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

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

November 15, 2023, 9:00 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.

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 Office at 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
- Eric Sklar, President
  Fish and Game Commission
- Michele Perrault, Member
  Legislative Director, Department of Finance
- Damon Nagami, Public Member
- Fran Pavley, Public Member
- Kathryn Phillips, Public Member

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

Executive Director
- Jennifer Norris

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)	**$658,182,958.70**
November 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(120,092,222.00)
Total Project Development:	(114,060,680.26)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$424,030,056.44**
HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND (0262)	**$63,521,045.86**
November 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(7,936,760.00)
Total Project Development:	(835,001.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$54,749,284.86**
WILDLIFE AND COASTAL PROTECTION ACT OF 1988 (0786))	**$3,778,917.00**
November 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(1,018,471.00)
Total Project Development:	(0.00)
Adjustments:	(2,760,446.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance	**$0.00**
GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION FUND (3228)	**$1,465,877.88**
November 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(0.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$1,465,877.88**
CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND (Proposition 40) (6029)	**$307,744.00**
November 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(0.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$307,744.00**
WATER SECURITY, CLEAN DRINKING WATER, COASTAL AND BEACH PROTECTION FUND OF 2002 (Proposition 50) (6031)	**$7,088,323.43**
November 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(5,231,066.74)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$1,857,256.69**

SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006 (Proposition 84) (6051)	**$6,800,939.09**
November 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(2,520,000.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$4,280,939.09**
WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND (Proposition 1) (6083)	**$49,257,823.91**
November 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(0.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$49,257,823.91**
THE CALIFORNIA DROUGHT, WATER, PARKS, CLIMATE, COASTAL PROTECTION, AND OUTDOOR ACCESS FOR ALL ACT OF 2018 (Proposition 68) (6088)	**$75,346,313.38**
November 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(1,582,000.00)
Total Project Development:	(6,900,069.78)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$66,864,243.60**
TOTAL – ALL FUNDS	**$865,749,943.25**
Grand Total – November 2023 Board Meeting Allocation:	(130,629,453.00)
Grand Total - Project Development:	(129,546,817.78)
Adjustments:	(2,760,446.00)
Grand Total Projected Unallocated Balance:	**$602,813,226.47**

4. Wildlife Corridors - Informational

WCB staff member, Don Crocker, will present information on WCB's support of wildlife corridors throughout California.

Consent Items

Items 5-31 are part of the Consent Calendar

5. Recovery of Funds, Wednesday, November 15, 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	$91,343.34
Habitat Conservation Fund	$89,707.45
Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund	$11,227.07
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund	$13,181.52
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006	$60,825.27
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014	$909,759.39
The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018	$606,960.65
Total Recoveries for All Funds	***$1,783,004.69***

Table 2 - General Fund

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
(CAL FIRE) Mattole Headwaters	$36,000.00	$12,106.90	$23,893.10
California Monarch Recovery Project	$612,270.00	$612,270.00	$0.00
Orchards Alive Monarch Butterfly Habitat	$505,000.00	$457,489.76	$47,510.24
White Tate	$20,000.00	$8,330.00	$11,670.00
Yanci Ranch	$20,000.00	$11,730.00	$8,270.00
Total Recoveries to General Fund			***$91,343.34***

Table 3 - Habitat Conservation Fund

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Escondido Falls	$1,520,000.00	$1,500,000.00	$20,000.00
Grizzly Island Wildlife Area Habitat Improvement	$721,000.00	$686,771.62	$34,228.38
Imperial Wildlife Area Wetland Restoration, Wetland Units T10 and S22	$950,000.00	$949,648.93	$351.07
Russian Gulch East Branch Fish Passage Improvement	$52,000.00	$16,872.00	$35,128.00
White Tate	$642,200.00	$642,200.00	$0.00
Total Recoveries to Habitat Conservation Fund			***$89,707.45***

Table 4 - Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Adaptation and Resilience Plan for the Petaluma River Baylands	$260,000.00	$260,000.00	$0.00
Elk River Estuary Restoration, Feasibility and Conceptual Design	$309,400.00	$308,172.93	$1,227.07
Silacci Ranch Conservation Easement	$2,010,000.00	$2,000,000.00	$10,000.00
Total Recoveries to Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund			***$11,227.07***

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

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Lake Earl Wildlife Area, Coastal Dunes Restoration	$300,000.00	$299,999.99	$0.01
San Joaquin River Parkway, Milburn Pond CEQA and Pond Isolation Design	$622,512.00	$609,330.49	$13,181.51
Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Habitat and Drainage Improvement Project	$800,000.00	$800,000.00	$0.00
Total Recoveries to California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund			***$13,181.52***

Table 6- Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
(CAL FIRE) Mattole Headwaters	$51,000.00	$50,807.50	$192.50
Hammill Meadows Restoration Project	$385,000.00	$349,897.15	$35,102.85
Palisades Ranch Restoration and Access Planning	$375,000.00	$349,470.08	$25,529.92
Redwoods Rising Forest Restoration	$1,500,000.00	$1,500,000.00	$0.00
Total Recoveries to Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006			***$60,825.27***

Table 7 - Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Environmental Flow Recommendations to Support Flow Enhancement Implementation in Two California Watersheds	$499,955.00	$449,959.51	$49,995.49
Forest Management Strategies to Increase Stream Flow	$609,970.00	$533,259.63	$76,710.37
San Ysidro Flow Enhancement and Water Conservation	$940,601.00	$157,547.47	$783,053.53

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Sproul Creek, South Fork Eel River, Flow Enhancement Planning	$249,959.00	$249,959.00	$0.00
Total Recoveries to Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014			***$909,959.39***

Table 8- The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Ash Creek Wildlife Area Wetland Habitat Conservation Project	$991,000.00	$986,102.53	$4,897.47
Bolsa Chica Conservancy Interpretive Center Improvements	$689,000.00	$689,000.00	$0.00
Central Sierra Meadow Planning	$275,000.00	$274,983.41	$16.59
Hudeman Slough Boat Launch Improvements	$130,000.00	$130,000.00	$0.00
Kaweah Subbasin Regional Conservation Investment Strategy	$515,330.00	$476,745.80	$38,584.20
Los Banos and North Grasslands Wildlife Areas Public Access	$120,000.00	$118,035.56	$1,964.44
North Campus Open Space, Public Access	$291,018.00	$290,463.71	$554.29
Santa Cruz County Regional Conservation Investment Strategy	$470,000.00	$469,740.92	$259.08
Santa Cruz County Regional Conservation Investment Strategy, Augmentation	$124,000.00	$100,238.36	$23,761.64
Sierra Foothill Forest Climate Resilience Planning	$219,000.00	$218,986.09	$13.91
Truckee River Wildlife Area Planning	$309,000.00	$205,581.53	$103,418.47
Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Habitat and Drainage Improvement Project	$600,000.00	$166,509.44	$433,490.56
Total Recoveries to The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018			***$606,960.65***

6. North Coast Wildlife Areas Enhancement

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,309,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Fish & Wildlife Resources – Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision [AB102, Sec. 84(1)]; 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:	North Coast Wildlife Areas Enhancement
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Amount Recommended:	$1,309,000
Funding Partners:	None
County:	Del Norte, Humboldt
Program:	Climate Adaptation and Resiliency
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1, C.1 Objectives: SI 1.3

LOCATION

The North Coast Wildlife Areas Enhancement (Project) will complete planning activities to improve wetland habitat and public access on CDFW's Fay Slough Wildlife Area (FSWA) and Mad River Slough Wildlife Areas (MRSWA) surrounding Humboldt Bay and at Lake Earl Wildlife Area (LEWA) near Crescent City. The 484-acre FSWA is comprised of coastal brackish and seasonal freshwater wetlands with riparian woodlands occurring along the eastern and southern edges. The 587-acre MRSWA was once part of Arcata Bay's extensive intertidal salt marsh and mudflats. The 6,100-acre LEWA is located adjacent to Lake Earl, the largest coastal lagoon in the western United States.

The Project is within and benefits several Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) Census Tracts [per the Department of Water Resources (DWR) DAC mapping tool]. The Project will benefit the DACs by providing increased and enhanced public access opportunities including wildlife viewing and hunting.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The wildlife areas within the Project area were historically diked and drained for agricultural use and lack the capacity to manage water levels and flow to benefit waterfowl, fish, and other wildlife. Habitat enhancements will be achieved through earthwork and infrastructure improvements to increase habitat heterogeneity and improve the capacity, control, and flow of water across the landscape. Site conditions at each Wildlife Area and proposed planning activities include:

Fay Slough Wildlife Area: FSWA was formerly comprised of extensive intertidal salt marsh and mudflats at the edge of Humboldt Bay. It was subsequently converted to agricultural use and eventually purchased by the state as habitat for wildlife. In its current state, the property is largely dominated by invasive bentgrass, which is managed through annual disking by CDFW. Historic leveling of the land

for agriculture and poor water delivery and management infrastructure limit the ability to manage habitats to support the full spectrum of species that have potential to occur there. In addition to decreased habitat functionality, there is a need to incorporate better access routes and signage so the public can more fully enjoy this wildlife area. Lastly, a storage shelter to protect the equipment necessary for invasive species management and infrastructure maintenance is vital to optimally managing the FSWA.

The Project will complete planning and environmental compliance activities for installation of new water control structures, filling or blocking the borrow ditches around ponds, internal earthwork to increase habitat quality, levee and access road improvements, and construction of a storage building. A northern levee breach will be evaluated to reintroduce tidal influence and restore tidal marsh habitat in the eastern portion of FSWA.

Mad River Slough Wildlife Area: MRSWA was formerly an interconnected mosaic of salt marsh, channels, and mudflats fringing Arcata Bay. The property was diked, drained, and leveled for cattle operations, until its acquisition by the state in the late 1980s. The property now has limited tidal influence through a small number of tide gates that vary in functionality. The limited capacity for water management and the uneven field levelling that occurred to support agriculture leads to reduced benefits for native species such as waterfowl and fish. Increasing waterflow and topographic variability (e.g., swales and habitat islands) are needed to improve habitat quality and increase abundance and diversity of native species. Levee improvements and installation of new water control structures will create added water management capability and provide access for staff and the public. Other public access improvements include an expanded parking area, removal of several derelict agricultural buildings, and construction of an interpretive kiosk near the access route.

The Project's scope of work includes planning and environmental compliance for improved water management infrastructure (e.g., water control structures, levee construction and improvement) and internal earthwork (e.g., swales) to improve habitat quality and water management capability. Planning will also include necessary steps for the removal of derelict buildings and construction of public access amenities (e.g., expanded parking area and new visitor's kiosk).

Lake Earl Wildlife Area: LEWA has an aging water control system with multiple failed culvert pipes, and some noted beaver interactions rendering the culverts no longer functional. Local public access elements have also degraded over the years and are either no longer functioning or are unsafe. The replacement of the culvert pipes and augmentation with beaver deceivers or other such mechanisms will enhance the aquatic functionality of LEWA while preventing future negative repercussions, such as washout events. The rehabilitation of public access elements will restore the public's ability to enjoy the local fora and fauna.

The Project will complete planning and environmental compliance for water connectivity improvements (e.g., culvert replacement and beaver proofing), well and water treatment system renovation for the Tolowa visitors center, refurbishment of the Pebble Beach access located northwest of Crescent City, installation of a foot bridge at Bouch Creek, and signage additions adjacent to the Coastal Lagoon trail and boat launch.

A cultural resources survey will be completed for all three wildlife areas in consultation with local tribes.

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	$72,048	---	$72,048
Engineering Designs	$558,532	---	$558,532
Environmental Compliance	$471,336	---	$471,336
Indirect Costs	$88,154	---	$88,154
Contingency	$118,930	---	$118,930
Total	$1,309,000	---	$1,309,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

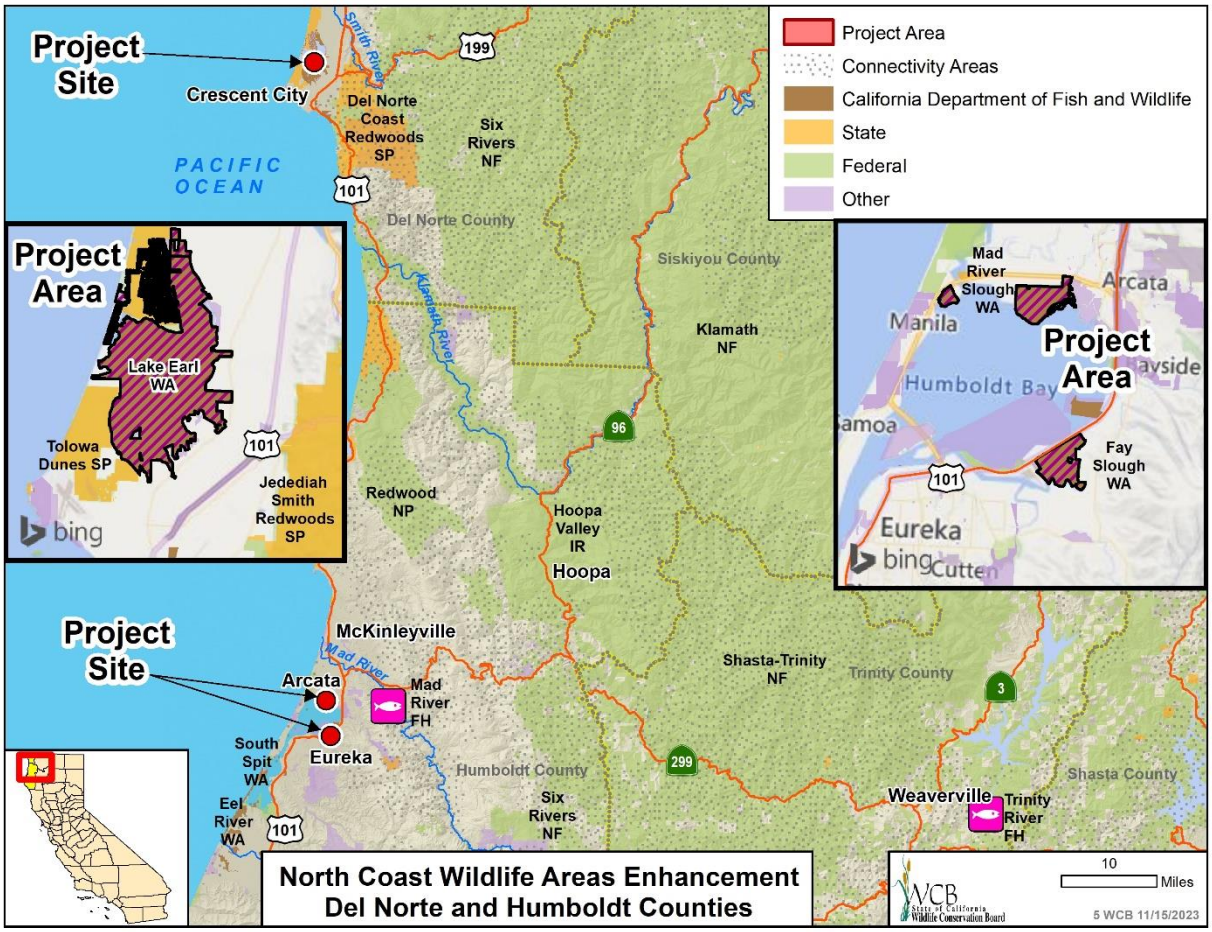
- Project Management: Secure and manage subcontracts, invoicing and reporting, and coordination with project partners.
- Engineering Designs: Complete surveys including topographic/bathymetric, fluvial & hydraulic modeling, opportunities/constraints report, complete 30%/60%/90%100% designs with bid package prep, solicitation, and recommendation.
- Environmental Compliance: Complete baseline studies, permitting, environmental review, cultural surveys and consultation, and compliance document.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:
- None received

Opposition:
- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is statutorily exempt from 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. Online Water Availability Tool - Augmentation

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $63,665 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:	Online Water Availability Tool - Augmentation
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	The Nature Conservancy
Amount Recommended:	$63,665
Funding Partners:	None
Landowners	Multiple
County:	Humboldt, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Sonoma
Program:	Stream Flow Enhancement
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.3

LOCATION

The geographic scope of the Online Water Availability Tool - Augmentation (Project) encompasses the area covered under the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) Policy (Policy)(SWRCB 2014) for Maintaining Instream Flows in Northern California Coastal Streams (Policy Area). The Policy Area covers coastal streams from the Mattole River to San Francisco and coastal streams entering northern San Pablo Bay, within Marin, Sonoma, and portions of Napa, Mendocino, and Humboldt counties.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Flows in many Northern California coastal streams drop to critical levels or dry up entirely during the dry season. Though water is usually plentiful in the winter, water demand in the dry season routinely exceeds the limited supply. To address this temporal mismatch in supply and demand, a diverse array of entities are working with water users to implement voluntary measures designed to improve stream flow and habitat conditions for listed salmonids, such as coho salmon and steelhead trout. One example is implementing actions to increase local winter water storage capacity and shift the timing of diversion from the dry to the wet season. In most cases, this transition requires a new water right or modifications to an existing one.

The Policy requires that new appropriative water right applications provide a Water Availability Analysis, consisting of a Water Supply Report (which quantifies the amount of unappropriated water remaining instream after senior rights are accounted for) and a Cumulative Diversion Analysis (which uses instream flow criteria to evaluate the effects of the proposed project, in combination with existing diverters, on instream flows needed for protection of fishery resources). Significant time and effort are associated with preparing these analyses, including data collection, analysis, and reporting by trained professionals. Currently, the

preparation of each water availability analysis is a stand-alone activity performed for each proposed project, with no widely available efficient tool to perform such analyses. Securing SWRCB approval for these analyses in water rights permitting can be a lengthy process, even for projects designed to enhance conditions for fish and wildlife.

The Project will develop an easily accessible tool, using a common set of data, tools, and assumptions that will allow practitioners, landowners, and government agencies to more efficiently answer questions related to water availability. The specific objective is to create an online decision support tool to evaluate water supply and demand in the Policy Area and provide water availability analysis information necessary to develop and permit flow enhancement projects at an increased pace and scale.

The decision support tool will be built using the best available data and scientific methods, in conformance with approaches allowed under the Policy. This will involve building on a body of peer-reviewed research, including work on methods related to predicting unimpeded stream flow, identification of ecological flow thresholds, assessing existing water rights cumulatively in context of natural supply, and supporting water availability and allocation decisions using web-based technology. Project partners will work closely with practitioners and regulatory decision-makers to understand information needs, accessibility requirements, and formatting or other requirements to ensure the tool will best support/meet the needs of target users. Outreach and communication regarding the decision support tool will occur through multiple venues, such as webinars, workshops, and/or other strategies to build broad awareness of the availability and utility of the tool.

The budget augmentation is required due to the unanticipated challenges regarding the complexity of implementation of the Policy into the water availability tool. Specifically, it was not fully appreciated at the time of the original grant application that the water allocation tool would need to perform analyses separately where there are multiple bypass requirements that vary by season for one permit application, thus, requiring the grantee to conduct additional outreach, and explore ways to accommodate multiple analytical periods for a project both within and outside the defined Policy season. For these reasons, the outreach and design and technical aspects of the Project will cost more than originally budgeted to complete the tool.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 10: Evaluate Conservation Outcomes and Adaptively Manage.

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

Project Task	WCB Original Grant	Augmentation	Cost Share	Total Cost
Water Supply and Demand Reports	$134,071	---	$1,675	$135,746
Technology Development	$340,386	$47,749	$2,702	$390,837
Outreach and Communication	$62,593	$15,916	$3,123	$81,632
Indirect Costs	$14,205	---	$112,001	$126,206
Total	$551,255	$63,665	$119,501	$734,421

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Water Supply and Demand Reports: Task is to determine the required and desired components of water supply and demand reporting necessary to support water availability analysis and identify approaches for using eWRIMS data.
- Technology Development: Task will convene a user-centered design group to develop end user profiles and develop a self-serve online water availability tool capable of producing Water Supply Reports and Cumulative Diversion Analyses for any stream reach in the Policy Area as well as answering other water availability queries.
- Outreach and Communication: This task includes holding webinars and/or workshops, supports development of an early user community, and sets up a process to evaluate new feature requests and/or expansion of the tool.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 20 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.


Online Water Availability Tool - Augmentation
Multiple Counties
WCB
State of California
Wildlife Conservation Board
CALIFORNIA
NEVADA
Mt Shasta
Eureka
Redding
Chico
Reno
Carson City
Elko
Sacramento
Vacaville
Fairfield
Antioch
Stockton
San Francisco
Modesto
Livermore
Fremont
San Jose
Salinas
Fresno
Visalia
Bakersfield
Mt Whitney
Las Vegas
Henderson
San Luis Obispo
Santa Maria
Lompoc
Santa Barbara
Santa Clarita
Lancaster
Palmdale
Victorville
Oxnard
Los Angeles
Riverside
Anaheim
Long Beach
Santa Ana
Cathedral City
Palm Desert
Indio
Murrieta
Oceanside
San Diego
Mexicali
Tijuana
Yuma
Salton Sea
Lake Havasu
Saint George
Colorado
Project Area
6 WCB 11/15/2023
National Geographic, Esri, Garmin, HERE, UNEP-WCMC, USGS, NASA, ESA, METI, NRCAN, GEBCO, NOAA, increment P Corp.

8. Càkawì ódiknonà and Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve Resource Management Plan

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,480,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Nature Based Solutions Provision [AB102, Sec. 85(3)(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:	Càkawì ódiknonà and Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve Resource Management Plan
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Chico State Enterprises
Amount Recommended:	$1,480,000
Funding Partners:	Chico State Enterprises, Point Blue Conservation Science
County:	Butte
Program:	Oak Woodlands Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 2.1, 4.2

LOCATION

The Càkawì ódiknonà and Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve Resource Management Plan (Project) focuses on the Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve which is located approximately ten miles northeast of the community of Chico and will occur on two Chico State University preserves encompassing about 7,835 acres adjacent to local, state, and federally conserved lands.

Càkawì ódiknonà and Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve properties range in elevation from 300 to 2,160 feet and include 4.5 miles of perennial Big Chico Creek situated in a narrow canyon, several seasonal drainages (Grizzly Hollow, Sheep Hollow, Cabin Hollow), and many perennial seeps/springs. Representative vegetation alliances include over 1,500 acres of blue oak woodland consistent with lower elevation foothills around the Sacramento Valley with numerous large meadows and savannas at the mouth of each drainage, transitioning to mixed chaparral as elevation increases.

The Project is not located withing a DAC/SDAC per DWR mapping, however it is adjacent to several DAC and SDAC areas with public access allowed on 3,950 acres and guided tours/workshops on remaining 3,850 acres of the preserve network.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Chico State Enterprises (CSE) manages Chico State Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve (BCCER) totaling 7,835 acres with the mission to preserve and steward critical habitat and to provide a natural area for environmental research and education. BCCER was established in 2000 with 3,950 acres in Big Chico Creek Canyon. In 2020, an anonymous donor gifted the BCCER an additional 3,885

acres of contiguous land to the west, doubling the size of the Reserve and adding distinct historical management practices and unique new habitat types. In partnership with the Mechoopda Indian Tribe, the property was named Càk̓awì ódiknonà, which roughly translates to “blue oak drainage beginning.” When BCCER was established in 2000, there was limited baseline data collection or documentation of the habitat condition or historic management, making it challenging to track successes and meet targeted management and ecological goals. While innovative, holistic, and culturally informed land stewardship has taken place on the BCCER, without baseline data and project tracking it is difficult to measure how the ecosystem has changed in the 20+ years that CSE has owned it. As foothill ecosystems and specifically blue oak woodlands are critical to wildlife habitat, catastrophic wildfire prevention, and cultural resource protection, it is crucial to incorporate long term management and research objectives to support education and influence land management of these ecosystems throughout California.

The Project will create a comprehensive management plan that utilizes baseline data to inform the goals, objectives, and outcomes for natural resource management on the reserve properties. A comprehensive biological and cultural resources survey will be conducted to inform the document and create baseline data for future management task efficacy monitoring to enable adaptive management. The planning process will integrate feedback from diverse experts including tribal members, land managers, agency representatives, and academics. Example management plan document components include, but are not limited to, land acknowledgment, property description, habitat and species descriptions, habitat connectivity, management goals and tasks, operations, and maintenance.

CSE has a collaborative working relationship and formal MOU with the Mechoopda Indian Tribe enabling access to culturally significant natural resources on the reserve and ensuring tribal participation on projects impacting cultural resources. This proposal includes funding for tribal collaboration.

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, and 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	$105,321	---	$105,321
Baseline Surveys	$700,069	---	$700,069
Management Planning & CEQA Compliance	$482,000	---	$482,000
Indirect Costs	$192,610	---	$192,610
Total	$1,480,000	---	$1,480,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Grant administration including invoicing and reporting, stakeholder engagement, and subcontractor management.
- Baseline Surveys: Biological and cultural resource surveys to inform management recommendations and provide data for long term comparative analysis of land management.
- Management Planning & CEQA Compliance: Management planning on CSE Reserve properties and associated CEQA compliance.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.

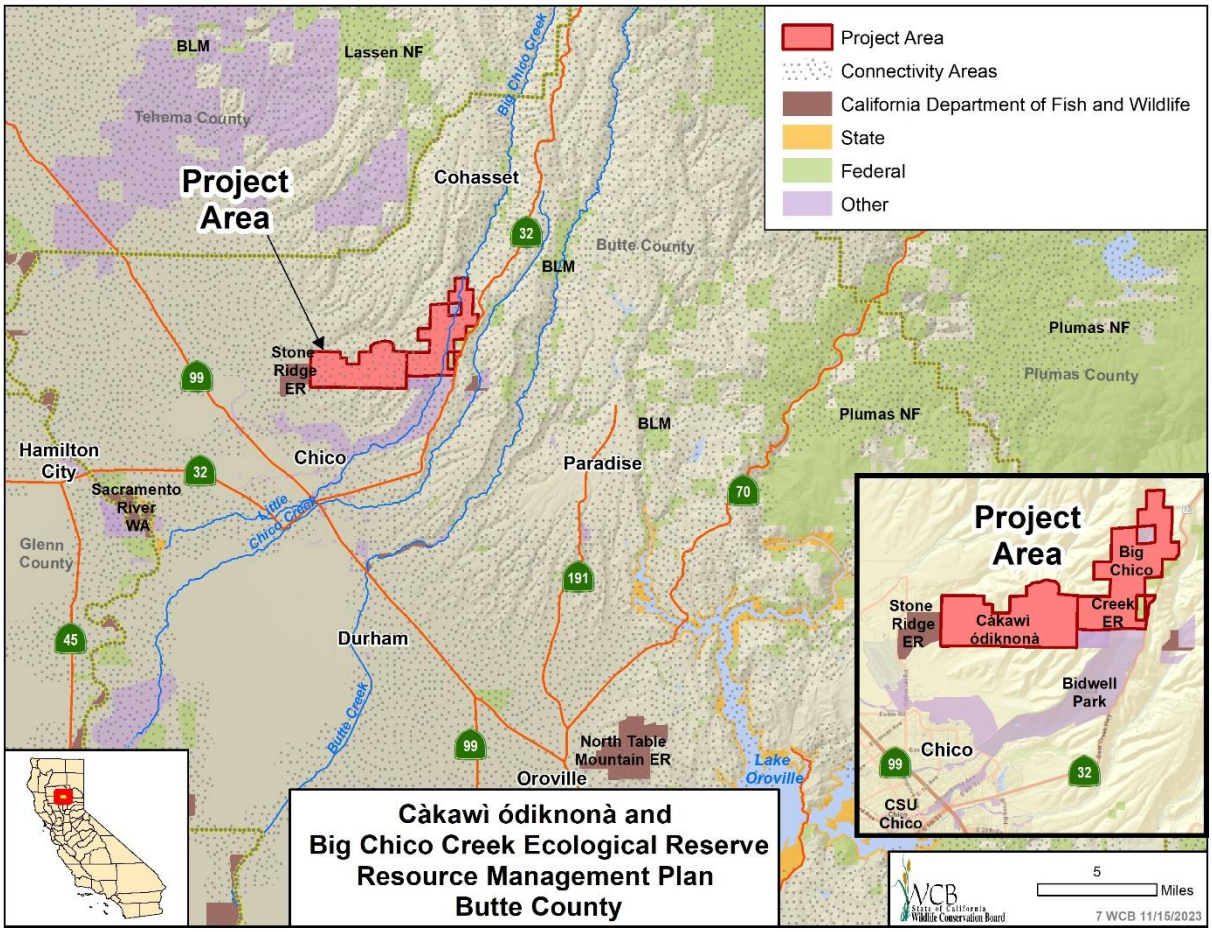
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- David E. Lee, Board Chairman, Butte County Resource Conservation District
- Dennis Ramirez, Chairman, Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria

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
BLM
Lassen NF
Tehema County
Project Area
Cohasset
Big Chico Creek
Butte County
BLM
Stone Ridge ER
Plumas NF
Plumas County
Plumas NF
BLM
Hamilton City
Chico
Paradise
Sacramento River WA
Little Chico Creek
Glenn County
Durham
Butte Creek
North Table Mountain ER
Oroville
Lake Oroville
Project Area
Big Chico Creek ER
Stone Ridge ER
Cakawi ódiknonà
Bidwell Park
Chico
CSU Chico
Càkawì ódiknonà and
Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve
Resource Management Plan
Butte County
5
Miles
7 WCB 11/15/2023

9. Keithly Wetland Preserve

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $850,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision (SB170, Sec. 53.5) for the grant to Lake County Land Trust (LCLT); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Keithly Wetland Preserve
Project Type:	Fee Title Acquisition (86± acre)
Grantee:	Lake County Land Trust
Amount Recommended:	$850,000
Funding Partners:	N/A
County:	Lake County
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.2 Objectives: SI 1.2, 1.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.4

LOCATION

The 86± acre Keithly Wetland Preserve (Property) is located adjacent to the southern border of the city of Lakeport in Lake County. The Property is located on Main Street/Soda Bay Road. The Property is located in the Clear Lake watershed less than a quarter of a mile from the western shore of Clear Lake. Prior WCB acquisitions in the surrounding area include the adjacent Wright Wetlands Preserve (2020; 200 acres) and the Melo Wetlands Preserve (2016; 34 acres).

The Property is located within Lake County, a Disadvantaged Community (DAC), immediately adjacent to the city of Lakeport, a Severely Disadvantaged Community (SDAC). LCLT intends to develop a plan for property co-management with the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is somewhat irregular in shape with level to gently sloping topography, and zoned Agricultural Preserve Zone, which has a 40-acre minimum lot size. The highest and best use is rural residential development of up to two residential homesites, with continued grazing on the pastureland.

Habitats on the Property include freshwater emergent wetlands, valley oak woodland, valley foothill riparian, and pastureland consisting of perennial and bunch grasses, rush grasses and sedges, providing habitat to fish including Clear Lake hitch, over 147 species of birds, black-tailed deer, otter, mink, coyote, and fox. The property includes a section of Manning Creek, a tributary to Clear Lake, which LCLT intends to restore to its historic channel through their adjacent Wright Wetlands Preserve.

The project supports SWAP strategies including maintaining and increasing native species distribution, enhancing ecosystem vegetation, and restoring Manning

Creek to help improve Clear Lake water quality and provide multiple spawning paths for Clear Lake hitch. The project is located within the Big Valley Wetland Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP).

The Property ranks 4 out of 5 for terrestrial connectivity in CDFW's Area of Conservation Emphasis mapping tool and is located within the Mayacamas to Berryessa wildlife corridor. Importantly, the property is located along the Clear Lake shoreline corridor, adjacent to LCLT's Wright Wetlands Preserve and open space land owned by the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians.

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
The Property will be owned and managed by LCLT, who intends to develop a combined management plan for the Property and the adjacent Wright Wetlands Preserve. LCLT and Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians will develop a plan for property co-management, which will provide Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians with decision-making authority over property management and access to the Property for a variety of purposes including cultivation and collection of culturally relevant plants. Limited access to the public for hiking and birdwatching will be provided.

PROJECT FUNDING
The Department of General Services (DGS) approved fair market value is $900,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$850,000
Lake County Land Trust	$50,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$900,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

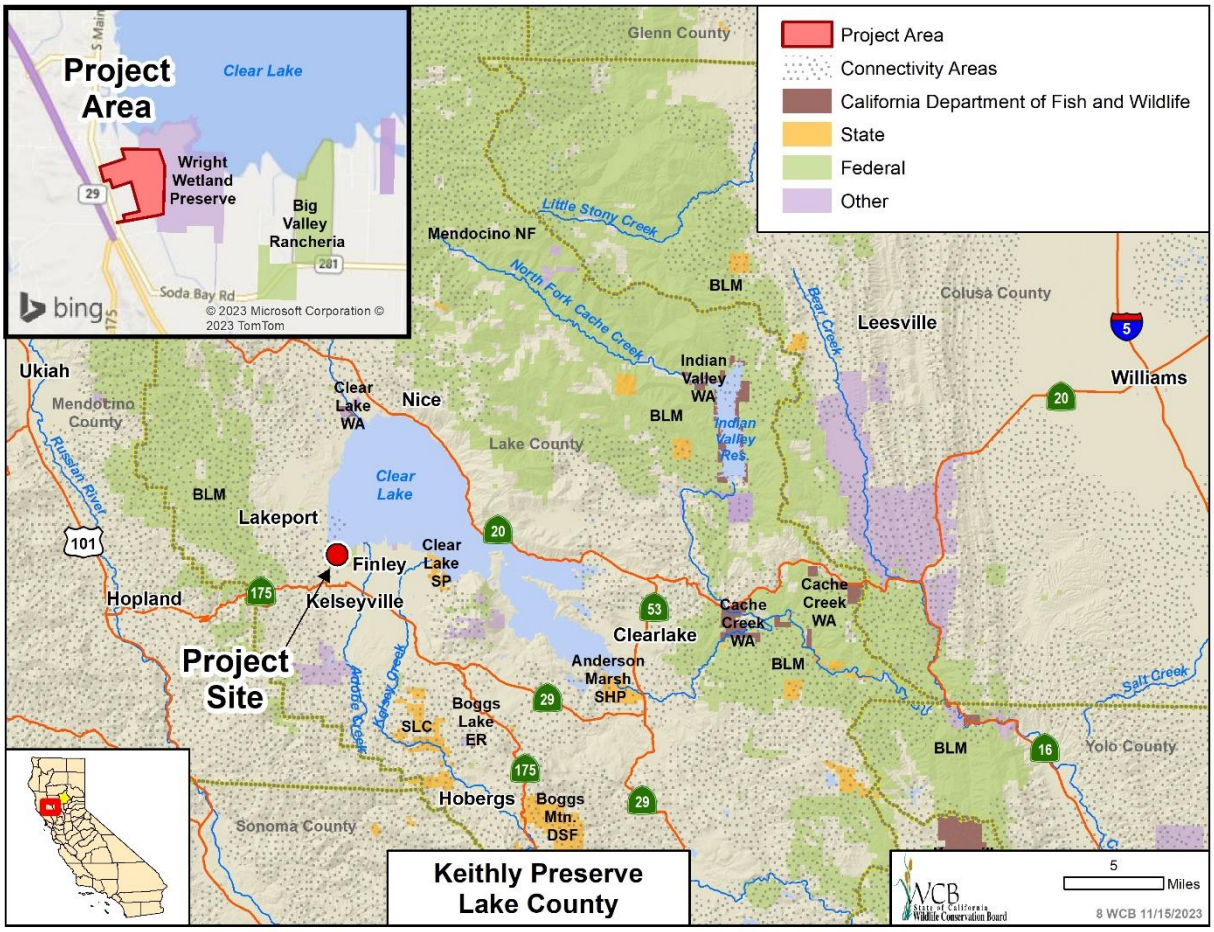
- Senator Mike McGuire
- Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry
- Jessica Pyska, Chair, Lake County Board of Supervisors
- Matt Teague, District Superintendent, Northern Buttes District, Department of Parks and Recreation
- Donna Mackiewicz, Conservation Co-chair, Redbud Audubon Society
- Matthew Metcalf, President, Lake County Chamber of Commerce
- Victoria Brandon, Conservation Chair, Sierra Club Lake Group, Sierra Club
- Bernard Butcher and Lynne Butcher, Tallman Hotel and Blue Wing Saloon and Café
- Broc Zoller

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

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



10. Snell Valley Ranch

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,800,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Fish & Wildlife Resources – Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision (SB170, Sec. 53.5) for the grant to The 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:	Snell Valley Ranch
Project Type:	Conservation Easement (846± acres)
Grantee:	Land Trust of Napa County
Amount Recommended:	$1,800,000
Funding Partners:	CDFW, Moore Foundation
County:	Napa
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.2 Objectives: SI 1.2, 2.1, 2.1

LOCATION

The Snell Valley Ranch (Property) is located directly off Snell Valley Road, east of State Route 29, northwest of Lake Berryessa, and approximately 6 miles north of the community of Pope Valley in northern Napa County. The subject is within the Putah Creek watershed; this creek is the main water source for Lake Berryessa, the seventh largest reservoir in the state. The Property abuts protected land on both the east and the west and in total, is connected to over 8,000 acres of protected land, including BLM, Land Trust of Napa County (LTNC), Napa Open Space District, and the 1,278-acre Grinsell property purchased in 2020 with WCB funding. Other prior WCB-funded acquisitions in the surrounding area include Montesol (2017; 7,266 acres), Wildlake (2012; 3,029 acres), and Pacific Union College (2018; 864 acres).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is of irregular shape consisting of 5 centrally located parcels totaling approximately 846 acres and zoned as Agriculture Watershed District. The Property is located in the eastern fringe of the Napa Valley American Viticultural Area, which commands a premium price for new vineyard land. There are two water wells, several springs, creeks, reservoirs and ponds on site.

The Property's habitats include mixed oak forest, with interior live oak and blue oak woodlands, serpentine and annual grasslands, serpentine chaparral and perennial and seasonal wetlands. A perennial stream, Butts Creek, runs for two miles through the Property. Botanical and herpetological surveys of the Property identified 13 special status species, including foothill yellow-legged frog and western pond turtle. The Property's extensive serpentine soils contain the highest concentration of rare plants of any soil type statewide and hosts 11 priority plant species, such as two-carpellate western flax (California Rare Plant Rank of 1B.2), a species found in only four counties in California.

The Property is located within the Blue Ridge Berryessa Natural Area CAPP and is considered a “high priority” by CDFW. The Property was ranked 5, the highest value, in CDFW’s Areas of Conservation Emphasis, for State Biodiversity Rank, Ecoregional Terrestrial Rank, State Terrestrial Biodiversity Rank, State Terrestrial Native Species Rank and State Terrestrial Irreplaceability Rank.

Additionally, the Property is within the Bay-Delta Bioregion and is consistent with SWAP goals of increasing conservation of oak woodland, riparian, and grassland habitats.

The Property consists of varied topography, with elevations from 360 feet in the valley grasslands to almost 1,000 feet in the forested hills. This elevational gradient and the Property’s water resources will provide the opportunity for refugia during climate change, the opportunity for animals and plants to move up gradient as well as along the larger landscape corridors. Additionally, the Property and larger corridor has sufficient elevation to provide a haven for wildlife and plants from sea level rise.

The Property is also located within the North Bay’s highest priority wildlife corridor identified in the Bay Area Critical Linkages Project, an initiative that involved 85 organizations in identifying wildlife corridor priorities around the Bay Area. This corridor stretches from the Point Reyes National Seashore on the coast in Marin to the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument in Napa.

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

LTNC will manage the Conservation Easement on the Property. A baseline conditions report will be provided before the close of escrow. LTNC will monitor the Property annually and will protect the conservation purposes of the easement and uphold the terms of the grant agreement. The LTNC currently holds 156 conservation easements and has many years of experience in monitoring and enforcing easements. LTNC has staff and a number of volunteers dedicated to the annual work of managing easements.

PROJECT FUNDING

The DGS approved fair market value is $3,800,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$1,800,000
CDFW-Prop 1 Funding	$2,000,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$3,800,000

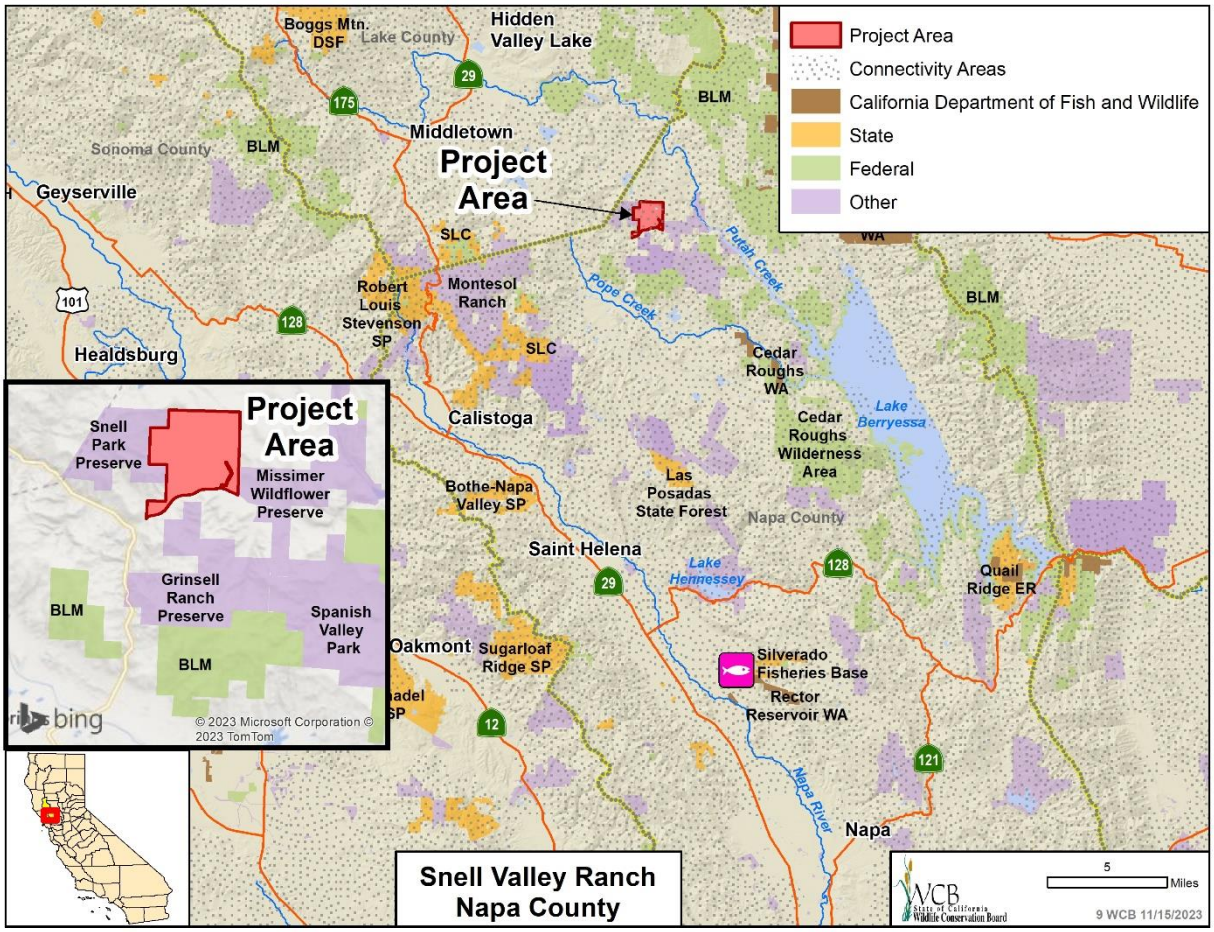
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- None

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.



11. Woodland North Regional Pond Enhancement

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,672,000 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:	Woodland North Regional Pond Enhancement
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Woodland Davis Clean Water Agency
Amount Recommended:	$1,672,000
Funding Partners:	Audubon Society, Center for Land Based Learning, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Woodland Davis Clean Water Agency
Landowner(s):	Woodland Davis Clean Water Agency
County:	Yolo
Program:	Inland Wetlands Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.3

LOCATION

The Woodland North Regional Pond Enhancement (Project) is located on the North Regional Pond (NRP) in the city of Woodland in Yolo County. The NRP was built as part of the City of Woodland's stormwater drainage system and the Woodland-Davis Clean Water Agency Regional Water Treatment Facility. This site of year-round open water has great conservation potential for birds. There are some shallow banks and a small seasonal island that provide some foraging and roosting opportunities. However, the NRP was not designed with wildlife conservation in mind; there are numerous enhancements that can maximize the wildlife conservation benefits for migratory birds and other wildlife while taking advantage of, and maintaining, its water management functions.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

One of the foremost limiting factors for bird habitat in the Central Valley is the dramatic decrease in wetland habitat. Starting in the 1880s, seasonal and year-round wetlands were drained and converted to agriculture, and 90 percent of this habitat—an essential part of the Pacific Flyway-- has been lost. Wetlands support migratory birds using the Flyway, including waterfowl (ducks and geese), shorebirds (avocets, sandpipers, plovers), and wading birds (egrets, herons, ibis). As the cycles of drought and deluges become more intense due to climate change, consistent summer water is essential for these vulnerable species to thrive.

