estimating site occupancy, habitat selection, and monitoring range extent changes;

3) live-capture and temporarily mark a portion of MGS for individual identification in camera-trap photographs;

4) permanently mark live-captured MGS with Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tags to passively detect PIT-tag-marked and released squirrels;

5) collect tissue samples from all live-captured MGS for population genetics analysis;

6) experiment with Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) to elicit and detect MGS vocalizations, and evaluate the potential for this method to be used in demographic parameter and occupancy estimation;

7) collect high resolution vegetation data using UAV;

8) collect high resolution vegetation data using traditional on-the-ground methods of vegetation quadrats and transects;

9) design and implement Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems to increase the efficiency of photographic reduction into analyzable data; and

10) design and implement a data management plan for all forms of data, including photographs, genetic samples, and artificial individual identity marks.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 4: Enhance Conservation of Existing Public Lands and Coastal Waters.

PROJECT FUNDING
The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	$391,248	$177,840	$569,088
Monitoring	$3,620,212	$1,445,732	$5,065,944
Indirect Costs	$300,860	---	$300,860
Total	$4,312,320	$1,623,572	$5,935,892

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Mohave Ground Squirrel Conservation Council will provide technical and administrative services associated with performing and completing work for this Project.
- Monitoring: Includes all aspects of live trapping, acoustic experiments, genetic testing, camera work (AI), vegetation sampling, compiling data, and database support.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.

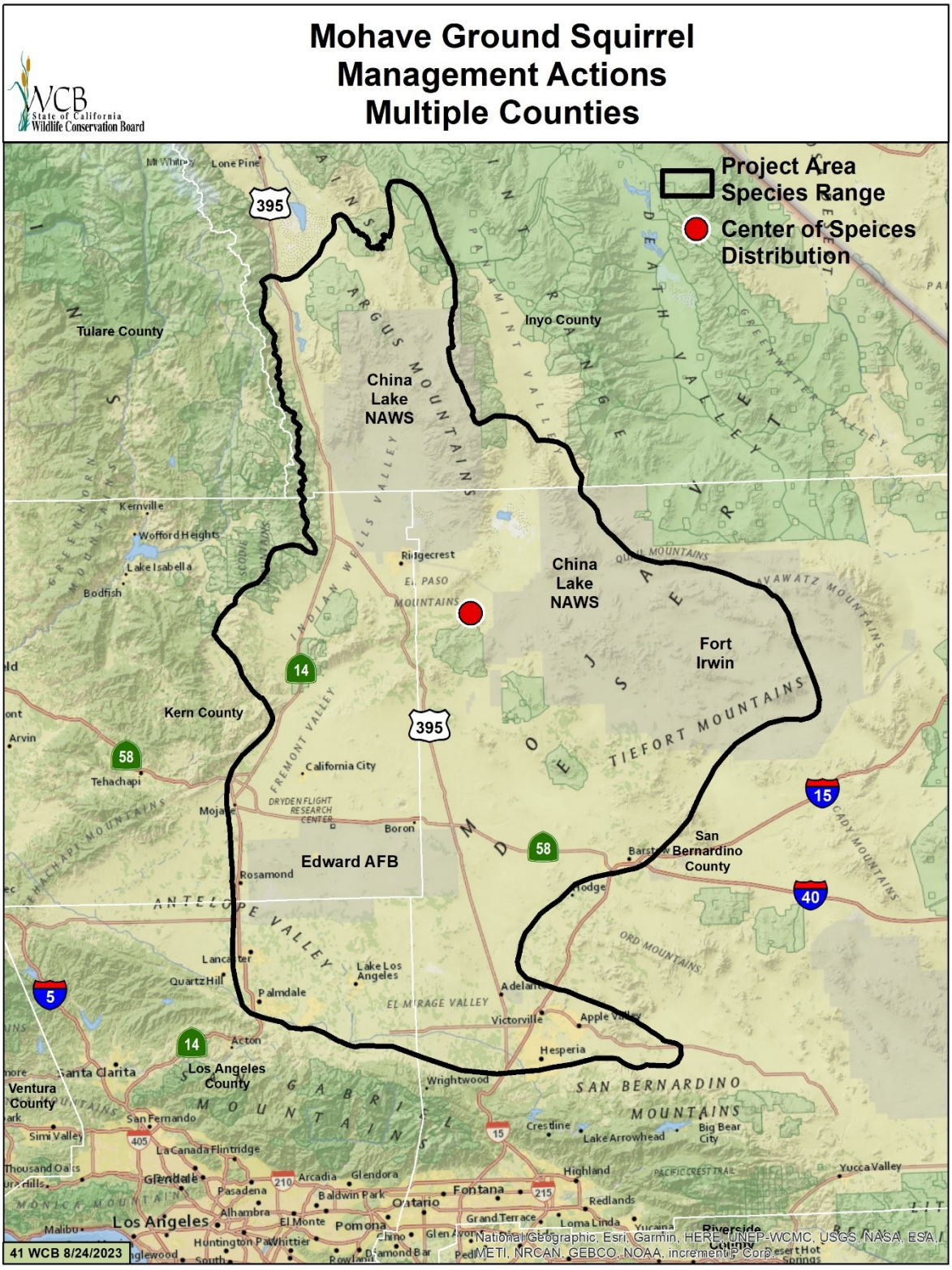
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Erin McConnell, Assistant District Manager, Bureau of Land Management District, California Desert District.
- Scott Sobiech, Field Supervisor, Ecological Services, USFWS, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office
- Mari Quillman, Chairperson, Desert Tortoise Council
- Judy P. Hohman, Desert Tortoise Council Board Member
- Ron Berger, President, Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc.
- Kelly Herbinson, Joint Executive Director, Mojave Desert Land Trust
- Jeff Aardahl, Senior California Representative, Defenders of Wildlife
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League
- Amy Fesnock Parker, Consumnes River Preserve (formerly the California BLM State Lead for Listed Species)

