



DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, California 94244-2090
<https://wcb.ca.gov>
(916) 445-8448
Gavin Newsom, Governor
NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY

Final Meeting Agenda

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

August 27, 2026, 10:00 a.m.**

King Gillette Ranch
26800 Mulholland Hwy,
Calabasas, CA 91302

The Board meeting will also be available via Zoom. A recording will be posted after the meeting. Please note: *WCB offers a video link but cannot guarantee remote access. Please attend in person if you believe your participation is essential.*

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International numbers available: <https://wildlife-ca-gov.zoom.us/j/87094498306>

Notice: We no longer require Speaker Cards. If you wish to comment on an agenda item, you will be provided with the opportunity to do so during the meeting. In person speakers will be asked to line up at the podium during the specified item. Similarly, on-line speakers will be asked to raise hands to enter the queue.

The Board will break for a 30-minute lunch at approximately 12pm.

Wildlife Conservation Board Meeting, August 27, 2026

****Members of the public are invited to join the Board on a tour of the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing on August 26, 2026, at 3pm. Space is limited. The tour involves walking on rocky terrain. Participants must provide their own transportation. Location and logistics will be provided to participants upon RSVP. Please use this [link](#) to RSVP.**

Wildlife Conservation Board Meeting, August 27, 2026

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Attachments

Attachment A – Map of August 2026 Projects

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Persons with disabilities needing reasonable accommodation to participate in public meetings or other CDFW activities are invited to contact the Department's EEO Office at EEO@wildlife.ca.gov. Please make any such requests at the earliest possible time to help ensure that accommodations can be in place at the time of the meeting. If a request for an accommodation has been submitted but is no longer needed, please contact the EEO Officer immediately.

1. Roll Call

Wildlife Conservation Board Members

Damon Nagami, Chair, Public Member
Tina Thomas, Vice Chair, Public Member
Karyn Gear, Public Member
Meghan Hertel, Member
Director, Department of Fish and Wildlife
Fran Pavley, Public Member
Michele Perrault, Member
Legislative Director, Department of Finance
Eric Sklar, Member
President, Fish and Game Commission

Joint Legislative Advisory Committee

Senator Catherine Blakespear
Senator John Laird
Senator Henry Stern
Assemblymember Steve Bennett
Assemblymember Diane Papan
Assemblymember Rick Zbur

Executive Director

Jennifer M. Norris, PhD

2. **Approval of Agenda**
3. **Executive Director's Report**
4. **Board Member Updates and Reports**
5. **Funding Status - Informational**

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

GENERAL FUND (0001)	\$7,293,128.00
August 2026 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(0.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$7,293,128.00

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND (0262)	\$50,562,941.57
August 2026 Board Meeting Allocation:	(11,920,000.00)
Total Project Development:	(18,605,044.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$20,037,897.57

WATER SECURITY, CLEAN DRINKING WATER, COASTAL AND BEACH PROTECTION FUND OF 2002 (Proposition 50) (6031)	\$1,852,000.00
August 2026 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(0.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$1,852,000.00

SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006 (Proposition 84) (6051)	\$3,537,129.75
August 2026 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(0.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$3,537,129.75

WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND (Proposition 1) (6083)	\$17,931,745.94
August 2026 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(1,600,000.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$16,331,745.94

THE CALIFORNIA DROUGHT, WATER, PARKS, CLIMATE, COASTAL PROTECTION, AND OUTDOOR ACCESS FOR ALL ACT OF 2018 (Proposition 68) (6088)	\$26,757,168.38
August 2026 Board Meeting Allocation:	(0.00)
Total Project Development:	(6,965,000.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$19,792,168.38

SAFE DRINKING WATER, WILDFIRE PREVENTION,

**DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS, AND CLEAN AIR BOND ACT
OF 2024 (Proposition 4) (6093)**

	\$258,304,061.0
August 2026 Board Meeting Allocation:	(51,948,000.00)
Total Project Development:	(71,882,600.00)
Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$134,473,461.00

TOTAL – ALL FUNDS

	\$366,238,174.64
Grand Total – August 2026 Board Meeting Allocation:	(63,868,000.00)
Grand Total - Project Development:	(99,052,644.00)
Grand Total Projected Unallocated Balance:	\$203,317,530.64

Consent Items

Items 6-11 are part of the Consent Calendar

6. Recovery of Funds, Thursday, August 27, 2026

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

Table 1 - Recoveries by Fund

Fund Name	Amount
General Fund	\$73,824.35
Habitat Conservation Fund	\$4,213.33
Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014	\$27,201.50
The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018	\$55,344.08
Total Recoveries for All Funds	\$160,583.26

Table 2 - General Fund

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
(CAL FIRE) Shackleford Forest CE	\$35,000.00	\$30,251.50	\$4,748.50
Ackerson Meadow Restoration	\$2,786,000.00	\$2,760,976.15	\$25,023.85
Curry Canyon Ranch	\$20,000.00	\$10,416.00	\$9,584.00
Curry Canyon Ranch Conservation Easement	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$20,000.00
Enhancing Wetlands at Goose Lake Augmentation	\$127,000.00	\$127,000.00	\$0.00
Indian Joe Springs Ecological Reserve, Expansion 1	\$30,000.00	\$25,126.00	\$4,874.00
Loyalton Ranch	\$10,000.00	\$8,246.00	\$1,754.00
North Coast Range Fen Conservation Area (Wojcik)	\$70,000.00	\$67,454.00	\$2,546.00
Sacramento River Wildlife Area Mile 164 - L (Felkins)	\$40,000.00	\$34,706.00	\$5,294.00
Tomato Stand Fish Passage Implementation	\$642,608.00	\$642,608.00	\$0.00
Total Recoveries to General Fund			\$73,824.35

Table 3 - Habitat Conservation Fund

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Curry Canyon Ranch	\$381,952.00	\$381,952.00	\$0.00
Curry Canyon Ranch Conservation Easement	\$259,608.00	\$259,608.00	\$0.00
Erikson Ranch Wetland and Nesting Habitat Enhancement	\$671,000.00	\$666,786.67	\$4,213.33
Grizzly Island Wildlife Area Waterfowl Breeding Habitat	\$761,956.00	\$761,956.00	\$0.00
Indian Joe Springs Ecological Reserve, Expansion 1	\$36,000.00	\$36,000.00	\$0.00
Loyalton Ranch	\$5,500,000.00	\$5,500,000.00	\$0.00
North Coast Range Fen Conservation Area (Wojcik)	\$559,000.00	\$559,000.00	\$0.00
Sacramento River Wildlife Area Mile 164 - L (Felkins)	\$1,820,000.00	\$1,820,000.00	\$0.00
Total Recoveries to Habitat Conservation Fund			\$4,213.00

Table 4 - Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Evan's Spring Analysis and Design, Phase 2	\$283,119.00	\$283,030.02	\$88.98
McKee Creek Conservation and Stream Flow Enhancement (Restoration)	\$139,377.00	\$139,345.13	\$31.87
Russian River Watershed Stream Gauging	\$261,316.00	\$253,962.13	\$7,353.87
Salt Creek Floodplain Restoration Planning	\$236,287.00	\$231,958.55	\$4,328.45
Tomato Stand Fish Passage Implementation	\$144,392.00	\$140,786.92	\$3,605.08
USFS Hot Springs-Montecito Creek Section 1707 Project	\$45,750.00	\$33,956.75	\$11,793.25
Total Recoveries to Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014			\$27,201.50

Table 5 - The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018

Project Name	Allocated	Expended	Balance
Coyote Valley Wildlife Linkage Master Plan	\$350,000.00	\$350,000.00	\$0.00
Enhancing Wetlands at Goose Lake	\$962,000.00	\$961,999.99	\$0.01
Grizzly Island Wildlife Area Waterfowl Breeding Habitat	\$538,044.00	\$538,044.00	\$0.00
Hawk Hill Visitor Access Improvements	\$204,077.00	\$204,077.00	\$0.00
Marple Canyon Wildlife Crossing Enhancement	\$245,500.00	\$190,552.55	\$54,947.45
Poplar Valley Meadow Restoration Planning	\$110,000.00	\$109,603.38	\$396.62
<i>Total Recoveries to The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018</i>			\$55,344.08

- 7. Table Bluff ER Coastal Prairie Restoration, Augmentation** **Restoration Implementation**
- WCB Grant: \$400,000
- Fund Source(s): Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (Proposition 4 – Existing Programs), Public Resources Code Section 93010 (SB 105, Sec. 94)
- Grantee: Mattole Restoration Council
- Landowner: California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Location: 4.5 miles northwest of Loleta
- County: Humboldt

Project Highlights

- Located at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Table Bluff Ecological Reserve
- Habitats restored: 100 acres of coastal prairie, and 50 acres of Sitka spruce forest
- Key species: federally endangered western lily, various plants of cultural significance to the Wiyot Tribe
- Regional or Species Plan: USFWS Western Lily Recovery Plan
- Project will include an ADA accessible nature trail with signage in English and Spanish, including cultural education signage developed by the Wiyot Tribe

Priority Metrics

- Benefits Justice Communities: Yes, the project is located within a DAC per the climate bond mapping tool. The project will benefit the surrounding justice community by increasing fire resiliency, increasing public access and providing firewood to the Wiyot Tribe.
- Tribal Partnerships: Yes, the Wiyot Tribe provides nursery services, interpretation, and ethnobotanical research.
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
- WCB Strategic Plan Target: B2.1, B3.4, C1.1

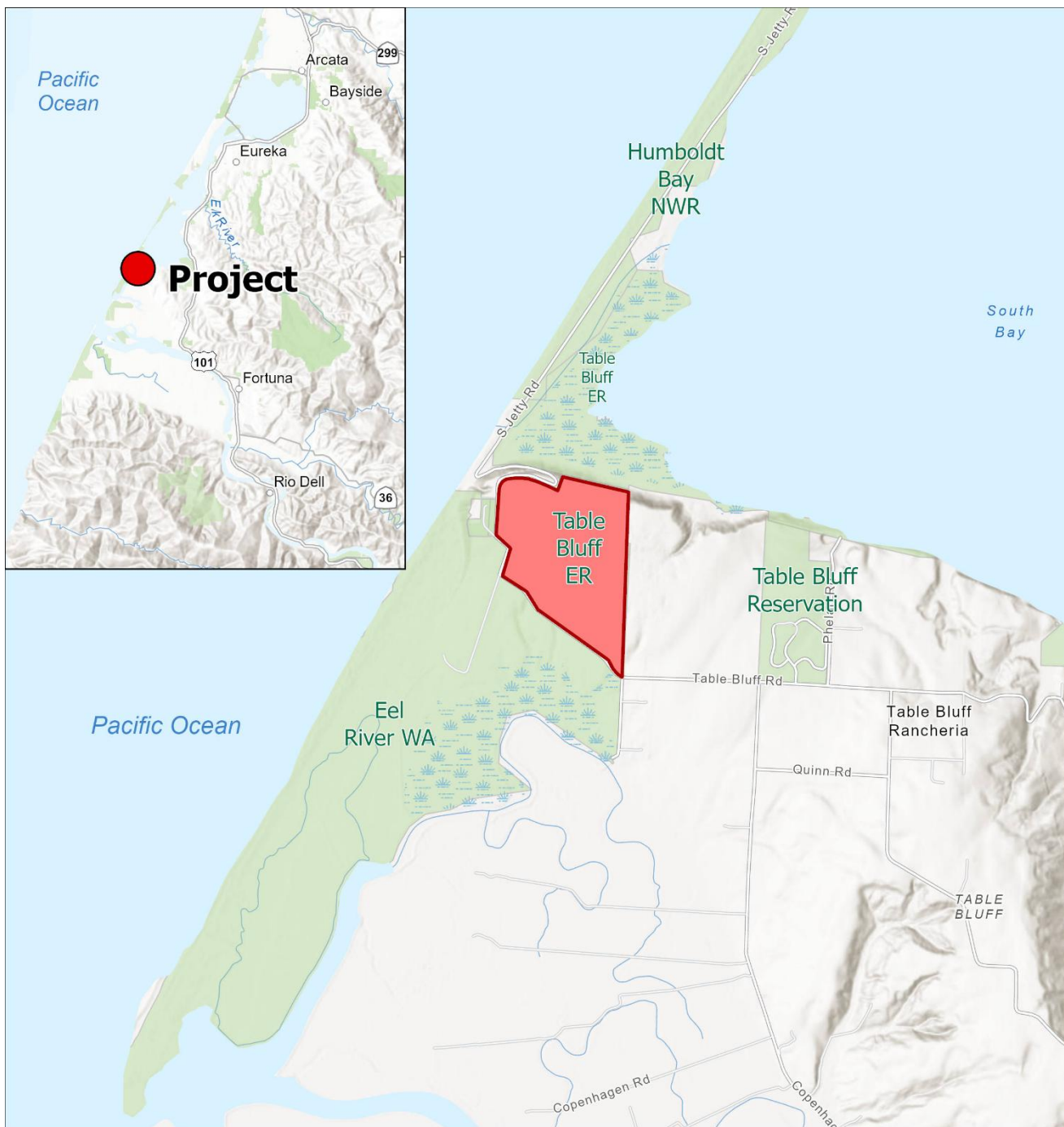


Table Bluff ER Coastal Prairie Restoration Augmentation

Humboldt County



Project

Protected
Lands



Project Description

Table Bluff ER Coastal Prairie Restoration (Project) project is located at Table Bluff, a prominent uplifted coastal terrace dividing the fertile Eel River Valley from Humboldt Bay and is a central location for the Wiyot Tribe. Much of the Table Bluff coastal terrace was tilled and farmed for potatoes and other crops or grazed. Despite the long and persistent history of alteration, the Table Bluff Ecological Reserve (Reserve) supports one of the largest populations of federally and state endangered western lily and a remarkable concentration of culturally significant plants for the Wiyot Tribe. The Reserve was acquired as part of the Eel River Wildlife Area Ocean Ranch Coastal Wetlands for wetland maintenance and habitat protection with funding from WCB in 1986. The Project will implement coastal prairie restoration activities for the benefit of federally endangered western lily and other culturally important plants by:

- Thinning Sitka spruce canopy cover into the coastal prairie to increase western lily flowering and reproductive success.
- Planting native coastal prairie grasses and plants to restore former pasture.
- Enhancing culturally significant plant populations within the coastal prairie.
- Constructing an ADA accessible trail connecting Table Bluff ER, the Waluph Lighthouse County Park, and the Ocean Ranch Unit of the Eel River Wildlife Area.

The Project was originally approved for funding in May 2023, but the project budget has since increased due to unexpected issues and a new opportunity for improved public access. A budget augmentation will improve project delivery by:

- Improving planting of western lily, native grasses, and culturally significant plants within the project area. Planting in Spring 2025 was delayed following inclement weather and logistical challenges. Seed germination was poor, necessitating reseeding in Fall 2025 which increased project costs. Additional funding will support nursery operations and additional supplies to complete another year of planting native coastal prairie plants within the former pasture at Table Bluff. This work will help create informed, science-based restoration plans for coastal prairie at and beyond Table Bluff.
- Creating a durable low maintenance public access trail that connects to the Waluph Lighthouse County Park to the West, and the Ocean Ranch Unit of the Eel River Wildlife Area to the North. While coordinating with local and federal project partners, an opportunity was identified to re-design the Table Bluff public access trail from a self-contained trail loop to a combination loop and through hike trail that connects to other local conserved lands, providing a higher quality public access experience. Additional funding will allow for construction of a longer and more durable through hike trail. The more durable trail will require less maintenance than originally scoped and support increased trail use.

Long-Term Management

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

Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Augmentation	Non-WCB Funds	Totals
Project Management	\$149,931	\$36,000	\$82,800	\$268,731
Thinning	\$572,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$612,000
Pilot Project	\$402,246	---	\$20,000	\$422,246
Restoration	\$892,157	\$153,000	\$10,000	\$1,055,157
Public Access	\$120,000	\$138,000	\$20,000	\$278,000
Indirect Cost	\$139,666	\$53,000	---	\$192,666
Contingency	\$145,000	---	---	\$145,000
Total	\$2,421,000	\$400,000	\$152,800	\$2,973,800

Non-WCB funders include:

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife - \$136,800
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service - \$16,000

Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Adam Canter, Natural Resources Director, Wiyot Tribe Natural Resources Department
- Vicky Ryan, Acting Field Supervisor, United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- Michael Bowen, Project Development Specialist, California State Coastal Conservancy
- Tony LaBanca, Natural Communities Chair, California Native Plant Society
- Jean-Philippe "JP" Marié, President, California Native Grasslands Association
- Julia Michaels, PhD., Restoration Ecologist, Hedgerow Farms/Pacific Coast Seed
- Dave Imper, Volunteer, Eureka, CA

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA

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

State Government

- Senate: Senator Mike McGuire, District 2
- Assembly: Assemblymember Chris Rogers, District 2

Staff Recommendation

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



Table Bluff ER coastal prairie with conifers in the background



Dense stands of conifers have encroached into western lily habitat



January 30, 2023

Wildlife Conservation Board
715 P Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for Table Bluff Ecological Reserve Coastal Prairie Restoration Project

Ha'wa'lou (Greetings) Wildlife Conservation Board,

The Wiyot Natural Resources Department is pleased to send support for the proposed restoration at Table Bluff Ecological Reserve (Reserve) to benefit Federally and State Endangered western lily (*Lilium occidentale*), native coastal prairie, and culturally significant plants on the Reserve, which is a significant area within Wiyot ancestral territory.

Table Bluff supports one of the most viable populations of western lily, and the only population on protected land in Humboldt County. In the period between the acquisition of the Reserve in 1986 and 2012, a combination of thinning encroaching Sitka spruce and other woody vegetation, preventing predation, and seasonal winter grazing successfully increased the reproductive population from less than 100 to 903 flowering plants. However, without substantial management for western lily on the Reserve in the last 10 years, the flowering population has fallen back to one tenth of the 2012 population peak.

Prior to agriculture and development associated with colonization, coastal prairies were maintained by the Wiyot and were rich with game, starchy edible geophytes, wild grains, and other useful and culturally important species. While grasslands that have been degraded by tilling and overgrazing no longer support western lily and other sensitive native herbaceous species such as geophytes, areas that have been undisturbed have been subject to encroachment by conifers and other woody vegetation that shade out early successional herbaceous vegetation.

Table Bluff's sweeping views of both Humboldt Bay and the Eel River are cultural landscapes of the Wiyot and iconic to residents and visitors, and the proposed restoration will add to the inspiration this area provides. We ask for your support as we work to restore Table Bluff's ecological and cultural value with improved public access and education.

Rra'dutwas (with kindness),

Adam Canter
Natural Resources Director
Wiyot Tribe Natural Resources Department
Table Bluff Reservation
1000 Wiyot Dr, Loleta, CA 95551



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office

1655 Heindon Road

Arcata, California 95521

(707) 822-7201, FAX (707) 822-8411



Wildlife Conservation Board
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Subject: Table Bluff Ecological Reserve to benefit western lily, native coastal prairie, and culturally significant plants.

To Whom it May Concern:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) supports the restoration project at the Table Bluff Ecological Reserve (Reserve) proposed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The proposed project will benefit the Federally and State Endangered western lily (*Lilium occidentale*) by improving occupied habitat, an important recovery strategy described in the 1998 *Western Lily Recovery Plan*.

Table Bluff supports one of the four most viable populations of western lily, and the only population on protected land in Humboldt County. In the period between the acquisition of the Reserve in 1986 to 2012, a combination of thinning Sitka spruce and other woody vegetation, preventing predation, and seasonal winter grazing successfully increased the reproductive population from less than 100 to 903 flowering plants. However, in the last ten years western lily management on the Reserve has been limited and the flowering population has fallen back to one tenth of the 2012 population peak.

Western lily is associated with early successional prairie, scrub, and wetland habitat near the coast, and this plant's decline may be largely attributed widespread loss of these habitats. Native coastal prairie and other early successional habitats are rich hotspots for biodiversity that face dual pressures of extreme disturbance associated with tilling and development, and the removal of disturbance regimes from the landscape. Western lily and its early successional habitat once occurred in coastal lowlands and terraces around Humboldt Bay that have been largely developed or tilled for agriculture. Prior to agriculture and development associated with colonization, coastal prairies were rich with game, starchy edible geophytes (often called "Indian potatoes"), wild grains, and other useful and culturally important species. While grasslands that have been degraded by tilling and overgrazing no longer support western lily and other sensitive native herbaceous species such as geophytes, areas that have been undisturbed have been subject to encroachment by conifers and other woody vegetation that shade out early successional herbaceous vegetation.

Restoring coastal prairie to benefit Federally and State Endangered western lily and the overall ecological and cultural value of the Reserve will be a multi-step process:

1. Thin encroaching Sitka spruce and other woody vegetation from the western lily population area. Previous studies have shown benefits of opening the canopy and reducing shading, and this follows previous management recommendations from the Service.

2. Reinstate disturbance. Goats will be reintroduced to the western lily population area during the winter dormancy period, as recommended following the success of previous use of goats. An experimental pilot project will also test the comparative success of grazing and prescribed burns in improving habitat.
3. Pilot project testing methods of restoring native coastal prairie vegetation, including culturally important plant populations sourced and cultivated by the Wiyot Tribal Nursery. Partnering with the Wiyot Tribe of Table Bluff and hiring their new Native Plant Nursery Program for cultivation and restoration of culturally significant plant populations of interest to the Tribe is an important step toward incorporating cultural survival and Traditional Ecological Knowledge into restoration and management of Table Bluff.
4. The remaining approximately 100 acres of degraded pasture on the Reserve will be restored to a mosaic of coastal prairie with culturally significant plant species using the most successful native species and restoration methods. Expanding native coastal prairie into previously degraded non-native pasture is key to the long-term survival and resilience of this threatened vegetation community. Using restoration methods that have been experimentally tested onsite will give this project its best chance of success and will provide scientific data to inform future coastal prairie restoration efforts along the North Coast. Environmentally and culturally conscious public access through restored coastal prairie will provide enjoyment and education to visitors without compromising important or sensitive habitat.

The Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office works cooperatively with stakeholders and partners to conserve and protect our nation's endangered and threatened species and coastal trust resources along the North Coast of California. We support efforts to restore western lily habitat on Table Bluff and will be actively involved in implementation and monitoring of this project. If you have further questions, please contact Laurel Goldsmith of my staff by phone at (707) 407-9403.

Sincerely,

Vicky Ryan
Acting Field Supervisor



January 31, 2023

Wildlife Conservation Board
c/o CDFW, P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Re: Table Bluff Ecological Reserve Habitat Restoration

To whom it may concern:

The State Coastal Conservancy proudly supports CDFW's extension of its remarkable regional restoration onto the Table Bluff Ecological Reserve. This effort will benefit federally and state endangered western lily (*Lilium occidentale*), native coastal prairie, and culturally significant plants on the Reserve. It will also represent the latest in a growing list of unprecedented habitat restoration efforts spearheaded by CDFW Region One's Habitat Conservation Unit.

Native coastal prairie and other early successional habitats are hotspots for biodiversity. Coastal prairies and native California grasslands are also rich with many edible and culturally important species. But management over the last several decades has not promoted their full potential, and the degradation of these habitats is both an ecological and cultural loss. CDFW's pilot projects and management will help ensure this habitat reaches its full potential.

Region One has a strong track record, and we appreciate the opportunity to partner with them. Beyond simply acquiring habitat and setting it aside, Region One has thought deeply and acted boldly to ensure that the ecological and cultural integrity and trajectory for protected lands is upward. CDFW also intends to incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge and cultural values into coastal prairie restoration and management, and support experimentation and sharing results to inform future coastal prairie restoration

Please consider funding this important project to restore coastal prairie at Table Bluff Ecological Reserve. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Michael Bowen

Michael Bowen
Project Development Specialist

1515 Clay Street, 10th Floor
Oakland, California 94612-1401
Scc.ca.gov
510-286-1015 Fax: 510-286-0470



CALIFORNIA
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

North Coast Chapter
P.O. Box 1067
Arcata, CA 95518

February 7, 2023

Wildlife Conservation Board
c/o California Department of Fish and Wildlife
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

RE: Support for the Table Bluff Ecological Reserve Coastal Prairie Restoration Project

The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is a statewide nonprofit organization of nearly 10,000 amateurs and professionals dedicated to the preservation of California's diverse native flora. CNPS conducts a variety of conservation efforts focused on long-term protection and preservation of native flora in its natural habitat. In our area, the North Coast Chapter represents approximately 575 members in Humboldt, Trinity, Del Norte, and western Siskiyou Counties. I am writing on behalf of the North Coast Chapter of CNPS to express our full support for the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) to fund the Table Bluff Ecological Reserve Coastal Prairie Restoration Project.

Table Bluff supports one of the most viable populations of the Federally and State Endangered western lily (*Lilium occidentale*), and the only population on protected land in Humboldt County. As the southernmost known population, western lily at Table Bluff occurs on soils, and in habitat, that generally differ from other populations to the north. Work to restore habitat and improve population numbers will ensure the preservation of unique traits and variability important to the species over its entire range.

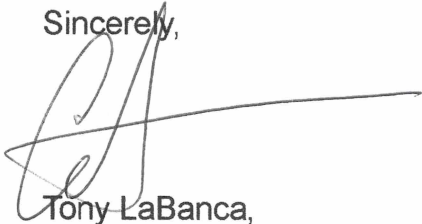
At Table Bluff, the thinning of woody vegetation and reestablishing an appropriate disturbance regime are important measures to improve habitat where western lily individuals are currently present, and bolster their numbers. In addition, restoration of early successional habitat at this location will allow for potential expansion of this population, an increased number of individuals, and a better understanding of degraded habitat in other lowland areas of Humboldt Bay.

The project will carry out a number of activities that are critical actions prescribed in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Plan for Western Lily, including conducting research on vegetation control methods, controlling woody vegetation, and conducting reintroduction & augmentation studies, as well as others. These actions have been determined to be the most important in moving the western lily towards recovery.

The North Coast Chapter of CNPS believes funding from WCB for restoration at Table Bluff Ecological Reserve will benefit Federally and State Endangered western lily (*Lilium occidentale*), native coastal prairie natural communities, and culturally significant plants on the Reserve. We recommend WCB fund the request in full.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony LaBanca', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Tony LaBanca,
North Coast Chapter CNPS
Natural Communities Chair &
Steering Committee Member
northcoast@cnps.org

Ec: Kelsey McDonald - CDFW
kelsey.mcdonald@wildlife.ca.gov

Carol Ralph - NC CNPS
theralphs@humboldt1.com



California Native Grasslands Association

P.O. Box 485 ▪ Davis, CA 95617

Phone: (530) 902-6009 ▪ Email: admin@cnga.org

January 21, 2023

Wildlife Conservation Board
c/o CDFW, P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Dear Wildlife Conservation Board,

On behalf of the CNGA Board of Directors, I am writing to express our full support for restoration at Table Bluff Ecological Reserve to benefit Federally and State Endangered western lily (*Lilium occidentale*), native coastal prairie, and culturally significant plants on the Reserve.

Western lily is one of many plants associated with coastal prairie and other early successional habitats that has been extirpated from many places due to the widespread loss of habitat. Native coastal prairie and other early successional habitats are rich hotspots for biodiversity. Coastal prairies and other native California grasslands are also rich with many edible and culturally important species, and the degradation of these habitats is a cultural loss as well as an ecological loss.

CNGA supports this project taking immediate action to restore habitat as well as conducting a pilot experiment to guide larger restoration. Expanding native coastal prairie by restoring previously degraded non-native pasture is key to the long-term survival and resilience of this important habitat and the many ecologically and culturally important species it supports. In cases with conifer encroachment, it may be necessary to remove trees and reinstate disturbance to restore and maintain habitat.

CNGA supports partnering with the tribes and incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge and cultural values into coastal prairie restoration and management. We also support experimentation and sharing results to inform future coastal prairie restoration efforts.

Please consider funding this important project to restore coastal prairie at Table Bluff Ecological Reserve.

Best regards,

Jean-Philippe "JP" Marié, President, CNGA Board of Directors

The mission of the California Native Grasslands Association is to promote, preserve, and restore the diversity of California's native grasses and grassland ecosystems through education, advocacy, research, and stewardship.

California Native Grasslands Association is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

Website: www.cnga.org

Tax ID #: 68-0239825



CAnativegrassland



@CAGrasslands



californianativegrassland



Pacific Coast Seed
1925 N. MacArthur Drive
Suite 100
Tracy, CA 95376

Wildlife Conservation Board
c/o CDFW, P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

2/1/2023

Dear Wildlife Conservation Board,

We are writing to express our full support for restoration at Table Bluff Ecological Reserve to benefit Federally and State Endangered western lily (*Lilium occidentale*), native coastal prairie, and culturally significant plants on the Reserve.

At Hedgerow Farms we specialize in the collection and production of native seed for restoration projects. We are familiar with Table Bluff Ecological Reserve because we have assisted with rare species seed collection in the past and are invested in the successful restoration and maintenance of the Reserve.

Western lily is one of many plants associated with coastal prairie and other early successional habitats that has been extirpated from many places due to the widespread loss of habitat. Native coastal prairie and other early successional habitats are rich hotspots for biodiversity. Coastal prairies and other native California grasslands are also rich with many edible and culturally important species, and the degradation of these habitats is a cultural loss as well as an ecological loss.

We support this project taking immediate action to restore habitat as well as conducting a pilot experiment to guide larger restoration. Expanding native coastal prairie by restoring previously degraded non-native pasture is key to the long-term survival and resilience of this important habitat and the many ecologically and culturally important species it supports. In cases with conifer encroachment, it may be necessary to remove trees and reinstate disturbance to restore and maintain habitat.

We support partnering with the tribes and incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge and cultural values into coastal prairie restoration and management. We also support experimentation and sharing results to inform future coastal prairie restoration efforts.

Please consider funding this important project to restore coastal prairie at Table Bluff Ecological Reserve.

Sincerely,

Julia Michaels
Julia Michaels, PhD.

Restoration Ecologist
Hedgerow Farms/Pacific Coast Seed

Joshua Scoggin
Associate Ecologist
Hedgerow Farms/Pacific Coast Seed

January 31, 2023

Wildlife Conservation Board
c/o California Department of Fish and Wildlife
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, California 94244-2090

**Subject: Letter of Support - Table Bluff Ecological Reserve Coastal Prairie Restoration Project,
Humboldt County, California**

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to express my great support for the grant application submitted by the Eureka office of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and which will enable restoration of an abundance of coastal prairie habitat, as well as habitat occupied by the Federally and State endangered western lily (*Lilium occidentale*) located on their Table Bluff Ecological Reserve (TBER) here in Humboldt County. I have investigated the western lily and its habitat at the TBER continuously for the past 40 years, initially as a volunteer, then under contract with CDFW for 14 years, then as an US Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) employee, and now again as a volunteer. As part of my work with western lily and other endangered species, I also investigated and monitored many similar coastal prairie and wetland habitats along the coast between Table Bluff and Coos Bay, Oregon. To a great degree, my working career revolved around the monitoring and management of western lily and coastal prairie.

This proposal contains many key elements necessary to continue, and improve upon my past work to manage for the western lily and its key habitat at TBER, one of the two most important populations for the species remaining in California. It also focuses on expanding coastal prairie on the reserve, an effort that was discussed with agency staff back in the 1990's but was never implemented. Like Point St. George, TBER contains one of the premier examples of high-quality coastal prairie remaining in California, and I am very pleased finally see an effort to pursue the restoration of additional habitat there.

As a result, I whole-heartedly support this proposal, and hope the commission will provide full funding for its implementation. I look forward to continuing to work with the department on this and other important projects in the future.