Migrating songbirds are also vulnerable as they move across the landscape. Currently, the upper banks of NRP are covered with mostly non-native plants, which, although they do provide some forage and cover, are not ideal. The lower banks were planted with native grasses when the pond was built, but this area is being overtaken by weeds. The threatened tricolored blackbird, a regional

songbird, requires a specific wetland habitat, which has been in decline. This species has used a field next to the pond for nesting in the past, though nesting is disrupted by farming operations.

The Project will construct two habitat islands, enhance existing mudflats for shorebird foraging, and provide emergent and upland cover for forage, nesting, and pollinator habitat along the perimeter of the Project site. Only a few trees will be planted at this site, as the extreme alkaline soils are challenging for most species. Red willows will be planted for songbird perching and potential ibis nesting sites. These habitat improvements were selected based on the known habitat needs of dabbling and diving ducks, geese and other waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, tricolored blackbird, and other wildlife. The upland site known to be used by tricolored blackbirds will be protected from farming and disturbance, and the plants providing upland habitat on the site will be managed for maximum benefit to the tricolored blackbird.

The Project will not use herbicide.

The Project area provides public access along two miles of trails (service roads) which are accessible to pedestrians, bikes, and cars. The Project will install interpretive signs to promote interest and visitation, to inform users of Central Valley natural history, to show the importance of the Pacific Flyway, and to highlight the plant and animal species that visitors are likely to observe.

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 Woodland Davis Clean Water Agency has adopted a Management Plan, the *City of Woodland North Regional Pond Shorebird, Waterfowl and Tricolored Blackbird Habitat 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, Woodland Davis Clean Water Agency 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	$101,000	$23,000	$124,000
Habitat Enhancement	$1,384,775	$223,000	$1,607,775
Indirect Costs	$34,225	---	$34,225
Contingency	$152,000	---	$152,000
Total	$1,672,000	$246,000	$1,918,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Project management, invoicing, reporting, subcontractor selection, and management.
- Habitat Enhancement: Mobilization, site prep, erosion control, earthwork, bird monitoring, revegetation, and creation and installation of interpretive signage.
- Indirect Costs: 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:

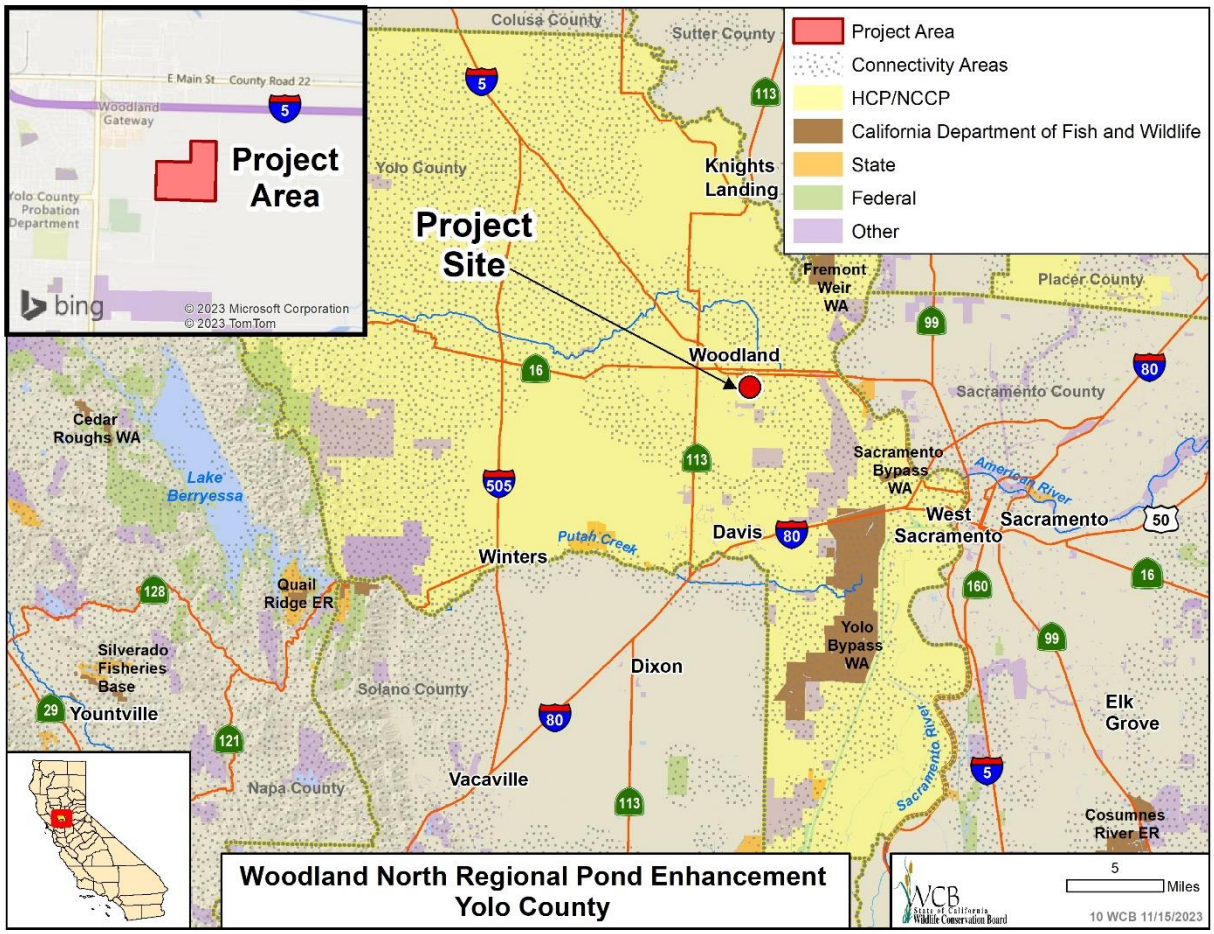
- James Cogswell, Coordinator, Central Valley Joint Venture
- Xeronimo Castaneda, Interim Working Lands Program Director
- Mary Kimball, Chief Executive Officer, Center for Land-Based Learning
- Ryan Pistochini, Director, Yolo County General Services Department
- Robert J. Meese, Ph.D., University of California (Retired)
- David Wilkinson, President, Woodland Tree Foundation
- Ann Brice, Ph.D., President, Yolo Audubon Society
- Alexander Tengolics, Executive Director, Yolo Habitat Conservancy

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The City of Woodland, as lead agency, prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA. Staff considered the EIR and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination (NOD) will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
HCP/NCCP
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Project Area
E Main St
County Road 22
Woodland Gateway
Yolo County Probation Department
bing
© 2023 Microsoft Corporation
© 2023 TomTom
Project Site
Colusa County
Sutter County
Yolo County
Knights Landing
Fremont Weir WA
Placer County
Woodland
Sacramento County
Cedar Roughs WA
Lake Berryessa
Sacramento Bypass WA
American River
West Sacramento
Sacramento
Davis
Winters
Putah Creek
Quail Ridge ER
Yolo Bypass WA
Silverado Fisheries Base
Yountville
Solano County
Dixon
Elk Grove
Napa County
Vacaville
Sacramento River
Cosumnes River ER
Woodland North Regional Pond Enhancement
Yolo County
5
Miles
WCB
State of California
Wildlife Conservation Board
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12. Effie Yeaw Nature Center Facilities Improvement Planning, Augmentation

STAFF RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $35,000 from California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80100(a)(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:	Effie Yeaw Nature Center Facilities Improvement Planning, Augmentation
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	American River Natural History Association
Amount Recommended:	$35,000
Funding Partners:	American River Natural History Association
County:	Sacramento
Program:	Lower American River Conservancy
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.5 Objectives: SI 3.1, 3.4

LOCATION
The Effie Yeaw Nature Center (Nature Center) is located within the American River Parkway, approximately one mile north of the city of Rancho Cordova. The Nature Center is nestled next to a 103-acre Nature Study Area designated by Sacramento County Regional Parks in their 2008 American River Parkway Plan. Riparian woodland, grassland, and oak woodland surround the Nature Center and a gravel beach of the American River can be reached by three self-guided trails that originate from the Nature Center. The American River Natural History Association (Association) operates the Nature Center pursuant to a lease with the County of Sacramento. The Association provides educational and interpretive programs about the natural and cultural environment of the American River Parkway, and promotes awareness, appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment of these resources for the Sacramento region.

The Project site is within one mile of an SDAC according to DWR maps.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Since it was constructed in 1976, the Nature Center has not been updated to accommodate the growth of its nationally recognized educational programs. In 2017, recognizing the need for facility improvements, the Association began preparation of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center Master Plan for Facilities Improvement (Master Plan). The Association proposes to make capital improvements to the Nature Center's Museum Building as described in the Master Plan. Improvements are proposed to be implemented in two phases.

This planning project will enable the Association to complete environmental review in accordance with CEQA for the Master Plan and obtain Sacramento County

approval of the Master Plan. Additionally, engineering studies and designs will be completed for the first stage of construction to bring the plans to a shovel ready status. Initial plans will design construction of a separate aviary adjacent to the Museum Building in the current location of the amphitheater. The new aviary will replace the outdated facilities currently used to house live animals serving as ambassadors for the Nature Center. The new aviary will provide a secure location for live animals and an improved work area for staff assigned to their care. Project design will also provide for replacement of the existing amphitheater with an improved outdoor education classroom in the area adjacent to the proposed aviary. The existing mews where the live animals are currently housed will be converted into an improved animal care area.

The Association will hold public meetings to solicit input from the community and stakeholders on the proposed Nature Center improvements. Designs will be completed at 65% and 100%, along with bid packages and permitting. Existing environmental conditions and environmental impacts associated with all construction proposed in the Master Plan will be analyzed and environmental review will be conducted. It is expected that a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) will be completed as a part of the project. Sacramento County will be the lead agency for CEQA. The final draft Master Plan and 100% construction designs will be reviewed in accordance with the policies of the 2008 American River Parkway Plan (Sacramento County) with final approval of the Master Plan and environmental document by Sacramento County Board of Supervisors.

The augmentation would cover cost escalations in the County's role as CEQA lead agency and permit fees.

The project was recommended by the Lower American River Conservancy Program Advisory Committee, whose role is to evaluate and recommend projects to be considered by WCB. The project was recommended for submittal to the WCB by the Advisory Committee on October 17, 2019, and the funding augmentation request was recommended for submittal to WCB by the Advisory Committee on October 12, 2023. American River Parkway Compliance Analysis was completed for the project at the December 12, 2019, Recreation and Parks Commission meeting, in accordance with Public Resources Code section 5845.5. The project was determined to be consistent with the American River Parkway Plan.

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

Project Task	WCB Augmentation	Original WCB Funds	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Public Outreach	---	$1,500	$4,500	$6,000
Engineering & Designs	---	$109,000	---	$109,000
Master Plan and CEQA	$35,000	$1,500	$18,000	$54,500
Total	$35,000	$112,000	$22,500	$169,500

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Public Outreach: Advertise and conduct public meetings.
- Engineering & Designs: Engineering studies, final design plans for aviary, outdoor classroom, and associated features.
- Master Plan and CEQA: Draft and final CEQA document, complete CEQA review, obtain construction and regulatory permits.

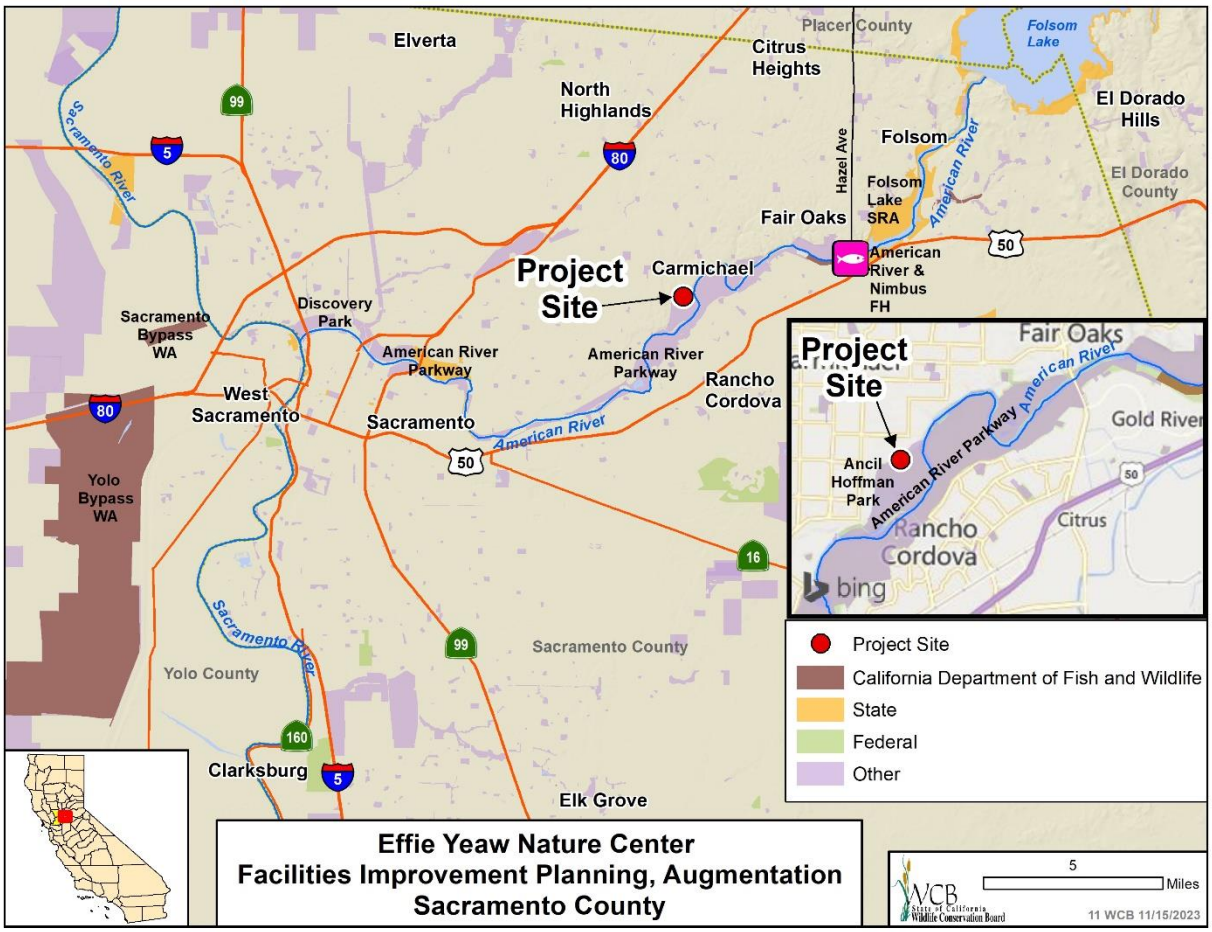
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- 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.



13. Rossmoor Bar Trail Enhancements Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $597,000 from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80100(a)(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:	Rossmoor Bar Trail Enhancements Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	City of Rancho Cordova
Amount Recommended:	$597,000
Funding Partners:	City of Rancho Cordova
County:	Sacramento
Program:	Lower American River Conservancy
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1, C.4 Objectives: SI 2.1

LOCATION

The Rossmoor Bar Trail Enhancements Planning (Project) is located within the city of Rancho Cordova (City) along the American River in the Rossmoor Bar Area of the American River Parkway (Parkway). Rossmoor Bar is home to several locally rare native plants including narrow-leaved mules ears, and the only known populations of Wright's buckwheat and sulfur buckwheat. The site also boasts populations of other native plants such as coyote mint, foothill penstemon, and sky lupine. This area is popular with hikers and runners and has been identified in the *American River Parkway Natural Resources Management Plan* as an area for remediation of social trails and promoting native vegetation growth. Current threats to site are undesirable off trail hiking and biking, and invasive species such as tree of heaven, Spanish broom, and yellow star thistle.

The Project site is in a DAC according to DWR maps. It is not in the top 25 percentile according to CalEnviroScreen. The City has engaged with the Wilton Rancheria on previous City-led projects and will continue to work with the tribe on the Project's interpretive panel content and developing a culturally significant plant palette for habitat restoration.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

There are currently 10.5 miles of 'social trails' within the Rossmoor Bar area that pose a risk to both the surrounding ecosystem and human safety and wellbeing. The current informal trail system causes habitat fragmentation, degrades wildlife habitat, and is characterized by excess dead foliage which increases the risk of fire. The unimproved social trails are a hazard to users and limit public access to Rossmoor Bar.

The Project will determine the best approach to closing and enhancing trails and constructing an ADA-compliant trail to the river and will include habitat restoration

on closed trails and developing interpretive materials to install along the enhanced trail system.

Planning activities will include field visits to identify and determine trails for closure or enhancement and subsequent conceptual designs and trail mappings to inform project alternatives. Two trail alternatives will be completed, including a mapping of proposed trail routes, and sign locations. To support the development of these alternatives, the project team will develop concept design and seek input from stakeholders, the community, and local Native American tribes for interpretive sign and wayfinding sign content, including historical, Native American, and natural topics. Project concept designs will be presented to the public and stakeholders for input before developing the two trail alternatives.

All necessary environmental review and permitting will be completed for the preferred alternative. An EIR was completed in 2008 for the American River Parkway Plan, it is anticipated that an addendum will be drafted with supporting biological and cultural technical memorandums to meet CEQA requirements. Additionally, all permits and permissions will be applied for, including those required by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Central Valley Flood Protection Board, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and CDFW. Applicant will prepare 65% design plans for trail engineering and habitat restoration to inform future implementation of the Project.

The Project was recommended by the Lower American River Conservancy Program Advisory Committee, whose role is to evaluate and recommend projects to be considered by WCB. The Project was recommended for submittal to WCB by the Advisory Committee on October 12, 2023. American River Parkway Compliance Analysis was completed for the Project at the October 26, 2023, Recreation and Parks Commission meeting, in accordance with Public Resources Code section 5845.5. The Project was determined to be consistent with the American River Parkway Plan.

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; and Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks (Regional Parks) has ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the American River Parkway. As part of the Project, the City will develop a long-term management plan in coordination with Regional Parks that describes Regional Parks' fiscal resources and ordinances concerning illegal encampments or unsheltered individuals, and the expected activities to maintain the enhanced trail system, new landscaping and existing vegetation, closed social trials, and the interpretive signage.

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

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	$45,106	$6,740	$51,846
Public and Stakeholder Outreach	$26,300	$3,810	$30,110
Plans, Specifications, and Estimates	$147,494	$22,039	$169,533
Environmental Review and Permitting	$323,900	$45,411	$369,311
Contingency	$54,200	---	$54,200
Total	$597,000	$78,000	$675,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Contracting, scheduling, budgeting, invoicing, reporting.
- Public and Stakeholder Outreach: Conduct two in-person public meetings, prepare and distribute online survey.
- Plans, Specifications, and Estimates: Prepare two trail alternatives, develop content for three interpretive panels, prepare 65% designs for preferred alternative, complete civil construction documents, develop planting, irrigation, and trail amenity plan.
- Environmental Review and Permitting: Prepare aquatic delineation report and biological and cultural resource technical reports, Draft EIR addendum, complete CEQA review, and prepare and submit permit applications for CDFW, USACE, RWQCB, and CVFPB.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

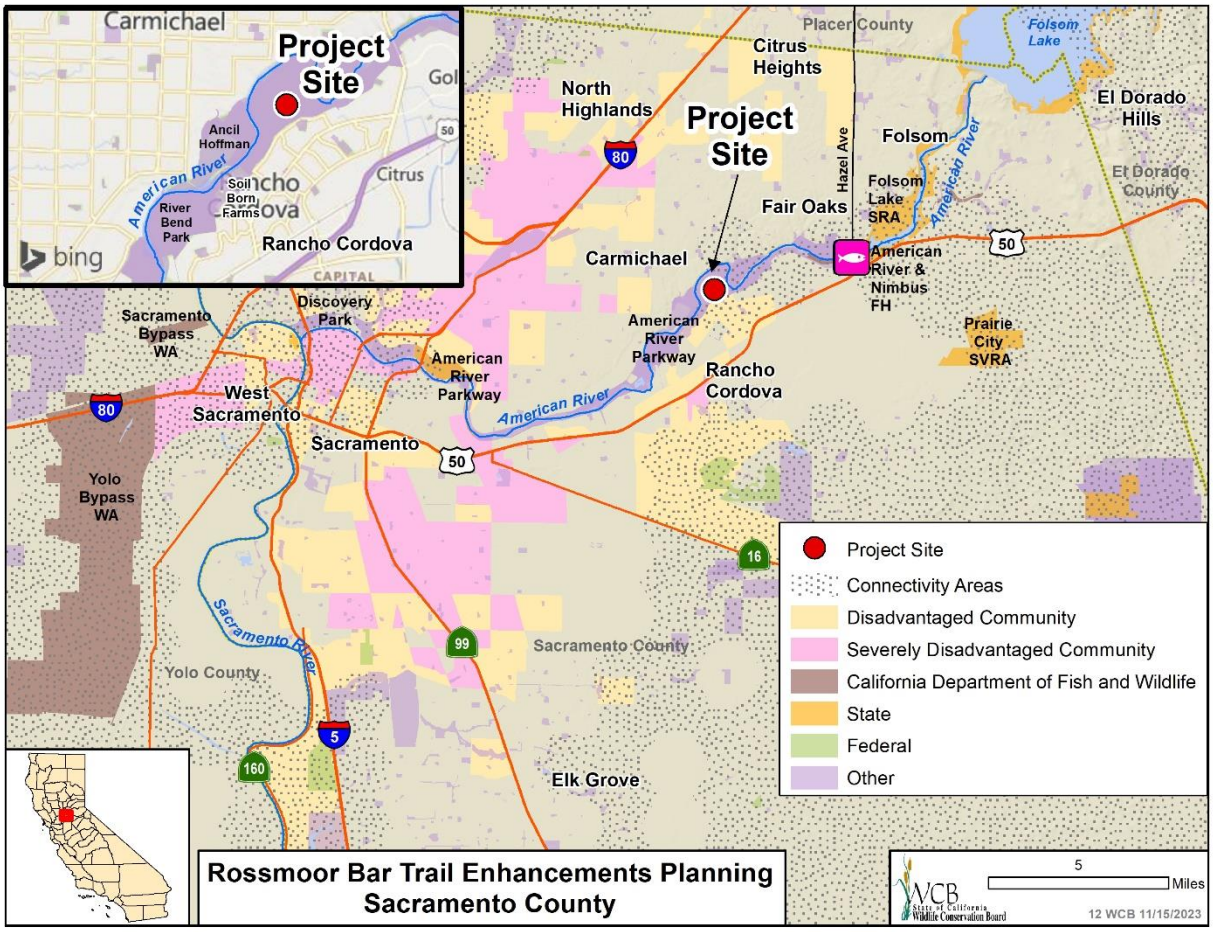
- Pat Hume, District 5, Board of Supervisors, Sacramento County
- Liz Bellas, Director, Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks
- Donald Terry, City Council Member, City of Rancho Cordova
- Partick Larkin, General Manager, Cordova Recreation and Park District
- Shelly Blanchard, Executive Director, Cordova Community Council Foundation
- Ross A. Johnson, President, Rancho Cordova Rotary Club

Opposition:

- None received.

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
The Project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies, as it involves only

feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



14. Sutter's Landing Regional Park ADA River Access Trail Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $950,000 from California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80100(a)(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:	Sutter's Landing Regional Park ADA River Access Trail Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	City of Sacramento
Amount Recommended:	$950,000
Funding Partners:	City of Sacramento
County:	Sacramento
Program:	Lower American River Conservancy
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.5, C.4 Objectives: SI 2.1

LOCATION

Sutter’s Landing Regional Park (Sutter’s Landing) is immediately adjacent to the American River Parkway (Parkway) and is owned and managed by the City of Sacramento (City). Sutter’s Landing provides recreational facilities that serve high population densities in the adjacent neighborhoods, some of which are classified as disadvantaged communities. A federal flood control levee on the northern side of Sutter’s Landing marks the park’s boundary, and the narrow riverbank on the river side of the federal levee is part of the Parkway and is managed by Sacramento County.

The Sutter’s Landing Regional Park ADA River Access Trail Planning (Project) is located within the city of Sacramento on the south side of the American River in the Woodlake area of the Parkway. This area is characterized by stratified sands and silts that are highly susceptible to bank erosion. The Natural Resources Management Plan for the Parkway identifies management of social trails and rehabilitation of vegetation understory as top management priorities for this area adjacent to Sutter’s Landing.

The Project area is in an SDAC according to DWR maps and is in the top 25 percentile according to CalEnviroScreen for environmental indicators such as traffic, pollution, cleanup sites, groundwater threats, hazardous waste, and poverty. The Project’s community outreach will seek input from members of the SDAC on the trail and boat launch designs, and the future construction of the designed project will provide direct benefits to members of the SDAC by addressing accessibility deficiencies in the City’s trail network, supporting community-led volunteer events and educational programming, and expanding access to the American River waterfront for all walks of life. The Project will engage with local

tribes through Assembly Bill 52 under CEQA and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The City received public funding to construct a new concession stand building near the 28th & B Street Skate Park at Sutter's Landing that will include paddleboard and kayak rentals. The American River waterfront at Sutter's Landing is anticipated to be the launch site for people utilizing these rentals; however, the current access to the river is informal and not ADA compliant. With site traffic predicted to increase with improvements, it is important to offer a formal, safe, and ADA compliant trail to accommodate all users while also enhancing the natural environment through closure of social trails and active revegetation.

The Project will finalize designs for a formal ADA trail and boat launch, develop a restoration plan for habitat that has been degraded by social trails, and develop interpretive signage for the new trailhead.

Planning activities will include environmental surveys, community outreach, agency consultation, and County collaboration to inform the design of two alternatives for the ADA trail and boat launch and influence the interpretive signage content and a habitat restoration plan. Conceptual trail and boat launch designs will be released for feedback from stakeholders, upon which two alternatives will be selected and refined to the 30% design level. A second round of stakeholder and public outreach will be conducted before selecting the preferred trail alternative design and proceeding with final designs and environmental review and permitting.

All necessary environmental review and permitting will be conducted for the trail designs and habitat restoration. It is anticipated that an Initial Study and MND will be prepared to meet CEQA requirements. Additionally, all permits and permissions for construction will be applied for, including those required by CDFW, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, and the Central Valley Flood Protection Board.

The Project was recommended by the Lower American River Conservancy Program Advisory Committee, whose role is to evaluate and recommend projects to be considered by WCB. The Project was recommended for submittal to the WCB by the Advisory Committee on October 12, 2023. American River Parkway Compliance Analysis was completed for the Project at the October 26, 2023, Recreation and Parks Commission meeting, in accordance with Public Resources Code section 5845.5. The Project was determined to be consistent with the American River Parkway Plan.

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 and 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	$100,075	$50,000	$150,075
Feasibility Study, Engineering, and Designs	$454,194	---	$454,194
Public & Stakeholder Outreach	$41,900	---	$41,900
Environmental Review & Permitting	$146,889	---	$146,889
General Expenses	$17,118	---	$17,118
Indirect	$113,894	---	$113,894
Contingency	$75,930	---	$75,930
Total	$950,000	$50,000	$1,000,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

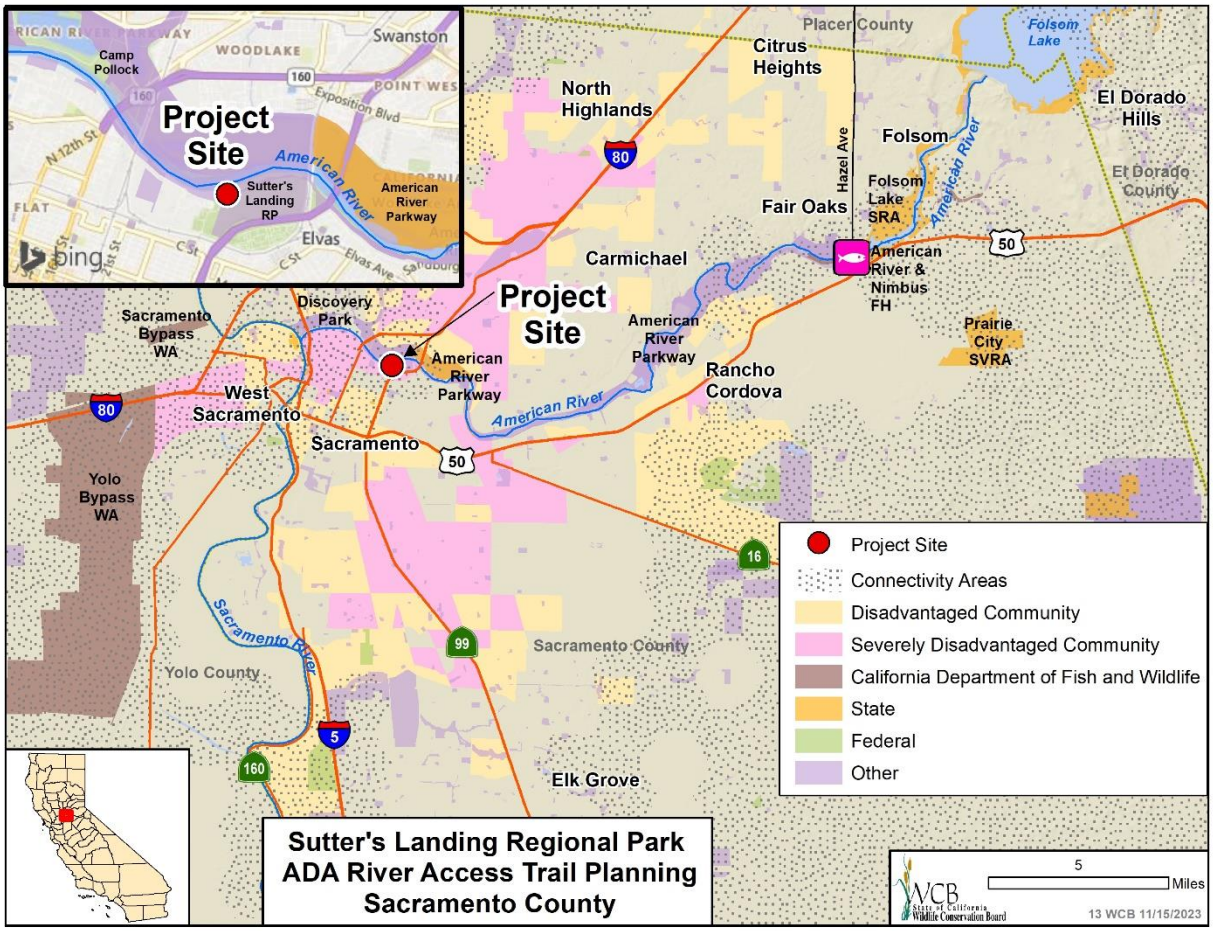
- Project Management: Contracting, scheduling, budgeting, invoicing, reporting.
- Feasibility Study, Engineering, and Designs: Field surveys, conceptual designs, alternatives development, landscape architecture, habitat restoration plan, sign design and content, 30-100% designs, cost estimates, technical reports and memos, utility coordination and agreements, construction documents.
- Public & Stakeholder Outreach: Outreach materials, tracking database, project web page, public meetings, online survey.
- Environmental Review & Permitting: Biological and cultural reports, draft and final IS/MND, permit applications for CDFW, USACE, CVFPB, and RWQCB.
- General Expenses: Cultural record search, mileage, printing, equipment rental, soil testing.
- 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:
- Kevin McCarty, 6th District, Assemblymember
- Liz Bellas, Director, Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks

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.



15. Cosumnes River Ecological Preserve, Expansion 12

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,800,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2021, Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision (SB170, Sec. 53.5) for purchase of Cosumnes River Ecological Preserve, Expansion 12 from The Conservation Fund; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Cosumnes River Ecological Preserve, Expansion 12
Project Type:	Fee Title Acquisition (170± acre)
Seller:	The Conservation Fund
Amount Recommended:	$1,800,000
Funding Partners:	N/A
County:	Sacramento County
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.2, A.4 C.1 Objectives: SI 1.3, 2.1, 3.3, 3.4

LOCATION

The 170± acre Cosumnes River Ecological Preserve, Expansion 12 (Property) is located in southern Sacramento County. The Property is on New Hope Road in the Galt region in the Cosumnes River watershed, adjacent and for addition to the 51,000-acre Cosumnes River Preserve, which is cooperatively owned and managed by CDFW, The Nature Conservancy, DWR, the Bureau of Land Management, and others with a focus on the protection of native wildlife and habitat. Since 1984, WCB has invested approximately $19,000,000 in approximately 31,000 acres of projects in the lower Cosumnes River watershed.

While the Property is not in a DACCDFW will provide limited wildlife-oriented recreation including hunting.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is somewhat irregular but generally rectangular in shape, with level-to-slightly rolling topography, zoned AG-80, with an 80-acre minimum lot size and agricultural zoning. The highest and best use is speculative vineyard/orchard conversion land with market-desired mitigation and habitat conservation potential.

The Property has high habitat diversity, including significant riparian forests, freshwater emergent wetlands, and grassland. These habitats support special status species that include giant garter snake, tricolored blackbird, Swainson’s hawk, and western pond turtle. Game species present include deer, California quail, mourning dove, western gray squirrel, and wild turkey.

The Property is in the approved Cosumnes River Floodplains CAPP, is considered a top priority acquisition by North Central Region CDFW staff, and once acquired,

will be owned and managed by CDFW as part of the Cosumnes River Ecological Preserve.

The Property receives a ranking of 3 out of 5 for Connections with Implementation Flexibility in the Areas of Conservation Emphasis mapping tool, and conservation of this Property will provide habitat linkages between existing state and federal administered public lands.

This project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 2: Execute Strategic Land Acquisitions, , and Pathway 7: Strengthen Coordination Among Governments.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
This Property will be owned and managed by CDFW as part of the existing Cosumnes River Ecological Preserve. Potential future public uses include fishing, hunting, hiking, and birdwatching.

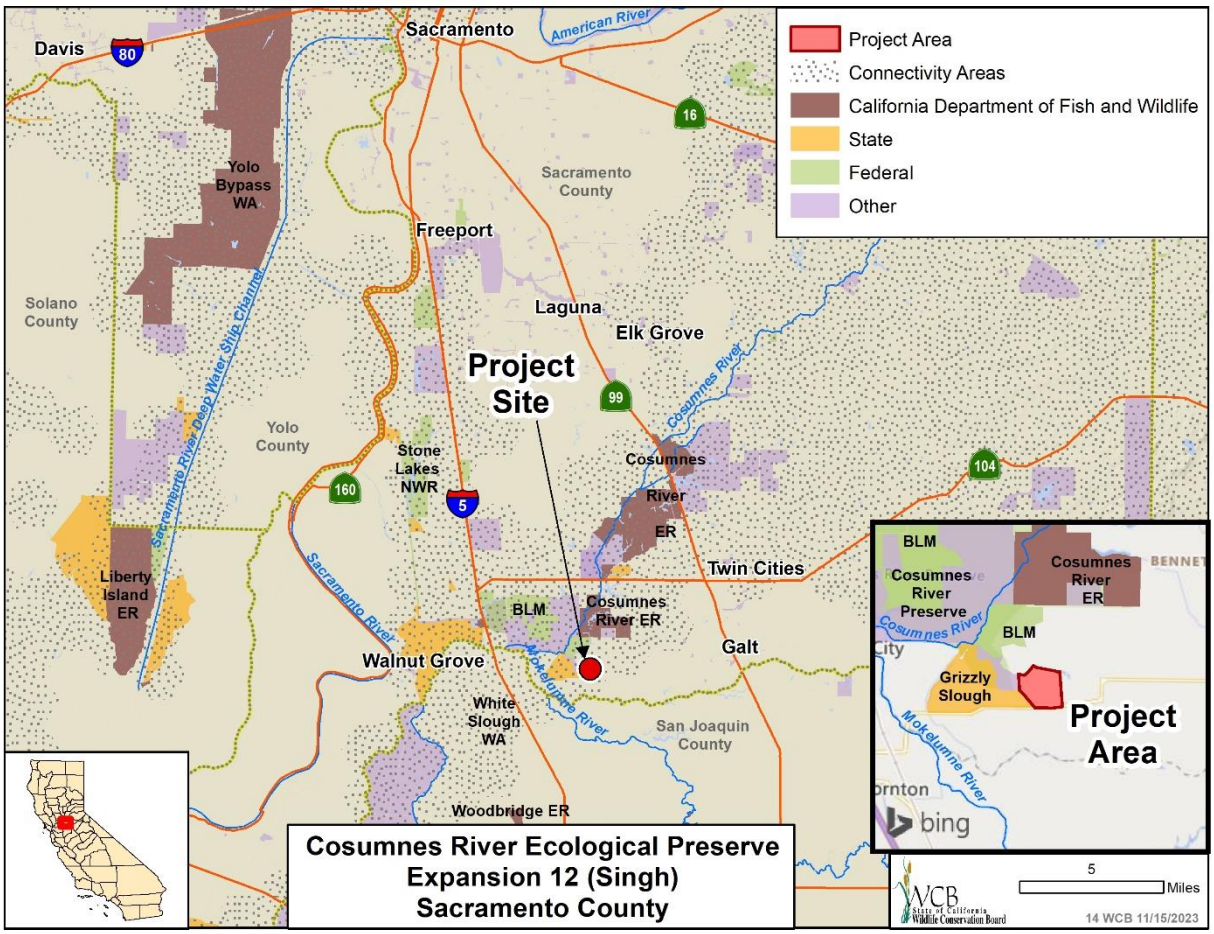
PROJECT FUNDING
The DGS approved fair market value is $1,800,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$1,800,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$1,800,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:
- None received

Opposition:
- None received

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


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Davis
Sacramento
American River
Yolo Bypass WA
Sacramento County
Freeport
Solano County
Laguna
Elk Grove
Project Site
Yolo County
Stone Lakes NWR
Cosumnes River
Cosumnes River ER
Sacramento River Deep Water Ship Channel
Liberty Island ER
Sacramento River
Twin Cities
BLM
Walnut Grove
Galt
White Slough WA
San Joaquin County
Mokelumne River
Woodbridge ER
Cosumnes River Preserve
Grizzly Slough
Project Area
bing
Cosumnes River Ecological Preserve
Expansion 12 (Singh)
Sacramento County
5
Miles
14 WCB 11/15/2023

16. Bolinas Lagoon South End Habitat Adaptation and Resilience Planning Augmentation

Withdrawn from consideration at this time.

17. Malech Ranch Conservation Easement
Withdrawn from consideration at this time.

18. Coyote Valley Wildlife Connectivity Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $5,000,000 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:	Coyote Valley Wildlife Connectivity Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Peninsula Open Space Trust
Amount Recommended:	$5,000,000
Funding Partners:	City of San Jose, Peninsula Open Space Trust, Webb Family Foundation, Western Digital Foundation, Johnson Foundation
County:	Santa Clara
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.1, 1.2

LOCATION

The Coyote Valley Wildlife Connectivity Planning (Project) area focuses on approximately 3,700 acres in Santa Clara County between the city of San José and the city of Morgan Hill, and contains three wildlife movement barriers – US 101, Monterey Rd, and the Union Pacific Rail Line. Located between the cities of San José and Morgan Hill in Santa Clara County, Coyote Valley is one of the San Francisco Bay Region's last remaining large, undeveloped valley floors and connects 1.13 million acres of core wildlife habitat across the Santa Cruz Mountains to the west and the Diablo Range to the east.

The Project will plan for future connects between protected lands including Coyote Creek Parkway, North- and Mid-Coyote Valley Conservation Areas, Santa Teresa County Park, Calero County Park, Mayyan Ooyakma Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve, and numerous other protected lands and private ranchlands in the Diablo Range, Coyote Valley, and Santa Cruz Mountains.

Past WCB investments in this region include: $10M to the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority to purchase the property now known as Spreckels Hill; $4M to the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency to purchase Tilton Ranch; and roughly $14M to create the newly renamed Mayyan Ooyakma Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Enhancing connectivity from the Santa Cruz Mountains to the Diablo Range through the Coyote Valley requires addressing linear transportation infrastructure that acts as a barrier to wildlife movement. Within the Valley, Union Pacific Rail, Monterey Rd, and US 101 run parallel to each other within a narrow half-mile stretch, creating a "triple barrier" to wildlife movement between the mountain ranges. Mountain lion, black-tailed deer, American badger, and bobcat are among

the species of concern that are currently unable to safely cross these barriers, resulting in negative ecological consequences and wildlife-vehicle collisions.

This triple barrier may also be contributing to genetic isolation of local wildlife populations. Studies have found that habitat fragmentation by roads in Coyote Valley is serving as a barrier to gene flow between the protected habitats that flank the Valley. This loss of connectivity has had significant impacts on mountain lions in the Santa Cruz Mountains which have low genetic diversity relative to other populations in the state. Without improved connectivity to the Gabilan and Diablo ranges, the long-term viability of this mountain lion population is in jeopardy. The Project area is included in CDFW's 2022 Wildlife movement Barriers Priority List indicating it is one of the top wildlife connectivity barriers in the state.

The Project area includes a section of Coyote Valley with the least distance between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range. Specifically, in North Coyote Valley, the two mountain ranges come within 0.4 miles of each other, in a chokepoint that spans several protected lands and the triple barrier.

This Project will complete planning to enhance ecological connectivity in Coyote Valley by reestablishing safe movement corridors across the landscape for species threatened by habitat fragmentation and transportation infrastructure.

Specific objectives include reduced wildlife-vehicle collisions, improved gene flow, improved genetic viability for mountain lion subpopulations in the California Central Coast ecoregion and other species at risk of genetic isolation (e.g., ground squirrel, American badger), expanded home ranges of focal species, increased opportunities for long-range dispersal events by focal species, climate change adaptation through species range shifts, and connection of the existing network of protected lands.

The Project will achieve these objectives by identifying wildlife permeability enhancements across the triple barrier and advancing planning, design, and environmental review for wildlife crossing structures identified during the feasibility study phase to deliver a shovel-ready project at 65% design with completion of the environmental documentation required under CEQA and NEPA. Recommended enhancements may include new wildlife crossing structures, retrofits and maintenance activities for existing underpasses, directional fencing, habitat restoration, and the design and environmental review for up to four wildlife crossing structures across the three barriers.