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
The Project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306, Class 6, Information Collection. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.


Mohave Ground Squirrel
Management Actions
Multiple Counties
WCB
State of California
Wildlife Conservation Board
Project Area
Species Range
Center of Speices
Distribution
Tulare County
Inyo County
China
Lake
NAWS
China
Lake
NAWS
Fort
Irwin
Kern County
Edward AFB
San
Bernardino
County
Los Angeles
County
Ventura
County
41 WCB 8/24/2023
National Geographic, Esri, Garmin, HERE, UNEP-WCMC, USGS, NASA, ESA, METI, NRCAN, GEBCO, NOAA, increment P Corp

42. Bouquet Canyon Creek Recovery Project Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $12,067,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2021, Water Supply for Environmental Flows, Stream Flow Enhancement Program Provision (SB170, Sec. 54); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Bouquet Canyon Creek Recovery Project Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Los Angeles County Public Works
Amount Recommended:	$12,067,000
Funding Partners:	Los Angeles County Public Works
County:	Los Angeles
Program:	Stream Flow Enhancement
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.1, 2.4

LOCATION
Bouquet Canyon Creek Recovery Project Planning (Project) is located along approximately eight miles of Bouquet Canyon Creek as it runs through Bouquet Canyon from just below Bouquet Reservoir to where the creek enters the urban area of Santa Clarita. This area is within the Angeles National Forest and Bouquet Reservoir is owned and operated by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

The Project is not within a Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) Census Tract (per the DWR DAC mapping tool). The Project may benefit DACs by improving safety and use of Bouquet Canyon Road by members of DACs that border the Project area for commutes and recreational opportunities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The Project will design and permit numerous multi-benefit projects. The primary focus of these projects will be habitat enhancement and restoration projects for the endangered unarmored threespine stickleback (UTS) and other rare, sensitive, threatened, and endangered riparian and aquatic species within Bouquet Canyon. Additionally, this multi-benefit Project will enhance many other aspects of Bouquet Canyon Creek including increasing water supply, providing sediment management and conveyance, providing flood protection of the adjacent road, and increasing public access to multiple day-use areas and trails.