Sincerely,

David Imper

David Imper,
Eureka, California

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse 1400 Tenth Street, Room 113 Sacramento, CA 95814	From: Department of Fish and Wildlife Wildlife Conservation Board P.O. Box 944209 Sacramento, CA 99244-2090
County Clerk (County of): N/A	Attention: James Croft
Project Title: Table Bluff ER Coastal Prairie Restoration	
Project Applicant: Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)	
Project Location – Specific: APN(s) Table Bluff Ecological Reserve, 4.5 miles southeast of the town of Loleta, APN's: 308-041-005-000, 308-061-001-000	
Project Location – City: Loleta	
Project Location – County: Humboldt	
CEQA Region: N. CA	
Description of Nature, Purpose, and Benefits of Project: Augmentation of an existing grant to enhance the reproductive population of western lily at the Table Bluff Ecological Reserve (Reserve), restore native coastal prairie, enhance culturally significant plant populations, and implement long-term science-based management planning to restore and maintain the ecological and cultural value of the Reserve. WCB Project Tracker ID: 2026080	
Public Agency Approving Project: Department of Fish and Wildlife, WCB	
Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out the Project: Rebecca J. Fris, Deputy Executive Director, WCB	
Exempt Status: (Check One) ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 15268): ☐ Declared Emergency [Sec. 15269 (a)]: ☐ Emergency Project [Sec. 15269 (b) and (c)]: ☒ Categorical Exemption. State Section number and type: 15301, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land ☐ Statutory Exemptions, State code Number: ☐ Other:	
Reasons why this project is exempt: Project consists of minor alterations in land, water, and vegetation on existing officially designated wildlife management areas or fish production facilities which results in improvement of habitat for wildlife.	
Lead Agency Contact Person: Rebecca J. Fris	
Area Code/Telephone Extension: (916) 212-5637	
If filed by applicant: 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding. 2. Has a notice of exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☒ Yes, (by this notice) ☐ No	
Signature:	Title: Acting Executive Director Date:
☒ Signed by Lead Agency	☐ Signed by Applicant
Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21108, 21152, 21152.1, Public Resources Code	SCH #: Posted Date: Date Received for Filing at OPR:

8. Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area, Expansion 20 (Stocker)

Acquisition

Purchase Price: \$697,000

CDFW Fee

Fund Source(s): Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)

Location: 4 miles southeast of Brownsville

County: Yuba

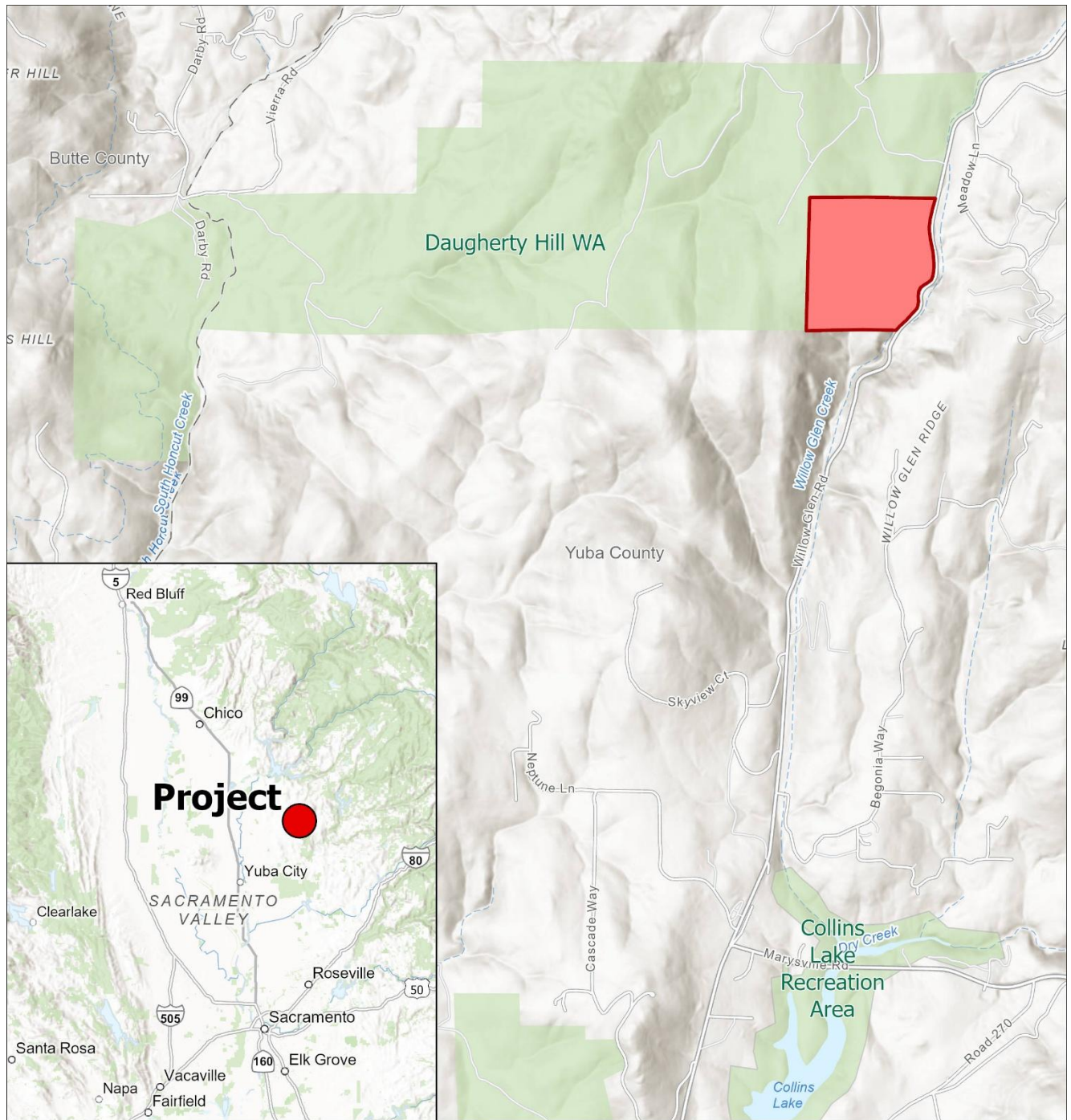
Acres: 155± (Property)

Property Highlights

- Expansion of CDFW's Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area, Darby Road Unit
- Protection and enhancement of blue oak, blue oak-foothill pine, annual grasslands, and mixed chaparral habitats for black-tailed deer, California quail, wild turkey, black bear, mourning dove, gray squirrel, mountain lion, and golden eagle
- Protection of this critical winter range for the Mooretown deer herd is imperative for the ongoing health of the herd

Priority Metrics

- Benefits Justice Communities: No
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 2, Execute Strategic Acquisitions
- WCB Strategic Plan Target: B1.1, B2.1
- Public Access: Yes: wildlife viewing, hiking, and hunting



Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area, Exp. 20 (Stocker) Yuba County



Project

Protected
Lands



Long-Term Management

The Property will be owned and managed by CDFW as part of the Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area.

Project Funding

The Department of General Services approved fair market value is \$697,000. The proposed funding breakdown is as follows:

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

Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- None received

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA

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

State Government

- Senate: Senator Megan Dahle, District 01
- Assembly: Vacant, District 03

Staff Recommendation

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



View to the south with Collins Lake in the background.



View of corrals in the center portion of the property.

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse 1400 Tenth Street, Room 113 Sacramento, CA 95814	From: Department of Fish and Wildlife Wildlife Conservation Board P.O. Box 944209 Sacramento, CA 99244-2090
County Clerk (County of): N/A	Attention: Brian Gibson
Project Title: Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area, Expansion 20 (Stocker)	
Project Applicant: Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)	
Project Location – Specific: APN(s) 056-220-040, 041, 042, 056-250-098, 099 and 100.	
Project Location – City: N/A	
Project Location – County: Yuba	
CEQA Region: N. CA	
Description of Nature, Purpose, and Benefits of Project: The purpose of this project is expansion of the Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area for long-range protection and enhancement of blue oak, blue oak-foothill pine, annual grasslands, and mixed chaparral habitats for black-tailed deer, California quail, wild turkey, black bear, mourning dove, gray squirrel, and support special status species including golden eagle and mountain lion. The property is also critical winter range for the Mooretown deer herd, and protection of this range is imperative for the ongoing health of the herd. WCB Project Tracker ID: 2025172.	
Public Agency Approving Project: Department of Fish and Wildlife, WCB	
Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out the Project: John P. Walsh, Deputy Executive Director, WCB	
Exempt Status: (Check One) ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 15268): ☐ Declared Emergency [Sec. 15269 (a)]: ☐ Emergency Project [Sec. 15269 (b) and (c)]: ☐ Categorical Exemption. State Section number and type: ☒ Statutory Exemptions, State code Number: Public Resources Code Section 21080.28 ☐ Other:	
Reasons why this project is exempt: Project involves the acquisition of an interest in land by a public agency for preservation of natural conditions existing at the time of transfer, including plant and animal habitats.	
Lead Agency Contact Person: John P. Walsh	
Area Code/Telephone Extension: (916) 539-8016	
If filed by applicant: 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding. 2. Has a notice of exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☒ Yes, (by this notice) ☐ No	
Signature:	Title: Deputy Executive Director Date:
☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☐ Signed by Applicant	
Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21108, 21152, 21152.1, Public Resources Code	SCH #: Posted Date: Date Received for Filing at OPR:

9. Desert View Conservation Area Trails - Augmentation

**Public Access
Implementation**

WCB Grant: \$707,000

Fund Source(s): Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (Proposition 4 – Existing Programs), Public Resources Code Section 93010 (SB 105, Sec. 94)

Grantee: County Service Area 20 Joshua Tree

Landowner: County Service Area 20 Joshua Tree

Location: ¼ mile east of Joshua Tree

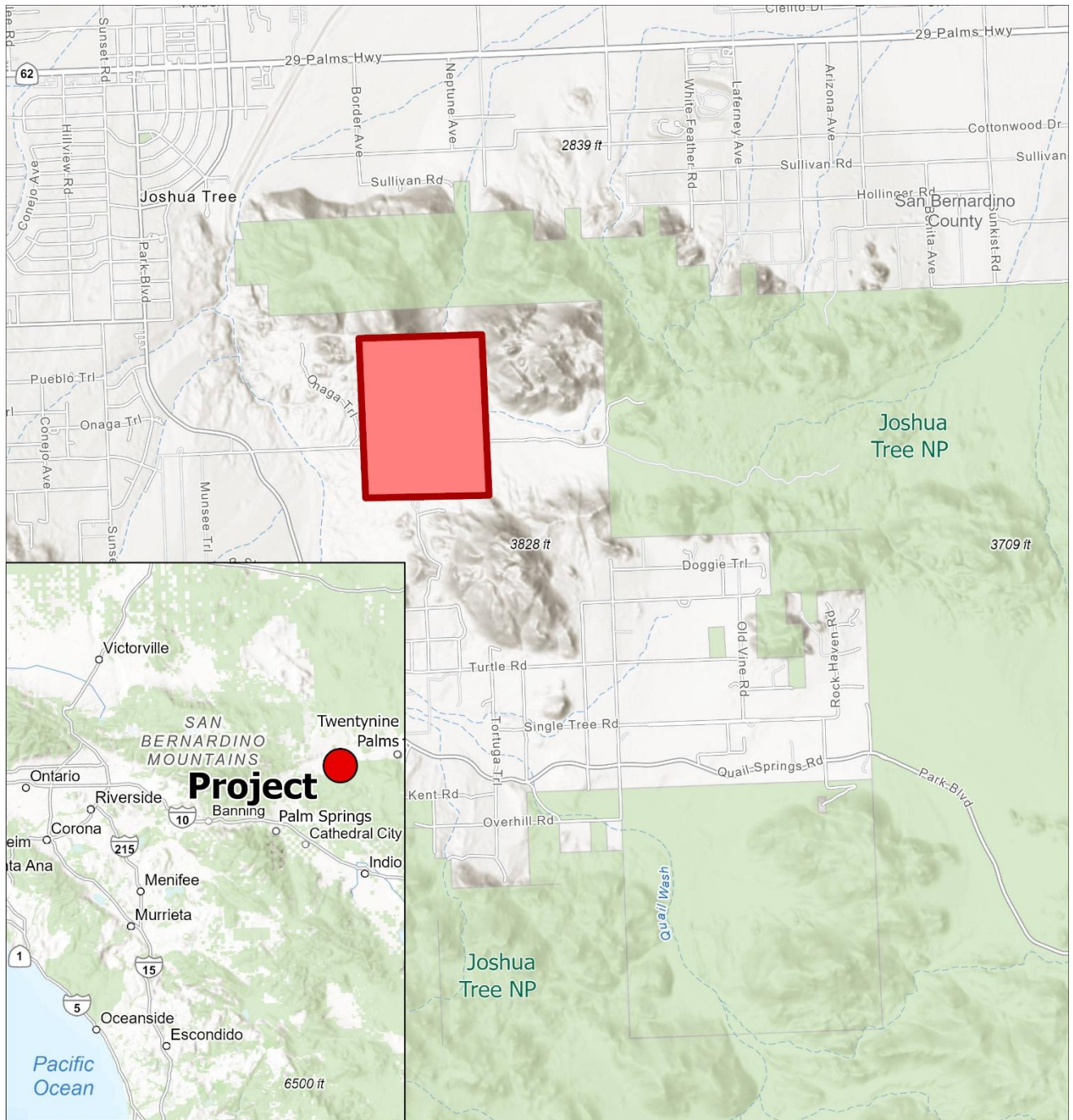
County: San Bernardino

Project Highlights

- Augmentation of an existing grant
- Provides enhanced safety for visitors and wildlife at a popular conservation area
- Located within the Mojave Desert just outside of Joshua Tree National Park
- Key species: desert tortoise, big horn sheep, greater roadrunner, chuckwalla, kangaroo rat

Priority Metrics

- Benefits Justice Communities: Yes, project is located adjacent to SDAC communities within the town of Joshua Tree. This project will provide a no-cost recreational option for these communities, where users can hike, picnic and view wildlife.
- Tribal Partnerships: Yes, The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians was involved in development of project design and advised on interpretive panels with Native American content.
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 4: Enhance Conservation of Existing Public Lands and Coastal Waters and Pathway 6: Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration.
- WCB Strategic Plan Target: B2.1, P2.2



Desert View Conservation Area Trails Augmentation

San Bernardino County



Project

Protected
Lands



Project Description

The Desert View Conservation Area Trails Augmentation Project (Project) site is home to numerous iconic desert species that are under threat due to extensive human disturbance and illegal activities. Visitors have participated in illegal shooting, dumping, campfires, overnight camping, off road vehicle activity, and poaching, including the tragic abuse and death of a desert tortoise. The Project will provide enhanced safety for wildlife and visitors by:

- Placing boulders and fencing barriers to keep visitors out of sensitive habitat.
- Upgrading trails with directional and wayfinding signage and markers, information kiosks, and steel mile marker posts.
- Establishing educational signage along trails, at the new observation desk, and in shaded “discovery shelters” to illustrate cultural, ecological and geological importance of the site in the past and present.
- Installing picnic benches, tables, and animal-proof trash receptacles.

The Project was originally approved for funding in November 2023. Due to increases in the cost of construction after going out to bid, the project budget increased, necessitating an augmentation request. This augmentation will ensure the project is completed successfully and as proposed.

Long-Term Management

County Service Area 20 Joshua Tree has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the Project, including management of the Property. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, Grantee does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Augmentation	Non-WCB Funds	Totals
Project Management	\$180,000.00	---	---	\$180,000.00
Design	\$128,000.00	---	---	\$128,000.00
Monitoring and Management Plans	\$20,000.00	---	---	\$20,000.00
Bid and Construction Support	\$269,500.00	---	---	\$269,500.00
Construction	\$1,275,000.00	\$707,000	---	\$1,982,000.00
Contingency	\$127,500.00	---	---	\$127,500.00
Total	\$2,000,000.00	\$707,000	---	\$2,707,000.00

Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- None received

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA

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

State Government

- Senate: Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh, District 19
- Assembly: Assemblymember Greg Wallis, District 47

Staff Recommendation

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



Conceptual rendering of viewing platform.



Conceptual rendering of one of two Discovery Shelters.

Notice of Determination

To: Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Department of Fish and Wildlife
Wildlife Conservation Board
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 99244-2090

County Clerk (County of): San Bernardino

Contact: Geneva Iversen-Krampitz
Phone: (916) 539-5326

Lead Agency: County of San Bernardino
Contact: Carrie Hyke
Phone: (909) 387-5530

SUBJECT: Filing Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code.

State Clearinghouse Number (If submitted by State Clearinghouse): 2014121048

Project Title: Desert View Conservation Area Educational Trails Project

Project Location: Joshua Tree in San Bernardino County

CEQA Region: S. CA

Project Description:

Project will complete and install recreational and educational improvements as well as wildland protective measures including: two 'discovery shelter' shade structures, interpretive signage, picnic amenities, a viewing platform and new barriers to protect wildlife and habitat including boulders and/or fencing. WCB Project Tracker ID: 2023095, 2026082.

This is to advise that the Wildlife Conservation Board has approved the above-described project on 8/27/26 and has made the following determinations regarding the above-described project.

☐ **Lead Agency** ☒ **Responsible Agency**

1. The Project [☐ will ☒ will not] have a significant effect on the environment.
2. ☐ An environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
☒ A Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation Measures [☒ were ☐ were not] made a condition of WCB's approval of the project.
4. A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan [☒ was ☐ was not] adopted by WCB for this project.
5. A statement of Overriding Considerations [☐ was ☒ was not] adopted by WCB for this project.
6. Findings [☒ were ☐ were not] made by WCB pursuant to the provision of CEQA.

This is to certify that the Desert View Conservation Area Trails with comments and responses and record of the project approval is available to the General Public at: 157 West Fifth Street, 2nd Floor. San Bernardino, CA 92415-0450

Signature:

Title: Deputy Executive Director

Date:

SCH#: 2014121048

Posted:
Date Received for Filing:

10. Crocker Meadows Wildlife Area, Exp. 4 (Williams)

**Acquisition
Fee**

WCB Grant: \$5,000

Fund Source(s): Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)

Location: Approximately 2 miles northwest of Beckwourth.

County: Plumas, County

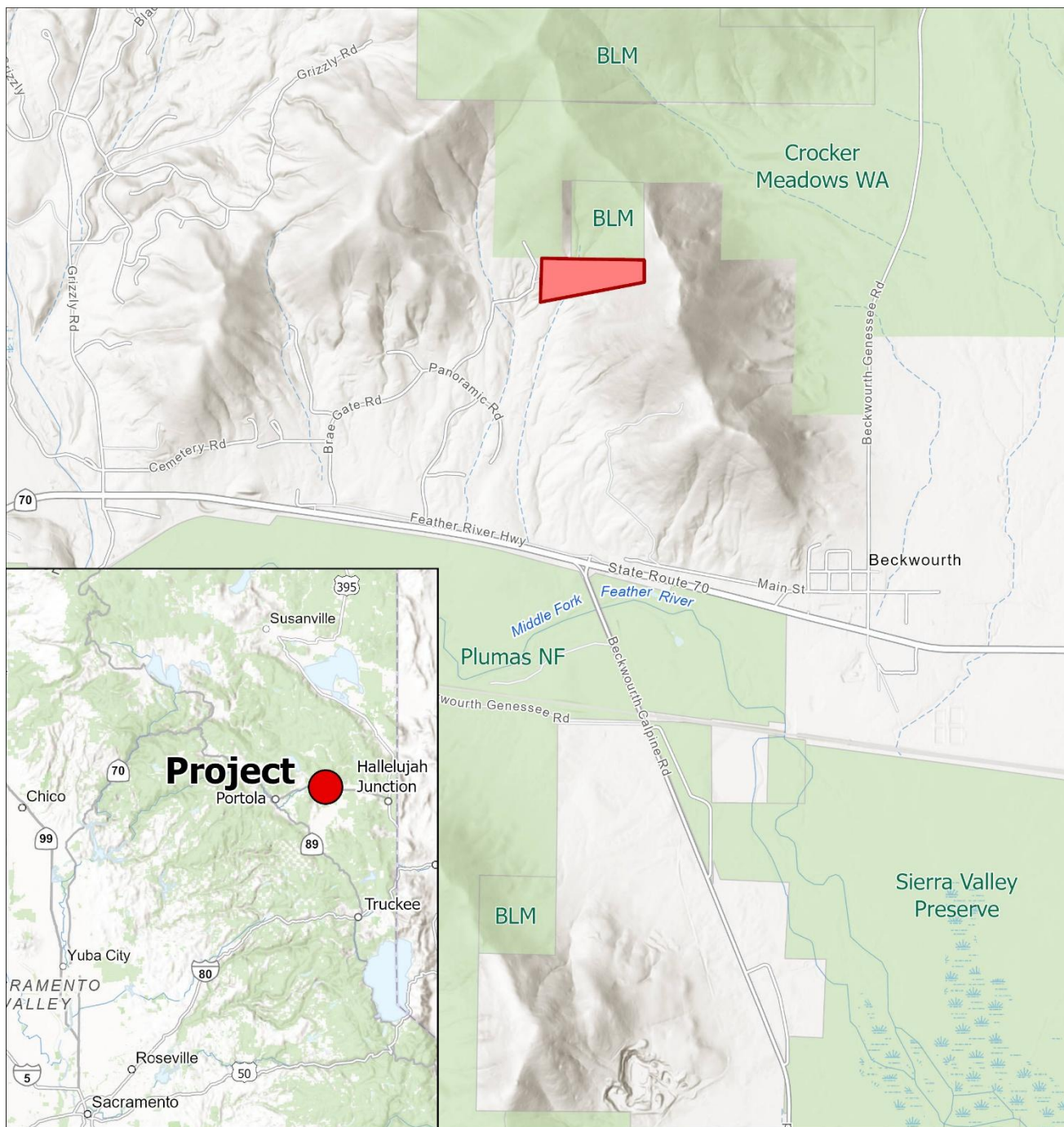
Acres: 23± (Property)

Property Highlights

- The Property is adjacent to the existing Crocker Meadows Wildlife Area, which provides important winter and fawning habitat for the Doyle interstate deer herd. Crocker Meadows Wildlife Area is adjacent to public lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and other protected conservation properties are nearby.
- The Property is within the approved Sierra Valley Truckee River Conceptual Area Protection Plan.
- The Property contains migration corridors used by deer as they travel between seasonal ranges.
- Game species include black bear, California quail, mountain quail, gray squirrel, and sooty grouse. Other species that occur in the area include mountain lion, bobcat, and golden eagle.
- Habitats represented include montane hardwood and black oak woodlands and bitterbrush.
- Property includes a guzzler which CDFW plans to rehabilitate to provide year-round water for wildlife. Sellers will also grant an access easement over an adjacent property to allow CDFW to access and maintain the guzzler.

Priority Metrics

- Benefits Justice Communities: Yes. The Property is in a SDAC census tract and will provide public access benefits.
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 2, Execute Strategic Acquisitions
- WCB Strategic Plan Target: B1.1, C1.2, P1.3
- Public Access: Yes, Property will be part of a publicly accessible wildlife area. The acquisition will provide expanded public access to recreational activities, including hunting, wildlife viewing and hiking.



Crocker Meadows Wildlife Area, Expansion 4 (Williams)

Plumas County



Project

Protected
Lands



Long-Term Management

The Property will be managed as part of the Crocker Meadows Wildlife Area.

Project Funding

The Department of General Services approved fair market value is \$85,000, and the landowner has agreed a bargain sale of \$5,000. The proposed funding breakdown is as follows:

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

Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- None received

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA

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

State Government

- Senate: Senator Megan Dahle, District 1
- Assembly: Assemblymember Heather Hadwick, District 1

Staff Recommendation

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



Close up view of guzzler.



View looking southwest from the Property

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse 1400 Tenth Street, Room 113 Sacramento, CA 95814	From: Department of Fish and Wildlife Wildlife Conservation Board P.O. Box 944209 Sacramento, CA 99244-2090
County Clerk (County of): N/A	Attention: David Dodds
Project Title: Crocker Meadows Wildlife Area, Exp. 4 (Williams)	
Project Applicant: Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)	
Project Location – Specific: APN(s) Portion of Assessor's Parcel No. 025-460-005.	
Project Location – City: N/A	
Project Location – County: Plumas	
CEQA Region: North	
Description of Nature, Purpose, and Benefits of Project: The purpose of this project is expansion of the Crocker Meadows Wildlife Area for long-range protection and enhancement of black oak woodland, savannah, and sagebrush habitats for black-tailed deer, mountain lion and other wildlife. The property is also critical winter and fawning range for the Doyle interstate deer herd. Conservation provides protection to migratory corridors for deer and other wildlife. WCB Project Tracker ID: 2024121.	
Public Agency Approving Project: Department of Fish and Wildlife, WCB	
Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out the Project: John P. Walsh, Deputy Executive Director, WCB	
Exempt Status: (Check One) ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 15268): ☐ Declared Emergency [Sec. 15269 (a)]: ☐ Emergency Project [Sec. 15269 (b) and (c)]: ☐ Categorical Exemption. State Section number and type: ☒ Statutory Exemptions, State code Number: Public Resources Code 21080.28 ☐ Other:	
Reasons why this project is exempt: Project involves the acquisition of an interest in land by a public agency for preservation of natural conditions existing at the time of transfer, including plant and animal habitats.	
Lead Agency Contact Person: John P. Walsh	
Area Code/Telephone Extension: (916) 539-8016	
If filed by applicant: 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding. 2. Has a notice of exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☒ Yes, (by this notice) ☐ No	
Signature:	Title: Deputy Executive Director Date:
☒ Signed by Lead Agency	☐ Signed by Applicant
Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21108, 21152, 21152.1, Public Resources Code	SCH #: Posted Date: Date Received for Filing at OPR:

11. Politsuwi

**Acquisitions
Fee**

WCB Grant: \$700,000

Fund Source(s): Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code, Section 2786(a)

Grantee: Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance

Location: Five miles north of Lakeport

County: Lake County

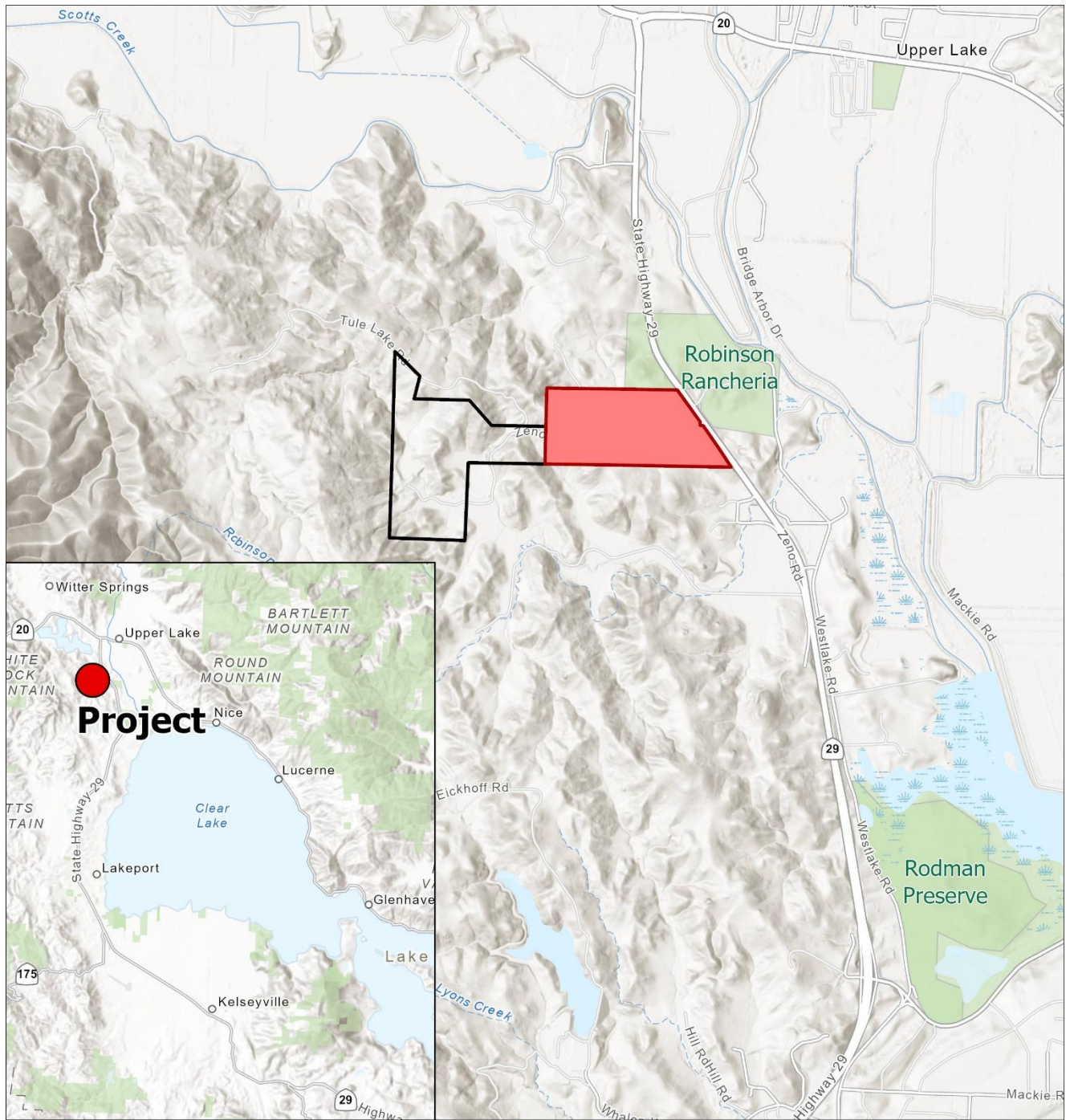
Acres: 80± (Property)

Property Highlights

- The property adjacent to Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance's EcoCultural Stewardship Training and Demonstration Center will provide a "living classroom," that is an ecocultural stewardship training and demonstration site that integrates Tribal Ecological Knowledge with science-based restoration.
- Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance's core program includes training and workforce development, which has engaged over 1,200 participants since its inception. Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance also implements intertribal land stewardship projects on private, public, and Tribal land.
- Habitats represented: blue oak and valley oak woodlands, native and annual grasslands, fresh water emergent wetland, and riparian vegetation
- Key species: Osprey, western gray squirrel, black-tailed deer, and pollinator and songbird species

Priority Metrics

- Benefits Justice Communities: Yes. The project is in an SDAC and Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance provides training to the community through their programs.
- Tribal Partnerships: Yes. The project is in the ancestral lands of the Robinson Rancheria Pomo Indians of California, Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians, and Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake, each of whom support this acquisition and work closely with Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance. Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance plans to include tribes in the planning and implementation of stewardship activities and provide land access to Tribal members, youth, and cultural practitioners.
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 1, Accelerate Regionally Led Conservation; Pathway 2, Execute Strategic Acquisitions
- WCB Strategic Plan Target: B1.1
- Public Access: No. However, the property will become part of Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance's EcoCultural Stewardship Training and Demonstration Site, where public programs are hosted throughout the year. Although there is no formal public access, the property provides public benefit through education, workforce training, cultural stewardship, and demonstration programs.



Politsuwi

Lake County



- Project
- Protected Lands
- Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance



Long-Term Management

Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance will provide long-term Indigenous-led management and stewardship of the Property as part of their EcoCultural Stewardship Training & Demonstration Center. Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance is authoring a long-term stewardship plan for the neighboring parcels, which will be expanded to include the Property. Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance will document and monitor their stewardship of the Property including with an existing partnership with UC Santa Cruz.

Project Funding

The Department of General Services approved fair market value is \$700,000. The proposed funding breakdown is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$700,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$700,000

Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Brad Rasmussen, District 4 Supervisor, County of Lake
- Daniella Santana Cazares, Environmental Director, Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake
- Eddie Crandell, District 3 Supervisor, County of Lake
- Eliot Hurwitz, Executive Director, Seigler Springs Community Redevelopment Association
- Frank Aebly, Ph.D., District Ranger, United States Forest Service
- Luis Santana, Fish and Wildlife Director, Robinson Rancheria Pomo Indians of California
- Patricia Franklin, Environmental Director, Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA

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

State Government

- Senate: Senator Mike McGuire, District 2
- Assembly: Assemblymember Cecelia Aguiar-Currey, District 4

Staff Recommendation

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



Figure 1 Pond / wetland Photo Credit: WCB



Figure 2 View of property facing west Photo Credit: WCB



COUNTY OF LAKE

Board of Supervisors

Courthouse - 255 North Forbes Street
Lakeport, California 95453
Telephone (707) 263-2368
Fax (707) 263-2207

BRAD RASMUSSEN

District 4 Supervisor

October 28, 2025

Wildlife Conservation Board
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1266
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: *Letter of Support for Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance – Land Acquisition at 8205 and 8155 N. Highway 29, Upper Lake, CA*

Dear Members of the Wildlife Conservation Board,

On behalf of the County of Lake District 4, I am writing to express my strong support for the Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance's (TERA) application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for funding to acquire and protect the property located at 8205 and 8155 N. Highway 29 in Upper Lake, California. These parcels of land are in my district and I believe this project is of importance to our community.

TERA's mission to restore the ecological and cultural resilience of Tribal lands and communities is of great service to our community. The acquisition of this parcel represents a rare opportunity to return ecologically significant land to Indigenous stewardship, protect habitat for native wildlife, and advance culturally informed restoration and climate adaptation strategies in the Clear Lake Basin.

The property's location along Highway 29 provides strategic ecological connectivity between oak woodland, riparian, and grassland habitats. TERA's leadership will support restoration activities that integrate traditional ecological knowledge with contemporary land management practices—benefiting both biodiversity and community wellbeing. I have witnessed TERA's leadership in our community and their integrity, technical capacity, and commitment to collaborative stewardship and conservation.

I enthusiastically support TERA's proposal and encourage the Wildlife Conservation Board to fund this critical acquisition. Protecting and restoring this land will create lasting ecological, cultural, and social benefits for the region.