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	---	$250,155	$250,155
Feasibility Analyses	$87,500	$412,500	$500,000
Designs and Caltrans Documentation	$4,198,618	$1,051,227	$5,249,845
Environmental Review	$713,882	$286,118	$1,000,000
Total	$5,000,000	$2,000,000	$7,000,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Feasibility Analyses: Feasibility study reports for potential crossing locations.
- Designs and Caltrans Documentation: Development of 35% designs, 65% designs, and required Caltrans documentation for proposed crossing structure(s).
- Environmental Review: Completion of any necessary CEQA and NEPA documentation.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Representative Jimmy Panetta, 19th Congressional District, United States Congress
- Senator John Laird, 17th District, California State Senate
- Senator Dave Cortese, 15th District, California State Senate
- Assemblymember Ash Kalra, 25th District, California State Assembly
- Assemblymember Gail Pellerin, 28th District, California State Assembly
- Christopher Caputo, Acting Deputy District 4 Director, California Department of Transportation
- Carolyn M. Gonot, General Manager/CEO, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
- John Ristow, Department of Transportation Director, City of San Jose
- Nanci Klein, Director of Economic Developments and Cultural Affairs, City of San Jose
- Lisa Bankosh, Watershed Stewardship and Planning Division Assistant Deputy Operating Officer, Santa Clara Valley Water District
- Andrea Mackenzie, General Manager, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority
- Edmund Sullivan, Executive Officer, Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency
- Brian Malone, Assistant General Manager, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
- Trina Hineser, Executive Director, Land Trust of Santa Clara Valley
- Sarah Newkirk, Executive Director, LTSCC

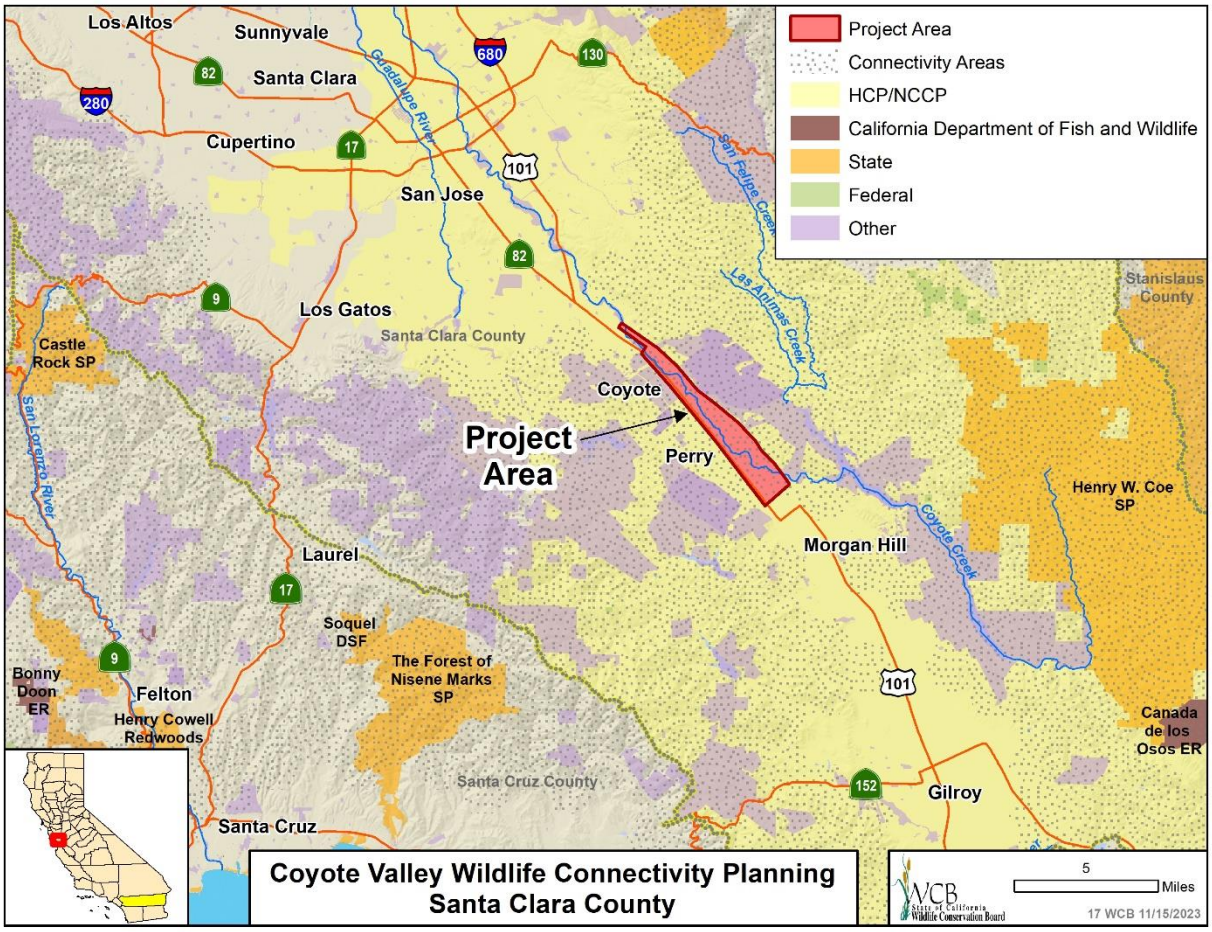
- Neal Sharma, California Wildlife Program Senior Supervisor, Wildlife Conservation Network

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

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



19. Alma Bridge Road Newt Passage Designs

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $2,122,250 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2018, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Program Provision (SB840); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Alma Bridge Road Newt Passage Designs
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Amount Recommended:	$2,122,250
Funding Partners:	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
County:	Santa Clara
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.1, 1.2, 1.3

LOCATION

The Alma Bridge Road Newt Passage Designs (Project) focuses on Alma Bridge Road (ABR) where it parallels the northern and eastern shores of Lexington Reservoir. The road is two-lanes wide and is owned and maintained by Santa Clara County. ABR provides access for property owners and residents in the Lexington Hills and Soda Springs neighborhoods and recreational users visiting Lexington Reservoir County Park, St. Joseph's Hill Open Space Preserve, and Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve in Santa Clara County.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The California newt is a California Species of Special Concern that lives in coastal mountain ranges from central Mendocino County, south to northern San Diego County. The newts are relatively inactive in subterranean refuges most of the year. This changes when the first rains of the season initiate migration to aquatic breeding localities. Once at the breeding sites, adults may remain in or near these ponds and streams for several weeks.

Lexington Reservoir in Santa Clara County is a perennial source of water that is adjacent to protected open space that provides ideal terrestrial habitat for the newts. This allows the California newt to spend the drier months holed up in rocks, logs, mammal burrows, rock fissures, or inside the bases of standing trees then migrate to aquatic habitat in late fall or early winter. The juxtaposition of the terrestrial and aquatic habitats here has created excellent conditions for successful newt reproduction.

Unfortunately, the two-lane ABR follows the shoreline of the reservoir and creates a barrier for migrating newts. A study conducted at the site documented that of the nearly 14,000 adult California newts that attempted to cross the road during the 2020-21 rainy season, almost 40 percent were killed by vehicle collisions. Surveys conducted since 2017 have shown similar results meaning 5,000 to 7,000 adults

are annually killed as they try to cross ABR. This level of mortality jeopardizes the long-term viability of the newt population and was confirmed by a modeling study that indicated the possible local extirpation of California newts in approximately 57 years.

The overall goal of the Project is to decrease wildlife mortality and provide habitat connectivity across ABR for the California newt and, to a lesser extent, the rough-skinned newt which is a closely related species that is present in the Los Gatos Creek watershed. In 2022, a feasibility study evaluated environmental and engineering services to improve wildlife connectivity for newts migrating to and from Lexington Reservoir. This study developed a stakeholder working group and the technical review of several crossing enhancement alternatives. These preliminary alternatives include variations of wildlife crossing structures (e.g., Corrective Actions) ranging from a bridge, to elevated roadway segments with repeating purpose-built passage structures and associated features to direct newts to the crossings, to micro passages and associated fencing in three identified priority zones throughout the Project area.

The Project will complete the required environmental assessments (e.g., geotechnical, biological, archaeological, etc.), CEQA review, acquisition of permits, and development of designs and construction plans for the selected alternatives. It has been estimated that implementation of the treatment options would treat between 56 and 68 percent of the newt population that crosses the road within the Project footprint. This should result in a 56 to 84 percent increase in newt population size after 30 years and would achieve population persistence for at least 100 years.

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	$314,138	---	$314,138
Technical Studies	$174,000	---	$174,000
Environmental Review	$173,250	---	$173,250
Designs	$1,272,862	$ 764,238	$2,037,100
Permitting	$188,000	---	$188,000
Total	$2,122,250	$764,238	$2,886,488

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Grant administration, subcontractor management, meeting facilitation, and stakeholder coordination.

- Technical Studies: Biological resources, site archaeology, water quality, and other necessary technical studies.
- Environmental Review: Preparation of necessary CEQA documents.
- Designs: Preliminary engineering, utilities coordination, and 65% level plans specifications and estimates (PS&E).
- Permitting: Securing any necessary local, State, or Federal permit.

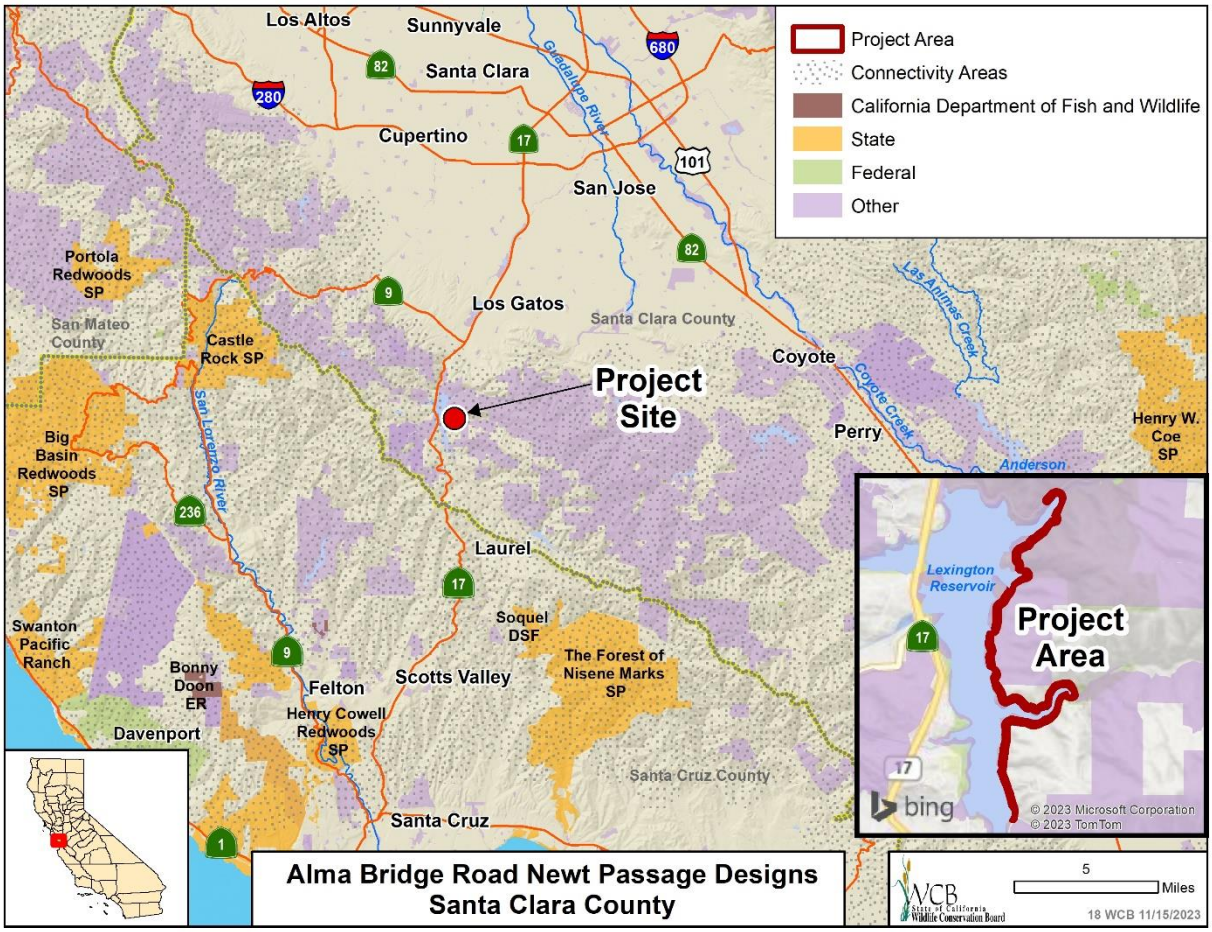
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Marian Vernon, Wildlife Linkages Program Manager, Peninsula Open Space Trust
- Jared Bond, Natural Resource Program Supervisor, Santa Clara County Parks
- Terry A. Marshall, Area Manager, Permitting III Vulcan Materials, Western Region
- Andrew R. Gere, P.E., President and Chief Operating Officer, San Jose Water Company
- Rea Freedom
- Jim Scholfield
- Shani Kleinhaus, Ph.D., Environmental Advocate, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
- Janet McBride, Executive Director, Bay Area Ridge Trail
- Tiffany Yap, DEnv/PhD, Senior Scientist, Wildlife Connectivity Advocate, Urban Wildlands Program, Center for Biological Diversity
- Merav Vonshak, Newt Patrol
- Matt DeYoung, Executive Director, Santa Cruz Mountains Trail Stewardship
- Harry Freitas, Director of Santa Clara County Roads and Airports Department, County of Santa Clara
- Lisa Bankosh, Assistant Deputy Operating Officer, Watershed Stewardship and Planning Division, Santa Clara Valley Water District

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
Los Altos
Sunnyvale
Santa Clara
Cupertino
San Jose
Guadalupe River
Las Animas Creek
Portola Redwoods SP
San Mateo County
Castle Rock SP
Los Gatos
Santa Clara County
Coyote
Coyote Creek
Project Site
Perry
Henry W. Coe SP
Anderson
Big Basin Redwoods SP
San Lorenzo River
Laurel
Lexington Reservoir
Project Area
Swanton Pacific Ranch
Soquel DSF
The Forest of Nisene Marks SP
Bonny Doon ER
Felton
Scotts Valley
Henry Cowell Redwoods SP
Davenport
Santa Cruz County
Santa Cruz
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Miles
WCB
State of California
Wildlife Conservation Board
18 WCB 11/15/2023
Alma Bridge Road Newt Passage Designs
Santa Clara County

20. Beneficial Reuse of Excavated Material

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate $2,982,471 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Nature Based Solutions Provision [AB102, Sec. 85(3)(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:	Beneficial Reuse of Excavated Material
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Amount Recommended:	$2,982,471
Funding Partners:	Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, State Coastal Conservancy
County:	Santa Clara
Program:	Inland Wetlands Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.4, 4.3

LOCATION

The Beneficial Reuse of Excavated Material (Project) planning focuses on an area of South San Francisco Bay, within the city limits of San Jose and Sunnyvale, in Santa Clara County. The site is between the Moffett Channel and Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant to the west; Sunnyvale Baylands County Park, Guadalupe Slough, and San Tomas Aquino Creek to the south; Alviso Slough in the center; Artesian Slough and Coyote Creek to the east, and open bay water to the north. The cities surrounding or near the ponds include Mountain View to the west; Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, and San Jose (Alviso District) to the south/southwest; and San Jose and Milpitas to the east. Historically the Project area consisted of tidal marshes prior to their reclamation for salt production, until the end of the 1950s, when planning and legislative efforts began to eventually change to the present-day trajectory towards tidal marsh restoration.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

San Francisco Bay is the largest estuary on the west coast of the United States, constituting a biological resource of global significance. The Bay provides critical winter-feeding habitat for over a million migratory birds annually along the Pacific Flyway, one of four major migratory bird routes in the Western Hemisphere. The Bay supports thousands of species of fish, invertebrates, birds, mammals, insects, amphibians, and plants, helping make the San Francisco Bay Area one of six most important biodiversity hotspots in the United States. However, over just two centuries (from 1800 to 1998) 79 percent of the tidal marshes (150,000 acres) and 42 percent of tidal flats (21,000 acres) were converted from estuarine habitat to other uses such as farming, salt production, and development. As a result, populations of species dependent on the Bay have declined dramatically.

Significant opportunities exist to restore former salt marsh habitats, particularly in the South Bay, where a 50-year project was started in 2003 to restore thousands of acres of former salt production ponds in the Alviso Pond Complex.

Until now restoring former salt production ponds to tidal marsh has relied on naturally delivered sediment, by strategically breaching berms and restoring tidal action to former salt production ponds, and then relying on naturally deposited sediment from bay water to increase the elevation of subsided pond bottoms to elevations suitable for tidal marsh plant colonization. However, it has since become clear that with anticipated rates of sea level rise, sediment addition to former ponds will be necessary to meet tidal marsh restoration goals.

Accordingly, there is an urgent need to identify means to bring large volumes of sediment from other sources to supply the necessary sediment for pond restoration. The Project explores an opportunity to provide a significant volume of fill to begin to offset this deficit of natural sediment available for tidal marsh restoration. Specifically, the Project will explore terrestrial sediment delivery to ponds planned for restoration to tidal marsh through the placement of up to 3.5 million cubic yards of excavated material from construction of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) BART Silicon Valley Phase II Project's approximate 5-mile-long tunnel into several former salt production ponds around South San Francisco Bay to raise pond bottoms for the purpose of accelerating tidal marsh habitat restoration.

Once completed the Project, through its eventual enabling of extensive wetlands restoration, will benefit the community of Alviso, which is regionally identified as an economically disadvantaged community (San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority's Economically Disadvantaged Communities map, August 2017). The community of Alviso is ranked in the 67% percentile on CalEnviroScreen 4.0.

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
Design/Plan of Pond Fill	$1,711,969	302,113	$2,014,082
Evaluation of Fill Material	$853,937	$150,694	$1,004,631
Environmental Clearance	$226,542	$39,978	$266,520
Indirect Costs	$190,023	$33,533	$223,556
Total	$2,982,471	$526,318	$3,508,789

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Design/Plan of Pond Fill: Determine means and methods to place BART Silicon Valley Phase II Project fill into ponds.
- Evaluation of Fill Material: Analysis to ensure that fill material meets the RWQCB Quality Assurance and Protection Plan (QAPP) criteria for placement into the ponds.
- Environmental Clearance: Design support for the environmental document and permit application.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.

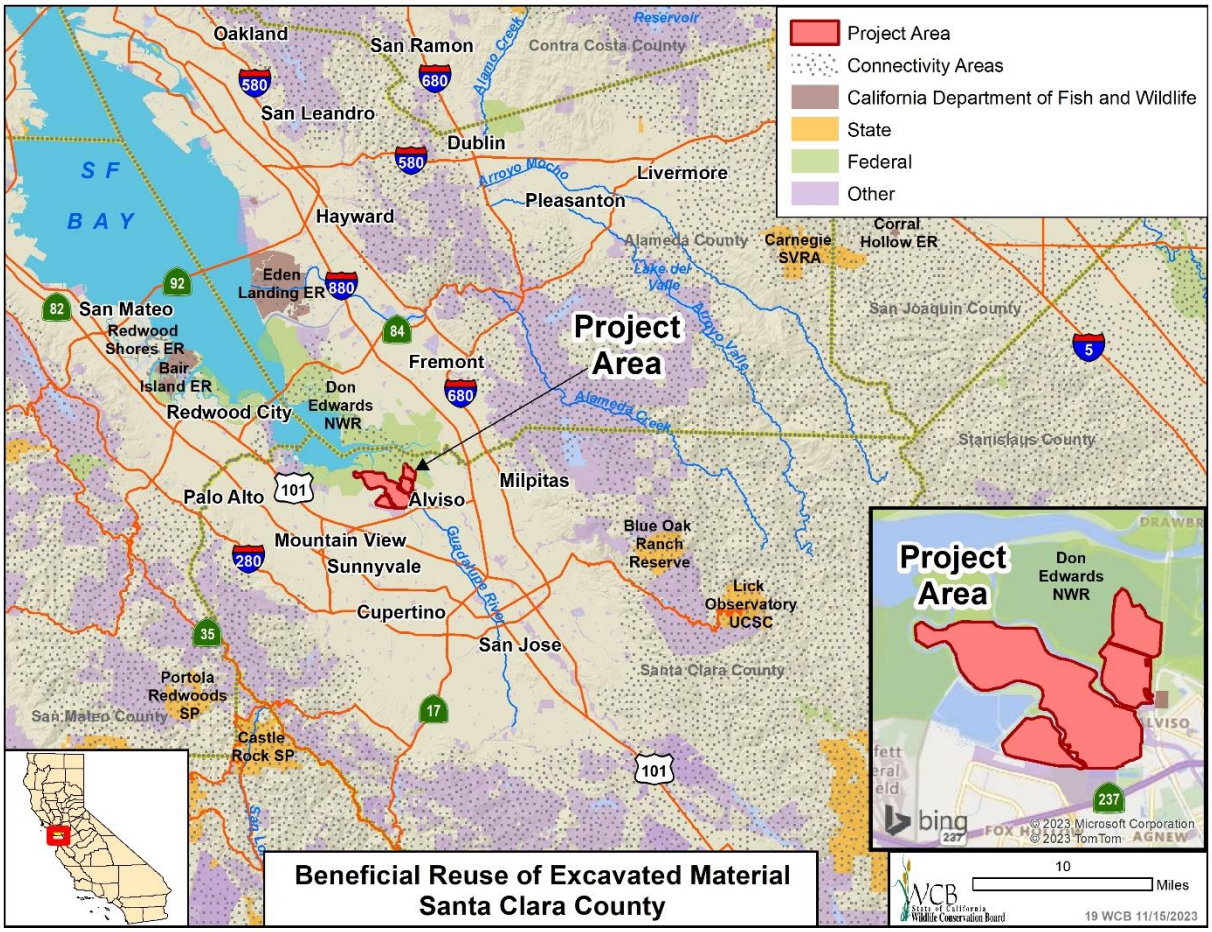
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Dave Halsing, Executive Project Manager, South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, California State Coastal Conservancy
- Matthew Brown, Complex Manager, USFWS
- Keith H. Lichten, Chief, Watershed Management Division, San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Lisa Bankosh (Acting for John Bougeois, Deputy Operating Officer, Watershed Stewardship and Planning Division, Santa Clara Valley Water District

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
Oakland
San Ramon
Contra Costa County
San Leandro
Dublin
Livermore
Pleasanton
Hayward
S F
B A Y
Alameda County
Carnegie SVRA
Corral Hollow ER
Eden Landing ER
San Mateo
Redwood Shores ER
Bair Island ER
Redwood City
Don Edwards NWR
Fremont
Project Area
San Joaquin County
Stanislaus County
Milpitas
Alviso
Palo Alto
Mountain View
Sunnyvale
Blue Oak Ranch Reserve
Lick Observatory UCSC
Cupertino
San Jose
Santa Clara County
Portola Redwoods SP
San Mateo County
Castle Rock SP
Project Area
Don Edwards NWR
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Beneficial Reuse of Excavated Material
Santa Clara County

21. Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander Section 6 (Schroeder)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $91,000 from 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 Santa Cruz County (LTSCC); approve the acceptance of the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in the amount of $259,000 and approve the subgrant of the federal funds to LTSCC; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander Section 6 (Schroeder)
Project Type:	Fee Title (3± acres)
Grantee:	LTSCC
Amount Recommended:	$91,000
Funding Partners:	USFWS Section 6
County:	Santa Cruz
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.3, A.4 Objectives: SI 1.2, 1.3

LOCATION

The Schroeder property (Property) is located west of Senda Ladera Road, north of Larkin Valley Road, in the unincorporated area of the Santa Cruz County. The Property is located approximately 2.6 miles northwest of the city of Watsonville.

Bordering the Property to the north is a Rural Residential parcel consisting of approximately 30 acres zoned as Special Use for Open Space with a County Assessor Use Designation of Common Area with No Improvements. Together with the Sterling property immediately to the west, these three parcels would provide a contiguous block of almost 44 acres of conserved habitat for Santa Cruz long-toed salamander (SCLTS), a state and federally listed endangered species, and other wildlife.

The Property will also improve connectivity among existing conservation lands, including the White Rabbit property conserved by PG&E for mitigation in 2021, the conservation easement held by Golden Gate Land, the Calabasas Unit of the Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge, and the Meyer Property owned by CDFW. The Property is located within dispersal distance (~1 mile) of four breeding populations of the SCLTS, one of which is the largest SCLTS breeding population in Larkin Valley. The Property’s proximity to Calabasas Pond, located 1/3 of a mile from the project, strengthens its importance in terms of providing upland, summer habitat for the species close to a breeding pond.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is zoned Residential Agriculture in the Rural Residential general plan designation allowing for one single family dwelling and one second dwelling unit up to 1,200 square feet in size. Degradation and herbaceous vegetation clearing has occurred in an approximately 45,000 square foot area in the name of fire protection and to facilitate residential development. This area is now mostly clear and open, covered by wildflowers, weeds, and non-native grasses except for several young oaks.

Aside from the cleared building site described above, the project site consists of oak woodland with a dense understory, large woody debris and a healthy layer of surface litter mulch, ideal summering habitat for SCLTS. While protection of the species' breeding ponds is critical, SCLTS individuals spend the majority of their lives in upland habitat, spending the summer underground, thus the protection of this property, along with the dispersal habitat between breeding ponds and uplands, is incredibly important. This project presents an opportunity to conserve both uplands and dispersal habitat on parcels identified as core habitat for the species by USFWS.

The SCLTS Recovery Plan (USFWS 1999) set forth recovery criteria for this federally and state endangered species. The primary objective of the Recovery Plan is to reclassify the species from endangered to threatened, and the criteria for delisting is "when breeding and uplands habitats are conserved […] so that self-sustaining populations or subpopulations are supported" within each metapopulation. This project serves that objective by conserving upland habitat in the Larkin Valley metapopulation of the species. In the most recent update to the Recovery Plan, the Strategic Plan for Recovery (Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District 2019), habitat protection was identified as a high priority recovery action. This project will prevent this property from being converted to incompatible land uses and will support recovery of the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander in perpetuity.

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

LTSCC will develop and implement a comprehensive management plan with recommended best management practices. Due to the small and remote nature of the Property away from public roads, the Property maintenance costs are anticipated to be nominal. The Property will be visited at a minimum of once per year to monitor for impacts to the conservation values. Restoration activities after acquisition would include removal of invasive vegetation while allowing for natural growth of native vegetation and forest floor cover. Only limited restoration is necessary because existing conditions on the Property are favorable for SCLTS in the vast majority of the property acreage. The Property contains a site that could be ideal for the construction of a breeding pond for SCLTS. USFWS, CDFW and Santa Cruz Regional Conservation District staff have all indicated their enthusiasm

for seeking funding for habitat restoration on SCLTS properties, including the construction of new breeding ponds in compatible locations.

PROJECT FUNDING
The DGS approved fair market value is $450,000, and the landowner has agreed to sell at a reduced price of $350,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$91,000
Partner	$259,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$350,000

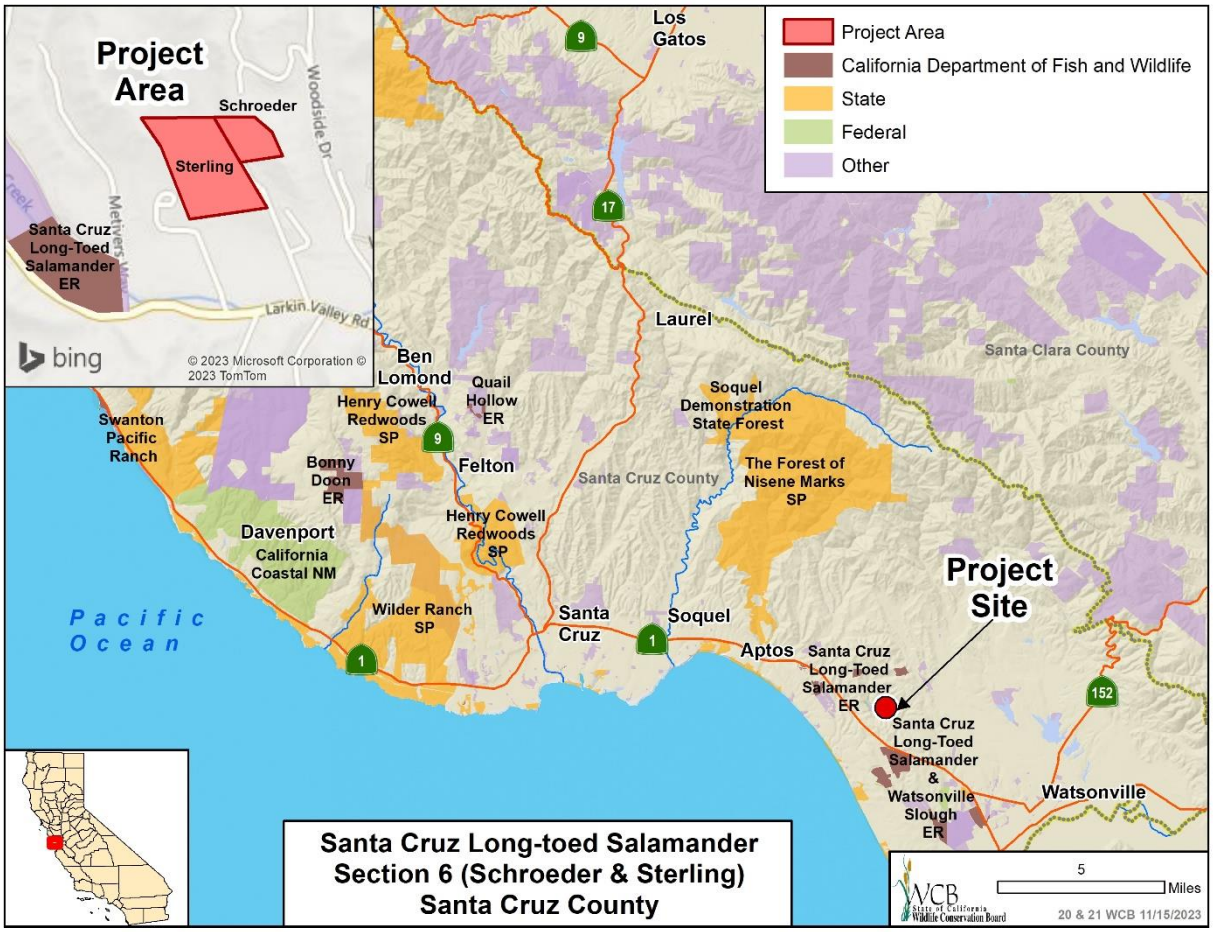
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- 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
Schroeder
Sterling
Woodside Dr
Santa Cruz Long-Toed Salamander ER
Larkin Valley Rd
bing
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Project Area
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Los Gatos
Laurel
Santa Clara County
Ben Lomond
Quail Hollow ER
Henry Cowell Redwoods SP
Soquel Demonstration State Forest
Swanton Pacific Ranch
Bonny Doon ER
Felton
Santa Cruz County
The Forest of Nisene Marks SP
Davenport
California Coastal NM
Henry Cowell Redwoods SP
Project Site
Pacific Ocean
Wilder Ranch SP
Santa Cruz
Soquel
Aptos
Santa Cruz Long-Toed Salamander ER
Santa Cruz Long-Toed Salamander & Watsonville Slough ER
Watsonville
Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander
Section 6 (Schroeder & Sterling)
Santa Cruz County
5
Miles
WCB State of California Wildlife Conservation Board
20 & 21 WCB 11/15/2023

22. Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander Section 6 (Sterling)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $143,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Fish & Wildlife Resources – Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision (SB170, Sec. 53.5) for the grant to the LTSCC; approve the acceptance of the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant from USFWS in the amount of $407,000 and approve the subgrant of the federal funds to LTSCC; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander Section 6 (Sterling)	
Project Type:	Fee Title (11± acres)	
Grantee:	LTSCC	
Amount Recommended:	$143,000	
Funding Partners:	USFWS Section 6	
County:	Santa Cruz	
Program:	Land Acquisition	
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.3, A.4	Objectives: SI 1.2, 1.3

LOCATION

The Sterling property (Property) is located west of Senda Ladera Road, north of Larkin Valley Road, in the unincorporated area of Santa Cruz County. The Property is located approximately 2.6 miles northwest of the city of Watsonville.

Bordering the Property to the north is a Rural Residential parcel consisting of approximately 30 acres zoned as Special Use for Open Space with a County Assessor Use Designation of Common Area with No Improvements. Together, with the Schroeder property immediately to the east, these three parcels would provide a contiguous block of almost 44 acres of conserved habitat for Santa Cruz long-toed salamander (SCLTS), a state and federally listed endangered species, and other wildlife.

The Property will also improve connectivity among existing conservation lands, including the White Rabbit property conserved by PG&E for mitigation in 2021, the conservation easement held by Golden Gate Land, the Calabasas Unit of the Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge, and the Meyer Property owned by CDFW. The Property is located within dispersal distance (~1 mile) of four breeding populations of the SCLTS, one of which is the largest SCLTS breeding population in Larkin Valley. The Property's proximity to Calabasas Pond, located 1/3 of a mile from the project, strengthens its importance in terms of providing upland, summer habitat for the species close to a breeding pond.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is zoned Special Use in the Rural Residential general plan designation allowing for one single family dwelling and one second dwelling unit.

Degradation and herbaceous vegetation clearing has occurred in an approximately 10,000 square foot area for fire protection and to facilitate residential development. Said area is unnaturally flat and appears to have been graded for agricultural use or in preparation for development in the distant past. This area is now clear and open, covered by wildflowers, weeds and non-native grasses. A short trail approximately 200 feet long has been cleared approximately 10 feet wide through the forest understory up to the top of a knoll on the ridge of the Property.

Aside from the cleared building site described above, the site consists of oak woodland with a dense understory, large woody debris and a healthy layer of surface litter mulch, ideal summering habitat for SCLTS. While protection of the species' breeding ponds is critical, SCLTS individuals spend the vast majority of their lives in the uplands over-summering underground and thus the protection of the Property, along with the dispersal habitat between breeding ponds and uplands, is incredibly important. This project presents an opportunity to conserve both uplands and dispersal habitat on parcels identified as core habitat for the species by USFWS.

The SCLTS Recovery Plan (USFWS 1999) set forth recovery criteria for this federally and state endangered species. The primary objective of the Recovery Plan is to reclassify the species from endangered to threatened, and the criteria for delisting is "when breeding and uplands habitats are conserved […] so that self-sustaining populations or subpopulations are supported" within each metapopulation. This project serves that objective by conserving upland habitat in the Larkin Valley metapopulation of the species. In the most recent update to the Recovery Plan, the Strategic Plan for Recovery (Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District 2019), habitat protection was identified as a high priority recovery action. This project will prevent this property from being converted to incompatible land uses and will support recovery of the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander in perpetuity.

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

LTSCC will develop and implement a comprehensive management plan with recommended best management practices. Due to the small and remote nature of the Property away from public roads, the Property maintenance costs are anticipated to be nominal. The Property will be visited at a minimum of once per year to monitor for impacts to the conservation values. Restoration activities after acquisition would include removal of invasive vegetation while allowing for natural growth of native vegetation and forest floor cover. Only limited restoration is necessary because existing conditions on the Property are favorable for SCLTS in the vast majority of the property acreage.

PROJECT FUNDING
The DGS approved fair market value is $550,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$143,000
USFWS	$407,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$550,000

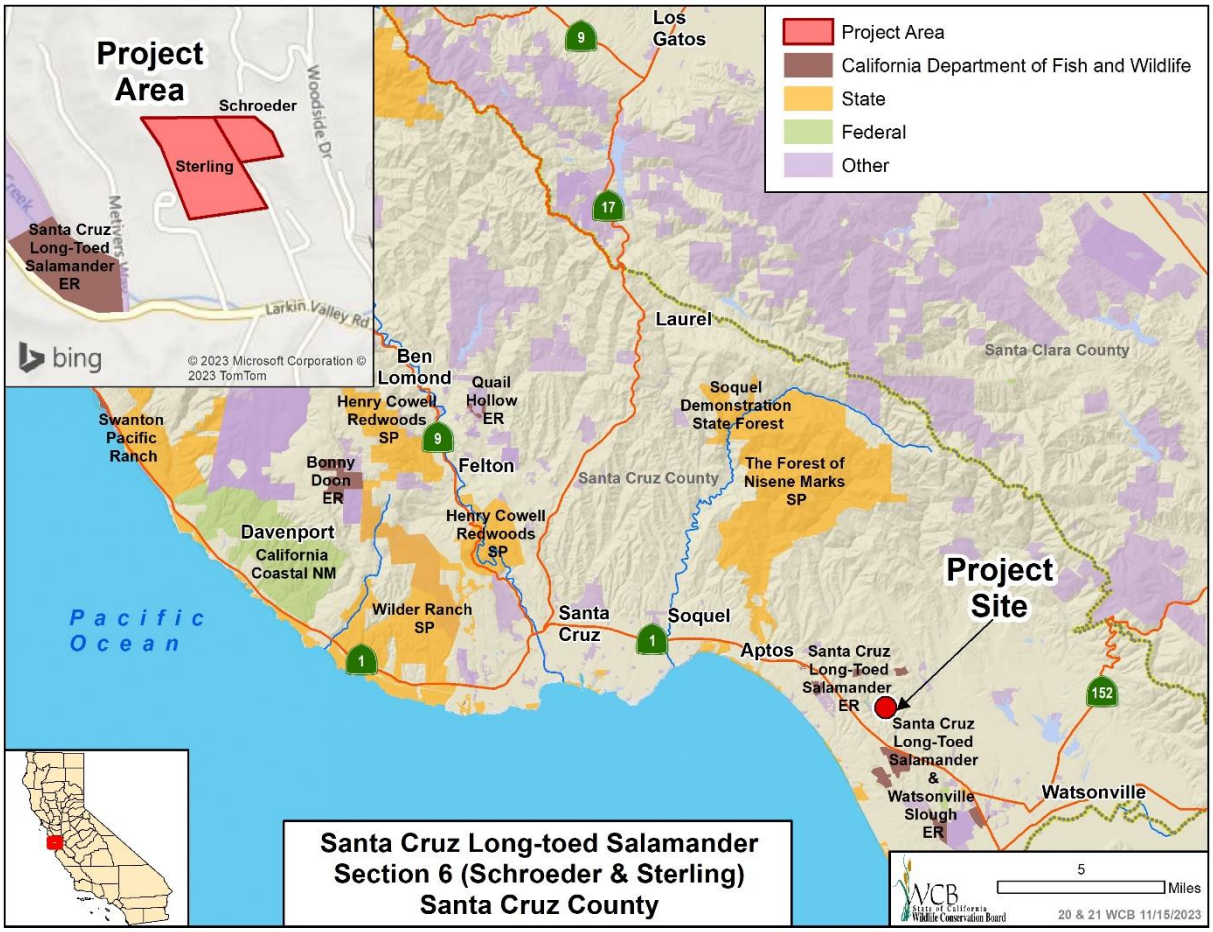
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- 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.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Project Area
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Laurel
Santa Clara County
Ben Lomond
Quail Hollow ER
Henry Cowell Redwoods SP
Soquel Demonstration State Forest
Swanton Pacific Ranch
Bonny Doon ER
Felton
Santa Cruz County
The Forest of Nisene Marks SP
Davenport
California Coastal NM
Henry Cowell Redwoods SP
Project Site
Pacific Ocean
Wilder Ranch SP
Santa Cruz
Soquel
Aptos
Santa Cruz Long-Toed Salamander ER
Santa Cruz Long-Toed Salamander & Watsonville Slough ER
Watsonville
Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander
Section 6 (Schroeder & Sterling)
Santa Cruz County
5
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23. Mount Whitney Fish Hatchery

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed for a no cost transfer of land by CDFW to the Fort Independence Indian Community of Paiute Indians of the Fort Independence Reservation (FIIC) to own, operate and maintain in perpetuity for purposes of maintenance of the historic Mount Whitney Fish Hatchery, public access; 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:	Mount Whitney Fish Hatchery
Project Type:	CDFW Disposal/Sale (40± acres)
Transferee:	Grantee
Amount Recommended:	$0
County:	Inyo
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: C.1, E.3 Objectives: 3.1, 5.2

LOCATION

The Mount Whitney Fish Hatchery (Property) is located in the eastern Sierra Nevada mountains approximately 1 mile west of U.S. Highway 395 and 2 miles northwest of the town of Independence in Inyo County. Oak Creek traverses the Property. The Fort Independence Indian Reservation is located on the north side of Oak Creek.

The Property is located in a DAC census track according to DWR DAC mapping tool.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery is a historic fish hatchery that supplied trout to the high Sierra and Owens Valley waterways. The Property was purchased in 1916 by CDFW, funded by donations from the citizens of Independence, and developed into a hatchery. The hatchery building was constructed of native granite collected within a quarter of a mile of the site. The walls are two to three feet thick and consist of approximately 3,500 tons of boulders. None of the stones used in construction were cut but were "sorted to fit." The roof is red Spanish tile made in Lincoln, California, from red clay found at that location. The hatchery produced approximately 10 million Whitney strain rainbow trout eggs annually. Additionally, around 1 million Kamloops rainbow, 300,000 golden and 100,000 brown trout eggs were produced annually.

In 1984 whirling disease was discovered at the Mount Whitney Fish Hatchery. whirling disease is a condition affecting trout caused by a parasite Myxobolus cerebralis. Whirling disease affects trout by damaging fish cartilage, directly killing juvenile fish, and causing infected fish to swim in an uncontrolled manner. Thereafter, fish were no longer planted from the hatchery. Because whirling disease does not infect nor is transited in trout eggs, the Mount Whitney Fish

Hatchery continued to produce 5 million rainbow trout eggs annually from 1984 until 2007.

The Property was severely damaged in July 2008 when a mudslide and flood were triggered by heavy rains. The region had been affected by recent wildfires in 2007. The mudslide destroyed two spawning houses, five residence buildings, fish rearing ponds, three raceways and killed 3,000 fish. Subsequently, the hatchery was closed to the public. The hatchery site is located on an alluvial fan, a natural mud flow out of the Sierra and is prone to such events.

In 2008, the Mount Whitney Fish Hatchery was reopened to the public on a limited basis as an interpretive center operated by the Friends of Mount Whitney Fish Hatchery pursuant to a lease agreement which expires in 2033. The group maintains a wildlife interpretive center with hatchery-specific exhibits and a gift shop.

CDFW determined that the Mount Whitney Fish Hatchery is unsuitable for use as a hatchery due to obsolescence, whirling disease, safety, expense of building maintenance and water supply and water quality issues. Enough fish are raised at other facilities.

The historic hatchery structures, residences, and other buildings cover approximately 19 acres. The remaining 21 acres have native plant vegetation. Habitat on the Property consists of about 17 acres of shrubland and 4.75 acres of oak and willow riparian habitat adjacent to Oak Creek. Willow flycatcher is the only special-status species known to occur on the Property but only with a single confirmed sighting.

The proposed transaction is to transfer the Mount Whitney Fish Hatchery to the FIIC. The FIIC provided the following statement:

“The Fort Independence Indian Community (Tribe) is recognized as one distinct, separate tribal government of the four Owens Valley Paiute Tribes. Water plays an integral part in Paiute culture, history, and social structure. Indigenous Paiute members settled on the banks of the Oak Creek in permanent homesites since time immemorial. The Tribe built and maintained extensive and sophisticated irrigation ditches to channel water from the Sierra Mountain Range snowmelt that flowed through Oak Creek. On the current site of the Mount Whitney Fish Hatchery, the Tribe cultivated wild plants, such as taboose and nahavita. Water and irrigation of these natural seed plots was a sacred and important tenant of the Paiute mythology and worldview.

This property is in inextricably intwined into who we are as Paiute people, and we hope to bring this knowledge and history back to the community through preservation of the Mount Whitney Fish Hatchery.”

Governor Newsom’s 2019 Executive Order N 15-19 encourages the transfer of excess state lands to tribes, as well as the Governor’s September 25, 2020,

Statement of Administrative Policy regarding Native American Ancestral Lands. This Statement identifies potential actions to be taken, including "[w]hen natural lands under the ownership or control of the State are in excess of State needs, working cooperatively within existing statutory and regulatory frameworks with the California tribes that have ancestral territory within those lands and are interested in acquiring them, including by prioritizing tribal purchase or transfer [.]"

Transferring the Property to FIIC is consistent with Governor Newsom's October 2020 Nature Based Solutions Executive Order N-82-20, which highlights the role of natural and working lands in the fight against climate change and in advancing biodiversity conservation. As part of this Executive Order, California committed to the goal of conserving 30 percent of our lands and coastal waters by 2030 (30x30).

Additionally, the transfer contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California including Core Commitment No. 2, strengthen tribal partnerships and Pathway 7, Strengthen Coordination Among Governments, and specifically 7.9, Explore administrative or regulatory mechanisms for California Native American tribes' ancestral land return programs for conservation and fee to trust land acquisition.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The FIIC has the capacity and ability to manage the Property for its current use—as a historic fish hatchery, public access, and open space—and is the ideal fee title holder. The Tribe is committed to protecting wildlife habitats and native plants, using the resources present prudently, and making the Property open to all. No loss of habitat, recreation or public access will occur as a result of the proposed transfer.

Several title encumbrances will be placed on the Grant Deed to ensure that the historic nature of the Property, habitat, water rights, and open space are preserved. Specifically, the FIIC will be required to maintain the historic fish hatchery structure as it exists today, maintain and protect the riparian vegetation, preserve the open space character, provide public access, prohibit cannabis cultivation and retail, prohibit for-profit corporate partners from being granted a long-term interest in the Property, keep any new construction within the existing building footprint and consistent with the existing buildings and structures. The FIIC is also assuming all liability for structures. The water rights must remain with the Property but maybe dedicated in the future for instream benefit of fish and wildlife. A reversionary right will be placed in the Grant Deed to ensure that if the Tribe fails to manage the property in accordance with the encumbrances, the State will retake title.

