

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

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NOTICE OF MEETING
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

November 18, 2010
10:00 AM
1/ State Capitol, Room 113
Sacramento, California 95814

ITEM NO.	PAGE NO.
1. Roll Call	1
2. Funding Status — Informational	2
3. Special Project Planning Account — Informational	6
4. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4—17)	7
*5. Approval of Minutes — August 26, 2010	7
*6. Recovery of Funds	7

* Proposed Consent Calendar
1/ These facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities

ITEM NO.		PAGE NO.
*7.	Fund Shift Various Projects To consider fund shifts for various previously approved cooperative projects with the San Joaquin River Conservancy, Department of Fish and Game, City of Fresno, County of Madera, and Ducks Unlimited, Inc. The proposed fund shifts are necessary to meet existing obligations and propose to use funding authorized for the same purpose from a subsequent enactment year appropriation. The purposes of the proposed projects are consistent with the proposed funding shifts. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Section 5096.650(b)(5) and Wildlife Restoration Fund]	\$887,855.00 10
*8.	Hamilton City Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration Glenn County To consider the disposal of a portion of property, the Sacramento River Conservation Area, Expansion 4, 120± acres, funded through a Wildlife Conservation Board grant to The Nature Conservancy, approved by the Board in November of 2001, and to authorize the reuse of proceeds generated by disposal to acquire 104± acres in fee title for the protection of riparian and riverine habitat supporting threatened and endangered species. The purposes of this project are consistent with the funding provided under the original grant approved by the Board in November of 2001 as well as the allocation proposed for this transaction that allow for the protection of threatened and endangered species habitat. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(b/c)(1E)]	\$10,000.00 12
*9.	Loch Lomond Vernal Pool Ecological Reserve Exchange Lake County To consider the acceptance of 1.7± acres and the disposal of 1.4± acres through an exchange of fee title land between the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and a private landowner to expand protection of vernal pool habitat at the Loch Lomond Ecological Reserve, located in the community of the Loch Lomond, in Lake County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the protection of threatened and endangered species habitat. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(b/c)(1E)]	\$25,000.00 16

ITEM NO.		PAGE NO.
*10. Swiss Ranch, Expansion 3 Calaveras County	\$430,000.00	19
<p>To consider the acquisition of a conservation easement for the Department of Fish and Game over 304± acres of land for protection of critical habitat for the migratory Rail Road Flat deer herd, located in the Sierra foothills along Swiss Ranch Road in Calaveras County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the protection of deer range habitat. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(a)]</p>		
*11. Eticuera Creek Watershed Habitat Restoration Napa County	\$515,000.00	22
<p>To consider the allocation for a grant to the Land Trust of Napa County for a cooperative project with the State Coastal Conservancy, U.C. McLaughlin Reserve, the Homestake Mining Company, the Blue Ridge Berryessa Natural Area Conservation Partnership, and the Department of Fish and Game to restore riparian habitat in the Eticuera Creek watershed. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding sources that allows for the enhancement or restoration of riparian habitat located in floodplains and for habitat that provides corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent habitat fragmentation. [Habitat Conservation Fund, (Proposition 117), Section 2786 (e/f)(1E), and the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Section 5096.650]</p>		
*12. Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, American Canyon Napa County	\$10,000.00	25
<p>To consider the acceptance of 352± acres of land for the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) for protection of bay wetlands, as an addition to the DFG's Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, located between the City of American Canyon and the Napa River in Napa County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for protection of wetland habitat within the San Francisco Bay Area. [Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Sections 79572(c)]</p>		

ITEM NO.		PAGE NO.
*13. Insectaries for Pollinators and Farm Biodiversity Sonoma County	\$73,000.00	27
<p>To consider the allocation for a grant to the Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District to restore and enhance wildlife and pollinator habitat by maximizing nesting and food sources for a variety of native bee species on eight privately owned properties located in Sonoma County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for assisting farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration and wildlife protection. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 84), Section 75055(d)(4)]</p>		
*14. Goleta Slough Ecological Reserve Restoration, Augmentation and Change of Scope Santa Barbara County	\$366,000.00	30
<p>To consider the allocation for a funding augmentation and change of scope for a grant to the Land Trust of Santa Barbara County, for a cooperative project with the Army Corps of Engineer and the Federal Aviation Administration to restore and enhance the Department of Fish and Game's Goleta Slough Ecological Reserve. The project is located within the City of Goleta, adjacent and south of the Goleta Airport, in Santa Barbara County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding sources that allow for the restoration of coastal wetlands in southern California. [Habitat Conservation Fund, (Proposition 117), Section 2786(d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley, P-50 SoCal], and Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50) Section 79572(a)]</p>		
*15. James San Jacinto Mountains Reserve Renovation Riverside County	\$248,000.00	34
<p>To consider the allocation for a grant to the Regents of the University of California to purchase and install five new manufactured cabins and one laundry facility, make renovations to two existing buildings, and repair roads at the James San Jacinto Mountains Reserve, located in the San Jacinto Mountain Range approximately 10 miles south of the town of Banning in Riverside County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for grants to the University of California for the Natural Reserve System for the construction and development of facilities that will be used for research and training to improve the management of natural lands and the preservation of California's wildlife resources. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 84), Section 75055(b)(3)]</p>		

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| *16. Peninsular Bighorn Sheep
Riverside County | \$5,000.00 | 36 |
|---|------------|----|

To consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition grant and authorize the use of those funds to acquire 947± acres for the Department of Fish and Game, to protect and enhance existing regional wildlife linkages and habitats for the Peninsular Bighorn Sheep, located west of the community of Oasis, in Riverside County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for grants to protect habitat corridors and prevent habitat fragmentation. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Section 5906.650]

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| *17. East Elliott and
Otay Mesa Regions (Sunroad)
San Diego County | \$5,000.00 | 39 |
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To consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant the federal funds to the City of San Diego to assist with the acquisition of 1± acre of land to protect critical regional wildlife linkages, coastal sage scrub, and to protect and preserve core areas of vernal pool habitat that will enhance the existing Multiple Species Conservation Program and the Natural Community Conservation Plan areas located on the western Otay Mesa, south of Highway 905 and east of Highway 805 in the San Diego city limits. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for grants to implement or assist in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(c)]

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| 18. Cow Creek Conservation Area,
Expansion 2
Shasta County | \$1,340,000.00 | 42 |
|--|----------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to the American Land Conservancy to acquire a conservation easement over 5,868± acres of land, for protection of rangeland, riparian corridors and other significant ecosystems, located north of State Highway 44 approximately 10 miles east of the City of Redding in Shasta County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the protection of wildlife corridors and significant natural landscapes. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Projection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(b)]

ITEM NO.		PAGE NO.
19.	Red Bank Creek Tehama County	\$3,960,000.00 45
	To consider the allocation for a grant to the Northern California Regional Land Trust to acquire conservation easements over two ownerships totaling 7,132± acres for protection of native oak woodland habitat, located approximately 20 miles northwest of the City of Red Bluff in Tehama County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the protection of native oak woodland habitat. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(d)(2)]	
20.	Heart K Ranch Plumas County	\$1,090,000.00 48
	To consider the acquisition of a conservation easement for the Department of Fish and Game over approximately 880± acres for protection of critical habitat for the Sloat Deer herd as well as protection of black oak woodland, montane riparian, wet meadow habitats, located in the Genesee Valley along Genesee Road in Plumas County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the acquisition of deer range, oak woodlands and mountain lion habitat and for the preservation of habitat located within a floodplain or flood corridor. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(a)(1E)]	
21.	Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area, Expansion 6 Butte County	\$1,120,000.00 51
	To consider the acquisition of 222± acres of land for the Department of Fish and Game for the protection of wetland habitat, located approximately five miles west of the City of Biggs in Butte County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the protection of wetland habitat within the inland region of California and for the preservation of wildlife values within a floodplain or flood corridor. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(d)(1E), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program]	

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| 22. | Lower Yuba River, Excelsior, Phase I
Nevada and Yuba Counties | \$3,216,440.00
54 |
|-----|--|----------------------|

To consider the acquisition of 527± acres of land by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) known as the Yuba Narrows Ranch for protection of deer and mountain lion habitat, located within the lower Yuba River watershed, situated between the DFG Daugherty Hills and Spenceville Wildlife Areas, in Nevada and Yuba Counties. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect deer range habitat and for the preservation of wildlife values within a floodplain or flood corridor. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(a)(1E)]

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| 23. | Bruin Ranch Phase I
Placer County | \$4,515,000.00
57 |
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To consider the allocation for a grant to Placer Land Trust for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game, Caltrans and Placer County to acquire 1,773± acres of property to protect habitat for threatened and endangered species, including blue oak woodland habitat and approximately three miles of riparian corridor along the Bear River, located in Placer County. Protection of this property will also allow the connection of a regional trail through previously protected land to Placer County's Hidden Falls Regional Park and Coon Creek. The purposes of this project are consistent with proposed funding source that allows for protection of habitat for threatened and endangered species and habitat corridors, and projects pursuant to the Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Section 5096.650]

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| 24. | Oak Hills Ranch
Yolo County | \$2,296,000.00
60 |
|-----|--------------------------------|----------------------|

To consider the allocation for a grant to the California Rangeland Trust for a conservation easement over 3,316 ± acres of native oak woodlands located south of the community of Dunnigan and north of the town of Esparto in Yolo County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the protection of native oak woodland habitat. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(d)(2)]

ITEM NO.		PAGE NO.
25.	San Joaquin River Parkway, Jensen River Ranch Phase II Construction Fresno County	\$1,982,513.00 63
	To consider the allocation for an interagency agreement with the Department of Water Resources for a cooperative project with the San Joaquin River Conservancy to restore wetland and riparian habitat and construct public access trails on the San Joaquin River Parkway near the junction of Highway 41, City of Fresno, Fresno County. The proposed funding source for this project allows for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of land and water resources. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Section 5096.650(b)(5)]	
26.	Los Vaqueros Ranch Conservation Easement, Phase II Monterey County	\$1,210,000.00 66
	To consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy to acquire a conservation easement over 800± acres of property to protect critical steelhead habitat as well as habitat for sensitive wildlife species including the red-legged frog, yellow-legged frog, western pond turtle and intact populations of native fish, oak woodlands, and grasslands on the west side of Salina Valley along the Arroyo Seco River in Monterey County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, threatened and endangered or fully protected species, and for the preservation of wildlife values within a floodplain or flood corridor. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(b/c)(1E)]	
27.	Santa Clara River Watershed, Totlcom Ventura County	\$2,298,500.00 69
	To consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy, the acceptance of a Recovery Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife; and the authorization to enter into an Agreement to Subgrant to The Nature Conservancy for a cooperative project with the State Coastal Conservancy, Santa Clara River Trustee Council and the Department of Fish and Game to acquire 123± acres of land for the protection of threatened and endangered species and habitat corridors, located south of the City of Ventura in Ventura County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for protection of threatened and endangered species and habitat corridors. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Section 5096.650]]	

ITEM NO.		PAGE NO.
31.	DFG Presentation Conservation and Habitat Mapping This item will cover a presentation by the Department of Fish and Game of two recent complementary mapping and modeling efforts to identify areas of high biological value in the State – Areas of Conservation Emphasis (ACE II) and the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project.	Informational 86
32.	2011 Wildlife Conservation Board Tentative Meeting Schedule	Informational 87

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WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

November 18, 2010
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Room 113
Sacramento, California 95814

FINAL AGENDA ITEMS

1. Roll Call

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS

John McCamman, Chairman
Director, Department of Fish and Game

Karen Finn, Program Budget Manager
Vice, Ana Matosantos, Member
Director, Department of Finance

Jim Kellogg, Member
President, Fish and Game Commission

JOINT LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Senator Fran Pavley
Senator Patricia Wiggling

Assembly Member Jared Huffman
Assembly Member Ira Ruskin

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

John P. Donnelly

2. Funding Status — Informational

(a) 2010-11 Wildlife Restoration Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act	\$1,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-117,000.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$883,000.00

(b) 2010-11 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$20,668,000.00

(c) 2009-10 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-333,783.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$20,334,217.00

(d) 2008-09 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-2,542,490.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$18,125,510.00

(e) 2006-07 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act	\$20,699,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-9,357,844.30</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$11,341,155.70

(f) 2006-07 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act (2010-11 Reappropriation)	\$15,224,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-12,755,109.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$2,468,891.00

(g) 1999-00 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Continuously Appropriated [Sec. 5096.350 (a)(1), (2), (4) & (7)]	\$36,100,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-27,515,085.39</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$8,584,914.61

(h)	2004-05 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund Capital Outlay Budget (2010-11 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$11,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-434,302.00...</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$10,565,698.00
(i)	Chapter 983, Statutes of 2002, Oak Woodlands Conservation Act	
	Budget Act (2009-10 Reappropriation)	\$4,800,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-4,586,689.51</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$213,310.49
(j)	2001-02 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund Capital Outlay Budget	
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 5096.650)	\$273,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-185,331,174.82</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$87,668,825.18
(k)	2003-04 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 Capital Outlay Budget (Section 79568)	
	Budget Act (2010-11 Reappropriation)	\$32,500,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-21,681,299.35</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$10,818,700.65
(l)	2002-03 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Continuously Appropriated (Sections 79565 and 79572), including Chapter 81, Statutes of 2005	\$814,350,000.00
	2003-04 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-21,000,000.00
	2004-05 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-21,000,000.00
	2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-4,000,000.00
	2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-3,100,000.00
	2006-07 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-17,688,000.00
	2007-08 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-5,150,000.00
	2008-09 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-1,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-666,754,469.48</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$74,657,530.52

(m)	2010-11 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$3,380,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$3,380,000.00
(n)	2009-10 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$10,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$10,000,000.00
(o)	2008-09 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$10,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$10,000,000.00
(p)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget (2010-11 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$10,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-75,000.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$9,925,000.00
(q)	2009-10 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (NCCP Section 75055(c))	\$10,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	-0.00
	2010-11 Budget Act Reversion	<u>-3,000,000.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$7,000,000.00

(r)	2009-10 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Chapter 2, Statutes of 2009 (SB 8)	\$24,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$24,000,000.00
(s)	2008-09 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (NCCP Section 75055(c))	\$25,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-1,180,000.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$23,820,000.00
(t)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget (2010-11 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act (NCCP Section 75055(c))	\$25,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-13,887,872.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$11,112,128.00
(u)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(1)), (2010-11 Reappropriation)	\$14,293,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-8,464,968.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$5,828,032.00
(v)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(2)), (2010-11 Reappropriation)	\$14,293,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-5,378,444.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$8,914,556.00
(w)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(4)), (2010-11 Reappropriation)	\$4,762,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-1,722,600.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$3,039,400.00

- (x) 2006-07 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget

Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055a)	\$164,700,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-14,490,000.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$150,210,000.00
Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055(b))	\$123,525,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-50,762,633.50</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$72,762,366.50

RECAP OF FUND BALANCES

Wildlife Restoration Fund (a)	\$883,000.00
Habitat Conservation Fund (b), (c), (d) and (e)	\$70,468,882.70
Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (f) and (g)	\$11,053,805.61
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (h), (i) and (j)	\$98,447,833.67
Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (k) and (l)	\$95,567,185.94
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (m), (n), (o), (p), (q), (r), (s), (t), (u), (v), (w) and (x)	\$339,991,482.50

RECAP OF NATURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT ACT OF 2000

Chapter 113, Statutes of 2000 and Chapter 715, Statutes of 2004 Tax credits awarded through June 30, 2008	\$48,598,734.00
Chapter 220, Statutes of 2009 (effective January 1, 2010) Tax credits awarded	\$0.00

3. Special Project Planning Account — Informational

The Board has historically used a special project account to provide working funds for staff evaluation (appraisals, engineering, preliminary title reports, etc.) of proposed projects. Upon the Board's approval of a project, all expenditures incurred and recorded in the Special Project Planning Account are transferred to the Board approved project account which then reduces the Special Project Planning Account expenditures. This procedure provides a revolving account for the pre-project expenses.