Sincerely,

Brad Rasmussen
District 4 Supervisor
Brad.Rasmussen@lakecountyca.gov



10/28/25

9470 Main St.
Upper Lake, CA 95485

Correspondence

P.O. Box 516
Upper Lake, CA 95485

P 707.275.0737 | F 707.275.0757
www.hpultribe-NSN.gov

To:

Wildlife Conservation Board
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1266
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: *Letter of Support for Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance – Land Acquisition at 8205 and 8155 N. Highway 29, Upper Lake, CA*

Dear Members of the Wildlife Conservation Board,

On behalf of Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake, Environmental Protection Agency, we are writing to express our strong support for the Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance's (TERA) application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for funding to acquire and protect the property located at **8205 and 8155 N. Highway 29 in Upper Lake, California.**

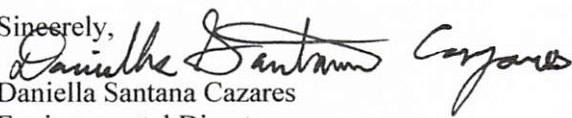
TERA's mission to restore the ecological and cultural resilience of Tribal lands and communities aligns deeply with our own values of stewardship, conservation, and community self-determination. The acquisition of this parcel represents a rare opportunity to return ecologically significant land to Indigenous stewardship, protect habitat for native wildlife, and advance culturally informed restoration and climate adaptation strategies in the Clear Lake Basin.

The property's location along Highway 29 provides strategic ecological connectivity between oak woodland, riparian, and grassland habitats. Under TERA's management, this site will support restoration activities that integrate traditional ecological knowledge with contemporary land management practices—benefiting both biodiversity and community wellbeing.

Our organization has partnered with TERA on prescribed fire training, watershed restoration projects, community-based stewardship, and workforce development, and we have witnessed firsthand their integrity, technical capacity, and commitment to collaborative stewardship and conservation.

This land is in the traditional homelands of many tribes including the Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake and we enthusiastically support TERA's proposal and encourage the Wildlife Conservation Board to fund this critical acquisition. Protecting and restoring this land under Tribal leadership will create lasting ecological, cultural, and social benefits for the region.

Sincerely,


Daniella Santana Cazares
Environmental Director,
Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake



COUNTY OF LAKE

Board of Supervisors

Courthouse - 255 North Forbes Street
Lakeport, California 95453
Telephone (707) 263-2368
Fax (707) 263-2207

EDDIE CRANDELL

District 3 Supervisor

October 28, 2025

Wildlife Conservation Board
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1266
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: *Letter of Support for Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance – Land Acquisition at 8205 and 8155 N. Highway 29, Upper Lake, CA*

Dear Members of the Wildlife Conservation Board,

On behalf of the County of Lake District 3, I am writing to express my strong support for the Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance's (TERA) application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for funding to acquire and protect the property located at 8205 and 8155 N. Highway 29 in Upper Lake, California.

TERA's mission to restore the ecological and cultural resilience of Tribal lands and communities is of great service to our community. The acquisition of this parcel represents a rare opportunity to return ecologically significant land to Indigenous stewardship, protect habitat for native wildlife, and advance culturally informed restoration and climate adaptation strategies in the Clear Lake Basin.

The property's location along Highway 29 provides strategic ecological connectivity between oak woodland, riparian, and grassland habitats. TERA's leadership will support restoration activities that integrate traditional ecological knowledge with contemporary land management practices—benefiting both biodiversity and community wellbeing.

I have witnessed TERA's leadership in our community and their integrity, technical capacity, and commitment to collaborative stewardship and conservation.

I enthusiastically support TERA's proposal and encourage the Wildlife Conservation Board to fund this critical acquisition. Protecting and restoring this land under Tribal leadership will create lasting ecological, cultural, and social benefits for the region.

Sincerely,

Eddie Crandell
Supervisor, District 3
County of Lake



October 28, 2025

To:

Wildlife Conservation Board
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1266
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: *Letter of Support for Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance*

Dear Members of the Wildlife Conservation Board,

On behalf of The Seigler Springs Community Redevelopment Association (SSCRA) based in Loch Lomond, California, we are writing to express our strong support for the Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance's (TERA) application to your organization for funding to acquire and protect the property located at **8205 and 8155 N. Highway 29 in Upper Lake, California.**

For the past ten years, SSCRA has been successfully empowering residents on Cobb Mountain and its surrounding area in community building for landscape resilience, focusing on fire and watersheds. TERA's mission to restore the ecological and cultural resilience of Tribal lands and communities aligns with our own deeply-held organizational values of stewardship, conservation, and community self-determination. As partners in our watershed restoration projects, TERA's knowledge, technical capacity, and commitment to community-based stewardship and conservation has been of immense value.

Accordingly, their acquisition of the subject parcel represents a rare opportunity to return ecologically significant land to Indigenous stewardship, protect habitat for native wildlife, and advance culturally informed restoration and climate adaptation strategies in the Clear Lake Basin. We have no doubt that under TERA's management, this site will support restoration activities that integrate traditional ecological knowledge with contemporary land management practices—benefiting both biodiversity and community wellbeing. The property's location itself, along Highway 29, provides strategic ecological connectivity between oak woodland, riparian, and grassland habitats.

Funding this critical acquisition is vital for our residents and the entire Clear Lake watershed. Please approve TERA's application to enable them to continue and expand their treasured work of directly sharing their knowledge and community-based conservation stewardship.

Sincerely,

Eliot Hurwitz
Executive Director



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Mendocino National Forest
Upper Lake Ranger District

10025 Elk Mountain Road
Upper Lake, CA 95485
707-275-2361
TDD: 711-Relay Service

File Code:

Date: October 30, 2025

To:

Wildlife Conservation Board
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1266
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: *Letter of Support for Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance – Land Acquisition at 8205 and 8155 N. Highway 29, Upper Lake, CA*

Dear Members of the Wildlife Conservation Board,

On behalf of Mendocino National Forest, Upper Lake Ranger District, I am writing to express strong support for the Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance's (TERA) application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for funding to acquire and protect the property located at **8205 and 8155 N. Highway 29 in Upper Lake, California.**

We have been partnered with TERA since their inception in 2019, and value their role in our community as leaders in land stewardship and Tribally led restoration work. The acquisition of this parcel represents a rare opportunity to return ecologically significant land to Indigenous stewardship, protect habitat for native wildlife, and advance culturally informed restoration and climate adaptation strategies in the Clear Lake Basin.

Under TERA's management, this site will support restoration activities that integrate traditional ecological knowledge with contemporary land management practices—benefiting both biodiversity and community wellbeing - to share with Tribal communities and the community at large.

The Mendocino National Forest has worked with TERA on prescribed fire training, fuels reduction on USFS land, and workforce development, and we have witnessed firsthand their integrity, technical capacity, and commitment to collaborative stewardship and conservation.

We enthusiastically support TERA's proposal and encourage the Wildlife Conservation Board to fund this critical acquisition. Protecting and restoring this land under Tribal leadership will create lasting ecological, cultural, and social benefits for the region.

Sincerely,

Frank Aebly, Ph.D.
District Ranger
Upper Lake and Covelo Ranger Districts



ROBINSON RANCHERIA

CITIZENS BUSINESS COUNCIL

10/28/2025

To:

Wildlife Conservation Board
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1266
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: *Letter of Support for Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance – Land Acquisition at 8205 and 8155 N. Highway 29, Upper Lake, CA*

Dear Members of the Wildlife Conservation Board,

On behalf of Danoxa Fish and Wildlife at Robinson Rancheria we are writing to express our strong support for the Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance's (TERA) application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for funding to acquire and protect the property located at **8205 and 8155 N. Highway 29 in Upper Lake, California.**

TERA's mission to restore the ecological and cultural resilience of Tribal lands and communities aligns deeply with our own values of stewardship, conservation, and community self-determination. The acquisition of this parcel represents a rare opportunity to return ecologically significant land to Indigenous stewardship, protect habitat for native wildlife, and advance culturally informed restoration and climate adaptation strategies in the Clear Lake Basin.

The property's location along Highway 29 provides strategic ecological connectivity between oak woodland, riparian, and grassland habitats. Under TERA's management, this site will support restoration activities that integrate traditional ecological knowledge with contemporary land management practices—benefiting both biodiversity and community wellbeing.

Our organization has partnered with TERA on prescribed fire training, watershed restoration projects, community-based stewardship, and workforce development, and we have witnessed firsthand their integrity, technical capacity, and commitment to collaborative stewardship and conservation.

This land is in the traditional homelands of our Tribe and we enthusiastically support TERA's proposal and encourage the Wildlife Conservation Board to fund this critical acquisition. Protecting and restoring this land under Tribal leadership will create lasting ecological, cultural, and social benefits for the region.

Sincerely,

Luis Santana

Luis Santana

Fish and Wildlife Director
Danoxa Fish and Wildlife Department
Robinson Rancheria Pomo Indians of California





Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians

10/28/25

Wildlife Conservation Board
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1266
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: *Letter of Support for Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance – Land Acquisition at 8205 and 8155 N. Highway 29, Upper Lake, CA*

Dear Members of the Wildlife Conservation Board,

On behalf of Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians, we are writing to express our strong support for the Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance's (TERA) application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for funding to acquire and protect the property located at **8205 and 8155 N. Highway 29 in Upper Lake, California**.

TERA's mission to restore the ecological and cultural resilience of Tribal lands and communities aligns deeply with our own values of stewardship, conservation, and community self-determination. The acquisition of this parcel represents a rare opportunity to return ecologically significant land to Indigenous stewardship, protect habitat for native wildlife, and advance culturally informed restoration and climate adaptation strategies in the Clear Lake Basin.

The property's location along Highway 29 provides strategic ecological connectivity between oak woodland, riparian, and grassland habitats. Under TERA's management, this site will support restoration activities that integrate traditional ecological knowledge with contemporary land management practices—benefiting both biodiversity and community wellbeing.

Our organization has partnered with TERA on prescribed fire training, watershed restoration projects, community-based stewardship, and workforce development, and we have witnessed firsthand their integrity, technical capacity, and commitment to collaborative stewardship and conservation.

This land is in traditional homelands of our Tribe and we enthusiastically support TERA's proposal and encourage the Wildlife Conservation Board to fund this critical acquisition. Protecting and restoring this land under Tribal leadership will create lasting ecological, cultural, and social benefits for the region.

Sincerely,

Patricia Franklin
Environmental Director
Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse 1400 Tenth Street, Room 113 Sacramento, CA 95814	From: Department of Fish and Wildlife Wildlife Conservation Board P.O. Box 944209 Sacramento, CA 99244-2090
County Clerk (County of): N/A	Attention: Kendall Webster
Project Title: Politsuwi	
Project Applicant: Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)	
Project Location – Specific: APN(s) 003-042-160-000 and 003-042-170-000	
Project Location – City: Lakeport	
Project Location – County: Lake	
CEQA Region: Northern California	
Description of Nature, Purpose, and Benefits of Project: Project involves a grant to Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance for fee acquisition of approximately 80 acres of land for the protection of critical oak woodland, upland grassland, and riparian and freshwater wetland habitat, and to implement and showcase tribal stewardship and traditional ecological knowledge. Located in Lakeport, in Lake County. WCB Project Tracker ID: 2025156.	
Public Agency Approving Project: Department of Fish and Wildlife, WCB	
Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out the Project: John P. Walsh, Deputy Executive Director, WCB	
Exempt Status: (Check One) ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 15268): ☐ Declared Emergency [Sec. 15269 (a)]: ☐ Emergency Project [Sec. 15269 (b) and (c)]: ☒ Categorical Exemption. State Section number and type: Sec.15313, Class 13 & Sec.15325, Class 25 ☐ Statutory Exemptions, State code Number: ☐ Other:	
Reasons why this project is exempt: Project involves the acquisition of land for conservation purposes, to preserve open space and habitat, including plant or animal habitats.	
Lead Agency Contact Person: John P. Walsh	
Area Code/Telephone Extension: (916) 539-8016	
If filed by applicant: 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding. 2. Has a notice of exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☒ Yes, (by this notice) ☐ No	
Signature:	Title: Deputy Executive Director Date:
☒ Signed by Lead Agency	☐ Signed by Applicant
Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21108, 21152, 21152.1, Public Resources Code	SCH #: Posted Date: Date Received for Filing at OPR:

ec: WCB Project Tracker
WCB Board Meeting Folder

Presentation Items

- 12. Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve (AP Ranch)** **Acquisition Fee**
- WCB Grant: \$11,500,000
- Fund Source(s): Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (Proposition 4 – Existing Programs), Public Resources Code Section 93010 (SB 105, Sec. 94)
- Grantee: The Wildlands Conservancy (TWC)
- Location: 9 miles east of Callahan
- County: Siskiyou
- Acres: 14,177± (Property)

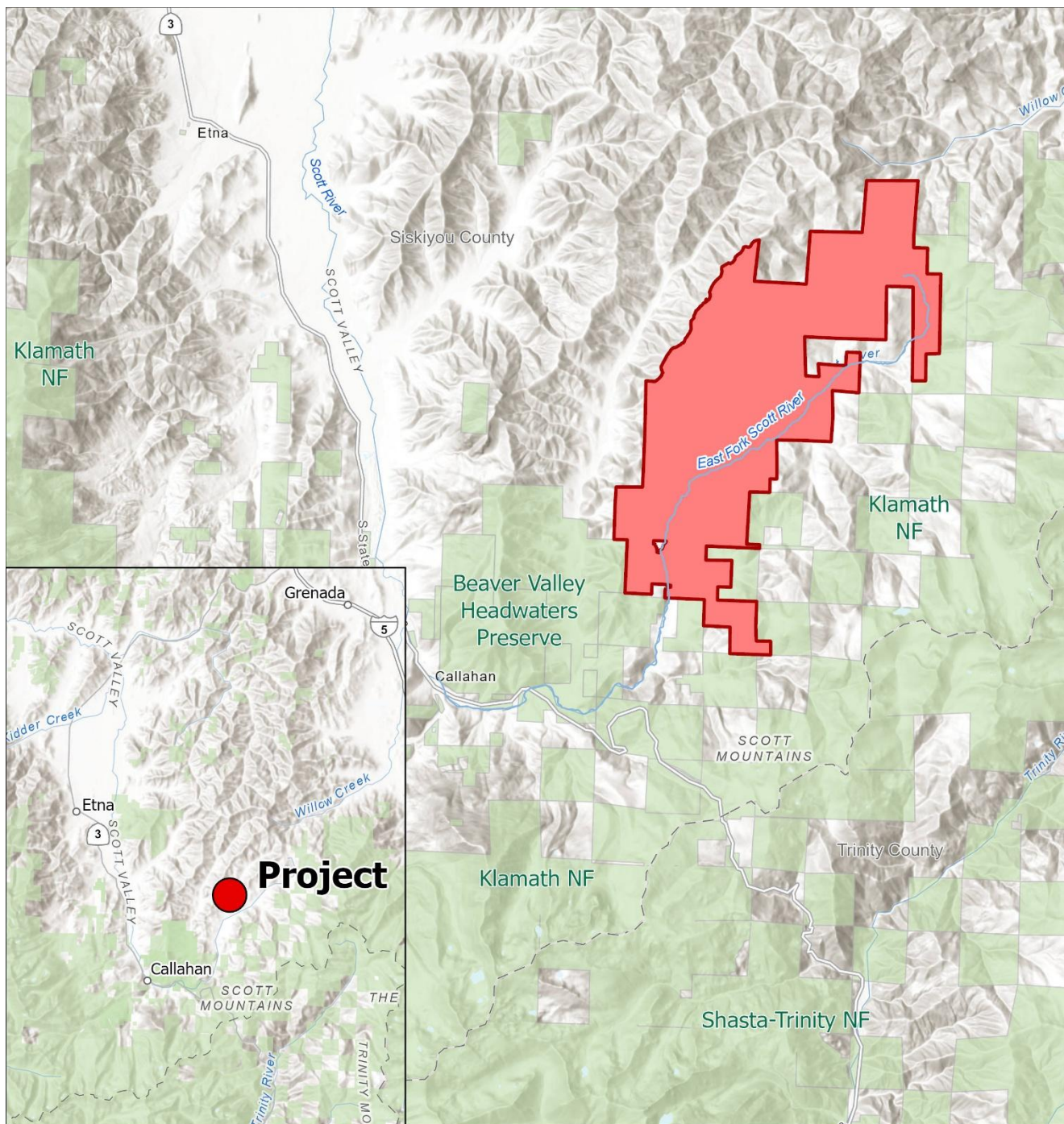
Property Highlights

- The proposed project expands the present day 6,095-acre Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve by an additional 14,177± acres, bringing the lands to be protected by TWC to 20,273 acres, increasing habitat connectivity with the Klamath National Forest lands, and creating a 52,000-acre continuous landscape of habitat
- The Property holds multiple water rights under the Scott River Decree, supporting irrigation for approximately 1,389 acres of flood-irrigated meadows and contributing to wetland and riparian function throughout the headwaters
- TWC plans to enhance and restore lands once purchased, with a focus on improving fish habitat for salmonids including coho and Chinook salmon, and improve fish passage along 8 miles of the East Fork of the Scott River
- The Property provides housing and facilities to support property management and future public uses
- Habitats represented: flood-irrigated mountain meadows, riparian corridors, and mixed conifer forests
- Key species: coho and Chinook salmon, steelhead trout, elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, beaver, and numerous bird species
- Regional or Species Plan: California Salmon Strategy for a Hotter, Drier Future: Restoring Aquatic Ecosystems in the Age of Climate Change, NOAA Fisheries Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast (SONCC) Coho Salmon Recovery Plan, California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan

Priority Metrics

- Benefits Justice Communities: Yes, the Property is located within a DAC. TWC is committed to providing free, low-impact public access, trails, and environmental education opportunities.
- Tribal Partnerships: Yes, TWC engaged tribal governments throughout project development, and will continue that engagement into the planning process for future activities onsite.
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 2, Execute Strategic Acquisitions
- WCB Strategic Plan Target: B1.1, C1.1, C1.2, P1.2
- Public Access: Yes, TWC will allow permissive public access where compatible immediately after acquisition. Future, public hunting access through CDFW's SHARE program will be provided. After close of escrow TWC will determine and design

appropriate public access infrastructure, including trails, education programming, and low impact recreational facilities in coordination with the community.



Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve (AP Ranch)

Siskiyou County



Project

Protected
Lands



Long-Term Management

The Property will be added to and managed alongside the existing Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve, with an onsite staff living on the Preserve. TWC will develop and implement a comprehensive management plan with recommended best management practices, including conservation grazing and forest management practices to improve climate resilience, biodiversity, and reduce wildfire risk. The Property will be accessible to CDFW fisheries biologists and others for salmonid research. Additionally, TWC will complete a separate water management plan to determine what meaningful contributions to instream flow can be made and then will pursue the actions recommended to best protect and enhance the fish habitat.

Project Funding

The Department of General Services approved fair market value is \$15,500,000. The proposed funding breakdown is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$11,500,000
TWC	\$4,000,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$15,500,000

Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Russel A. Atterbery, Karuk Tribal Chairman, Karuk Tribe
- Sarah Schaefer, Environmental Director, Quartz Valley Indian Reservation
- Natalie Kelly, District Ranger, U.S. Forest Service
- Wesley Stroud, Environmental Program Manager, California Department of Transportation, District 2
- Valery Quinto, Executive Officer, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Rod Dowse, District Manager, Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District
- Ryan Walker, President, Siskiyou County Farm Bureau
- Allan S. Carver, County Superintendent, Siskiyou County Office of Education
- Damon Goodman, Shasta-Klamath Regional Director, California Trout
- Alexis Robertson, Acquisition Director, Siskiyou Land Trust

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA

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

State Government

- Senate: Senator Megan Dahle, District 1
- Assembly: Assemblymember Heather Hadwick, District 1

Staff Recommendation

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

Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve (AP Ranch)

View of the meadow at
the heart of the
property along Gazelle-
Callahan Road.



1

Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve (AP Ranch)

View of property
from an old fire
watch lookout point.



2

Karuk Community Health Clinic

64236 Second Avenue
Post Office Box 316
Happy Camp, CA 96039
Phone: (530) 493-5257
Fax: (530) 493-5270

Karuk Tribe



Administrative Office

Phone: (530) 493-1600 • Fax: (530) 493-5322
64236 Second Avenue • Post Office Box 1016 • Happy Camp, CA 96039

Karuk Dental Clinic

64236 Second Avenue
Post Office Box 1016
Happy Camp, CA 96039
Phone: (530) 493-2201
Fax: (530) 493-5364

March 5, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

Subject: **Letter of Support – Acquisition of the AP Ranch by The Wildlands Conservancy**

Dear Review Committee,

The Karuk Tribe and Fisheries Program is pleased to support The Wildlands Conservancy's (TWC) efforts to secure funding for the acquisition of the 14,000-acre AP Ranch. This acquisition represents a critical opportunity to protect and restore headwaters fisheries habitats and riparian habitats, improve water quality, and enhance ecological function within the Scott River watershed, a key tributary to the Klamath River. The property's protection would also expand the connectivity of landscape and watershed conservation via TWC's Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve, a 6,094-acre property located downstream on the East Fork Scott River.

TWC's stewardship of AP Ranch would advance conservation priorities in the Klamath River Basin by:

- Protecting and restoring critical habitat for native fish, including Chinook salmon, coho salmon, and steelhead, across tributaries and headwater areas.
- Enhancing salmon spawning and juvenile rearing habitat through improved riparian cover, water quality, and instream conditions.
- Supporting wildlife habitat and connectivity for species dependent on intact riverine and upland ecosystems.
- Facilitating large-scale watershed restoration, including opportunities for sediment management, cold-water refugia, and habitat complexity improvements.
- Increasing tribal involvement and collaboration in land stewardship and establishing an MOU with the Karuk Tribe with that purpose.

In December 2025, Karuk fisheries staff conducted a site visit to AP Ranch with TWC to identify opportunities to benefit fish and wildlife and help steward the land. The visit highlighted the property's potential to expand ongoing restoration efforts in the watershed and protect additional miles of high-value salmonid habitat. The Karuk Tribe has also been directly involved in designing fisheries restoration projects at the Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve, and TWC's acquisition of AP Ranch provides opportunities to extend these efforts and enhance outcomes for salmon and other aquatic species across the East Fork Scott River.

The Karuk Tribe strongly supports TWC's acquisition of AP Ranch and the resulting benefits for salmon, fisheries, and wildlife habitat, as well as the long-term protection and restoration of this critical watershed.

Sincerely,
DocuSigned by:



85DCDEB4D77C4BA...
Russell A. Attebery

Karuk Tribal Chairman



Quartz Valley Indian Reservation, 13601 Quartz Valley Road
Fort Jones, CA 96032, Phone: 530-468-5907 Fax: 530-468-5908

To Whom It May Concern

Subject: Letter of Support – Acquisition of the AP Ranch by The Wildlands Conservancy

Dear Review Committee,

The Quartz Valley Indian Reservation (QVIR) is pleased to support The Wildlands Conservancy's (TWC) acquisition of the 14,000-acre AP Ranch. Conserving this property represents an important opportunity to advance forest and oak habitat health, protect critical wildlife corridors, and restore headwater tributaries in the East Fork Scott River watershed.

TWC's stewardship of AP Ranch would support:

- Forest and oak habitat management, building on collaborative oak stewardship and cultural burn practices conducted with QVIR at the Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve.
- Protection and restoration of tributaries and riparian zones, enhancing habitat for salmon, steelhead, and other native fish species.
- Wildlife habitat connectivity, supporting species dependent on intact forest, riparian, and upland ecosystems.
- Improved land and watershed resilience, including fire-adapted landscapes, soil stability, and long-term ecosystem health.

QVIR recognizes TWC's proven ability to integrate forestry, habitat restoration, and watershed management into long-term conservation outcomes. Acquisition of AP Ranch will expand opportunities to protect and restore both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems across the watershed.

Sincerely,

Sarah Schaefer
Environmental Director
Quartz Valley Indian Reservation



File Code: 1900

Date: January 12, 2026

Subject: Letter of Support – Acquisition of the AP Ranch by The Wildlands Conservancy

Dear Review Committee,

The U.S. Forest Service, Salmon/Scott River Ranger District is pleased to support The Wildlands Conservancy's (TWC) efforts to acquire the 14,000-acre AP Ranch in Scott Valley, Siskiyou County. This acquisition presents a meaningful opportunity to enhance connectivity between conserved lands and the National Forest landscape, strengthen watershed and forest health, support coordinated stewardship across ownership boundaries, and provide enhanced public access and outdoor education opportunities.

The Salmon/Scott River Ranger District and TWC have a longstanding collaborative relationship in the district, including:

- Implementation of a Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA) for the East Fork and Grouse Creek grazing allotments, supporting compatible use livestock grazing and resource protection across forest and adjacent lands;
- Coordination on timber harvest access and planning on Hayden Ridge, demonstrating cooperative planning for forest management;
- Regular lease of grazing lands at the Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve under the MSA, supporting integrated landscape stewardship; and
- Wildfire response coordination as part of our shared responsibilities to protect communities, infrastructure, and natural resources from wildfire risk through both suppression and landscape treatments.

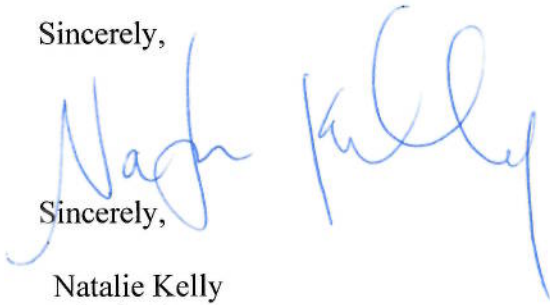
The Salmon/Scott River Ranger District recognizes that TWC's acquisition of AP Ranch would provide additional opportunities to:

- Enhance landscape connectivity between private, conserved, and National Forest lands, supporting wildlife movement and ecological resilience.
- Advance watershed and riparian restoration, protecting tributaries and headwaters that contribute to forest and stream health.
- Support fire risk reduction and forest health, aligning with regional prescribed fire and fuels management priorities that reduce wildfire risk and improve ecosystem function.
- Position the property for consideration under the Forest Legacy Program and other conservation funding mechanisms that benefit long-term landscape stewardship.
- Create free public access for passive recreation and science-based outdoor education with developed access amenities such as trailheads, trails, parking, restrooms, and a campground.



The Salmon/Scott River Ranger District appreciates TWC's demonstrated ability to translate land acquisition into tangible conservation outcomes and supports this acquisition for its potential to strengthen coordinated stewardship and public access across the broader landscape.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Natalie Kelly", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Sincerely,

Natalie Kelly
District Ranger

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 2

1657 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, MS 30 | REDDING, CA 96001
PHONE (530) 356-3004 | FAX (530) 225-3019 | TTY 711
Wesley.stroud@dot.ca.gov



February 24, 2026

Dear Review Committee:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), North Region Environmental, is pleased to provide this letter of support for the Wildlands Conservancy's proposed acquisition of the approximately 14,000-acre AP Ranch property in the Scott River watershed, Siskiyou County.

The AP Ranch includes significant instream, riparian, and upland habitats along the East Fork Scott River and its tributaries that support Chinook salmon, coho salmon, steelhead, and a diversity of native wildlife species. Permanent conservation and long-term stewardship of this property represent an important opportunity to enhance watershed function, protect cold water resources, and strengthen wildlife connectivity to adjacent public lands.

Caltrans is currently working with The Wildlands Conservancy, California Trout, and the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board on sediment reduction and habitat restoration efforts downstream at Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve. The AP Ranch acquisition presents a complementary opportunity to further advance watershed health and climate resilience through coordinated conservation and restoration planning.

Caltrans supports the AP Ranch acquisition as a strategic, watershed scale conservation effort that aligns with regional water quality objectives, salmon recovery priorities, and collaborative resource stewardship goals within the Scott River watershed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Wesley Stroud'.

Wesley Stroud

Environmental Program Manager

California Department of Transportation, District 2

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

February 27, 2026

To Whom it May Concern

Subject: Letter of Support – Acquisition of the AP Ranch by The Wildlands Conservancy

Dear Review Committee,

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (North Coast Water Board) is pleased to offer this letter of support for The Wildlands Conservancy's (TWC) effort to secure funding for the acquisition of the 14,000-acre AP Ranch in Scott Valley. This purchase will shift the management focus of the property from agricultural production to restoration, focusing on the protection and enhancement of habitat, improvements in water quality, and ecological health. This property spans extensive reaches of the East Fork Scott River and its tributaries, including Meadow Gulch, Kangaroo Creek, Mountain House Creek, Crater Creek, and Rail Creek. Protection of these tributaries through implementing actions outlined in the Scott River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Action Plan will significantly advance water quality and ecological goals in the Scott River watershed by safeguarding riparian systems, enhancing watershed function, and supporting beneficial uses identified in the North Coast Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan).

This acquisition represents a substantial opportunity to protect and restore cold-water habitat, ameliorate sediment and temperature impairments, and support native aquatic species, including salmonids. The Scott River remains listed as impaired for sediment and temperature under the Clean Water Act Section 303(d), and implementation of the Scott River TMDL Action Plan remains a priority for achieving water quality objectives and protecting beneficial uses.

TWC's stewardship of the AP Ranch would advance regional water quality and watershed priorities by:

- Protecting and restoring headwater and riparian habitats that support cold-water aquatic communities and beneficial uses, consistent with regional objectives to maintain natural temperature regimes and reduce sediment delivery to the Scott River system;

- Enhancing watershed function and resilience through coordinated restoration, improved land management practices, and protection of floodplain and wetland systems; and
- Strengthening watershed stewardship partnerships that support implementation of the North Coast Region's Basin Plan, TMDL Action Plans, and collaborative nonpoint source management approaches aimed at restoring impaired waters.

TWC has demonstrated their management approach with their previous acquisition in the Scott Watershed – the Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve. They have implemented extensive restoration projects, including uplands forest restoration, instream habitat improvements, and necessary road maintenance, while coordinating closely with tribes, restoration organizations, and agencies. The proximity of AP Ranch to TWC's Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve further enhances opportunities for large-scale watershed protection and restoration.

We commend TWC's leadership in implementing collaborative conservation actions that align with regulatory and restoration priorities of the North Coast Region. The North Coast Water Board strongly supports TWC's acquisition of the AP Ranch and the substantial water quality and ecological outcomes it will help achieve across the Scott River watershed.

Sincerely,

Valery Quinto
Executive Officer



SHASTA VALLEY
RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

January 10, 2026

To Whom It May Concern

Subject: Letter of Support – Acquisition of the AP Ranch by The Wildlands Conservancy

Dear Review Committee,

The Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District (SVRCD) is pleased to express our full support for The Wildlands Conservancy's (TWC) acquisition of the 14,000-acre AP Ranch in Scott Valley, Siskiyou County. As a local special district dedicated to working collaboratively with landowners to enhance the sustainable use of natural resources and ensure long-term economic viability of our community, SVRCD recognizes the significant benefits this acquisition would bring to water resources, agricultural sustainability, and ecological health in the region.

AP Ranch supports extensive irrigated pastures and ranchlands under active agricultural use, supplied by multiple irrigation diversions and water rights that are integral to local ranching operations. Conserving these working lands will help maintain agricultural productivity while supporting improved water management practices that benefit both ranching and downstream ecological functions. SVRCD's mission emphasizes voluntary collaboration to improve natural resource management, including water conservation and ranching viability, outcomes that align with the goals of this acquisition.

In addition to agricultural values, the property includes tributaries to the East Fork Scott River that contribute cold-water flows and habitat for salmonids and other aquatic species. Protection of this landscape supports the long-term health of these watercourses and enhances opportunities for coordinated watershed restoration—consistent with SVRCD's longstanding engagement in watershed monitoring, water quality work, and fish passage efforts across the region.

TWC's stewardship of AP Ranch builds on a track record of integrating conservation with working land stewardship, as demonstrated at the adjacent Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve. Conserving AP Ranch will support sustainable ranch operations, secure critical water resources, and contribute to resilient habitat for fish, wildlife, and the broader ecological systems of Scott Valley.

The Shasta Valley RCD strongly supports this acquisition and the long-term benefits it will provide for agricultural sustainability, water resource conservation, and watershed health.

Sincerely,

Rod Dowse, District Manager

Shasta Valley RCD



February 6, 2026

To Whom It May Concern

Subject: Letter of Support – Acquisition of the AP Ranch by The Wildlands Conservancy

Dear Review Committee,

The Siskiyou County Farm Bureau (SCFB) represents and advocates for farmers and ranchers in Siskiyou County. As such, we support individuals and groups that seek to invest in working lands and maintain those lands in agricultural production. Such investment supports the land values of our members and helps to maintain a vibrant agricultural economy in Siskiyou County. This agricultural economy and its associated working landscapes are the foundation of the open space and ecological beauty that characterizes Scott Valley and the other agricultural communities of Siskiyou County. Accordingly, SCFB is pleased to express its support for The Wildlands Conservancy's (TWC) proposed acquisition of the 14,000-acre AP Ranch in Scott Valley, Siskiyou County. This project represents a unique opportunity to protect an historic working ranch that provides ecological services essential to the long-term health of the East Fork Scott River watershed.