This grant is for planning, design, and environmental compliance, which collectively would develop multiple shovel-ready implementation projects. With full design documents and environmental documents and permits, the Applicant would be well-positioned to organize construction bids and engage a contractor for the actual construction.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathway 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 and Coordination	$34,000	---	$34,000
Working Group and Public Outreach	$196,000	---	$196,000
Preliminary Design	$1,800,000	---	$1,800,000
Design (30-60-90-100)	$5,940,000	$2,490,000	$8,430,000
Environmental Approvals	$2,893,000	---	$2,893,000
Long-term Monitoring, Maintenance, and Management	$107,000	---	$107,000
Contingency	$1,097,000	---	$1,097,000
Total	$12,067,000	$2,490,000	$14,557,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management and Coordination: Provide technical and administrative services associated with performing and completing the work of this Project.
- Working Group and Public Outreach: Working Group meetings to engage stakeholder agencies and community outreach/engagement meetings.
- Preliminary Design: Preliminary design includes data collection and additional modeling, and feasibility and conceptual design for stream, road, and watershed improvements.
- Design (30-60-90-100): Development of 30, 60, 90, and 100 percent designs for future implementation projects.
- Environmental Approvals: CEQA, NEPA, and other environmental permits.
- Long-term Monitoring, Maintenance, and Management: Develop a Long-term Monitoring and Adaptative Management Plan that will focus on habitat improvements developed in this Project.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Mike Garcia, U.S. Representative, 25th District
- Scott Wilk, California State Senator, 21st District
- Roman Torres, Forest Supervisor, USFS – Angeles National Forest
- Kathryn Barger, 5th District Supervisor, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

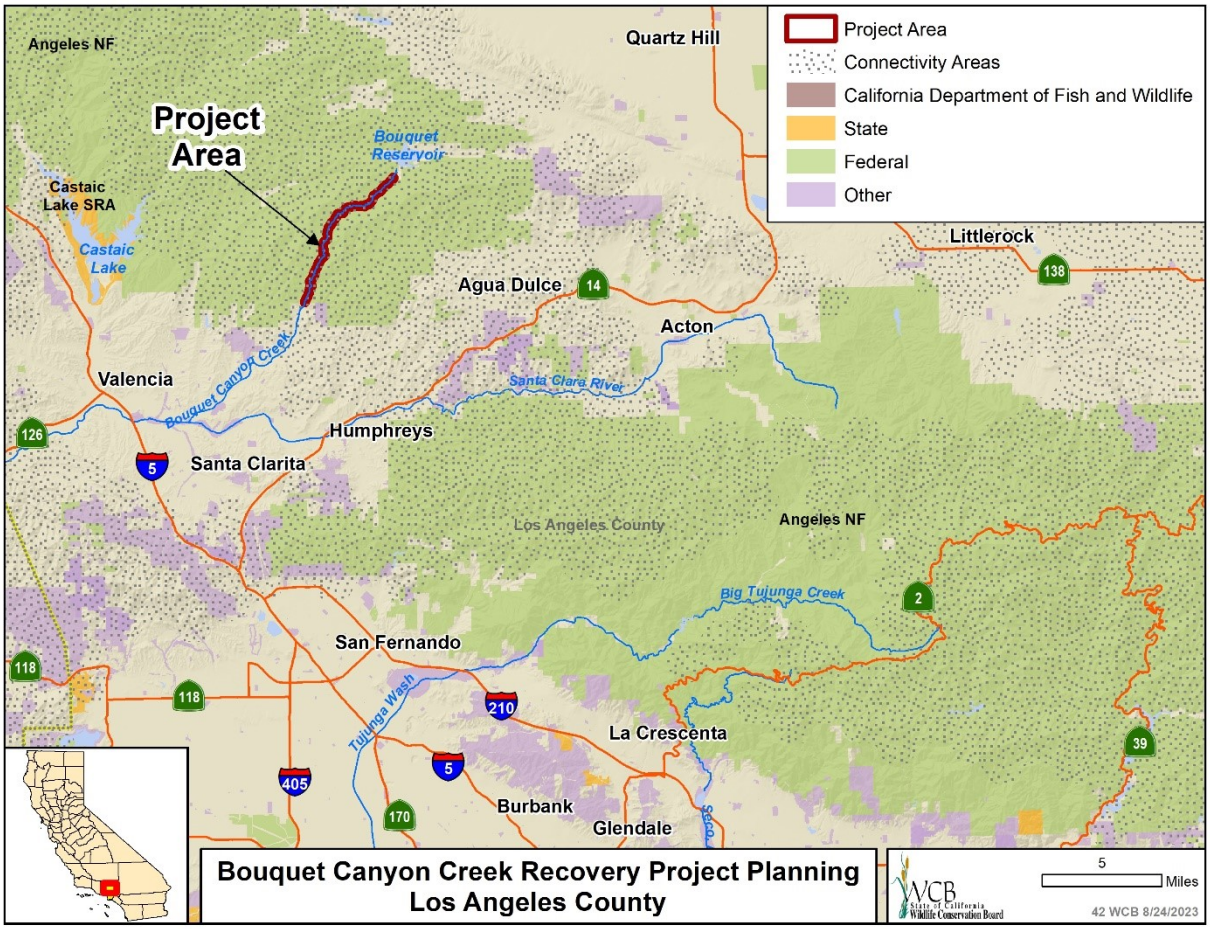
- Adam Perez, Manager of Aqueduct, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
- Stephen L. Cole, Assistant General Manager, Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency
- Rick Viergutz, Chair, Upper Santa Clara River Regional Water Management Group
- Maria Gutzeit, Board President, Santa Clarita Valley-Groundwater Sustainability Agency