Some appropriations now made to the Board do not include a specific budgeted planning line item appropriation necessary to begin a project without prior

Board authorization. Pre-project costs are a necessary expenditure in most all capital outlay projects. The Special Project Planning Account is available to be used for these costs.

The Board, at its May 6, 1986 meeting, authorized the Executive Director to use up to 1% of a budgeted appropriation to set up and maintain an appropriate planning account with the provision it would be reported to the Board as an informational item.

Accordingly, a planning account has been set up as follows:

Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Fund.....	\$35,000.00
Habitat Conservation Fund.....	\$35,000.00

4. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4—17)

*5. Approval of Minutes — August 26, 2010

*6. Recovery of Funds

The following projects previously authorized by the Board are now completed, and some have balances of funds that can be recovered and returned to their respective funds. It is recommended that the following totals be recovered and that the projects be closed.

\$8,881.83 to the **Habitat Conservation Fund**
\$0.00 to the **Wildlife Restoration Fund**
\$1,191,838.99 to the **California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe
 Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection
 Fund**
\$43,795.21 to the **Water Security, Clean Drinking Water,
 Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002**
\$735.00 to the **Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and
 Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal
 Protection Fund of 2006**

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND

Montna Farms Wetland Restoration, Sutter County

Allocated	\$150,000.00
Expended	<u>-149,635.17</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$364.83

Truckee River Wildlife Area, Gray Creek Canyon Unit, Nevada County

Allocated	\$15,000.00
Expended	<u>-6,483.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$8,517.00

Total Habitat Conservation Fund **\$8,881.83**

WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND

Kings River Fishing Access, Fresno County

Allocated	\$11,824.00
Expended	<u>-11,824.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Total Wildlife Restoration Fund **\$0.00**

CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND

California Fisheries Restoration Projects - 2007, Chorro Creek Floodplain and Riparian Restoration, San Luis Obispo County

Allocated	\$1,157,073.00
Expended	<u>-158.50</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$1,153,231.50

Eastern Mojave Desert Springs Habitat Restoration, San Bernardino County

Allocated	\$43,000.00
Expended	<u>-4,075.01</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$38,924.99

Kings River Fishing Access, Fresno County

Allocated	\$112,176.00
Expended	<u>-112,176.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Pacifica Fishing Pier Improvements, San Mateo County

Allocated	\$500,252.00
Expended	<u>-500,252.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Total California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund **\$1,191,838.99**

WATER SECURITY, CLEAN DRINKING WATER, COASTAL AND BEACH PROTECTION FUND OF 2002

Loch Lomond Marina Intertidal Enhancement, Marin County

Allocated	\$207,775.00
Expended	<u>-163,979.79</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$43,795.21

Total Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 **\$43,795.21**

SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006

Iron Mountain Wildlife Area, Expansion 4, San Diego County

Allocated	\$15,000.00
Expended	<u>-14,265.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$735.00

Total Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 **\$735.00**

*7. Fund Shift, Various Projects
Fresno, Madera and Monterey Counties

\$887,855.00

This proposal is to consider various fund shifts for six previously approved San Joaquin River (SJR) Conservancy and Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) projects. The cooperative projects involve the SJR Conservancy, Department of Fish and Game, City of Fresno, County of Madera, and Ducks Unlimited, Inc. The proposed fund shifts are necessary to meet existing Grant Agreement obligations and will utilize funding authorized for the same purpose from a subsequent enactment year appropriation.

The table below outlines the fund shifts for the previously approved cooperative projects which include five projects for the SJR Conservancy from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40) and one project for the WCB from the Wildlife Restoration Fund (WRF).

Grant Agreement	Grantee	WCB Approval Date*	Project Name	County	Fund Shift Amount (Maximum)
WC-2043TC	City of Fresno	11/17/05	SJR Parkway, Lewis S. Eaton Trail, Friant Road Segment	Fresno	\$140,000.00
WC-6084TC	County of Fresno	05/24/07	SJR Parkway, Lost Lake Regional Park Master Plan	Fresno	\$223,445.00
WC-7019TC	SJR Conservancy	08/23/07	SJR Parkway, Lewis S. Eaton Trail River West CEQA	Fresno	\$125,600.00
WC-7056BT	Department of Fish and Game	02/20/08	SJ Hatchery Public Access, Phase I, Preconstruction Planning & Design	Fresno	\$187,500.00
WC-8004BT	County of Madera	05/22/08	SJR Parkway, River West-Madera Restoration Planning & Environmental Review	Madera	\$37,100.00
WC-9022AL	Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	05/27/10	Moss Landing Wildlife Area Public Access	Monterey	\$174,210.00
Total (Maximum Amount)					\$887,855.00

* The project descriptions for the previously approved items may be viewed at www.wcb.ca.gov in the WCB Meeting Minutes for the respective Board meeting.

The fund shifts for the SJR Conservancy projects are necessary as the Grant Agreements require no cost time extensions in order for the Grantee's to fulfill

existing obligations. The no cost time extensions are due, in part, to the Pooled Money Investment Account (PMIA) bond freeze of December 2008 which recently lifted. As a result of the PMIA freeze, the Grantee's work was either slowed or stopped by the Grantor until funding for the project allocations could be secured from up front bond sale proceeds. The current allocations for these Grantee obligations are due to revert at the end of the fiscal year.

With regard to the Moss Landing Wildlife Area Public Access project, the fund shift is necessary due to an accounting error wherein a previous approved WCB project allocation was paid from a later year appropriation from the same fund source for the same purpose. The error was discovered during reconciliation and within one week of release of the monthly Agency Reconciliation Report. A Correction Memorandum was immediately sent to the State Controllers Office (SCO); however, the SCO was unable to revive the reverted appropriation. This unfortunate situation has left a cash shortage in the appropriation from which the Moss Landing Wildlife Area Public Access project was funded requiring the WCB to fund shift a part of this Grantee obligation to the current fiscal year WRF appropriation established for the same purpose.

The table outlines the maximum amount proposed for the fund shift. The amount of the shift will be based on the unliquidated agreement balance at the time of the fund shift. A revised Funding Certification will be prepared for each Grant Agreement and submitted to the SCO. The fund shifts will utilize funding authorized for the same purpose from a subsequent fiscal year appropriation. The shifted amounts from the previous WCB allocations will be recovered and returned to their respective fund sources; therefore, the net effect of the project fund shift on the WCB allocation for the project is zero.

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the fund shifts as proposed; allocate up to \$713,645.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Section 5096.650(b)(5); allocate up to \$174,210.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

- *8. Hamilton City Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration
Glenn County \$10,000.00

This proposal is to consider the disposal of 120± acres of a larger 482± acre property located in the Sacramento River Conservation Area, Expansion 4 (Expansion 4), and to authorize the reuse of the proceeds to acquire 104± acres in fee title for the protection of riparian and riverine habitat supporting threatened and endangered species. The property was acquired with a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC), which was approved by WCB in November 2001.

LOCATION

The disposal property and proposed acquisition property (Stiles Ranch) are located approximately 10 miles west of Chico and southeast of the Hamilton City, on the west side of the Sacramento River in Glenn County. Both properties are improved with orchards and are located outside the immediate levee system of the Sacramento River. Various governmental agencies and nonprofits own property within the vicinity, including TNC, Department of Fish and Game (DFG), California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The DFG's Sacramento River Wildlife Area (SRWA) is located further east of Expansion 4, along the Sacramento River. SRWA is 1,078± acres in size and was acquired in a number of separate transactions between the late eighties and early nineties. USFWS holdings in the area include the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge (SRNWR), located immediately north of Stiles Ranch property. Immediately east of the Stiles Ranch property is the Bidwell - Sacramento River State Park.

The Expansion 4 property lies on the protected side of the J levee, outside the main floodplain of the Sacramento River. When Expansion 4 was presented to the Board in 2000 for funding, it was anticipated the new setback levee would run through the middle of the Expansion 4, from north to south. The portion of the Expansion 4 located on the river side of the levee would be restored to riparian habitat and the portion outside the levee would be excess and considered for disposal.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Since the early 2000s, the WCB has approved six grants for acquisitions and expansions at its meetings under the title of the Sacramento River Conservation Area (SCRA). The WCB's grant to acquire Expansion 4 was one of these. The SCRA acquisitions provide protection of riparian habitat for threatened and endangered species and public access, as well as assistance in the implementation of the Hamilton City Flood Damage and Ecosystem Restoration project (Flood and Ecosystem Project).

The two main objectives of the Flood and Ecosystem Project are to expand the floodplain to create a more natural hydrology, increasing riverine and riparian habitat and provide an improved level of flood protection for Hamilton City. The riparian areas will provide an important seasonal habitat for migratory birds, waterfowl, native amphibians and salmonids. This includes a number of federal and State listed threatened and endangered species, such as the western yellow-billed cuckoo, giant garter snake, greater sandhill crane, bank swallow, western pond turtle and Swainson's hawk. Improved riverine habitat will provide improved spawning areas for the central valley steelhead and winter-run Chinook salmon. With regard to Expansion 4, the Flood and Ecosystem Project essentially called for the removal of a private levee, referred to as the J levee, and construction of a new (setback) levee further away from the river.

At this time, the current configuration of the Setback Levee Project has been established so that excess portion of Expansion 4 can be determined. Part of this proposal is for TNC to dispose of the excess 120± acres of Expansion 4 and reuse the proceeds from this disposal to assist in the acquisition of additional property along the Sacramento River. The acquisition will further implement the Flood and Ecosystem Project. The Stiles Ranch property is located within the boundary area of the Flood and Ecosystem Project and will allow for the construction of the new setback levee and the further restoration of riparian habitat within the newly expanded floodplain area of the Sacramento River.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition of this project is being made under the Land Acquisition Program at WCB. The Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the WCB's original enabling legislation, the Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 (Fish and Game Code Section 1300 et seq.) to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this program, acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG, which will evaluate the biological values of property. In this particular case the DFG, as a member of the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum (SRCAF), authorized acquisition of properties lying within the boundary of the purview of the SRCAF.

The SRCAF was established from Senate Bill 1086, passed by the State Legislature in 1986, calling for development of a management plan to protect, restore and enhance fisheries and riparian habitat along the Sacramento River and its tributaries along the 222 miles of the Sacramento River between Keswick and Verona. The SRCAF is governed by a board of directors that includes both private landowners and public interest appointees from each of the seven involved counties and an appointee of the Natural Resources Agency. The SRCAF is advised by a panel of representatives from three State agencies: the Department of Water Resources, DFG and the Reclamation Board; and three federal agencies: the Army Corps of Engineers, the USFWS

and the Bureau of Reclamation. Both proposed projects have been presented to the SRCAF Board as informational items.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

TNC and its partners, including the USFWS, the DFG, the WCB, and stakeholders participating in the SRCAF, have undertaken the largest riparian restoration project in the United States. The goal is to restore a continuous 100-mile stretch of ecologically viable riparian habitat to flood-prone lands along the river between Red Bluff and Colusa. On some sites the river will revegetate its banks and meander through the natural process of winter flooding and deposition. On other sites, TNC is contracting with local farmers to plant native trees and shrubs, pumping money into the local economy and helping to generate interest and involvement in local communities in the fate of the river ecosystem.

TNC, the USFWS, the DFG, and the WCB have acquired 14,000 acres along the river. Three thousand acres have been restored thus far to native riparian forest.

TNC intends to manage the properties in the immediate future, with the possibility of combining Expansion 4 with the adjacent SRWA, Pine Creek Unit. The Stiles Ranch property could potentially be added to the SRNWR.

TERMS

The grant for Expansion 4 provides that the Grantee, TNC, may dispose or transfer ownership of all or a portion of the property with the approval of the WCB Executive Director. The Executive Director has authorized the disposal of the excess portions of Expansion 4. Those proceeds are to be held in an escrow account. If approved by the Board, the funds will be used to help acquire the 104± acre Stiles Ranch property. The newly acquired Stiles Ranch property will also fall under the terms of the grant agreement and a Notice of Unrecorded Grant referring back to the original agreement will be recorded on the property. If the Board does not approve, then the funds will be returned to the WCB. The remaining portions of Expansion 4 will remain encumbered by the grant terms of the original agreement.

It is understood both the value of the disposed portion of Expansion 4 and the purchase price of the Stiles Ranch property will be based on the fair market value appraisals, approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) on August 26, 2010 (Expansion 4, Vereschagin property), and September 13, 2010 (Stiles Ranch property).

The terms and conditions of the existing grant still require staff of the WCB to review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account

established for the acquisition and disposal of the two subject properties. In the event of breach of the grant terms, the WCB can encumber the properties with a conservation easement and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Disposal of Expansion 4 (dry side)	\$672,581.00
Purchase Stile Ranch Property	- 934,257.00
TNC contribution (via DWR grant)	<u>261,676.00</u>
TOTAL	\$0.00
Other Project-related Costs:	\$10,000.00
<u>TOTAL WCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$10,000.00</u>

It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including DGS review costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786 (b/c)(1E) that provides funding for protection of threatened and endangered species within floodplains and is consistent with the objectives of this project. The original funding source used for Expansion 4 was the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786 (b/c) that provides funding for protection of threatened and endangered species and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as 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. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The Department of Fish and Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for approval

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$10,000.00 from Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786 (b/c)(1E) for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

- *9. Loch Lomond Vernal Pool \$25,000.00
Ecological Reserve Exchange
Lake County

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of 1.7± acres and the disposal of 1.4± acres through an exchange of fee title land between the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and a private landowner to expand protection of vernal pool habitat at the Loch Lomond Ecological Reserve (Reserve). The proposed exchange will complete the DFG's acquisition of the complete vernal pool while disposing of property not related to the protection of critical habitat. The exchange will ensure that the total vernal pool is protected from unauthorized use but will be available for visits by schoolchildren and researchers.

LOCATION

The subject property is located adjacent to the community of Loch Lomond, along the north side of State Highway 175 corridor, within the Big Canyon/ Putah Creek Watershed, in Central Lake County. The area consists of vernal pool habitat, healthy, large conifers, black oak, and an understory of manzanita, mountain-mahogany and ceanothus. Most of the surrounding development is rural residential with some small commercial development in the vicinity.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed exchange will complete the DFG's acquisition and protection of the intended vernal pool habitat within the Reserve. The Reserve was created by three prior acquisitions, totaling approximately 13 acres. The exchange will increase the area to 14± acres and complete the last piece necessary to provide full protection of vernal pool complex. Currently there are plans to construct a perimeter fence around the entire project area once the exchange is completed. The disposal area was acquired under one of the prior acquisitions, and has been reviewed by DFG and determined not to contain any significant habitat values.

A survey of the subject property was completed by licensed staff from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire). The survey was given to the real estate appraiser and will be used to record a new parcel map for the area if the project is approved. The subject property contains a Northern Ash Flow Vernal Pool and is one of two protected in the Napa-Lake County region. It contains rare, endemic vernal pool plants, including button-celery, many flowered navarretia, few-flowered navarretia, and Konocti manzanita. Acquisition of the property will also increase the public's educational opportunities, with educational field trips and access provided under the direction of DFG staff.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed exchange is being made under the Land Acquisition Program at WCB. The Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the WCB’s original enabling legislation, the Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 (Fish and Game Code Section 1300 et seq.), which gives the WCB the authority to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this program, acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG, which evaluates the biological values of property and whether or not to recommend it for funding.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The maintenance, conservation, security and caretaker services on the property will be managed by the DFG’s North Central Region staff. The DFG already has the fencing materials needed to enclose the property, and installation will be handled by the DFG’s staff. Any additional costs associated with this project will be nominal and absorbed under the current operation and maintenance budget for the Reserve.