PROJECT FUNDING

The DGS approved fair market value is $940,000. Transfer to the tribe will be a no cost transaction.

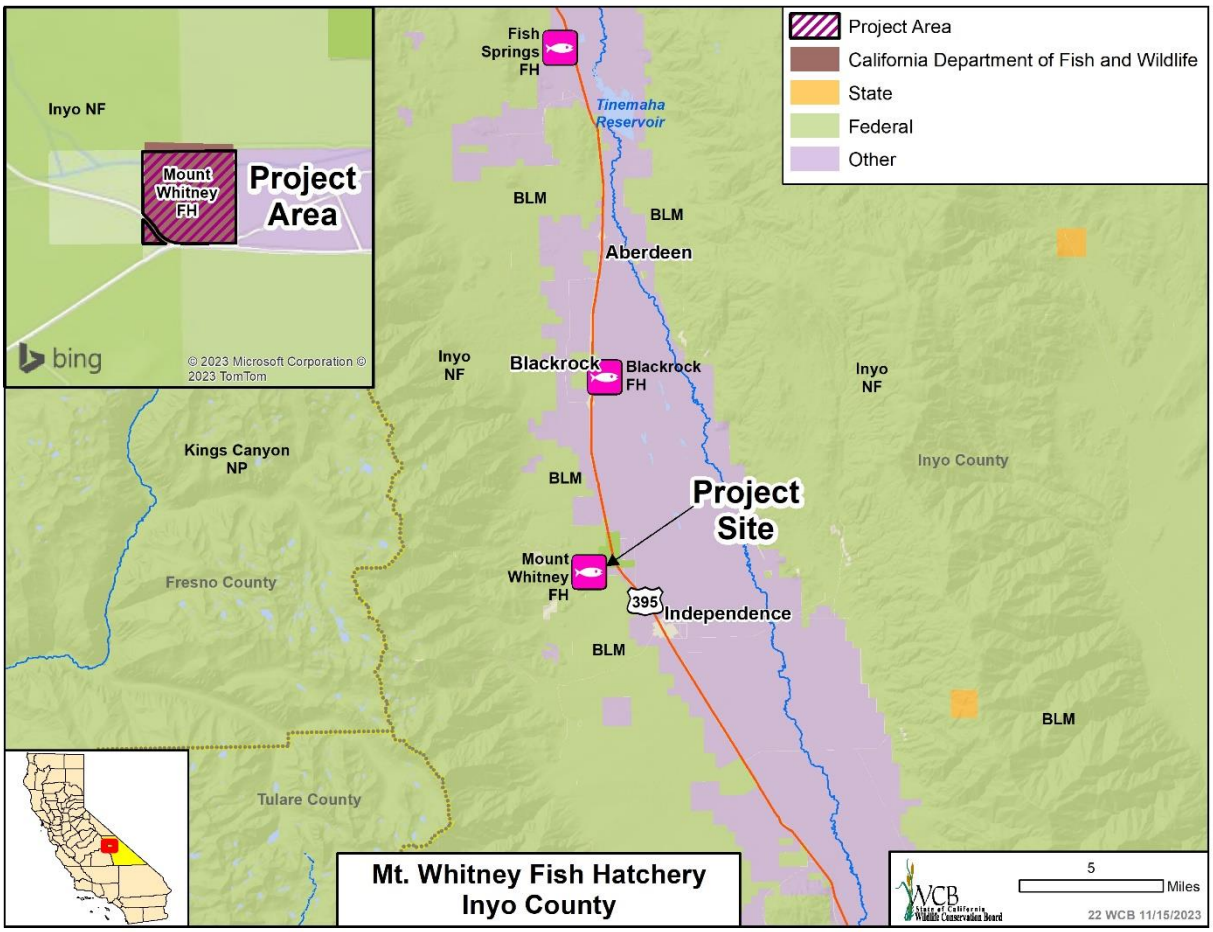
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- None received

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
The proposed transfer 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.



24. Carrizo Plains Ecological Reserve, Expansion 7 (Yang)
Withdrawn from consideration at this time.

25. San Benito County US-101 Wildlife Crossing Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $5,605,000 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:	San Benito County US-101 Wildlife Crossing Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	LTSCC
Amount Recommended:	$5,605,000
Funding Partners:	Caltrans
County:	San Benito
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.1, 1.2

LOCATION

The San Benito County US-101 Wildlife Crossing Planning (Project) is located within the Caltrans right-of-way along U.S. Highway 101 (US-101) in San Benito County, near the border with Monterey County and three miles away from the nearest incorporated city, San Juan Bautista. The roadway is in an area called the Aromas Hills which separates the Santa Cruz Mountains to the north and the Gabilan Range to the south.

This land is part of the ancestral territory of Mutsun-speaking indigenous communities. The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band continues to steward the land in this region today through the Amah Mutsun Land Trust and partnerships with organizations including the LTSCC. In post-colonial times, the area has a long history of cattle grazing.

WCB has made several investments in conservation for the region, including easement acquisitions such as Gabilan Ranch and fee title acquisitions including Rocks Ranch at the tip of the Gabilan Range and Star Creek Ranch at the southern terminus of the Santa Cruz Mountains. These acquisitions protected a wildlife linkage between the Santa Cruz Mountains and Gabilan Ranch. The Project will complete planning to improve connectivity between these protected lands.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project will develop a plan to address one of the most significant and least permeable wildlife connectivity bottlenecks in California. The Santa Cruz Mountains and the Gabilan Range are two of the state’s most biodiverse areas and are bisected by US-101. The four-lane highway blocks wildlife movement across these mountain ranges, especially native species with large home ranges and dispersal needs. Mountain lion, black-tailed deer, American badger, and bobcat

are among the focal species that are currently unable to safely cross this barrier. This results in negative ecological consequences and numerous wildlife-vehicle collisions.

The most significant limiting factor to safe wildlife crossing at US-101 in the Aromas Hills area is inadequate infrastructure. The Project's planning area is part of a high-volume traffic arterial route between the San Francisco Bay Area and the Monterey Peninsula and Salinas Valley. Current conditions at the project site include dense traffic of 63,000 to 84,000 vehicles per day, tall median barriers, and inadequate culverts, all of which together form an insurmountable obstacle to wildlife.

Unlike many other high-volume highways bisecting natural areas, there are no bridge crossings or large culverts that span US-101 in the Project area. The project site is included in CDFW's 2022 Wildlife movement Barriers Priority List indicating it is one top wildlife connectivity barriers in the state.

The Project will develop plans for infrastructure improvements to support wildlife connectivity in this critical linkage between two mountain ranges that contain expansive intact habitat essential to biodiversity conservation in California's Central Coast Ecoregion. This includes producing 30%, 60%, and 95% engineering, design, and landscape plans for one or multiple wildlife crossings at the project site. Plans will be developed in collaboration with technical and biological experts to ensure designs are as taxonomically inclusive as possible, with a focus on facilitating movement for mountain lion, bobcat, and mule deer, identified as target species in the CDFW 2022 Restoring California's Wildlife Connectivity Report. The design is also likely to consider American badger and listed amphibians, such as the California tiger salamander.

As a part of the planning process, the Project will conduct environmental studies, and prepare technical reports for the project site with avoidance and minimization measures. These studies and reports will contribute to the completion of an environmental document required under CEQA and NEPA for the Project. After the environmental document and 95% designs are complete, Caltrans and partners will develop cost estimates and contract specifications so the contractor bid package and 100% design process can begin immediately after the planning grant concludes. The Project will also include outreach to landowners to the north of the project site to ensure the proposed crossing structure(s) will be compatible with local land uses.

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	$213,400	---	$213,400
Caltrans Documentation	---	$60,000	$60,000
Designs	$3,263,390	---	$3,263,390
Environmental Review	$997,200	---	$997,200
Outreach	$400,000	$20,000	$420,000
Indirect Costs	$731,010	---	$731,010
Total	$5,605,000	$80,000	$5,685,000

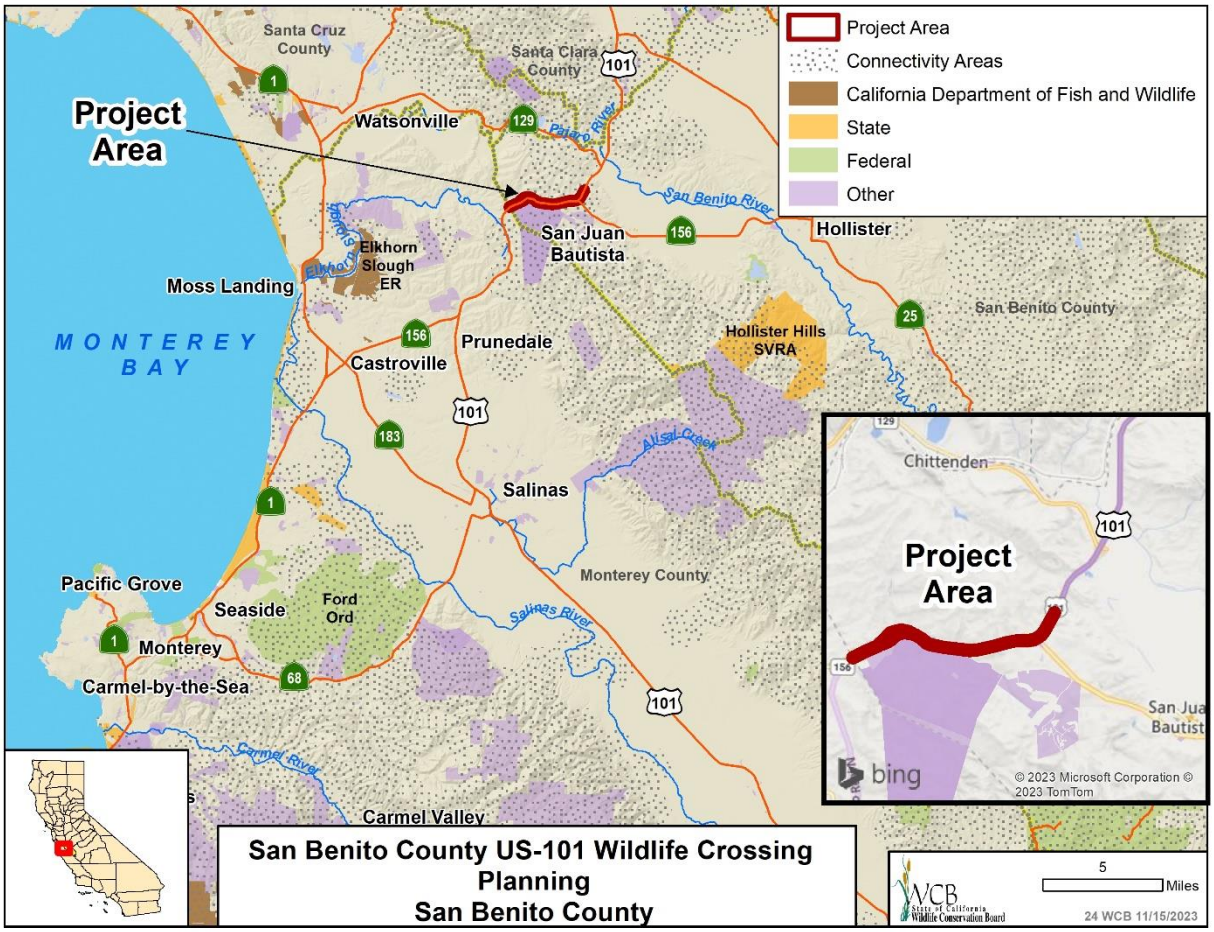
Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Oversight of Project tasks, grant administration, facilitating Project team meetings, and subcontractor management.
- Designs: Technical studies and 30%, 60%, and 95% design plans with specifications.
- Environmental Review: Completion of any necessary CEQA and NEPA documentation.
- Outreach: Stakeholder meetings, landowner outreach, and engagement with technical advisors.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:
- Senator John Laird, 17th District, California State Senate
- Senator Anna M. Caballero, 14th District, California State Senate
- Assemblymember Robert Rivas, 29th district, California State Assembly
- Scott Eades, District 5 Director, California Department of Transportation
- Walter T. Moore, President, Peninsula Open Space Trust
- Neal Sharma, California Wildlife Program Senior Supervisor, Wildlife Conservation Network

Opposition:
- None received

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


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Project Area
Santa Cruz County
Santa Clara County
Watsonville
Pajaro River
San Benito River
San Juan Bautista
Hollister
Elkhorn Slough
Elkhorn Slough ER
Moss Landing
MONTEREY BAY
Prunedale
Castroville
Hollister Hills SVRA
San Benito County
Salinas
Allsal Creek
Monterey County
Pacific Grove
Seaside
Ford Ord
Monterey
Carmel-by-the-Sea
Salinas River
Carmel River
Carmel Valley
Chittenden
Project Area
bing
© 2023 Microsoft Corporation © 2023 TomTom
San Benito County US-101 Wildlife Crossing Planning
San Benito County
5
Miles
WCB
24 WCB 11/15/2023

26. Desert View Conservation Area Trails

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate $2,000,000 from General Fund Budget Act of 2023, Nature-Based Solutions, DAC Provision [AB102, Sec. 85(3)(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:	Desert View Conservation Area Trails
Project Type:	Public Access
Applicant/Grantee:	San Bernardino County Service Area 20 Joshua Tree
Amount Recommended:	$2,000,000
Landowner(s):	San Bernardino County Service Area 20 Joshua Tree
County:	San Bernardino
Program:	Desert Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: C.1, C.4 Objectives: SI 3.1, 3.4

LOCATION

The Desert View Conservation Area is a county-owned desert biome a quarter mile east of the town of Joshua Tree. San Bernardino County Service Area 20 Joshua Tree (County) acquired the property from the Bureau of Land Management, with the intent to develop the site into a regional recreational park, just outside the boundaries of Joshua Tree National Park.

The Desert View Conservation Area Trails (Project) will directly benefit the SDAC of Joshua Tree, as per the DWR DAC Mapping Tool. This Project will provide trail amenities, improved educational opportunities through interpretive panels, and increased opportunities to foster partnerships with local user groups. This Project will offer a more accessible multi-use recreational park, where users can hike, picnic, and view wildlife.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project area is home to several iconic desert species, including desert tortoises, big horn sheep, coyotes, cougars, and various birds, rodents, and reptiles. These species are under threat due to extensive human disturbance and illegal activities. Visitors have participated in illegal shooting, dumping, campfires, overnight camping, off road vehicle activity, and poaching, including the tragic abuse and death of a desert tortoise. This Project will provide enhanced safety for wildlife and visitors, by improving recreational amenities and installing barriers to keep visitors out of sensitive habitat areas. New wayfinding signage and trail delineators will be installed throughout the Conservation Area, to clearly mark sanctioned trails. Additional fencing and large boulder and/or cable barriers will be placed in sensitive areas to physically prevent visitors from trespassing. Visitors will be allowed to view wildlife from a safe distance with the installation of a vista overlook structure. Additional recreational amenities such as picnic tables and

trash receptacles will be installed. Interpretive signage will appear throughout the Project site to educate visitors on the cultural, ecological, and geological context of the area.

No herbicide will be used for this Project.

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 and Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
The County has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the Project. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, the County 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	$60,000	$0	$60,000
Design	$693,000	$0	$693,000
Monitoring and Management Plans	$25,000	$0	$25,000
Bid and Construction Support	$218,000	$0	$218,000
Construction	$822,180	$0	$822,180
Contingency	$181,820	$0	$181,820
Total	$2,000,000	$0	$2,000,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Complete reporting, invoicing, and deliverables.
- Design: Execute contract with consultant, and complete topographic survey, conceptual designs, master plan, cost opinion, public presentation, draft and final construction plans and interpretive panel content.
- Monitoring and Management Plans: Complete draft and final monitoring and management plans.
- Bid and Construction Support: Complete bid documents and issue Notice to Proceed, conduct inspections and site visits, complete record drawings, and respond to Requests for Information.
- Construction: Prep site for construction activities, and construct trail and picnic amenities, barriers, interpretive signage, two shade structures, and an overlook vista.

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

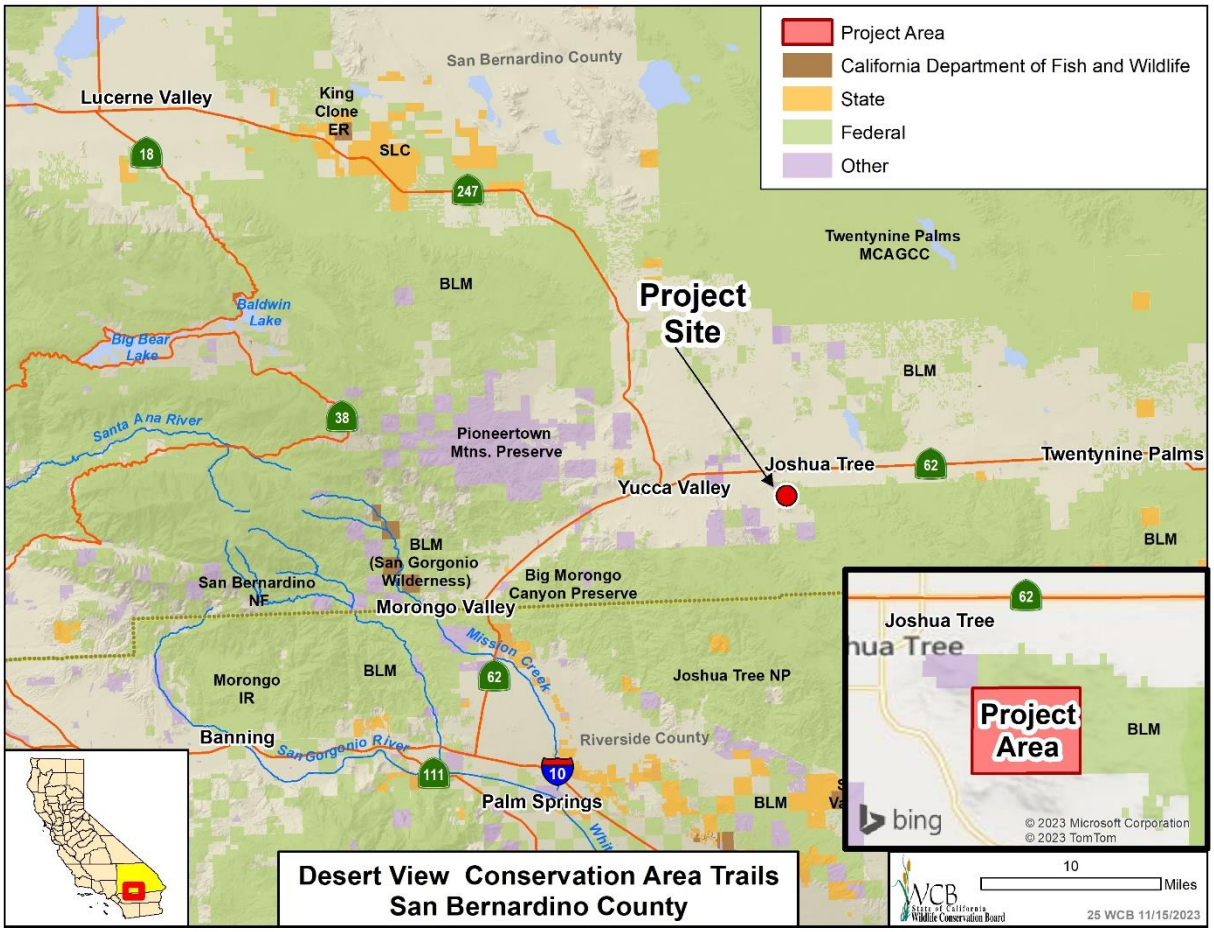
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Mary Helen Tuttle, President, Rotary Club of Joshua Tree
- Steve Bardwell, President, Morongo Basin Conservation Association

Opposition:

- None received

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



27. Audubon Starr Ranch Sanctuary Restoration

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $316,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Nature Based Solutions – Land Acquisition and Habitat Enhancement Program Provision [AB102, Sec. 85(3)(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:	Audubon Starr Ranch Sanctuary Restoration
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Audubon Society
Amount Recommended:	$316,000
Funding Partners:	Audubon Society
Landowner(s):	Audubon Society
County:	Orange
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1, B.5 Objectives: SI 1.3, 2.1, 2.5

LOCATION

The Audubon Starr Ranch Sanctuary (Starr Ranch) is a 4,000-acre nature preserve and ecological field station, approximately three miles east of Rancho Santa Margarita. In the 1900s, Starr Ranch was operated as a cattle ranch until it was officially designated as a wildlife sanctuary in 1973. After extensive research-based habitat restoration, the property is now comprised of a unique mosaic of Mediterranean climate habitats, including oak and riparian woodlands, coastal sage scrub, cactus scrub, chaparral, and needlegrass grassland which provides refugia for numerous special status bird species and other wildlife.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Agriculture, invasion by exotic species, development, and other human-related activities have degraded critical California native habitats, including coastal sage scrub, cactus scrub, and California native grassland. The loss of these habitat types has resulted in a steady decline of bird species, especially threatened and endangered species.

To respond to these ecological needs, the Audubon Starr Ranch Restoration (Project) will protect and expand habitat for rare and declining songbird species in the Starr Ranch landscape mosaic through controlling invasive weeds through nonchemical removal techniques, and replanting areas with more climate-resilient, sustainable native plants. The Project will restore 20 acres of coastal sage scrub, 13 acres of cactus scrub, and 95 acres of high-quality native grasslands. The Project will prioritize conservation work in these habitats to support the foraging and nesting needs of several special status bird species, including the Coastal California gnatcatcher, Coastal cactus wren, and grasshopper sparrow. Conserving biodiversity here creates climate refugia for these species, which are in danger of extinction.

In addition to restoration, the Project will include monitoring of rare bird populations in both unrestored and restored areas to understand how birds are responding to restoration and other factors such as climate change. Monitoring will take place across 628 acres of cactus scrub, coastal sage scrub, riparian woodland, willow habitat, and oak woodland.

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 herbicide.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
The Audubon Society has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the Property. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, Audubon Society 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	---	$15,138	$15,138
Restoration	$200,582	$24,093	$224,675
Bird Surveys	$49,346	$86,135	$135,481
Indirect Costs	$37,399	$7,089	$44,488
Contingency	$28,673	---	$28,673
Total	$316,000	$132,455	$448,455

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Restoration: Collection of seed, direct seeding or plug planting restoration sites. Monitoring and maintenance of sites.
- Bird Surveys: Conduct surveys of songbirds of rare upland habitats, cactus scrub and coastal sage scrub, and equally critical oak and riparian woodlands.
- 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:

- Scott A. Sobiech, Field Supervisor, USFWS
- Justin M. Valliere, Assistant Professor of Cooperative Extension, University of California Davis

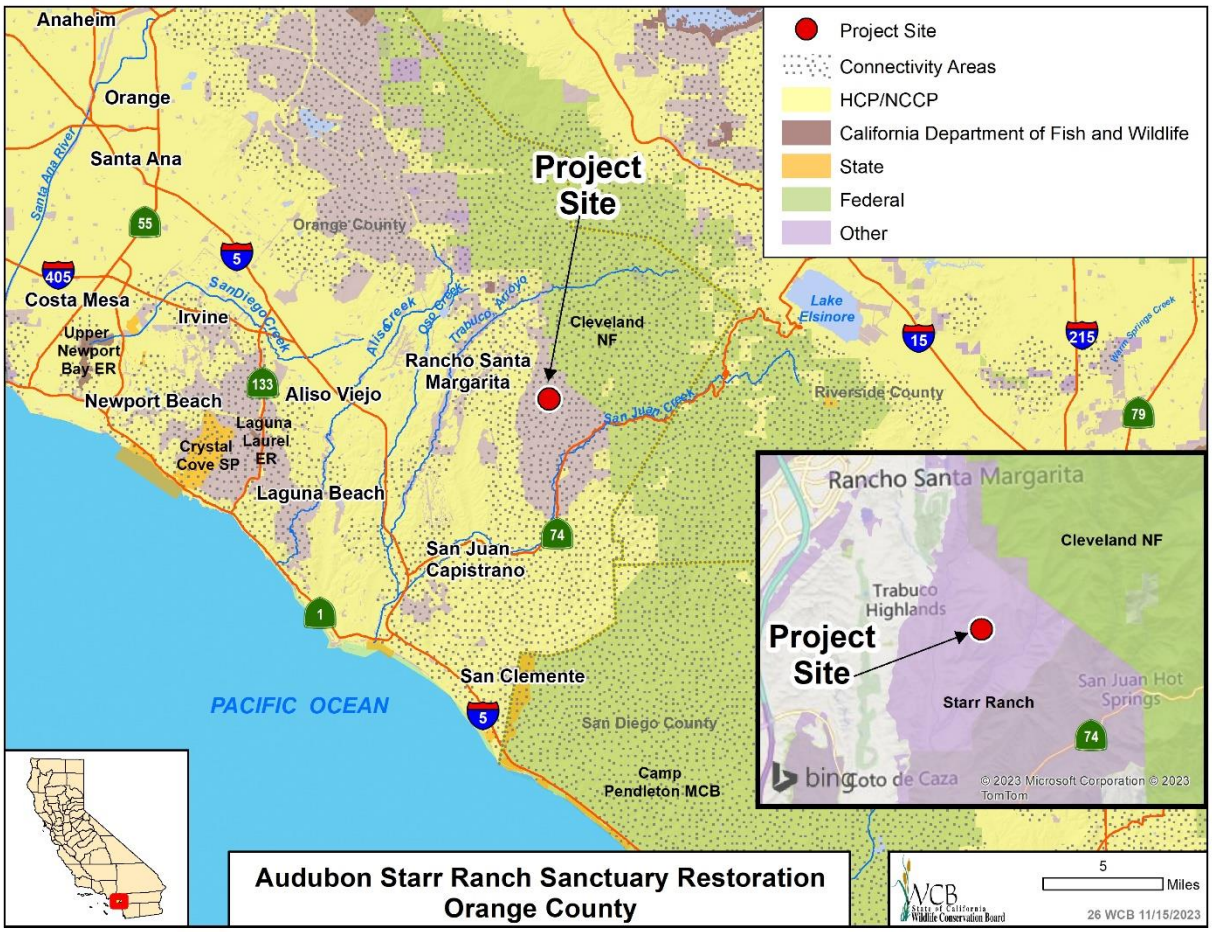
- William J. Hoese, Professor of Biological Sciences, California State University Fullerton

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



28. Western Riverside MSHCP Wolfskill

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,456,000 from Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the grant to Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (RCA); approve the acceptance of the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant from USFWS in the amount of $2,704,000 and approve the subgrant of the federal funds to RCA; 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 Wolfskill
Project Type:	Fee Title Acquisition (640± acres)
Grantee:	Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority
Amount Recommended:	$1,456,000
Funding Partners:	USFWS, RCA
County:	Riverside
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.3 Objectives: 1.2, 1.3, 2.2

LOCATION

The Wolfskill Property (Property) is located immediately northeast of the intersection of Gilman Springs Road and Alessandro Boulevard in an unincorporated portion of western Riverside County, adjacent to the city of Moreno Valley to the west, and within the Moreno Valley Sphere of Influence. The Property is between State Route 60 and CDFW's San Jacinto Wildlife Area and lies within the Middle Santa Ana River watershed. The Property is within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (MSHCP/NCCP) area boundary.

The Property is part of the Badlands formation, a complex of highly erosive hills and canyons that forms an escarpment at the interface of the lower-lying San Jacinto Valley and the higher-elevation San Gorgonio Pass area. It is located less than two miles north of Mystic Lake and four miles north of the San Jacinto River. The San Bernardino Mountains are located eleven miles to the northeast and the San Jacinto Mountains are located ten miles to the east.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property covers three parcels totaling approximately 640 acres, is generally square in shape, and contains steep hills and canyons throughout. A narrow linear valley containing an ephemeral wash system is present in the western and northwestern portions. The Property is currently undeveloped and zoned as W-2-1 and W-2-20 (Controlled Development Areas). Allowed land uses under these zoning designations include single family dwellings, limited agricultural uses and nurseries, animal grazing, and home occupations. Numerous commercial uses are also allowed with a conditional use permit. The highest and best use is commercial

uses on the southwest portion of the Property and rural residential on the remainder. A gas pipeline traverses the Property along the western and northwestern portions.

Vegetation communities found on the Property include chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and grassland, as well as riparian scrub, woodland, and forest occurring along an ephemeral wash system. Listed California Species of Special Concern found on the Property include loggerhead shrike, Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow, yellow warbler, turkey vulture, and coastal western whiptail. The Crotch's bumble bee, a candidate species under the California Endangered Species Act, was found on the Property. Other species that are expected to utilize the Property include the federally listed Stephens' kangaroo rat and coastal California gnatcatcher, mountain lion, northern harrier, northwestern San Diego pocket mouse, Cooper's hawk, bobcat, and the smooth tarplant. The Property is also located within the area covered by the 1996 Stephens' Kangaroo Rat Habitat Conservation Plan of the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency.

The proposed acquisition of the Property contributes to meeting the goals of the 2015 California State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) specific to the Southern California Mountain and Valley Ecoregion by achieving multiple goals identified for California Grassland Flowerfield habitats by the year 2025.

The Property supports a high level of biodiversity. Approximately 511 acres (80%) of the Property are designated as Ecoregion Biodiversity Rank 4 – High by the CDFW Areas of Conservation Emphasis (ACE) Species Biodiversity dataset, with the remaining 129.5 acres designated as Rank 3. Approximately 553 acres (86%) of the Property are designated as Level 5 – Irreplaceable and Essential Corridors by the CDFW's ACE Terrestrial Connectivity dataset, with the remaining 87.5 acres designated as Level 3 – Connections with Implementation Flexibility by the ACE Terrestrial Connectivity dataset.

Acquisition of the Property will contribute to a secure linkage for covered species between large blocks of conserved land. Existing MSHCP conserved land located immediately adjacent to the northern Property boundary is connected directly to an existing undercrossing of State Route 60, connecting to existing MSHCP/NCCP conserved land north of State Route 60 and allowing movement across this wildlife barrier. This will provide covered species access to habitat across an elevational gradient ranging from approximately 1,400 feet above sea level within the San Jacinto Valley to the south (including the CDFW San Jacinto Wildlife Area) to elevations of approximately 2,500 feet above sea level in the Norton Younglove Reserve and additional MSHCP/NCCP conserved land beyond, providing climate resiliency by allowing covered species the opportunity for recolonization of habitat following localized extinction events and potential elevational shifts in habitat and foraging resources.

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
RCA will permanently manage the Property upon acquisition. Since its formation with the adoption of the MSHCP/NCCP in 2004, RCA has incorporated 67,622 acres of Additional Reserve Lands, consisting of 557 individual properties, into the MSHCP/NCCP Conservation Area to be conserved, monitored, and managed in perpetuity. A comprehensive team of fully dedicated staff positions support the implementation of the MSHCP/NCCP and monitoring and management of the Conservation Area. Reserve management staff, consisting of the Riverside County Park and Open-Space District Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Unit (MSHCP Parks), patrol and conduct studies on the Reserve Lands. Additionally, RCA works collaboratively with Native American tribes such as the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians and Pechanga Band of Indians to develop management practices that benefit both Western Riverside MSHCP/NCCP covered species and habitats and Native American cultural resources.

Once acquired, MSHCP Parks will conduct a detailed baseline analysis of the Property. Public access will be available for passive wildlife-oriented recreation, such as hiking, non-motorized biking, bird watching, and botany within existing roads and trails.

Long-term management is funded through Local Development Mitigation Fees and other local sources. The current Fiscal Year 2023/24 long-term management budget is over $1,600,000. The Local Development Mitigation Fees and other local sources are also funding an endowment for management of the MSHCP/NCCP Conservation Area in perpetuity.

PROJECT FUNDING
The DGS approved fair market value is $7,360,000 and the landowner has agreed to sell at a reduced price of $4,224,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

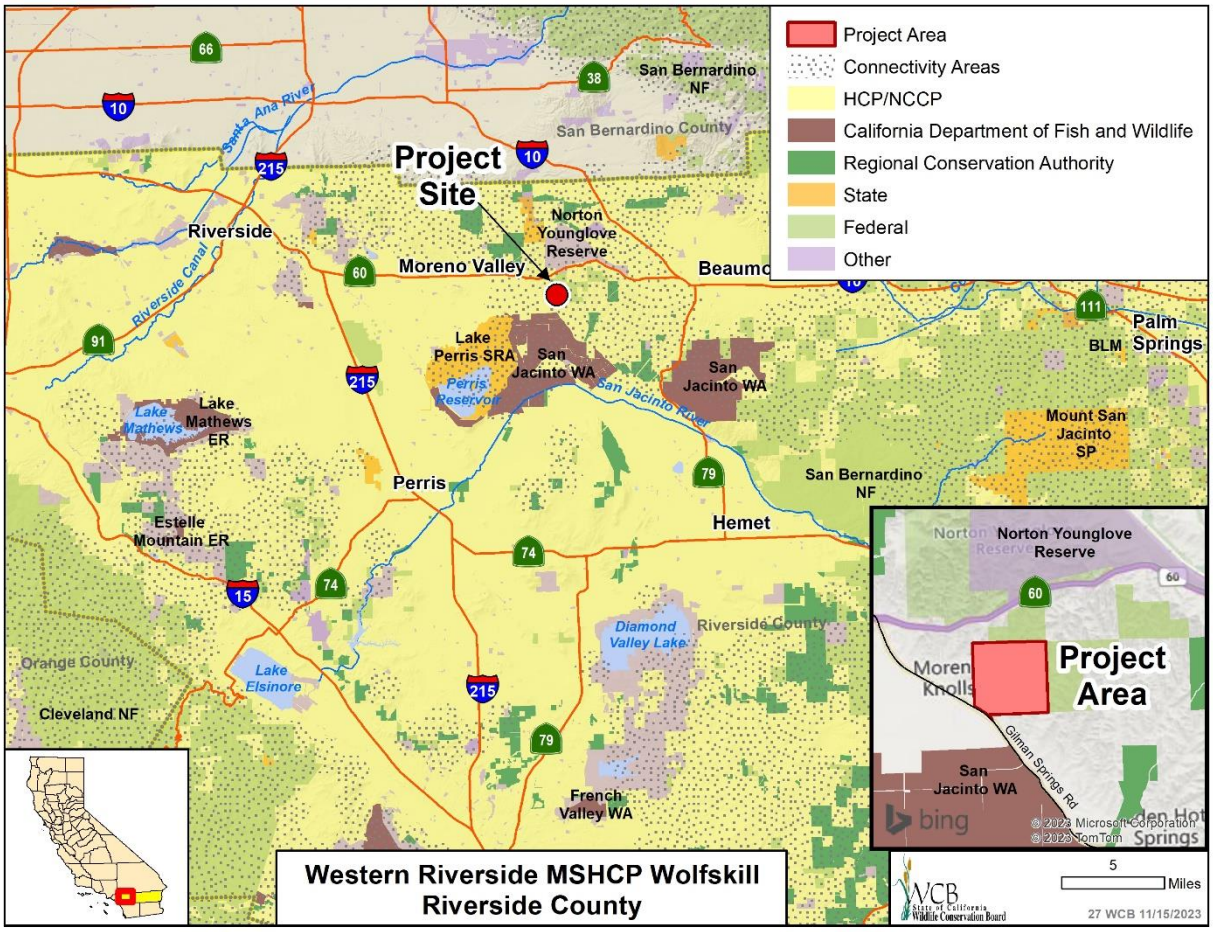
Partners	Amount
WCB	$1,456,000
USFWS	$2,704,000
WRCRCA (Grantee)	$64,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$4,224,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:
- None received

Opposition:
- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

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



29. Coastal California Gnatcatcher Habitat Restoration Augmentation

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $263,000 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:	Coastal California Gnatcatcher Habitat Restoration Augmentation
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation
Amount Recommended:	$263,000
Funding Partners:	County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation
Landowner:	County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation
County:	San Diego
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.3, 2.1

LOCATION

The Coastal California Gnatcatcher Habitat Restoration (Project) is located in Dictionary Hill County Preserve (Preserve) near the community of Spring Valley in the west-central portion of unincorporated San Diego County, east of State Route 125 and south of State Route 94. The Preserve spans 175 acres of coastal sage scrub (CSS) and chaparral habitat and is within the Metro-Lakeside-Jamul Segment of the Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

CSS is a plant community found in coastal California that is dominated by aromatic shrubs that often lose their leaves during the long dry summer and rarely exceed 2 meters in height. It is found primarily at low elevations near the coast and on foothill slopes in areas with some maritime influence. CSS once covered approximately 2.5 million acres, but recent estimates indicate that 85-90 percent has been destroyed due to urban and agricultural development.

CSS presents different evolutionary pressures than other California ecosystems and many wildlife species have come to be completely reliant on the habitat. The coastal California gnatcatcher (CAGN) is one such species. The CAGN is a small grey, white, and black songbird that is dependent on CSS for its breeding and foraging habitat. The loss of CSS has negatively impacted CAGN populations to the point that the bird is now federally listed as threatened.

With upwards of 90 percent of its habitat being lost to development, the CAGN has lost most of its historical breeding grounds. There are remnant portions of CAGN

habitat that have been preserved, but they are highly fragmented with nearly all being bordered on at least one side by rapidly expanding urban centers. This has led to isolated pockets of CAGN that have reduced genetic variation and are vulnerable to being wiped out by one of the fire events frequent to southern California.

The 175-acre Preserve was acquired by the County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) in 2017 to preserve CSS and to provide a refuge for CAGN and other species listed in the MSCP. The Preserve also functions as a stepping-stone for CAGN from conserved lands directly east of the Preserve within the Sweetwater Reservoir to the San Miguel Mountain Core Resources Area.

CSS covers 90 percent of the Preserve, but it has been degraded by disturbances from the unauthorized use of numerous dirt trails and invasive non-native plants. Restoration of disturbed CSS within the Preserve would provide a refuge for listed species, including CAGN and other MSCP covered species. In addition, restoration of disturbed CSS would increase carrying capacity for CAGN, and also assist with preserving genetic diversity if a fire occurs within the preserved land east of the Preserve.

After recently completing its second year, the Project is on track to meet its goals of increasing CAGN habitat by actively restoring approximately four acres of CSS and enhancing a linkage for CAGN between nearby conserved lands. This progress includes installing an extensive irrigation network that has allowed the first wave of plants to establish themselves. As these plants have filled in, however, it has become clear the number of plants installed has not covered as much of the irrigated area as possible. This has left gaps in the native habitat that have already been cleared of invasive species which, however, will return to being dominated by non-native plants if left in their current state.

These gap areas are reachable by irrigation and represent a relatively low-cost opportunity to increase CSS habitat and the benefits the project provides to the sensitive wildlife species that reside there. This augmentation will allow the Grantee to install more CSS plants and provide an additional year of watering to ensure the new plantings become established.

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

This augmentation will not provide funds for the purchase or application of herbicides.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
The Grantee has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the Property. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, 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 Augmentation	Original WCB Grant	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Site Preparation	---	$96,783	---	$96,783
Implementation	---	$202,026	---	$202,026
Maintenance	$245,500	$171,386	---	$416,886
Monitoring	$8,820	$25,926	---	$34,746
Project Management and Reporting	$8,680	$30,879	$24,560	$64,119
TOTAL	$263,000	$527,000	$24,560	$814,560

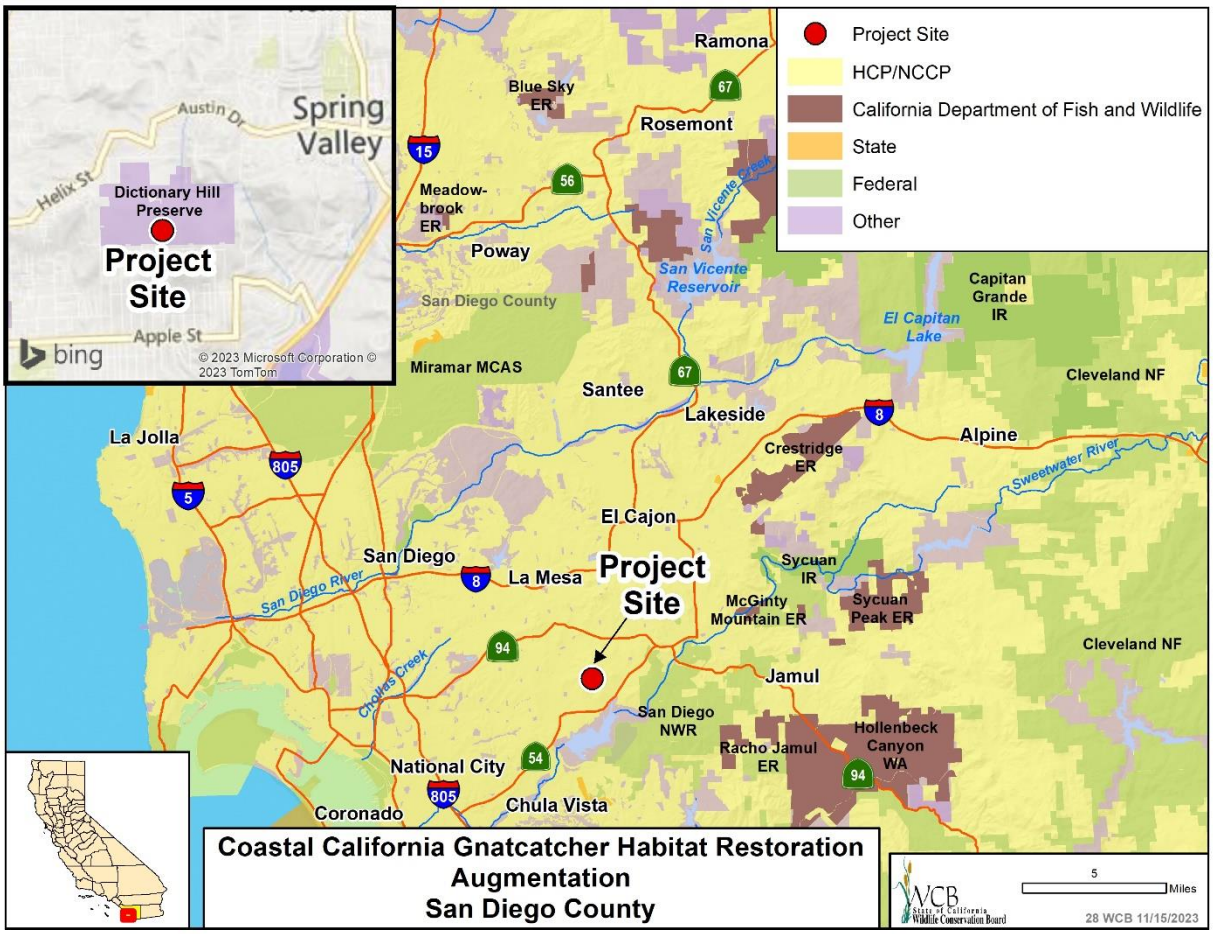
Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Site Preparation includes restoration site preparation and finalizing the habitat restoration and data management plans.
- Implementation includes CSS plant installation and invasive plant treatments.
- Maintenance includes weeding and watering necessary to maintain newly installed plants.
- Monitoring includes monitoring of invasive plant treatments and restoration areas.
- Project Management and Reporting includes invoicing, contract management, and annual and final reports.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:
- None received

Opposition:
- None received

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


Project Site
HCP/NCCP
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Spring Valley
Austin Dr
Helix St
Apple St
Dictionary Hill Preserve
Project Site
bing
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Ramona
Blue Sky ER
Rosemont
Meadow-brook ER
Poway
San Vicente Creek
San Vicente Reservoir
San Diego County
Capitan Grande IR
El Capitan Lake
Miramar MCAS
Santee
Lakeside
Cleveland NF
La Jolla
Crestridge ER
Alpine
Sweetwater River
El Cajon
San Diego
La Mesa
Project Site
Sycuan IR
McGinty Mountain ER
Sycuan Peak ER
San Diego River
Cleveland NF
Jamul
Chollas Creek
San Diego NWR
Hollenbeck Canyon WA
Racho Jamul ER
National City
Chula Vista
Coronado
Coastal California Gnatcatcher Habitat Restoration
Augmentation
San Diego County
5
Miles
WCB
28 WCB 11/15/2023

30. Otay Valley Regional Park Restoration Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $409,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision [AB102, 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:	Otay Valley Regional Park Restoration Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County
Amount Recommended:	$409,000
Funding Partners:	City of San Diego, San Diego Green Infrastructure Consortium, Lumbercycle, Institute for Public Strategies
County:	San Diego
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 4.1

LOCATION

The Otay Valley Regional Park Restoration Planning (Project) focuses on the Otay Valley Regional Park (OVRP), an 8,869-acre natural asset located in the middle of under-served populated areas in the city of Chula Vista and the city of San Diego. Throughout the OVRP, there are 8.3 miles of multi-use trails for hiking, biking, and equestrian riding, and there are multiple ponds available to the public for fishing. The OVRP is made up of riparian woodland, coastal sage scrub, alkali marsh, and maritime succulent scrub which provides crucial habitat, within an otherwise urban region, for coyote, gray fox, desert cottontail, American badger, Quino checkerspot butterfly, Hermes copper butterfly, garden salamander, and over 200 species of birds.