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.



43. Descanso Gardens Lake Area Access

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate $5,840,000 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); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Descanso Gardens Lake Area Access
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Descanso Gardens Foundation
Amount Recommended:	$5,840,000
Funding Partners:	City of Los Angeles, Department of Parks and Recreation, Descanso Gardens Foundation, Private Donations
Landowner(s):	County of Los Angeles
County:	Los Angeles
Program:	Public Access
Strategic Plan:	Goals: C.1 Objectives: SI 2.1, 3.4

LOCATION

Descanso Gardens is a 150-acre botanical garden located in La Cañada Flintridge in Los Angeles County, approximately four miles northwest of the city of Pasadena, and just south of Angeles National Forest and the foothills of the Verdugo Mountains. The property is bordered by the 2 and 210 freeways to the west and north, Cherry Canyon Park to the south, and the city of La Cañada Flintridge to the east.

The project area does not overlap with a Disadvantaged Community, though it is within a mile of disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged block groups in nearby Montrose (as identified in the DWR mapping tool), and within four miles of several climate-vulnerable communities in the Los Angeles area (receiving the highest 25% of overall scores in CalEnviroScreen). Located in one of the most diverse metropolises in the world, Descanso Gardens recognizes its responsibility to serve a diversity of people and communities. With approximately 940,000 visitors in 2022 and an expected one million visitors in 2023, Descanso Gardens is committed to offering equitable access and educational programs to local communities, schools, ethnic minorities, special needs youth, and low-income residents. Free admission is offered year-round to EBT cardholders; active duty and retired military; seasonally to students and teachers through educational programs; and once a month to the general public through the Free Tuesday program. Between 2018 and 2022, 160,785 visitors received free admission.

Descanso Gardens consulted with several tribes in 2019 when developing their Master Plan, and have continued building relationships with educators, cultural ambassadors, storytellers, and artists from local indigenous communities, including