TERMS

The property owner has agreed to trade the property for a portion of the existing ecological reserve. Both properties were appraised for \$67,000.00 by a local independent appraiser, and the appraisals were reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The terms and conditions of the proposed exchange agreement provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, exchange documents, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to recordation of the deeds transferring title to the properties.

PROJECT FUNDING

This project is an even exchange. There are no capital costs for this project.

Other project-related costs: \$25,000.00

TOTAL WCB Allocation **\$25,000.00**

It is estimated that \$25,000.00 will be needed for internal project-related expenses, including title insurance, fifty percent of the escrow fees, appraisal review costs by the DGS and the survey costs incurred by the CalFire.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(b/c)(1E), that allows for the protection of habitat for threatened and endangered species and preservation of wildlife values within a floodplain or flood corridors and is consistent with this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and under Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and habitat. Subject to approval by the WCB, a Notice of Exception will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$25,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(b/c)(1E), for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

*10. Swiss Ranch, Expansion 3
Calaveras County

\$430,000.00

This proposal is to consider the acquisition by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) of a conservation easement over 304± acres to maintain and protect unfragmented habitat in Calaveras County for the migratory Rail Road Flat deer herd, protection of oak woodland, hardwood-conifer, mixed chaparral, and riparian habitats for black bear, mountain lion, and bobcat, and contribute to linkages and corridors between upper and lower Sierra habitat. The DFG will hold and monitor the conservation easement.

LOCATION

This privately owned property is located in central Calaveras County, along Swiss Ranch Road approximately 18± miles northeast of San Andreas, between the communities of Mountain House and Rail Road Flat. The property is within the approved Railroad Flat Deer Winter Range Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The Board allocated funding in 1985, 1988 and 1998 for the purpose of acquiring conservation easements on lands immediately south and west of the subject property. Last year, the property owner donated a conservation easement to Calaveras County over a separate 197± acres immediately east of this property thereby completing a linkage between Eagle Ridge to the immediate west with federal forest and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land to the immediate east. The BLM land extends to federal forest land to its east and south with DFG managed Sheep Ranch Wildlife Area. In close proximity, but non-contiguous, are the Calaveras Big Trees State Park and more federal forest land to the east and southeast.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This conservation easement will preserve and protect in perpetuity migratory deer habitat, oak woodland, hardwood-conifer, mixed chaparral, and riparian habitats for black bear, mountain lion, and bobcat. The conservation easement will provide habitat corridors and connectivity between adjacent lands that have been preserved for conservation purposes. The key species benefiting from this proposed conservation easement are migrant California mule deer, with the entire property providing winter habitat forage for large numbers of migrant deer. The ranch also supports a variety of other wildlife, including black bear, mountain lion, bobcat, coyote, and California quail. Other species that will benefit from the acquisition include ringtail cats and golden eagles.

According to the DFG's Railroad Flat deer herd management plan, 75 percent of the winter range of this herd is privately owned. Land uses in the area are gradually changing from large acreage cattle ranches to small acreage ranchettes, potentially reducing the property's wildlife values, making public protection critical to protection of this herd.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition of this project is being made under the Land Acquisition Program at WCB. The Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the WCB’s original enabling legislation, the Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 (Fish and Game Code Section 1300 et seq.) to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this program, acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG evaluating the biological values of property through development of a Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The CAPP is then submitted to DFG’s Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and approval and later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

This project provides the DFG with an opportunity to protect critical habitat, benefiting a host of wildlife species, while incurring very little management costs. It is estimated that 1-2 person days per year would be needed to conduct an onsite inspection to monitor the conservation easement area. DFG will hold title to the easement and will monitor the property on an annual basis to ensure that conservation easement conditions are being met. Monitoring costs will be covered and absorbed under the current regional operation and maintenance (O&M) budget.

TERMS

The property owner has agreed to sell the conservation easement to the DFG for the Department of General Services (DGS) approved appraised fair market value of \$410,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed property acquisition agreement provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. Additionally, DFG staff will be responsible for monitoring the property at least once annually.

PROJECT FUNDING

The WCB will fund the entire purchase price of the easement which is \$410,000.00.

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$410,000.00
Other Project-related Costs	<u>20,000.00</u>
<u>TOTAL WCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$430,000.00</u>

It is estimated that an additional \$20,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including appraisal costs, DGS review costs, and escrow

fees bringing the total recommended allocation for this proposal to \$430,000.00.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786 (a) that provides funding for protection of deer, mountain lion, and oak habitats and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as 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. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$430,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(a), to cover the acquisition and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

- *11. Eticuera Creek Watershed Habitat Restoration \$515,000.00
Napa County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Land Trust of Napa County for a partnership project with the State Coastal Conservancy, the U.C. McLaughlin Reserve, the Blue Ridge Berryessa Natural Area Conservation Partnership, and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to restore riparian habitat in the Eticuera Creek Watershed.

LOCATION

The project is located in the Eticuera Creek Watershed between the town of Knoxville and the north shore of Lake Berryessa in Napa County. The project is located on three separate ownerships: property owned by the Homestead Mining Company (HMC), but managed through long-term agreement by the University of California McLaughlin Reserve (McLaughlin), a second portion that is privately owned, and the remainder of the project is on the Knoxville Wildlife Area, owned by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Eticuera Creek Watershed has for millenia supported riparian habitat, one of the most important habitats for wildlife in California. Statewide, most of this habitat type has been impacted by human activities through development, agriculture, and flood control. This particular watershed has been altered primarily by mining and the introduction exotic invasive plant species. Exotic invasive plant species like tamarisk, one of the main targets of this project, out-compete native plants and provide little wildlife habitat value. In some areas of the State, tamarisk has formed a complete monoculture in riparian corridors, excluding all native vegetation.

This project is a watershed-wide endeavor addressing multiple issues with multiple partners in a four pronged approach:

1. Knoxville Creek at the Knoxville town-site has been heavily impacted by both gold and mercury mining. While no longer present, a mining town was once located on the banks of Knoxville Creek and, as a consequence, nearly all riparian vegetation was removed. Later, mine tailings were disposed of along the creek banks. HMC, the current owner of the area, is in the process of moving these mine tailings away from the Knoxville Creek channel to protect water quality in the creek. While HMC owns the property, it is managed through long-term agreement by McLaughlin, and HMC is not required to replant with native plants or control invasive species. WCB funding will allow for the enhancement of the aquatic and habitats by eliminating exotic invasive species on the site and planting both woody and herbaceous native riparian species on 21.6 acres of floodplain created by the removal of the tailings. Additional riparian vegetation will be installed along 3500 lineal feet of creek channel. The floodplain plants will be

2. Portions of Knoxville Creek at the Knoxville town site have become heavily incised and disconnected from the floodplain as a result of human activity along the creek. A hydrologic study will be implemented to identify solutions to restore more natural creek morphology and function, which will be implemented in future projects.
3. In 2002 and 2006, the Board funded a two-phase project to remove tamarisk from Knoxville and Elicuera Creeks on the Knoxville Wildlife Area. This project will continue that work on other creeks and properties in the watershed. These will include Elicuera Creek, Adams Creek and Nevada Creek on the Gamble Ranch and Long Canyon Creek, Zim Zim Creek and Nevada Creek on the Knoxville Wildlife Area. In addition, Elicuera Creek on the newly acquired Todd Ranch portion of the wildlife area will also be treated.
4. Barbed goatgrass, an exotic invasive grass, has begun to invade the Elicuera Creek watershed. This species is of particular concern because it can invade serpentine seeps, a rare wetland type with endemic plants that would be highly susceptible to such an invasion. This has already occurred in nearby watersheds. This portion of the project will control the invasion in its early stages, before it is irreversible. Preliminary surveys and mapping have been done in anticipation of herbicide treatments to be funded by this grant.

WCB PROGRAM

This project is funded through the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program and meets program's goal of increasing riparian habitat across California by implementing riparian habitat restoration projects.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

According to the Grant Agreement, signed by both the Grantee and Landowners, the five-year implementation period is to be followed by long-term management of the project by the Grantee for riparian habitat values for at least 25 years. Furthermore, all areas where tamarisk, barbed goatgrass and other invasives were removed by this project will be monitored for reinvasion and retreated when necessary.

This project will meet the objectives of the Knoxville Wildlife Area Management Plan, The U.C. McLaughlin Reserve Management Plan and the Blue Ridge Berryessa Natural Area Conservation Framework.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$515,000.00
State Coastal Conservancy	118,113.00
Homestake Mining Company	100,000.00
Other Partners	<u>92,500.00</u>
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$825,613.00</u>

Project costs will be for project management; hydrologic assessment and mapping; planning and design; site preparation; weed control; planting; irrigation and plant protection; maintenance; monitoring/evaluation; replanting; and project administration.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding sources for this project are the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786 (e/f)(1E) and the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Section 5096.650. Respectively, these sources provide funding for the protection, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat located in floodplains and for habitat that provides corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent habitat fragmentation. They are consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The DFG, as lead agency, has prepared and filed a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project and staff has prepared written findings based upon the Mitigated Negative Declaration. Subject to approval by the WCB, a Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$370,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786 (e/f)(1E) and \$145,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Section 5096.650; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

- *12. Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, \$10,000.00
American Canyon
Napa County

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of 352± acres of land for the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) for protection of bay wetlands, as an addition to the DFG's Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area. The property contains scarce salt marsh habitat that support a number of waterfowl and shorebirds species in the San Francisco North Bay area, including a number of listed species.

LOCATION

The subject property is located east of the Napa River, along Eucalyptus Drive, on the western edge of the City of American Canyon, in Napa County. The property abuts up to the northeast edge of the DFG Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area (Wildlife Area) at an area referred to as the American Canyon Unit salt plant site. Portions of the project site are encumbered with an easement for development and connection with the San Francisco Bay Trail in Napa County that runs along the eastern border of the Wildlife Area, north toward the City of Napa.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The original site was acquired from the Port of Oakland, with funding provided by a CALFED grant, requiring at least 70% of the property be deeded to DFG. The other 30% is being retained by the City of American Canyon as public open space. The property is being accepted by the DFG and will be assembled into the Wildlife Area. The property is predominately bay wetlands, and there are no plans for any future restoration. The habitat on the property will support waterfowl and shorebird species, including California clipper rail, California black rail, salt marsh yellow throat and western snowy plover.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition of this project is being made under the Land Acquisition Program at WCB. The Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the WCB's original enabling legislation, the Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 (Fish and Game Code Section 1300 et seq.), which gives the WCB the authority to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this program, acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG, which evaluates the biological values of property and whether or not to recommend it for funding.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The property will be assembled into the Wildlife Area and managed as tidal wetlands by the DFG. There are no pumps or hard structures on site requiring maintenance. The bay trail will be managed by the City of American Canyon. Because the property is primarily a wetland in its current condition, and is being

assembled to wetland areas, any operation and maintenance costs are expected to be nominal and easily absorbed under the current operating and maintenance budget of the Wildlife Area.

TERMS

The original CALFED grant used to acquire the property was for \$2,600,000.00. The grant funding terms allows for the protection, restoration and enhancement wetlands and the transfer of the property to DFG. Staff has reviewed the title documents and conferred with DFG staff, and have agreed to accept the property subject to the terms of the CALFED grant agreement.

PROJECT FUNDING

This is a non-cash transfer from the City of American Canyon to DFG. The purchase price is \$0.00.

Other Project-Related Costs:	\$10,000.00
<u>TOTAL WCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$10,000.00</u>

It is estimated that \$10,000.00 will be needed for internal project-related expenses, including title insurance, escrow fees, and review charges by the Department of General Services.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Section 79572(c), which allows for protection of wetland habitat within the San Francisco Bay Area and is consistent with this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and under Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and habitat. Subject to approval by the WCB, a Notice of Exception will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$10,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Section 79572(c), for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

- *13. Insectaries for Pollinators and Farm Biodiversity \$73,000.00
Sonoma County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District (Grantee) for a cooperative project with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Sonoma County Fish and Game Commission, the Community Alliance with Family Farmers, Farm Stewards and the landowners to restore and enhance wildlife and pollinator habitat by maximizing nesting and food sources for a variety of native bee species on eight privately owned properties located in Sonoma County.

LOCATION

The project is located in western Sonoma County in the Green Valley Creek Watershed, Salmon Creek Watershed, and Blucher Creek Watershed between the towns of Santa Rosa and Bodega Bay.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Native bees and other beneficial insects play an integral role in California farm industries, pollinating one-third of all food crops and numerous native plant species that compose the State's agricultural and biological diversity. Despite their significance, populations of native and European bees throughout the U.S. have crashed dramatically over the past several decades. Concerned for both their own farm productivity and the vitality of the landscape around them, innovative producers have sought to restore and enhance pollinator habitat and attract bees back to their farms.

This project represents a collaborative effort with the Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District (GRRCD), the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF), and Farm Stewards to create and improve substantial pollinator habitat on eight working farms in western Sonoma County. The partners will work with participating landowners to develop and implement Pollinator Farm Plans. These plans are comprehensive property assessments that will be designed to maximize nesting and food sources for a variety of native bee species while providing secondary benefits such as pest management, improved water and soil quality, and harvestable products. Efforts will focus on innovative applications of insectary habitat creation, such as drought-tolerant hedgerows on non-irrigated rangeland, and an emphasis on non-Pierce's disease host plants for vineyards. Particular emphasis will be given to habitat creation for native bee species, which have been shown to be resilient to many of the current threats to managed honeybees, and essential to many plant species throughout California. The project will include the creation of field borders, nesting structures, appropriate cover crop mixes, contour buffer strips and drift barriers, critical area planting, filter strips, riparian and farm pond revegetation, and pest management practices. Plantings will be specifically designed to provide year-round pollen and nectar sources and shelter for native bees and other pollinators, while also harboring other beneficial predatory insects that

control crop pests. Planting areas will also provide essential wildlife corridors for birds and mammals, while improving riparian and pond habitat for aquatic species.

The project will take place on eight privately owned farms that represent a range of agricultural land uses, including one conventional vineyard, one organic vineyard, one organic orchard, two organic vegetable crop farms, a diverse farm including an organic vineyard, and two grazed rangelands. The plantings will be installed to create insectary habitat throughout the eight properties, using available spaces that will expand riparian areas and provide wildlife corridors along fence lines.

WCB PROGRAM

This project is funded through the Ecosystem Restoration on Agricultural Lands Program and meets program’s goal of assisting farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration and wildlife protection.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Grantee has agreed to manage and maintain the facilities for 25 years, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the grant. If at any time during the life of the project, the grantee is unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, they will 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:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$73,000.00
Natural Resources Conservation Service	71,520.00
Sonoma County Fish and Wildlife Commission	7,495.00
Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District	8,400.00
Landowners	<u>42,000.00</u>
<u>TOTAL Project Cost</u>	<u>\$202,415.00</u>

Project costs will be for planting and irrigation, nursery plants, materials, vegetation maintenance, and project signs; and project design, construction supervision, and administration.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 84), Section 75055(d)(4). This funding allows for assisting farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration and wildlife protection, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

This restoration project is exempt under Sections 15304 of the CEQA Guidelines because the project will consist of a minimal amount of earthmoving and there will be no negative impacts to the physical environment that would reduce its ability to produce native or agricultural plants. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$73,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(d)(4); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

- *14. Goleta Slough Ecological Reserve Restoration, \$366,000.00
Augmentation and Change of Scope
Santa Barbara County

This project is to consider the allocation for a funding augmentation and change of scope for a grant to the Land Trust of Santa Barbara County (LTSBC) for a cooperative project with the Army Corps of Engineer and the Federal Aviation Administration to restore and enhance the Department of Fish and Game's Goleta Slough Ecological Reserve (Reserve).