The Project is surrounded by multiple DAC and SDAC communities (per the DWR mapping tool). The Project will directly benefit these communities by strengthening community engagement and stewardship for the natural resources within OVRP. Additionally, the eventual implementation of this Project will benefit the surrounding DACs and SDACs by improving water quality, reducing wildfire risk, and increasing public access to OVRP. The Mongol tribe is a partner for this Project; they will provide their expertise in Traditional Ecological Knowledge and continue to engage with other native groups throughout the planning process.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project site is in the eastern region of OVRP, directly west of I-805. This site was planted as a eucalyptus grove in the 1950s prior to it being added to OVRP. The Project area is now designated as open space within OVRP, but it is still primarily filled with eucalyptus and other invasive species. Due to this, the Project area faces multiple ongoing issues including water pollution and erosion from

stormwater runoff, wildfire risk, lack of wildlife corridors within or connected to adjacent park property, and inadequate public access.

To address these ongoing issues, the Project will produce streamlined shovel-ready plans, supported by technical and field studies, that when implemented will:

1. Restore native habitat appropriate to supporting local wildlife, especially native and at-risk species, which will aid in fire risk reduction.
2. Enable wildlife connectivity by designing wildlife corridors within the site that connect to the surrounding OVRP property.
3. Improve water quality, availability, and drought tolerance through stormwater reduction, improved infiltration, and reduced erosion, using nature-based solutions to the extent feasible.
4. Increase public access to enable more use of the park, especially by local disadvantaged community members, so they can connect with this restored natural space and the wildlife within it.
5. Build local community engagement needed to provide long-term stewardship of this restored site.

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	$101,639	$45,000	$146,639
Project Analysis	$75,100	$10,000	$85,100
Community Engagement	$38,500	$5,000	$43,500
Landscape Concept Plan and Construction Documents	$116,844	$20,000	$136,844
Indirect Costs	$39,785	---	$39,785
Contingency	$37,132	---	$37,132
Total	$409,000	$80,000	$489,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Overall project coordination, staff supervision, monitoring, financial management, legal agreements, and executing contracts.
- Project Analysis: Analysis of existing documents, site survey, ecological, community, permitting needs, and local ordinances. Gather stakeholder list and obtain permits.
- Community Engagement: Establish and convene forum to obtain community input and produce long-term management plans.

- Landscape Concept Plan and Construction Documents: Create landscape concept plan for habitat restoration, trails, water management, interpretive features, and construction documents. Obtain cost estimates and finalize the implementation budget.
- 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.

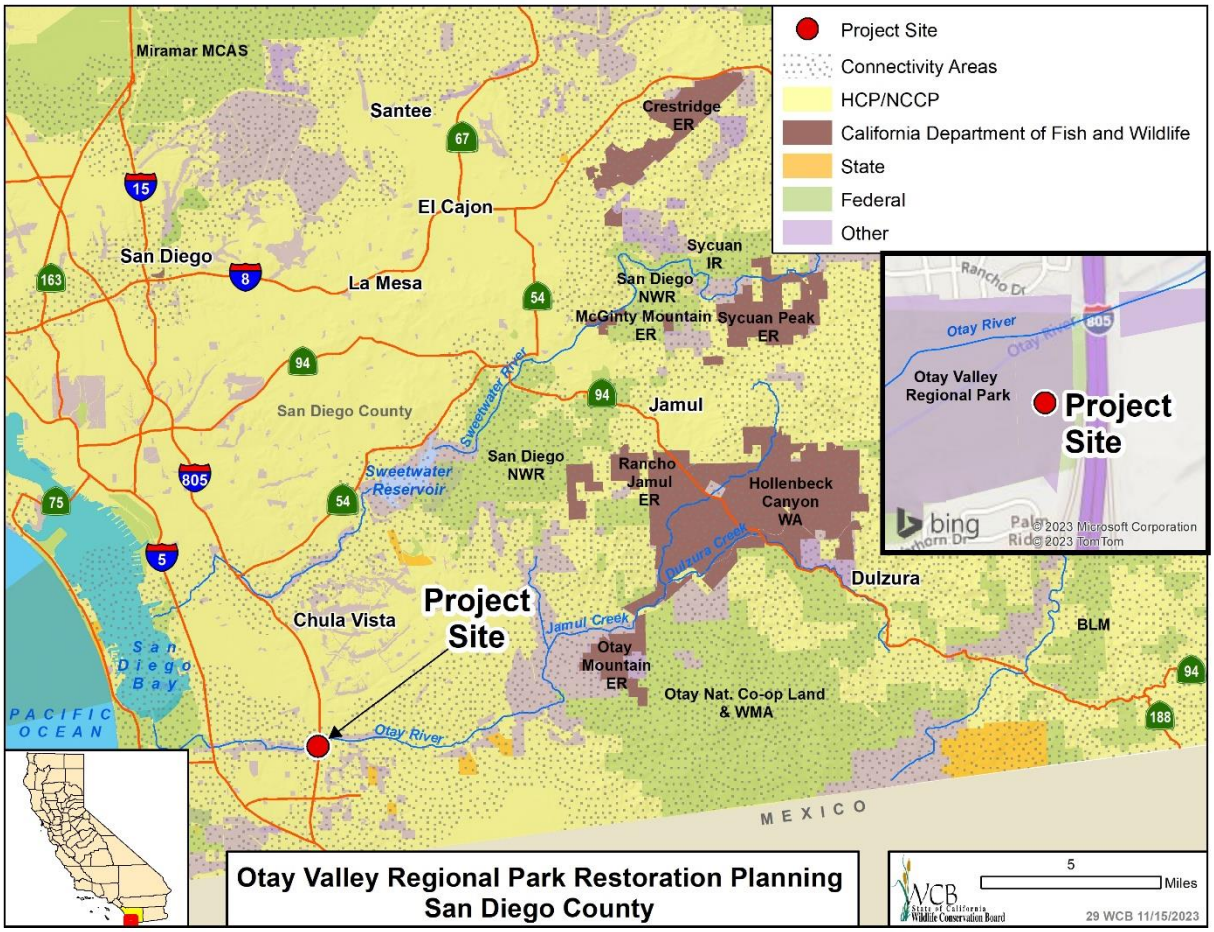
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Senator Stephen C. Padilla, California State Senate, District 18
- Assemblymember David A. Alvarez, California State Assembly, District 18
- Nora Vargas, District Supervisor, San Diego County Board of Supervisors
- Laura C. Black, Director, City of Chula Vista Development Services Department
- Crystal Benham, Chief of Resources Management, City of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation
- Nathan Lou, Executive Director, Mongol Tribe
- David Grubb, Board Member, The Environmental Center on San Diego
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League
- Mitch Silverstein, San Diego Policy Coordinator, The Surfrider Foundation
- Brenda Simmons, Chief Executive Officer, Institute for Public Strategies
- Andrea Sanchez Davidson, Program Manager, Resources Legacy Fund
- Pamela Gray Payton, Vice President, San Diego Foundation
- Rachel Lozano Castro, Senior Officer, San Diego Regional Policy and Innovation Center
- Laurie Broedling, Co-founder, San Diego Green Infrastructure Consortium
- Tom Hamilton, President and Chief Executive Officer, Lumbercycle

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 Site
Connectivity Areas
HCP/NCCP
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Miramar MCAS
Santee
Crestridge ER
El Cajon
San Diego
La Mesa
Sycuan IR
San Diego NWR
McGinty Mountain ER
Sycuan Peak ER
San Diego County
Sweetwater River
Jamul
Sweetwater Reservoir
San Diego NWR
Rancho Jamul ER
Hollenbeck Canyon WA
Dulzura Creek
Dulzura
Chula Vista
Project Site
Jamul Creek
Otay Mountain ER
Otay Nat. Co-op Land & WMA
BLM
San Diego Bay
PACIFIC OCEAN
Otay River
MEXICO
Otay Valley Regional Park
Project Site
Rancho Dr
Otay River
© 2023 Microsoft Corporation
© 2023 TomTom
Otay Valley Regional Park Restoration Planning
San Diego County
5
Miles
WCB
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31. Volcan Mountain Montane Forest Habitat Resilience

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,550,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Nature Based Solutions Provision [AB102, Sec. 85(3)(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:	Volcan Mountain Montane Forest Habitat Resilience
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Volcan Mountain Foundation
Amount Recommended:	$1,550,000
Funding Partners:	California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Volcan Mountain Foundation
Landowner(s):	Volcan Mountain Foundation
County:	San Diego
Program:	California Forest Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.1, 4.1

LOCATION

The Volcan Mountain Montane Forest Habitat Resilience (Project) is located approximately three miles north of the community of Julian on the Nature Center Preserve owned and managed by the Volcan Mountain Foundation (VMF). The Preserve protects approximately 400 acres and contributes to a 41,000-acre network of conserved lands in the region. The site is characterized by oak woodlands transitioning to Southern California montane forest as elevation increases through the steep drainage formed by the headwaters of Santa Ysabel Creek, a significant tributary to the San Dieguito River. Mid to high elevation areas of the preserve have been impacted by wildfire, with some areas experiencing multiple burns resulting in high severity impacts to vegetation and increasing the pace of type conversion from forest to chaparral.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

VMF's Volcan Mountain Nature Center property supports an excellent example of Southern California montane forest found only on isolated 'Sky Islands' in the Transverse and Peninsular Ranges. These montane forests and meadows have fuel loads driven by historic fire suppression and type conversion to chaparral following high severity wildfire. Oak trees throughout the preserve are succumbing to infestations of goldspotted oak borer beetle (GSOB). Implementing forest management activities such as fuel reduction and restoration planting designed to increase the resilience of these increasingly rare natural communities will result in habitat benefits for California spotted owl, which has been documented nesting on the property. Additional sensitive species that will benefit include purple martin, San Diego mountain kingsnake, and Coast Range newt.

In addition to the habitat value of its montane forest plant communities, the Nature Center property contains the first order headwaters of the San Dieguito River (as well as connecting to three other nearby major watersheds on the range's western flank). Promoting the wildfire resilience of the montane forest community within which the headwaters of the San Dieguito River [Santa Ysabel Creek] and its riparian corridor originates would help preserve stream flows and wildlife habitat functions downstream.

The Project will implement conservation and habitat management practices identified in the recent Forest Management Plan for the Foundation's Nature Center Property (Black Fox Timber 2023) on 167 acres to enhance wildfire resilience of the montane forest ecosystem. As described in the Forest Management Plan, project activities/fuel treatments will include:

- Manual and mechanical thinning (density/basal area reduction) within select, high-value groves of mature mixed conifer/hardwood forest (Sky Island Trailhead, Ironside Springs, and the Upper Outdoor Classroom).
- Shaded fuel break management and ladder fuel removal.
- Mechanical treatment (mastication, livestock grazing, broadcast burning) of type-converted chaparral in preparation for reforestation.
- Removal of approximately 200 deceased oak trees (GSOB mortality) to reduce continuity of fuel loads.
- Reforestation of approximately 37 acres of mixed chaparral with native conifer seedlings, targeting areas around mature conifer stands.

The completion of this Project will enhance ecosystem functions throughout the watershed and provide high quality habitat for sensitive species while preserving rare forest types. The landscape has been and will continue to be a living classroom for 1,200 children in grades K-12 (predominantly from Title 1 schools) per year through the Volcan Mountain Foundation's outdoor education programs, and up to 800 adults per year through various outreach, volunteer, and education events.

The Foundation and their CEQA Lead Agency (Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego) have consulted with several local tribes as well as the San Diego Native American Conservation Corps Pilot Program, Southern California Interagency Fire and Fuels Cadre, and the Climate Science Alliance's Indigenous Stewardship Pathways Training Program as potential workforce partners.

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 Volcan Mountain Foundation 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, Volcan Mountain 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	$246,008	$24,780	$270,788
Forest Thinning	$520,870	$366,400	$887,270
Reforestation	$576,257	$24,200	$600,457
Monitoring	$42,839	---	$42,839
Indirect Costs	$23,452	---	$23,452
Contingency	$140,574	---	$140,574
Total	$1,550,000	$415,380	$1,965,380

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

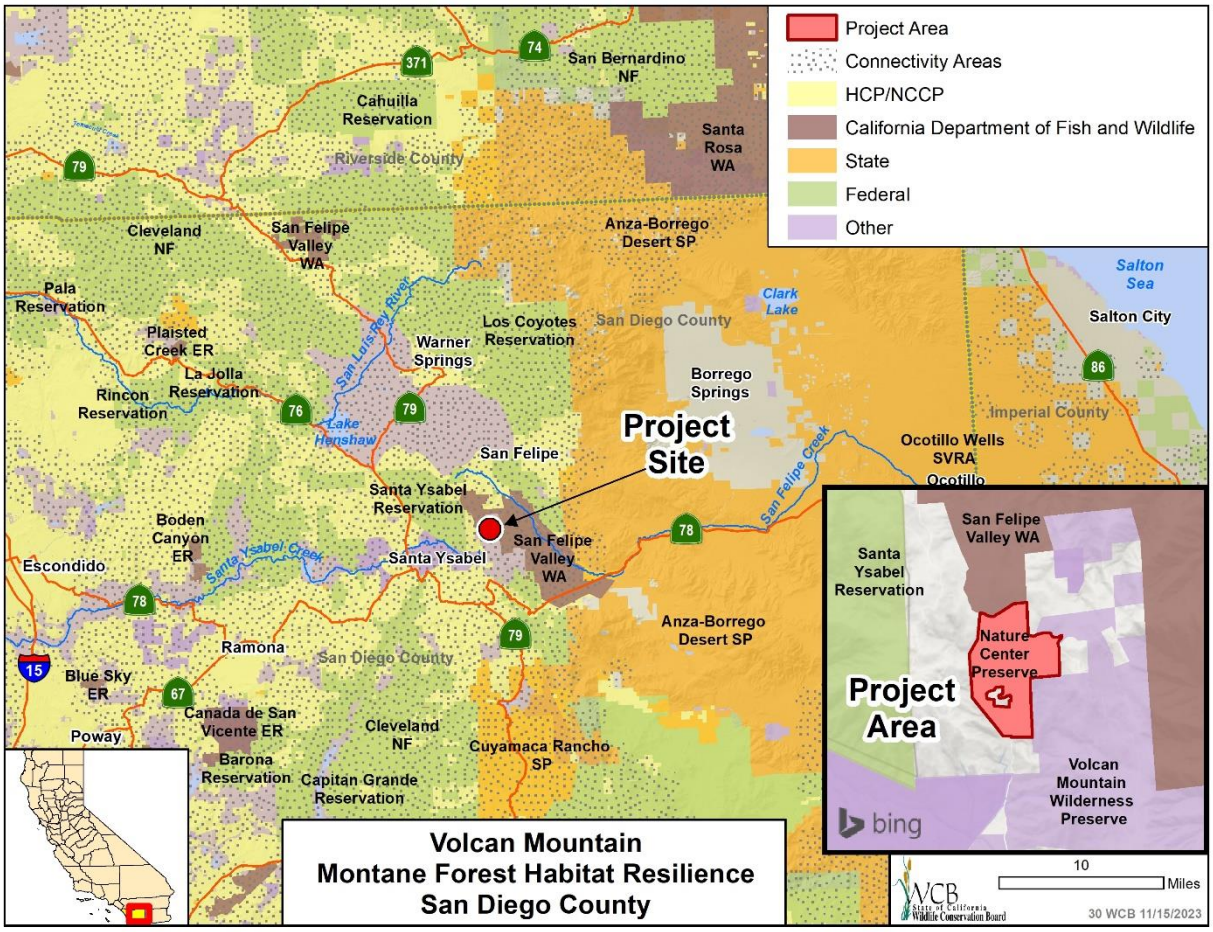
- Project Management: Grant administration including invoicing and reporting, stakeholder engagement, and subcontractor management.
- Forest Thinning: Various vegetation treatments correlated to forest type, pests, and fuel load for forest health improvement.
- Reforestation: Site preparation and planting of several locally appropriate conifer species at an approximate density of 170 trees/acre on 37 acres.
- Monitoring: Forest thinning treatment efficacy monitoring, monitoring and maintenance of reforestation plantings.
- 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:
- Ann Baldridge, Executive Director, Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County
- Kim Simas, Board President, Julian Fire Safe Council

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.



Presentation Items

32. Shasta Timberlands Working Forest Conservation Easement

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $5,697,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2021, Drought Resilience and Response Provision [AB211, Sec. 35(h)(1)] for grant to The Pacific Forest Trust (PFT); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Shasta Timberlands Working Forest Conservation Easement
Project Type:	Conservation Easement (7,589± acres)
Grantee:	The Pacific Forest Trust
Amount Recommended:	$5,697,000
County:	Siskiyou
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan	Goals: A.2, C.1 Objectives: 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 2.4, 4.1

LOCATION

The Shasta Timberlands Working Forest Conservation Easement (Property) acquisition is a landscape-level conservation acquisition that will protect 7,589± acres comprising several conifer forest types, montane hardwoods and chaparral, mountain meadows and streams. The Property is located 13-20 miles northeast of McCloud, north of California Highway 89. The Property is accessed from Pilgrim Creek Road, Military Pass Road, Deer Mountain Road, and various unnamed U.S. Forest Service (USFS) roads which provide good overall access to the Property and the region.

The Property is located within a large landscape of contiguous habitat and open space on the northeastern shoulder of Mount Shasta at the crest of the Sacramento and Klamath River basins. The area has varied geography given the location of Mount Shasta where the Cascade, Klamath and Modoc Plateau regions converge.

Surrounding landowners include USFS, commercial forestlands owned by Manulife Investment Management Timberland and Agriculture, Sierra Pacific Industries, Campbell Global, New Forests, as well as other privately owned parcels. PFT's Butte Creek Meadows Working Forest Conservation Easement, which was funded by WCB, abuts the Property on the northern boundary. The surrounding land uses support the Property's continued use primarily for commercial timber production.

The Property is within the Mount Shasta Headwaters Forest region where over 42,000 acres has been conserved in the last 15 years. Within this region several acquisitions were completed with WCB funding including the 9,200-acre McCloud Conservation Easement (2006), the 8,230-acre Bear Creek Conservation

Easement (2012), the 3,587-acre Butte Creek Meadows Conservation Easement (2015), and the 1,346 acre McCloud Soda Springs Working Forest Conservation Easement (2018). This Property will further expand the conservation of the McCloud River watershed, which is a major tributary to the upper Sacramento River providing cold water for downstream fisheries, drinking water, and agriculture and habitat corridors and linkages for wildlife moving through the region.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The Property consists of 12 non-contiguous sections of land, located within the Shasta-Trinity National Forest northeast of Mount Shasta. The elevation on the Property ranges from approximately 5,000 feet to nearly 8,400 feet above sea level and comprises much of Ash Creek Butte. The headwaters of Antelope Creek is on the Property which is a significant watercourse within the Klamath River Basin. Headwaters portions of Trout Creek, Swamp Creek, and Gravel Creek, tributaries of the McCloud River cross the Property. The McCloud River flows into Shasta Lake, a principal source of California's water supply.

With an elevation range that spans more than 3,000' and encompasses north, east, south, and west facing slopes, the Property will preserve outstanding opportunities for lateral and upward migration of these animals as they adapt to climate change. The Property's connectivity to other public lands and conserved areas provides linkages to abundant water, opportunities for upslope migration, and wildlife refugia within a relatively intact landscape that is showing slower rates of climate change than other parts of the state and is identified as a critical nexus within the "least cost corridor" for functional habitat connectivity.

The Property consists of an assemblage of conifer ecosystems that reflect the elevational gradient, including relatively natural stands of ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, white fir, red fir, lodgepole pine, and subalpine conifer forest. These ecosystems contain a high diversity of species, ages, and forest structures, as well as significant stands of montane chaparral, montane hardwood, and montane riparian vegetation. The Property will ensure this well-managed forest is protected forever through management intended to reduce fuel loads while restoring and maintaining a diverse, resilient forest with heterogeneous structure and more, older, large trees as well as snags and down-woody debris for habitat value. Forest management will be guided by habitat related goals in all silviculture and assure timber harvest cannot exceed 25 percent of the beginning forest inventory per decade so that carbon stocks are protected and enhanced.

Approximately 2,670± acres (35%) of the Property will be managed as Special Habitat Management Zones for the conservation of sensitive and rare habitat types, including wetlands, wet meadows, vernal pools, springs, aspen groves, riparian habitat areas and chaparral. Within the Special Habitat Management Zones, the identified habitats will be maintained, restored and enhanced in alignment with Habitat Enhancement Plans approved by CDFW.

The diversity of the Property's habitats supports up to 237 wildlife species, including 25 special status plant and animal species. Moreover, there is suitable habitat for 4 endemic, 36 rare, and 42 climate vulnerable plant and animal species as well. An Areas of Conservation Emphasis (ACE III) analysis shows that more than 75 percent of the Property ranks 4.0 or above for biodiversity at the state level. Special status wildlife and plant species are known to occur on or within two miles of the Property, including American badger, Cascades frog, long-eared myotis, North American porcupine, northern goshawk, obscure bumblebee, Oregon snowshoe hare, Pacific marten, prairie falcon, Sierra Nevada red fox, silver-haired bat, southern long-toed salamander, willow flycatcher, Pacific fisher, northern goshawk, American pine marten, grey wolf, and McCloud River red band trout. There are 11 special status plant species known to occur on or near the Property including little-leaved huckleberry, snow fleabane daisy, Cascade alpine campion, and Oregon sedge.

The Property's large, healthy tree stands have the capacity to store atmospheric carbon to mitigate global warming. Stewardship under the purposed easement will help maintain climate resilient forests that will be better able to withstand natural disturbance and stressors brought about by climate change.

Further, the conservation easement permanently establishes non-motorized public access on the Property, subject to Landowner control for fire risks and other hazards, complementing the world class recreation enjoyed by residents and visitors on Mt. Shasta. Along with continued economic uses and employment opportunities afforded by this project, this enhanced public access benefits the disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities in Siskiyou County.

The Property is within the Mt. Shasta Headwaters Forest Conceptual Area Protection Plan (2015), which encompasses approximately 3.1 million acres of land in the forest-dominated watersheds that feed the Sacramento River. It is within the North Coast and Klamath area designated by SWAP and this conservation easement fulfils several SWAP goals. These include protection of "north Coastal Mixed Evergreen and Montane Conifer Forest, provide protection of habitat suitable for 32 of the SWAPs species of greatest conservation need, and provide protection for SWAP focal species in the Cascade and Modoc Plateau.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be protected according to the terms and conditions of the conservation easement. The Property will continue to be owned and managed by the landowner for sustainable timber harvesting and enhancement of watershed, wildlife, fishery and plant resources, subject to the provisions of the easement. The Pacific Forest Trust will be responsible for the long-term monitoring and enforcement of the easement according to the terms and conditions of the WCB grant agreement. Prior to closing, PFT will be required to provide WCB with a baseline conditions report documenting the current conditions of the Property and a monitoring protocol describing how monitoring will occur. PFT holds conservation

easements over approximately 115,000 acres and has staff dedicated to monitoring and enforcement of easement terms.

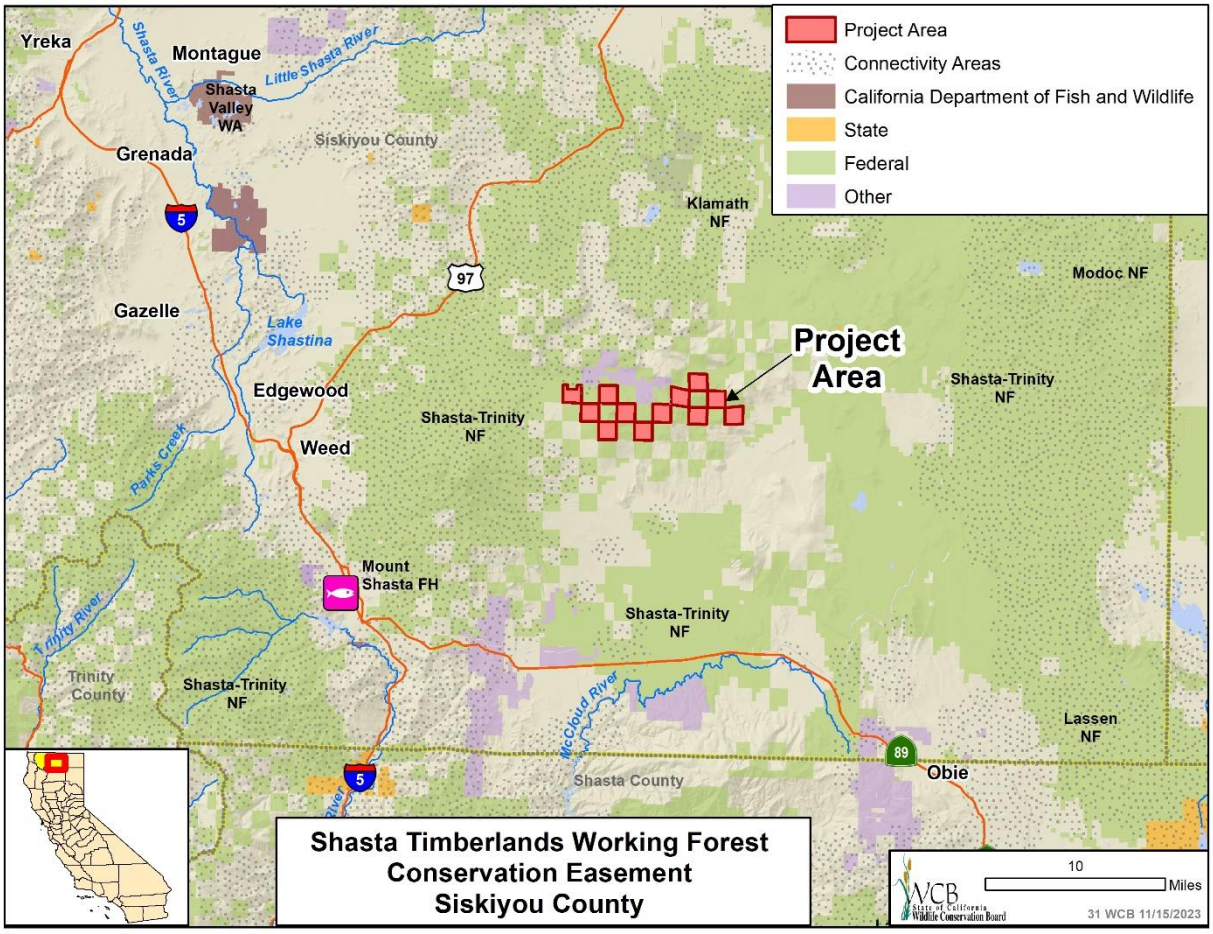
PROJECT FUNDING
The DGS approved fair market value is $5,697,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$5,697,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$5,697,000

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
Yreka
Montague
Shasta River
Little Shasta River
Shasta Valley WA
Siskiyou County
Grenada
5
Klamath NF
97
Modoc NF
Gazelle
Lake Shastina
Project Area
Edgewood
Shasta-Trinity NF
Weed
Parks Creek
Mount Shasta FH
Trinity River
Shasta-Trinity NF
Trinity County
Shasta-Trinity NF
McCloud River
Lassen NF
89
Obie
Shasta County
5
Shasta Timberlands Working Forest Conservation Easement
Siskiyou County
10
Miles
WCB
State of California
Wildlife Conservation Board
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33. Lone Pine Ranch, Phase III

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $3,925,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Nature Based Solutions Provision [AB179, Sec. 83(a)] for the grant to The Wildlands Conservancy (TWC); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Lone Pine Ranch, Phase III
Project Type:	Fee Title (8,085± acres)
Grantee:	The Wildlands Conservancy
Amount Recommended:	$3,925,000
Funding Partners:	State Coastal Conservancy
County:	Trinity
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.2, A.4, C.1 Objectives: SI 2.5, 3.4

LOCATION

The property (Property) known as Lone Pine Ranch Phase III, is 8,085± acres located in the rural area south of the community of Kettenpom, in rural southern Trinity County. The Property has access from Zenia-Lake Mountain Road which runs southerly along the east side of Kekawaka Creek to the northern portion of the Property.

The Property and the surrounding area is rural, with a landscape consisting of rolling hills, deep valleys, waterways, and forested mountains that host smaller scale private ranches, which has previously been primarily dedicated to cattle grazing, agriculture, and timber uses.

Just one mile west of the Property is the Six Rivers National Forest, which borders the Mendocino National Forest. Approximately 12 miles north is TWC's 3,000-acre Emerald Waters Reserve, and its 5,800-acre Spy Rock Reserve is less than five miles to the south.

Prior WCB acquisitions in the surrounding area include Lone Pine Ranch Phase 1 (2021; 7,479 acres) and Lone Pine Phase II (2022; 10,848 acres). This Property is the final phase. Upon completion of the three acquisitions, TWC will protect over 18 miles of Wild and Scenic Eel River frontage. This frontage will protect the viewshed of the envisioned 320-mile Great Redwood Trail that will run along the former line of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad from Larkspur to Arcata. The trail will meander through portions of the Eel River watershed. The Property is targeted to act as a strategic access point to the trail, which will provide the public recreational opportunities in the form of hiking, camping, bicycling, and equestrian activities.

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

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

According to the DWR mapping tool, the Property is within a SDAC which will benefit from proposed recreation opportunities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The 8,085± acre Property is the northwestern portion of the larger 26,600± acre Lone Pine Ranch property. It is comprised of rolling to steeply sloping rural land above the Eel River and includes several feeder streams, most of which are perennial. It is irregular in shape and includes 24 contiguous parcels. The Property is improved with two rural ranch compounds that each include a variety of structure improvements. Interior access through the ranch is through a network of gravel and dirt interior access roads.

Most of the Property has oak woodlands with some grassland cover on slopes and meadows throughout the Property. Some timberland is found on the Property's eastern edge. Two herds of Roosevelt elk, pacific Fisher, northern Spotted Owls, Western Pond Turtles, and foothill yellow-legged frog are among numerous special status species found on the Property.

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

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
TWC will own, manage, and monitor the Property as a protected nature preserve ensuring that natural resources remain undisturbed and restored for compatible public access and public recreation. Near-term conservation will include improvements to sustainable cattle grazing and ensuring timber harvest only occurs to improve ecological conditions. Other anticipated conservation efforts include invasive species management, wetland and stream protection and restoration, erosion control, improved forest management, and native tree planting. Established in 1995, TWC created a nature preserve system comprised of 25 preserves encompassing over 210,000 thousand acres of diverse mountain, valley, desert, river, and oceanfront landscapes in California, Oregon, and Utah. These preserves are open to the public for passive recreation including camping, hiking, birding, and other compatible uses.

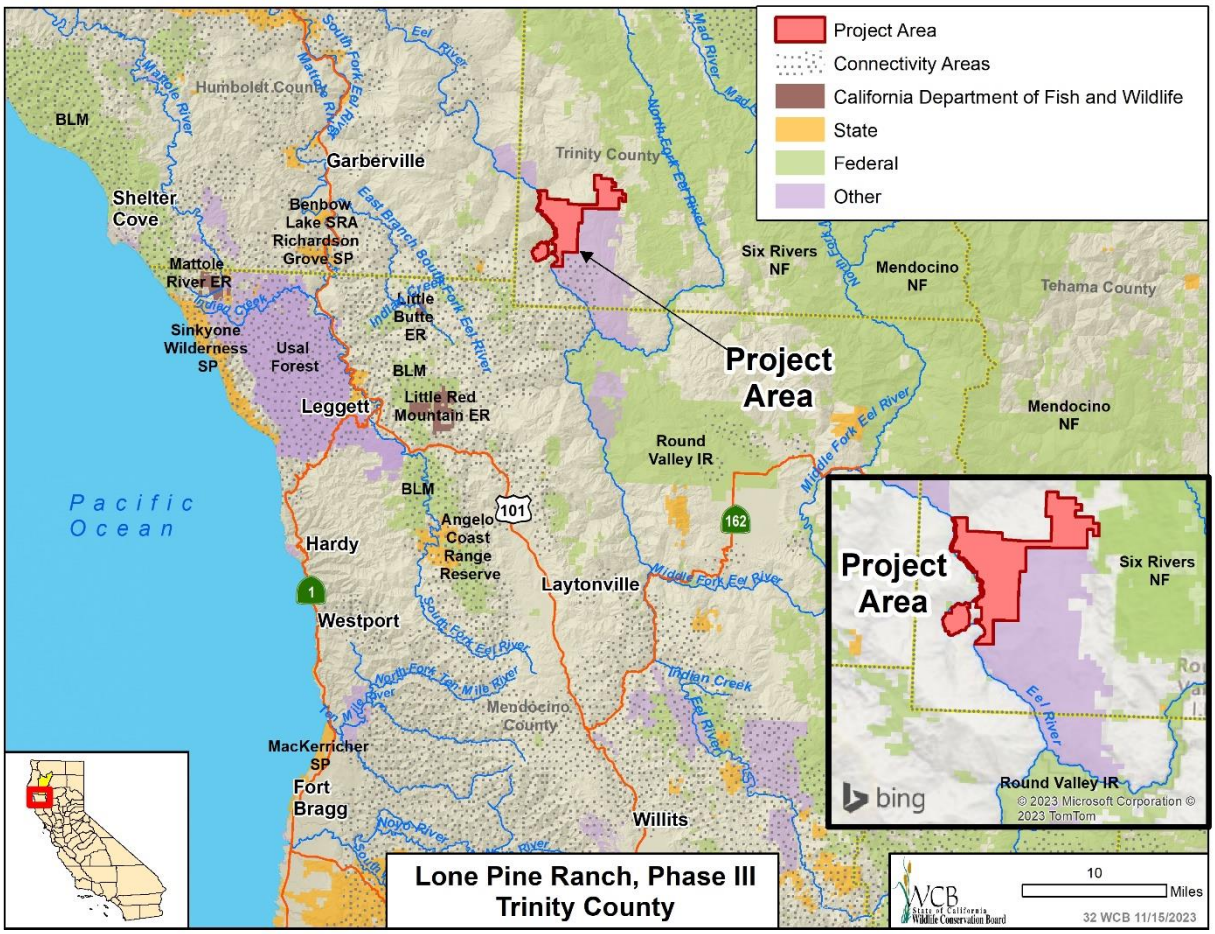
PROJECT FUNDING
The DGS approved fair market value is $7,950,000. and the landowner has agreed to sell at a reduced price of $7,850,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$3,925,000
State Coastal Conservancy	$3,925,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$7,850,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:
- The Honorable Mike McGuire, California State Senator
- The Honorable Jim Wood, California State Assemblymember
- Michael Murphy, Sonoma County Regional Parks Foundation Director
- Jimmy Flat, Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer, Hunters of Color
- Darren Mierau, North Coast Director, California Trout
- Pelayo Alvarez, PhD, California Director, Audubon California
- Julie Evans, Vegetation Program Director, California Native Plant Society
- Steve Hobbs, California State Director, The Conservation Fund
- Caryl Hart, Chair, The Great Redwood Trail Agency Board of Directors

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
Humboldt County
Trinity County
Tehama County
Mendocino County
Garberville
Shelter Cove
Benbow Lake SRA
Richardson Grove SP
Mattole River ER
Sinkyone Wilderness SP
Usal Forest
Little Butte ER
Leggett
Little Red Mountain ER
Hardy
Angelo Coast Range Reserve
Westport
Laytonville
Willits
MacKerricher SP
Fort Bragg
Round Valley IR
Six Rivers NF
Mendocino NF
Project Area
Pacific Ocean
BLM
Lone Pine Ranch, Phase III
Trinity County
10
Miles
32 WCB 11/15/2023
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34. Restoring Biodiversity at Wadulh Dunes

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate $6,813,512 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Nature Based Solutions Provision [AB102, Sec. 85(3)(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:	Restoring Biodiversity at Wadulh Dunes
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Redwood Community Action Agency
Amount Recommended:	$6,813,512
Funding Partners:	California State Coastal Conservancy, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, USFWS, CDFW
Landowner(s):	USFWS, Friends of the Dunes
County:	Humboldt
Program:	Climate Adaptation and Resiliency
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1, C.1 Objectives: SI 1.3, 2.1, 3.4

LOCATION

The Restoring Biodiversity at Wadulh Dunes (Project) covers two properties: a section of the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Wadulh Unit) and the Humboldt Coastal Nature Center. Both areas are collectively known by the Native American name of Wadulh Dunes. The Project area is publicly owned with recreational use open space and is located approximately five miles west of the city of Arcata. A WCB funded acquisition helped to purchase the Humboldt Coastal Nature Center portion of the Project area and is currently managed by the Friends of the Dunes. The properties are located on the northern dune barrier of Humboldt Bay, which protects the Humboldt Bay estuary. The site has been used by the Wiyot people for millennia. Invasive species were introduced or spread on to the site in the 1960s. The Project area is now heavily vegetated by invasive species that have displaced the native dune mat vegetation.

The Wiyot Tribe has been involved with the Project since its inception, helping to identify sensitive cultural resources and management strategies, and planning to continue stewardship of this special place.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

European beachgrass has invaded the entire foredune within the Project area. As a result, the dunes, which are naturally semistable, have become completely stabilized. These conditions are maladapted to climate change, as stabilized dunes prevent sediment migration between beach, foredune, and backdune. Foredunes that are stabilized through heavy infestation of European beachgrass also have greatly reduced biodiversity. Along the backdunes, the yellow bush lupine infestation is enriching soils with nitrogen, resulting in secondary invasions of invasive annual grasses. Native dune plants are adapted to low nutrient soils and are not competitive in enriched soils. A restored, biodiverse dune system that

allows for such sediment migration will provide long-term adaptation to sea level rise. A resilient coastline is also needed to protect cultural resources and infrastructure located on or adjacent to the properties, and to provide protection of the Humboldt Bay estuary.

The goal of the Project is to restore dune function and biodiversity to the dunes, resulting in a resilient system that is self-maintaining. The Project will restore both native plant communities (dune mat) and the geomorphic processes that sustain them. The Project will result in a more resilient coastline to extreme events and the ability to migrate with sea level rise without the loss of the protective foredune. The Project will also restore biodiversity to 350 acres of degraded dunes at either end of a previously restored 3.5-mile stretch of dunes, resulting in a contiguous reach of 6.5 miles of restored dunes.

The objective of the Project is two-fold: (1) increase climate resiliency along three miles of a coastal dune barrier protecting the Humboldt Bay estuary and (2) restore biodiversity to a severely degraded dune system. To achieve this objective, the Project will: (1) remove invasive species infestation from 350 acres of dunes, (2) revegetate with nursery plants grown from seed or wild-harvested from adjacent restored dunes, and (3) restore underlying dune processes which confer resilience through faster recovery from extreme events and reconnect the beach-foredune-backdune sands allowing for migration with sea level rise.

Invasive plant species will be removed using manual methods, heavy equipment, and herbicide, followed by removal of accumulated duff, planting of native dune mat species propagated in the nursery, and planting of American dunegrass and beach bluegrass harvested from adjacent restored dunes. On the Wadulh site, the herbicide imazapyr will be used to kill concentrated stands of European beachgrass along the foredunes where heavy equipment cannot be used, and manual labor resources are too scarce and cost prohibitive. The majority of the Project (90% of the site) will utilize manual and mechanical removal.

WCB funding will not support the purchase or application of herbicide.

Once completed, the Project will benefit the disadvantaged community of Manila (DWR DAC Mapping Tool) located in the southern portion of the Project area by providing a buffer from sea level rise and extreme events that could impact the community.

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 Redwood Community Action Agency 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, Redwood Community Action

Agency 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	$395,600	$904,121	$1,299,721
Implementation	$5,119,717	$4,366,435	$9,486,152
Propagation	---	$1,886,032	$1,886,032
Monitoring	$300,000	$209,000	$509,000
Outreach	$5,000	$88,412	$93,412
Equipment/supplies	$70,060	$526,555	$596,615
Indirect costs	$334,097	$350,676	$684,773
Contingency	$589,038	---	$589,038
Total	$6,813,512	$8,331,231	$15,144,743

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project management: Administration and management of multiple field crews and all field efforts.
- Implementation: Removal for invasive plants and site revegetation with native plants.
- Monitoring: Measurement of the extent to which the Project meets both climate resilience and biodiversity objectives. Includes cultural monitoring under a programmatic agreement that dictates treatment around a cultural site.
- Outreach: Presentations at public meetings, online project information, and docent-led walks on the Project site open to the public.
- Equipment/supplies: Purchase of materials and equipment necessary for implementation work.
- 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

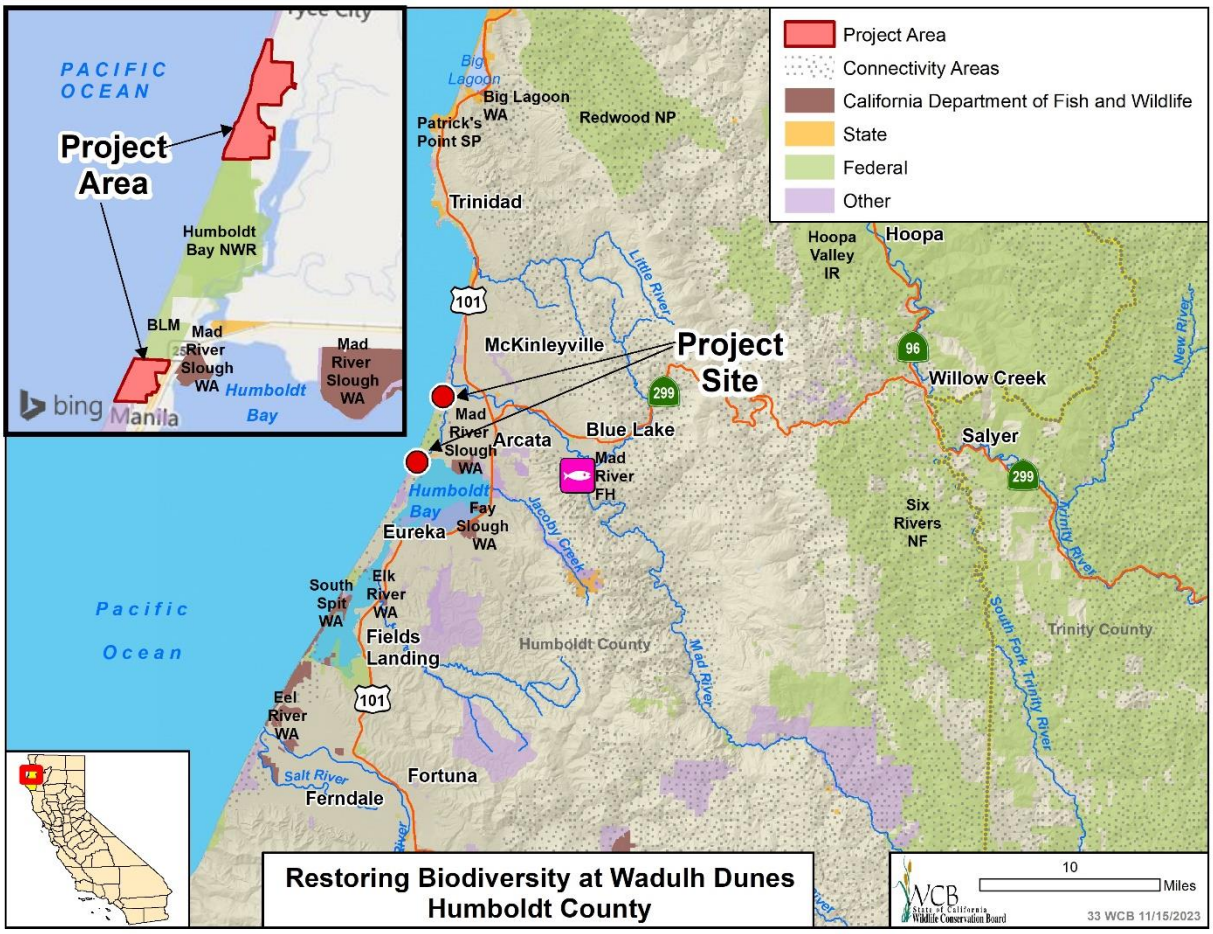
Opposition:
- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
Both projects have completed CEQA.