Tongva, Chumash, and Yoeme representatives. These individuals have worked with Descanso Gardens in a variety of ways, such as facilitating public programs and gallery exhibitions, leading staff and volunteer training, and advising on potential partnership opportunities. Descanso Gardens seeks to further its institutional understanding of the history of the land on which it sits and incorporate the stories of indigenous peoples into its programming.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Descanso Gardens Lake Area Access (Project) will partially support Descanso Gardens' Master Plan for rehabilitation of its Lake Area. The Lake Area's two manmade lakes have been an important feature of the gardens since the 1940s and have provided habitat for 195 local and migratory bird species among the urban expanse of Los Angeles County. Native trees and vegetation are located throughout the area, which include the Oak Woodland Garden and a California Native Garden. The most important recreational uses of the Lake Area include aesthetic enjoyment, nature walks, and bird watching. The Lake Area's infrastructure is aging and creates several challenges that impact the lake ecology as well as visitor safety, access, and viewsheds. Presently, more than half of the lakes' perimeter is not accessible for maintenance and nature-oriented recreation and 100 percent of the Lake Area is not ADA-accessible. Concerned with the deterioration of the Lake Area, the impact it has on the gardens' bird populations, and its limited access and interpretation value, the Descanso Gardens Foundation designed a large-scale Lake Rehabilitation project as a part of its Master Plan, which was approved by the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation in 2020.

This Project will focus on the public access improvements and interpretive elements that have been designed for the Lake Area. Reservoir infrastructure and habitat restoration will be achieved through other fund sources and implemented in a phased approach. Construction will begin on the west side of the Lake Area with an ADA-accessible restroom that will serve the Lake Area and the Nature Discovery Garden (which is already funded and will be implemented concurrently). The restroom will be connected to the gardens' existing Membrane Bio-Reactor, which recycles wastewater for use in irrigation of the Gardens' collections. This area will also feature an interpretive space with five large-scale interactive installations inspired by bird nests, where young visitors can explore nature and connect to wildlife in a meaningful way. While the associated lake and habitat rehabilitation work is underway, the remainder of the public access connections will be constructed: a perimeter walk, including a boardwalk surrounding the lake; interpretive signage in at least three key locations and an ADA-accessible trail with a 5 percent maximum slope; ADA-compliant bridges and ramps to facilitate easier access to various locations around the lake; fencing and guardrails to protect landscape areas and provide additional safety; lighting to accommodate evening programs; and a Wi-Fi connection to provide access to Descanso Gardens' online educational resources. The lake, restroom, and interpretive space are scheduled to be opened to the public simultaneously in January 2027.

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 only includes infrastructure and interpretive elements; therefore, no herbicides are involved.

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

PROJECT FUNDING
The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	$49,150	$80,000	$129,150
Final Design and Permitting	---	$360,000	$360,000
Construction	$5,512,000	$1,666,000	$7,178,000
Contingency	$278,850	$278,850	$557,700
Total	$5,840,000	$2,384,850	$8,224,850

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Grantee's supervision of construction progress and grant administration.
- Construction: Grading and materials costs for the interactive nests area, pathways, bridges, and boardwalk; interpretive signage; restroom and utility connections; construction labor.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use. Descanso Gardens proposed covering an equal share of contingency, if necessary.