LOCATION

The project is located within the City of Goleta, adjacent to and south of the Goleta Airport, in Santa Barbara County. The Reserve area was once part of an estuarine ecosystem connected directly to the tidal influences of the Goleta Slough. During World War II, portions of the Reserve were filled in and developed, restricting tidal action and effectively eliminating the estuarine areas. More recently, the Reserve area was purchased by the California Department of Transportation as a potential highway route. Plans for the route were abandoned and the property was later conveyed to the DFG. Today, the Reserve functions mostly as a freshwater wetland and upland habitat, trapping rain and run-off water from surrounding development.

The Reserve is long and triangular in shape, bounded by the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) on the south, Goleta Airport property to the west and the airport and light industrial uses to the north. A major thoroughfare, Los Carneros Road, runs north-south essentially through the middle of the reserve, dividing it into two main units connected by culverts, referred to as the West Unit and East Units.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The goal of project is to enhance and expand wetland habitat values throughout the 34.41 acres owned by the DFG in the Reserve by: (a) creating seven acres of new wetlands, (b) removing non-native plant species; (c) improving hydrologic conditions to sustain existing wetlands; (d) removing man-made features; (e) enhancing upland habitats adjacent to wetlands; (f) providing for future tide circulation opportunities; and (g) providing up to five years maintenance and monitoring to ensure the success of the project.

West Unit

The West Unit is approximately 12 acres in size. Work on the West Unit, referred to as Phase 1, entailed removal of fill materials, grading and contouring to expand and enhance wetland areas, culvert removal and improved water conveyance, removal of non-native plants and replanting of native vegetation within the wetland and upland areas, and construction of a public access trail with interpretive signs along the southern perimeter of the site. Most of the

Phase 1 work on the West Unit is completed, though some infill planting, maintenance and monitoring are still required.

East Unit

The East Unit is approximately 22 acres and contains freshwater wetlands, upland areas and a tidally-influenced channel. The site also contains two old military bunkers and roads and parking areas that are used by the UCSB facilities operations. The proposed work on the east Unit includes creation of seven acres of new wetland; removal of non-native plants and planting of native vegetation; removal of the two old military world war two era bunkers, paved areas, rubble and fill; fencing; grading and contouring to enhance wetland areas; and installation of culverts and gates to improve water management along Mesa ditch, which provides muted tidal flows from Goleta Slough located near the south east portion of the site.

To date most of the necessary preconstruction work, including permits and a Remedial Action Plan to identify and test for hazardous materials, has been completed for the East Unit and the project is ready for construction. Already much of the site preparation, including removal of the bunkers and other improvements has occurred, along with removal of some of the invasive plants. The contract to begin the major restoration work on the wetland areas is in place and scheduled to occur in the fall and winter of 2010/11.

Change of Scope

As a result of an archeological survey on the site and the identification of potential sensitive areas (a Chumash Native American site), a larger than expected buffer areas was required that reduced the planned restoration site on the northwest side of the East Unit, reducing the amount of transitional wetland and upland areas planned for restoration by 1.75 acres. Total restoration acreage will be reduced from 26.26 acres to 24.51 acres.

WCB PROGRAM

The original grant and the augmentation for this project are being made under the WCB's Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program. The Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program (General) is the Board's general restoration program that includes native fisheries restoration and restoration of tidal or fresh wetland habitats, coastal scrub, grasslands, oak woodlands, and threatened and endangered species habitats. This authority is pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq).

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The grant and restoration project requires five years of monitoring for performance. Over the first two years bi-monthly visits will be conducted by the LTSBC to determine the success of removing invasive species and the regrowth of new native species. After two years, site visits will occur quarterly.

The target survival rate is 80% after five years. Bird surveys will also be conducted through the first five years. Annual reports will be provided to the WCB each November. Maintenance during the first five years will include maintaining newly planted areas, including temporary irrigation systems, weeding, repairs to fencing, trash removal, paths and temporary erosion control items. After five years, the DFG will take over maintenance responsibilities, which are expected to be minimal.

If at any time during the life of the project, the landowners are unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, they will 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 original budget total for the project was \$1,738,312.00. The funding breakdown from the different partners was as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$ 903,312.00
US Army Corps of Engineers	795,000.00
Federal Aviation Administration	<u>40,000.00</u>
 <u>TOTAL</u>	 <u>\$1,738,312.00</u>

Of the original WCB grant approximately \$260,000.00 remains unexpended.

Because of project delays related to obtaining permits, completing remediation for contaminated soil found onsite, and higher than expected prevailing wage costs, the total project cost has gone up by \$996,000.00. The additional needed funds will come from the following:

Federal grant funds	\$593,000.00
Wildlife Conservation Board	366,000.00
Federal Interest Accrued	37,000.00
 Total additional funds	 <u>996,000.00</u>
 <u>Total Project Cost</u>	 <u>\$2,734,312.00</u>

Project costs will be primarily for completion of construction on the East Unit, entailing clearing, grading, contouring of land, installation of water control structures, planting, and maintenance and monitoring throughout the term of the agreement, which expires December 31, 2011.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding sources for this project are the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(d) (Wetlands Outside the Central Valley,

(P-50 SoCal) and the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Section 79572(a), both of which provide funding for the protection, restoration or enhancement of wetland areas along the southern California coast.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. A coastal development permit has already been obtained from the California Coastal Commission for this project. The Department of Fish and Game, as lead agency, prepared a Negative Declaration for the original project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff considered the Negative Declaration for the project and has prepared proposed written findings documenting the WCB's compliance with CEQA. Upon approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$300,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(d) (Wetlands Outside the Central Valley, (P50 SoCal) and \$66,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Section 79572(a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

- *15. James San Jacinto Mountains Reserve Renovation \$248,000.00
Riverside County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Regents of the University of California to purchase and install five new manufactured cabins and one laundry facility, make renovations to two existing buildings, and repair roads at the James San Jacinto Mountains Reserve, located in the San Jacinto Mountain Range approximately 10 miles south of the town of Banning in Riverside County.

LOCATION

James Reserve (Reserve) sits on an alluvial bench at the lower end of Hall Canyon, a steep western flank of Black Mountain, part of the San Jacinto Mountains. The Reserve hosts a wide variety of plant communities: Sierra mixed conifer forest, oak woodlands, montane chaparral, alder-willow-cedar riparian forest. A rapidly flowing mountain stream with a manmade reservoir (Lake Fulmor) is immediately downstream. The entire watershed is protected for research and study by the U.S. Forest Service (500 acres). The reserve has recorded 259 species of vascular plants, 35 bryophytes, 6 amphibians, 18 reptiles, 125 birds (60% nesting), 35 mammals, and over 1000 invertebrates. The Reserve is also home to one of the oldest and largest ponderosa pines in southern California, at around 500 years old and 200 feet tall.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will add five cabins to provide additional and longer-term accommodation for users, with one cabin having space to be used as a classroom facility. The project will also add a laundry facility for the residents with an outdoor access bathroom for day users. The renovations will take place at Lolomi Lodge and Trailfinder Lodge. Lolomi Lodge is an integral and historic part of the Reserve and provides vital housing for the resident director. The roof, flooring, and foundation all need to be replaced. The Trailfinder Lodge also needs renovation as it has long outgrown its original design purpose. It was originally only meant to provide dormitory style housing, but has since become the main office, library, and headquarters for the Reserve. The project will renovate the kitchen facilities, office, library, meeting room and roof. The project also includes site prep for the cabins, utilities, and roadway rehabilitation.

WCB PROGRAM

Under Proposition 84, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) received funding to provide matching grant dollars to the University of California for the Natural Reserve System for land acquisitions, construction and development of facilities that will be used for research and training to improve the management of natural lands and the preservation of California's wildlife resources. The mission of the University of California, Natural Reserve System (UCNRS) is to contribute to the understanding and wise management of the earth and its natural systems by supporting university-level teaching, research, and public service at protected areas throughout California. To implement this funding, the WCB and the UCNRS developed guidelines for selecting eligible projects.

This also included establishment of a UCNRS Ad Hoc Advisory Subcommittee to review and set priorities for project proposals prior to submittal to the WCB.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The grantee has agreed to manage and maintain the facilities for 25 years, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the grant. If at any time during the life of the project, the grantee is unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, they will 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:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$248,000.00
University of California, Riverside	248,000.00
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$496,000.00</u>

Project costs will be for site prep, utility upgrades, five manufactured cabins, one laundry facility, renovations to two existing buildings, roadway improvements, construction supervision, and administration.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 84), Section 75055(b)(3). This funding may be granted to the University of California for the Natural Reserve System for the construction and development of facilities that will be used for research and training to improve the management of natural lands and the preservation of California's wildlife resources and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

This project is exempt under Sections 15301 and 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines because the project will consist of less than 2,500 sq. ft. of new structures and less than six dwelling units and there will be no negative impacts to the physical environment. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The project was vetted through the University of California Natural Reserve System's Ad Hoc Subcommittee and recommended for funding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$248,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(b)(3); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

- *16. Peninsular Bighorn Sheep
Riverside County

\$5,000.00

This proposal is to consider a cooperative project with the United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS), Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), to acquire 947± acres of private land adjacent to the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument for the protection of habitat for the peninsular bighorn sheep. This acquisition is part of the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan and Natural Community Conservation Plan approved for the Coachella Valley portion of Riverside County.

LOCATION

The property is located within the Santa Rosa Mountains and Coachella Valley, west of 77th Avenue, southwest of Old State Highway 86, west of the community of Oasis, and just west of the Salton Sea. Most of the property is surrounded by mountains, held by public agencies. The surrounding areas in the valley are mostly agriculture, with residential development located just to the east.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The subject property is mostly desert mountain area, sloping down into a fluvial plain with some follow vineyards located at the lower eastern portions of the property. The acquisition of the subject parcels will provide core habitat, linkages, and transport corridors which are important for the Peninsular Bighorn sheep (PBS). Placement of this area in public ownership will add a significant buffer from the developing residential lands to the east and north. The subject property has multiple species values including habitat for desert tortoise, least Bell's vireo, and the southwestern willow flycatcher. There is also potential habitat for several sensitive bat species including the western yellow bat, pallid bat, California leafnosed bat, spotted bat, pocketed free-tailed bat, and western mastiff bat. Protection of the property would also benefit many other species that inhabit the area including mountain lion, mule deer, golden eagle, and prairie falcon.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition of this project is being made under the Land Acquisition Program at WCB. The Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the WCB's original enabling legislation, the Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 (Fish and Game Code Section 1300, et seq.), which gives the WCB the authority to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this program, acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG, which evaluates the biological values of property and whether or not to recommend it for funding.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The DFG has identified the subject property as being within a Significant Natural Area and has recommended the purchase of the property which would be incorporated into and managed in conjunction with other existing wildlife areas and ecological reserves in the region. The subject property may be appropriate for both passive and consumptive recreational uses. The acquisition of the subject property, if approved, brings the total number of acres protected within the Santa Rosa and Santa Jacinto Mountains National Monument area to over 115,000 acres. Management costs will be covered and absorbed under the current regional operation and maintenance (O&M) budget.

TERMS

The owners have agreed to sell the property at the appraised value of \$1,798,730.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The USFWS will provide a Recovery Land Acquisition Program Grant, in an amount not to exceed \$1,259,111.00 to be applied toward the purchase price of the property. The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy has agreed to provide funds in the amount of no less than \$539,619.00 to assist in this acquisition. The terms and conditions of the proposed grants provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

USFWS Section 6 Grant (E-27-RL-3)	\$1,259,111.00
Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy Grant	<u>539,619.00</u>
<u>TOTAL Purchase Price</u>	<u>\$1,798,730.00</u>
Other Project-related Costs:	5,000.00
<u>TOTAL WCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$5,000.00</u>

It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed to cover internal project-related expenses, including DGS review costs, bringing the total recommended allocation for this proposal to \$5,000.00.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Section 5906.650 that allows for grants to protect habitat corridors and prevent habitat fragmentation.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as 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. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The project has been reviewed by DFG through the establishment and approval of the NCCP and has been recommended for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; approve the acceptance of a Recovery Land Acquisition Program Grant from USFWS in the amount of \$1,259,111.00; allocate \$5,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Section 5906.650 to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

- *17. East Elliott and Otay Mesa Regions (Sunroad) \$5,000.00
San Diego County

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant \$67,200.00 of the federal funds to the City of San Diego (City) to assist with the acquisition of 1± acre of land to protect critical regional wildlife linkages, coastal sage scrub, and to protect and preserve core areas of vernal pool habitat that will enhance the existing Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) area.

LOCATION

The subject property is located on the western Otay Mesa, south of Highway 905 and east of Highway 805 within the San Diego city limits. The property is within a Mutli-Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) that is a joint federally approved Habitat Conservation Plan and a state approved Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP). The MSCP covers approximately 900 square miles in southwestern San Diego County and includes the City of San Diego, portions of the unincorporated County of San Diego, and ten other local jurisdictions. The planning area is bordered by Mexico to the south, National Forest lands to the east, the Pacific Ocean to the west, and the San Dieguito River Valley to the north.

The City of San Diego, along with 12 other local jurisdictions, developed the MSCP to address potential impacts from increased development and related infrastructures and the need to protect and preserve important habitat areas and corridors within the 900 square mile area covered under the plan. Together with the wildlife agencies, the local communities developed a conservation plan that addresses both development and wildlife needs within the planning area, along with individual subarea plans that provide the details on how each jurisdiction will implement the plan within their boundaries.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Otay Mesa is a core biological resource in southern San Diego County, but is under threat from nearby development and related external impacts. Protection and preservation of properties on the Otay Mesa and surrounding area is critical to maintaining the regional wildlife linkages, coastal sage scrub, and vernal pool habitat that will further the objectives of the MSCP. Acquisition of the subject property will contribute to the protection of critical habitat used by many sensitive species found in the area. Among these are the California gnatcatcher, San Diego fairy shrimp and the burrowing owl. Acquisition of this property will also benefit several are and/or narrow endemic species within the County's subarea plan. San Diego thornment, willow monardella, Otay mesa mint, and the Otay tarplant are only found in San Diego County. Orcutt's grass is limited to a very few locations, with one of the main sites located within the proposed acquisition area on the Otay Mesa.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition of this project is being made under the Land Acquisition Program at WCB. The Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the WCB’s original enabling legislation, the Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 (Fish and Game Code Section 1300 et seq.). The acquisition program enables the WCB to pursue acquisitions on behalf of the DFG, accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant the federal funds to assist with acquisitions as recommended by the DFG, provide State bond funding to assist in proposed acquisitions and to cover its project-related expenses.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The subject property is bordered on the west and south side by matching City-owned and managed one acre properties. The City will manage the property in accordance with the MSCP adopted in 1997. The City currently monitors and manages over 20,000 acres of City-owned lands. The subject property will be added to this responsibility. It is anticipated that once the acquisition is complete and the biological values of the property are evaluated, appropriate public access will be considered.

TERMS

The property owner has agreed to sell the property for the Department of General Services (DGS) approved appraised fair market value of \$105,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed subgrant to the City provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board (USFWS Subgrant)	\$67,200.00
City of San Diego	<u>37,800.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$105,000.00
Other Project-related Costs:	<u>5,000.00</u>
<u>TOTAL WCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$5,000.00</u>

It is estimated that \$5,000.00 will be needed to cover internal project-related expenses, including DGS appraisal review costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(c) that provides funding for grants to implement

or assist in the establishment of NCCPs and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as 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. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The Department of Fish and Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; authorize acceptance of the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and approve the Agreement to Subgrant in the amount of \$67,200.00 to the City of San Diego; allocate \$5,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(c) to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

18. Cow Creek Conservation Area, Expansion 2 \$1,340,000.00
Shasta County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the American Land Conservancy (ALC) for a cooperative project with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to acquire a conservation easement over 5,868± acres of land for protection of rangeland, riparian corridors and other significant ecosystems.