AP Ranch supports over 1,300 acres of irrigated pastures and working rangeland, maintained through multiple water rights and irrigation diversions. These resources underpin sustainable agricultural operations while also contributing to downstream water availability, watershed function, and ecosystem health. We understand TWC intends to maintain these important agricultural resources and continue to hold AP Ranch as a productive working landscape. Protecting this agricultural asset and its related natural resources ensures continued viability of agricultural production in Scott Valley, supports the local rural economy, and preserves essential infrastructure that benefits the broader agricultural community.

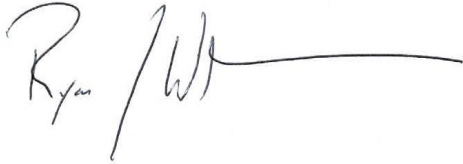
The property also includes extensive riparian corridors and tributary systems—Meadow Gulch, Kangaroo Creek, Mountain House Creek, Crater Creek, and Rail Creek—which provide critical cold-water habitat for Chinook salmon, coho salmon, and steelhead. Conserving these waterways maintains ecosystem services, protects water quality, and strengthens both fisheries and agricultural resilience in the region. AP Ranch further connects with TWC's Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve, enhancing ecological connectivity while supporting sustainable ranching practices.

The conservation of AP Ranch directly aligns with SCFB's mission by preserving productive working lands, safeguarding water resources, and promoting responsible stewardship that

benefits both agriculture and the environment. This acquisition ensures that Scott Valley remains a place where working farms and ranches can thrive alongside conservation of natural resources.

With TWC's vision balancing agriculture, fish, and environmental resources balanced on the landscape, Siskiyou County Farm Bureau supports the permanent conservation of AP Ranch and commends TWC for their commitment to integrating sustainable agricultural use with landscape-scale stewardship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ryan Walker", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Ryan Walker
President, Siskiyou County Farm Bureau



Allan S. Carver
County Superintendent

Board of Education

John Bennett
Michelle Harris
Stace Jankowski
Michelle O'Gorman
Michael Sims

609 S. Gold Street • Yreka CA 96097 • 530 842 8400 • fax 530 842-8436 • www.siskiyoucoe.net

January 9, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

Subject: Letter of Support – Acquisition of the AP Ranch by The Wildlands Conservancy

The Siskiyou County Office of Education (SCOE) is pleased to support The Wildlands Conservancy's (TWC) acquisition of the 14,000-acre AP Ranch. Conserving this property offers an important opportunity to expand public access and outdoor education resources in Siskiyou County, advance forest and oak habitat health, protect critical wildlife corridors, and restore headwater tributaries in the East Fork Scott River watershed.

The SCOE provides educational leadership, resources, and services to districts and schools to ensure learning for all students. Our Watershed Education Program works with several schools in the county to support day camps, special programs, and activities that advance standards-based, hands-on science. SCOE recognizes the significant benefits this acquisition would bring to public access and science-based outdoor education in the region, as well as its vital ecological benefits.

TWC's stewardship of AP Ranch would support:

- Enhance free public access and hands-on science-based outdoor education opportunities
- Forest and oak habitat management, building on collaborative oak stewardship at the Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve
- Protection and restoration of tributaries and riparian zones, enhancing habitat for salmon, steelhead, and other native fish species
- Wildlife habitat connectivity, supporting species dependent on intact forest, riparian, and upland ecosystems
- Improved land and watershed resilience, including fire-adapted landscapes, soil stability, and long-term ecosystem health

SCOE recognizes TWC's proven ability to integrate public access, outdoor education, habitat restoration, and watershed management into long-term conservation and education outcomes. The acquisition of AP Ranch will expand opportunities to protect and restore terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems across the watershed and create space for shared nature experiences with students and the public alike.

Sincerely,

Allan S. Carver
County Superintendent

ASC/ch



To Whom It May Concern:

Subject: **Letter of Support – Acquisition of the AP Ranch by The Wildlands Conservancy**

Dear Review Committee,

California Trout (CalTrout) is pleased to support The Wildlands Conservancy's (TWC) efforts to secure funding for the acquisition of the 14,000-acre AP Ranch. This acquisition represents a vital opportunity to protect and restore critical habitats, water quality, and ecological functions within the Scott River watershed. Additionally, it expands the connectivity of landscape and watershed conservation via TWC's Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve, a 6,094 acres property, immediately adjacent and downstream on the E. Fork Scott River.

TWC's stewardship of the AP Ranch would advance regional conservation priorities by:

- Protecting headwater and riparian habitats that support native fish, wildlife, and aquatic species.
- Enhancing opportunities for coordinated restoration, climate- and fire-resilient landscapes, and long-term watershed health.
- Maintaining productive working lands while advancing conservation practices.

TWC has demonstrated their capacity and dedication to stewardship and tangible conservation outcomes, including habitat restoration, water quality improvements, and community engagement. CalTrout works in partnership with TWC at several of their Preserves including the Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve, where a holistic approach to restoration on the East Fork Scott Rivers and its lower tributaries is currently underway. More than just a willing landowner, TWC's passion for achieving conservation outcomes is evident in their steadfast commitment to the preserves through fee ownership, and to providing space for people to experience nature as their birthright, without cost.

We commend TWC's leadership in advancing conservation actions that align with regional priorities for protecting natural resources and promoting resilient landscapes. We strongly support their efforts to acquire the AP Ranch and work toward these important outcomes that advance California's conservation goals

Sincerely,

Damon Goodman
California Trout
Shasta-Klamath Regional Director



To Whom It May Concern

Subject: Letter of Support – Acquisition of the AP Ranch by The Wildlands Conservancy

Dear Review Committee,

The Siskiyou Land Trust (SLT) is pleased to express our full support for The Wildlands Conservancy's (TWC) acquisition of the 14,000-acre AP Ranch in Scott Valley, Siskiyou County.

As a community based non-profit dedicated to working collaboratively with landowners, agencies and organizations to ensure long-term stewardship of watersheds and working lands in Siskiyou County, SLT recognizes the significant benefits this acquisition would enhance landscape scale conservation of agricultural lands, forested lands, and ecological health in the region.

AP Ranch supports extensive irrigated pastures and rangeland under active agricultural use, supplied by multiple irrigation diversions and water rights that are integral to local ranching operations. Conserving these working lands will help maintain agricultural productivity and create opportunity for water efficiency practices that benefit both ranching and downstream ecological functions. SLT's mission emphasizes conserving lands to safeguard working farms and ranches, forests, and open spaces that link mountains and wilderness areas to valley floors, protecting essential wildlife corridors, outcomes that align with the goals of this acquisition.

In addition to agricultural values, the property includes tributaries to the East Fork Scott River that contribute cold-water flows and habitat for salmonids and other aquatic species. Protection of this landscape supports the long-term health of these watercourses and enhances opportunities for coordinated watershed restoration. This project is consistent with SLT's engagement in the conservation of the near by Scott River Headwaters Project, a historic partnership that is enhancing conservation values, watershed monitoring, forest health, water quality work, and fish passage efforts across the region.

TWC's stewardship of AP Ranch builds on a track record of integrating conservation with working land stewardship, as demonstrated at the adjacent Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve. Conserving AP Ranch provides a unique opportunity for landscape scale conservation, consistent management across both of these ranches, increasing the potential for sustainable management and habitat enhancement for fish, wildlife, and the broader ecological systems of Scott Valley.

The Siskiyou Land Trust strongly supports this acquisition and the long-term benefits it will provide for agricultural sustainability, land conservation, and watershed health.

Sincerely,

Alexis Robertson

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alexis Robertson", is located below the typed name.

Acquisition Director

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse 1400 Tenth Street, Room 113 Sacramento, CA 95814	From: Department of Fish and Wildlife Wildlife Conservation Board P.O. Box 944209 Sacramento, CA 99244-2090
County Clerk (County of): N/A	Attention: Alexa Dunn

Project Title: Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve (AP Ranch)
Project Applicant: Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)
Project Location – Specific: APN(s) 022-110-070, 022-130-070, 022-130-110, 022-130-190, 022-130-200, 022-140-020, 022-140-050, 022-140-070, 022-140-080, 022-140-090, 022-140-100, 022-140-110, 022-140-130, 022-140-140, 022-140-200, 022-150-101, 022-150-220, 022-150-241, 022-150-250, 022-150-270, 022-150-280, 022-150-291, 022-150-300, 022-150-311, 022-160-020, 022-180-040, 022-180-090, 022-180-130, 022-180-230, 022-180-240, 022-180-250, 022-180-260, 022-180-311, 022-180-321, 022-180-330, 023-341-270, 023-390-070, 023-390-080, 023-390-100, 023-390-120, 023-390-130, 023-390-140, 023-390-200, 023-400-030, 023-400-080, 023-400-100, 023-400-110, 023-400-140, 023-400-150, 023-400-160, 023-400-170, 023-400-180, 023-400-190, 023-400-200, 031-210-040, 031-340-011, 031-340-020, 031-350-060, 031-350-070, 031-580-040, 031-580-090, 031-580-100, 031-580-110, 031-590-010, 031-590-030, 031-590-070, 031-590-080, 031-590-090, 031-590-100, 031-590-110, 031-590-120, 022-130-011
Project Location – City: Callahan
Project Location – County: Siskiyou
CEQA Region: N. CA
Description of Nature, Purpose, and Benefits of Project: Project involves a grant to The Wildlands Conservancy to acquire 14,177± acres of land for the protection of forest and stream habitats for salmon and steelhead, and provide future wildlife-oriented public use opportunities. Located near Callahan, in Siskiyou County. WCB Project Tracker ID: 2026030.
Public Agency Approving Project: Department of Fish and Wildlife, WCB
Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out the Project: John P. Walsh, Deputy Executive Director, WCB
Exempt Status: (Check One) ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 15268): ☐ Declared Emergency [Sec. 15269 (a)]: ☐ Emergency Project [Sec. 15269 (b) and (c)]: ☒ Categorical Exemption. State Section number and type: Section 15313, Class 13, Section 15325, Class 25 ☐ Statutory Exemptions, State code Number: ☐ Other:
Reasons why this project is exempt: Project involves the acquisition of land for wildlife conservation to preserve open space and habitat, including plant or animal habitats.

Lead Agency Contact Person: John P. Walsh
Area Code/Telephone Extension: (916) 539-8016
If filed by applicant: 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding. 2. Has a notice of exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☒ Yes, (by this notice) ☐ No
Signature: Title: Deputy Executive Director Date:
☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☐ Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21108, 21152, 21152.1, Public Resources Code	SCH #: Posted Date: Date Received for Filing at OPR:
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13. Big Springs Ranch Habitat Implementation

**Restoration
Implementation**

WCB Grant: \$2,447,000

Fund Source(s): Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (Proposition 4 – Stream Flow Enhancement Program), Public Resources Code Section 91040(a) (SB 105, Sec. 97)

Grantee: California Trout, Inc.

Landowner: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Location: Approximately 10 miles southeast of Grenada

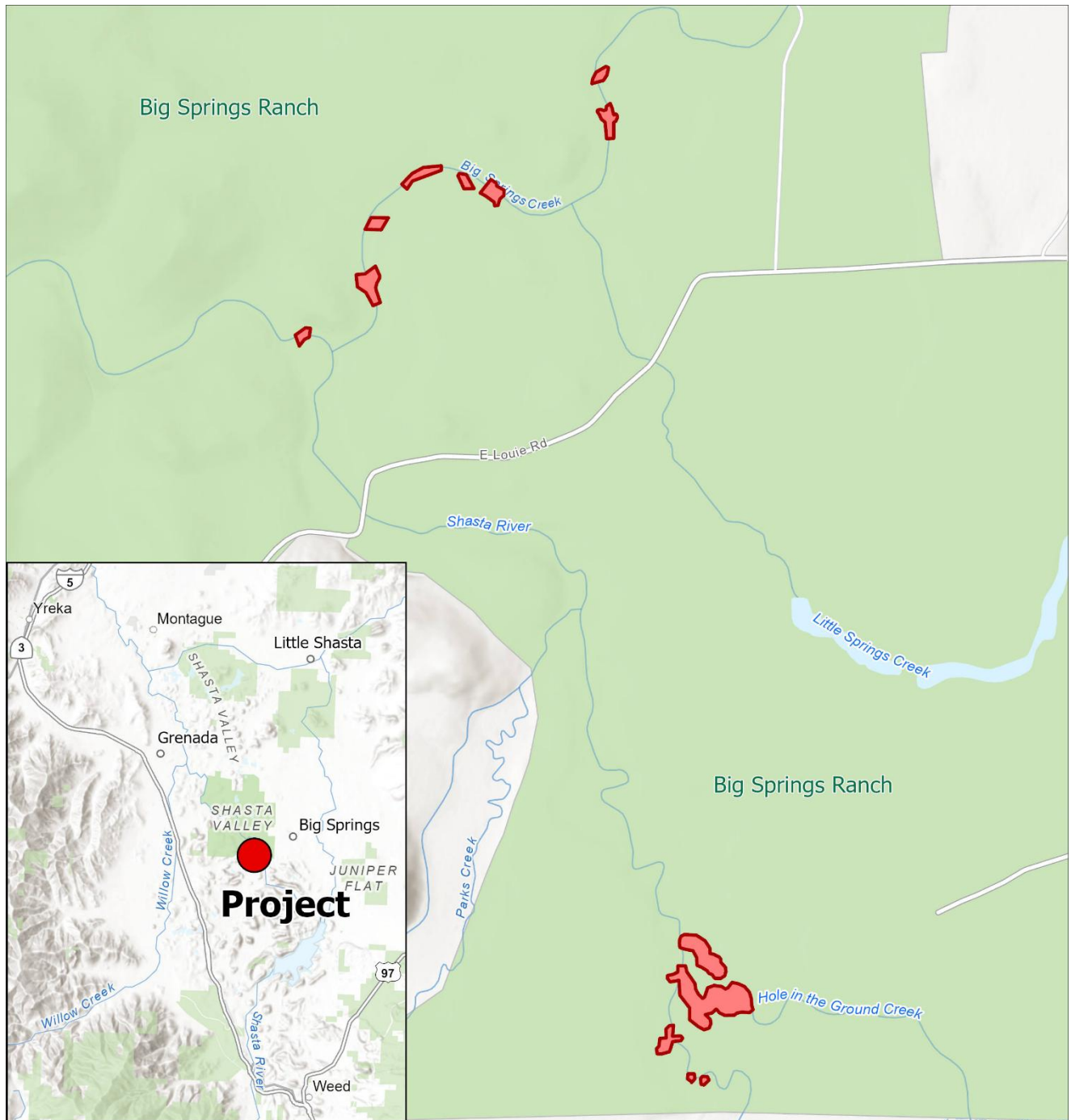
County: Siskiyou County

Project Highlights

- Restore approximately 8 acres of habitat for migratory salmonids and waterfowl
- Create complex stream channels and reconnected floodplains with riparian and floodplain vegetation
- Key species: Coho salmon, Chinook salmon, steelhead, Pacific lamprey, migratory waterfowl

Priority Metrics

- Benefits Justice Communities: Yes. The Project is within an SDAC and the increase in fish populations will result in improved catch at the active subsistence fisheries operated by the Karuk and Yurok Tribes that are downstream of this Project site. The Project will also improve recreational fishing opportunities that are used as subsistence for underserved communities along the Klamath River and a wide range of businesses along the river.
- Tribal Partnerships: Yes. The Yurok Tribe, Karuk Tribe, and Quartz Valley Indian Reservation all serve on the Technical Advisory Committee for this project.
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
- WCB Strategic Plan Target: B2.2



Big Springs Ranch Habitat Implementation

Siskiyou County



Project

Protected Lands



Project Description

This Big Spring Ranch Habitat Implementation (Project) will construct new instream and off channel habitat for salmonids, other native aquatic organisms, and migratory waterfowl. This work will include restoration elements such as enlarging spring alcoves, reconnecting oxbows, improving floodplain connectivity, strategic grading, installation of large wood and boulder instream habitat structures, creation of beaver dam analogs (BDAs), and riparian plantings. These elements will all increase channel complexity and habitat diversity, reconnect the creeks to their historic floodplains, and provide velocity refugia on two creeks, Big Springs Creek and Hole in the Ground Creek, which are tributaries to the Shasta River. The Project will implement stream restoration activities to enhance stream flow and habitat value by:

- Adding gravel to the streambed
- Installing large wood debris and boulder weirs to the creeks to create habitat complexity
- Installing BDAs to retain water and reconnect floodplain
- Planting native riparian vegetation
- Restoring approximately 8 acres of streambed, riparian and floodplain habitat, and benefiting approximately 26 river miles

Long-Term Management

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

Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Totals
Lower Big Springs Creek Design, Environmental Compliance, and Implementation	\$929,000	\$500,000	\$1,429,000
Lower Hole in the Ground Creek Design, Environmental Compliance, and Implementation	\$817,000	\$500,000	\$1,317,000
Post-Construction Monitoring and Reporting	\$389,000	---	\$389,000
TAC and Stakeholder Coordination	\$94,000	---	\$94,000
Indirect Costs	\$218,000	---	\$218,000
Total	\$2,447,000	\$1,000,000	\$3,447,000

Non-WCB funders include:

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife - \$1,000,000

Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Toz Soto, Senior Research and Policy Advisor, Karuk Tribe
- Michael Belchik, Senior Water Policy Analyst, Yurok Tribal Fisheries Department
- Robert Hawkins, Acting Regional Manager – Northern Region, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Valerie Quinto, Executive Officer, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Board, as lead agency, prepared a PEIR for the Project pursuant to the provisions of the CEQA. Staff considered the PEIR and prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

State Government

- Senate: Senator Megan Dahle, District 1
- Assembly: Assemblymember Heather Hadwick, District 1

Staff Recommendation

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



Hole in the Ground Creek with Mount Shasta in the background. Little vegetative cover and simplified channel reduce habitat value for Coho Salmon, Chinook Salmon, and Steelhead. Restructuring the stream channel by adding gravel, large wood debris, boulder weirs, and BDAs will improve spawning and rearing habitat for salmonids.



Big Springs Creek. This waterway has little vegetation on the banks and a wide and shallow channel. This causes water to warm and provides low habitat value for migratory salmonids. Restructuring the stream channel by adding gravel, large wood debris, boulder weirs, and BDAs will improve spawning and rearing for these listed fish species.

Administrative Office

64236 Second Avenue
Post Office Box 1016
Happy Camp, CA 96039
Phone: (530) 493-1600
Fax: (530) 493-5322

Karuk Tribe

**Karuk Community Health Clinic**

64236 Second Avenue
Post Office Box 316
Happy Camp, CA 96039
Phone: (530) 493-5257
Fax: (530) 493-5270

Date: January 22, 2026

Jennifer M. Norris
Executive Director
California Wildlife Conservation Board
PO Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244

Re: Letter of Support
California Trout Upper Shasta River Habitat Improvement Project Phase 2

Dear Ms. Norris,

As a representative of the Karuk Tribe's Fisheries Habitat Restoration Program this Letter of Support is for California Trout's Phase 2 of the Upper Shasta River Habitat Improvement Project. The project will implement priority instream habitat improvements in two separate restoration areas located on CDFW's Big Spring Ranch Wildlife Area. The two restoration areas are referred to as the Big Springs Creek Habitat Enhancement Site and the Hole in the Ground Confluence Habitat Enhancement Site. Together, these two areas are the second phase of a larger program or work to improve instream habitat within the Shasta River's core salmon spawning and rearing areas. Phase 1 was constructed over the summer of 2025, reconnecting a former oxbow channel to the mainstem Shasta River. Phase 2 projects are fully permitted with construction-ready designs.

The Shasta River is of paramount importance for the recovery of anadromous species in the Klamath River Basin. The Shasta River produces twice as many Chinook salmon per mile than other tributaries in the Klamath Basin due to its spring-fed hydrology which drives a complex food web. Restoring Shasta River habitat is essential for salmon recovery and returning federally endangered coho salmon from the brink of extirpation.

Thank you for your consideration of this priority salmon restoration.

Sincerely,

Toz Soto 
Senior Research and Policy Advisor, Karuk Tribe



YUROK TRIBE

190 Klamath Boulevard • Post Office Box 1027 • Klamath, CA 95548



February 11, 2026

Jennifer M. Norris
Executive Director
California Wildlife Conservation Board
PO Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244

Re: Letter of Support for the California Trout Upper Shasta River Habitat Improvement
Project Phase 2

Dear Ms. Norris:

The Yurok Tribal Fisheries Department strongly supports California Trout's (CalTrout's) Upper Shasta River Habitat Improvement Project, Phase 2. This project addresses critical habitat needs in and around key spring-fed areas of the Shasta River. After reviewing the proposal, we believe it will help address key limiting factors and significantly enhance cold-water habitat conditions.

The Shasta River is an essential tributary for Chinook salmon and other salmonid species, and its extensive, stable cold groundwater inputs make it an important climate change refuge. Protecting and enhancing these areas is critical, and timely action is necessary.

CalTrout has demonstrated itself to be a highly capable project manager and a strong collaborative partner to the Yurok Tribe and others. With a proven track record of successful habitat restoration projects, we are confident in CalTrout's ability to implement this effort and look forward to its completion.

Sincerely,

Michael Belchik

Michael Belchik
Senior Water Policy Analyst
Yurok Tribal Fisheries Department



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Northern Region
601 Locust Street
Redding, CA 96001
www.wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
VALERIE TERMINI, Acting Director



February 10, 2026

Jennifer M. Norris
Executive Director
California Wildlife Conservation Board
PO Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244
Jennifer.Norris@Wildlife.ca.gov

SUBJECT: CDFW LETTER OF SUPPORT

Dear Jennifer Norris:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) owns and manages the Big Springs Ranch Wildlife Area (BSRWA) located in the Shasta Valley, in Siskiyou County. CDFW manages BSRWA for all wildlife species with a special focus on the protection and enhancement of instream flows, and habitat for salmonids. As the landowner and manager of BSRWA, CDFW supports the California Trout's (CalTrout) submission of their project proposal titled "Phase 2 of the Upper Shasta River Habitat Improvement Project" (Project). This Project includes two restoration sites within the BSRWA.

The Shasta River contains many salmon species including the state and federally listed threatened coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast (SONCC) Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU), Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*) and state species of special concern (SSC) steelhead trout (*O. mykiss*) that are all declining in wild populations in the Klamath Basin. While conservation efforts are increasing within the watershed to establish minimum instream flows to meet [California Salmon Strategy](#) objectives, there remains a critical need for habitat conservation and restoration.

The CalTrout's Project will restore two areas within BSRWA, specifically the Big Springs Creek Habitat Enhancement Site and the Hole in the Ground Confluence Habitat Enhancement Site. Together, these two areas are the second phase of a larger effort to improve instream habitat within the Shasta River's core salmon spawning and rearing areas. CDFW is committed to these

Conserving California's Wildlife Since 1870

Jennifer Norris, Executive Director
California Wildlife Conservation Board
February 10, 2026
Page 2

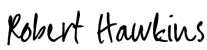
projects as the responsible and trustee agency for fish and wildlife resources, and as the landowner for necessary maintenance and monitoring.

CDFW looks forward to working with California Trout and other project partners to implement post-construction monitoring and develop an adaptive management plan for restoration actions. While the Project has been designed to be self-maintaining and substantial maintenance is not anticipated, CDFW will continue to manage the BSRWA, inclusive of the two restoration areas, in a manner aligned with CDFW's mission. CDFW is in the process of establishing the property as a wildlife area open to the public, and we have included monitoring and adaptive management of on-site habitat conservation projects when preparing the land management plan for the property.

CDFW supports the work on BSRWA in CalTrout's proposal and the commitment of project partners to enhance salmon conservation in the Shasta River and the greater Klamath River watershed.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please contact Janae Scruggs, at (530) 945-9458.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Robert Hawkins, Acting Regional Manager
Northern Region

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

February 5, 2026

Jennifer M. Norris
Executive Director
California Wildlife Conservation Board
PO Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244

Subject: Letter of Support – California Trout Upper Shasta River Habitat
Improvement Project Phase 2

Dear Ms. Norris:

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (North Coast Water Board) is submitting this Letter of Support for Phase 2 of the Upper Shasta River Habitat Improvement Project. The shovel-ready project will implement priority instream habitat improvements in two separate restoration areas located on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Big Spring Ranch Wildlife Area; the Big Springs Creek Habitat Enhancement Site and the Hole in the Ground Confluence Habitat Enhancement Site. Together, these two areas are the second phase of a larger program to improve instream habitat within the Shasta River's core salmon spawning and rearing areas. Phase 1 was constructed over the summer of 2025, reconnecting a former oxbow channel to the mainstem Shasta River. Phase 2 projects are fully permitted with construction-ready designs and present a unique opportunity to rapidly implement restoration projects in critical, climate-resilient cold-water habitat.

The Shasta River is listed as impaired for elevated water temperature and dissolved oxygen impacts from organic enrichment. TMDLs for these impairments were adopted by the North Coast Water Board in 2006. These restoration projects will result in improved riparian conditions in critical cold water habitat, supporting attainment of the TMDLs for temperature and dissolved oxygen through increases in shade and preservation of cold water, while also enhancing spawning and rearing habitat to support increased juvenile salmonid survival.

The Shasta River is of paramount importance for the recovery of anadromous species in the Klamath River Basin, and immediate action is needed to restore its degraded habitats. The Shasta River produces twice as many listed Chinook salmon per mile than other tributaries in the Klamath Basin due to its spring-fed hydrology, which drives a complex food web and has the potential to provide high-quality year-round habitats for cold-water fishes. Restoring Shasta River habitat is essential to recovering listed Chinook salmon and returning federally endangered coho salmon from the brink of extirpation.

Thank you for your consideration of this priority salmon restoration project.

Sincerely,

Valerie Quinto
Executive Officer

Notice of Determination

To: Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Department of Fish and Wildlife
Wildlife Conservation Board
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 99244-2090

County Clerk (County of): Siskiyou

Contact: Aaron N.K. Haiman
Phone: (916) 926-8835

Lead Agency: NORWQCB
Contact: Jake Shannon
Phone: (707) 576-2673

SUBJECT: Filing Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code.

State Clearinghouse Number (If submitted by State Clearinghouse): 2019100230

Project Title: Shasta River Habitat Improvement Project

Project Location: iskiyou county at 41.659902° N, 122.497866° W; 41.596253° N, 122.436115° W; 41.582233° N, 122.430155° W

CEQA Region: Northern

Project Description:

The purpose of this Project is to promote conservation, habitat enhancement, and the recovery of coho salmon within the Shasta River, including Big Springs Creek, Hole in the Ground Creek, and Parks Creek. The Project's restoration elements include enhancing in-stream and off-channel habitats, enlarging spring alcoves, reconnecting oxbows, and improving floodplain connectivity to provide velocity refuge and increase habitat diversity. This will be achieved through strategic grading to improve connectivity, large wood and boulder in-stream habitat structures, beaver dam analogs (BDAs), and riparian plantings.

This is to advise that the Wildlife Conservation Board has approved the above-described project on 8/27/26 and has made the following determinations regarding the above-described project.

☐ **Lead Agency** ☒ **Responsible Agency**

1. The Project [☐ will ☒ will not] have a significant effect on the environment.
2. ☒ An environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
☐ A Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation Measures [☒ were ☐ were not] made a condition of WCB's approval of the project.
4. A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan [☒ was ☐ was not] adopted by WCB for this project.
5. A statement of Overriding Considerations [☐ was ☒ was not] adopted by WCB for this project.
6. Findings [☒ were ☐ were not] made by WCB pursuant to the provision of CEQA.

This is to certify that the SRGO PEIR with comments and responses and record of the project approval is available to the General Public at: <https://ceqanet.lci.ca.gov/2019100230/44>

Signature:

Title: Deputy Executive Director

Date:

SCH#:

Posted:
Date Received for Filing:

14. Folsom Ranch (Mendocino Land Trust)

Acquisition

WCB Grant: \$4,500,000

Fee

Fund Source(s): Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (Proposition 4 – Existing Programs), Public Resources Code Section 93010 (SB 105, Sec. 94)

Grantee: Mendocino Land Trust

Location: Approximately 10 miles northeast of the City of Willits

County: Mendocino County

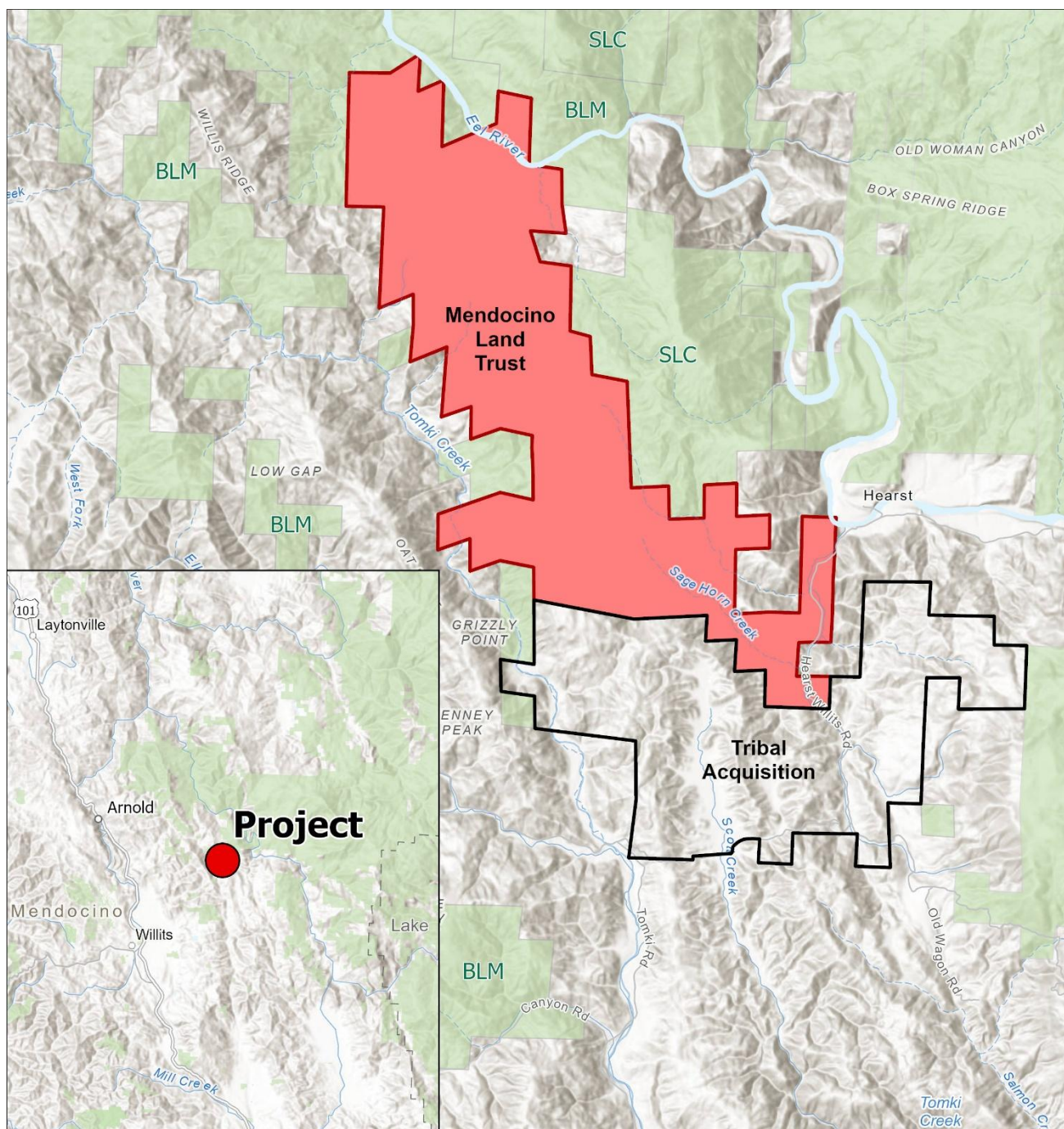
Acres: 3,946± (Property)

Property Highlights

- Habitats represented: oak woodlands, grasslands, mature mixed conifer forests, and riparian areas of Eel River and Tomki Creek
- Key species: Tule elk, Coho and Chinook salmon, and steelhead
- The project includes development of multiple modes of public access, including a trailhead and parking area.
- The project will fill in a gap within a patchwork of public land and conservation easements across tens of thousands of acres in interior Mendocino County.
- Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) plans to transfer the property to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for permanent ownership and management. In the coming months, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funds from BLM may become available for the acquisition. If that occurs, the funding amount provided by WCB will be reduced and BLM would become the Grantee. Therefore, close of escrow may be delayed for up to a year after Board approval to preserve the possibility of using LWCF funds in lieu of a portion or all the approved WCB funds.