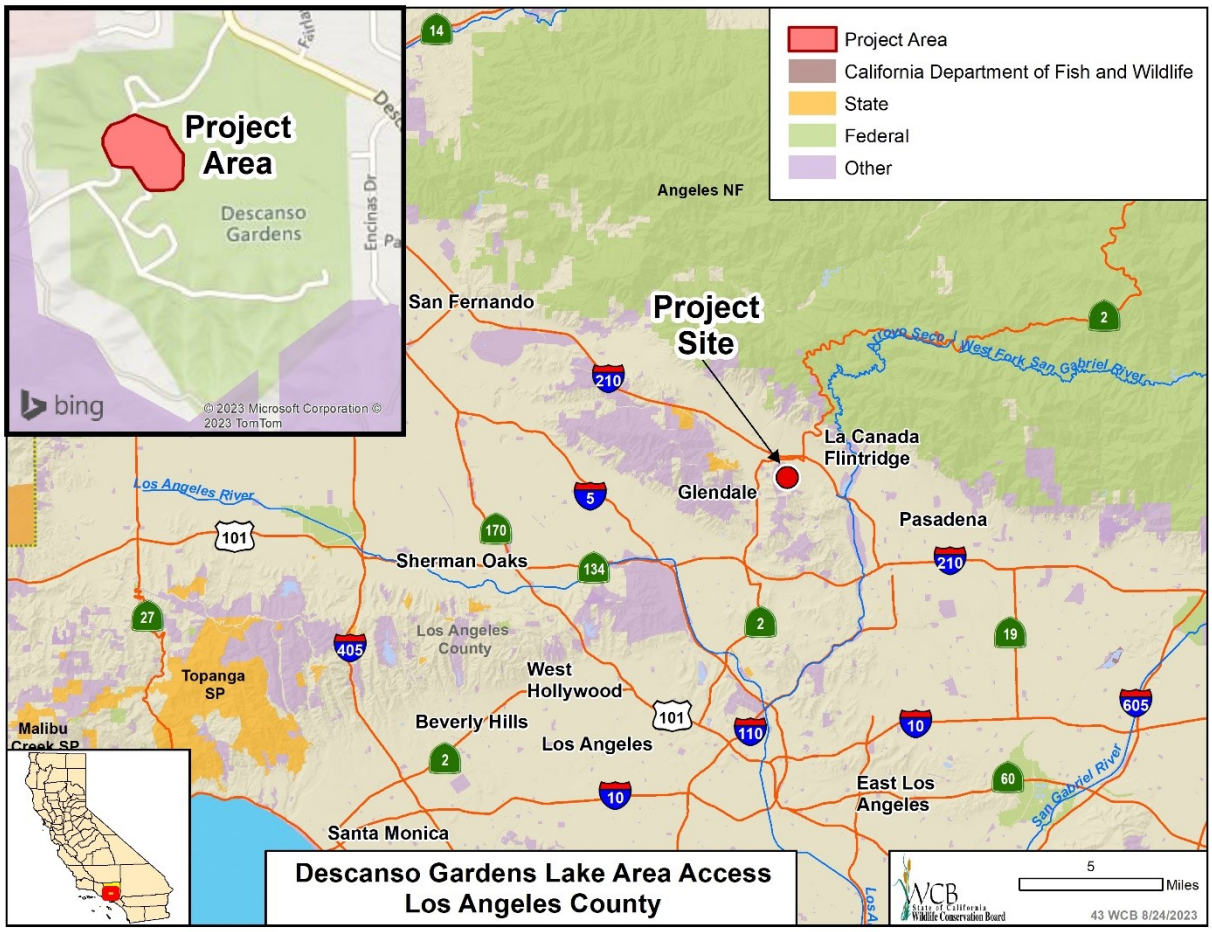
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:
- Senator Anthony J. Portantino, District 25
- Bob Fan, General Manager, Valley Water Company
- Wendy Butts, CEO, LA Conservation Corps
- Luke Tiller, President, Pasadena Audubon Society
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League
- Vincent S. Luculano, CEO, YMCA of the Foothills
- Tom Reynolds, President, La Cañada Flintridge Trails Council

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, as lead agency, 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.



44. I-8 Peninsular Bighorn Sheep Crossing Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $5,808,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022 Drought Package Provision [SB129, Sec. 89(3)]; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	I-8 Peninsular Bighorn Sheep Crossing Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	University of California, Davis
Amount Recommended:	$5,808,000
Funding Partners:	None
County:	Imperial
Program:	Desert Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B1 Objectives: SI 1.1, 1.2

LOCATION
The I-8 Peninsular Bighorn Sheep Crossing Planning (Project) is located along the portion of Interstate-8 (I-8) where the eastbound and westbound lanes are separated, forming an isolated island of mountainous desert habitat in an area known as In-Ko-Pah Gorge in western Imperial County near the border with San Diego County.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The Peninsular Mountain ranges of eastern San Diego and Riverside and western Imperial counties provide habitat for a wide range of native wildlife, including the federally and state endangered peninsular bighorn sheep (PBS) and the-California Endangered Species Act (CESA)-candidate southern California evolutionary significant unit of mountain lions. The mountain ranges are bisected by I-8, which creates a semi-permeable barrier to PBS movement and results in frequent collisions between vehicles and PBS.