LOCATION

The subject property is a privately owned rangeland parcel located in the Cascade Range foothills, north of State Highway 44 about 10 miles east of the City of Redding in Shasta County. The parcel is more specifically located on Whitmore Road, north of Millville, north of highway 44. The property is bisected by two creeks Old Cow Creek and Clover Creek. Each creek runs through the property in an east to west direction and ultimately both flow to the Sacramento River. The property has been operated as a ranch, grazed and farmed, since the 1860's. Current land uses in the area includes agriculture, recreation, residential, natural areas and water supplies.

The property is part of the DFG Cow Creek Conceptual Area Protection (CAPP) that includes a combination of blue oak woodlands, chaparral, mixed conifer, riparian, aquatic, vernal pools and grasslands habitats that support sensitive species and significant populations of native fish and wildlife. There have been two major acquisitions within the Cow Creek CAPP including Cow Creek Ranch totaling about 5,000 acres (adjacent to JS Ranch) and the Hathaway Ranch totaling about 6,600 acres. The Shasta Land Trust is expecting to close on a third property, the Richert Ranch, totaling about 5,000 acres, in the next few months. Including this proposed conservation easement, the total protected area in the Cow Creek CAPP will be in excess of 22,000 acres after the completion of this project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The property contains developed springs and irrigation ditches that provide water to large tracts of land that parallel the creeks on the property. There are a number of miscellaneous barn and farm structures on site that support the ranch operation. This project will help create a landscape-scale reserve that contains a variety of different habitats, including oak woodland, chaparral, mixed conifer, riparian, grassland and aquatic habitats. These habitat areas will support multiple species of plants and animals, including deer and mountain lion, as well as fall-run, late-fall run Chinook salmon and steelhead trout.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being made under the Land Acquisition Program at WCB. The Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the WCB's original enabling legislation, the Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 (Fish

and Game Code Section 1300 et seq.) to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreational opportunities. Under this program, acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG, evaluating the biological values of property through either development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE) or a CAPP. The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to the DFG Regional Operation Committee (ROC) for review and approval and later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

ALC will manage the conservation easement over property for the benefit of threatened and endangered species. The grazing use will continue into perpetuity and ALC will monitor for compliance of the terms and conditions of the easement. The owners of the property will be donating an endowment for monitoring the easement. ALC will eventually transfer the easement interest with all of the terms and conditions as well as the endowment over to the California Rangeland Trust. Because this is an easement on private land, public access will be restricted.

TERMS

The property owner has agreed to sell a conservation easement to ALC for the Department of General Services (DGS) approved appraised fair market value of \$2,640,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed grant to ALC provides that staff of WCB will review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of breach of the grant terms the WCB can encumber the property with a conservation easement and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$1,320,000.00
Natural Resource Conservation Service	<u>1,320,000.00</u>
Total Purchase Price:	\$2,640,000.00
Other Project-related Costs:	20,000.00
<u>TOTAL WCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$1,340,000.00</u>

This is estimated that \$20,000.00 will be needed to cover internal project-related costs, including the Department of General Services review costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(b), which provides funding for grants for the protection of wildlife corridors, significant natural landscapes and the protection

endangered and threatened species, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as 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. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The project has been reviewed and approved for funding by WCB staff.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,340,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Projection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(b) for the grant and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

19. Red Bank Creek
Tehama County

\$3,960,000.00

This proposal is to consider an allocation for a grant to the Northern California Regional Land Trust (NCRLT) to acquire conservation easements over 7,132± acres of two contiguous ownerships (3,356± acres Burrow Ranch and 3,776± acres Big Bluff Ranch) in Tehama County. The project will allow the continued operations of the ranches and at the same time protect important oak woodland habitat areas, and maintain the property's relatively natural, scenic, and open-space characteristics.

LOCATION

The ranches are located approximately 20 miles southwest of the City of Red Bluff, seven miles west of the town of Red Bank, along Colyear and Red Bank Roads, in Tehama County. Most of the surrounding lands comprise ranches similar to those to be protected by this project. To the north, the project area abuts over 6,000 acres of protected Bureau of Land Management land and another 1,017 acres that is part of the Mendocino National Forest.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

An estimated 60 to 70 percent of the acreage is occupied by individual oak trees, oak savannah, or oak woodland. Oak tree species present within the project area include black, valley, interior live, canyon live, blue, scrub, and tan. The project would also protect annual grassland, farmland, chamise-redshank chaparral, mixed chaparral, valley-foothill riparian land, spring-fed wetlands and creek frontage along Red Bank and North Fork Elder Creeks and a number of other perennial and seasonal creeks.

WCB PROGRAM

This project funding proposal was submitted to the Wildlife Conservation Board through its Oak Woodlands Conservation Program. The project is reviewed and approved by WCB staff, and must be located within a county that has adopted an Oak Woodlands countywide conservation plan. The Program is designed to help local efforts to achieve oak woodland protection. More importantly, this program provides a mechanism to bring ranchers and conservationists together in a manner that allows the achievement of both sustainable ranch and farming operations and healthy oak woodlands. The project meets the objectives of the Oak Woodland Conservation Program by conserving some 4,275 contiguous acres of oak woodlands and allowing for the continued ranching and farming operations on the land. Because this is an easement of a private land, public access will be restricted.

In May 2010, the WCB authorized a grant to the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Audubon Society and the landowners to restore riparian habitat, reduce sedimentation and streambank

erosion and improve water quality along Red Bank Creek. This project will complement those restoration improvements and will improve the wildlife values the restoration project aims to enhance.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The NCRLT will hold, manage and be responsible for the monitoring of the easement in perpetuity per the WCB grant terms. A baseline report will have been completed by the Grantee and approved by the WCB. The conservation easement deed allows access to the subject properties by both the NCRLT and the WCB for monitoring purposes.

TERMS

The property owners have agreed to sell conservation easement over their properties to the NCRLT for the Department of General Services (DGS) approved appraised fair market values of \$1,850,000.00 and \$2,100,000.00, respectively. Combined the total purchase is \$3,950,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed grant to the NCRLT provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of breach of the grant terms, the WCB can seek specific performance or require that title to the conservation easement be transferred to the WCB or another qualifying entity. The project lands are encumbered by Land Conservation Contracts under the Williamson Act that are not affected by the terms of the easement.

PROJECT FUNDING

The WCB proposes to make a grant to NCRLT for the full amount of the purchase price:

WCB Grant	\$3,950,000.00
Other Project-related Costs:	10,000.00
<u>TOTAL WCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$3,960,000.00</u>

It is estimated that \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover internal project-related costs including the appraisal review costs by the DGS.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(d)(2), that allows for the acquisition of conservation easements on agricultural properties for the protection of oak woodland habitat and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as 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. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The project has been reviewed under the WCB's Oak Woodlands Conservation Program and has been recommended for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,960,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(d)(2) to cover the grant amount and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

20. Heart K Ranch
Plumas County

\$1,090,000.00

This proposal is to consider the acquisition by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) of a conservation easement over 880± acres in Plumas County. The conservation easement would restrict future development and help insure that the biological and cultural resources found on the property are protected in perpetuity. The DFG will hold and monitor the conservation easement.

LOCATION

The Heart K Ranch is located in Plumas County, approximately 2 hours north of the town of Truckee, 45 minutes north east from the town of Quincy, and 15 minutes east of the small town of Taylorsville. It is a top priority property within the DFG Genesee Valley Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). Genesee Valley is characterized by a large (~3,000 acres) relatively level mountain valley, bisected by Indian Creek, and surrounded on all sides by coniferous and oak forests. The north side of the Genesee Valley contains unique geologic features including large talus slopes. The mountains to the south side are dominated by dense, Douglas-fir dominated mixed conifer forests. Land uses surrounding the Heart K Ranch are primarily agriculture (ranching) with some private residences interspersed as single lots or small subdivisions. Forest lands bordering the north and south of the property are open for public use and administered by the Plumas National Forest.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This conservation easement will preserve and protect in perpetuity a variety of animal and plant habitat. Terrestrial and riparian vegetation types around the Heart K Ranch include mixed conifer forests and black oak woodlands along upland portions of the property. These forested habitat types transition to perennial grasslands, wet meadows, and eventually the montane riparian and river habitats associated with Indian Creek, which flows through the center of the ranch. The habitat types support a wide range of terrestrial and aquatic species, including both State and federal species of special concern.

The riparian area and associated cottonwood-willow riparian habitats along Indian Creek support a large colony of state threatened bank swallow as well as state endangered willow flycatcher. The pastures and grasslands adjacent to the riparian area have regular occurrences of greater sandhill crane and bald eagle. In combination with upland conifer and hardwood forests, these habitat types provide nesting and foraging habitat for several birds of prey, including the golden eagle, northern goshawk, Cooper's hawk, and the California spotted owl. Indian Creek currently supports six species of native fishes, which include: hardhead, Sacramento pikeminnow, speckled dace, riffle sculpin, Sacramento sucker, and rainbow trout. The property also supports a highly diverse assemblage of mammal species, including Sierra Nevada mountain beaver,

southwestern river otter, beaver and ringtail. There are several more common land mammals, including black bear, bobcat, mountain lion, grey fox, and blacktail deer, which are abundant throughout Heart K Ranch year-round.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition of this project is being made under the Land Acquisition Program at WCB. The Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the WCB's original enabling legislation, the Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 (Fish and Game Code Section 1300 et seq.) to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this program acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG, evaluating the biological values of property through development of a Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The CAPP is then submitted to DFG's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and approval and later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The DFG will hold title to the conservation easement and will monitor the property on an annual basis to ensure that conservation easement conditions are being met. The Feather River Land Trust, which owns the property, has agreed to fully fund an endowment which will pay all costs associated with monitoring the conservation area.

TERMS

The property owner has agreed to sell the conservation easement to the DFG for less than the Department of General Services (DGS) approved appraised fair market value of \$2,200,000.00. The DFG will acquire the conservation easement for \$1,075,000.00, with a landowner donation (bargain sale) of \$1,125,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed property acquisition agreement provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. Additionally, DFG staff will be responsible for monitoring the property at least once annually.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$1,075,000.00
Landowner donation (bargain sale)	<u>1,125,000.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$2,200,000.00
Other Project-related Costs:	15,000.00
<u>TOTAL WCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$1,090,000.00</u>

It is estimated that an additional \$15,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including DGS review costs and escrow fees.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786 (a)(1E) that provides funding for protection of deer, mountain lion, oak habitats, and preservation of wildlife values within a floodplain or flood corridor, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as 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. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The Department of Fish and Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,090,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(a)(1E) to cover the acquisition and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

21. Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area, Expansion 6 \$1,120,000.00
Butte County

This proposal is to consider for the acquisition of 222± acres of land for the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), for the protection of wetland habitat and as an expansion to the Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area (UBBWA). The property will provide habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds and riparian songbirds and will contribute to the public use and other management objectives of the UBBWA.

LOCATION

The subject property is located approximately five miles west of the City of Biggs, in Butte County. The site is next to Cherokee Canal, and fronts the southerly side of Schohr Ranch Road, a gravel roadway that provides access to the property from Afton-Biggs Road. The DFG Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area (UBBWA), which the property will be a part of, is open to the public and allows for waterfowl hunting and other outdoor wildlife related uses. The surrounding lands consist mostly of farm, mostly rice farms, and hunting clubs.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The UBBWA contains a mosaic of diverse and moist soil habitat that provides quality vegetation for wintering waterfowl, wading birds, and shorebirds. The project area will provide nesting areas and brood ponds for breeding waterfowl and other resident wetland related wildlife, and riparian habitat. The project will benefit mallards, gadwall, American green-winged teal, cinnamon teal, northern pintail, northern shoveler, American wigeon, riparian songbirds, white faced ibis and the long-billed curlew.

The property is currently encumbered by a conservation easement held by the DFG. Because of its location to the Cherokee Canal, and the facilities for water conveyance and appropriation, both current and future, this property could be an integral part of the overall water management on the UBBWA. For these reasons, DFG requested that staff of the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) negotiate a Right of First Refusal as part of the original easement project. Consequently, the land owner notified the DFG of his intent to sell a portion of the property, and the DFG has recommended that we pursue acquisition.

In addition to waterfowl and other wildlife diversity found on site, this particular property is significant for ownership by the DFG because of the water infrastructure located within its boundaries. The property hosts an important pumping facility at its southwest boundary that appropriates/diverts water from the Cherokee Canal to the existing properties of the UBBWA. While the DFG maintains an easement for the use of this pumping facility, the landowner and UBBWA staff has made improvements to the water infrastructure to allow water to be diverted through existing ditches across the property for the benefit of the UBBWA. The diversion and eventual flow into the UBBWA is by way of gravity

flow ditch, thus reducing pumping costs and maintenance the DFG would otherwise incur. If the property were sold to another land owner, the DFG may not have the ability to access or improve the property's infrastructure to meet current and /or future water needs. This could significantly increase the costs of providing water to the area while at the same time reducing overall habitat and species management.

WCB PROGRAM

This project funding proposal is being made through the Wildlife Conservation Board's Inland Wetland Conservation Program. The Inland Wetlands Conservation Program (IWCP) was created to assist the Central Valley Joint Venture (CVJV), a federal entity, with specific goals to increase populations of wintering waterfowl, breeding waterfowl, non-breeding shorebirds, breeding shorebirds, waterbirds, and breeding riparian songbirds. The project meets the objectives of the IWCP by protecting habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds and riparian songbirds.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Department of Fish and Game will manage these additional 222 acres as part of the Little Dry Creek Unit of the UBBWA, as a mixture of seasonal wetlands, semi-permanent wetlands, upland and riparian habitats. The property will be managed with existing DFG staff working on the UBBWA.

TERMS

The property owner has agreed to sell the property for the Department of General Services (DGS) approved appraised fair market value of \$1,110,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed acquisition provide that staff of the WCB review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. The property is encumbered by a Land Conservation Contract under the Williamson Act, and notification has been provided accordingly to the Department of Conservation.

PROJECT FUNDING

The WCB will be funding the entire purchase price of \$1,110,000.00.

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$1,110,000.00
Other Project-related Costs:	10,000.00
<u>TOTAL WCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$1,120,000.00</u>

It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including appraisal and DGS review costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund, (Proposition 117), Section 2786(d)(1E) Inland Wetland Conservation Program, which allows for the protection of wetland habitat within the Central Valley and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as 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. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The Department of Fish and Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,120,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(d) (1E) Inland Wetland Conservation Program, to cover the cost of acquisition and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

22. Lower Yuba River, Excelsior, Phase I \$3,216,440.00
Nevada and Yuba Counties

This proposal is to consider the acquisition by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) under a cooperative project with The Trust for Public Land (TPL) and Caltrans to acquire approximately 527± acres of land for protection of deer and mountain lion habitat. The project will help maintain the natural biodiversity of the Lower Yuba River watershed and surrounding foothill areas, and expand public access and fishing opportunities to the Yuba River.