Priority Metrics

- Benefits Justice Communities: Yes. The project will provide recreational access to the public in a disadvantaged community.
- Tribal Partnerships: Yes. This property is part of a larger 7,037-acre parcel, which is being split between MLT for this project and the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians (Sherwood), who will acquire the other 3,091± acres of the larger parcel with funding from California Natural Resources Agency. Sherwood entered a Memorandum of Understanding with the Cahto Tribe of the Laytonville Rancheria and the Potter Valley Tribe to manage their acreage collaboratively. MLT intends to collaborate with all three tribes in the management of the acreage owned by Mendocino Land Trust.
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 2, Execute Strategic Acquisitions; Pathway 4, Enhance Conservation of Existing Public Lands and Coastal Waters
- WCB Strategic Plan Target: B1.1
- Public Access: Yes. Trails, trailheads, and parking will be constructed following the acquisition.



Folsom Ranch (Mendocino Land Trust)

Mendocino County



Project

Protected
Lands

Tribal
Acquisition



Long-Term Management

As discussed above, MLT plans to transfer fee title to BLM in the future. As part of BLM's long-term management, it will prepare a Resource Management Plan, which will identify BLM's approach to management and public access. If BLM is unable to take fee title to the Property, MLT is prepared for long-term ownership and management.

Project Funding

The Department of General Services approved fair market value is \$5,400,000. The proposed funding breakdown is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$4,500,000
Private Philanthropy	\$900,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$5,400,000

Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Alecia Hamann, Executive Director, Friends of the Eel River
- Andrea Jones, Senior Director of Conservation, Audubon California
- Brian P. Bender, City Manager, City of Willits
- Carl Erquiaga, Nevada Field Representative, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
- Darren Mierau, North Coast Director, California Trout
- Elyane Steanick, California Program Director, Conservation Lands Foundation
- Jim Wood, California State Assemblymember, 2nd District
- Joel Weltzien, California Chapter Coordinator, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Lewis "Bill" Whipple, President, Round Valley Indian Tribes
- Luke Farmer, Regional Director, The Wildlands Conservancy
- Marc Deprey, Executive Director, Golden State Land Conservancy
- Marisela de Santa Anna, President, Peregrine Audubon Board of Directors
- Mary J. Norris, Chairwoman, Cahto Tribe of the Laytonville Rancheria
- Mary Small, Deputy Executive Director, California State Coastal Conservancy
- Maureen Mulheren, Chair, Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
- Rob Andress, Lands Program Manager, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- Salvador Rosales, Tribal Chairman, Potter Valley Tribe
- Stephanie Garrabrandt-Sierra, Executive Director, Mendocino County Resource Conservation District
- The Undersigned Organizations of the Power In Nature Coalition
- Valerie G. M. Nixon, President, Lake County Land Trust

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA

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

State Government

- Senate: Senator Mike McGuire, District 2
- Assembly: Assemblymember Chris Rogers, District 2

Staff Recommendation

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



View of Tomki Creek from the tribal portion



View of meadow from the tribal portion looking towards residences



FRIENDS OF THE EEL RIVER

Working for the recovery of our Wild & Scenic River, its fisheries and communities.

July 24th, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of Friends of the Eel River, I am writing to express our support for WCB funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. We recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment, open new public access, but also to provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to the Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

We believe that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands while providing new public access opportunities on a landscape scale. Of particular importance for native fish recovery is the opportunity to apply TEK informed management to protecting Tomki Creek, identified in the National Marine Fisheries Service Recovery Plan as habitat for an "essential independent population" of steelhead.

Please feel free to reach out to us at the contact information below if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on the environment, the public, and our shared future.

Sincerely,

Alicia Hamann
Executive Director
alicia@eelriver.org, 707-798-6345

Cc: Jennifer Norris
Geneva Thompson

FRIENDS OF THE EEL RIVER
707.798.6345 • foer@eelriver.org
PO Box 4945, Arcata, CA 95518



July 26th, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of Audubon California, I am writing to express our support for BLM funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. We recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment, open new public access, but also to provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to the Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

We believe that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands while providing new public access opportunities on a landscape scale.

Folsom Ranch falls within the top 20% climate stronghold national priority areas as mapped by Audubon Scientists. Climate strongholds are areas that are predicted to have high climate suitability and low human modification for bird species at present and under contemporary climate change scenarios in both breeding and non-breeding seasons. This is an additional benefit to the acquisition of this land.

Please feel free to reach out to us at the contact information below if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on the environment, the public, and our shared future.

Sincerely,



Andrea Jones
Audubon California
Senior Director, Conservation
Andrea.jones@audubon.org

Cc: Jennifer Norris
Geneva Thompson



Gateway to the Redwoods
CITY OF WILLITS

111 E COMMERCIAL STREET, WILLITS CA 95490 • PHONE: (707) 459-4601 • FAX: (707) 459-1562

July 25, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return.

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of the Willits City Council, I am writing to express the Council's support for WCB funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. The City of Willits recognizes the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment, open new public access, but also to provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to the Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

The City of Willits believes that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands while providing new public access opportunities on a landscape scale.

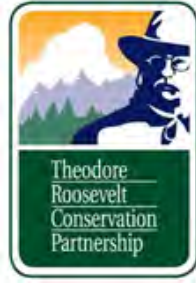
Please feel free to reach out to myself at the contact information below if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. The City Council eagerly anticipates the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on the environment, the public, and our shared future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Bender", with a stylized, cursive script.

Brian P. Bender, ICMA-CM, AICP CEP, CFM
City Manager
bbender@cityofwillits.org
707.972.0008

Cc: Jennifer Norris
Geneva Thompson



July 20th, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP), I am writing to express our support for BLM funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. The TRCP is a national non-profit conservation organization working to guarantee all Americans quality places to hunt and fish. At TRCP, we work with our 62 formal partners and represent over 120,000 individual members nationally. We recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment, open new public access, increase hunting and fishing opportunities, but also to provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to the Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

We believe that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands while providing new public access opportunities on a landscape scale.

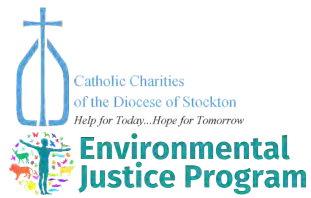
Please feel free to reach out to us at the contact information below if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on the environment, the public, and our shared future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Carl Cerquiaga". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Carl" being more prominent.

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Nevada Field Representative
1625 Golden Park Way
Fallon, NV 89406
775-219-6185
Email: cerquiaga@trcp.org

Cc: Jennifer Norris
Geneva Thompson





July 20th, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of California Trout (CalTrout), I am writing to express our support for WCB funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. We recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment, open new public access, but also to provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to the Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

CalTrout is a statewide conservation organization whose mission is to ***ensure resilient, wild fish thriving in healthy waters for a better California***. We work to solve complex resource issues throughout California, seeking innovative solutions to restore and protect riverine ecosystems that work for the diverse interests of public and private landowners, and our communities. We believe that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands while providing new public access opportunities on a landscape scale. We particularly support the efforts and opportunities for tribal engagement in this project.

Please feel free to reach out to us at the contact information below if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on the environment, the public, and our shared future.

Sincerely,

Darren Mierau

North Coast Director

California Trout



707-825-0420 o

707-845-7810 m

Cc: Jennifer Norris

Geneva Thompson



**CONSERVATION
LANDS
FOUNDATION**

Conservation Through Community

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

July 29, 2024

Subject: Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of the Conservation Lands Foundation, I am writing to express our support for WCB funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. We recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment, open new public access, but also to provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to the Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

We believe that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands while providing new public access opportunities on a landscape scale.

Please feel free to reach out to us at the contact information below if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on the environment, the public, and our shared future.

Sincerely,

Elyane Stefanick
California Program Director
Conservation Lands Foundation
(415) 663-6278
elyane@conservationlands.org



JIM WOOD

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, SECOND DISTRICT

July 30, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

I am writing in strong support for Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. I recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment and open new public access, but also to provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to three local Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Folsom Ranch. The tribal portion will be acquired using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

I believe that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands while providing new public access opportunities and ancestral land return on a landscape scale.

I appreciate your serious consideration of this important proposal.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Wood". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" and last name "Wood" clearly distinguishable.

JIM WOOD
Assemblymember, 2nd District



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS
CALIFORNIA**

July 26th, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of the California Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, I am writing to express our support for Wildlife Conservation Board funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. We recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only conserve essential habitat and increase Tribal involvement in the management of their ancestral lands, but also to increase opportunities for California's hunters by opening public access to newly acquired BLM lands.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

We believe that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands while providing new public hunting opportunities on a landscape scale.

Please feel free to reach out to us at the contact information below if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on the environment, the public, and our shared future.

Sincerely,

Joel Weltzien
California Chapter Coordinator, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
weltzien@backcountryhunters.org
406-925-3771



WWW.BACKCOUNTRYHUNTERS.ORG/CALIFORNIA_BHA
CHAPTER@BACKCOUNTRYHUNTERS.ORG

Cc: Jennifer Norris
Geneva Thompson



WWW.BACKCOUNTRYHUNTERS.ORG/CALIFORNIA_BHA
CHAPTER@BACKCOUNTRYHUNTERS.ORG

ROUND VALLEY INDIAN TRIBES
A Sovereign Nation of Confederated Tribes

TRIBAL COUNCIL OFFICE
77826 COVELO ROAD
COVELO, CALIFORNIA 95428
PHONE: 707-983-6126
FAX: 707-983-6128



LOCATION: ON STATE HWY 162
ONE MILE NORTH OF COVELO
IN ROUND VALLEY
TRIBAL TERRITORY SINCE TIME BEGAN

ROUND VALLEY RESERVATION ESTABLISHED 1856

July 20th, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Tribal Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of the Round Valley Indian Tribes, I am writing to express our continued support for WCB funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. The Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians, Cahto Band of Indians, and the Potter Valley Band Of Indians have deep historical and ancestral ties to the lands and waters within and surrounding the Folsom Ranch. We recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment, open new public access, but also to honor the significance of this land to our Tribes' identities as well as provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to the Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

We continue to believe that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands for current and future generations. The alignment of our tribe's values with the conservation and goals of this acquisition is a cause for much enthusiasm, and we are grateful for the opportunity.

Please feel free to reach out to me us at the contact information below if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on our tribe, the environment, the public, and our shared future.

Sincerely,

Lewis "Bill" Whipple
President, Round Valley Indian Tribes
lwhipple@council.rvit.org Cell Phone (707)354-2395

Cc: Jennifer Norris
Geneva Thompson



THE WILDLANDS CONSERVANCY

Behold the Beauty

July 24th, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of The Wildlands Conservancy, I am writing to express our support for WCB funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. We recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment, open new public access, but also to provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to the Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

The Wildlands Conservancy is dedicated to protecting lands along the Eel River and promoting public access in this remarkable part of California. We believe that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands while providing new public access opportunities on a landscape scale.

Please feel free to reach out to us at the contact information below if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on the environment, the public, and our shared future.

Sincerely,

Luke Farmer

Luke Farmer

The Wildlands Conservancy
Regional Director
Sonoma Coast and Eel River Canyon Preserves
Luke.f@wildlandsconservancy.org
(707) 328-8539

Cc: Jennifer Norris
Geneva Thompson





GOLDEN STATE LAND CONSERVANCY

July 24, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Board Emeritus:

Bob Whitney, *President*
Whit Manley
Rose Zoia
Michael Zander
Dino Bonos

Board of Directors:

Greg Carr, *Chair*
Matt Richmond, *Vice Chair*
Casey Edmondson, *Treasurer*
Steve Sharpe, *Secretary*
Jean Kolpolchok
Dean Parsons
Denny Rossati

Staff:

Marc Deprey
Executive Director

Rob Moore,
Stewardship Director

Angelique Sweetman,
Office Administrator

1151 Gravenstein Hwy South
Sebastopol, CA 95472
(707) 827-8634
www.gslc.us

Subject: Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of the Golden State Land Conservancy, I am writing to express our support for WCB funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. We recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment, open new public access, but also to provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to the Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

We believe that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands while providing new public access opportunities on a landscape scale.

Please feel free to reach out to us at the contact information below if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on the environment, the public, and our shared future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marc Deprey", is written over a light blue circular background.

Marc Deprey
Executive Director



PEREGRINE AUDUBON SOCIETY
PO Box 311, Ukiah, CA 95482
PEREGRINEAUDUBON.ORG

July 20, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20 th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of the Peregrine Audubon Society, I am writing to express our support for WCB funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. We recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment, open new public access, but also to provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to the Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems. We believe that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands while providing new public access opportunities on a landscape scale.

Please feel free to reach out to us at the contact information below if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on the environment, the public, and our shared future.

Sincerely,

Marisela de Santa Anna
President, Peregrine Audubon Board of Directors
peregrineaudubonsociety@gmail.com

Cc: Jennifer Norris, Geneva Thompson



Cahto Tribe

Laytonville Rancheria
PO Box 1239 Laytonville, CA 95454
Phone (707) 984-6197 • Fax (707) 984-6201

July 20th, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Tribal Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of the Cahto Tribe of the Laytonville Rancheria, I am writing to express our continued support for WCB funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. The Cahto Tribe of the Laytonville Rancheria have deep historical and ancestral ties to the lands and waters including the Eel River within and surrounding the Folsom Ranch. We recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment, open new public access, but also to honor the significance of this land to our Tribes' identities as well as provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to the Tribes.

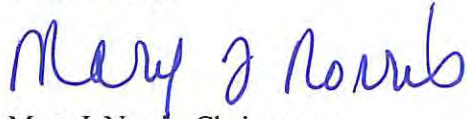
The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

We continue to believe that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands for current and future generations. The alignment of our tribe's values with the conservation and goals of this acquisition is a cause for much enthusiasm, and we are grateful for the opportunity.



Please feel free to reach out to me us at the contact information below if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on our tribe, the environment, the public, and our shared future.

Respectfully,



Mary J. Norris, Chairwoman
Cahto Tribe of the Laytonville Rancheria
(707) 354-1255 (cell)
chair@cahtotribe-nsn.gov



July 26th, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of the State Coastal Conservancy, I am writing to express our support for Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. We recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment, open new public access, but also to provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to the Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The GRT is a The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

We believe that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands while providing new public access opportunities on a landscape scale. Public and recreational access on the Ranch may include camping facilities that would serve users of the nearby Great Redwood Trail (GRT). The GRT is one of five signature trail projects of the State Coastal Conservancy and, when complete, will be a 307-mile, world-class, multi-use rail-to-trail connecting California's San Francisco and Humboldt bays.

Please feel free to reach out to us at the contact information below if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on the environment, the public, and our shared future.

Sincerely,

Mary Small

Mary Small
Deputy Executive Officer
mary.small@scc.ca.gov

1515 Clay Street, 10th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-1401
510-286-1015



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

Board of Supervisors

DARCIE ANTLE
CLERK OF THE BOARD

501 Low Gap Rd. Room 1010
Ukiah, CA 95482

Email: bos@mendocinocounty.gov
Website: www.mendocinocounty.gov

Office: (707) 463-4221
Fax: (707) 463-5649

July 29, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Secretary Crowfoot:

I am writing on behalf of the County of Mendocino to express our support for BLM funding to help acquire the 7,000-acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. We believe that acquiring the Folsom Ranch has the potential to protect the environment, create new public access, and offer the opportunity to return ancestral lands to local Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is collaborating with participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund to acquire the Folsom Ranch. This acquisition will provide multiple-use public access on the 5,300-acre BLM portion of the Ranch and nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-acre tribal portion. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding, thereby protecting traditional tribal lands, utilizing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, creating economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, promoting ecological connectivity, and safeguarding essential ecosystems.

The Folsom Ranch acquisition offers a unique opportunity to conserve these lands while providing expanded public access on a large scale.

We look forward to the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on our local environment, the public, and our shared future. For these reasons the County of Mendocino supports this project and recommends it receive funding.

Sincerely,

Maureen Mulheren, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

CC: The Honorable Jared Huffman, 2nd Congressional District
Ms. Jennifer Norris
Ms. Geneva Thompson

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

GLENN MCGOURTY
First District

MAUREEN MULHEREN
Second District

JOHN HASCHAK
Third District

DAN GJERDE
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TED WILLIAMS
Fifth District



**ROCKY MOUNTAIN
ELK FOUNDATION**

July 23, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF), I am writing to express our support for WCB funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's mission, supported by more than 10,000 members in California and 230,000 members nationwide, is to ensure the future of elk, other wildlife, their habitat, and our hunting heritage. RMEF has been working to conserve more than 60,000 acres of land in the Eel River watershed. The Folsom Ranch is located adjacent to some of the lands already conserved and would greatly increase the total acreage of conserved lands while ensuring connectivity across the landscape and providing increased public access and recreation opportunities.

Please feel free to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,

Rob Andress
Lands Program Manager
randress@rmef.org
(928) 499-9620

Cc: Jennifer Norris
Geneva Thompson



POTTER VALLEY TRIBE



2251 S. State St. • Ukiah, California 95482 • (707) 462-1213 • Fax (707) 462-1240
• E-mail: pottervalleytribe@pottervalleytribe.com

Chairperson

Salvador Rosales

Secretary

**Rosemary
Rahmaoui**

Treasurer

**Losario
Rosales**

Member-At-Large Appointed Spokesperson

Norma Rosales

July 20th, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Tribal Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of the [Potter Valley Tribe], I am writing to express our continued support for WCB funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. The [Potter Valley Tribe], [Potter Valley Tribe], [Potter Valley Tribe] have deep historical and ancestral ties to the lands and waters including the Eel River within and surrounding the Folsom Ranch. We recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment, open new public access, but also to honor the significance of this land to our Tribes' identities as well as provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to the Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

We continue to believe that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands for current and future generations. The alignment of our tribe's values with the conservation and goals of this acquisition is a cause for much enthusiasm, and we are grateful for the opportunity.

Please feel free to reach out to me us at the contact information below if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on our tribe, the environment, the public, and our shared future.



Salvador Rosales
Tribal Chairman



Rosemary Rahmaoui
Administrative Assistant

Losario Rosales
Treasure

Cc: Tracy Stone-Manning
Gordon Toevs



707.462.3664
410 Jones St., Suite C-3
Ukiah, CA 95482
www.mcrd.org

July 20th, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District, I am writing to express our support for WCB funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. We recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment, open new public access, but also to provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to the Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

We believe that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands while providing new public access opportunities on a landscape scale.

Please feel free to reach out to me at stephanie.sierra@mcrd.org if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on the environment, the public, and our shared future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephanie".

Stephanie Garrabrant-Sierra, Executive Director



August 12, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

The Power in Nature coalition is writing to express our support for WCB funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. We recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment, open new public access, but also to provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to the Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes (Cahto, Potter Valley, and Sherwood Valley), BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

As a coalition dedicated to furthering 30x30 in California, we believe that this acquisition presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands while providing new public access opportunities on a landscape scale, helping us get closer to reaching our goal of protecting 30% of land and coastal waters by 2030.

Please feel free to reach out to us at the contact information below if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on the environment, the public, and our shared future.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Organizations of the Power in Nature Coalition:

Contact:

Josefina Barrantes | 30x30 Coordinator | EPIC | <josefina@wildcalifornia.org>



Catholic Charities of Stockton
Ector Olivares
Program Manager

Resource Renewal Institute
Chance Cutrano
Director of Programs

CalWild
Lina Castro
Assistant Policy Director

Nature Legacies
Janice Kelley
Writer

Endangered Habitats League
Dan Silver
Executive Director

Central Valley Partnership
Daniel O'Connell
Director

Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center
Michelle Berditchevsky
Medicine Lake Highlands and Aquifer
Protection Director

The Wildlands Conservancy
Frazier Haney
Executive Director

Sierra Nevada Alliance
Lis Olaerts
30x30 Coordinator

Klamath Forest Alliance
Kimberly Baker
Executive Director

Environmental Protection Information Center
Josefina Barrantes | 30x30 Coordinator / Del Norte Advocate

Inland Mendocino County Park Land Trust
Suzanne Pletcher
Vice-President

Alta Peak Chapter, California Native Plant
Society
Barbara Brydolf
President

Nature for All
Belén Bernal
Executive Director

Siskiyou Crest Coalition
Suzie Savoie
Member

Rivers & Lands Conservancy
Nicole Padron
Co-Executive Director

Truckee Dirt Union
Matt Chappell
Executive Director

Sierra Club California
Mahtisa Djahangiri
Campaign Strategist

Sierra Club Redwood Chapter
Dan Mayhew
Chapter Chair

Northcoast Environmental Center
Caroline Griffith
Director

Morongo Basin Conservancy
Steve Bardwell
President



Cc: Jennifer Norris
Geneva Thompson

About the Power in Nature Coalition

Power In Nature is a statewide coalition of over 100 community groups, environmental and conservation organizations, land trusts, indigenous organizations and tribal members dedicated to advancing California's 30x30 commitment. The Power In Nature coalition has identified [nearly 100 potential 30x30 projects](#) across the state and works on a broad range of issues including biodiversity protection, climate resilience, equity, recreation, outdoor access and social justice. For more information, visit powerinnature.org.

July 25th, 2024

California Natural Resources Agency
Secretary Wade Crowfoot
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for WCB Funding for the Acquisition of Folsom Ranch for Public Access and Tribal Land Return

Dear Sec. Crowfoot:

On behalf of the Lake County Land Trust, I am writing to express our support for WCB funding to assist with the acquisition of the 7,000-Acre Folsom Ranch in Mendocino County. We recognize the potential of the Folsom Ranch acquisition to not only protect the environment, open new public access, but also to provide an opportunity to return ancestral lands to the Tribes.

The Mendocino Land Trust (MLT) is working on behalf of and in partnership with all the participating Tribes, BLM, and The Conservation Fund on the Folsom Ranch acquisition that will provide multiple use public access on the 5,300-Acre BLM portion of the Ranch and multi-benefit nature-based solutions and limited public access on the 1,700-Acre tribal portion of the Ranch. The tribal portion will be conserved using CNRA Tribal Nature-Based Solutions funding by conserving and protecting traditional tribal lands, employing Traditional Ecological Knowledge, expanding economic opportunities, increasing public and recreational access, and advancing ecological connectivity and protection of important ecosystems.

We believe that the acquisition of the Folsom Ranch presents a unique opportunity to ensure the conservation of these lands while providing new public access opportunities on a landscape scale.

Please feel free to reach out to us at the contact information below if you need any information or to discuss this project in more detail. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact that the Folsom Ranch acquisition could have on the environment, the public, and our shared future.

Sincerely,



Valerie G. M. Nixon
President, Lake County Land Trust
4val944@gmail.com

Cc: Jennifer Norris
Geneva Thompson

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse 1400 Tenth Street, Room 113 Sacramento, CA 95814	From: Department of Fish and Wildlife Wildlife Conservation Board P.O. Box 944209 Sacramento, CA 99244-2090
County Clerk (County of): N/A	Attention: Kendall Webster
Project Title: Folsom Ranch (Mendocino Land Trust)	
Project Applicant: Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)	
Project Location – Specific: APN(s) 037-270-07-00, 037-270-10-00, 037-270-11-00, 037-280-10-00, 037-280-11-00, 037-290 11-00, 037-290-14-00, 037-300-10-00, 037-300-14-00, 037-330-07-00, 037-330-14-00, 037-340-04-00 (portion), and 037-340-26-00 (portion)	
Project Location – City: Willits	
Project Location – County: Mendocino	
CEQA Region: Northern California	
Description of Nature, Purpose, and Benefits of Project: The protection of oak woodlands, grasslands, and mature mixed conifer forests in the Eel River and Tomki Creek watersheds, supporting threatened and endangered species including Coho and Chinook salmon and steelhead. Located ~10 miles northeast of the City of Willits, in Mendocino County. WCB Project Tracker ID: 2026064.	
Public Agency Approving Project: Department of Fish and Wildlife, WCB	
Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out the Project: John P. Walsh, Deputy Executive Director, WCB	
Exempt Status: (Check One) ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 15268): ☐ Declared Emergency [Sec. 15269 (a)]: ☐ Emergency Project [Sec. 15269 (b) and (c)]: ☒ Categorical Exemption. State Section number and type: Sec.15313, Class 13 & Sec.15325, Class 25 ☐ Statutory Exemptions, State code Number: ☐ Other:	
Reasons why this project is exempt: Project involves the acquisition of land for conservation purposes, to preserve open space and habitat, including plant or animal habitats. The Project also is an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes.	
Lead Agency Contact Person: John P. Walsh	
Area Code/Telephone Extension: (916) 539-8016	
If filed by applicant: 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding. 2. Has a notice of exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☒ Yes, (by this notice) ☐ No	
Signature:	Title: Deputy Executive Director Date:
☒ Signed by Lead Agency	☐ Signed by Applicant
Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21108, 21152, 21152.1, Public Resources Code	SCH #: Posted Date: Date Received for Filing at OPR:

ec: WCB Project Tracker
WCB Board Meeting Folder

15. Knoxville Wildlife Area, Expansion 3

**Acquisition
Fee**

WCB Grant: \$1,000,000

Fund Source(s): Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)

Grantee: Land Trust for Napa County (LTNC)

Location: 12 miles east of Middletown

County: Napa County

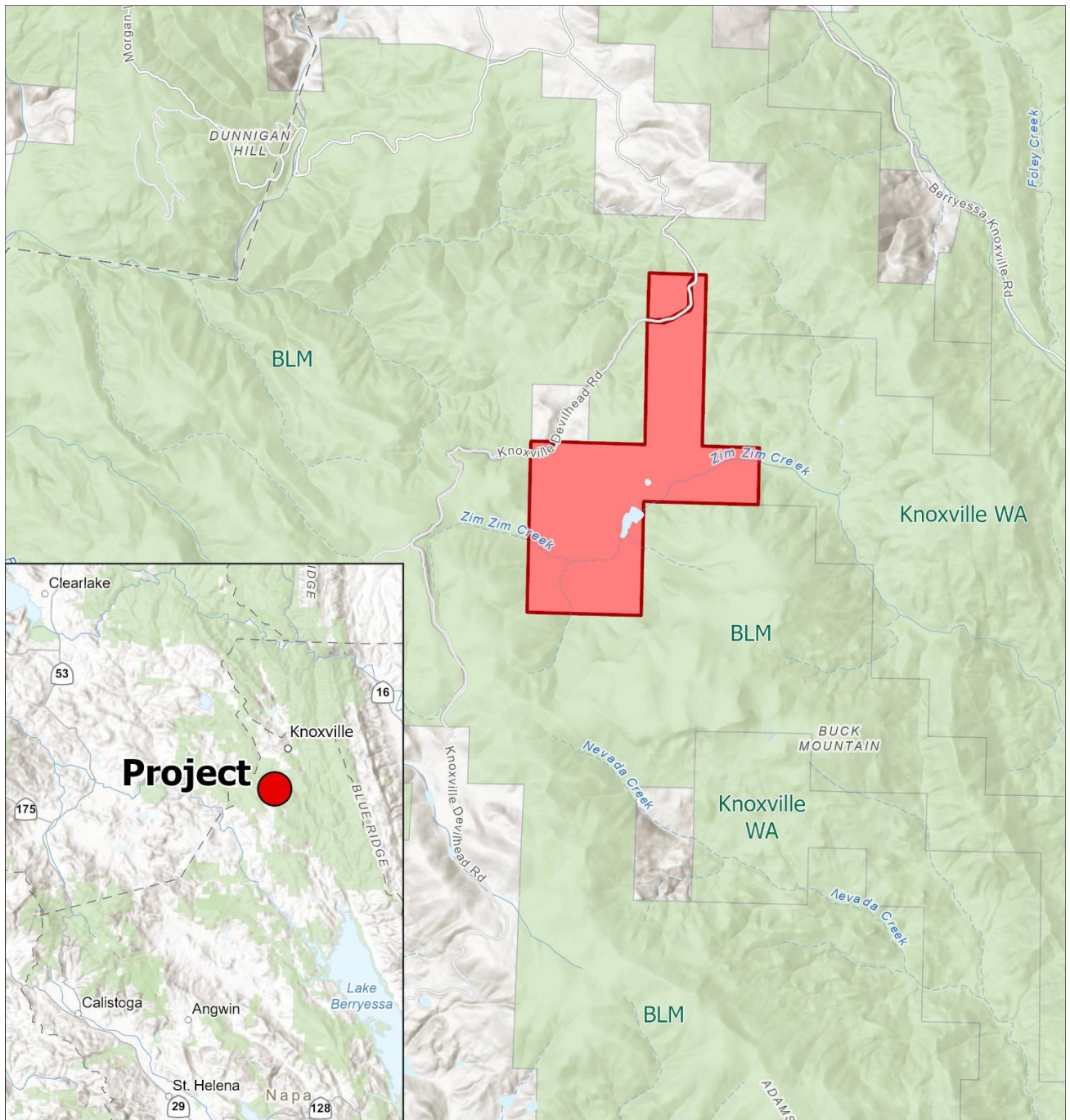
Acres: 436± (Property)

Property Highlights

- High priority conservation acquisition in the CDFW Blue-Ridge Berryessa Conceptual Area Protection Plan (2014).
- Property supports multiple conservation objectives, including the protection and enhancement of habitat for rare, threatened, and sensitive species; preservation of ecological connectivity and large mammal movement corridors; and expansion of opportunities for wildlife-dependent public recreation consistent with CDFW management goals.
- Habitats represented: grasslands, oak woodlands, serpentine chaparral, riparian, and cliff habitats present on the property.
- Protects a vulnerable section of the highest priority wildlife corridor in the North Bay.

Priority Metrics

- Benefits Justice Communities: No
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 2, Execute Strategic Acquisitions
- WCB Strategic Plan Target: Plan B1.1, B2.1, P1.1
- Public Access: Yes, wildlife viewing, wildflower observation, birdwatching, hiking, and hunting.



Knoxville Wildlife Area, Expansion 3

Napa County



Project

Protected Lands



Long-Term Management

LTNC is acquiring the Property on behalf of CDFW, with the intent to transfer fee title ownership to CDFW in the future. The Property will be managed by CDFW as part of the Knoxville Wildlife Area.

Project Funding

The Department of General Services approved fair market value is \$1,000,000. The proposed funding breakdown is as follows:

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

Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- None received

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA

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

State Government

- Senate: Senator Christopher Cabaldon, District 3
- Assembly: Assemblymember Cecelia M. Aguilar-Curry, District 4

Staff Recommendation

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

16. Johnson Meadow Restoration

**Restoration
Implementation**

WCB Grant: \$4,000,000

Fund Source(s): Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (Proposition 4 – Existing Programs), Public Resources Code Section 93010 (SB 105, Sec. 94)

Grantee: Tahoe Resource Conservation District

Landowner: Tahoe Resource Conservation District

Location: South Lake Tahoe

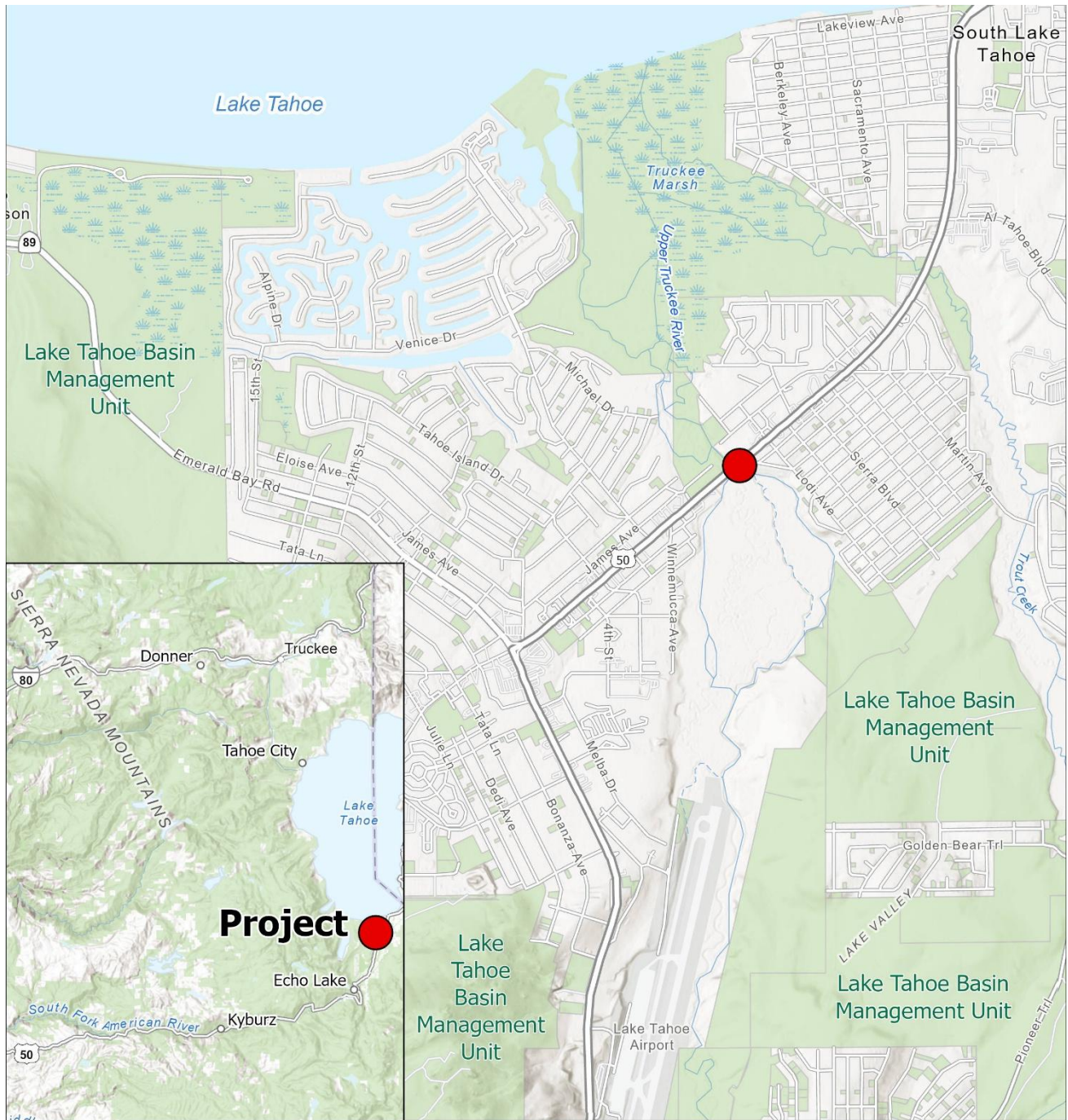
County: El Dorado

Project Highlights

- 79 acres mountain meadow restoration
- Habitat benefits to western pearlshell mussel, Lahontan cutthroat trout, yellow warbler, mountain whitefish, Tahoe sucker
- Keystone project allowing future phases of restoration within Johnson Meadow
- Water quality improvement to the Upper Truckee River, Lake Tahoe's largest tributary watershed

Priority Metrics

- Benefits Justice Communities: Yes, the project is adjacent to DAC/SDAC areas and will enhance public access and increase climate resilience.
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
- WCB Strategic Plan Target: B1.3, C1.1



Johnson Meadow Restoration

El Dorado County



Project Description

The Johnson Meadow property is a 206-acre meadow along the Upper Truckee River watershed. The Project area was degraded due to historic dairy operations as well as high flow channel downcutting and realignment. As a result, wetland function is disrupted which leads to water quality impacts, lowering of the water table, and upland encroachment into the floodplain.