The Project will focus on a section of I-8 that runs through the In-Ko-Pah Gorge and bisects important habitat used as a movement corridor by endangered PBS and other wildlife. Specifically, the In-Ko-Pah ewe group uses the area for giving birth and raising lambs – behavior that requires them to cross I-8 and results in frequent collisions between vehicles and PBS. CDFW and USFWS have studied PBS movement and mortality in this area and have expressed concern about I-8's role in interrupting habitat connectivity and contributing to the decline of the species. This has led CDFW to include this area on its 2022 Wildlife Movement Barriers Priority list as a "Top Priority" which places it among the 12 barriers most in need of improvement throughout the entire state.

To reduce the impact I-8 has on PBS, the Project will investigate and plan for construction of at least one and up to three overcrossing structures. In the event the investigation determines an overcrossing to be unworkable in the Project area,

the Project will evaluate using an undercrossing structure to reestablish habitat connectivity. The nature of these structures will be determined based on site characteristics, such as roadway location, topography, and landscape ecology. Whichever form of crossing is decided upon, the Project will develop plans and designs for any necessary associated fencing and wildlife escape ramps.

Determination of the precise location for any structure may require additional studies of current landscape conditions of the surrounding areas and environmental studies (e.g., archeology, geology, wetland delineations) may be needed to inform where the proposed structures will be sited without impacting protected attributes. The Project will use this data to choose a location(s) that best allows PBS to migrate over or under I-8, while concurrently balancing maintenance and land ownership considerations.

The Project will be carried out under the auspices of Caltrans' typical project delivery process. This will include the development of a PID. PID documents are required by the California Transportation Commission to program transportation projects into the State Highway Operation and Protection Program. The PID will be based on a Project Study Report and Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report that will also be developed as part of the Project.

Following the PID process, Caltrans will enter the PA&ED phase. During this phase, the Project will also develop environmental documents pursuant to NEPA and CEQA as part of the necessary environmental review. This review will include utilizing the results of the technical studies to determine what project alternatives will be the least environmentally damaging. Finally, the Project will develop 35% design plans for review by Caltrans, then 65% design plans, specifications and estimates, and Design-Level Engineering Technical Reports.

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	$644,997	---	$644,997
Technical Studies and Design	$2,243,506	---	$2,243,506
Environmental Review & Project Documentation	$2,031,890	---	$2,031,890
Outreach	$178,948	---	$178,948
Indirect Costs	$708,659	---	$708,659
TOTAL	$5,808,000	---	$5,808,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Oversight of Project tasks, grant administration, facilitating Project team meetings, and coordination with stakeholders.
- Technical Studies and Designs: Any necessary technical or environmental studies and 35% and 65% designs for the preferred crossing alternative.
- Environmental Review and Project Documentation: CEQA and NEPA documentation and development of a Caltrans PID and PA&ED.
- Outreach: Coordination and facilitation of any necessary stakeholder meetings and landowner outreach.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