LOCATION

The subject property is located adjacent to the historic community of Smartsville, along the north side of the Highway 20 corridor in the eastern portion of Yuba County, and the western edge of Nevada County. The property is situated on the Lower Yuba River between Rose Bar and Englebright Dam and includes approximately two miles of river frontage, at the confluence of the Yuba River and Deer Creek. The site is bordered by Penn Valley, Grass Valley and Nevada City to the east and Marysville and Yuba City to the west. A historic Miner's Trail used during the Gold Rush remains on the site, providing a scenic hiking access through the property. The proposed acquisition is located within the DFG Lower Yuba River Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) and will provide habitat and recreational linkage between the DFG Daugherty Wildlife Area; University of California Foothill Research Station on the north; DFG Spenceville Wildlife Area; and the Beale Air Force Base on the south.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project is being completed in two phases. The first phase before the Board for consideration is the fee acquisition of 527± acres of land. The second phase involves the acquisition of a conservation easement over 157± acres of adjoining land and will be completed in a future transaction between the property owner and TPL. At this time, there are no plans for WCB to participate in this second transaction.

The subject property is well known for its scenic beauty and attractiveness to fisherman for its Chinook salmon and steelhead trout. It offers recreational boaters and hikers with panoramic views of the river, Rose Bar Bridge to the west, and the Englebright Dam on the east. The acquisition will also provide connections to over five miles of recreational areas previously deemed inaccessible. The site is representative of early California history and includes a traversable Miner's Trail that was constructed and used by miners during the California Gold Rush. Remnants of an historic Chinese wall and mining tunnel also remain intact on the property from California's gold mining past.

The subject property is rich in biodiversity, and includes grassland pastures, blue oak woodlands and riparian corridors containing riverine aquatic and associated riparian/wetland habitats. The property also supports wildlife that

includes at least 29 reptiles and amphibian species, 57 bird species and 10 mammal species. Listed species found on the site include the Peregrine falcon, spring run Chinook salmon, Central Valley steelhead, California black rail, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, foothill yellow-legged frog, and the burrowing owl. The proposed acquisition will contribute to the regional conservation planning efforts carried out by various entities including the California Department of Parks and Recreation; the Sierra Nevada Conservancy; the Counties of Nevada, Yuba, Placer and Butte; Nevada County Land Trust; and the Placer Land Trust.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition of this project is being made under the Land Acquisition Program at WCB. The Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the WCB's original enabling legislation, the Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 (Fish and Game Code Section 1300 et seq.) to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this program acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG, evaluating the biological values of property through development of a Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The CAPP is then submitted to DFG's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and approval and later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The maintenance, conservation, security and caretaker services on the property will be managed at no cost to the State, according to the terms of a Stewardship Agreement between the DFG and the Excelsior Foundation, a California nonprofit corporation, for a period of five years. At any time during the five year period and afterwards the DFG can take over management.

TERMS

The property has a fair market value of \$3,700,000.00 based on an independent appraisal of the property, reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the property at less than its approved appraised value, for \$3,505,000.00. Once the property is acquired by TPL, it will immediately be conveyed to the DFG. The terms of the option agreement between TPL and seller require that escrow must be closed no later than December 31, 2010. Should the State grant funds not be available to close escrow as stipulated in the State's purchase agreement, TPL has agreed to fund the acquisition and hold the property until State funding is available to complete the acquisition by the DFG.

The terms and conditions of the proposed purchase agreement with TPL provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition.

PROJECT FUNDING

Proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board Grant	\$3,196,440.00
California Department of Transportation	308,560.00
Landowner Donation	<u>195,000.00</u>
Total Purchase Price	\$3,700,000.00
Other Project-related Costs:	<u>20,000.00</u>
<u>TOTAL WCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$3,216,440.00</u>

It is estimated that an additional \$20,000.00 will be needed for internal project-related expenses, including title and escrow fees and appraisal and transaction review costs by the Department of General Services.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 17), Section 2786(b/c)(1E), which allows for the protection of habitat threatened and endangered species and preservation of wildlife values within a floodplain or flood corridor and is consistent with this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and under Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and habitat. Subject to approval by the Wildlife Conservation Board, a Notice of Exception will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,216,440.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 17), Section 2786(b/c)(1E), for the acquisition and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

23. Bruin Ranch Phase I
Placer County

\$4,515,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation of a grant to Placer Land Trust for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), Caltrans and Placer County to acquire 1,773± acres of property to protect habitat for threatened and endangered species, including blue oak woodland habitat and approximately three miles of riparian corridor along the Bear River.

LOCATION

This privately owned property is located west of Highway 49, just west of the junction of Bell Road and Lone Star Road, adjacent to the Auburn Valley Golf and Country Club in Placer County. The property is within the DFG approved Spenceville Wildlife Area Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) made an allocation of two grants in 2007 to Placer Land Trust (PLT) for the purposes of acquiring fee interest in approximately 320 acres and a conservation easement over approximately 313 acres of land south of the subject property.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Bruin Ranch is the largest parcel containing blue oak woodland in western Placer County, and includes over three miles of frontage on the Bear River. The property also includes a wide diversity of wildlife habitat, including potential habitat for the western pond turtle and its subspecies, the northwestern pond turtle, California red-legged frog and foothill yellow legged frog. In addition, protection of Bruin Ranch is a very high priority for Placer County, which is a funding partner, as part of its effort to implement the Placer County Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and the Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) for the preservation habitat and open space corridors in the face of increasing development pressure. Protection of this property may also allow the connection of a regional trail through previously protected land to Placer County's Hidden Falls Regional Park and Coon Creek, if appropriate.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being made under the Land Acquisition Program at WCB. The Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the WCB's original enabling legislation, the Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.) to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this program acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG, evaluating the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE)/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to DFG's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and approval and later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Under the terms of the grant agreement, PLT will manage the property for the benefit of wildlife habitat preservation, restoration and management, wildlife-oriented education and research, and for compatible public and private uses, all as may be consistent with wildlife habitat preservation and protection of sensitive biological resources.

TERMS

The property owner has agreed to sell the property for the Department of General Services (DGS) approved appraised fair market value of \$9,500,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed grant to PLT provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of breach of the grant terms the WCB can encumber the property with a conservation easement and seek reimbursement of funds. The property is encumbered by a Land Conservation Contract under the Williamson Act, and notification has been provided accordingly to the Department of Conservation.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$4,500,000.00
Placer County’s Placer Legacy Program (Pending)	5,000,000.00
Caltrans EEMP	<u>350,000.00</u>
Total Purchase Price	\$9,850,000.00
Other Project-related Costs:	15,000.00
<u>TOTAL WCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$4,515,000.00</u>

It is estimated that an additional \$15,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including DGS review costs and escrow fees.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Section 5096.650 that allows for protection of habitat for threatened and endangered species and protection of habitat corridors and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as 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. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The Department of Fish and game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$4,515,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Section 5096.650 to cover the grant amount and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

24. Oak Hills Ranch
Yolo County

\$2,296,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Rangeland Trust (CRT) for a cooperative project to acquire a conservation easement over 3,316± acres of land for the protection of oak woodlands, riparian habitat, and conservation of critical wildlife migration corridors.

LOCATION

The property is located south of the community of Dunnigan and north of the town of Esparto in Yolo County. The property provides a wildlife migration corridor adjacent to the existing and currently negotiated conservation easements in the Hungry Hollow area. The property also provides linkage with the Cache Creek watershed open space areas to the west.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The property provides a high diversity of wildlife habitats that are intact and contiguous. The property is part of a much larger mosaic of intact oak woodland and oak savannah in the region and is adjacent and nearby to numerous large-acreage private ranches with similar habitat types and conditions. There are a multitude of natural vegetation communities present within the property, including California annual grassland, live oak woodland, blue oak woodland, valley oak savannah, chaparral, and riparian woodland, as well as salt water springs. Blue oaks are the dominant species and demonstrating an extremely significant regeneration rate. The live oak, blue oak and riparian woodland communities all exhibit trees of mixed age from seedlings to maturity.

Water on the property is provided by numerous springs, wells, and four seasonal creeks. The major drainages within the property provide important wildlife migration corridors and foraging, nesting, breeding and protection for a variety of birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles. There are also sixteen stock ponds on the property that provide water for seasonal grazing and abundant wildlife.

WCB PROGRAM

This project funding proposal was submitted to the Wildlife Conservation Board through its Oak Woodlands Conservation Program (Program). The project is reviewed and approved by WCB staff, and must be located within a county that has adopted an Oak Woodlands countywide conservation plan. The Program is designed to help local efforts achieve oak woodland protection. More importantly, this Program provides a mechanism to bring ranchers and conservationists together in a manner that allows both to achieve sustainable ranch and farming operations and healthy oak woodlands. The project meets the objectives of the Program by conserving some 4,275 contiguous acres of oak woodlands and allowing for the continued ranching and farming operations

on the land.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The conservation easement and project area will be managed in accordance with local land use planning under the County of Yolo’s Oak Woodland Conservation and Enhancement Program. As a condition of the grant, baseline studies will be completed and provided to the WCB prior to closing escrow. The CRT, which will hold title to the conservation easement, will monitor the property on an annual basis to ensure that conservation easement conditions are being met. Because this is an easement on private land, public access will be restricted.

TERMS

The property owners have agreed to sell a conservation easement to the CRT for the Department of General Services’ (DGS) approved appraised fair market value of \$2,286,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed grant to the CRT provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of breach of the grant terms the WCB can request the conveyance of the conservation easement to the State and/or seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The WCB proposes to make a grant to the CRT for the full amount of the purchase price:

Wildlife Conservation Board Grant	<u>\$2,286,000.00</u>
Other Project-related Costs:	10,000.00
<u>TOTAL WCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$2,296,000.00</u>

It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover internal project-related expenses, including DGS review costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (Proposition 84), Section 75055(d)(2) and provides funding to ensure continued wildlife, water quality, watershed and open space benefits to the State of California for oak woodlands preservation and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as 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. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The project has been reviewed and approved for funding by WCB staff under the WCB's Oak Woodlands Conservation Program.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,296,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(d)(2) for the grant and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

25. San Joaquin River Parkway, Jensen River Ranch \$1,982,513.00
Phase II Construction
Fresno County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for an interagency agreement with the Department of Water Resources for a cooperative project with the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) to restore wetland and riparian habitat and construct public access trails on the San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway) just east of Highway 41 in the City of Fresno, Fresno County.

LOCATION

The Parkway is defined in State Legislation as approximately 5,900 acres within a twenty-two mile long stretch between Friant Dam and State Route 99 on the San Joaquin River in Fresno and Madera Counties. The SJRC was created in 1992 to preserve and enhance the San Joaquin River's extraordinary biological diversity, protect its valued cultural and natural resources and provide educational and recreational opportunities to the local communities. The SJRC's mission includes both public access and habitat restoration within the Parkway.

The 167± acre Jensen River Ranch, acquired by the WCB in 1997, is located on the Parkway near the junction of Highway 41, in the City of Fresno, in Fresno County. Phase I was restored by the DWR in the fall of 2007 and consisted of the 100± acres south of the D/K storm water channel, which roughly divides the property into north and south halves. Planning and design for the restoration of the remainder of the property lying north of the D/K storm water channel, which is the property to be restored with this proposal, was approved by the WCB on May 22, 2008.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Completing the Jensen River Ranch Project is the SJRC and the Interagency Project Development Committee's (IPDC) highest priority restoration project. The IPDC is an independent committee and serves to provide recommendations to the San Joaquin River Conservancy staff and board on priorities for both land acquisitions and restoration or public access projects. The recommended action will authorize funding for DWR to construct the remaining infrastructure on the portion of the Jensen River Ranch site north of the water retention channel, identified as Phase 2. The scope of work includes:

1. Habitat enhancement infrastructure, which includes demolition of pasture irrigation pipes; installing irrigation to the planting cells; construction of a gravel maintenance road on the perimeter; grading swales and depressions for runoff to create wetlands; and installing barbed wire fencing to allow for future prescribed grazing for weed management;

2. Improvements to public access trail within the Phase 1 area, which will improve performance and reduce maintenance by paving the surface of the Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant trail and improving trail drainage;
3. Recreation and public access infrastructure, which includes the construction of split rail fencing to demark the hiking trail (co-located on the maintenance road) and a trail ascending the bluff to connect the northern trail loop with the Lewis S. Eaton multiple purpose trail above. The City of Fresno, which maintains existing public access facilities on the site and on adjacent Parkway lands, currently has a moratorium on building new trails and parks until new local funding is identified; therefore the recreation and public access components will not be included in the bid package unless additional resources are secured; and
4. Construction oversight and environmental permitting.

Construction is planned to begin in late summer or early fall of 2011.

WCB PROGRAM

The WCB's Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and Public Access Program provide the basis for WCB's ability to restore habitat and provide public access State-wide. In addition, funds were appropriated to the WCB from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40) to be provided to the SJRC for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of land and water resources.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The 167± acre Jensen River Ranch is owned by the San Joaquin River Conservancy. The SJRC, as the landowner, will be responsible for managing the property after the project is complete, as it does at present. For all of its properties, the SJRC maintains fences and gates, maintains grazing and other leases, removes illegal dumping and nuisances, addresses citizen complaints, coordinates with the local mosquito abatement districts, performs fire prevention activities, and maintains access licenses with stewardship and educational groups. The proposed project will not significantly increase current management demands.

The San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust has also been a partner in the overall Jensen Ranch project, and received a River Parkways Grant from the California Natural Resources Agency to plant, irrigate, and maintain the habitat restoration component of Phase 1. The River Parkway Trust's work on the grant is on-going. Funding for habitat planting and maintenance is expected to be brought to the San Joaquin River Conservancy Board in the near future. Work to be funded will include weed eradication,

planting native trees and shrubs, and managing irrigation and weeds for at least three years of plant establishment.

Existing recreational access has, and will continue to, be managed by the City of Fresno. However, the City of Fresno enacted a moratorium on extending trails and building new parks until new local funding can be identified. As a result, the recreational components for Phase II are budgeted but will not be constructed if the moratorium continues. Should funds be identified, the new public access facilities will be constructed, and the City of Fresno will maintain the new facilities consistent with their current responsibilities.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$1,982,000.00
Other Project-related Costs:	513.00
<u>TOTAL WCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$1,982,513.00</u>

Project costs funded by the WCB will include DWR's construction oversight and environmental permitting and compliance; site preparation; earthmoving; gravel for access road; irrigation; trail construction; trail renovation within the Phase I area; and fencing. In addition to the costs listed above, an additional \$513.00 will be required for Department of General Services' review costs, bringing the total allocation necessary for this project to \$1,982,513.00.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Section 5096.650(b)(5). This funding provides for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of land and water resources consistent with the SJRC's mission and the Parkway Master Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

As lead agency, the SJRC filed a Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in March 2002. Staff considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared by SJRC and has prepared written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,982,513.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Section 5096.650(b)(5); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

26. Los Vaqueros Ranch Conservation Easement, \$1,210,000.00
Phase II
Monterey County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to assist with its acquisition of a conservation easement over 800± acres of property to protect critical steelhead trout habitat as well as habitat for sensitive wildlife species.

LOCATION

The Los Vaqueros Ranch (Ranch) totals 2,137± acres and is located in central Monterey County in the Coast Range Mountains on the west side of the Salinas Valley, approximately 7 miles southwest of the town of Greenfield. The property includes portion of the Arroyo Seco River and its riparian corridor as well as portions of Sweetwater Creek and Vaqueros Creek.

Phase 1 of the project was approved on November 19, 2009, by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). The WCB approved a subgrant of federal funds to assist TNC with the acquisition of a conservation easement over 1,337± acres of the Ranch. Phase 1 covered the western portion of the Ranch and the proposed project (Phase 2) will allow TNC to acquire a conservation easement over the eastern 800± acres of the Ranch.