The Johnson Meadow Restoration (Project) is the first phase of a larger restoration effort to reconnect the Upper Truckee River to its floodplain on the Johnson Meadow property in South Lake Tahoe. Highway 50, located on the northern border of the project area, bisects the historic floodplain and disrupts flows north towards Lake Tahoe.

The Project will construct a grade control structure and modify channel configuration to mitigate the risk of scour, erosion, and potential damage to the Highway 50 bridge as a result of channel realignment. The grade control structure allows for fish passage while safely conveying water from Johnson Meadow under the bridge in the Upper Truckee River channel. In addition to channel enhancement under the bridge, the grade control structure will improve hydrologic connectivity in the lower portion of the meadow. Project outcomes include 79 acres of restored meadow habitat, increased biodiversity and climate resilience, and will allow for future phases of restoration in Johnson Meadow.

Project activities supporting these outcomes include:

- Channel realignment and creation of side channel
- Grade control structure installation
- Bank stabilization
- Revegetation of disturbed areas
- Removal of derelict utilities from Upper Truckee River channel

Long-Term Management

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

Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Totals
Project Management	\$191,116	\$75,000	\$266,116
Restoration	\$3,654,037	\$875,000	\$4,529,037
Monitoring and Adaptive Management	\$69,447	\$70,000	\$139,447
Indirect	\$85,400	---	\$85,400
Total	\$4,000,000	\$1,020,000	\$5,020,000

Non-WCB funders include:

- Tahoe RCD - \$20,000
- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (Lake Tahoe Restoration Act) - \$1,000,000

Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Dionne Uzes, Acting Forest Supervisor - Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, U.S. Forest Service
- Elizabeth van Diepen, Engineering Geologist, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Julie W. Regan, Executive Director, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
- Jason Vasques, Executive Director, California Tahoe Conservancy
- Laura Patten, Natural Resource Director, Keep Tahoe Blue
- Amy Berry, CEO, Tahoe Fund

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA

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

State Government

- Senate: Senator Marie Alvarado-Gil, District 4
- Assembly: Assemblymember Heather Hardwick, District 1

Staff Recommendation

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

Photos



View of chaparral habitat.



View of 4-acre pond looking northeast.



View from hill above pond looking south.

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse 1400 Tenth Street, Room 113 Sacramento, CA 95814	From: Department of Fish and Wildlife Wildlife Conservation Board P.O. Box 944209 Sacramento, CA 94244-2090
County Clerk (County of): N/A	Attention: Celestial Reysner

Project Title: Knoxville Wildlife Area, Expansion 3
Project Applicant: Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)
Project Location – Specific: APN(s) 015-120-016 & 015-120-008
Project Location – City: Middletown
Project Location – County: Napa County
CEQA Region: Northern CA
Description of Nature, Purpose, and Benefits of Project: To consider the expansion of the Knoxville Wildlife Area for the protection of 436 acres to enhance management access and increase public recreation opportunities. The property is located within the highest priority wildlife corridor in the North Bay, according to the Bay Area Critical Linkages Project. This corridor runs from the Point Reyes National Seashore on the Marin coast to the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument in Napa County. WCB Project Tracker ID: 2026019.
Public Agency Approving Project: Department of Fish and Wildlife, WCB
Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out the Project: John P. Walsh, Deputy Executive Director, WCB
Exempt Status: (Check One) ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 15268): ☐ Declared Emergency [Sec. 15269 (a)]: ☐ Emergency Project [Sec. 15269 (b) and (c)]: ☒ Categorical Exemption. State Section number and type: Sec.15313, Class 13 & Sec.15325, Class 25 ☐ Statutory Exemptions, State code Number: ☐ Other:
Reasons why this project is exempt: Project involves the acquisition of an interest in land by a public agency for preservation of natural conditions existing at the time of transfer, including plant and animal habitats.

Lead Agency Contact Person: John P. Walsh
Area Code/Telephone Extension: (916) 539-8016
If filed by applicant: 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding. 2. Has a notice of exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☒ Yes, (by this notice) ☐ No
Signature: Title: Deputy Executive Director Date:
☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☐ Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21108, 21152, 21152.1, Public Resources Code	SCH #: Posted Date: Date Received for Filing at OPR:
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17. Año Nuevo Island Seabird Habitat

**Restoration
Implementation**

WCB Grant: \$2,500,000

Fund Source(s): Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (Proposition 4 – Existing Programs), Public Resources Code Section 93010 (SB 105, Sec. 94)

Grantee: Oikonos – Ecosystem Knowledge

Landowner: California Department of Parks and Recreation

Location: 5 miles southwest of Pescadero

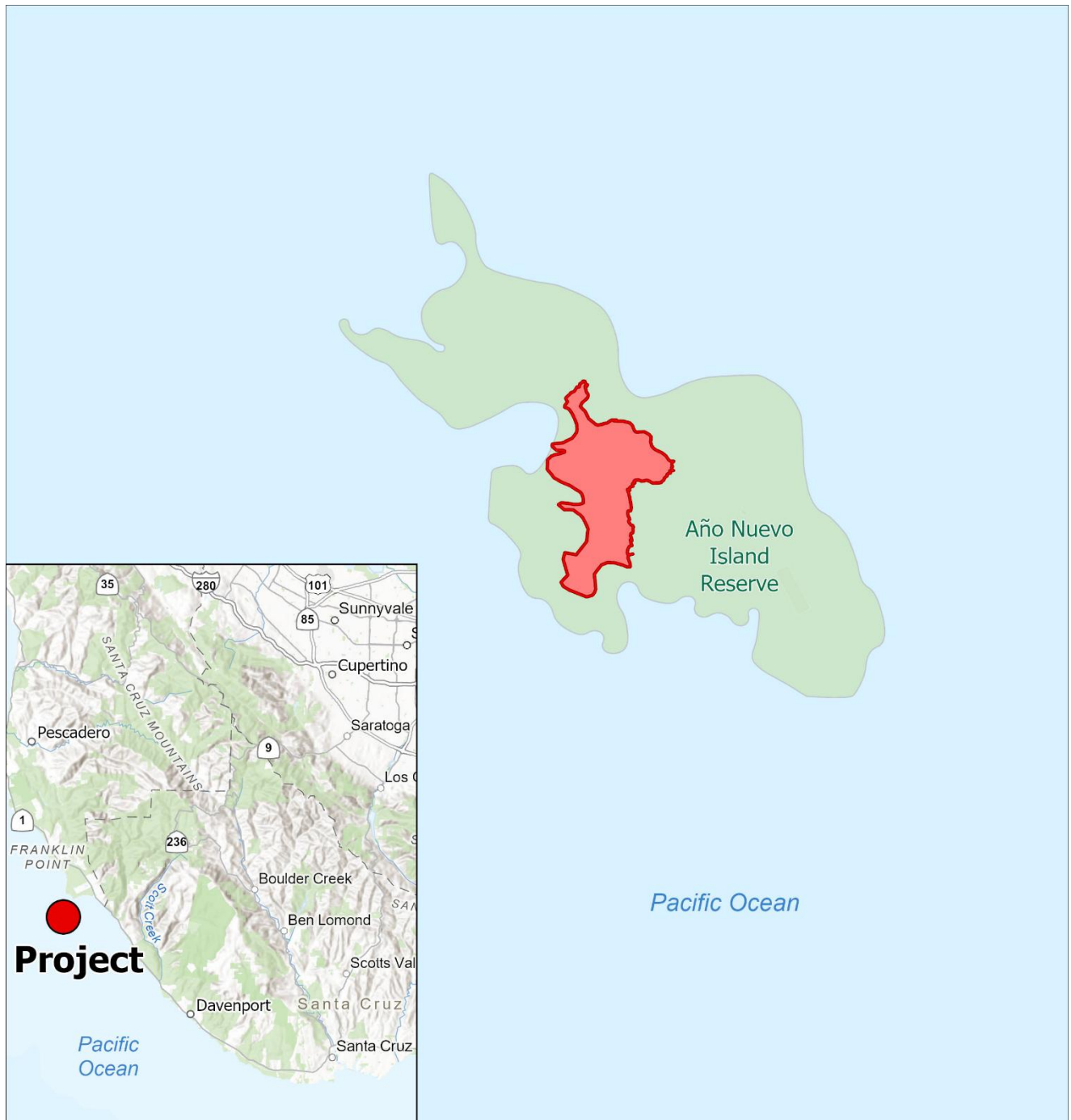
County: San Mateo County

Project Highlights

- Located on Año Nuevo Island, within Año Nuevo State Park
- Recognized as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area of Global Priority by BirdLife International
- Habitat restored: 9 acres of seabird nesting habitat
- Key bird species: Rhinoceros Auklet, Cassin's Auklet, Pigeon Guillemot, Brandt's Cormorant, Pelagic Cormorant, and Black Oystercatcher
- Key pinniped species: Northern elephant seals, California sea lions, Stellar sea lions, harbor seals
- Regional or Species Plan: California Central Coast Joint Venture, USFWS Pacific Region Seabird Conservation Plan

Priority Metrics

- Benefits Justice Communities: No
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
- WCB Strategic Plan Target: B2.1



Año Nuevo Island Seabird Habitat

San Mateo County



Project

Protected
Lands



Project Description

The Año Nuevo Island Seabird Habitat (Project) project is located on Año Nuevo Island (ANI) a rare, predator-free refuge and an important biodiversity hotspot located off the San Mateo County coast. It supports four species of pinnipeds and more than seven species of seabirds, of which at least six species breed on the island. Each year ANI hosts over 20,000 seabirds, seals and sea lions. Once a U.S. Coast Guard Lighthouse Station for 76 years, the island's habitats were heavily altered, but today it is protected within Año Nuevo State Park, designated as a State Marine Conservation Area by CDFW, recognized as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area of Global Priority by BirdLife International, and included within the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Seabirds, pinnipeds, and their prey form an interconnected system that is essential to California's coastal biodiversity.

Nesting seabirds at ANI face increasing pressure from several sources including competition for nesting space and climate-related stressors such as hotter summer nesting seasons, stronger winter storms, sea level rise, and accelerated erosion made worse by historic disturbance and dense wildlife populations. The Project will maintain a core nesting area for burrow-nesting seabirds and provide durable, temperature-buffered nesting spaces to provide lasting, climate-resilient habitat that supports the reproductive success and long-term viability of sensitive seabird populations in California by:

- Replacing 200-meters of conservation fencing to protect a one-acre core nesting area.
- Constructing and installing 75 new ceramic nests.
- Retrofitting 45 existing ceramic nests with reflective sun shields.
- Conducting drone and thermal monitoring to document seabird populations, habitat condition and infrastructure performance.
- Installing a livestreamed burrow-cam system and interpretive display at the Año Nuevo State Park, providing an ADA accessible window into burrow-nesting seabird behavior.

Long-Term Management

The California Department of Parks and Recreation has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the Project, including management of Año Nuevo Island. If at any time during the 20-year life of the Project, Grantee does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Totals
Project Management	\$939,000	\$418,000	\$1,357,000
Restoration	\$1,252,000	\$279,000	\$1,531,000
Indirect Cost	\$309,000	\$248,000	\$557,000
Total	\$2,500,000	\$945,000	\$3,445,000

Non-WCB funders include:

- Oikonos – Ecosystem Knowledge - \$650,000
- California Department of Parks and Recreation – \$60,000

- Regents of the University of California, Santa Cruz - \$80,000
- GoNative - \$155,000

Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Stan Kopacz, Supervising State Park Ranger, California State Parks, Santa Cruz District
- Connor Jandreau, Director and Partnerships Coordinator, California Central Coast Joint Venture
- Patrick W. Robinson, Ph.D., Director, Año Nuevo Reserve

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA

The California Department of Parks and Recreation, as lead agency, prepared a Notice of Exemption for the Project pursuant to the provisions of the CEQA. The Project is proposed as exempt from the CEQA pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines: Section 15301 Class 1 Existing Facilities, Section 15302 Class 2 Replacement or Reconstruction, Section 15303 Class 3 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, and Section 15304 Class 4 Minor Alterations to Land. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, as a Responsible Agency, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

State Government

- Senate: Senator Josh Becker, District 13
- Assembly: Assemblymember Marc Berman, District 23

Staff Recommendation

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



Aerial view of Año Nuevo Island



Ceramic nest module (left), Rhynoceros Auklet (right)



Stan Kopacz
California State Parks, Año Nuevo State Park
1 New Years Creek Road
Pescadero, CA 94060

November 6, 2025

Wildlife Conservation Board
715 P Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Letter of Support for the “Año Nuevo Island Seabird Habitat” Project (Oikonos)

Dear WCB Review Committee,

California State Parks, Santa Cruz District, is pleased to support Oikonos’ “Año Nuevo Island Seabird Habitat” implementation proposal at Año Nuevo State Park (ANSP). The project advances our mission to preserve California’s extraordinary biological diversity, protect natural and cultural resources, and provide education and meaningful public engagement. ANSP has a trusted relationship with Oikonos after working with the project leaders for several decades. Continuously since 2006, we have renewed Oikonos’ annual permit to help conserve the seabird populations at ANSP.

Project Alignment with State Parks Goals

Año Nuevo Island is part of a designated Natural Preserve within the State Park and supports dense colonies of seabirds and pinnipeds. Additionally, it is a University of California Natural Reserve. The proposed work to rebuild the conservation fence, install 75 climate-resilient ceramic nests, and implement drone-based and thermal monitoring will safeguard key nesting habitat, minimize disturbance, and provide measurable benefits for seabird Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

The project also includes livestream educational components that will allow the public to observe burrow-nesting seabirds in real time. This aligns with State Parks’ priorities to expand inclusive, ADA-accessible interpretive opportunities while reducing human impact on sensitive wildlife areas.

In-Kind Cost Share (California State Parks, Santa Cruz District)

Subject to available resources and standard procedures, the Santa Cruz District anticipates providing in-kind support to facilitate project implementation from 2026 – 2030 and continued maintenance, including:

- Staff time for environmental compliance, permitting coordination, and Tribal liaison engagement through State Parks channels.

- Coordination of interpretive elements and integration of project materials into public education programs.
- Maintenance of access roads and trails to facilitate transport of materials and personnel during project implementation.
- Emergency support for boat operations.
- Temporary storage or staging space at Año Nuevo mainland facilities for materials, ceramic nests, or fencing sections.
- Participation in post-implementation monitoring or adaptive management meetings.

We encourage the Wildlife Conservation Board to fund this well-designed project that protects biodiversity, builds climate resilience, and enhances public understanding of California's coastal ecosystems at Año Nuevo State Park.

Sincerely,



Stan Kopacz
Supervising State Park Ranger
California State Parks, Santa Cruz District

cc: Portia Halbert, Natural Resources Program Manager, California State Parks, Santa Cruz District



California Central Coast Joint Venture
Connor Jandreau
Director and Partnerships Coordinator
60051 Martin St
San Ardo, CA 93450



Wildlife Conservation Board
715 P Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Letter of Support for the “Año Nuevo Island Seabird Habitat” Initiative:

Dear Review Committee of the Wildlife Conservation Board,

On behalf of the California Central Coast Joint Venture (C3JV), I write to express our strong support for the proposal titled the “*Año Nuevo Island Seabird Habitat*” initiative being advanced by Oikonos to the Wildlife Conservation Board. This timely and well-founded project embodies the mission, principles, and conservation priorities of the C3JV and will provide critical benefits to California’s coastal biodiversity and conservation community.

This initiative proposes to restore and protect vital nesting habitat for seven seabird Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) — including Rhinoceros Auklet, Cassin’s Auklet, Pigeon Guillemot, Pelagic and Brandt’s Cormorants, Black Oystercatcher, and Brown Pelican — on Año Nuevo Island, a globally recognized Important Bird Area located within a State Marine Conservation Area on California’s Central Coast. As C3JV focal species, this project has strong alignment within our Coastal and Marine Conservation Target and broader regional objectives.

Oikonos has developed a proven, integrated strategy to address some of the most immediate threats facing island-nesting seabirds: competition for nesting space, human and pinniped disturbance, and the escalating impacts of climate change. Their plan to install 75 upgraded ceramic nests, rebuild a 200-meter conservation fence to reduce sea lion encroachment, and employ cutting-edge drone imaging to assess seabird occupancy exemplifies a model of innovative, science-driven conservation with long-term impact.

We are especially encouraged by the project’s clear alignment with the C3JV’s Implementation Plan and guiding principles, including:

- **Integration of Diverse Knowledge and Adaptive Science:** The project incorporates advanced technologies (e.g., thermal imaging, microclimate sensors, and COSMOS climate modeling) and local ecological insight to inform site design and adaptive restoration.

- **Cross-Jurisdictional and Flyway-Scale Collaboration:** This work supports national and international seabird conservation goals across the Pacific Flyway and builds on decades of interagency partnerships with California State Parks and the UC Natural Reserve System.
- **Equity and Workforce Development:** The project's paid internships for students from underrepresented communities reflect our core principle that ecological restoration must also foster social equity and opportunity, and contributes to our benchmark goal of generating at least 25 new livelihoods through coastal stewardship by 2035.
- **Multi-Benefit Outcomes in Socio-Ecological Systems:** This effort simultaneously addresses biodiversity protection, climate resilience, environmental education, and equity—hallmarks of multi-benefit conservation championed by the C3JV.

This initiative will directly advance our the C3JV's Coastal and Marine Conservation Target Benchmark Goals by enhancing protected habitat conditions and contributing to the stabilization and potential recovery of key focal seabird populations. The proposed improvements also build long-term resilience into the system—providing a scalable model of seabird restoration applicable to other critical island habitats across the Pacific.

In addition, the project's use of real-time public livestreams at Año Nuevo State Park will expand public engagement and stewardship of marine resources. The team's commitment to Tribal coordination through California State Parks ensures that this work is carried out with care, cultural sensitivity, and respect for Indigenous stewardship, consistent with the C3JV's acknowledgement of conservation's historical injustices and our commitment to equity, justice, and Indigenous-led restoration.

In closing, the *Año Nuevo Island Seabird Habitat* initiative is a strong example of forward-thinking conservation that embodies the values, goals, and strategic priorities of the California Central Coast Joint Venture. We urge the Wildlife Conservation Board to fully support this project and the vital work of Oikonos to ensure a resilient future for seabirds and marine ecosystems on California's central coast.

Sincerely,



Connor Jandreau

Director and Partnerships Coordinator
California Central Coast Joint Venture
cjandreau@abcbirds.org | 5054703745



04 November 2025

Wildlife Conservation Board
715 P Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Members of the Wildlife Conservation Board,

On behalf of UC Santa Cruz's Año Nuevo Reserve, I am pleased to express strong support for Oikonos Ecosystem Knowledge's "Año Nuevo Island Seabird Habitat" implementation proposal. This effort directly advances the UC Natural Reserve System's mission to foster research, education, and public service at protected natural areas across California.

Project Alignment with the Reserve's Mission

Año Nuevo Reserve provides a rare opportunity for long-term, low-disturbance ecological research in collaboration with California State Parks. Oikonos' proposal to replace the 200-meter conservation fence, install 75 durable ceramic nests, and apply remote monitoring technologies such as drones, thermal imaging, and machine learning aligns with the Reserve's priorities for science-driven habitat protection and innovation in wildlife monitoring and will provide synergistic benefits to existing projects. Specifically, these activities will enhance habitat resilience, strengthen data continuity for ongoing seabird and pinniped studies, and expand opportunities for UC students and researchers to engage in applied conservation science.

In-Kind Cost Share (UCNRS / UCSC Año Nuevo Island Reserve)

Año Nuevo Reserve anticipates contributing in-kind support to facilitate implementation of the proposed project whenever possible, including:

- Coordination of research access, scheduling, and on-site orientations.
- Support for field logistics and use of Reserve staging areas, equipment, and facilities as appropriate.
- Integration with ongoing academic and student research aligned with UCNRS educational and data-collection goals.
- Support for transportation logistics, including coordination of carpooling, site access, and shared boat operations when needed to facilitate efficient field mobilization.



We strongly urge the Wildlife Conservation Board to fund this forward-looking, science-based project that enhances seabird habitat resilience while advancing the UC Natural Reserve System's educational and research mission at Año Nuevo Island.

Thank you,



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Patrick W. Robinson".

Patrick W. Robinson, Ph.D.
Director, Año Nuevo Reserve
115 McAllister Way
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Voice: 831.708.8094
E-mail: patrick.robinson@ucsc.edu

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse 1400 Tenth Street, Room 113 Sacramento, CA 95814	From: Department of Fish and Wildlife Wildlife Conservation Board P.O. Box 944209 Sacramento, CA 94244-2090	
County Clerk (County of): San Mateo	Contact: James Croft Phone: 916-926-7523 Lead Agency: Department of Parks and Recreation Contact: Linda Hitchcock, Santa Cruz District Phone: 831-227-8390	
State Clearinghouse Number (if submitted by State Clearinghouse) 2026070159		
Project Title: Año Nuevo Island Climate-Resilient Seabird Habitat		
Project Location: Año Nuevo State Park		
Project City: 21 miles north of Santa Cruz	Project County: San Mateo	
CEQA Region: N. CA		
Project Description: Project consists of maintaining and expanding seabird nesting habitats through two integrated activities at Año Nuevo State Park to protect burrow and ground-nesting seabirds from habitat disturbance caused by California Sea Lions. The project will construct a redwood fence in the same footprint to protect nesting habitat. Fence design and location will be similar to existing fencing and will maintain a low visual and ecological impact. The project will install 75 durable ceramic nest modules above-ground in strategic locations informed by erosion risk. The modules are manufactured from non-toxic materials, and designed for minimal maintenance, with an expected service life of 50+ years. Additionally, 45 existing ceramic nests will be retrofitted with ceramic sunshields to facilitate above-ground placement. WCB Project Tracker ID: 2025093.		
This is to advise that the Wildlife Conservation Board has approved the above-described project on 8/27/26 and has made the following determinations regarding the above-described project. ☐ Lead Agency☒ Responsible Agency		
Exempt Status: (Check One) ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 15268): ☐ Declared Emergency [Sec. 15269 (b) and (c)]: ☐ Emergency Project [Sec. 15269 (b) and (c)]: ☒ Categorical Exemption, State Section Number and type: 15301 Class 1, 15302 Class 2, 15303 Class 3, & 15304 Class 4 ☐ Statutory Exemptions, State Code Number and type: ☐ Other:		
Reasons why project is exempt: Project consists of the operation, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond current levels; replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced; construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures, included a tion or installation of park facilities such as fencing and gates" in the Department of Parks and Recreation's list of exempt activities in accordance with CCR 300.4; and minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes.		
If filed by applicant: 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding. 2. Has a notice of exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☒ Yes (by this notice)☐ No		
Signature:	Title: Deputy Executive Director	Date:
SCH#: 2026070159		Posted Date: Date Received for Filing at OPR:

ec: WCB Project Tracker
WCB Board Meeting Folder

18. Mojave Reserve

Acquisition

Fee

WCB Grant: \$7,500,000

Fund Source(s): Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)

Grantee: Mojave Desert Land Trust (MDLT)

Location: 8 miles east of the community of Yucca Grove

County: San Bernardino

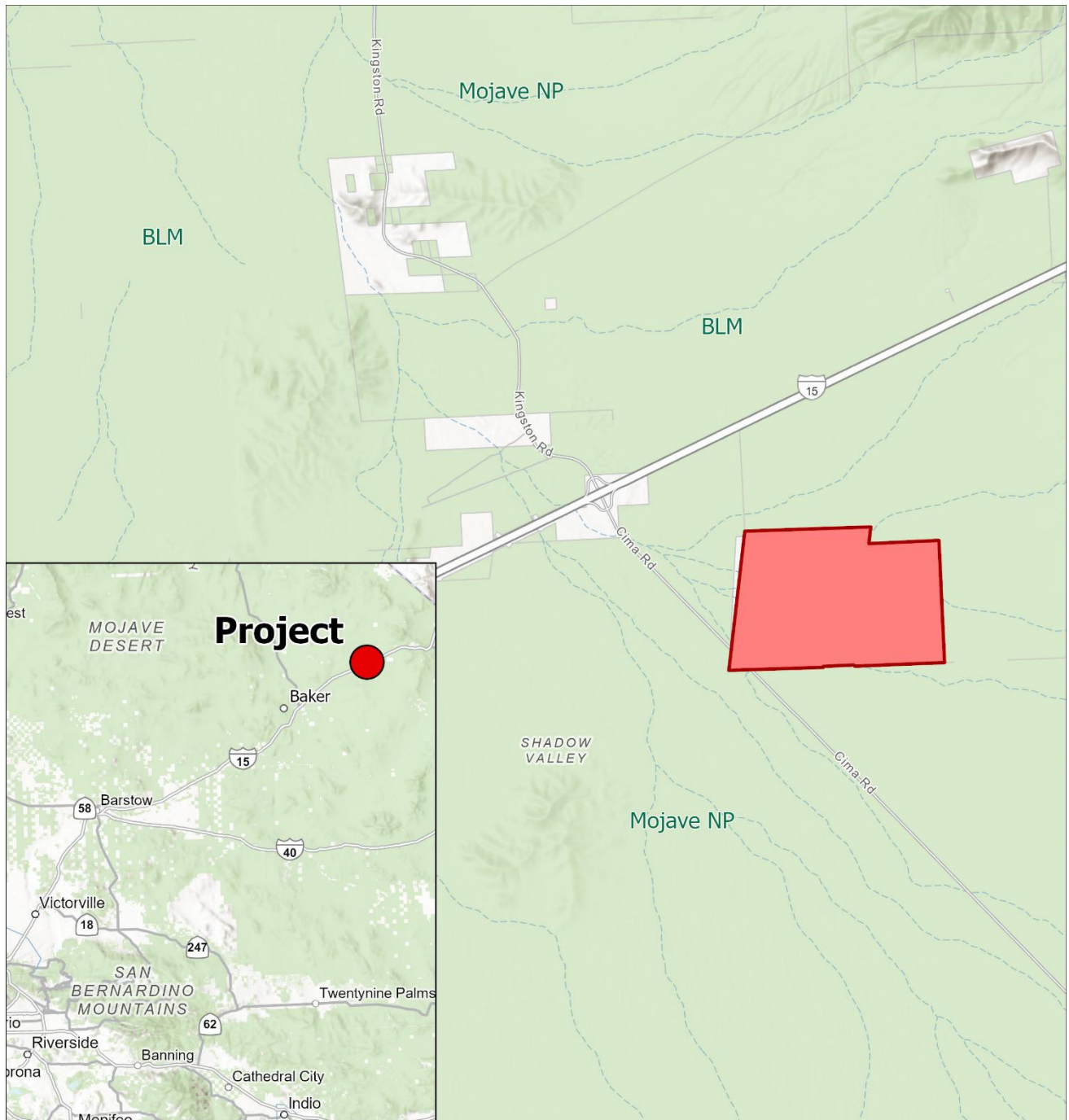
Acres: 1,093± (Property)

Property Highlights

- Privately owned and developable inholding within the vast Mojave National Preserve
- Key species: Mojave desert tortoise
- Habitats represented: creosote bush scrub, Joshua tree woodland, Madrean warm semi-desert wash woodland/scrub
- Located within the Ivanpah Critical Habitat Unit of the Eastern Mojave Recovery Unit for the Mojave Desert Tortoise
- Regional or Species Plan: Recovery Plan for the Mojave Population of the Desert Tortoise (USFWS 2011 & 2022), State Wildlife Action Plan (CDFW 2025)

Priority Metrics

- Benefits Justice Communities: Yes, Property is in a SDAC.
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 2, Execute Strategic Acquisitions
- WCB Strategic Plan Target: B2.1, C1.1, C2.2, P2.1
- Public Access: Yes, the undeveloped portion of the Property will be open to the public for passive recreation, similar to the Mojave National Preserve that surrounds it.



Mojave Reserve

San Bernardino County



Project

Protected
Lands



Long-Term Management

MDLT will develop and implement a comprehensive land management plan with a focus on the conservation and recovery of the Mojave desert tortoise and other sensitive species. Post-acquisition activities will include a use assessment and potential removal of existing structures and non-native trees.

Project Funding

The Department of General Services' approved fair market value is \$7,500,000. The proposed funding breakdown is as follows:

Partners	Amount
WCB	\$7,500,000
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$7,500,000

Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Raymond McPadden, Superintendent, Mojave National Preserve - National Park Service
- Inland Desert Working Group (multiple organizations), Power in Nature

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA

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

State Government

- Senate: Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh, District 19
- Assembly: Assemblymember Tom Lackey, District 34

Staff Recommendation

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



The Property's natural habitat features Eastern Joshua tree, Mojave yucca, creosote, and white bursage plant communities.



Northwest-facing view from within the central portion of the Property.



IN REPLY REFER TO:
1.A.2 (MOJA)

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Mojave National Preserve
2701 Barstow Rd.
Barstow, CA 92311



Dr. Jennifer Norris
Executive Director
Wildlife Conservation Board
715 P Street, 17th Floor, Sacramento, 95814

RE: Support for Acquisition Grant funding of critical desert tortoise habitat

Dear Director Norris:

I am writing on behalf of Mojave National Preserve to express our strong support for the acquisition and permanent protection of 1,092 acres of desert habitat and a key inholding within Mojave National Preserve. Once acquired, this property will be stewarded in perpetuity for the conservation of the desert tortoise and all endemic species on these lands.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service and the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife have identified this property as very important for desert tortoise protection and recovery of the species, and the National Park Service has recognized this property as a significant inholding with concerning development potential. Biological surveys of the property revealed a very high concentration of desert tortoise presence as well as important rare plants.

Thank you for your consideration of this major acquisition project.

Sincerely,

RAYMOND
MCPADDEN

Digitally signed by
RAYMOND
MCPADDEN
Date: 2025.08.01
08:24:21 -07'00'

Raymond McPadden
Superintendent

December 2, 2025

Dr. Jennifer Norris
Executive Director
Wildlife Conservation Board
715 P Street, 17th Floor,
Sacramento, 95814

Re: Letter of Support for Acquisition Grant funding of critical desert tortoise habitat

We, the undersigned organizations of the Power in Nature coalition- Inland Desert Regional Working Group, are writing to express our support express our strong support for the acquisition and permanent protection of 1,092 acres of desert habitat and a key inholding within Mojave National Preserve. Once acquired, this property will be stewarded in perpetuity for the conservation of the desert tortoise and all endemic species on these lands.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service and the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife have identified this property as very important for desert tortoise protection and recovery of the species, and the National Park Service has recognized this property as a significant inholding with concerning development potential. Biological surveys of the property revealed a very high concentration of desert tortoise presence as well as important rare plants.