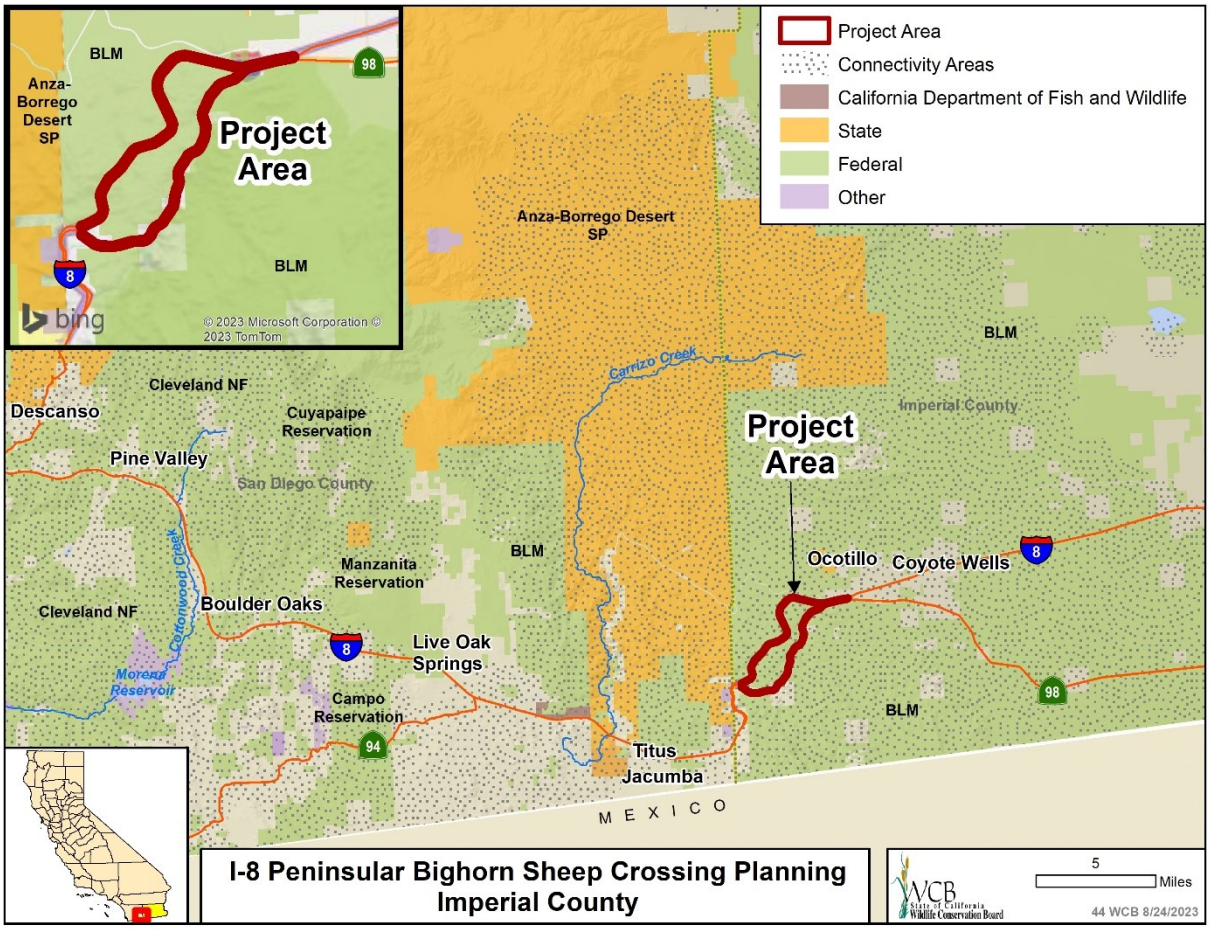
- Danielle K. Chi, Deputy State Director of Natural Resources, Bureau of Land Management
- Stefan Galvez-Abadia, Environmental Division Deputy District Director, Caltrans
- Ray Lennox, Colorado Desert District Superintendent, California Department of Parks
- Dale MacDougall, State Wildlife Project Director, California Deer Association
- Cara Lacey, Wildlife Crossings Director, The Nature Conservancy
- Bri Fordem, Executive Director, Anza-Borrego Foundation
- Devin O'Dea, CA Chapter Coordinator, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Mari Galloway, California Program Director, Wildlands Network
- Melissa Baffa, Executive Director, Ventura Land Trust
- Chris Bowles, President, California Bowmen Hunters/State Archery
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League
- Ann Van Leer, Executive Director, Escondido Creek Conservancy
- Aimee J. Byard, Associate Director/Biologist, Bighorn Institute
- Don Martin, President, California Chapter – Wild Sheep Foundation
- John Wehausen, President, Sierra Nevada Bighorn
- Corey Thompson, President, Cal-Ore Wetland and Waterfowl Council
- Steve Jarvis, Chief Executive Officer, California Deer Association
- Lori Jacobs, President, California Houndsmen for Conservation
- Fred Harpster, President, Black Brant Group
- Steve Chappell, Executive Director, Suisun Resource Conservation District
- Gary F. Brennan, President, San Diego County Wildlife Federation
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League
- Adam Chavez, President, California Hawking Club
- Steve Miller, President, Tulare Basin Wetlands 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.



45. Board Member Updates

46. Executive Director's Report

47. 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 AUGUST 2023 PROJECTS