The majority of the land south and west of the Ranch is public land owned by the Federal Government. Immediately south of the Ranch is the Ventana Wilderness area, administered by the Los Padres National Forest as part of the United States Forest Service. The Ranch borders large tracts of privately owned land on its eastern and northern borders. The Department of Fish and Game has developed the Arroyo Seco River Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) and the Ranch is located within that CAPP.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

DFG has identified the Arroyo Seco River, in Monterey County, as a conservation priority. Protection of the river and its surrounding properties would create a terrestrial and hydrologic connection between the northern boundary of the Los Padres National Forest and the Arroyo Seco River basin and would help protect the last remaining known southern steelhead trout run in the Salinas River basin. Extensive riparian habitat will provide neotropical migratory songbird and waterfowl habitat and several sensitive wildlife species including the California red-legged frog, a federally threatened species, foothill yellow-legged frog, a federal and state species of concern, the western pond turtle and several intact populations of native fish are found on site.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being made under the Land Acquisition Program at WCB. The Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the

WCB's original enabling legislation, the Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 (Fish and Game Code Section 1300 et seq.) to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreational opportunities. Under this program, acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG, evaluating the biological values of property through either development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE) or a CAPP. The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to the DFG Regional Operation Committee (ROC) for review and approval and later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

TNC has owned and managed lands for biodiversity conservation purposes for over 50 years. The policies and procedures adopted by the TNC's Board of Governors require that when TNC acquires any legal interests in conservation land that it intends to hold, funds must be set aside by the date of closing for the perpetual management or stewardship of that interest.

The WCB grant agreement requires the grantee prepare, and WCB approve, a baseline conditions report for the property being protected. The WCB grant agreement also requires annual monitoring by TNC and access to the property by WCB/DFG staff not less than once every three years to conduct monitoring.

TNC proposes to manage the conservation easement to maintain and restore habitat for breeding populations of red-legged frogs, for steelhead passage and for potential steelhead spawning and rearing. Conservation of aquatic and riparian habitat within the Arroyo Seco watershed will help maintain red-legged frog and steelhead presence within the greater Salinas drainage, and may provide a starting point for future restoration of historic steelhead runs in other Salinas tributaries. Because this is an easement on private land, public access will be restricted.

TERMS

The Phase 2 conservation easement was appraised for \$1,465,000.00 and the appraisal has been reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the conservation easement at a bargain sale price of \$1,200,000.00. The difference of \$265,000.00 represents a donation by the landowner. The terms and conditions of the proposed grant to TNC provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all documents pertaining to the acquisition of the conservation easement, including, without limitation, appraisals, preliminary title reports and items referenced therein, options, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition.

PROJECT FUNDING

The WCB proposes to make a grant to TNC for the full amount of the purchase price:

WCB Grant	\$1,200,000.00
Landowner Donation	<u>265,000.00</u>
Total Purchase Price	\$1,465,000.00
Other Project-related Costs:	10,000.00
<u>TOTAL WCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$1,210,000.00</u>

It is estimated that \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover internal project-related costs including the appraisal review costs by the DGS.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund, (Proposition 117), Section 2786 (b/c)(1E), that allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, threatened and endangered or fully protected species, provide corridors linking separate habitat areas and protect significant natural lands and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of ownership in land to preserve open space. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The DFG has reviewed the project and recommends approval of the grant.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,210,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786 (b/c)(1E) to cover the grant amount and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

27. Santa Clara River Watershed, Totlcom \$2,298,500.00
Ventura County

This proposal is to consider the allocation of a grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the acceptance of a Recovery Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the authorization to enter into an Agreement to Subgrant to TNC for a cooperative project with the State Coastal Conservancy, Santa Clara River Trustee Council and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG). The project consists of the acquisition of 123± acres of land for the protection of threatened and endangered species and habitat corridors.

LOCATION

The subject property is a privately owned agricultural parcel located within the floodplain of the Santa Clara River east of Harbor Drive and west of Victoria Avenue, just southerly of the city limits of the city of Ventura. The property abuts the Santa Clara River and is within the 100-year flood plain area. The Santa Clara River is one of the largest watersheds in Southern California without a major dam; as such, it is one of the priority watersheds for protection and restoration. TNC has acquired the property adjacent to the subject property and intends to complete two more acquisitions nearby, thus protecting total 350± acres in the vicinity. All of the properties within the immediate area are in agricultural use.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The subject property has been farmed over the past seventy five years and is improved with an agricultural well with diesel engine pump and miscellaneous temporary farm structures to assist during the harvest season. The project will allow for the protection of riparian and floodplain habitat along the Santa Clara River, one of the most intact river systems remaining in southern California. Southwestern willow flycatcher, least Bell's vireo and the southern California steelhead; all federally endangered species, are the primary targets of the project. However, other listed and candidate species are expected to benefit from this project, including the arroyo toad and the California red-legged frog. This acquisition is part of a larger effort to project and restore the river and floodplain ecosystem, which supports exceptional biodiversity. The goal of the larger effort is to protect the river and floodplain from channelization, urban development, bank stabilization and other actions that alter the river and floodplain processes.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being made under the Land Acquisition Program at WCB. The Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the WCB's original enabling legislation, the Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 (Fish and Game Code Section 1300 et seq.) to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this program acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG,

evaluating the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE)/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to DFG's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and approval and later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Under the terms of the grant, TNC will manage the property for the benefit of threatened and endangered species. The agricultural use will continue under specific seasonal leases managed by TNC. Monitoring for the agricultural lease will be conducted periodically by TNC and the lease will be modified to achieve the maximum protection of the resource. If appropriate for the property, levees may be removed allowing more naturally occurring floodplain and creating a wider riverine and riparian habitat area.

TERMS

The property owner has agreed to sell the property in fee to TNC below the Department of General Services' (DGS) approved appraised fair market value of \$8,800,000.00. The negotiated purchase price is \$8,577,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed grant to TNC provides that staff of WCB will review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of breach of the grant terms the WCB can encumber the property with a conservation easement and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$2,288,500.00
State Coastal Conservancy	2,288,500.00
Santa Clara River Trustee Council	3,000,000.00
US Fish and Wildlife Service – Sec. 6 Grant	<u>1,000,000.00</u>
Total Purchase Price:	\$8,577,000.00
Other Project-related Costs:	10,000.00
<u>TOTALWCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$2,298,500.00</u>

It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related costs, including the Department of General Services review costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 40), Section 5096.650, that provides funding for grants to acquire property for habitat protection for endangered and threatened species and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as 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. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The project has been reviewed and approved for funding by WCB staff.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,298,500.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Section 5096.650 for the grant and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

28. Malibu Lagoon State Beach \$4,000,000.00
Lagoon Restoration, Construction Phase
Los Angeles County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to improve water circulation, remove non-native vegetation, restore native vegetation, and provide additional educational and public use facilities in Malibu Lagoon State Beach.

LOCATION

The project is located in Malibu Lagoon State Beach at Pacific Coast Highway and Cross Creek Road in Los Angeles County. The lagoon is a 31-acre shallow water embayment and coastal wetland complex occurring at the terminus of the Malibu Creek Watershed, the second largest watershed draining into Santa Monica Bay. The lagoon empties into the Pacific Ocean at world famous Malibu Surfrider Beach, renowned as a surfing and recreational destination, hosting approximately 1.5 million visitors every year.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The lagoon has undergone many changes in its recent history. In the 1950's and 60's it was used as a dump site for fill material by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and others. By the late 1970's the site was completely filled and housed two baseball fields. The lagoon has also been greatly diminished by urban development along the coast. In addition, urbanization upstream in the Malibu Creek Watershed has increased the volume of water transported into the lagoon and significantly diminished the quality of the water.

In 1983, DPR initiated restoration work on the lagoon, by excavating fill to create three channels with sloping mudflats to reintroduce tidal flow. The channels were seeded with salt marsh plants and series of boardwalks were created to allow access by the public. Over time, sediments were deposited, creating pickleweed marshes and upland habitat. In 1996 Caltrans funded a successful restoration program to mitigate impacts incurred during the Malibu Lagoon Bridge Replacement Project. Specific restoration measures, coordinated by the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (RCDSMM) and DPR, included a successful tidewater goby habitat enhancement project and the revegetation of areas disturbed by construction activities. However, the problems of Malibu Creek and Malibu Lagoon and its adjacent coastal waters continue. The lagoon is currently listed as impaired under the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) for benthic impacts, pathogens, nutrients, eutrophication, swimming restrictions, and shellfish harvesting. Studies have indicated high pathogen concentrations in the lower Malibu Creek, the lagoon and surf zone that could potentially impact the health of swimmers and surfers. The current configuration of channels causes poor circulation, eutrophication, and low dissolved oxygen levels in the lagoon.

Large algal blooms erupt in the dry season, further depleting oxygen and endangering fish and other aquatic organisms. In the summer when direct flows to the ocean are impeded by the build up of sand bars, circulation is further reduced, thus worsening the problem.

The purpose of this project is to enhance existing water quality conditions and restore and enhance habitat areas that have diminished functions or are in a currently degraded state. Restoration activities have been designed to improve water circulation, increase tidal inundation, improve and expand critical habitat for tidewater goby and steelhead trout, remove non-native and restore native vegetation, minimize human and pet disturbance while maximizing educational and recreational use of the site. The goal of the project is to create a natural self sustaining system that minimizes future maintenance requirements.

Restoration activities will encompass two primary components. First, salt marsh enhancement in the western complex will increase tidal flushing, improve water circulation, increase holding capacity and reduce predator encroachment. Second, east lagoon restoration will restore typical salt marsh hydrology and enhance habitat for sensitive bird species. Construction activities at the lagoon will primarily involve earthwork coupled with non-native species removal and enhancement and creation of native/wetland vegetation.

In addition, the project will enhance the visitor experience through improvements to access and interpretive amenities. The existing trail along the perimeter of the western lagoon will be enhanced through the addition of five new interpretive nodes, with interpretive signage that will provide information on intertidal habitat and kelp forest ecology, watershed processes, sensitive bird and aquatic species, tidal inundation and seasonal water level fluctuations, as well as the cultural history of the site. Interpretive signage will also be installed along the trail, which will enable passive interaction without disturbing the wildlife using the lagoon.

WCB PROGRAM

This project is funded through the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program, which allows for the restoration of native fisheries restoration, restoration of tidal or freshwater wetlands and upland areas including coastal scrub, grasslands, oak woodlands, and threatened and endangered species habitats in the State. This authority is pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 (Fish and Game Code Section 1300 et seq).

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The grantee has agreed to manage and maintain the facilities for 25 years, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the grant.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$4,000,000.00
State Water Resources Control Board	2,495,858.00
State Coastal Conservancy	50,000.00
Los Angeles County	<u>1,129,808.00</u>
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$7,675,666.00</u>

Project costs will be for site preparation, grading, erosion control, planting, parking lot rehabilitation, interpretive features, monitoring and project management.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Section 79572(a), which allows for the restoration of coastal wetlands in southern California, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The Department of Parks and Recreation, as lead agency, prepared a Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Notice of Determination for the project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff considered the EIR and has prepared written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$4,000,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund (Proposition 50), Section 79572(a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

29. Tejon Ranch \$15,800,000.00
Kern and Los Angeles Counties

This proposal is to consider the allocation for five grants to the Tejon Ranch Conservancy (Conservancy) to acquire five perpetual conservation easements over a total of 62,003± acres to protect significant natural landscapes and ecosystems, provide corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent fragmentation, and promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species. The five easement properties are all situated within a larger property, known as Tejon Ranch, which comprises approximately 270,000 acres located in Kern and Los Angeles Counties.

LOCATION

The Tejon Ranch is located along Interstate 5, approximately 60 miles north of Los Angeles and 30 miles south of Bakersfield. Its 422 square miles make it almost as large as the City of Los Angeles and about 40% the size of Rhode Island. The project provides a key linkage and wildlife corridors between the southern region of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Tehachapi Mountains.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Tejon Ranch was founded in 1843 as a Mexican land grant and through the decades the Ranch grew in size as additional land grants were purchased by General Edward Fitzgerald Beale. The Ranch contains a mosaic of rugged mountains, steep canyons, oak covered rolling hills, and broad valleys.

The landowner has agreed to convey five conservation easements over Tejon Ranch in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Tejon Ranch Conservation and Land Use Agreement. The Agreement was struck with the landowner, Natural Resources Defense Council, National Audubon Society, Planning and Conservation League, Sierra Club, Endangered Habitats League and the Conservancy.

Further the Tejon Ranch Company (TRC) has agreed to dedicate conservation easements over an additional 135,000 acres as TRC receives development approvals, with all dedications to occur within 30 years from final approval of the first development project.

Tejon Ranch straddles the Tehachapi Mountains, and lies at the confluence of four major ecological regions: Great Central Valley, Sierra Nevada, Mojave Desert, and Southwestern California. Thus, the diversity of plants and animals found on Tejon Ranch reflects its position at what has been termed a bio-geographic crossroads, where species unique to each of these regions can be found together on the Ranch. The east-west trending Tehachapi Mountains serve as the spine of regional landscape linkage between the Coast/Transverse Ranges to the west and the Sierra Nevada to the east.

Tejon Ranch lies at the center of this continentally significant linkage, protection of which has long been a conservation priority for many organizations and agencies. This linkage includes the last grassland corridor around the agricultural lands in the southern San Joaquin Valley, oak and pinyon-juniper woodlands that connect to the west and east slopes of the Sierra Nevada respectively, and “sky islands” of conifer habitat connecting the more extensive conifer forests in the adjacent Transverse Range and Sierra Nevada. Tejon Ranch appears to be a hotspot of evolution, where a large number of different species and subspecies have evolved over time. The Ranch is also characterized by a significant amount of topographic complexity – over 6,000 feet of elevation change, major north-south and east-west trending canyons, and a well distributed diversity of slopes and aspects – thereby providing landscape resilience and a potential refugium for species in the face of climate change.

The easement areas support a wide-variety of plant and animal species, including a number of special status species. These include bald and golden eagles, tricolored black bird, San Joaquin kit fox, Swainson’s hawk, American badger, and Bakersfield cactus.

Tejon Ranch contains a very rich record of intact prehistoric archaeological sites resulting from three different adaptive systems, dating back at least 4000 years. Tejon Ranch was the location of the first Indian reservation in the U.S., established in 1853. The sites associated with this reservation are remarkably well preserved. They represent the single best, and most complete, archaeological district of historical-era Native American sites in California.

The Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) runs through a portion of the Ranch and one of the easement areas will be bisected by the future realignment of the PCT.

The five easement areas are explained in more detail below:

White Wolf. The 16,178-acre White Wolf easement area is located entirely within Kern County. The easement area is bounded by the Tejon Ranch property boundary to the west, near top of slope to the north, and a varying contour line to the south and east. Highways 58 and 223 traverse the easement area, and secondary county-maintained roads include Deer Trail Road in the southern portion and Bena and Caliente-Bodfish roads cut across the northern portion. The Bakersfield National Cemetery inholding lies within White Wolf. Current land uses in the easement area are cattle ranching, wildlife management (hunting), and mining. Approximately 10,969 acres of the easement area is under Williamson Act contract, within which 93 acres of that have a non-renewal notice filed.

White Wolf supports four primary natural community types: grassland, oak woodland, scrub, and riparian. The grassland community type (14,222 acres)

is found on the San Joaquin Valley floor and lower foothills of the Tehachapi Mountains. At higher elevations and northeast facing slopes of the Tehachapi Mountain foothills, grasslands transition to oak woodlands (1,748 acres), both open savanna and closed woodland types.

Shrub communities (133 acres) are scattered on slopes within grassland communities. Riparian communities (75 acres) are associated with drainages on the flank of Bear Mountain, tributaries of Caliente Creek, and springs and areas with very high groundwater. Within these four major communities, a wide array of plant species associations or alliances can be found. Excluding designated mining areas, all of the natural communities within White Wolf are generally devoid of human alteration and support high quality resource conditions.

Some of the special status species documented within the White Wolf easement include Tejon poppy, Swainson's hawk, tricolored blackbird, American badger and San Joaquin kit fox.