Within the USFWS-owned Wadulh Unit of the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge, USFWS completed an Environmental Assessment for this Project and adopted a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, and the State Coastal Conservancy, acting as Lead Agency under CEQA, is using the project FONSI as the CEQA document pursuant to the provisions of CEQA and California Code of Regulations section 15221.

Within the Humboldt Coastal Nature Center, the Humboldt County Planning and Building Department, acting as Lead Agency has prepared a MND pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

Staff considered the FONSI and 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.



35. Coastal Mendocino Pollinator Habitat Enhancement

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,521,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision [AB102, 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:	Coastal Mendocino Pollinator Habitat Enhancement
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Mendocino Land Trust
Amount Recommended:	$1,521,000
Funding Partners:	Bureau of Land Management, Community Foundation of Mendocino County, State Parks, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Volunteers
Landowner(s):	Bureau of Land Management, Mendocino Land Trust, California State Parks
County:	Mendocino
Program:	Monarch Butterfly and Pollinator Rescue
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1, B.5 Objectives: SI 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 4.2

LOCATION

The Coastal Mendocino Pollinator Habitat Enhancement (Project) will be implemented at five sites along the southern Mendocino coast, near Albion, Manchester, and Point Arena. The first site is at Navarro Point Preserve, a 56-acre preserve owned and managed by the Mendocino Land Trust (MLT). The landscape is comprised of coastal terrace prairie and is home to many native wildflowers. The second and third sites are located at Manchester State Park (MSP), a 5,272-acre California State Park with 18,000 feet of protected coastline. The diverse landscape at MSP is made up of coastal dunes and prairie. The fourth site is the Bureau of Land Management's Point Arena-Stornetta Unit, which consists of 1,665 acres of public land and is a part of the California Coastal National Monument. The fifth site is Pelican Bluffs Preserve, a 73-acre preserve owned and managed by the MLT. Within the Pelican Bluffs Preserve, Peregrine falcons, Bishop pine forests, and many native coastal prairie wildflowers flourish.

The Project is located within a DAC Census Tract and partially within a SDAC Census Tract (per the DWR DAC mapping tool). MLT has conducted initial tribal outreach to the Manchester-Point Arena Band of Pomo.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project will restore pollinator habitat along the southern Mendocino County coast with a particular focus on restoring habitat for the federally endangered Behren's silverspot butterfly (BSB). BSBs are endemic to this region, and their only larval host plant is the early blue violet. Historically, early blue violets existed in highly dense patches on the coastal prairie, but fire suppression, development, and

the heavy spread of invasive grasses have replaced the native habitat of many pollinators, including the BSB. These factors have limited the availability of nectar plants for native pollinators and reduced the density of early blue violet to numbers that are insufficient to support a sustaining population of BSBs.

To enable BSB recovery, this Project will restore a combined 53.4 acres of coastal prairie habitat, with a focus of planting highly dense patches of early blue violets, at Navarro Point, MSP, Point Arena-Stornetta Unit, and Pelican Bluffs. Additionally, 47 acres of invasive European beachgrass will be removed at MSP, allowing the native dune mat to reestablish. The restoration of these sites will not only provide high-quality pollinator habitat but will also provide habitat connectivity between these sites for BSBs and other native pollinators. The Project will also expand local seed collection and propagation of early blue violets for future restoration work. Lastly, surveying for BSB and local pollinators will occur at each site to gain a better understanding of their population size, distribution, life cycles, and habitat requirements, which is crucial for developing effective conservation strategies.

The second component of this Project is the captive rearing and release program for BSB. This program includes collecting female BSBs from the wild in late summer, hatching the eggs, rearing the caterpillars to pupae, and releasing approximately 50-200 butterflies onto suitable and improved violet habitats the following summer, each year for two years. Due to the small known population size of this species and the unpredictable nature of environmental conditions, the efforts to captive rear and release BSBs are critical for preventing extinction. Ultimately, this Project is working towards recovering the BSB to the point where it can be delisted as a federally endangered insect.

The Project will use an integrated approach to invasive species removal at MSP. The European beachgrass on MSP's dune site is near 100 percent cover. To eradicate the European beachgrass, Imazapyr will be utilized in conjunction with a vegetable oil adjuvant. Herbicide treatment will be applied via a backpack sprayer to avoid non-target species and spraying will only occur when no rain is forecasted within the next 24 hours, when winds are sustained under ten miles per hour, and when nectar species are out of bloom. Hand treatment and pile burning will be used to minimize the amount of herbicide used at the Project site, and as follow up treatments. At MSP's coastal prairie site, herbicide will also be used. This site is composed of 90 percent cover of non-native grasses. At this site, State Parks have previously utilized intensive rotational grazing, mowing, and re-planting in the coastal prairie as a non-chemical method to control invasive grasses, but this was ineffective as non-native grasses were replaced with secondary non-native invaders. To recover the native prairie community, Imazapyr will be used to control non-native grasses and triclopyr salt will be added to control broadleaf secondary invaders. This site will follow the same spraying conditions as MSP's dune site.

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 Mendocino Land Trust has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the properties, including management of the Project. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, Mendocino Land Trust 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	$133,999	---	$133,999
Restoration	$774,000	$178,643	$952,643
Captive Rearing	$210,000	$104,180	$314,180
Surveying	$84,400	$18,484	$102,884
Indirect Costs	$180,340	---	$180,340
Contingency	$138,261	---	$138,261
Total	$1,521,000	$301,307	$1,822,307

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Technical and administrative services associated with performing and completing the work as well as scheduling meetings, administering subcontracts, invoicing and payments, contractor oversight, and reporting.
- Restoration: Invasive plant management, planting of native nectar plants, and dense plantings of early blue violets.
- Captive Rearing: Captive rearing and release of Behren’s silverspot butterfly.
- Surveying: Pollinator and early blue violet surveying. New transects will be documented through ArcGIS and shared between surveyors and volunteers.
- 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.

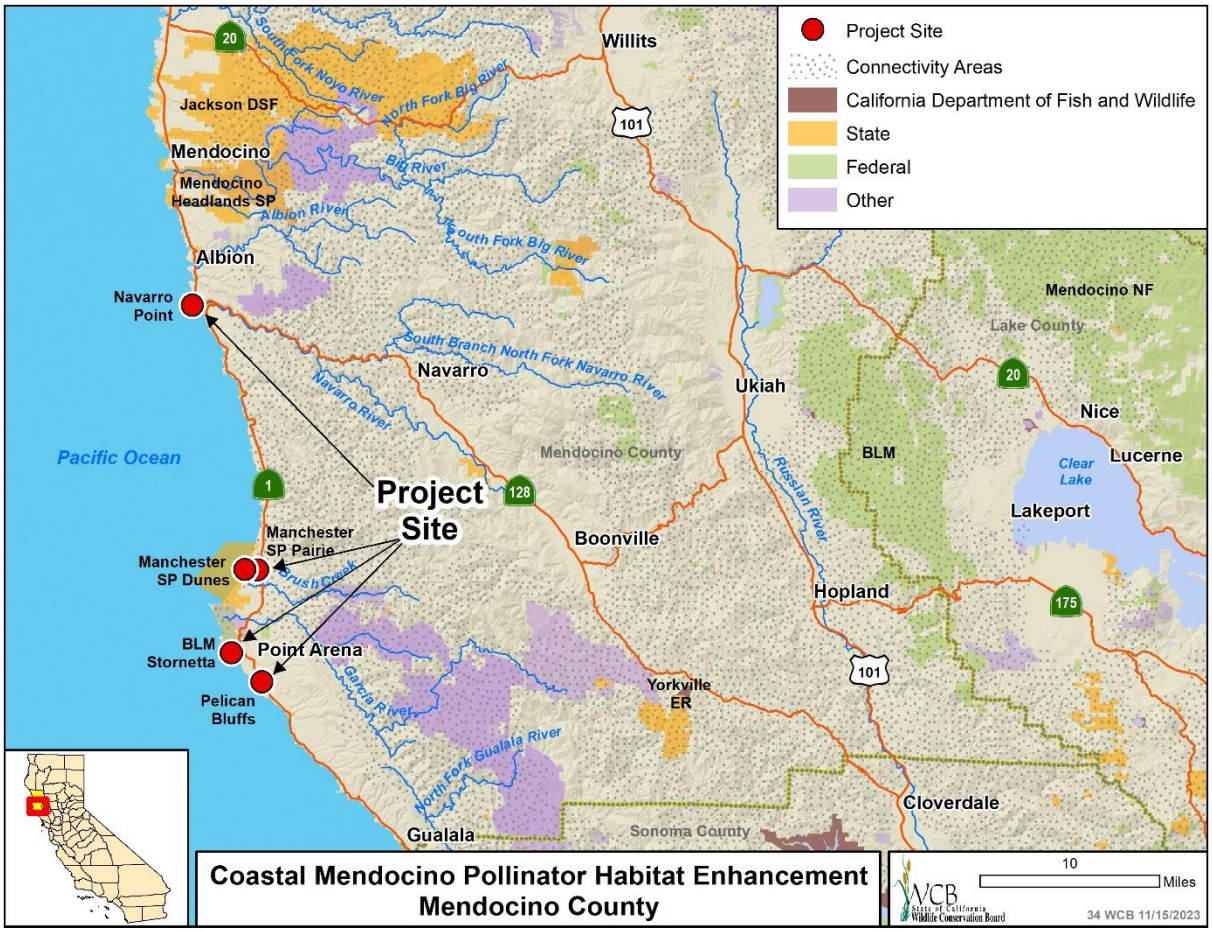
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:
- Senator Mike McGuire, California State Senate, 2nd District
- Assemblymember Jim Wood, California State Assembly, 2nd District
- Paul Andersen, City Manager, City of Point Arena
- Nancy R. Morin, President, Dorothy King Young Chapter California Native Plant Society
- Billy Arana, President, Arena Cove Stewards

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, as a minor alteration of public topographical features, Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, consisting of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land and/or vegetation, and Section 15306, Class 6, Information Collection, consisting of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



Herbicide use questionnaire

Please describe current vegetation conditions and composition at project site. Provide a description or list of the dominant native and invasive plant species, any rare or sensitive species, percent cover of invasive species, and if they occur in monocultures or mixed communities with natives.

Site 1: Site one is a monoculture, with 46 acres composed of almost 100% cover of European beach grass (*Ammophila arenaria*). There is very little native plant composition with only a small occurrences of beach sagewort (*Artemisia pycnocephala*) and coyote bush (*Baccaharis piluaris)*(Photo 1). As the site recovers from invasion, the native plants recover and repopulate with species indicative of paleo- and active dune systems, including yellow sand verbena (*Abronia latifolia*), rare pink sand verbena (*Abronia umbellata*), *Artemisia*, beach gumweed (*Grindelia stricta*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), seapink (*Armeria maritima*), and other native forbs (Photo 2).

Photo 1: Proposed treatment area, monoculture *Ammophila*

Photo 2: Proposed retreatment area with 2 previous treatments (<60% *Ammophila*)

Site 2: 2 acres composed of 90% cover of nonnative grasses (*Holcus lannatus, Agrostis capillaris*, and *Anthoxanthum odoratum*) with a composition of 10-20% non-native forbs (invasive plantain, dandelion, and thistles) and 5% native forbs (*Achillea millefolium, Eschscholzia californica, Horsakia, Iris douglasiana, solidago spp., and others)* (Photo 3).

Photo 3: Site 2, dominated by nonnative grasses

Please describe which herbicides and adjuvants will be used, including tank mix concentrations, application rates, and timing of application. Where applicable, identify selective herbicides that will be used to target specific plant life forms (grasses, broadleaf, woody, etc.).

Project will utilize 1.5-2% solution imazapyr (likely brand name Habitat) with 1.5-2% vegetable oil adjuvant. Imazapyr has been used successfully at this concentration to reduce European Beachgrass (*Ammophila arenaria*) in other National Parks, State Parks, and CDFW projects (Pickart, 2021). In 46 acres, where *Ammophila* is around 100% cover, application rate of the concentrated product is expected to be 0.75 gallons/acre. Application rates in re-treatment sites (86 acres, reference map) will be significantly lower, estimated to be on average 0.19-0.08 gal concentrate/acre, for spot treatment (Table 1).

Imazapyr is being utilized in this project specifically for its relative non-toxicity in aquatic and riparian zones. With that in mind, SMCD uses the following restrictions to apply herbicide on the landscape:

a. Spray only when winds are sustained under 10mph,
b. Spray only if no rain is forecasted within 24hrs of application,

c. Additional PPE is used for staff, such as googles, coveralls, and gloves.

This chemical will be used to control *Ammophila* and its secondary invaders; sea rocket (*Cakile spp.),* New Zealand spinach (*Tetragonia tetragonoides*), *Lupinus arboreus*, and others. Based on previous herbicide work, each re-treatment area requires 30-40% less herbicide than the initial treatment and therefore, after the initial treatments, herbicide use will be minimal and in many cases hand removal will be sufficient to maintain the area.

Year	Treatment Phase	Oz Imazapyr / acre @ 1.5%	% reduction
2020	1	74.95	
2021	2	23.90	31.89%
2022	3	10.41	43.56%

For **Site 2**, where SMCD is proposing a prairie restoration pilot project of 2.4 acres of completely infested nonnative grassland, SMCD will be spraying 1.5% imazapyr to control non-native grasses and adding 0.5% triclopyr salt (likely brand name Vastlan, due to its relative safety to workers) to control broadleaf secondary invaders like bush lupine (*Lupinus arboreus*) and others. SMCD has chosen this herbicide, like imazapyr, because of its reduced impacts on wildlife and groundwater. Application rate of the concentrated product is expected to be 0.25 gal/acre for triclopyr and 0.75 gal/acre for imazapyr.

If your project will use glyphosate, have other herbicides been considered to eliminate glyphosate usage? If not, why was glyphosate chosen as the preferred herbicide?

- ***If your project includes the use of a glyphosate product, have safer formulations (i.e., those registered for aquatic applications) or alternative herbicides been considered to reduce the potential for non-target environmental impacts? Please provide justification for the formulations and tank mixes selected as the preferred approach.***
- ***If adjuvant(s) will be used in this project, are safer products that do not contain nonylphenol (often listed as "alkylphenol ethoxylate" on labels) being used to reduce the potential for non-target environmental impacts?***

Glyphosate will not be used in this project. SMCD has attempted to use glyphosate in 2018 but found that it was not effective at controlling *Ammophila*.

Adjuvant used does not contain nonylphenol.

Please describe any non-chemical treatments that will be used to minimize the amount and/or concentration of herbicides used at the project site. What negative effects might these treatments have on the biological community?

Site 1: Hand treatment and pile burning will be used to minimize the amount of herbicide used at the project site, and as follow up treatments, though not within the scope of this grant. Previous work within the study area has shown that after initial treatment, herbicide application was

reduced by 30-40% (Table 1). SMCD has used hand removal and pile burning to control secondary invaders and re-treat areas.

These treatments all have similar negative effects: they remove non-native vegetation that pollinators, small mammals, and other wildlife utilize on the landscape and can be slow to recolonize with natives. Herbicide has been chosen as the best initial treatment type because other, non-chemical treatments require high intensity, long-duration workforces (weeks to months of treatment versus days of treatment with herbicide- Table 1) that can have a detrimental impact on sensitive coastal soils, native forbs, and impact endangered species that live adjacent to project sites, including the Point Arena Mountain Beaver and Western Snowy Plover, as well as ground-disturbance impacts on potential cultural sites. The impacts of high intensity, long-duration vegetation work in these sensitive biological communities and cultural landscapes cannot be overstated, causing soil erosion, plant death, soil compaction, denudation, and additional hours of human disturbance in delicate ecosystems.

Please describe all herbicide application measures the project will employ to reduce negative impacts to water quality, non-target plant species, pollinators, and other wildlife species.

SMCD is building on years of research on invasive plant control with our integrated pest management practices. Using the expertise of natural resources subject-matter experts, US Fish and Wildlife species experts, and licensed Pest Control Advisors, SMCD has developed and implemented strict practices to ensure that our herbicide application is as safe and minimal-risk as possible. The following are measures that are part of our current application practices that will be implemented into this project:

Utilizing aquatic-approved herbicides when there is a potential of dry riparian areas,

a. Spray only when winds are sustained under 10mph,
b. Hand treatment around areas with sensitive biological concerns and to remove accumulated biomass,
c. Spray only if no rain is forecasted within 24hrs of application,
d. Nonnative nectar species (like *Lupinus arboreus*) are sprayed only when out of bloom,
e. Native plants flagged or otherwise marked for avoidance,
f. Handheld backpack sprayers with adjustable nozzles only,
    a. Any plant over hip height is treated with other methods to prevent spray drift,
g. Treatment areas flagged to apply herbicide only where desired,
h. Consistent oversight by qualified specialist during application to ensure that best practices are being implemented.

Would removal of invasive weeds within the project area be possible using only non-chemical methods (hand-pulling, mowing, burning, etc.)? Please describe whether biocontrol has been considered and why or why not it was incorporated in to the IPM approach for this project.

Removal of invasive weeds within **Site 1** is theoretically possible, but practically infeasible. A representative site in MacKerricher State Park Ten Mile Dunes Natural Preserve was treated using only non-chemical methods (hand removal and pile burning of biomass.) To treat 55 acres

of *Ammophila* with similar cover as the project site (90-100%), SMCD has performed 10-15 retreatments since 2000 and spent approximately $10 million. Hand treatment is effective, but very slow and with rhizominous plants like *Ammophi*la can take decades of consistent treatment to eradicate. Due to the sensitivity of dune habitats, site revisitation is extremely detrimental to wildlife and native plant species that are trying to recover within the footprint of the treated areas. For Site 1, though hand treatment was heavily considered and is still the treatment of choice for retreatments and spot treatments, herbicide provides a less invasive, more cost-efficient, and safer initial treatment for the environment.

It should be noted that SMCD is considering implementing prescribed fire as a method of addressing accumulated biomass in Site 1, which will increase the effectiveness of subsequent herbicide treatments, accelerate native plant recovery, and reduce the overall amount of herbicide applied to the landscape. However, due to the novelty of this approach within State Parks, cost analysis for this method is not included in this document.

For Site 2, SMCD has utilized intensive rotational grazing, mowing, and re-planting in the coastal prairie as a non-chemical method to control invasive grasses. While these methods were effective in reducing nonnative grass thatch (the dead grass material underneath live stalks) and in controlling *Holcus lanatus and* was able to preserve very small areas of remnant native community, it was completely ineffective in a) reducing overall populations of nonnatives (*Holcus* was replaced by *Agrostis capillaris* and nonnative forbs) and b) recovering any native prairie community. Re-planted *Viola adunca* in Manchester SP have a survival rate of <0.5%. This is why a pilot project (stage 0 approach) is being requested.

The non-herbicide alternative for this project that was considered was tarping, which was determined to be cost-prohibitive, adds plastics to the landscape, and is potentially harmful to any native seed bank or invertebrates (due to high temperatures underneath the tarps). Even after tarping to kill standing grasses, manual removal at a rate of almost 100% cover would be required to remove resprouts and manage dormant seed banks, which would be both extremely labor intensive (over 5,000hrs) and ineffective in removing rhizominous grasses and therefore, an unachievable method. At this time, labor sources that could perform work that would take the length of time (approx. 3.5wks/year assuming a 12-person crew) required to treat this area are very few, with most resources allocated to fire/fuel reduction work and only a few short weeks per year can be allotted to restoration projects.

Due to the extreme sensitivity of the coastal dune and prairie biological community, biocontrol was not considered for this project. Coastal communities are adapted to nutrient-poor soil conditions with low compaction and high exposure to temperature and humidity differentials. The addition of any cover crop (even sterile seed) has the potential to alter already modified soil chemistry and is contrary to the goals of this restoration project.

Please provide a total cost estimate for using only non-chemical removal methods for the invasive species where this approach would be possible. Please estimate both the project cost and long-term management costs, including an estimate of any additional personnel or contracts required.

The following tables have been generated from a production worksheet that SMCD collects each day of work and from past contracts, with the rate of $65/person/hour. This rate is competitive and expected to increase to $75/person/hour by 2025.

Site 1: *Ammophila* removal (46 acres @ 100% cover), re-treatment (86 acres @ <60% cover)

	Hand Removal	Herbicide Removal
Materials (herbicide, tools)	**$1,180**	**$15,851**
Implementation cost (*does not include contractor overhead @~10%)*	54 hrs / acre* @ $65/hr = **$161,460** 48hrs/acre @ $65/hr = **$268,320** Plus 2 retreatments (40% total) = **$747,817.2**	6.3 hrs/acre @ $65/hr = **$18,590** 5.7 hrs/acre @ $65hr = **$31,863** Plus 2 retreatments (40% total)= **$90,000**
DPR Personnel Costs**	551 hrs @ $74/hr= **$962,736**	**$222,167**
# retreatments	10- 15	4
Long-term management costs @ 1 retreatment/year	**$17,117,330**	**$235,763**
Total Cost	**$1,711,733**	**$328,018**

**assuming a full contractor crew of 12 people/day. Costs may increase if crew size is reduced.*

***does not include salary match*

Site 2: Prairie restoration pilot project (2.4 acres)

	Tarping and manual removal	Herbicide Removal
Materials	35 32'x100' 6mil silage tarps @ 269.99 = **$9446.65** 13,068 J Hook rebar anchors @88.00/50pk = **$22,999.68** 10rubber mallets @ 18.13 = **181.30** **= $32,627.63**	3 shovels @ 38.25 = **$114.75** 5 trowels @ 10.00 = **$50.00** 15g Imazapyr @ 84.80/g = **$1,272.00** 5 backpack sprayers @ 100.00 = **$500.00** 5g dye @ 58.78/g = **$293.90** 15g surfactant @ 45.03/g = $**675.45** 5g triclopyr @ 66.60/g = **$333.00** **= $3,239.10**
DPR Personnel costs	**$81,588.24**	**$67,990.20**
Contractor costs for plant propagation and seed collection	$100,000	$100,000
Labor crew	5000hr @ $65/hr = **$325,000** 20% overhead = **$65,000** **=$390,000**	
Long term management costs	*Not known for pilot project*	*Not known for pilot project*
TOTAL	**$504,215.87**	**$171,229.3**

***estimate does not include CCC time for planting*

***assuming a full contractor crew of 12 people/day. Costs may increase if crew size is reduced.*

For California Department of Fish and Wildlife owned/managed properties only:

Have you worked with CDFW's Pest Control Advisor to develop an integrated past management plan that uses the safest and most effective herbicide formulation(s) and application method(s) for your project?

Pickart, A.J. *Ammophila* Invasion Ecology and Dune Restoration on the West Coast of North America. *Diversity* **2021**, *13*, 629. https://doi.org/10.3390/d1312062

SERA (Syracuse Environmental Research Associates, Inc.). 2004. Imazapyr – Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment – Final Report, prepared for USDA, Forest Service, December 18, 2004

36. Gray Lodge Auto Tour Phase II

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $4,200,000 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:	Gray Lodge Auto Tour Phase II
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Amount Recommended:	$4,200,000
Funding Partners:	CDFW, Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Landowner(s):	California Department of Fish and Game
County:	Butte
Program:	Inland Wetlands Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.3, 3.4

LOCATION

The Gray Lodge Auto Tour Phase II (Project) is located at CDFW's Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, located five miles west of Gridley in Butte County.

The State of California acquired the Gray Lodge Gun Club in 1931 and renamed the property the Gray Lodge Refuge. From 1931 through 1952, the area was maintained as a sanctuary for waterfowl. In 1953, public hunting for waterfowl and pheasants was initiated and in 1970 the area was renamed to its current name, the Gray Lodge Wildlife Area (Gray Lodge).

Today, Gray Lodge consists of over 9,000 acres of seasonal, semi-permanent, and permanent wetlands, riparian habitat, wetland-associated uplands, and wildlife food plots. The area provides critical habitat for over 200 species of birds and numerous fish, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals, including several special-status species. Gray Lodge is one of the most important wetland areas in the Pacific Flyway and supports up to 1 million ducks and 100,000 geese during the winter.

This Project is the second and final phase of an effort to improve wetland habitat and public access along the Gray Lodge Auto Tour Route. In 2019, WCB allocated $1,410,000 to enhance 577 acres of managed wetlands along the Gray Lodge Auto Tour Route.

The Project is within and benefits several DAC Census Tracts (per the DWR DAC mapping tool). The Project will benefit the DACs by providing increased recreational opportunities including wildlife viewing and hunting.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The wetlands within the Project area were developed in the 1940s. Since that time, routine management activities and as needed maintenance to the water conveyance infrastructure has been conducted by Gray Lodge staff. However, no comprehensive wetland enhancement project has been completed in these fields. As a result, these wetlands do not meet their potential to provide high-quality wildlife habitat.

Some of the wetlands have substantial topographic variation, limiting water distribution and drainage capabilities. The wetlands cannot be irrigated efficiently or effectively during the summer to promote moist-soil vegetation. Summer irrigations can also cause mosquito production due to poor drainage capabilities. The wetlands also lack functioning swale systems, and the existing water control structures are degraded and lack capacity to convey adequate amounts of water effectively and efficiently.

To restore these wetland fields, a topographic survey will be conducted, and a final engineering design will be prepared for habitat improvements within the Project area. Select areas within the wetlands will be recontoured, while new levees, swales and potholes will be constructed to improve wetland management capabilities and create topographic conditions that will support a mix of open water and emergent vegetation. Swales and potholes will be linked to water control structures to provide positive drainage and prevent areas of standing water that can lead to mosquito production. Islands, loafing bars, and/or submerged benches will be constructed to increase habitat quality and diversity.

Sections of existing levees and ditches will be regraded or improved and degraded water control structures will be replaced in all the wetland fields. These new structures will improve operational flexibility, water conveyance, and water and vegetation management capabilities. Access roads to newly installed water control structures will be graveled to provide year-round access for maintenance and management activities.

Select areas along the auto-tour route’s levee side slope will be improved to reduce sharp drop-offs and provide improved public safety. Auto turnouts will be installed along the auto-tour route to provide designated areas to safely pull over, stop and observe wildlife. Security fencing will be installed around one lift pump and three wells that work to provide water to the auto tour route, to decrease vandalism and increase security of the wildlife area.

Public access improvements will be completed within Field 94 and Field 58. Field 94 supports a rice harvest lease, and after rice harvest, the field is used for duck hunting. The Project will install eight concrete hunting blinds to improve hunting opportunities within Field 94. Field 58 only has one wetland unit that supports mobility impaired hunting at Gray Lodge. The Project will designate Field 58 as a mobility-impaired hunting field, and two hunting blinds specifically designed for use

by mobility-impaired hunters will be installed, with associated paths leading from an existing parking area.

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

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

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	$156,134	---	$156,134
Construction	$3,397,876	$21,000	$3,418,876
Indirect Costs	$284,321	$227,000	$511,321
Contingency	$361,669	---	$361,669
Total	$4,200,000	$248,000	$4,448,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

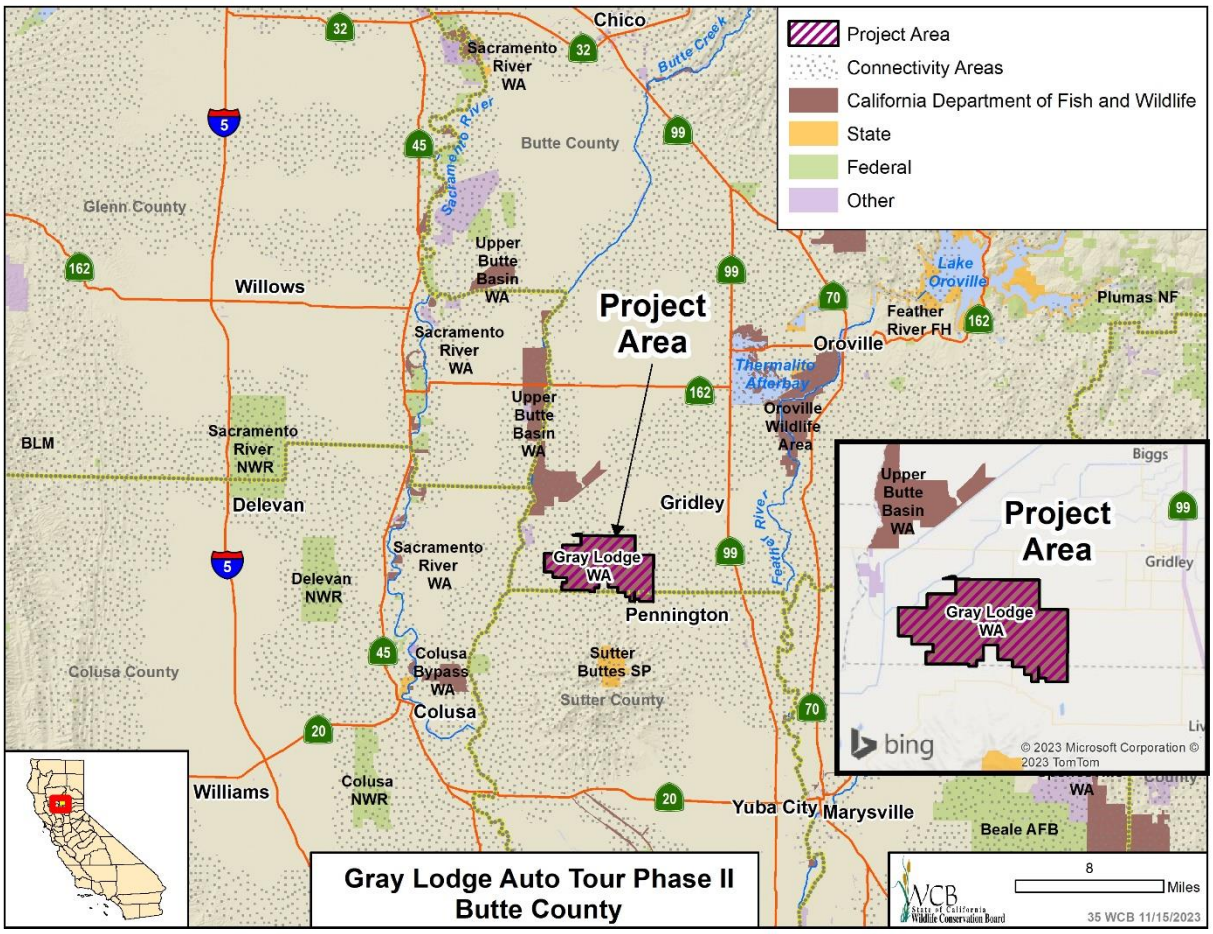
- Project Management: Engineering survey, restoration design, construction management, and invoicing.
- Construction: Mobilization, site prep, earthwork for wetlands units and levee improvements, purchase and install new water control structures, purchase and install access road gravel, purchase and install pre-cast hunting blinds, purchase and install fencing, revegetation of disturbed areas.
- Indirect Costs: 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

Opposition:
- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15302, Class 2, as replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities; Section 15303, Class 3, as construction of new, small facilities or structures; and Section 15304, Class 4, as a minor alteration in land, water, and vegetation on existing officially designated wildlife management areas or fish productions facilities which result in improvement of habitat for fish and wildlife resources or greater fish production. Subject to approval by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. CDFW has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by WCB.



37. El Dorado Ranch Expansion 4

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $2,700,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision (SB170, Sec. 53.5) for the grant to American River Conservancy; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; authorize CDFW to accept a future transfer of fee title to the real property acquired by American River Conservancy, and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	El Dorado Ranch Expansion 4
Project Type:	Fee Title (1,026± acres)
Grantee:	American River Conservancy
Amount Recommended:	$2,700,000
Funding Partners:	Sierra Nevada Conservancy and California Natural Resources Agency
County:	El Dorado County
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1.2, C.1 Objectives: SI 1.3, 2.1, 2.4, 3.4

LOCATION

The 1026± acre El Dorado Ranch Expansion 4 (Property) is located in southwestern El Dorado County. The Property is off Highway 49, approximately 10 miles south of the city of Placerville in the Cosumnes River watershed. The Property is approximately 20 miles west of El Dorado National Forest in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Acquisition of the Property will contribute to the protection of the 7,500-acre El Dorado Ranch, along the Cosumnes River and its tributary springs. The intent is for American River Conservancy (ARC) to transfer the Property to CDFW, and it will then become the first CDFW wildlife area in El Dorado County. Prior WCB acquisitions in the surrounding area include Ervin Ranch (2019; 1781 acres), El Dorado Ranch Expansions 1 – 3 (2013-2018; 3,500± acres), and Upper Cosumnes River Basin (2001; 1178 acres).

ARC has engaged or consulted with Native American tribes on the current and previous three acquisition phases of El Dorado Ranch. ARC is performing and will continue to perform outreach to local tribes for input on planning and implementation of land management practices and tribal access for management and cultural purposes.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property consists of rolling to steeply sloping topography north of the Cosumnes River. The zoning is Rural Lands with 40- or 80-acre lot sizes and allows for residential development. The current use is cattle grazing and the highest and best use is the continued historic use of cattle grazing.

The Property contains extensive blue oak woodland, annual grassland, chaparral, and valley foothill riparian habitats. Water resources on the Property include

several springs and two tributary creeks to the Cosumnes River (Slate Creek and Fanny Creek). The Property is inhabited by many native game species, including black-tailed deer, black bear, wild turkey, gray squirrel, mourning dove, and California quail. This project also provides additional habitat for several wildlife species of concern including northern goshawk, yellow-breasted chat, sharp-shinned hawk, Cooper's hawk, red-shouldered hawk, red-tailed hawk, western pond turtle, and California red-legged frog. The Cosumnes River watershed provides important habitat for numerous additional species of concern, including Ione manzanita and Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog. The tributary creeks on the Property flow into the Cosumnes River just upstream of spawning gravels for San Joaquin winter run Chinook salmon, a candidate species for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

Completion of this project will expand regional conservation planning efforts outlined in the Upper Cosumnes River Basin CAPP and Strategic Plan (2001) by acquiring land that complements existing public land owned and administered by Bureau of Land Management, USDA Forest Service (Eldorado National Forest), CDFW, and ARC.

The El Dorado Ranch area is an important migration and wildlife movement corridor in the Cosumnes River watershed, and the Property is located within an irreplaceable and essential corridor per the Areas of Conservation Emphasis mapping study. This purchase would also provide habitat linkages between existing BLM administered public lands and two large ranches up and downstream that are under conservation.

The Cosumnes River, the only river on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada that is un-dammed, supports a population of wild fall-run and winter-run Chinook salmon and steelhead, and serves as a major wildlife corridor. This project, which supports the protection of the entire El Dorado Ranch property, accomplishes landscape-level conservation, advancing climate action by maintaining the integrity of ecological processes and services that benefit both human and wildlife health in the region. Lastly, upon establishment of the El Dorado Ranch Wildlife Area, this project will serve as a recreation resource for nearby rural, disadvantaged communities and the greater Sacramento Valley-Sierra Foothill region.

This project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 2: Execute Strategic Land Acquisitions. This project also aligns with 30 x 30 Pathway 8: Align Investments to Maximize Conservation Benefits, by leveraging several funding sources to achieve a conservation acquisition. Through the four acquisition phases of El Dorado Ranch to date, ARC has secured funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, California Natural Resources Agency's Environmental Enhancement Mitigation Program, Conservation Alliance, El Dorado County, and WCB.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
In the short-term, monitoring and management of the Property will be completed by ARC's stewardship staff in conjunction with the ARC Land Steward Program. The Land Steward Program is a volunteer-based program established in 2013 by ARC to engage volunteers in the monitoring and maintenance of ARC-owned lands.

Long-term management will ultimately be the responsibility of CDFW once the Property is transferred to CDFW. CDFW will adopt a final Land Management Plan for the El Dorado Ranch Wildlife Area once ownership has been transferred to CDFW. ARC has been involved in the drafting of a Land Management Plan that conforms to CDFW standards. Funding for long-term management will be derived from grazing lease income and budget allocations for CDFW lands management.

It is anticipated that the property will be transferred to CDFW within 2-3 years of acquiring the Property. Public access, including hiking, birdwatching, hunting, and fishing, will commence after CDFW completes land management planning and a public comment period.

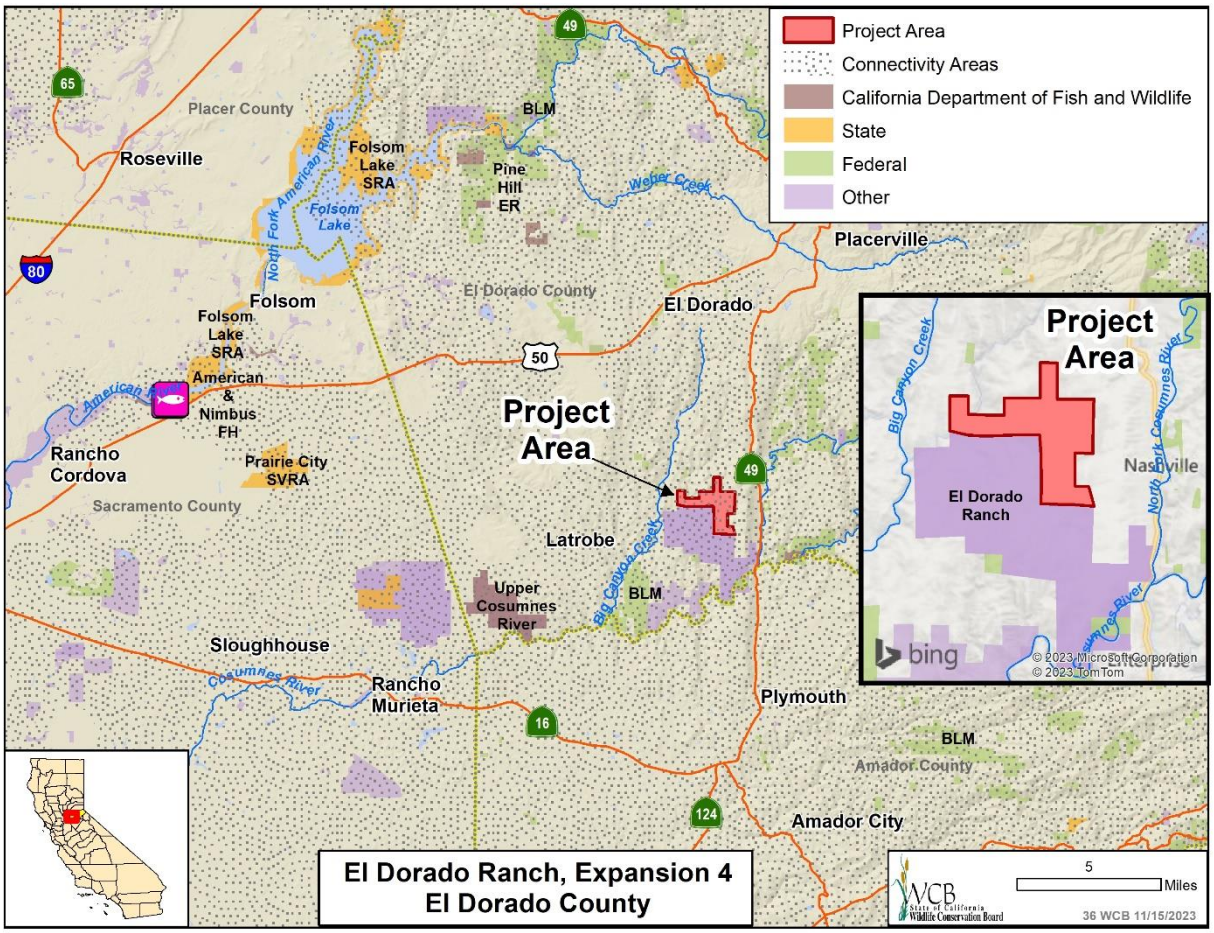
PROJECT FUNDING
The DGS approved fair market value is $4,700,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$2,700,000
California Natural Resources Agency	$1,000,000
Sierra Nevada Conservancy	$1,000,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$4,700,000

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
Placer County
Roseville
Folsom Lake SRA
Folsom Lake
North Fork American River
BLM
Pine Hill ER
Weber Creek
Placerville
El Dorado County
El Dorado
Folsom
Folsom Lake SRA
American & Nimbus FH
American River
Rancho Cordova
Prairie City SVRA
Sacramento County
Project Area
Latrobe
Big Canyon Creek
Upper Cosumnes River
BLM
Sloughhouse
Cosumnes River
Rancho Murieta
Plymouth
BLM
Amador County
Amador City
Project Area
El Dorado Ranch
Nashville
Big Canyon Creek
North Fork Cosumnes River
Cosumnes River
bing
© 2023 Microsoft Corporation
© 2023 TomTom
El Dorado Ranch, Expansion 4
El Dorado County
5
Miles
WCB
State of California
Wildlife Conservation Board
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38. Bolinas Lagoon Wye Wetlands Resiliency

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate $3,142,000 from General Fund Budget Act of 2023, Nature-Based Solutions Provision [AB102, Sec.85(3)(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:	Bolinas Lagoon Wye Wetlands Resiliency
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Marin County Parks
Amount Recommended:	$3,142,000
Funding Partners:	County of Marin, Marin County Parks
Landowner(s):	County of Marin, Marin County Open Space Districts
County:	Marin
Program:	California Riparian Habitat Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.2

LOCATION

The Bolinas Lagoon Wye Wetlands Resiliency (Project) area is located at the north end of Bolinas Lagoon, and is a county-owned wetland habitat, two miles north of Bolinas in Marin County. The site is bordered by two roads, Olema-Bolinas Road to the West and State Route 1 to the east. The wetland habitat is bisected by Fairfax Bolinas Road through the center of the site, connecting Olema-Bolinas to State Route 1. Lewis Gulch Creek runs through the site under Olema-Bolinas and Fairfax-Bolinas Roads. The area is contiguous to the Bolinas Lagoon Open Space Preserve and National Park Service Lands. The Lagoon is a 1,100-acre tidal estuary and has been designated as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance, and an Audubon Important Bird Area. This Project will enhance and restore 25 acres of this network of preserved and protected lands.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project site has been subject to decades of historical land use by roads, undersized culverts, and channelization which disconnects creek and floodplain, blocks water and sediment movement, and prevents wetland migration with sea level rise. Lewis Gulch Creek is plagued by heavy sediment loads and channelization and provides poor habitat for Salmonids. The site has also been invaded by non-native weeds including Cape ivy, Himalayan blackberry and periwinkle. These species outcompete native plants and provide poor habitat for native wildlife. The Project will address these concerns by reconnecting wetland habitat and floodplains, redirecting Lewis-Gulch Creek onto its alluvial fan and removing invasive species. The Project will elevate Olema-Bolinas Road out of the flood-inundation zone, and remove Fairfax-Bolinas Road, resulting in a continuous wetland habitat. A bridge will be installed at the far north end of the site, to reconnect Olema Bolinas Road to State Route 1. The road removal and bridge will allow Lewis Gulch Creek to flow freely through the site. Intensive non-native

invasive species removal will also occur throughout the Project site. These areas and the Fairfax-Bolinas removal site will be replanted with locally sourced native vegetation.