The acquisition of this priority habitat contributes to the land and biodiversity protection goals of California's 30x30 efforts. Beyond increasing the total acreage of protected lands, this acquisition will also provide connectivity for wildlife between already-protected 30x30 lands.

Thank you for your consideration of this major acquisition project.

Sincerely,

The Following Undersigned Organizations of the Power in Nature Coalition, Inland Desert Working Group:



Sendy Hernández Orellana Barrows
CoFounder/President
CactusToCloud Institute

Ileene Anderson
Senior Scientist/CA Deserts Director
Center for Biological Diversity

Jora Fogg
CA Associate Director
Conservation Lands Foundation

Aydee Rodriguez
Environmental Justice Campaign Project
Manager
Alianza Coachella Valley

Steve Bardwell
President
Morongo Basin Conservation Association

Sam Easley
Executive Director
Transition Habitat Conservancy

Robert T. Przeklasa
Executive Director
Native American Land Conservancy

Chance Wilcox
California Desert Program Manager
National Parks Conservation Association

Josefina Barrantes
30x30 Coordinator
EPIC (Environmental Protection
Information Center)

James André
Director
University of California Riverside

Linda Castro
Assistant Policy Director
CalWild

Tammy Martin
Executive Director
Friends of the Desert Mountains

Wendy Schneider
Executive Director
Friends of the Inyo

Arch McCulloch
President
California Native Plants Society Mojave
Desert Chapter

Miguel Miguel
Director
Sierra Club California

Jessica Martinez
Director of Programs and Development
Council of Mexican Federations (COFEM)





Transition Habitat
CONSERVANCY



NATIVE AMERICAN
LAND CONSERVANCY



CALWILD



Friends of the
Desert Mountains



SIERRA
CLUB

CALIFORNIA



CactusToCloud
Institute



MOJAVE DESERT CHAPTER
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

C3FEM CONSEJO DE
FEDERACIONES
MEXICANAS®



Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse 1400 Tenth Street, Room 113 Sacramento, CA 95814	From: Department of Fish and Wildlife Wildlife Conservation Board P.O. Box 944209 Sacramento, CA 99244-2090
County Clerk (County of): N/A	Attention: Kim Cruz

Project Title: Mojave Reserve

Project Applicant: Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)

Project Location – Specific: APN(s)

0572-031-07, 0572-031-09, 0572-031-10, 0572-031-16 and 0572-051-06

Project Location – City:

Project Location – County: San Bernardino

CEQA Region: S. CA

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Benefits of Project:

The allocation for a Wildlife Conservation Board grant to the Mojave Desert Land Trust to acquire 1,093± acres of land for the protection of Mojave desert tortoise habitat, and provide future wildlife-oriented public use opportunities. Located 8 miles east of the community of Yucca Grove in San Bernardino County. WCB Project Tracker ID: 2025136.

Public Agency Approving Project: Department of Fish and Wildlife, WCB

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out the Project: John P. Walsh, Deputy Executive Director, WCB

Exempt Status: (Check One)

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 15268):
☐ Declared Emergency [Sec. 15269 (a)]:
☐ Emergency Project [Sec. 15269 (b) and (c)]:
☒ Categorical Exemption. State Section number and type: Sec.15313, Class 13 & Sec.15325, Class 25
☐ Statutory Exemptions, State code Number:
☐ Other:

Reasons why this project is exempt:

Project involves the transfer of an ownership interest in land for conservation purposes and to preserve open space and habitat, including plant or animal habitats. The Project is also an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes

Lead Agency Contact Person: John P. Walsh

Area Code/Telephone Extension: (916) 539-8016

If filed by applicant: 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a notice of exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☒ Yes, (by this notice) ☐ No

Signature:

Title: Deputy Executive Director

Date:

☒ Signed by Lead Agency

☐ Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Section 21108, 21152, 21152.1, Public Resources Code

SCH #:

Posted Date:

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

19. Santa Clara River Middle Reach Restoration

**Restoration
Implementation**

WCB Grant: \$2,018,000

Fund Source(s): Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f)

Grantee: Santa Clara River Conservancy

Landowner: Private Landowner

Location: 0.5 mile south of Santa Paula

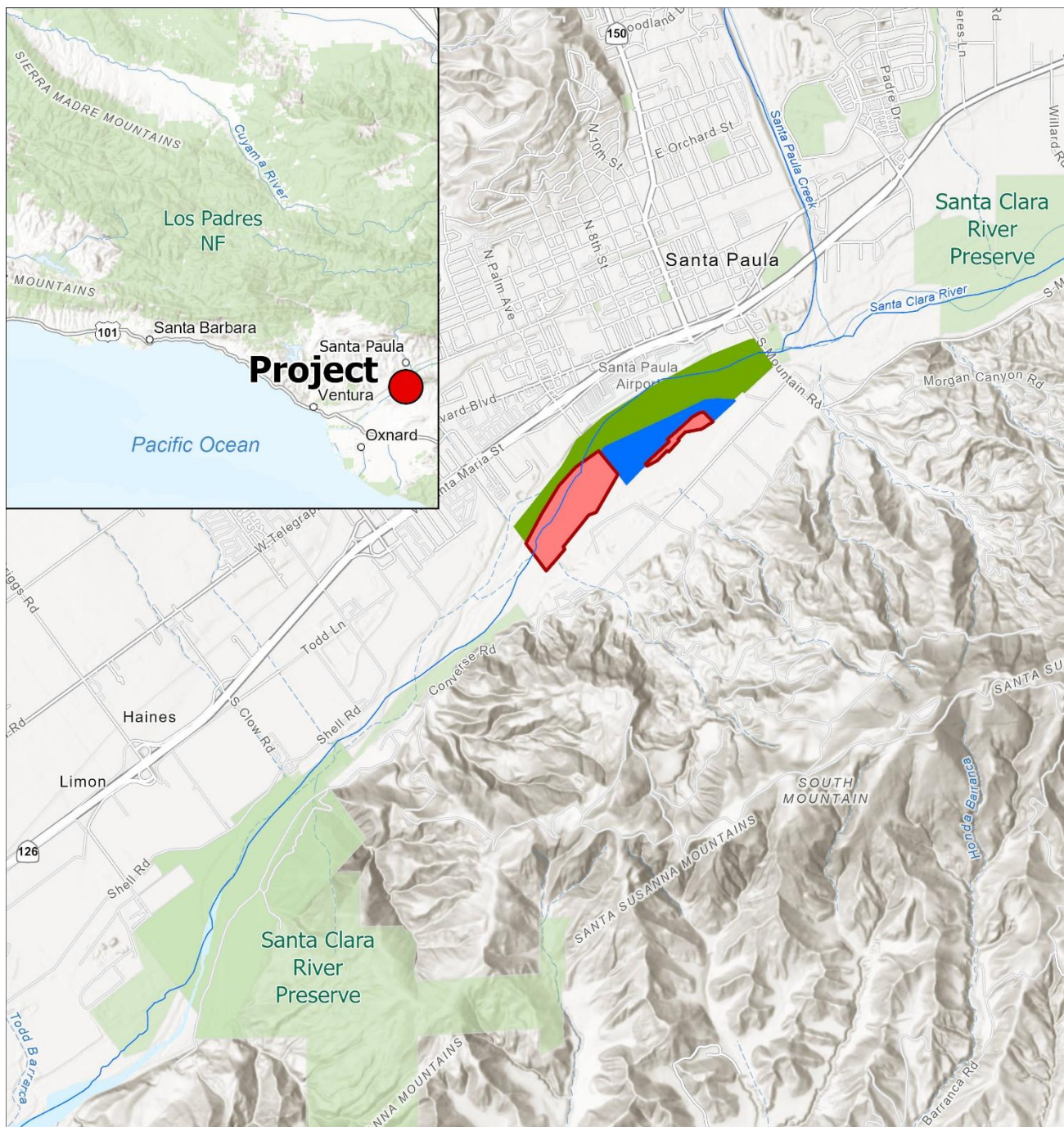
County: Ventura

Project Highlights

- The restored habitat will provide a key linkage in the middle of 700 acres that were restored upstream and downstream as part of the Santa Clara River Restoration Program
- Habitats restored: 4 acres of riparian forest and 66 acres of riparian scrub/woodland, with enhancement of topographic depressions that have the potential to support vernal pool habitat
- Key species: least Bell's vireo (LBVI), southwestern willow flycatcher (SWWF), monarch butterfly, special status reptiles
- Species Plan: LBVI Recovery Plan (USFWS 1998) and SWWF Recovery Plan (Finch, et al. 2002)

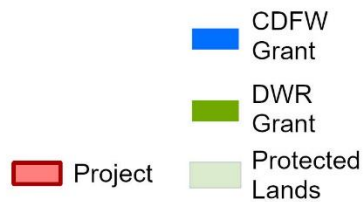
Priority Metrics

- Benefits Justice Communities: Yes, project is adjacent to a DAC and SDAC. and will increase resilience to climate, fire, and flood threats by removing highly flammable invasive species and improving flood conveyance and groundwater recharge.
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship; Pathway 8, Align Investments to Maximize Conservation Benefits
- WCB Strategic Plan Target: B1.1, 2.1, 2.2; C1.3, 2.1



Santa Clara River Middle Reach Restoration

Ventura County



Project Description

The Santa Clara River Middle Reach Restoration (Project) site has a long history of human use and degradation: a portion of the Project area is a former golf course and other areas were intensively farmed as orchards and row crops. These past land uses introduced non-native species, altered the natural landform and hydrology, and degraded the riparian landscape. More recently, the site experienced repeated fires, reducing the regenerative capacity of the native plants on site. The Project will implement habitat restoration activities that increase biodiversity and climate resiliency, enhance an important wildlife dispersal corridor, connect a mosaic of habitat types across the 220-acre project site, and monitor ecosystem responses by:

- Collecting baseline data and site assessments to inform final restoration design
- Preparing the site for planting by significantly reducing invasive plant cover using integrated pest management practices (see herbicide questionnaire) and removing trash, debris, and man-made berms that alter drainage patterns
- Collecting native seeds and propagules from the watershed to curate a climate adapted plant palette, and planting this material along with purchased container stock
- Watering installed plants and hand weeding, which will be supported by local high school students and community groups
- Conducting annual monitoring to track project performance and response to restoration, including groundwater levels, vegetation cover, richness and height, and avian richness and density

Long-Term Management

The Santa Clara River Conservancy has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the Project, including management of the restored property. If at any time during the 20-year life of the Project, Grantee does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Totals
Project Management	\$121,923	\$75,335	\$197,258
Habitat Restoration	\$1,162,994	\$506,032	\$1,669,026
Maintenance and Monitoring	\$610,083	\$170,108	\$780,191
Indirect	\$123,000	---	\$123,000
Total	\$2,018,000	\$751,475	\$2,769,475

Non-WCB funders include:

- Santa Clara River Conservancy - \$203,742
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife - \$447,733
- California Department of Water Resources - \$100,000

Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Assemblymember Steve Bennett, 38th District, State Assembly
- Supervisor Kelly Long, 3rd District, Ventura County Board of Supervisors
- Alyssa Gomez, Restoration Project Associate, The Nature Conservancy

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA

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

State Government

- Senate: Senator Steve Bennett, District 38
- Assembly: Assemblymember Monique Limon, District 21

Staff Recommendation

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

Herbicide use questionnaire

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

The project site consists primarily of degraded riparian scrub habitat, with some riparian forest and seasonal wetland components. Vegetation is dominated by non-native annual and perennial invasive plant species, with invasive cover estimated at approximately 60–90% across much of the site. Invasive species occur both in dense monocultures and in mixed communities with remnant native vegetation.

Dominant non-native annual species include red and ripgut brome (*Bromus* spp.), short-pod mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), and poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*). Common non-native perennial species include white sweet clover (*Melilotus albus*), perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*), tamarisk (*Tamarix* spp.), castor bean (*Ricinus communis*), eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* spp.), and ornamental palms. Remnant patches of giant reed (*Arundo donax*) are present at low densities following prior treatment.

Native vegetation occurs primarily as scattered individuals or small patches and includes riparian scrub and forest species such as willows (*Salix* spp.), Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), big saltbush (*Atriplex lentiformis*), sages (*Salvia* spp.) and other native shrubs and herbaceous species typical of southern California riparian systems. While native species richness remains relatively high, native cover is suppressed by competition from invasive plants and recurrent fire. California black walnut (*Juglans californica*) is the only rare or sensitive plant species confirmed to occur at this site. Other rare and sensitive plant species including white cudweed (*Pseudognaphalium leucocephalum*), Leopold's rush (*Juncus acutus* ssp. *leopoldii*) have potential to occur at this site.

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

In combination with manual and mechanical removal methods, an array of chemical herbicide application techniques will be implemented to effectively control non-native invasive plant species. Manual and mechanical removal methods will be used wherever possible. Herbicide applications will be targeted and selective, always following best management practices and integrated pest management to reduce herbicide use and minimize risk of non-target effects.

Quest – Spray adjuvant and water-conditioning agent that lowers pH level. Water at project sites, and in Southern California in general, is often basic (high pH or hard water) due to mineral content. Quest is used to neutralize water prior to herbicide application. For effective foliar spray application. Quest is added to foliar spray tank mixtures at a rate of 1.5 oz per gallon.

Agri-dex – Non-ionic spray surfactant and paraffin-based petroleum oil that improves herbicide penetration through plant cuticles. For effective foliar spray application, Agri-dex is added to foliar spray tank mixtures at a rate of 1-1.5oz per gallon.

Blue dye – Blue marker is added to herbicide mix so that the applicator can visualize where herbicide is sprayed. This helps reduce herbicide use by avoiding over-application, re-application, and drift.

Aquamaster – Broad-spectrum herbicide with glyphosate as the active ingredient. Approved for use in aquatic environments. Aquamaster is used in areas where manual methods are impractical because of the extent of the weed population or because native plants are present. It is also used when planting of natives will occur soon after application because of its short soil residence time (24 hours). For effective foliar spray application, Aquamaster is added to foliar spray tank mixtures at a rate of 1-3%. Aquamaster can also be used in its concentrated form (50-100%) to treat woody weed species like tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*) and castor bean (*Ricinus communis*) using the cut stump method.

Chlorsulfuron 75 – Herbicide with chlorsulfuron as the active ingredient, primarily used to control broadleaf weeds such as perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*) during the bolting growth phase. Chlorsulfuron is the only effective product for eliminating perennial pepperweed, but has a soil residual of several months. Not approved for use in aquatic environments. Chlorsulfuron is added to foliar spray tank mixtures at 1gram per gallon.

Fusilade II – Grass-specific herbicide with fluazifop-P-butyl as the active ingredient. Used to treat bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), red brome (*Bromus madritensis*), and annual grasses where tarping and other manual or mechanical methods are ineffective. Not approved for use in aquatic environments. Fusilade is added to foliar spray tank mixtures at 0.4-0.6 oz per gallon.

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

Yes, additional herbicides have been considered and are being used for the project, such as imazapyr, chlorsulfuron, fluazifop, and triclopyr. In the case of imazapyr, which is used similarly to glyphosate to treat grasses and broadleaf weeds, the chemical has a long residual lifespan in the soil to deter future plant germination. Imazapyr damage has been observed on native vegetation (sometimes years later) in areas where planting occurred post-application. Additionally, many of the specialized herbicides used to treat grasses and broadleaf plants (Fusilade and Chlorsulfuron) are not approved for use in aquatic areas. Subsequently, glyphosate is a necessary tool to treat annual and broadleaf weeds in areas where planting will occur. Effective weed treatment in these areas is essential to prevent increased competition from non-native species and to ensure the survivorship of native plantings used for restoration.

If your project includes the use of a glyphosate product, have safer formulations (i.e. those registered for aquatic applications) or alternative herbicides been considered to reduce the potential for non-target environmental impacts? Please provide justification for the formulations and tank mixes selected as the preferred approach.

Only aquatically approved formulations of glyphosate are utilized for this project, and all tank mixes are carefully calibrated to apply the lowest effective concentrations necessary for the treatment of target non-native species. Herbicide selection prioritizes the safest available formulations, and applications are conducted with deliberate consideration of site-specific

environmental conditions to minimize potential impacts to non-target species and surrounding habitats.

If adjuvant(s) will be used in this project, are safer products that do not contain nonylphenol (often listed as “alkylphenol ethoxylate” on labels) being used to reduce the potential for non-target environmental impacts?

No adjuvants used for this project contain nonylphenol (alkylphenol ethoxylate) and are all approved for aquatic use.

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

Additional non-chemical methods proposed for controlling target invasive weeds at the project site include flame-weeding (when weather conditions allow), mechanical mowing, mulching, hand-pulling, and hand-hoeing or tilling. Flame-weeding and mechanical mowing result in minimal soil disturbance and are not anticipated to cause substantial water quality impacts; however, these methods may result in incidental effects to adjacent non-target vegetation and may cause temporary disturbance or mortality to nearby pollinators and other wildlife.

Hand-pulling and hand-hoeing result in localized soil disturbance, which may expose buried non-native seed banks and could contribute to soil runoff and associated water quality concerns. These methods may also adversely affect sensitive biological soil crusts present in dryland ecosystems, including Southern California river systems. In addition, hand-pulling and hand-hoeing may cause direct physical disturbance to pollinators and other wildlife associated with targeted vegetation and may disturb ground-dwelling insects or small mammals.

Mulching is an effective method for suppressing weed germination, particularly around the base of newly installed plantings, and is associated with minimal environmental impacts. However, obtaining sufficient quantities of clean mulch for a project of this scale may be logistically challenging. Certain non-chemical control methods that rely on gasoline-powered equipment (e.g., mechanical mowing and mulch production) would also generate emissions that contribute to greenhouse gas production.

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

Herbicide application methods proposed for use at the project site include cut-and-daub or cut-and-spray, foliar spray, bend-and-spray, drill-and-fill, and spot-spray techniques. When implemented using best management practices, these methods are not anticipated to result in measurable water quality degradation or substantial impacts to non-target vegetation, pollinators, or other wildlife. All herbicide applications will be conducted in a deliberate and controlled manner, using highly targeted techniques to minimize the potential for off-site movement or non-target exposure. If conditions arise that could result in unintended impacts—such as herbicide drift affecting non-target species or potential disturbance to nearby wildlife—application activities will be suspended and reassessed prior to resuming work.

All herbicide application will be overseen by staff who possess California Qualified Applicator Licenses. Field personnel responsible for applying herbicides and monitoring contractor activities have degrees in biology and are trained in resource protection, plant identification, and wildlife monitoring. Surveys are conducted before and during treatment activities to identify sensitive biological resources and best management practices that can be applied to avoid impacts to native vegetation and wildlife.

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

Relying solely on non-chemical methods to manage invasive weeds at the project site is not feasible. Many of the target species—such as giant reed and red brome—cannot be fully controlled or eradicated through non-chemical approaches alone. These species are already widespread, reproduce readily through seed or rhizome, and often reach large sizes, making complete mechanical removal impractical. Exclusive use of non-chemical methods would result in ongoing maintenance needs and substantial ecological and financial costs. Perennial pepperweed, in particular, is difficult to control due to its extensive underground rhizome network and seed production. Attempting to remove all roots mechanically would cause significant environmental disturbance and is unlikely to fully eradicate the plant. Herbicide treatments, however, can be translocated from the leaves to the roots, effectively targeting and killing the entire plant.

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

A total cost estimate for the project using only non-chemical removal methods would range between \$5,000,000-\$7,000,000. A strictly non-chemical approach for the removal and management of invasive species at this project site would not be realistically possible due to the size of the project site and the extent of weed populations. The continued long-term management costs, level of disturbance of mechanical methods, and cost for additional personal and subsequent contracting would be prohibitive.

For California Department of Fish and Wildlife owned/managed properties only:
Have you worked with CDFW's Pest Control Advisor to develop an integrated pest management plan that uses the safest and most effective herbicide formulation(s) and application method(s) for your project?

Not applicable. This project is not located on California Department of Fish and Wildlife owned or managed lands



Native trees killed by a weed-fueled fire in June 2025



Native shrubs in a field of annual weeds

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0038
(916) 319-2038
FAX (916) 319-2138

DISTRICT OFFICE
300 E. ESPLANADE DRIVE, SUITE 1790
OXNARD, CA 93036
(805) 485-4745
FAX (805) 485-4779

E-MAIL
Assemblymember.Bennett@assembly.ca.gov



COMMITTEES
CHAIR: BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 4 ON
CLIMATE CRISIS, RESOURCES, ENERGY,
AND TRANSPORTATION
BUDGET
ELECTIONS
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
WATER, PARKS AND WILDLIFE

January 16, 2026

Wildlife Conservation Board
California Natural Resources Agency

**RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR SANTA CLARA RIVER HABITAT RESTORATION
PROJECT – SANTA PAULA, CALIFORNIA**

Dear Chair and Members of the Wildlife Conservation Board,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Santa Clara River Conservancy's proposed riparian habitat restoration project on The Nature Conservancy's Prairie Pacific/Banman Property along the Santa Clara River in Santa Paula, California.

This project will deliver significant, measurable, and critically needed ecological and community benefits for Santa Paula and surrounding disadvantaged communities within the 38th Assembly District. The Santa Clara River is a vital natural resource for the region, supporting groundwater recharge, wildlife habitat, and biodiversity, while contributing to the environmental and economic well-being of communities that depend on it. Restoration of this site—one of the largest groundwater-dependent ecosystems in the watershed—will enhance ecosystem resilience, support native species, and improve the landscape's ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change, including increased drought, extreme heat, and altered hydrology.

I commend the Santa Clara River Conservancy for its proven track record of restoring more than 1,000 acres of riparian habitat throughout the watershed in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, the University of California at Santa Barbara, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The proposed restoration of 110 acres on this property builds upon these successful collaborative efforts, and I am encouraged by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's existing funding commitment to restore a portion of the site not included in this proposal.

In addition to its habitat benefits, project partners are exploring opportunities to support public education related to riparian ecology and biodiversity, watershed function, and the importance of habitat restoration. These efforts would help foster greater community awareness and stewardship while reinforcing the ecological significance of the Santa Clara River.

For these reasons, I strongly support the Santa Clara River Conservancy's request for funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board and appreciate your consideration of this important project, which advances California's goals for biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation, and long-term community resilience. If you have any questions, please reach out to Michelle Sevilla at Michelle.Sevilla@am.ca.gov, or by calling (805) 485-4745.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Steve Bennett' in a cursive script.

Assemblymember Steve Bennett
38th Assembly District



COUNTY of VENTURA

Board of Supervisors

**SUPERVISOR
KELLY LONG**
Third District

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

JEFF GORELL, CHAIR

MATT LAVERE

KELLY LONG

JANICE S. PARVIN

VIANEY LOPEZ

January 22, 2026

Wildlife Conservation Board
California Natural Resources Agency

Re: Letter of Support for Santa Clara River Habitat Restoration Project – Santa Paula, California

Dear Chair and Members of the Wildlife Conservation Board:

As the Ventura County Supervisor representing the 3rd District, I am writing in support of the Santa Clara River Conservancy's proposed riparian habitat restoration project on The Nature Conservancy's Prairie Pacific/Banman Property along the Santa Clara River in Santa Paula, California.

This project will deliver significant, measurable, and critically needed ecological and community benefits for the City of Santa Paula and surrounding disadvantaged communities. The Santa Clara River is a defining natural resource for this region, supporting groundwater recharge, wildlife habitat, and opportunities for residents to better understand and appreciate the river that flows through their community. Restoration of this site—one of the largest groundwater-dependent ecosystems in the watershed—will enhance ecosystem resilience while protecting resources that are vital to the long-term environmental health of the Santa Paula area.

I commend the Santa Clara River Conservancy for its successful track record of restoring more than 1,000 acres of riparian habitat throughout the watershed in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, the University of California, Santa Barbara, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The proposed restoration of 110 acres on this property builds upon these collaborative efforts, and I am encouraged by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's existing funding commitment to restore a portion of the site not included in this proposal.

In addition to its habitat benefits, project partners are exploring opportunities to support public education related to river ecology, watershed function, and the importance of riparian habitat restoration. These efforts would help foster greater community awareness and stewardship while reinforcing the ecological value of the Santa Clara River.

For these reasons, I strongly support the Santa Clara River Conservancy's request for funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board and appreciate your consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,

Kelly Long,
3rd District Supervisor
County of Ventura

March 27, 2026

Wildlife Conservation Board
1700 9th Street
4th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

Subject: Wildlife Conservation Board Climate Bond (Prop 4) Grants

Dear Review Committee,

I submit this letter in support of the grant proposal submitted to the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) Climate Bond (Prop 4) Grant Program by the Santa Clara River Conservancy (SCRC). The proposed project directly addresses WCB's goals to improve biodiversity, climate resilience, and watershed health. SCRC is a key partner to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in planning and implementing riparian restoration along the Santa Clara River (SCR).

TNC has protected over 4500 acres, about 21 river miles, within the SCR watershed through fee acquisitions and conservation easements of 38 properties. Over 1000 acres of the floodplain have been restored within the lower watershed through coordinated efforts by TNC and our partners. These multi-benefit restoration projects have proven successful in facilitating the recovery of listed species such as the least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), improving instream flows and groundwater recharge, and improving habitat resiliency to disturbance. Nearby communities also benefit from reduced flood and fire risk due to invasive species removal such as giant reed (*Arundo donax*). TNC's Prairie Pacific property has been the focus of restoration activities through funding from the Department of Water Resources/Ventura County Watershed Protection District (awarded to TNC) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (awarded to the University of California, Santa Barbara) to restore riparian habitat. Additional funding from WCB would support downstream restoration and increase connectivity and quality of habitat on the remaining area of the property. As the landowner, TNC is committed to monitoring and maintaining the habitat improvements that will occur at the site into the future.

I strongly encourage the review committee to note the incredible opportunity provided for habitat connection and restoration at this project location and the strength of the assembled team of partners who are committed to successful riparian restoration along the SCR.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Gomez

Alyssa Gomez
Restoration Project Associate | Santa Clara River and Coast
The Nature Conservancy
alyssa.gomez@tnc.org

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Department of Fish and Wildlife
Wildlife Conservation Board
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

County Clerk (County of):
Ventura

Contact: Cara Allen
Phone: 916-926-584

Lead Agency: Ventura County Resource Conservation District
Contact: Jamie Whiteford
Phone: 805-764-5132

State Clearinghouse Number (if submitted by State Clearinghouse) 2023110627

Project Title: Santa Clara River Restoration

Project Location: 107-0-140-475, 104-0-170-515, 104-0-170-505; Center of project coordinates: 34.339485, -119.066376

Project City: Santa Paula

Project County: Ventura

CEQA Region: S.CA

Project Description:

Project involves restoring 70 acres of riparian habitat on TNC's Prairie Pacific property. Project activities include invasive vegetation removal, trash and debris removal, native plant revegetation, enhancement of wetland features, and maintenance and monitoring of habitat restoration. This work will increase native biodiversity, repair hydraulic function and habitat connectivity, and will result in long-term habitat integrity, support endangered species recovery, and provide climate resiliency to the Santa Clara River ecosystem. WCB Project Tracker ID: 2025168.

This is to advise that the Wildlife Conservation Board has approved the above-described project on 8/27/26 and has made the following determinations regarding the above-described project.

☐ **Lead Agency**

☒ **Responsible Agency**

Exempt Status: (Check One)

☐ Ministerial (Sec. 15268):

☐ Declared Emergency [Sec. 15269 (b) and (c)]:

☐ Emergency Project [Sec. 15269 (b) and (c)]:

☐ Categorical Exemption, State Section Number and type:

☒ Statutory Exemptions, State Code Number and type: Public Resources Code section 21080.56

☐ Other:

Reasons why project is exempt:

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

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.

2. Has a notice of exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?

☒ Yes (by this notice)

☐ No

Signature:

Title: Deputy Executive Director

Date:

SCH#: 2023110627

Posted Date:

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

20. Bowtie Park Public Access

**Public Access
Implementation**

WCB Grant: \$2,614,000

Fund Source(s): Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (Proposition 4 – Existing Programs), Public Resources Code Section 93010 (SB 105, Sec. 94)

Grantee: Department of Parks and Recreation

Landowner: Department of Parks and Recreation

Location: City of Los Angeles

County: Los Angeles

Project Highlights

- Project will provide equitable access to public open space and strengthen the connection between surrounding neighborhoods and the Los Angeles River
- Habitat creation and enhancement to support least Bell's vireo and Crotch's bumble bee
- Clockshop, State Parks' nonprofit partner, leads community outreach in English and Spanish, and will support educational programming
- Project will include ADA-compliant interpretive features

Priority Metrics

- Benefits Justice Communities: Yes, the Project is located within a Disadvantaged and Climate Vulnerable Community and will provide public open space along the Los Angeles River
- Tribal Partnerships: Yes, State Parks is working with three Tribal organizations on design, planting palette, cultural monitoring, and interpretive elements: Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council, Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation, and San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians – Gabrieleño/Tongva
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 1, Accelerate Regionally Led Conservation
WCB Strategic Plan Target: P2.1, P3.1



Bowtie Park Public Access

Los Angeles County



Project



Protected
Lands



Project Description

The Bowtie Park Public Access (Project) will develop approximately 14.8 acres of the 18-acre Bowtie parcel into publicly accessible open space that advances equitable recreation and cultural recognition, re-establishes native plant communities, and manages stormwater. The Bowtie parcel is located in Taylor Yard, a former railyard that was historically used for rail operations by Southern Pacific. It is adjacent to Rio de Los Angeles State Park and the G2 parcel of the former railyard. Together these projects are part of a larger vision known as the 100-Acre Partnership, led by the City of Los Angeles, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, and California State Parks. The Bowtie and G2 parcels will be connected through the Paseo del Rio, a continuous riverfront trail and greenway.

The Nature Conservancy is leading the first phase of development at the Bowtie, a 3.2-acre demonstration wetland. Phases 2 and 3 will focus on soil remediation, habitat creation, public access infrastructure, and development of the Paseo del Rio. The Project will fund a portion of Phase 2, which will:

- Re-establish native plant communities to support pollinators and other wildlife, including the federally listed least Bell's vireo and Crotch's bumble bee, which is a candidate for State protection
- Improve water quality through removal of existing asphalt and replacement with permeable decomposed granite (DG) trails
- Construct an entry access driveway with bus drop-off, roundabout, and connections to the Paseo del Rio trail and bike path
- Install culturally inclusive, ADA-compliant interpretive features that connect visitors to the site's ecology and history

Long-Term Management

Department of Parks and Recreation adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the Project. If at any time during the 20-year life of the Project, Department of Parks and Recreation does not manage and maintain the Project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Totals
Project Management	\$48,500	\$430,000	\$478,500
Habitat and Landscaping	\$1,019,600	\$6,200,000	\$7,219,600
Interpretive Elements	\$224,690	\$500,000	\$724,690
Public Access Infrastructure	\$960,710	\$12,540,000	\$13,500,710
Design and Monitoring	---	\$2,630,000	\$2,630,000
Indirect Costs	\$360,500	---	\$360,500
Total	\$2,614,000	\$22,300,000	\$24,914,000

Non-WCB funders include:

- California State Parks Waterway Connections Initiative - \$11,000,000
- National Park Service Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grant - \$5,000,000
- Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy - \$2,800,000
- U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development - \$2,000,000
- Measure A, Los Angeles County - \$1,500,000

Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Alfred Mata, PE, Interim City Engineer, City of Los Angeles
- Brian Baldauf, Deputy Executive Director, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA

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

State Government

- Senate: Senator María Elena Durazo, District 26
- Assembly: Assemblymember Jessica M. Caloza, District 52

Staff Recommendation

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

Herbicide use questionnaire

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

The Bowtie project area supports a highly disturbed urban riparian and upland mosaic adjacent to the Los Angeles River, with a mix of remnant native vegetation and extensive invasive plant infestations. Prior to implementation, invasive species comprised a substantial portion of vegetative cover, occurring both in dense monocultures and mixed stands with native species.

Dominant invasive species include perennial grasses and forbs typical of highly disturbed urban sites, with prevalence of fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*), along with other non-native annual grasses and broadleaf weeds. In several areas, invasive species formed near-continuous cover, suppressing native recruitment and limiting habitat function.

Native vegetation occurs patchily throughout the site and includes early-successional riparian and upland native species, though native cover is generally fragmented and constrained by invasive competition. No direct impacts to listed rare or sensitive plant species are anticipated; however, the project area supports habitat values that warrant careful protection during maintenance activities.

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

Herbicide use at the Bowtie project site is incorporated as part of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy and will be applied only when non-chemical methods alone are insufficient to achieve invasive species control objectives.