Michener. The 1,585-acre Michener easement area is located within Los Angeles County. The easement area is bounded by the Tejon Ranch property boundary to the south, west and east, and the north ends of T8N, R19W, Section 1 and T8N, R18W, Section 6. Current land uses in the easement area are cattle ranching and wildlife management (hunting). There are no Williamson Act contracts in Los Angeles County. The majority of the property (1,456 acres) lies with Los Angeles County Significant Ecological Area #59.

Michener supports grassland and oak woodland natural community types. Oak woodlands (467 acres) tend to be associated with north and east facing canyons, which are surrounded by grassland communities (1,118 acres). It is a fairly species rich area for its size, with a relatively high percentage of native species. All of the natural communities within Michener are generally devoid of human alteration and support high quality resource conditions.

Michener supports two primary drainages: Bear Canyon and Crane Canyon, which drain north to Castac Lake. Michener comprises an approximately 2-mile portion of a regional habitat linkage design proposed by the South Coast Wildlands Project (Penrod et al. 2003) to conserve connectivity for a broad suite of plant and animal species.

Tri-Centennial. The 7,183-acre Tri-Centennial easement area is located entirely within Kern County. The easement area is bounded by the Tejon Ranch property boundary to the south, the approximately 4,500-foot elevation contour to the north, the extension of 290th Street to the west, and T9N, R16W, Section 9 to the east. Current land uses in the easement area are cattle ranching and wildlife management (hunting). The entire easement area is under Williamson Act contract.

Tri-Centennial supports natural communities that can be grouped into four major types: grasslands, shrub, riparian, and Joshua tree woodland. The grassland community type (3,316 acres) is found on the Antelope Valley floor and dissected alluvial terraces of the Tehachapi Mountains. Scrub communities (2,652 acres), including both chaparral and desert scrub habitats, occur along the foothills and alluvial terraces of the Tehachapi Mountains. Riparian communities (534 acres) are found in Antelope Canyon, the only significant stream draining the southern slopes of the Tehachapi Mountains, and springs discharging along the foothills and alluvial terraces. Joshua tree woodlands (681 acres) are found within Canyon del Gato Montes and some adjacent alluvial fans. All of the natural communities within Tri-Centennial are generally devoid of human alteration and support high quality resource conditions. The flora of Tri-Centennial is characterized by a high percentage (92%) of native species and many unique plant assemblages. The desert scrub communities in Tri-Centennial are of particularly high quality. These scrub communities generally have very low levels of disturbance, low levels of nonnative plant species, and a high diversity of native shrubs, forbs and grasses.

Tri-Centennial supports a series of small, intact watersheds draining the southern slope of the Tehachapi Mountains. Tri-Centennial comprises an approximately 4-mile portion of a regional habitat linkage design proposed by the South Coast Wildlands Project to conserve connectivity for a broad suite of plant and animal species.

Special status species documented within Tri-Centennial include the Loggerhead shrike and Tehachapi pocket mouse.

Old Headquarters. The 26,716-acre Old Headquarters easement area is located entirely within Kern County. The easement area is bounded by the Tejon Ranch property boundary to the northeast, approximately the 2,000-foot contour to the southeast, between a 1,100 to 2,400-foot contour to the north and a varying contour line to the west. The site of the original headquarters of the Tejon Ranch Company lies within the easement area, which currently support numerous houses, barns, and workshops. Current land uses in the easement area are cattle ranching, wildlife management (hunting), and oil and gas extraction. Approximately 12,920 acres of the easement area is under Williamson Act contract.

Old Headquarters supports natural communities that can be grouped into three major types: grasslands, oak woodlands, and riparian. The grassland community type (21,435 acres) is found on the San Joaquin Valley floor, Tejon Hills, and lower foothills of the Tehachapi Mountains. At higher elevations and northeast facing slopes of the Tehachapi Mountain foothills, grasslands transition to oak woodlands (2,537 acres), both open savanna and closed woodland types. Riparian communities (1,592 acres) are associated with

drainages traversing Old Headquarters and springs and areas with very high groundwater. Within these three major communities, a wide array of plant species associations or alliances can be found. There is also a grove of nonnative eucalyptus trees near the agricultural areas (18 acres).

There are three major watersheds comprising Old Headquarters: Tejon Creek, El Paso Creek, and Tunis Creek. All of these watersheds drain to the Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region of the southern San Joaquin Valley.

Old Headquarters comprises an approximately 10-mile portion of a regional habitat linkage design proposed by the South Coast Wildlands Project to conserve connectivity for a broad suite of plant and animal species. With the exception of the Designated Farming and Disturbance Areas, the majority of natural communities within Old Headquarters is generally devoid of human alteration and provides connectivity functions for many San Joaquin Valley species.

Some of the special status species documented within Old Headquarters include the Bakersfield cactus, Striped adobe lily, Tejon poppy, Western spadefoot, bald eagle, golden eagle, San Joaquin kit fox, northern harrier and tricolored blackbird.

Bi-Centennial. The 11,026-acre Bi-Centennial easement area is located within both Kern (10,777 acres) and Los Angeles (249 acres) counties. The easement area is bounded by the Tejon Ranch property boundary and the Kern/Los Angeles County line to the south, the extension of 290th Street to the east, the National Cement lease boundary to the west, and extends north to a boundary line between the 3,500 and 4,500-foot contours. The Bi-Centennial easement area is essentially bisected by the proposed future conservation easement corridor for a realignment of the Pacific Crest Trail through Tejon Ranch. Current land uses in the easement area are cattle ranching, wildlife management (hunting), mining, agriculture, and a series of infiltration basins associated with the Tejon Ranch Company (TRC) Water Bank. The California Aqueduct traverses the western portion of the easement area. Approximately 7,044 acres of the eastern two-thirds of the easement area is under Williamson Act contract.

Bi-Centennial supports natural communities that can be grouped into four major types: grasslands, shrub, oak woodlands, and riparian. The grassland community type (5,847 acres) is found on the Antelope Valley floor and dissected alluvial terraces of the Tehachapi Mountains. Scrub communities (3,475 acres), including both chaparral and desert scrub habitats, occur along the foothills and alluvial terraces of the Tehachapi Mountains. At higher elevations between Los Alamos and Big Sycamore canyons, grasslands transition to open oak woodlands (628 acres). Riparian communities (847 acres) are associated with streams draining the southern slopes of the

Tehachapi Mountains and springs discharging along the foothills and alluvial terraces. Except for the designated mining and agricultural areas and TRC Water Bank, all of the natural communities within Bi-Centennial are generally devoid of human alteration and support high quality resource conditions. In particular, Bi-Centennial supports outstanding native grasslands, and Bi-Centennial is well-known for its very showy native wildflower displays in the spring.

Bi-Centennial supports a series of small watersheds draining the southern slope of the Tehachapi Mountains, including Los Alamos Canyon, Little Sycamore Canyon, Bronco Canyon, and Pescado Creek, and a number of unnamed drainages. All of these watersheds drain to the Antelope Hydrologic Unit of the Lahontan Region in the western Antelope Valley.

Some of the special status species documented within Bi-Centennial include the silvery false lupine, Adobe yampah, coast horned lizard, northern harrier, loggerhead shrike, tricolored blackbird, burrowing owl and the Tehachapi pocket mouse.

The Bi-Centennial easement area in the Antelope Valley portion of the Ranch supports an approximately 7-mile wide swath of the southern foothills of the Tehachapi Mountains rising approximately 1,500 feet from the Mojave Desert floor. Bi-Centennial is visible from surrounding communities, such as Palmdale, Lancaster, and Neenach, visitors to the Antelope Valley Poppy Preserve, and by travelers on Highway 138.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being made under the Land Acquisition Program at WCB. The Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the WCB's original enabling legislation, the Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.) to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this program acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG, evaluating the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE)/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to DFG's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and approval and later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Under the terms of the conservation easements, the landowner will continue Ranch activities, including ranching /livestock management, farming, hunting and other wildlife management activities and water banking. The Conservancy will hold the conservation easements and will monitor the property for compliance with the purposes, terms and conditions of the conservation easements. Monitoring will be performed by the Conservancy staff.

Day to day operations and overall management will be carried out consistent with a management plan. The Interim Ranch-Wide Management Plan (IRWMP) and subsequent Ranch-Wide Management Plan (RWMP), identifies and assess natural resource and conservation attributes of the conserved lands in order to develop sustainable stewardship management strategies that provide for protection and enhancement of natural resources values and management of existing ranch uses. In addition the RWMP will establish best management practices for continued use of the conserved lands for existing ranch uses.

Public enjoyment of the conserved lands is high priority of the Conservancy and TRC. Both parties have agreed to establish and implement a public access plan that encourages and facilitates public access, including public access opportunities for underserved populations.

TERMS

The property owner has agreed to sell the conservation easements for the Department of General Services’ (DGS) approved combined appraised fair market value of \$15,750,000.00. The DGS approved combined fee interest value is \$49,720,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed grant to the Conservancy provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account(s) established for the acquisition. In the event of breach of the grant terms, the WCB can request the conveyance of the conservation easement to the State and/or seek reimbursement of funds.

The separate DGS approved conservation easement values are broken down below:

Conservation Easement Area	Conservation Easement Value	Acres
White Wolf	\$4,340,000.00	15,500
Old Headquarters	\$7,050,000.00	26,717
Michener	\$450,000.00	1,585
Bi-Centennial	\$2,910,000.00	11,019
Tri-Centennial	\$1,000,000.00	7,183

PROJECT FUNDING

The WCB will be funding the entire purchase price.

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$15,750,000.00
TOTAL Purchase Price	<u>\$15,750,000.00</u>
Other Project-related Costs:	50,000.00
<u>TOTAL WCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$15,800,000.00</u>

It is estimated that an additional \$50,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including DGS appraisal review and independent appraisal reviews.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this acquisition is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(b). This fund allows for acquisition and protection of habitat that promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species; provides corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent fragmentation; and protects significant landscapes and ecosystems, including old growth redwoods, mixed conifer forests, oak woodlands, riparian habitat and other significant habitats and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the grants to the Tejon Ranch Conservancy for its acquisition of the conservation easements as proposed; allocate \$15,800,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(b) to cover the grant amounts and pay internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

30. Bottle Peak
San Diego County

\$3,562,900.00

This is a proposal to consider the allocation for a grant to The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) to assist with the acquisition of 418± acres of property to anchor regional habitat conservation planning efforts, in central San Diego County and provide a critical ecological link between coastal habitat and the higher elevation Cleveland National Forest.

LOCATION

The subject property is located east of Interstate Highway 15 and west of Lake Wohlford on the northeasterly border of the City of Escondido in San Diego County. The property has been identified by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) as a priority for protection in the Rancho Guejito Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The subject property is strategically located west of Guejito Ranch and contributes to a north-south habitat linkage between the South San Diego County Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) and the North San Diego County Multiple Species Conservation Plan (NC MSCP).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The subject property contains a variety of significant biological resources. The existing natural open space represents a large portion of the remaining open space in the contiguous unincorporated region of the City of Escondido and supports many sensitive plant and animal species including the federally threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, coast live and Engelmann oak woodlands, various types of chaparral, coastal sage scrub, grasslands and riparian habitats. Based on its topography, native vegetation, large north-south canyon/drainage and adjacent open space areas, the property provides essential landscape linkage, habitat biodiversity and an important natural linkage for wildlife corridors at the intersection of the MSCP and the NC MSCP. Acquisition of the subject property will also create a significant habitat and open space buffer from the more urbanized areas to the west.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being made under the Land Acquisition Program at WCB. The Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the WCB's original enabling legislation, The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 (Fish and Game Code Section 1300 et seq.) to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this program, acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG, evaluating the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE)/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to DFG's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and approval and later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

TECC is a non-profit, public benefit corporation dedicated to the preservation, restoration and protection of the natural open space within the Escondido Creek watershed. It currently owns and/or manages approximately 266 acres of land in seven separate ownerships in the Escondido Creek watershed, spanning roughly between the Cities of Encinitas and Escondido. The landowner is considering making an endowment to TECC for management of this property.

Since this project will be managed by TECC consistent with the guidelines established for the MSCP and NC MSCP plans, public access to the property will be minimal but will likely include access for educational and scientific studies. If appropriate, guided tours by local groups may also be considered by TECC.

The WCB grant agreement requires annual monitoring by TECC and access to the property by WCB/DFG not less than once every three years to conduct monitoring.

TERMS

This proposed acquisition is for approximately one-half (417±) of the total acreage (800±) of the subject property. The full property was appraised and the appraisal was approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). Before the project could be completed, the available bond funding was frozen and the project was placed on hold. When funding was again available, the appraisal was updated. The value had decreased and the updated appraisal was reviewed and approved by the DGS. Due to budget constraints, the project was scaled back to the current acreage. After consultation with the DGS appraisal review staff, the per-acre value in the updated appraisal of the whole property was deemed to be applicable to the current project. The landowner has agreed to sell the property for the approved, appraised value of \$3,552,900.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant to TECC provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all preliminary title reports, title documents, documents for purchase and sale, instruments of conveyance, and escrow instructions prior to disbursement of funds directly in the escrow account established for the acquisition.

PROJECT FUNDING

The WCB proposes to make a grant to TECC for the full amount of the purchase price.

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$3,552,900.00
Other Project-related Costs:	10,000.00
<u>TOTAL WCB Allocation</u>	<u>\$3,562,900.00</u>

It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including DGS appraisal review costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(c), that allows for grants to implement or assist in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as 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. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,562,900.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(c) to cover the grant amount and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

31. DFG Presentation
Conservation and Habitat Mapping

Informational

In 2010, the Department of Fish and Game (Department) completed work on two complementary statewide mapping and modeling efforts. To guide and inform its priorities for species and habitat conservation in service of its broad mission to conserve California's natural resources for both ecological and recreational values, the Department undertook Areas of Conservation Emphasis II (ACE II). The primary focus of ACE II was to collect and summarize the best available statewide spatial data on biological richness, including species diversity, rarity, and sensitive habitats. Information on recreational needs and opportunities throughout the State, including fishing, hunting and wildlife-viewing, was also compiled. Because a functional network of connected wildlands is essential to the continued support of California's diverse natural communities in the face of both human development and climate change, the Department partnered with Caltrans on the California Essential Habitat Connectivity (Connectivity) Project -- a commissioned study to identify large remaining blocks of intact habitat or natural landscape and model linkages between them that need to be maintained, particularly as corridors for wildlife.

The projects shared the goal of using the best available science, data sets, spatial analyses and modeling techniques in a process both transparent and repeatable. They supplement, and in many cases validate, earlier approaches to identify priorities by having experts with on-the-ground knowledge hand draw areas of high biological, recreational, or connectivity value on large maps.

Rather than produce single statewide maps depicting priorities, both projects produced a set of Geographic Information System (GIS) data layers that can be used flexibly to inform decision-making. ACE II layers represent specific biological and recreational values, threats, and landscape considerations at a consistent scale of 2.5 square mile hexagons that can be combined in various ways to identify priorities for conservation, depending on management question or funding opportunity. The Connectivity Project has one layer identifying large intact habitat blocks, another modeling the "path of least resistance" or "least cost corridor" between them, and a third showing places where only a road disrupts habitat connectivity and Caltrans can offer solutions for restoring a connection.

These two complementary mapping efforts will continue to aid the DFG and conservation partners in the development of Land Acquisition Evaluations and Conceptual Area Protection Plans. They are key to achieving a network of large connected reserves of high biological value -- a focus of the State Wildlife Action Plan, the California Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, land acquisition and management, and conservation planning across jurisdictional boundaries.

32. 2011 Wildlife Conservation Board
Tentative Meeting Schedule

Informational

February 24, 2011

May 26, 2011

August 25, 2011

November 17, 2011