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

No WCB funds will go to the purchase or use of herbicide.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
The Marin County Parks 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, Marin County Parks 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
Final Design, Request for Proposals and Bids	---	$300,000	$300,000
Road, Bridge, and Creek Channel Construction	$1,063,000	$6,154,000	$7,217,000
Non-Native Invasive Species and Revegetation	$1,337,000	$480,000	$1,817,000
Team Coordination, Construction Management and Grant Management	$634,000	$1,528,000	$2,162,000
Maintenance, Monitoring and Adaptive Management	$108,000	$115,000	$223,000
Total	$3,142,000	$8,577,000	$11,719,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

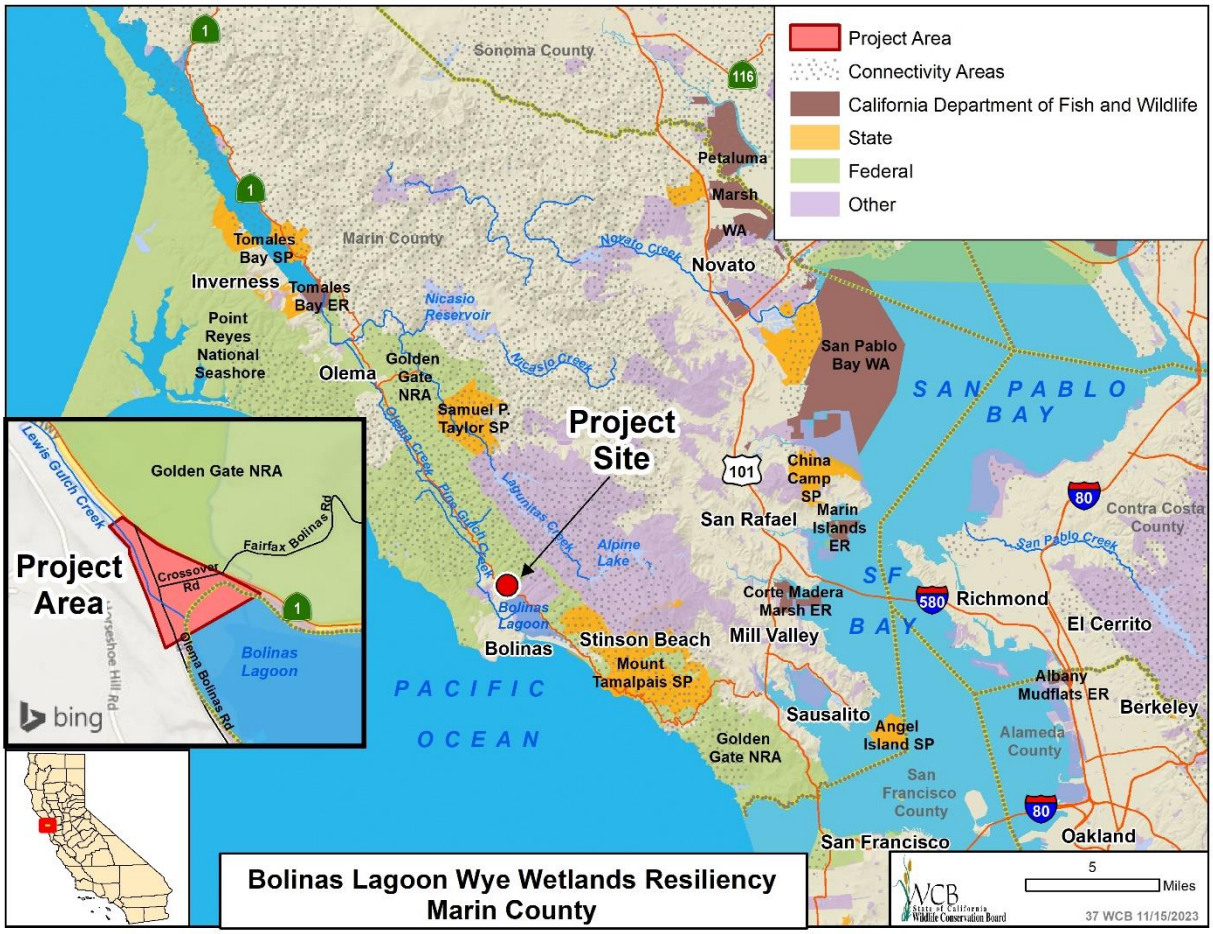
- Road, Bridge, and Creek Channel Construction: Equipment mobilization and demobilization, tree and vegetation removal, channel and floodplain grading, bank stabilization, road and bridge construction, erosion protection, and installation of large woody debris.
- Non-Native Invasive Species and Revegetation: Mechanical invasive plant removal, replanting and re-seeding.
- Team Coordination, Construction Management and Grant Management: Construction, permit, grant, revegetation, and invasive species removal

management, coordination and logistics. Prepare invoices, deliverables and progress reports.
- Maintenance, Monitoring and Adaptive Management: Erosion and sediment monitoring and adaptive management.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:
- Maria Brown, Superintendent, Greater Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries
- Davis Smith, General Superintendent, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service
- Trudy Garber, Director, Parks Projects and Design, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

Opposition:
- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
The Marin County Open Space District, as lead agency, prepared a MND for the project pursuant to the provisions of the CEQA. Staff considered the MND and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOD will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.


Project Area
Connectivity Areas
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Sonoma County
Marin County
Petaluma Marsh WA
Novato
Tomales Bay SP
Inverness
Tomales Bay ER
Point Reyes National Seashore
Olema
Golden Gate NRA
Samuel P. Taylor SP
Nicasio Reservoir
Nicasio Creek
Novato Creek
Olema Creek
Bolinas Gulch Creek
Lagunitas Creek
Project Site
San Pablo Bay WA
SAN PABLO BAY
China Camp SP
Marin Islands ER
San Rafael
Alpine Lake
Contra Costa County
San Pablo Creek
Corte Madera Marsh ER
Richmond
El Cerrito
SF BAY
Bolinas Lagoon
Bolinas
Stinson Beach
Mount Tamalpais SP
Mill Valley
Albany Mudflats ER
Berkeley
Sausalito
Angel Island SP
Alameda County
Golden Gate NRA
San Francisco County
San Francisco
Oakland
PACIFIC OCEAN
Project Area
Golden Gate NRA
Lewis Gulch Creek
Fairfax Bolinas Rd
Crossover Rd
Olema Bolinas Rd
Horseshoe Hill Rd
Bolinas Lagoon
bing
Bolinas Lagoon Wye Wetlands Resiliency
Marin County
5
Miles
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39. South San Francisco Bay Shoreline

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate $5,142,235 from California Wildlife, Coastal, and Park Land Conservation Fund of 1988 (Proposition 70), Public Resources Code Section 5907(c)(1)(A), and General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision [AB102, 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:	South San Francisco Bay Shoreline
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	State Coastal Conservancy
Amount Recommended:	$5,142,235
Funding Partners:	Department of Water Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Landowner(s):	Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department, USFWS
County:	Santa Clara
Program:	Climate Adaptation and Resiliency
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1, C.1, C.4 Objectives: SI 1.4, 2.5, 3.1

LOCATION

The South San Francisco Bay Shoreline (Project) site is located within the Alviso Pond Complex within the south San Francisco Bay, in Santa Clara County, approximately eight miles north of downtown San Jose. Beginning in the 1850s, this as well as other shallow tidal marsh areas of San Francisco Bay were diked to commercially produce salt through solar evaporation. By the late 1950s, widespread concern over the conversion and ecological degradation of the Bay led to a series of legislative actions leading to the establishment of 20,000 acres of active and former salt ponds for protection as a wildlife refuge. Subsequently, in 2002, the State of California and the federal government purchased a large number of these commercial salt ponds, thereby creating an opportunity for large-scale tidal marsh restoration. In response to the expanded opportunities for flood control and tidal marsh habitat restoration, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, USFWS, the Santa Clara Valley Water District, and the State Coastal Conservancy initiated the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Interim Feasibility Study in 2005 to evaluate alternatives for flood protection, ecosystem restoration, and recreation.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Approximately 85 percent of tidal marsh habitat in San Francisco Bay has been lost since the Gold Rush, leading to dramatic losses of fish and wildlife and significant decreases in water quality, resilience to tidal and fluvial flooding, and public access opportunities on the shoreline. The need for tidal marsh habitat restoration in San Francisco Bay to recover at-risk species, improve water quality, and provide flood and sea level rise resilience is well recognized among scientists and resource managers.

There is considerable risk for tidal flooding caused by having large areas of low-lying terrain that are bordered by severely degraded non-engineered dikes that were originally designed and constructed for commercial salt ponds. The dikes, which were created as early as the 1920s, were generally maintained for salt production activities and to protect the salt pond production from tidal flooding. Currently, much of the land south of the ponds is urbanized, including much of Silicon Valley. The Alviso area is particularly vulnerable to flooding, not only from inadequate levees but also local subsidence from groundwater pumping over the past 100 years. The Our Coast, Our Future sea-level rise mapping tool shows the entire Project area under water with only 2.4' of sea-level rise and a 20-year storm event. In addition to inundating the nearby community, this would lead to loss of wetland habitat and public trails.

In response to these impacts the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California State Coastal Conservancy, Valley Water, and partner agencies and other organizations have developed a multi-benefit project to provide climate change resilient coastal flood protection, wetland restoration, and public access along the South San Francisco Bay shoreline. The Project will fund a component of this overall effort by building a 4-mile, FEMA-certifiable flood risk management levee at a height of 15.2' that will enable tidal marsh restoration while protecting the low-lying community of Alviso and critical transportation and water infrastructure. The levee will feature a 200-foot-wide transitional habitat or "ecotone" slope on the bayward side. This feature will support upland vegetation while ensuring the restored tidal wetland habitat can persist in the face of sea level rise by moving upslope while the levee provides continual flood risk protection. After settlement, the height of the flood protection levee would be 15.2-feet, approximately 5-10 feet higher than the existing salt pond berms, and able to protect against 100-year coastal storm events and a sea level rise rate of up to 2.6 ft.

Once the flood protection levees are complete, a phased restoration of approximately 2,900 acres of former salt evaporation ponds to tidal wetlands will follow. The restored wetlands will provide additional protection for communities by buffering storm surges, create habitat and forage for native fish and birds, add additional migratory bird habitat along the Pacific Flyway, sequester carbon, and provide accessible nature for local residents and visitors.

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 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	$53,784	---	$53,784
Construction	$4,611,196	$167,350,641	$171,961,837
Indirect Costs	$10,757	---	$10,757
Contingency	$466,498	---	$466,498
Total	$5,142,235	$167,350,641	$172,492,876

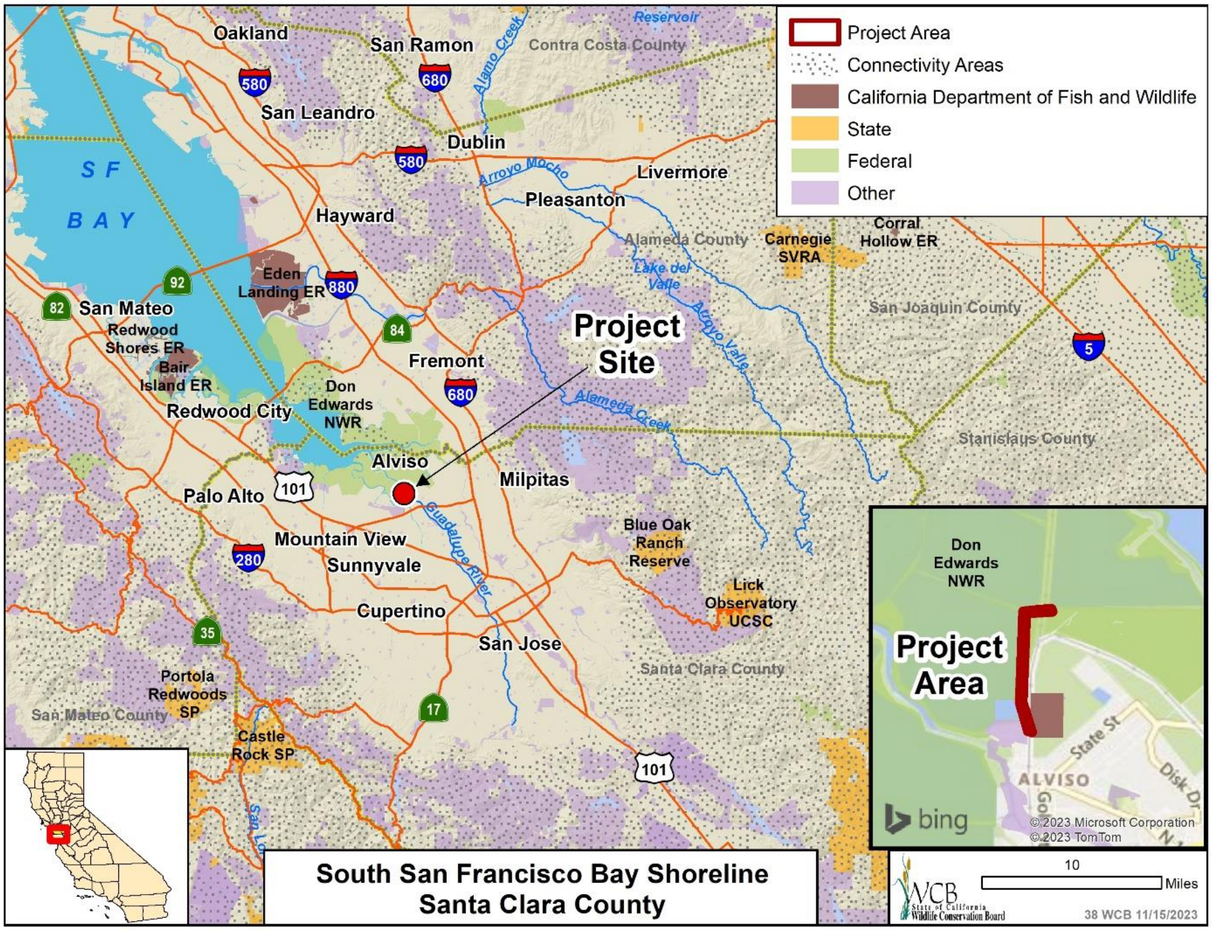
Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Invoice processing, writing progress reports, and contractor coordination.
- Construction: Contracting services to implement levee construction.
- Indirect Costs: Incidental or indirect costs not to exceed 15 percent of the total direct WCB award.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:
- Bhavani Yerrapotu, P.E., Deputy Operating Officer, Watershed Design and Construction Division, Santa Clara Valley Water District

Opposition:
- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
The Santa Clara Valley Water District, acting as Lead Agency, prepared a combined EIS/EIR with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District, and USFWS, for the project pursuant to the provisions of the CEQA. Staff considered the EIS/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
Project Site
Project Area
Don Edwards NWR
ALVISO
South San Francisco Bay Shoreline
Santa Clara County
10 Miles
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40. Desert Tortoise Conservation Innovations

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $1,987,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision [AB102, 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:	Desert Tortoise Conservation Innovations
Project Type:	Scientific Study
Applicant/Grantee:	Transition Habitat Conservancy
Amount Recommended:	$1,987,000
Funding Partners:	None
Landowner(s):	Bureau of Land Management, Transition Habitat Conservancy
County:	San Bernardino
Program:	Desert Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 2.2, 2.4

LOCATION

The Desert Tortoise Conservation Innovations (Project) is a scientific study that will take place over a large area within San Bernardino County on lands owned by the Transition Habitat Conservancy and managed by the Bureau of Land Management within the Mojave Desert, approximately six miles east of the city of Boron.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The federally and state threatened desert tortoise is declining. Despite the best efforts of two generations of conservationists, the California state reptile continues its slide toward extinction. The signals coming from the ecosystem tell us that a new approach is needed to rescue the species: predation by ravens rises in lockstep with their expanding populations; the displacement of the tortoise's essential food plants by non-native grasses is seen in entire landscapes turned gold by the invaders; the thermometer and the rain gauge tell the story of climate change in the desert. In the face of these threats, this Project proposes a bold response. Although habitat protection is an obvious first step and must continue, tortoises are declining on fully protected lands. Habitat protection alone is insufficient. This Project proposes a program of active ecological interventions to address the underlying threats facing the desert tortoise using a wide array of newly available tools in a coordinated manner. This Project will address three threats: raven predation, invasive plant displacement of native food plants, and severe, persistent drought simultaneously. The tools include remote egg oiling of raven nests to prevent raven reproductive success; development of sophisticated laser systems to drive ravens from subsidy sites and high quality tortoise habitat; the Techno-tort™, an aversive training device to reprogram ravens to avoid tortoises; rainfall concentrators that deliver water collected over several square meters of desert ground to a smaller patch pre-seeded with high quality tortoise food plants; and simple artificial drinking sites that, in their ability to temporarily

retain natural rainfall, mimic the sites tortoises create for themselves, and functionally increase water availability for them in sandy habitat.

The goals of the Project include the following: (1) Use a broad range of tortoise conservation tools and techniques to enhance tortoise survival at known tortoise hotspots; (2) operate on a regional basis to reduce predator pressure by eliminating subsidies, discouraging reproduction of ravens and hazing them at roosts and other gathering points; (3) monitor with a scientifically-valid approach tortoise status and changes in raven numbers and movement patterns in the study area over multiple years; (4) study “hotspot” conditions in more detail to inform refinement of management actions and to better predict other areas for acquisition or targeted conservation actions, especially in light of expected changes driven by climate change; (5) share tools, techniques, and results with the broader conservation community; (6) ensure maximum use of the data gathered and lessons learned by coordinating actions with relevant federal and state agencies including USFWS and Mojave National Preserve; and (7) integrating technological advances over the course of the Project.

The Project proposes to meet these goals by monitoring tortoises using LoRa (long range) transmitters to track tortoise movements; using rainfall concentrators to collect rainfall over several square meters and deliver it to smaller areas pre-seeded with high quality tortoise foods; use of passive hydration using clay dishes as artificial tortoise drinking sites; predator management actions including oiling raven eggs and deploying raven repelling lasers at major subsidy sites; characterizing the habitat at known tortoise hotspots, and finally, designing a scientifically and statistically valid effectiveness monitoring program which will include monitoring two control sites, two hotspot sites, and two “coldspots” which are defined as areas that have tortoise habitat but where tortoise density is much lower than at hotspots.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 10: Evaluate Conservation Outcomes and Adaptively Manage.

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

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	$70,877	---	$70,877
Tortoise Monitoring	$730,000	---	$730,000
Passive Hydration	$18,000	---	$18,000
Habitat Enhancement	$57,000	---	$57,000
Predator Management Actions	$345,000	---	$345,000
Habitat Characterization	$200,000	---	$200,000
Effectiveness Monitoring	$150,000	---	$150,000

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Indirect Costs	$235,541	---	$235,541
Contingency	$180,582	---	$180,582
Total	$1,987,000	---	$1,987,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Transition Habitat Conservancy will provide project management and administrative services associated with performing and completing work for this Project including the preparation of invoices, quarterly reports, and final reports as well as supervising contractors.
- Tortoise Monitoring: Includes placement of transmitters on tortoises.
- Passive Hydration: Placement of artificial drinking sites.
- Habitat Enhancement: Includes the collection of native seed and placement of rainfall collectors.
- Predator Management Actions: Includes raven nest mapping, monitoring and egg oiling; placement of laser system to repel ravens from tortoise habitat; deployment of Techno-tort™ predator aversive training units; and laser-based repulsion of ravens from food subsidy sites.
- Habitat Characterization: Includes measuring physical characteristics of the hotspots, conducting botanical surveys, and developing habitat quality index.
- Effectiveness Monitoring: Includes the monitoring of the effectiveness of the management and study actions.
- 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:

- Danny C. Reinke, PhD, Environmental Management Division, Edwards Air Force Base
- Ron Berger, President, Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc.
- Kelly Herbinson, Joint Executive Director, Mojave Desert Land Trust
- Dr. James Danoff-Burg, Vice President of Conservation, The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens

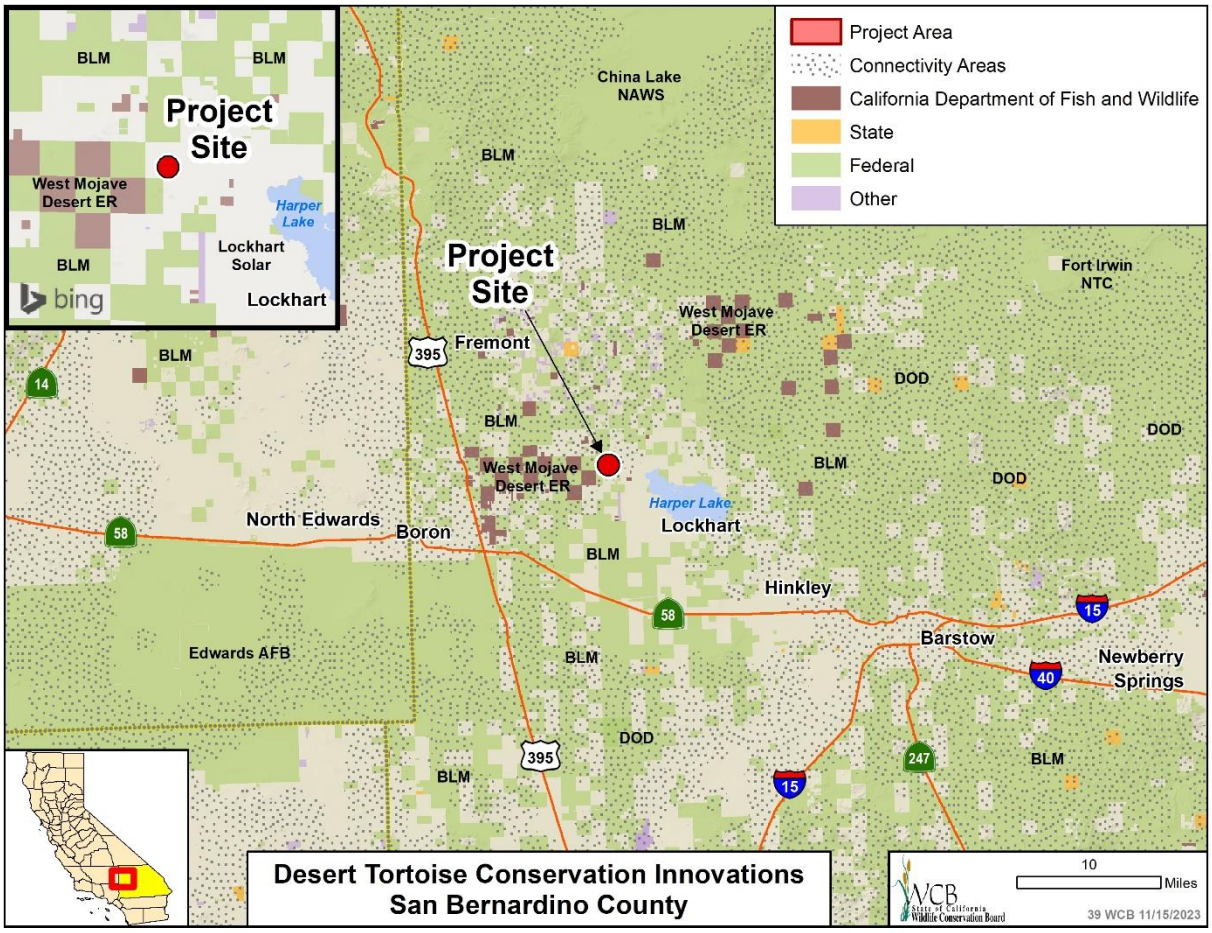
Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15303, Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures consisting of installation of small new facilities or structures; Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land as minor alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature,

scenic trees; and Section 15306, Class 6, Information Collection consisting of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



41. Ballona Wetlands Restoration Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $2,805,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision [AB102, 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:	Ballona Wetlands Restoration Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	CDFW
Amount Recommended:	$2,805,000
Funding Partners:	None
County:	Los Angeles
Program:	Habitat Enhancement and Restoration
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.3, 2.1, 4.3

LOCATION

The Ballona Wetlands Restoration Planning (Project) is located in the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve (BWER) which is approximately 600 acres of CDFW owned open space in the middle of the Los Angeles County coast and halfway along the Santa Monica Bay coastline. It is bordered by the communities of Westchester, Marina del Rey, and Playa Vista, and is approximately five miles north of the Los Angeles International Airport and close to Loyola Marymount University. BWER today is a heavily impacted remnant of a much larger wetland complex that stretched from Venice to the Baldwin Hills.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

More than a century of neglect and abuse by humans has left BWER in a highly degraded state. Approximately three million cubic yards of marine sediment was dumped into the wetlands to build Marina del Rey harbor and the Ballona Creek Flood Control Channel, separating the creek from its floodplain. In some places the dirt layer is up to 20 feet thick.

The loss of the wetlands' historic connections to creeks and the ocean means that many native species no longer thrive there. Repairing the basic structure and function of BWER will bring back and provide additional habitat for native plants, birds, and other wildlife, some of which are imperiled and clinging to existence in the region due to loss of habitat. The Project will lead to a restoration project that will reconnect the land and the sea, so freshwater stream flows and tidal waters can both support a healthy ecosystem.

Rejuvenating these habitats will allow wetland plants to flourish and attract the insects, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, birds, and mammals that call wetlands home. A restored BWER will be a refuge for millions of migratory birds and an important nursery area for coastal fish such as halibut and striped mullet. The restoration project will also increase public recreational and educational opportunities.

An extensive planning and public process for the restoration project began 17 years ago. In 2006, planning commenced with the selection of a Science Advisory Committee composed of local and regional experts. This included Science Advisory Committee meetings, public stakeholder meetings, and over 60 presentations to various groups and the public. This process led to the development of the Ballona Wetlands Restoration Environmental Impact Report (EIR) which will provide the environmental review required to begin the implementation phase of the restoration project.

A Los Angeles County Superior Court judge recently issued a ruling on litigation challenging certification of the EIR. In this decision, CDFW is required to disclose and analyze new flood control design parameters and commit to additional environmental review if performance criteria changes. The Project will fund the revisions and recertification of the EIR ordered by the court.

The Project will also fund the designs and permits needed to move forward with the first two sequences in the overall restoration project, which per the EIR include:

- Sequence 1: Removing and relocating the existing gas line in the southeastern portion of BWER
- Sequence 2: Enhancing and restoring habitat in the southern and southeastern portion of BWER

Sequences 1 and 2 of the larger restoration project will create and enhance salt marsh and brackish marsh by excavating new tidal channels, lowering adjacent marshplain, installing new culverts and water control structures, removing invasive non-native vegetation, and planting native species. When implemented, the Project will provide several benefits:

- Restoration and enhancement of pickleweed-dominant salt marsh habitat for the endangered Belding’s savannah sparrow nesting habitat.
- Restoration and enhancement of tidal channels to convey tidal flows and promote marsh inundation.
- Maintenance of the existing level of flood protection for adjacent areas surrounding the wetlands.
- Allowing management flexibility and adaptive management, including seasonally closed/non-tidal wetland habitat management to mimic certain wetland habitat conditions present at the site in the 1890s.
- Creation of a managed wetland system that will be resilient to sea level rise.

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	Total Cost
Environmental Review	$1,800,000	$1,800,000
Designs and Permits	$750,000	$750,000
Contingency	$255,000	$255,000
Total	$2,805,000	$2,805,000

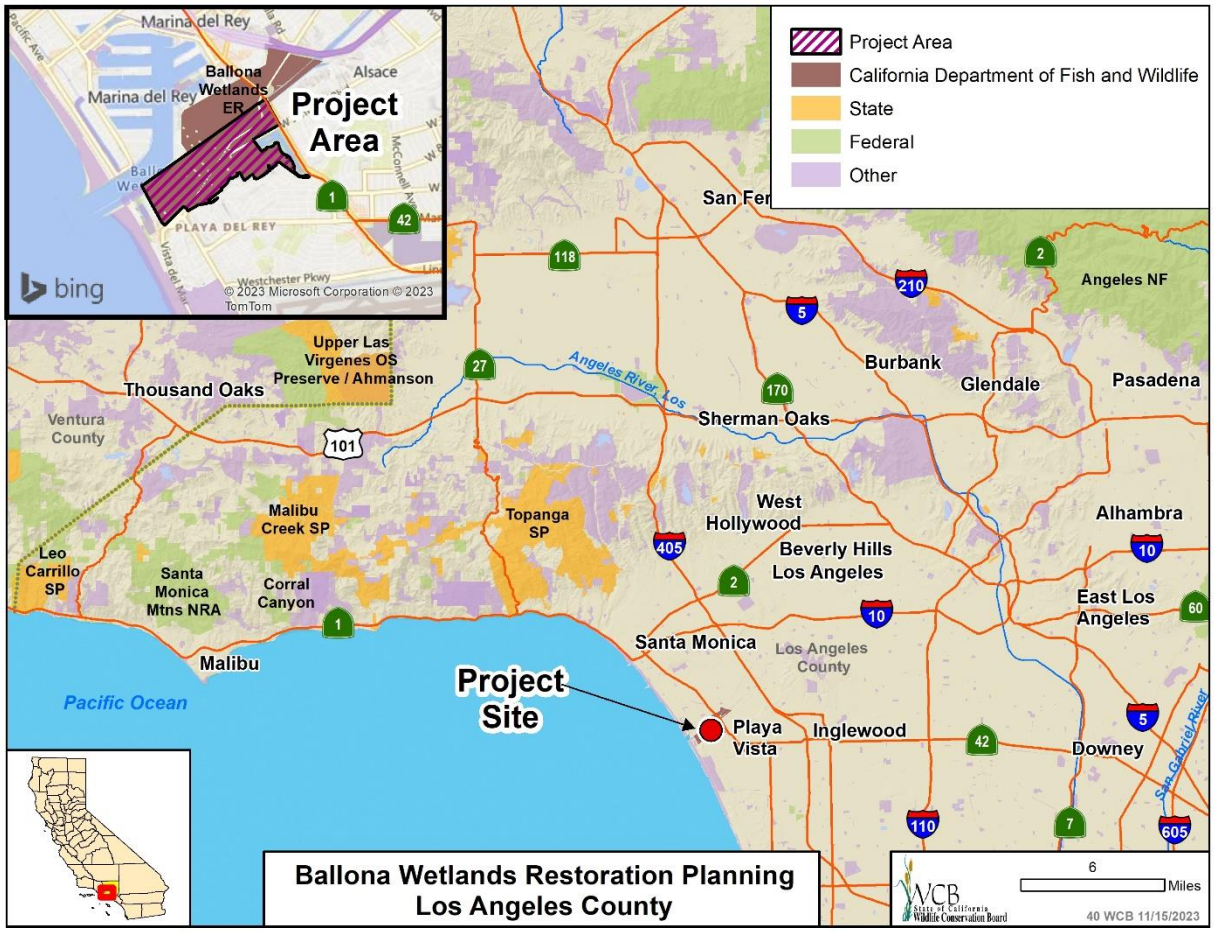
Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Environmental Review: Update and recertify the Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project Environmental Impact Report.
- Designs and Permits: Final designs and permits for Sequences 1 and 2.
- Contingency: Unanticipated project costs associated with WCB-funded tasks only, requires WCB staff approval prior to use.

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:
- Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project Gabrielino Village of Guashna Tribal Council
- David W. Kay, D. Env.

Opposition:
- Walter Lamb, Ballona Wetlands Land Trust
- Courtney Lamb, Dorothy Steinicke, Ellen Cox, Christina Ku, Jamie Lowry, Joseph Zell, Annette Mercer, Catherine Ronan, Patrick Davenport, Paige Carter, Caroline Ehren, Cindy Hardin, Cindy Grant, Margot Griswold, Jonathan Coffin, Kelly Hatfield, Patricia McPherson

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
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Marina del Rey
Ballona Wetlands ER
Alsace
Project Area
PLAYA DEL REY
Westchester Pkwy
© 2023 Microsoft Corporation © 2023 TomTom
bing
San Fer
Angeles NF
Upper Las Virgenes OS Preserve / Ahmanson
Thousand Oaks
Ventura County
Angeles River, Los
Burbank
Glendale
Pasadena
Sherman Oaks
Malibu Creek SP
Topanga SP
West Hollywood
Alhambra
Leo Carrillo SP
Santa Monica Mtns NRA
Corral Canyon
Beverly Hills
Los Angeles
East Los Angeles
Santa Monica
Los Angeles County
Malibu
Pacific Ocean
Project Site
Playa Vista
Inglewood
Downey
San Gabriel River
Ballona Wetlands Restoration Planning
Los Angeles County
6
Miles
WCB
40 WCB 11/15/2023

42. Los Angeles Zoo Oak Woodland Restoration and Career Pathways

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate $3,600,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Nature Based Solutions Provision [AB102, Sec. 85(3)(a)] DAC; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Los Angeles Zoo Oak Woodland Restoration and Career Pathways
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	Outward Bound Adventures Inc.
Amount Recommended:	$3,600,000
Funding Partners:	The Wildlands Conservancy, Mountain Recreation and Conservation Authority
Landowner(s):	Los Angeles Zoo & Botanical Garden
County:	Los Angeles
Program:	Oak Woodlands Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1, B.5 Objectives: SI 2.1, 2.1

LOCATION

The Los Angeles Zoo Oak Woodland Restoration and Career Pathways (Project) is located at the northern extent of the city of Los Angeles. The Project will occur on Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens (Zoo) property, which is bordered on two sides by approximately 4,000 acres of parkland, with the remainder of the property adjacent to the community of Glendale. The Project will restore a six-acre zone of denuded oak woodland that contains a mixed assemblage of native and non-native invasive plants. Mature coast live oak, California walnut, toyon, elderberry, and dual-listed (state and federal) endangered shrub Nevin’s barberry occur in the Project area. Wildlife species on the site include an array of birds, small mammals, herpetofauna and bats including two California Species of Special Concern: western mastiff and Yuma myotis.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Historically, oak woodlands were widespread in California and harbor the highest diversity of any broad habitat type in the state. Oak woodlands are currently considered imperiled and have been dramatically reduced in extent over the last 200+ years. The Zoo and Outward Bound Adventures (OBA) propose to restore a 6-acre patch of disturbed habitat as a coast live oak demonstration and research site. This Project was developed to test strategies for restoration and sustainable management of a coast live oak woodland in the face of climate change. The work will be undertaken through a unique partnership between the Zoo and OBA, the oldest non-profit in the nation created and dedicated to providing outdoor education, conservation, and environmental learning expeditions for low-income urban youth from diverse communities in Los Angeles.

The Project is a key component of the objectives of the Zoo's Conservation Strategic Plan (CSP), touching on three of its six focal areas, including social and environmental justice, California conservation, and evidence-based conservation. Since 2021, the Project site has been used as a study area to engage individuals from communities that have been historically excluded or underrepresented in environmental and conservation careers, including the Conservation Interns in the Zoo Paid Internship Program, and OBA's Youth Environmental Restoration Team participants. Led by the Zoo Conservation Division team, program participants have utilized this space to gain practical skills used in the field (e.g., habitat and biodiversity surveys, invasive plant removal methods, soil chemistry analysis, etc.).

The Project will divide the six-acre site into three test plots to research oak restoration. The three test plots will use low, medium, and high intensity restoration methodologies, with evaluation of these methods conducted by both experimental and observational studies. These studies will support new and ongoing oak woodland restoration and management by generating data to support broad and fine scale decision-making. Activities will include test plot establishment, nonnative invasive plant removal, seed collection and onsite nursery propagation, soil testing, irrigation installation, restoration planting, and development/implementation of a long-term monitoring and maintenance plan. The Project will be implemented in large part utilizing a multi-year workforce development program focused on habitat restoration, botany, soil science, monitoring, and environmental career training. Participants will work with researchers from the Zoo and academic partners to learn about this incredibly important ecosystem while gaining valuable career skills in ecological restoration and land management. Specific skills include native plant maintenance and installation, scientific study data collection, plant propagation practices, restoration plant maintenance and monitoring.

OBA and the Zoo will engage members of disadvantaged communities in paid, site-based workforce training. Participants will come from SDACs identified by the DWR DAC Mapping Tool, which includes approximately: 20 SDACs across Interstate 5 in southwest Glendale; 25 SDACs in the Burbank and North Hollywood areas; and 10 SDACs along the 210 and 134 Freeways in low-income Northwest Pasadena. These communities are located in urban areas dotted with industry and warehouses, with many neighborhoods cut off from city amenities by freeways and railroad tracks.

Through paid environmental workforce training and development, this Project will provide employment, mentorship, and pathways to careers in outdoor education and conservation.

OBA has consulted with the Tongva Taraxat Paxaavxa Conservancy (TTPC) who represent the Tongva/Gabrielino peoples whose ancestral lands/territory were 2.56 million acres of the greater Los Angeles area.

The Project will not use herbicide.

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, and Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship.

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

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

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Project Management	$426,318	$100,000	$526,318
Restoration Implementation	$2,340,932	$284,000	$2,624,932
Monitoring & Data Analysis	$80,000	$80,000	$160,000
Indirect Costs	$426,085	---	$426,085
Contingency	$326,665	---	$326,665
Total	$3,600,000	$464,000	$4,064,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

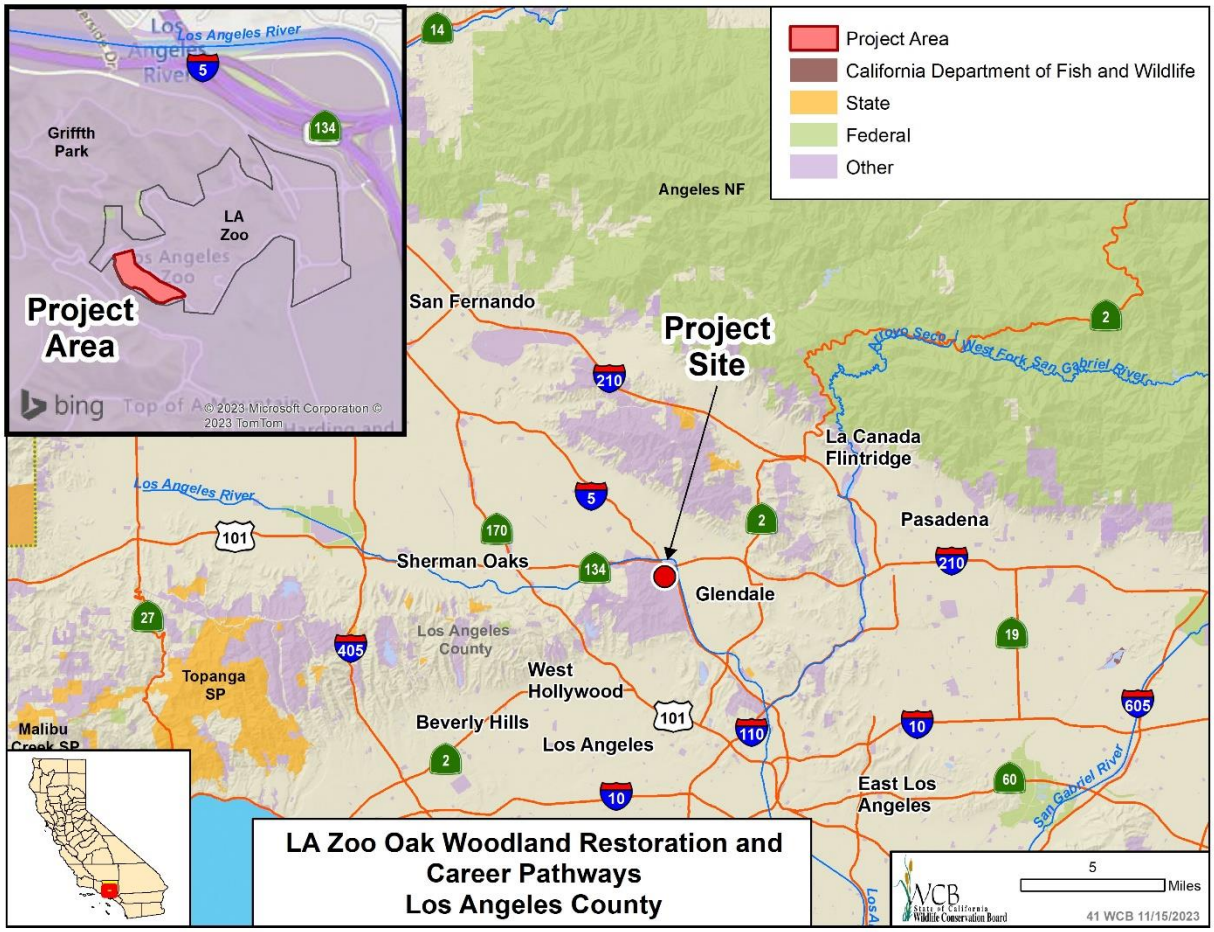
- Project Management: Grant administration including invoicing and reporting, stakeholder engagement, and subcontractor management.
- Restoration Implementation: Oak woodland restoration study plot implementation, plant propagation, nursery installation, etc.
- Monitoring & Data Analysis: Restoration study plot monitoring, data collection and analysis and results reporting. Study plot and nursery maintenance for grant term.
- 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:
- Hon. Anthony J. Portantino, Senator, 25th District
- Abigail Allen, Apprenticeship and Training Program Specialist, Region 6, U.S. Department of Labor

Opposition:
- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The City of Los Angeles, as lead agency, prepared an EIR for the Project pursuant to the provisions of the CEQA (Los Angeles Zoo Vision Plan Project EIR and Focused Recirculated EIR--SCH#: 2019011053). 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.



43. Los Angeles River Habitat Enhancement

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate $5,896,000 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:	Los Angeles River Habitat Enhancement
Project Type:	Implementation
Applicant/Grantee:	The Nature Conservancy
Amount Recommended:	$5,896,000
Funding Partners:	California Resources Agency, Department of Water Resources, Private Donation, The Nature Conservancy, California Department of Parks and Recreation
Landowner(s):	California Department of Parks and Recreation
County:	Los Angeles
Program:	California Riparian Habitat Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.1 Objectives: SI 1.3

LOCATION

The Los Angeles River Habitat Enhancement (Project) is located within the Glendale Narrows stretch of the Los Angeles (LA) River, on the California State Parks “Bowtie” Parcel, in the city of Los Angeles within Los Angeles County. The Bowtie Parcel was previously part of Taylor Yard, a Southern Pacific Railroad service railway station and classification yard. Southern Pacific closed the facilities in the late 1980s and State Parks purchased the site in 2003 with the intention of turning the site into a public park. The Bowtie Parcel primarily remains as a post-industrial landscape, partially covered with concrete, contaminated soil, and a mixture of native and invasive vegetation and wildlife. Currently, residents from nearby communities visit the Bowtie Parcel to walk their dogs, run, and birdwatch. In August 2020, WCB allocated $350,000 for a planning project to complete restoration design, permitting, environmental compliance and community and tribal outreach.

The Project will benefit disadvantaged, severely disadvantaged and climate vulnerable communities. The Project is located within half a mile of disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities along the Los Angeles River in northeast Los Angeles, per the DAC Mapping Tool. The Project is located within a 97% percentile climate-vulnerable community, per CalEnviroScreen.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project will improve water quality and reduce pollutants transported to the Los Angeles River by daylighting a storm drain and diverting and treating dry-weather flows for metals, bacteria, and organics via hydrodynamic separators, media filters, and a constructed wetland.

There are two storm drains that run underneath the Bowtie Parcel. The Project will divert and treat dry-weather flows and partial wet-weather flows from the larger of the two storm drains. The storm drain carries runoff from 2,775 acres upstream bringing pollutants to the Los Angeles River. The hydrodynamic separator will remove Total Suspended Solids (TSS) and debris, which includes particles containing all the major contaminants. The filter will help to remove approximately 90 percent of copper and zinc, and will also remove bacteria, cadmium, and lead. The wetland plants will uptake nitrogen and phosphorous from the water as part of their normal biological processes. Similarly, bacteria that make it through the first two processes will be preyed upon by other bacteria that live in the wetland. Taken together, these treatments are designed to target known contaminants and improve water quality. This improved water quality will mean the water can be used for irrigation on-site, reducing the need for external sources of irrigation.

The Project will reduce both peak flows and overall runoff volume, while the land will capture and slow down 100 percent of dry weather flows and approximately 5 percent of wet weather flows. The Project design will increase climate resilience for the region by reducing flood risk inland of the site, reducing the amount of water flowing into the Los Angeles River, improving the quality of water flowing into the river, increasing permeability, reducing urban heat impacts, and providing an accessible open space for community members. The Project will also include ADA-compliant educational signage in Spanish and English to inform the public about the value and importance of this work to the health and well-being of the community, and for local wildlife.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has and will continue to integrate the expertise of indigenous community members at various stages of the Project, including Tongva and Kizh elders, on whose ancestral lands the Project is located.

The Project will not use herbicide.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The California Department of Parks and Recreation has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the property, including management of the Project area. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, The Nature Conservancy 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	$492,000	---	$492,000
Construction	$4,169,000	$4,322,000	$8,491,000
Indirect Costs	$699,000	$317,000	$1,016,000

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Contingency	$536,000	---	$536,000
Total	$5,896,000	$4,639,000	$10,535,000

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Project and subcontractor management, construction oversight, community and tribal outreach, invoicing, reporting.
- Construction: Site prep, grading, soil remediation, wetland basin construction, construction of underground treatment system and drain diversion structure, revegetation, construction of habitat features, installation of ADA-compliant interpretive and educational elements.
- Indirect Costs: 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:

- Congressman Adam B. Schiff, Member of Congress, US House of Representatives
- Senator Maria Elena Durazo, California State Senate
- Hilda L. Solis, Supervisor, First District, Board of Supervisors County of Los Angeles
- Candace Dickens-Russell, Chief Executive Officer, Friends of the LA River
- Brian Baldauf, Deputy Executive Officer, Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority on behalf of the 100 Acre Partnership
- Raul Macias, President, Anahauk Youth Sports Association
- Evelyn Serrano, Director, Audubon Center at Debs Park
- Susan Bell Yank, Executive Director, Clockshop
- Kathleen Johnson, Executive Director, LA River State Park Partners
- Juliet Sims, Associate Program Director, Prevention Institute

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
The California Department of Parks and Recreation, as lead agency, prepared an IS/MND for the project pursuant to the provisions of the CEQA. Staff considered the IS/MND and have 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
Project Area
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Angeles NF
San Fernando
Tujunga
Burbank
Pasadena
Sherman Oaks
Glendale
Project Site
West Hollywood
Topanga SP
Malibu Creek SP
El Monte
Los Angeles
Los Angeles County
Pacific Ocean
Ballona Wetlands ER
Ingelwood
Los Angeles River
San Gabriel River
Los Angeles River Habitat Enhancement
Los Angeles County
5
Miles
42 WCB 11/15/2023
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44. Lower Los Angeles River Restoration and Access Planning

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $4,652,000 from General Fund 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:	Lower Los Angeles River Restoration and Access Planning
Project Type:	Planning
Applicant/Grantee:	Trout Unlimited
Amount Recommended:	$4,652,000
Funding Partners:	Private Partners, Trout Unlimited, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
County:	Los Angeles
Program:	California Riparian Habitat Conservation
Strategic Plan:	Goals: B.5, C.4 Objectives: SI 2.2, 3.1, 4.3

LOCATION

In 1938 the US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) began channelizing the Los Angeles (LA) River to control flood issues and promote economic development in LA County. The LA River has not been a free-flowing river since that time.

Located in the city of Paramount and adjacent to the city of Compton, the focus of the Lower LA River Restoration and Access Planning (Project) is a 0.6-mile reach of river between Rosecrans Avenue on the north and Somerset Boulevard on the south. This section of the river is a trapezoidal, concrete bottom reach completed in 1955 without public access to the channel, however up to 65 acres of open space opportunities exist and the LA River Bike Path and Ralph C. Dills Park are adjacent to the Project site. The low-flow channel contains dry weather flow from recycled water and overflow from drainage areas. Volunteer plants can be found in areas of overflow along with fish and birds that come to forage and migrate upriver in search of better habitat.

The Project site is within an SDAC according to DWR maps and has a 96-percentile rating in CalEnviroScreen with top 25 percentile ratings for traffic, hazardous waste, pollution burden, education, and poverty. The Project will benefit members of the SDACs of Paramount, Compton, and Lynwood through community-led engagement and youth mentorship programs with the local unified school districts and colleges. The Project will build on existing engagement with local tribes, including the San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

While channelization of the LA River has provided protection from historic flood issues, local citizens and public agencies have developed interest in utilizing the river channel for benefits in addition to flood control.

Community efforts for improving the Lower LA River were jump started by AB 530 in 2015, which created the Lower LA River Revitalization Plan (Revitalization Plan). The Revitalization Plan detailed the health benefits and environmental justice issues inherent to open space and public lands and that the lower LA River is the largest open space in the county within many park-poor communities. Consistent with the Revitalization Plan, Trout Unlimited developed conceptual design plans with funding from the San Gabriel and Lower LA Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for a low-flow river channel that supports habitat and outdoor recreation. The Project will address and integrate flood control, habitat restoration, community access and environmental justice concerns, redesigning the Project reach of the lower LA River as a habitat node accessible to both wildlife and residents of southeast LA County, while serving as a nature-based demonstration and template to improve human and ecosystem health, equity, and access to nature.

The goals of the Project are to advance the conceptual designs for ecological function and fish passage and public access to 65 percent while integrating local communities at every step of the design process, coordinating and consulting with responsible agencies at local, state, and federal governments, and engaging local youth through ongoing mentorship programs. The Project is going to meet its goals by using the *California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual* for stream simulations at high and low flows, completing a detailed hydraulic analysis for the designed project features; engaging with LA County departments, CDFW, State Lands Commission, and USACE's Engineering with Nature program in redesigning the channelized river; integrating community members into the restoration effort by mentoring local high school and college students for three school years and promoting community-led engagement with tribes and local communities using bilingual materials; completing biological assessments to document historical conditions and the river's current physical and chemical parameters; and completing state and federal environmental reviews.

This Project contributes to the goals of Pathways to 30x30 California by aligning with Pathway 4: Enhance Conservation of Existing Public Lands and Coastal Water; and 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	$135,000	$23,715	$158,715
Community Engagement and Mentorship Program	$950,299	$33,000	$983,299
Designs, Modeling, and Environmental Reviews	$2,918,120	$161,500	$3,079,620
General Expenses	$48,867	---	$48,867

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Total Cost
Indirect	$397,108	---	$397,108
Contingency	$202,606	---	$202,606
Total	$4,652,000	$218,215	$4,870,215

Costs associated with WCB funding include:

- Project Management: Contracting, scheduling, budgeting, invoicing, reporting.
- Community Engagement and Mentorship Program: Community assessment, focus groups and interviews, community-led meetings and workshops, develop Action Plan, and develop mentorship curriculum, roster, and outreach and recruitment, and educational engagement.
- Designs, Modeling, and Environmental Reviews: Baseline evaluation, jurisdictional waters report, bat survey, topographical survey, design refinement, hydraulic modeling, 65% design plans, signage masterplan, basis of design report, opinion of probable construction cost, and CEQA and NEPA reviews.
- General Expenses: Water quality meter, mileage, design review fees.
- 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.

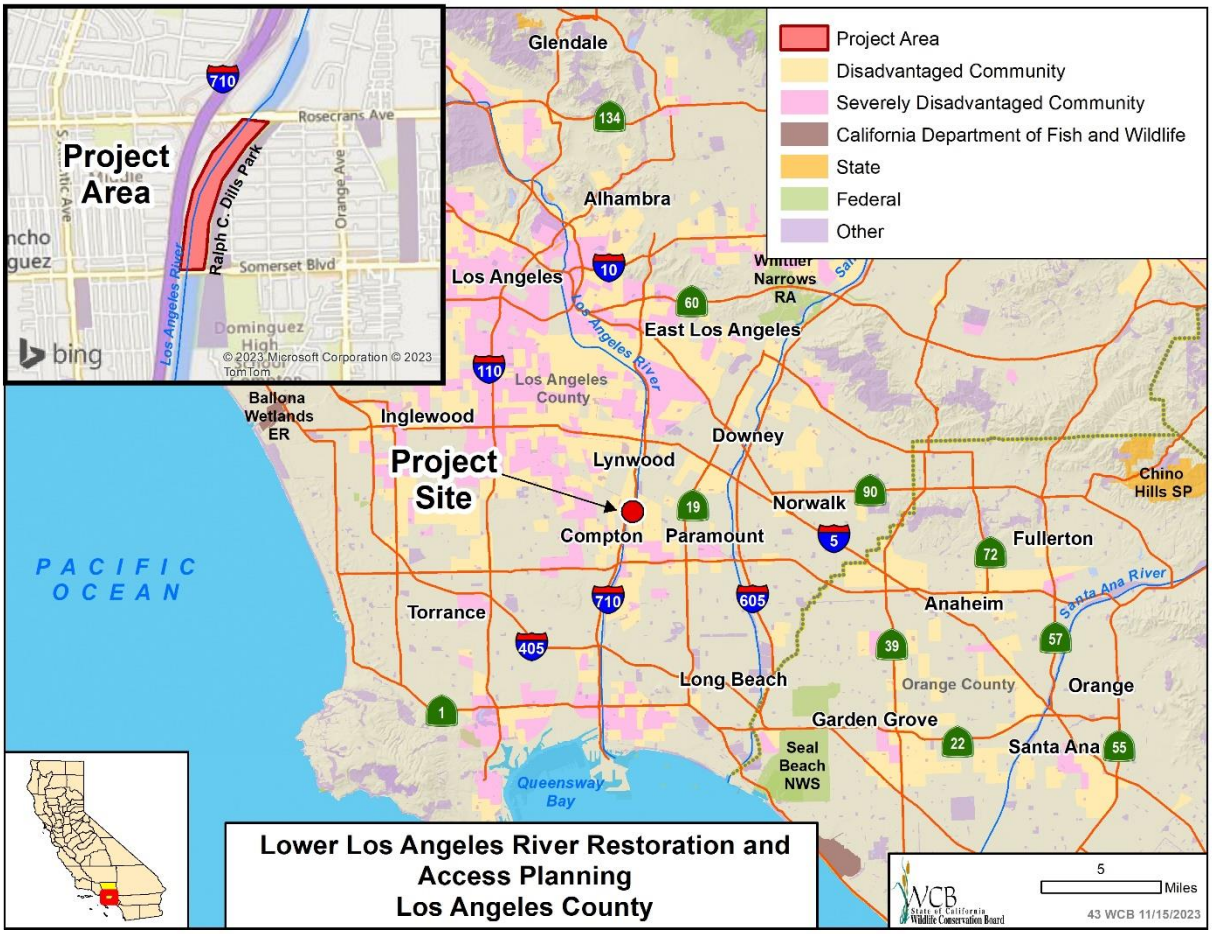
PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- Danaly Leon, Executive Director, Latinas Art Foundation
- Dan Silver, MD, Chief Executive Officer, Endangered Habitats League
- John Moreno, City Manager, City of Paramount
- Danaly Leon, Executive Director, Latinas Art Foundation
- Alicia Megofna, Principal, Odyssey STEM Academy, Paramount Unified School District

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
Disadvantaged Community
Severely Disadvantaged Community
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
State
Federal
Other
Project Area
Ralph C. Dills Park
Rosecrans Ave
Somerset Blvd
Orange Ave
Los Angeles River
Dominguez High
bing
© 2023 Microsoft Corporation © 2023 TomTom
Glendale
Alhambra
Los Angeles
Whittier Narrows RA
East Los Angeles
Los Angeles River
Los Angeles County
Ballona Wetlands ER
Inglewood
Project Site
Lynwood
Downey
Compton
Paramount
Norwalk
Chino Hills SP
Fullerton
Anaheim
Santa Ana River
Torrance
Long Beach
Orange County
Orange
Garden Grove
Seal Beach NWS
Santa Ana
Queensway Bay
PACIFIC OCEAN
Lower Los Angeles River Restoration and Access Planning
Los Angeles County
5
Miles
WCB State of California Wildlife Conservation Board
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45. B Canyon

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $4,808,760 from Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) and $10,045,560 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022 Drought Resilience and Response Provision [AB179, Sec. 19.58(b)(2)(B)] for the grant to Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (RCA); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	B Canyon
Project Type:	Fee Title Acquisition (670± acres)
Grantee:	Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority
Amount Recommended:	$14,854,320
Funding Partners:	RCA
County:	Riverside
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.3 Objectives: 1.2, 1.3, 2.2

LOCATION

The B Canyon Property (Property) is located in unincorporated Riverside County adjacent to the city of Corona to the north and east, the Orange County line adjacent to the west and south, State Route 91 adjacent to the north, and the Cleveland National Forest adjacent to the south, with Chino Hills State Park located less than one-half mile to the north. The Property is located within the City of Corona Sphere of Influence and within the Middle Santa Ana River watershed. The Property is a currently unprotected, critical piece of land within the irreplaceable wildlife corridor between the Santa Ana Mountains/Cleveland National Forest and Chino Hills State Park via the State Route 91 undercrossing. The Property is within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (MSHCP/NCCP) area boundary.

The Property will protect movement habitat for mountain lion and other wildlife traveling though the wildlife undercrossing at B Canyon and State Route 91. In August 2022, WCB approved a planning grant to Caltrans to improve the configuration of the existing wildlife undercrossing to create a direct line of sight between the north and south entrances to the undercrossing, which will increase its use by wildlife. Permanent protection of the Property is necessary to maintain the viability of the wildlife undercrossing by protecting adjacent habitat in perpetuity.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The undeveloped Property covers ten parcels totaling approximately 670 acres, is irregular in shape and contains moderately sloping to sharply sloping mountainous

topography. Most of the Property is zoned as RR – Rural Residential, with one of the small parcels, nearly one acre, zoned as R2 – Multiple Family Dwellings. The highest and best use is single family residential development.

Acquisition of the Property would permanently protect the final critical connection piece in the functional habitat corridor connecting approximately 14,000 acres of contiguous conserved habitat in Chino Hills State Park, located to the north of State Route 91, with approximately 68,000 acres of contiguous MSHCP/NCCP Conservation Area in the Santa Ana Mountains/Cleveland National Forest, south of State Route 91.

The linkage and habitat proposed for conservation supports many special-status species, but is of utmost importance for the long-term survival of the mountain lion population in the Santa Ana Mountains. The southern California/central coast Evolutionary Significant Unit of mountain lion is a candidate species for listing under the California Endangered Species Act.

The Property supports a high level of biodiversity and is designated as Ecoregion Biodiversity Rank – High by CDFW's Areas of Conservation Emphasis (ACE) Species Biodiversity dataset. MSHCP/NCCP covered species documented within the Property include mountain lion, federally listed as Threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, California Species of Special Concern listed northern harrier, Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow, turkey vulture, Cooper's hawk, bobcat, and coyote. The federally listed as endangered Braunton's milk-vetch and chaparral nolina are also present within the Property. Vegetation communities found on the Property include chaparral, coastal sage scrub, grassland, and riparian scrub, woodland, and forest.

Acquisition of the Property would provide a secured linkage for covered species such as mountain lion and coastal California gnatcatcher. Mountain lions utilize large home ranges that span vast tracts of land, while the gnatcatcher requires habitat patches in close or contiguous proximity to each other because dispersal distances are relatively short. While mountain lion and California gnatcatcher have differing dispersal/territorial habits, providing a linked corridor of reserves will allow for genetic interchange between populations of these and other species, as well as allow for recolonization of habitat following localized extinction events. Protection of the Property will also support live-in breeding habitat and foraging habitat in perpetuity for several covered species.

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
The RCA will permanently manage the Property upon acquisition. Since its formation with the adoption of the MSHCP/NCCP in 2004, RCA has incorporated 67,622 acres of Additional Reserve Lands, consisting of 557 individual properties, into the MSHCP/NCCP Conservation Area to be conserved, monitored, and

managed in perpetuity. A comprehensive team of fully dedicated staff positions support the implementation of the MSHCP/NCCP and monitoring and management of the Conservation Area. Reserve management staff, consisting of the Riverside County Park and Open-Space District Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Unit (MSHCP Parks), patrol and conduct studies on the Reserve Lands. Additionally, RCA works collaboratively with Native American tribes such as the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians and Pechanga Band of Indians to develop management practices that benefit both MSHCP/NCCP covered species and habitats and Native American cultural resources.

Once acquired, MSHCP Parks will conduct a detailed baseline analysis of the Property. Public access will be available for passive wildlife-oriented recreation, such as hiking, non-motorized biking, bird watching, and botany within existing roads and trails.

Long-term management is funded through Local Development Mitigation Fees and other local sources. The current Fiscal Year 2023/24 long-term management budget is over $1,600,000. The Local Development Mitigation Fees and other local sources are also funding an endowment for management of the MSHCP/NCCP Conservation Area in perpetuity.

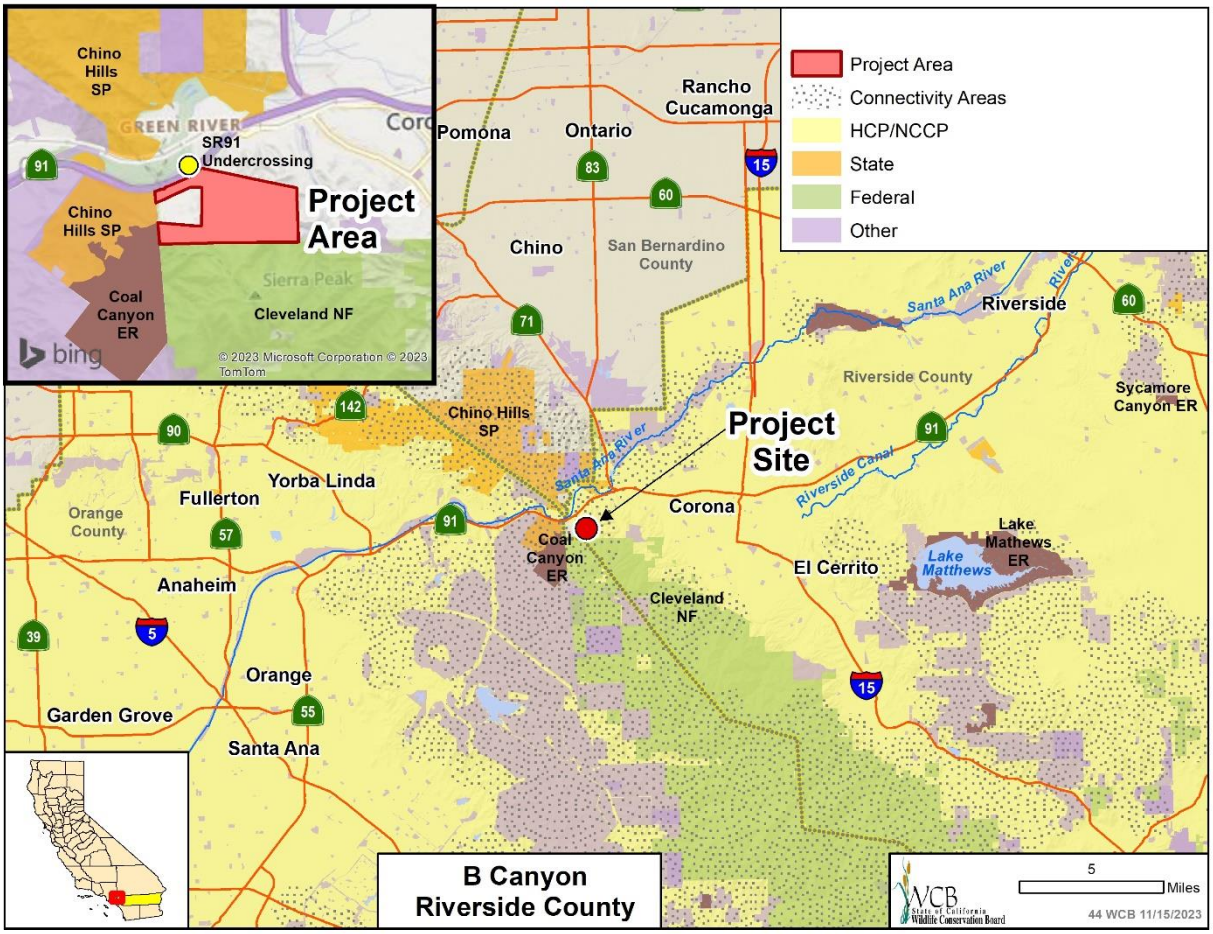
PROJECT FUNDING
The DGS approved fair market value is $21,528,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$14,854,320
WRCRCA (Grantee)	$6,673,680
TOTAL Purchase Price	$21,528,000

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
HCP/NCCP
State
Federal
Other
Chino Hills SP
GREEN RIVER
SR91 Undercrossing
Project Area
Chino Hills SP
Coal Canyon ER
Sierra Peak
Cleveland NF
© 2023 Microsoft Corporation © 2023 TomTom
Pomona
Ontario
Rancho Cucamonga
Chino
San Bernardino County
Santa Ana River
Riverside
Riverside County
Sycamore Canyon ER
Chino Hills SP
Project Site
Yorba Linda
Fullerton
Orange County
Corona
Riverside Canal
Coal Canyon ER
Lake Mathews
Lake Mathews ER
El Cerrito
Anaheim
Cleveland NF
Orange
Garden Grove
Santa Ana
B Canyon
Riverside County
5
Miles
WCB State of California Wildlife Conservation Board
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46. Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve, Expansion 6

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate $30,000,000 from General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Fish & Wildlife Resources - Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision (SB170, Sec.53.5); approve the acceptance of the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant from USFWS in the amount of $2,500,000; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

Project Title:	Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve, Expansion 6
Project Type:	Fee Title Acquisition (1,291± acres)
Amount Recommended:	$30,000,000
Funding Partners:	The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, USFWS Section 6
County:	San Diego
Program:	Land Acquisition
Strategic Plan:	Goals: A.1, A.3, A.4 Objectives: SI 1.2,1.3, 2.2, 2.4

LOCATION

The property (Property) is approximately 1,291 acres located within Proctor Valley, just north of Otay Lakes, along Proctor Valley Road between the city of Chula Vista and the unincorporated community of Jamul in San Diego County. Access to the Property is provided by Proctor Valley Road, a County maintained dirt and decomposed granite public road.

Proctor Valley runs northeast between San Miguel Mountain and the Jamul Mountains. The Property is in the Otay watershed, one of three watersheds making up the San Diego Bay Watershed Management Area. The Otay watershed begins in the mountains of east Jamul and drains to the San Diego Bay between Chula Vista and Imperial Beach.

The Property is adjacent to or nearby the approximately 5,600-acre CDFW Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve (Reserve), CDFW Hollenbeck Canyon Wildlife Area, the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge, the Otay Ranch Preserve (which is owned by a local joint power authority), and Bureau of Land Management property.

Prior WCB acquisitions in the surrounding area include Proctor Valley Villages 14 and 16 (2002; 1,446 acres), Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve, Expansion 3 (2017; 40 acres), and Hollenbeck Canyon Wildlife Area, Expansion 1 (2001; 3,210 acres).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project will result in the fee title acquisition of approximately 1,291 acres and an access easement. The Property is irregular in shape and consists of three non-contiguous clusters of Assessor’s parcels, 15 total, plus one free-standing parcel.

Governed by the Otay Ranch General Development Plan/Otay Ranch Subregional Plan, the Property consists of a portion of Village 14 plus Planning Areas 16 and 19. The land is planned for a mixed-use housing/commercial development with 1,119 homes within an approximately 860-acre development footprint. The remainder of Village 14 is owned by CDFW and incorporated into the Reserve.

Located in the Proctor Valley, the topography ranges from moderately to steeply sloping, with scattered broad level areas and gentle slopes. The Property is zoned S88 (Specific Plan Area), S80 (Open Space), and RR (Rural Residential).

Consisting almost entirely of raw undisturbed land, the Property is mostly covered with coastal sage scrub with areas of chaparral and small patches of grasslands. Essential to regional connectivity, the Property supports habitat for numerous rare and endemic species such as the coastal California gnatcatcher, San Diego fairy shrimp, Otay tarplant, San Diego button celery, golden eagle, and Quino checkerspot butterfly.

The project complements the County of San Diego Subarea Plan within the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Subregional Plan in San Diego County. Due to the Property's strategic location, the acquisition also complements the City of Chula Vista Subarea Plan and the City of San Diego Subarea Plan.

There are two structures on the Property: one prefabricated metal barn building and one concrete block building containing approximately 120 square feet, a small concrete pad, and four concrete drainage pits near the metal structure.

Acquisition of the Property 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.

Three cases were filed against the proposed development project by the Sierra Club, Endangered Habitats League, and other organizations, which were also supported by the California Attorney General. In October 2021, a Superior Court ruling ordered the County to vacate the 2019 approvals of the development project, citing issues with the EIR and approval process for the following reasons:

- Mitigation measures regarding greenhouse gasses
- Wildfire ignition risk
- Multiple species conservation program; consistency with the general plan
- Quino checkerspot butterfly
- Cumulative impacts of large projects in the county
- Affordable housing

In November 2021, the ruling was affirmed. In January 2022, the developer filed an appeal and the plaintiffs filed a cross appeal. The appellate process may take several years. The opportunity to acquire this Property for permanent conservation is created by a current settlement agreement. If the Property is not purchased for conservation under this proposal and pursuant to the terms of the current

settlement agreement, the litigating parties agreed not to oppose the development of 1,119 homes on a reduced development footprint of approximately 550-600 acres. Even though less acres would be developed, the development would still significantly impact core habitat, connectivity, and species.

Per the terms of the current settlement agreement, this Property must be acquired for conservation by January 31, 2024, or development is anticipated to proceed unopposed. Accordingly, approval of this proposal is paramount to permanently preserving the Property.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS
Following the proposed acquisition, CDFW will own and manage the Property as an addition to CDFW's Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve. The Reserve is within the boundaries of the Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve Conceptual Area Protection Plan and the San Diego MSCP, a joint Habitat Conservation Plan and NCCP. Costs associated with managing the Property will be minimal as the main purpose of the acquisition is to retain the site in its natural state. Site visits will be required from time to time to monitor the Property. These site visits will be included with other surrounding parcels in State ownership and management.

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

PROJECT FUNDING
In a July 2023 settlement agreement involving lawsuits filed against the U.S. – Mexico border wall, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agreed to provide $25 million to the State of California for the purpose of purchasing the Property. DHS funding is in escrow. Pursuant to this settlement agreement, close of escrow must occur no later than April 15, 2024, otherwise the DHS funding will revert to other purposes. The DGS approved fair market value is $60,000,000. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	$30,000,000
The Nature Conservancy	$2,500,000
USFWS	$2,500,000
US Department of Homeland Security Settlement Funding	$25,000,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	$60,000,000

PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION
Support:

- CA Native Plant Society, Defenders of Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust, Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks, Sierra Club San Diego Chapter, Outdoor Outreach, CA Wildlife Foundation, Nature Collective, Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society, Anza Borrego Foundation, San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy, Center for Biological

Diversity, Pomona Valley Audubon Society, Savia, The Urban Wildlands Group, California Chaparral Institute, EHL, Hills for Everyone, Center for Natural Lands Management, San Diego Audubon Society, Sea and Sage Audubon Society, San Diego Coastkeeper, Conservation Biology Institute, Los Angeles Audubon, Escondido Creek Conservancy, ECO San Diego, Transition Habitat Conservancy

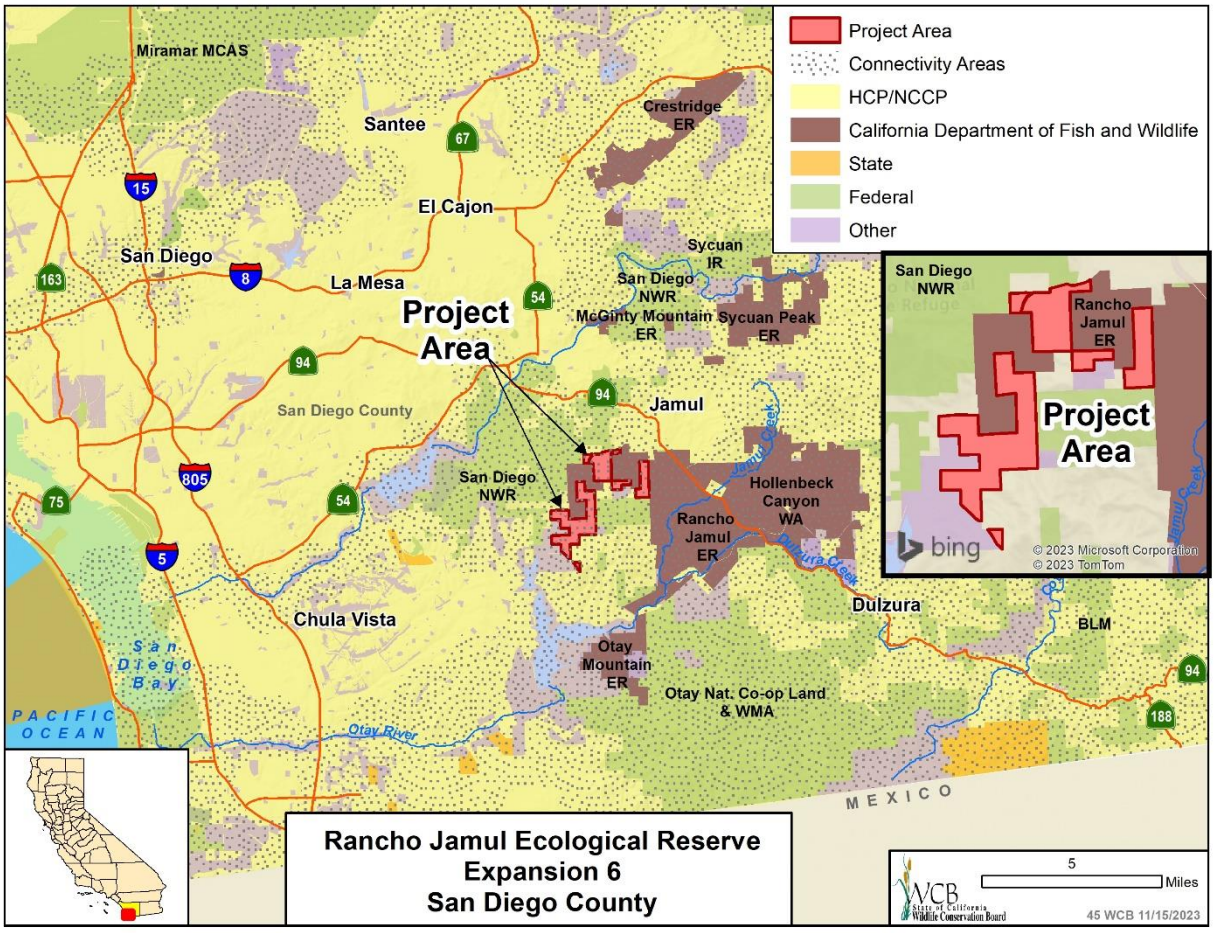
- David Waters, Vice Present, GDC Holdings, LLC
- Nick Jensen, PhD, Conservation Program Director, California Native Plant Society
- Dr. Peter Andersen, Co-founder, Jamul Action Committee

Opposition:

- R. Mitchel Beauchamp, President, Pacific Southwest Biological Services, Inc.

CEQA REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

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



47. 2024 Board Meeting Dates
The Board will be asked to approve WCB meetings dates for 2024:

Thursday, February 15, 2024
Thursday, May 23, 2024
Thursday, August 22, 2024
Thursday, November 21, 2024

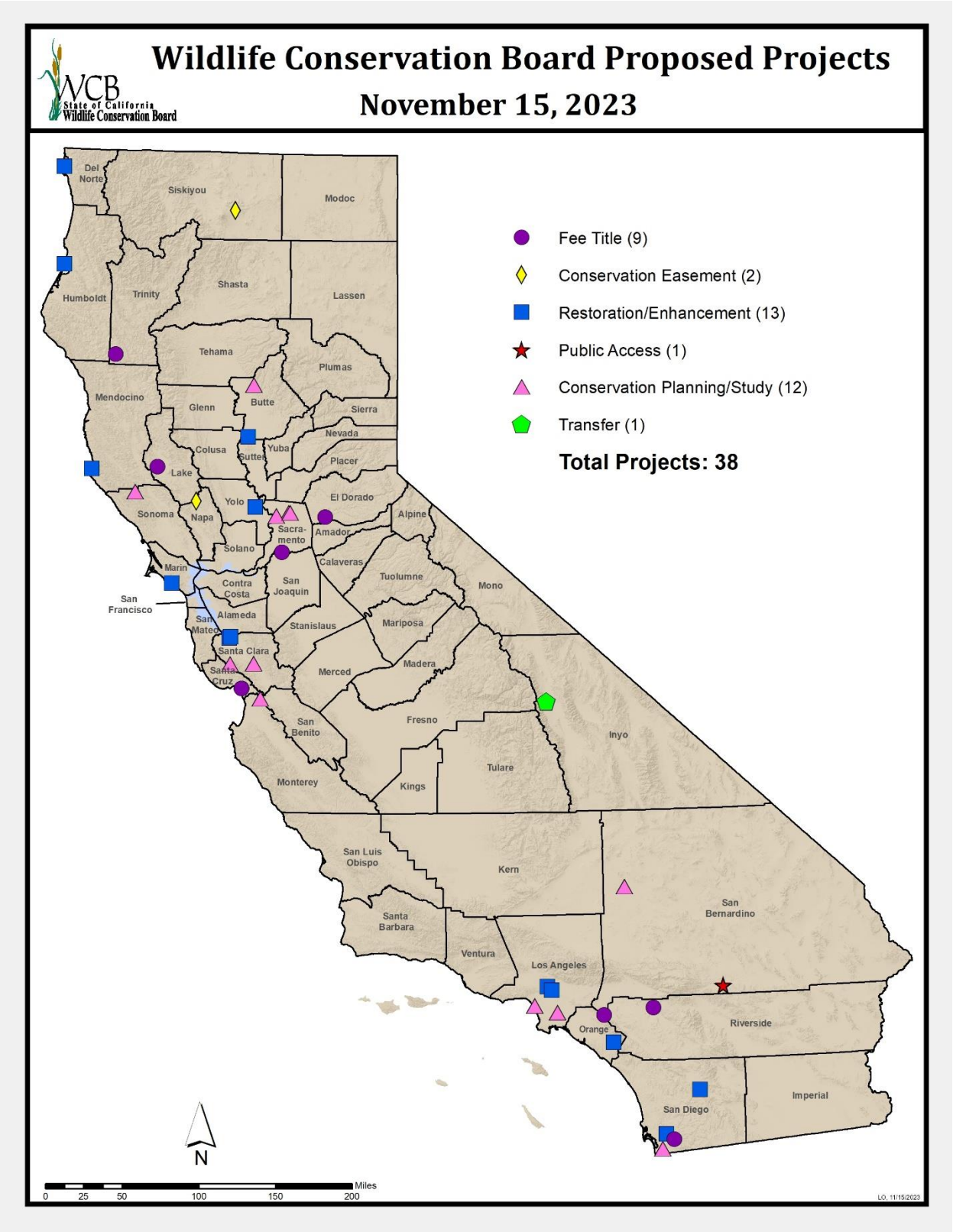
48. Board Member Updates

49. Executive Director's Report

50. 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 NOVEMBER 15, 2023, PROJECTS



ATTACHMENT B – WCB DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

DEFINITIONS

Disadvantaged Community – a community with a median household income less than 80 percent of the statewide average (PRC § 80002[e]).

Severely Disadvantaged Community - a community with a median household income less than 60 percent of the statewide average (PRC § 80002[n]).

ACRONYMS

Americans with Disabilities Act	ADA
Bureau of Land Management	BLM
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	CDFW
California Department of Finance	DOF
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection	CAL FIRE
California Department of General Services	DGS
California Department of Transportation	Caltrans
California Department of Water Resources	DWR
California Endangered Species Act	CESA
California Environmental Quality Act	CEQA
California Fish and Game Commission	FGC
California Natural Resources Agency	CNRA
Conceptual Area Protection Plan	CAPP
Disadvantaged Community	DAC
Enactment Year	EY
Habitat Conservation Plan	HCP
Land Acquisition Evaluation	LAE
Mitigated Negative Declaration	MND
National Environmental Policy Act	NEPA
National Marine Fisheries Service	NMFS
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	NOAA
Natural Community Conservation Plan	NCCP
Negative Declaration	ND
Notice of Determination	NOD
Notice of Exemption	NOE
Resource Conservation District	RCD
Resource Conservation Investment Strategy	RCIS
Severely Disadvantaged Community	SDAC
Sierra Nevada Conservancy	SNC
State Coastal Conservancy	SCC
Sustainable Groundwater Management Act	SGMA
Tahoe National Forest	TNF
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	USFWS
U.S. Forest Service	USFS
Wildlife Conservation Board	WCB

ATTACHMENT C – WCB STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL A. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

Acquire and invest in wildlife habitat and natural areas, and work towards long-term, landscape level conservation, habitat quality and connectivity, and the success of wildlife species and populations.

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

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

A.3 Fund projects that support the implementation of Natural Community Conservation Plans, Habitat Conservation Plans and recovery of listed species.

A.4 Invest in priority conservation projects recommended under CDFW's land acquisition evaluation process or within other conservation plans supported by CDFW.

A.5 Improve transparency and efficiency of WCB and CDFW project evaluation and recommendations to approve or deny applications

A.6 Coordinate acquisition application processes to ensure that WCB project evaluation is unified across programs to the fullest possible extent.

GOAL B. ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT

Work with partners to restore and enhance natural areas, create viable habitat on working lands, manage adaptively, and ensure long-term ecosystem health.

B.1 Invest in projects and landscape areas that help provide resilience in the face of climate change, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife and enhance habitats on working lands.

B.2 Strengthen the grant application process to further highlight the importance of the following factors in project design and selection: robustness and resilience to extreme weather events, ecosystem services (e.g. groundwater recharge, flood reduction, fire prevention, etc.), water quality and quantity, and compatible public use and access.

B.3 Improve transparency and efficiency of WCB and CDFW project evaluation and recommendations to approve or deny applications.

B.4 Expand project monitoring and evaluation of restoration activities to assess long-term project success, moving beyond compliance monitoring.

B.5 Provide opportunities for greater public involvement in restoration projects.

GOAL C. PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION

Leverage WCB investments in programs and projects by expanding opportunities for outdoor wildlife-oriented recreational activities that are compatible with conservation goals.

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

C.2 Document and describe the current public access project evaluation and selection processes and explore the option of establishing a competitive grant making cycle for the Public Access Program.

C.3 Standardize existing project monitoring protocols to facilitate consistent reporting and improved performance management.

C.4 Place greater emphasis on projects that accommodate compatible wildlife-oriented public uses, while supporting urban areas and disadvantaged communities.

GOAL E. Fiscal and Organizational Effectiveness

E.1 Maximize expenditure of remaining bond funds and identify opportunities to leverage existing funds as effectively as possible.

SI 1: CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION, RESILIENCY, AND MITIGATION (PLAN GOALS A, B, AND C)

OBJECTIVE SI 1.1 Invest in at least three wildlife under-or over-crossings each year for the next three years (2019 - 2021), in locations deemed high priority by both transportation and fish and wildlife agencies.

OBJECTIVE SI 1.2 Invest in at least five projects that contribute to connectivity as highlighted in the California Terrestrial Connectivity Map, or linkages as mapped in regional assessments.

OBJECTIVE SI 1.3 Ensure 40 percent of all acquisition and restoration projects are in areas identified as habitat for vulnerable species or as highly resilient to climate change.

OBJECTIVE SI 1.4 Invest in at least five projects that provide long-term measurable carbon sequestration benefits.

OBJECTIVE SI 1.5 Collaboratively develop and publish criteria for addressing catastrophic natural resource events like extreme fire and prolonged drought, for inclusion as priorities in future solicitations.

OBJECTIVE SI 1.6 Collaboratively identify and fund five upper watershed improvement projects each year that have a primary or secondary purpose of providing resilience to climate change

SI 2: BIODIVERSITY ACTIONS (PLAN GOALS A AND B)

OBJECTIVE SI 2.1 Increase habitat for sensitive species to support biodiversity through statewide protection or restoration of oak woodlands, riparian habitat, rangeland, grazing land, and grassland habitat by funding at least 10 projects in each of these WCB programs with at least 25 percent of restoration projects on conserved lands.

OBJECTIVE SI 2.2 Each year, invest in at least three acquisitions and two restoration grants that advance habitat and natural community targets embodied in RCIS, NCCPs, or regional conservation plans.

OBJECTIVE SI 2.3 Implement at least 10 projects each year that enhance stream flow, increase water resiliency and meet priorities in the California Water Action Plan.

OBJECTIVE SI 2.4 Ensure 75 percent of all approved projects meet one or more conservation priorities expressed in the SWAP.

OBJECTIVE SI 2.5 Protect or restore at least 1,000 acres each of riparian, wetlands, and grassland habitats in priority areas as defined in the SWAP.

SI 3: PUBLIC ACCESS AND WILDLIFE-ORIENTED RECREATION (PLAN GOAL C)

OBJECTIVE SI 3.1 Invest in at least five projects providing public access for disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged communities.

OBJECTIVE SI 3.2 Invest in at least five projects providing boating/fishing/hunting access to disadvantaged communities and providing additional facilities for mobility-impaired visitors and/or access compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

OBJECTIVE SI 3.3 Invest in at least 10 projects that provide hunting or fishing opportunities (at least five each).

OBJECTIVE SI 3.4 Invest in at least 10 projects that have a primary or secondary purpose of non-consumptive wildlife recreation, such as bird watching or hiking.

OBJECTIVE SI 3.5 Attend or conduct at least two meetings per year that provide outreach, workshops, and materials to increase visibility of the WCB Public Access Program. At least one should be in a disadvantaged community.

SI 4: ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (PLAN GOAL A, B AND D)

OBJECTIVE SI 4.1 Each year, invest in at least five acquisition or restoration projects that have a demonstrated and measurable upper watershed ecosystem services benefit.

OBJECTIVE SI 4.2 Each year, invest in at least three projects that have a primary purpose of conserving or restoring native pollinator habitat in locations that provide a measurable ecosystem services benefit.

OBJECTIVE SI 4.3 Invest in at least five projects that provide tangible ecosystem services benefits to local lower watershed (urban or rural) communities, and document that benefit.

SI 5: PARTNERSHIPS (PLAN GOALS A, B, C, AND D)

OBJECTIVE SI 5.1 Invest in at least three projects that support state or federal Safe Harbor programs.

OBJECTIVE SI 5.2 Conduct outreach, including meetings or field visits to five new partners per year.

OBJECTIVE SI 5.3 Implement at least three competitive grant solicitations over the next five years that have been coordinated among multiple organizations and are directed at a high priority habitat per WCB program priorities.

OBJECTIVE SI 5.4 Per the USFWS Urban Wildlife Conservation Program, establish a new partnership with one urban community each year to support nature and wildlife connections consistent with WCB programs.

SI 6: WCB ORGANIZATION AND TRANSPAREN-CY (PLAN GOALS D AND E)

OBJECTIVE SI 6.1 By the end of 2020, implement a system to make WCB meetings accessible online.

OBJECTIVE SI 6.2 By the end of 2020, make substantial progress in standardizing solicitation content, criteria, and process, and develop an online application portal for competitive grants.

OBJECTIVE SI 6.3 By the end of 2020, update the WCB website to include current goals, targets, metrics, and conservation priorities for each WCB Program.

OBJECTIVE SI 6.4 By the end of 2020, develop and make mapped data that illustrates WCB projects and their relationship to program conservation objectives available to the public.

OBJECTIVE SI 6.5 Each year, hold at least one conservation partner workshop in a different part of the state, to discuss competitive grant programs and receive feedback.

OBJECTIVE SI 6.6 Sponsor at least five conferences or workshops each year throughout the state and distribute outreach materials about WCB programs.

SI 7: NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP (PLAN GOALS D AND E)

OBJECTIVE SI 7.1 Take the lead to coordinate among the state conservancies and other agencies, regarding habitat-based priorities for upcoming competitive grant solicitations.

OBJECTIVE SI 7.2 Participate in the development and implementation of the natural working lands elements of the State Safeguarding and Scoping Plans.

OBJECTIVE SI 7.3 With CDFW, complete a unified, simplified process to identify CDFW’s acquisition investment priorities and obtain CDFW’s review and endorsement of WCB projects

OBJECTIVE SI 7.4 Participate in statewide policy development efforts to improve fire resiliency and forest management through natural resource protection and restoration.

OBJECTIVE SI 7.5 Refine priority conservation areas for each WCB program (consistent with overall WCB goals), and report progress toward program-specific goals annually or biannually

SI 8: MONITORING AND PROGRAM EVALUATION (PLAN GOAL E)

OBJECTIVE SI 8.1 By 2021, define criteria for effectiveness monitoring by program, habitat or geography.

OBJECTIVE SI 8.2 Through continued implementation of the annual monitoring program, by 2024, cumulatively monitor 20 percent of completed projects, summarize the project compliance results, and post on the WCB website.

OBJECTIVE SI 8.3 By 2024, make the monitoring survey platform accessible on the WCB website for use by project partners.

OBJECTIVE SI 8.4 Include monitoring data in each WCB annual report and list projects by county and by SWAP habitat type.

OBJECTIVE SI 8.5 By 2022, update the WCB 60-year assessment—for WCB's 75th anniversary—to highlight program accomplishments, including the acreage of habitat type preserved and restored.