The primary herbicides proposed include:

- Glyphosate (Roundup Custom®) — an aquatic-approved formulation
- Imazapyr (Habitat® or Polaris®) — aquatic-approved formulation, used selectively

Glyphosate will be applied as a low-concentration foliar or cut-stump treatment targeting actively growing invasive species above the banks of the Los Angeles River. Imazapyr may be used selectively for species that are not effectively controlled by glyphosate alone (e.g., fountain grass), with strict limitations due to its longer soil residual.

Herbicide application rates, tank mixes, and timing will follow label requirements and best management practices, with treatments scheduled to coincide with periods of active invasive growth and minimal risk to non-target species. Spot treatment methods will be prioritized over broadcast application.

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

Alternative herbicides were evaluated; however, glyphosate was selected because it provides the most effective and flexible control for the diverse suite of invasive species present while allowing precise, low-volume applications.

Glyphosate's efficacy across multiple life forms (annuals, perennials, grasses, and broadleaf species), combined with its lack of soil residual activity, makes it well-suited for post-restoration maintenance where native revegetation is a priority.

If your project includes the use of a glyphosate product, have safer formulations (i.e. those registered for aquatic applications) or alternative herbicides been considered to reduce the potential for non-target environmental impacts? Please provide justification for the formulations and tank mixes selected as the preferred approach.

All glyphosate products used for this project will be aquatic-approved formulations (e.g., Roundup Custom®), selected specifically to reduce risks to water quality and non-target aquatic organisms. Alternative herbicides were considered, but aquatic-approved glyphosate provides the most environmentally protective option for work occurring adjacent to the Los Angeles River.

If adjuvant(s) will be used in this project, are safer products that do not contain nonylphenol (often listed as "alkylphenol ethoxylate" on labels) being used to reduce the potential for non-target environmental impacts?

If adjuvants are required, only non-ionic surfactants that do not contain nonylphenol or alkylphenol ethoxylates will be used. Adjuvant selection will prioritize products designed to minimize non-target impacts while improving herbicide efficacy, thereby reducing overall herbicide volume.

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

Non-chemical methods are the primary management tools for this project and include:

- Hand pulling
- Mechanical removal (cutting, weed-whacking)
- Biomass reduction prior to any chemical treatment
- Cultural methods to promote native establishment and competitive exclusion

While these methods reduce chemical reliance, they may result in short-term soil disturbance, temporary habitat disruption, and increased labor demands. These impacts will be mitigated through phased work, avoidance of sensitive periods for wildlife, and prompt stabilization and revegetation.

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

The project will implement multiple protective measures, including:

- Spot treatment only; no broadcast spraying
- No herbicide application directly to standing water
- Use of aquatic-approved formulations
- Application during low-wind conditions
- Avoidance of treatment within 24 hours of rainfall or runoff-generating events
- Coordination with biological monitoring where appropriate

These measures collectively minimize risks to water quality, pollinators, and wildlife.

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

Exclusive reliance on non-chemical methods is **not feasible** for long-term invasive control at this site due to reinvasion pressure, perennial root systems, and the scale of infestation. While non-chemical methods are emphasized, limited herbicide use is necessary to prevent repeated disturbance cycles that would otherwise degrade habitat.

Biological control has been considered; however, no approved or effective biocontrol agents are currently available for the primary invasive species present, and therefore biocontrol is not incorporated into the IPM strategy.

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

A non-chemical-only approach would substantially increase both initial project and long-term management costs due to the need for repeated treatments, increased labor, and ongoing reinfestation control. Long-term maintenance would require additional staffing or contracted labor indefinitely, making this approach cost-prohibitive and less environmentally sustainable over time.

For California Department of Fish and Wildlife owned/managed properties only:
Have you worked with CDFW's Pest Control Advisor to develop an integrated pest management plan that uses the safest and most effective herbicide formulation(s) and application method(s) for your project?

Not applicable. This project is not located on California Department of Fish and Wildlife owned or managed lands.



The Glendale Narrows is a unique stretch of the Los Angeles River with a natural, non-concrete bottom



Non-native vegetation along walking path to be replaced with native grasses, shrubs, and trees

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ALFRED MATA, PE
INTERIM CITY ENGINEER

1149 S. BROADWAY, SUITE 700
LOS ANGELES, CA 90015-2213

<http://engineering.lacity.gov>

February 6, 2026

California Wildlife Conservation Board
715 P Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
WCB@wildlife.ca.gov

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE BOWTIE PARK DEVELOPMENT PROJECT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD'S GENERAL GRANT

Dear California Wildlife Conservation Board:

The City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Engineering, is pleased to support the Bowtie Park Development Project's application for the Wildlife Conservation Board's General Grant.

The Project is located on the Bowtie parcel, which was part of a larger Southern Pacific Railroad railyard, Taylor Yard, from the 1920s until the California Department of Parks and Recreation purchased the parcel in 2003. Over the course of the railyard's operation, the surrounding neighborhoods were founded, primarily by rail workers and their families. When rail operations closed in the 1980s, nonprofit organizations, community groups, and government agencies began working together to ensure the railyard became public land and preserved the history of the site and the working-class roots of the area. As a result, the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), and the City of Los Angeles (City) created the 100 Acre Partnership at Taylor Yard, formally committing to transform 100 acres of the Taylor Yard site into a contiguous public green space along the Los Angeles River. The 100 acres is comprised of the 18-acre Bowtie Parcel, the 42-acre City- and MRCA-owned G2 parcel, and the 40-acre State Parks-owned Rio de Los Angeles State Park.

The Bowtie and G2 parcels are currently not accessible to the public, contain remnants of Southern Pacific Railroad facilities, are comprised of both native and invasive plant species, and are home to a variety of wildlife species. The nearby Rio de Los Angeles State Park also hosts the endangered Least Bell's Vireo. The Bowtie Park Development Project will transform 15 acres of the Bowtie parcel into native wildlife-supporting habitat, publicly accessible passive recreation infrastructure, a welcome center, and renovation of a railcar turntable for public gathering space.



California Wildlife Conservation Board
February 6, 2026

The City is committed to the realization of 100 acres of public park space at Taylor Yard and its Bureau of Engineering is currently developing a similar project, the Paseo del Rio, on the G2 parcel. The two projects together will create a mile-long continuous, accessible walking path along the Los Angeles River, as well as at least two dozen acres of wildlife habitat.

Should the Board award funding to the Bowtie Park Development Project, the City commits to working closely on alignment on overall project design, supporting community outreach efforts, and aiding in coordination with its various agencies.

The City views the Bowtie Park Development Project as a vital piece of the larger 100-acre puzzle and humbly requests your assistance in making this project a reality.

If you have any questions, please contact Elena Lopez, Civil Engineer, Clean Water Division, at (213) 485-5705 or elena.lopez@lacity.org.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Alfred Mata, PE
Interim City Engineer

AM/EL/EB:eg

Box\EXE_2026 City Engineer\Bowtie Park - Letter of Support - City of LA.pdf

cc: Christopher Johnson, Bureau of Engineering
Evann Gonzales, Bureau of Engineering
Bryan Powell, Bureau of Engineering

Notice of Determination

To: Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Department of Fish and Wildlife
Wildlife Conservation Board
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 99244-2090

County Clerk (County of): Los Angeles

Contact: Alyssa Benedetti
Phone: 916-212-0691

Lead Agency: Department of Parks and Recreation
Contact: Luke Serna
Phone: (619) 221-7068

SUBJECT: Filing Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code.

State Clearinghouse Number (If submitted by State Clearinghouse): 2024061129

Project Title: Bowtie Park Development Project

Project Location: 2780 W. Casitas Ave, City of Los Angeles

CEQA Region: S. CA

Project Description:

Project will develop 14.8 acres of a former rail yard into a publicly accessible greenspace with native habitat and interpretive elements. WCB Project Tracker ID: 2026008.

This is to advise that the Wildlife Conservation Board has approved the above-described project on 8/27/26 and has made the following determinations regarding the above-described project.

☐ **Lead Agency** ☒ **Responsible Agency**

1. The Project [☐ will ☒ will not] have a significant effect on the environment.
2. ☐ An environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
☒ A Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation Measures [☐ were ☒ were not] made a condition of WCB's approval of the project.
4. A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan [☐ was ☒ was not] adopted by WCB for this project.
5. A statement of Overriding Considerations [☐ was ☒ was not] adopted by WCB for this project.
6. Findings [☒ were ☐ were not] made by WCB pursuant to the provision of CEQA.

This is to certify that the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration with comments and responses and record of the project approval is available to the General Public at: Department of Parks and Recreation, Southern Service Center, 2797 Truxtun Rd, San Diego, CA 92106

Signature:

Title: Deputy Executive Director

Date:

SCH#:

Posted:
Date Received for Filing:

21. Santa Ana River Wash Restoration

Restoration Implementation

WCB Grant: \$3,280,000

Fund Source(s): Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (Proposition 4 – Existing Programs), Public Resources Code Section 93010 (SB 105, Sec. 94)

Grantee: San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust

Landowner: San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District

Location: 3.5 miles southeast of Highland

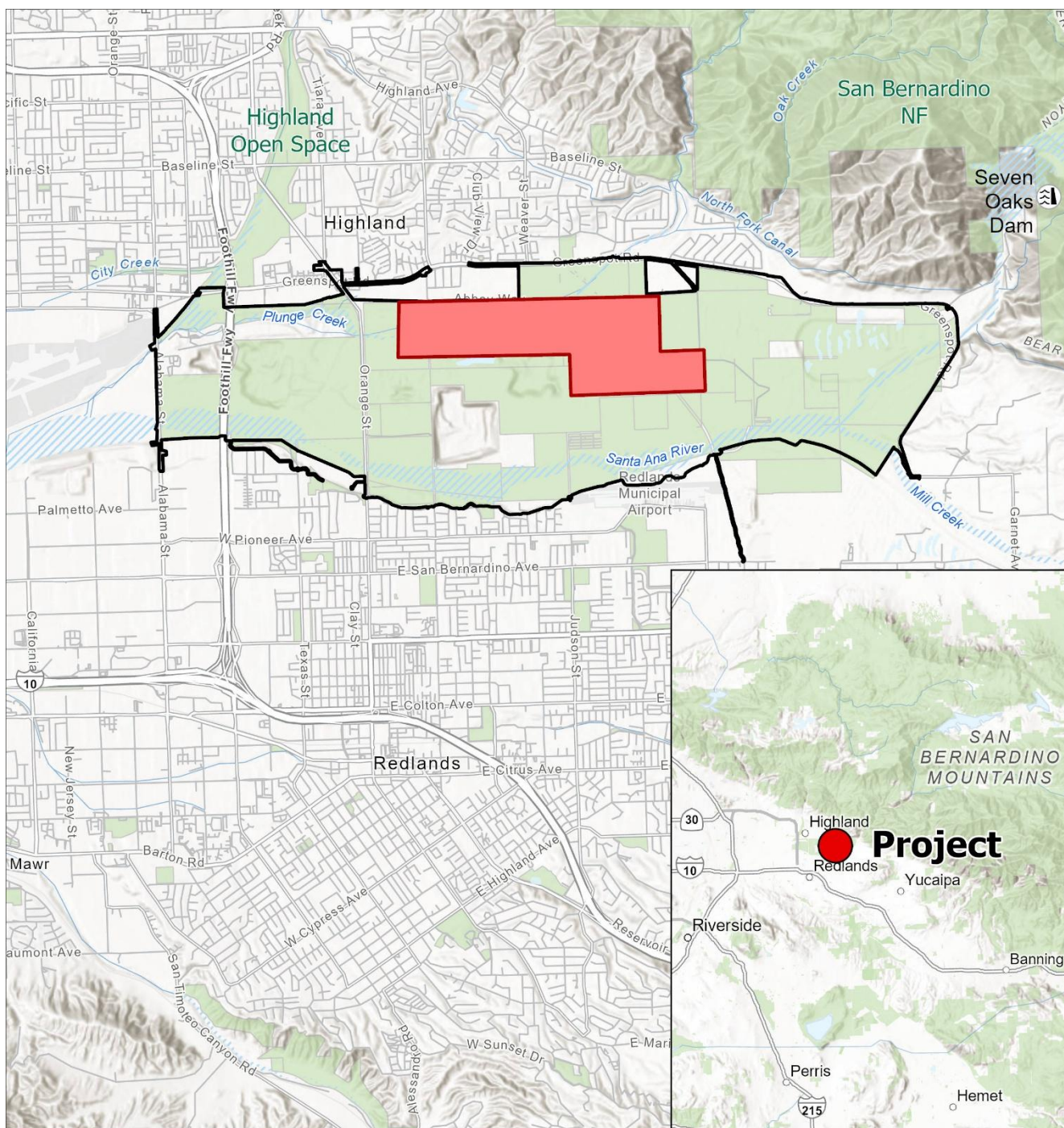
County: San Bernardino

Project Highlights

- Located within the Santa Ana Wash Plan HCP (Wash Plan) Preserve Boundary and the Bunker Hill Basin, a high priority basin for groundwater recharge
- Restores fluvial processes to Riversidian alluvial fan sage scrub habitat, a rare riparian system found primarily in Southern California
- Capitalizes on a unique post-disturbance restoration window following the 2024 Line Fire
- Key species: San Bernardino kangaroo rat (SBKR), California gnatcatcher, coastal cactus wren, Santa Ana River woolly star, and slender-horned spineflower
- Advances actions identified in the Recovery Implementation Strategy for SBKR (USFWS 2024)
- Habitats restored: 44 acres of alluvial terraces along Plunge Creek, 15 acres of floodplain, and 30 acres of alluvial fan sage scrub using hydrological and mechanical treatments

Priority Metrics

- Benefits Justice Communities: Yes, project is adjacent to an SDAC and will reduce fire threats, increase groundwater recharge, and use climate-adapted native plants.
- Tribal Partnerships: Yes, Yuhaaviatam of San Manual Nation will participate in formal cultural and natural resources consultation and field participation for seeding and planting events
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 1, Accelerate Regionally Led Conservation; Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
- WCB Strategic Plan Target: B1.1, 2.1, 2.2; C2.3



Santa Ana River Wash Restoration

San Bernardino County



Project

Protected
Lands

Santa Ana
River Wash
HCP



Project Description

The Santa Ana River Wash Restoration (Project) site has experienced decades of flood control infrastructure, sand and gravel extraction, and groundwater recharge management that have altered the natural flood disturbance regime that historically created and maintained Riversidian alluvial fan sage scrub habitat. The result is a successional shift toward dense shrub canopies, accumulated vegetation litter and duff, and nonnative annual grass invasion that reduces available habitat for, and recruitment by, sensitive species that depend on the favorable conditions created by fluvial disturbance and successional dynamics. The Project will implement hydrological and mechanical treatments to restore and emulate natural disturbance that will create and maintain alluvial fan scrub habitat for the key species and improve climate resiliency for people and wildlife by reducing fire threats and increasing groundwater recharge in the Bunker Hill Basin that provides drinking water for over 700,000 residents in the San Bernardino Valley. New science for SBKR will be led by USGS and will inform the Project's restoration design and range-wide species recovery science. The Project will address these goals by:

- Installing splitter structures and pilot channels that will enhance 44 acres of fluvial terraces and rewet 15 acres of floodplain along Plunge Creek.
- Controlling nonnative annual grasses and thinning shrubs across 200 acres with mechanical and chemical treatments to reduce fire risk and create open habitat.
- Collecting, propagating, and bulking native seed, including seed of the slender-horned spinyflower, with California Botanic Garden.
- Enhancing 30 acres of alluvial fan scrub habitat through light soil scraping, sand spreading, seeding, and cactus planting that will benefit all the key species and connect occupied habitat of two populations of SBKR.
- Validating dietary assay and species competition modeling for SBKR that will inform the seed mix to use and where mechanical treatments will benefit SBKR the most versus the more common *Dulzura kangaroo* rat.
- Conducting robust monitoring that documents baseline conditions, measures performance in groundwater recharge, geomorphic conditions, habitat lift, and SBKR Percent Area Occupied, and operationalizes adaptive management decisions.

Long-Term Management

The San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the Project, including management of the Wash Plan HCP Preserve. If at any time during the 20-year life of the Project, Grantee does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds	Totals
Project Management	\$315,000	\$160,000	\$475,000
Final Design	\$295,000	\$175,000	\$470,000
Habitat Restoration	\$2,060,000	\$985,000	\$3,045,000
Monitoring	\$610,000	\$335,000	\$945,000
Total	\$3,280,000	\$1,655,000	\$4,935,000

Non-WCB funders include:

- San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust - \$675,000
- US Fish and Wildlife Service - \$75,000
- US Bureau of Land Management - \$305,000
- San Bernardino County Flood Control District - \$600,000

Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Lynn R. Valbuena, Chairwoman, Yuhaaviatam of San Manual Nation
- Congressman Pete Aguilar, 33rd District, U.S. Congress
- Assemblymember Robert Garcia, 50th District, State Assembly
- Noel Castillo, P.E., Chief, Flood Control Engineer, San Bernardino County Flood Control District
- Ilene Anderson, Senior Scientist, Center for Biological Diversity
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League

Opposition:

- None received

CEQA

The San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, as lead agency, prepared an EIR for the Project pursuant to the provisions of the CEQA. Staff considered the EIR and prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

State Government

- Senate: Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh, District 19
- Assembly: Assemblymember Greg Wallis, District 47

Staff Recommendation

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

Herbicide use questionnaire

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

The ~325-acre project area lies within the 1,659-acre Wash Plan HCP Preserve and encompasses active alluvial floodplain along the Santa Ana River mainstem and its principal tributary, Plunge Creek. The dominant vegetation is Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub (RAFSS) at all successional stages — Pioneer, Intermediate, Intermediate/Mature, and Mature — interspersed with Non-Native Grassland (NNG), Mature RAFSS/NNG transitional polygons, riparian corridors associated with the Plunge Creek active channel, and small areas of developed/ruderal cover. Habitat quality is generally high, dominated by native cover, and supports five federally and/or state-listed Covered Species under the Wash Plan HCP.

Dominant native species (perennial cover):

- Santa Ana River woolly star (*Eriastrum densifolium* ssp. *sanctorum*) — federally and state endangered; present on site
- California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*)
- Scale-broom (*Lepidospartum squamatum*)
- California croton (*Croton californicus*)
- Brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*)
- California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*)
- Yerba santa (*Eriodictyon trichocalyx*)
- Desert wishbone bush (*Mirabilis laevis*)
- Cholla and prickly pear cactus (*Cylindropuntia* spp., *Opuntia* spp.) — supports cactus wren nesting habitat
- Riparian: arroyo willow, sandbar willow, black willow (*Salix lasiolepis*, *S. exigua*, *S. gooddingii*) and mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*)

Rare and sensitive species (HCP Covered Species and other special-status taxa):

- Santa Ana River woolly star (*Eriastrum densifolium* ssp. *sanctorum*) — federal/state endangered, CRPR 1B.1; present
- Slender-horned spineflower (*Dodecahema leptoceras*) — federal/state endangered, CRPR 1B.1; one of only eight remaining known locations range-wide
- San Bernardino kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys merriami parvus*) — federally endangered, CDFW SSC; the entire project area is within USFWS-designated critical habitat
- Coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*) — federally threatened, CDFW SSC
- Cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) — HCP Covered Species; cactus-nesting habitat present at Railroad Line Road

Dominant invasive species:

Annual non-native grasses (the principal invader threatening SBKR habitat suitability and native plant recruitment): cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), red brome (*Bromus madritensis* ssp. *rubens*), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), Mediterranean grass (*Schismus barbatus*), wild oat (*Avena* sp.), and rat-tail fescue (*Festuca myuros*). Cheatgrass and red brome are both Cal-IPC “Red Alert” species with “severe” impact ranking.

Annual broadleaved invasives: Sahara mustard (*Brassica tournefortii*), short-pod mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), red-stemmed filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*), exotic goosefoots (*Chenopodium* spp.), and stinknet (*Oncosiphon piluliferum*). 2026 is a strong Sahara mustard year following early-season rainfall.

Perennial woody and herbaceous invasives (concentrated in and along the Plunge Creek active channel): tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*), castor bean (*Ricinus communis*), salt cedar/tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*), Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*), perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*), and South African fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*).

Distribution and percent cover. Invasive distribution is highly variable across the project area and is generally found as mixed communities with natives rather than as monocultures. Recent monitoring data within the existing 203-acre Plunge Creek Conservation Project provide an empirical baseline: across ten 50×50-meter SBKR habitat-protocol monitoring plots within active treatment areas, average non- native grass cover was 26% in 2025, with targeted *Bromus* species declining from 30% in 2022 to 21% in 2025 (a 28% reduction over four years of treatment). Individual monitoring plots have shown baseline non-native grass cover ranging from 77–90% in untreated/heavily infested areas down to 4–19% in successfully treated polygons. Pioneer and Intermediate RAFSS polygons typically support lower invasive cover (<25%); Mature RAFSS polygons support more variable cover; NNG and Mature/NNG transitional polygons support 25–65% non-native grass cover. Perennial woody invasives in the active channel occur as scattered individuals and patches rather than continuous monocultures, except for localized tamarisk thickets in former sedimentation basins

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

All herbicide applications will be performed by Nakae & Associates under the supervision of a California- licensed Qualified Applicator (QAL/QAC) and a licensed Pest Control Adviser (PCA) recommendation. Treatments follow the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) framework established in the Wash Plan HCP (Section 5.2.2 and Appendix B), the Plunge Creek HMMP (2019, Section 5.3), and adaptive management practice refined over five years of on-site implementation by IERCD (2021–2024) and Nakae & Associates (2025–present). Herbicide selection is matched to target plant life form, site conditions, and proximity to sensitive resources, with the smallest effective dose and most selective product chosen for each application context.

Selective grass herbicide — non-native annual grass control:

Active ingredients and products: fluazifop-P-butyl (Fusilade DX, EPA Reg. No. 100-1070) and clethodim (Envoy Plus, EPA Reg. No. 59639-132). Both are ACCase-inhibitor graminicides; Nakae & Associates uses both products and selects between them based on target species, growth stage, and environmental conditions at the time of treatment.

Targets: annual non-native grasses (*Bromus* spp., *Schismus barbatus*, *Avena* sp., *Festuca myuros*). Both products are graminicide-selective and do not injure broadleaved native plants, providing strong selectivity for restoration in mixed communities.

Application rate and tank mix: Fusilade DX at 16–24 fl oz/acre or Envoy Plus at 9–16 fl oz/acre (label- rate ranges for warm-season annual grass control), in 20–40 gal/acre carrier, with crop-oil concentrate (COC) at 1% v/v. Final rates set per PCA recommendation and label-specific instructions for each treatment block.

Timing: January through April, applied to actively growing grasses prior to seed set; multiple passes within season as needed to address staggered germination cohorts.

Broad-spectrum herbicide — broadleaved invasives and perennial woody invasives:

Active ingredient and products: glyphosate. Roundup ProMax (EPA Reg. No. 524-579) is the standard terrestrial product used by Nakae & Associates. For any application within or adjacent to the Plunge Creek active channel and remnant wetted areas, Nakae substitutes Roundup Custom (EPA Reg. No. 524-343), the aquatic-registered glyphosate formulation, to provide the appropriate environmental safety profile (see Question 4).

Targets: Sahara mustard, short-pod mustard, exotic *Chenopodium* spp., perennial pepperweed, tree tobacco, castor bean, tamarisk, and Spanish broom.

Application methods and rates:

- Spot foliar spray for broadleaved annuals/biennials: 1–2% glyphosate solution applied with backpack sprayer, sufficient to wet foliage without runoff. Carrier volume varies by canopy density.
- Cut-stump treatment for woody perennials (tree tobacco, castor bean, tamarisk, Spanish broom): cut stem within 4 inches of the ground; immediately apply 25–50% glyphosate concentrate to the cambium with a paint dauber or wick applicator. This method delivers herbicide only to the target stem and uses a small fraction of the product volume that broadcast spraying would require.
- Broadcast spray is reserved for areas with continuous, dense annual broadleaved infestations (e.g., heavy Sahara mustard flushes in wet years) and is not used in spineflower or woolly star occurrences or buffer zones.

Timing: Annual broadleaved invasives — January through May at rosette to early bolting stage. Perennial woody invasives — fall (September–November), the most effective season for translocation of glyphosate to the root system. Treatment timing is adjusted annually based on phenology and wildlife agency-coordinated avoidance windows for active SBKR, CAGN, and cactus wren.

Adjuvants:

- Crop-oil concentrate (COC) with the grass-selective herbicide as required by the fluazifop-P- butyl label.
- Non-ionic surfactant (NIS) WITHOUT nonylphenol/alkylphenol ethoxylate — see Question 5 for product class detail.
- Spray indicator dye (e.g., Hi-Light Blue or equivalent) used in all foliar spot applications to ensure precise targeting and avoid double-coverage of non-target plants.

Specific product selections, exact tank mix concentrations, and application rates within the label-permitted ranges are confirmed by Nakae & Associates' licensed PCA at the time of each treatment and documented in the project's annual Pesticide Use Report submissions to the San Bernardino County Agricultural Commissioner

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

Yes, alternative active ingredients were considered, and glyphosate was retained as the preferred broad- spectrum herbicide for a narrow set of treatment contexts (perennial woody species, dense annual broadleaf infestations) for the reasons below. The project does not rely on glyphosate as a default product; rather, the IPM hierarchy directs glyphosate use only where (a) the target is a broadleaved or woody invasive that is unresponsive to grass-selective products, and (b) non-chemical methods alone are insufficient to achieve the necessary level of control without unacceptable collateral impact to sensitive habitat (see Question 8).

Alternatives considered and why they were not adopted as the sole approach:

- Triclopyr (Garlon 3A/4) was considered for cut-stump treatment of woody perennials. While effective, triclopyr products carry higher aquatic and amphibian toxicity profiles than aquatic- registered glyphosate formulations, and the tamarisk and castor bean treatment locations are within or immediately adjacent to the Plunge Creek active channel. Roundup Custom (the aquatic-registered glyphosate formulation Nakae & Associates uses for in-channel work) provides comparable cut-stump efficacy with a substantially reduced risk profile to aquatic organisms.
- Imazapyr was considered for tamarisk control. Imazapyr is highly effective for tamarisk but exhibits significant soil persistence and lateral movement that can damage non-target native shrubs and trees in adjacent habitat through root uptake. The mosaic of native species at this site — including federally endangered woolly star within meters of treatment polygons — makes the spatial precision of cut-stump glyphosate preferable to soil-active imazapyr.
- Aminopyralid and clopyralid were considered for select broadleaf control. Both are selective on Asteraceae and Fabaceae but ineffective on the principal mustard targets (*Brassica*, *Hirschfeldia*), and aminopyralid carries persistence concerns for native wildflower seed banks.
- 2,4-D and other phenoxy herbicides were not selected due to volatility risk and poor

selectivity in mixed native–invasive stands.

Glyphosate was retained for the specific applications described in Question 2 because it (1) is non-selective, ensuring efficacy on the range of perennial woody and annual broadleaf targets present; (2) has a short environmental half-life (typically <30 days in soil), no significant root uptake by non-target plants, and no persistent metabolites of regulatory concern; (3) is available in formulations registered for aquatic and aquatic-adjacent use (see Question 4); (4) when applied via cut-stump or low-volume spot spray, allows the smallest volume of any candidate herbicide to achieve durable control; and (5) is the active ingredient explicitly identified in the Wash Plan HCP's annual habitat management cost estimate (Table 7-2) and used successfully on this site by IERCD and Nakae & Associates over five years of treatment with documented reductions in invasive cover and recovery of native cover.

If your project includes the use of a glyphosate product, have safer formulations (i.e. those registered for aquatic applications) or alternative herbicides been considered to reduce the potential for non-target environmental impacts? Please provide justification for the formulations and tank mixes selected as the preferred approach.

Yes. For all glyphosate applications within or adjacent to the Plunge Creek active channel, remnant wetted areas, splitter structures, and pilot channels associated with the Plunge Creek 2.0 design, Nakae & Associates uses Roundup Custom (EPA Reg. No. 524-343), the aquatic-registered formulation of Roundup, rather than the terrestrial-only Roundup ProMax used elsewhere on the project. (Note: Roundup Custom is the current branded name for the same aquatic-registered glyphosate formulation that was previously sold as Aquamaster; the two names refer to the same product and EPA registration.) Aquatic-registered formulations such as Roundup Custom omit the polyethoxylated tallowamine (POEA) surfactant present in older terrestrial Roundup formulations — the surfactant component, not glyphosate itself, is responsible for most of the documented aquatic toxicity (especially to amphibians) of legacy glyphosate products.

For terrestrial-only treatment locations away from any wetted feature (e.g., upland fluvial terrace and Mature RAFSS polygons in the Linkage Area), the standard terrestrial product is Roundup ProMax. Even in these contexts, the project standard is to default to Roundup Custom when within ~100 ft of any potentially wetted feature, conforming to a more conservative standard than label requirements alone.

Tank mix selection rationale: each mix is built around the smallest effective concentration of glyphosate for the application context (1–2% solution for foliar spot; 25–50% concentrate for cut-stump), paired with an aquatic-approved non-ionic surfactant (where required by the formulation) and an indicator dye for application precision. The project does not pre-mix glyphosate with other systemic herbicides because the broad-spectrum activity of glyphosate alone is sufficient for the perennial woody and dense annual broadleaf targets, and adding a second active ingredient would expand the non-target risk profile without improving control.

If adjuvant(s) will be used in this project, are safer products that do not contain nonylphenol (often listed as “alkylphenol ethoxylate” on labels) being used to reduce the potential for non-target environmental impacts?

Yes. Nakae & Associates uses NPE-free non-ionic surfactants for this project. No adjuvant containing nonylphenol or alkylphenol ethoxylate (NPE/APE) is used in any tank mix. Surfactants are selected from products formulated with safer alternative surfactant chemistries (e.g., alcohol ethoxylates or methylated seed oils). Where required for grass-selective herbicide efficacy, crop-oil concentrate (COC) products without alkylphenol surfactants are used. Adjuvant labels and Safety Data Sheets are screened by Nakae & Associates' PCA prior to procurement to confirm the absence of NPE/APE. Indicator dyes (e.g., Hi-Light Blue) and aquatic spray colorants used in the project are also NPE-free.

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

Non-chemical treatments are integral to the project's IPM approach and substantially reduce the herbicide footprint compared to a chemical-only program. The Plunge Creek HMMP (Section 5.3) explicitly directs that hand removal be used around special-status plants, that herbaceous weeds be removed by hand before setting seed where feasible, and that chemical methods be reserved for control of perennial weed species and areas with large nonnative grass infestations. Non-chemical methods used in this project include:

- Hand pulling: Used for broadleaf invasives (Sahara mustard, short-pod mustard, filaree) within 30 m of known slender-horned spineflower populations and within delineated buffers around woolly star occurrences. IERCD removed approximately fifteen 42-gallon trash bags of mustard manually over four days in March 2021 from spineflower enhancement areas; the same approach is carried forward in this project.
- String-trimming/cutting: Used selectively on woody invasives prior to cut-stump treatment, with prior consent from the project biologist on a site-by-site basis.
- Mechanical and manual light soil scraping: A core element of the Mechanical Means component (Tasks 3.2–3.4 of the Workplan) at the 28-acre Plunge Creek South, 16-acre Plunge Creek Southwest, and 30-acre Linkage Area Mature RAFSS polygons. Light scraping addresses the surface annual grass and mustard seed bank, exposes mineral soil for native recruitment, and emulates the disturbance regime that historically maintained alluvial fan sage scrub. Scraping reduces the need for repeated foliar herbicide application in subsequent seasons.
- Sand spreading: Approximately 95 acres of native sand spreading on Mature RAFSS polygons (using County Plunge Creek post-Line Fire sediment as in-kind match, plus District Mill Creek sand) provides a clean substrate that suppresses re-invasion by annual grasses and re-establishes the fluvial substrate condition that woolly star and slender-horned spineflower require.
- Hydrological reset: The Plunge Creek 2.0 splitter structure and pilot channel restoration (Task 3.1) re-engages flood flows across the historic floodplain,

periodically scouring annual grass cover, depositing fresh sediment, and rejuvenating early-successional habitat. PC1.0 demonstrated that engineered storm response can convert 11.7 acres of formerly grass- dominated terrace into novel wetted/fluvial conditions in a single 600 cfs event. Hydrological reset is the most powerful long-term invasive grass suppression mechanism available at this site.

- Native cactus salvage and outplanting (Element 3): provides native structural cover that competes directly with invasives in restored polygons.

Potential negative effects of non-chemical treatments and how they are mitigated:

- Mechanical scraping and sand spreading involve heavy equipment access in sensitive habitat and can cause direct mortality of SBKR, woolly star, and other native species if not carefully sequenced. Mitigation: pre-treatment SBKR live-trapping by Origin Biological (USFWS- permitted SBKR biologist), pre-construction nesting bird surveys for CAGN and cactus wren, biological monitor present during all ground-disturbing activities, treatment limited to seasonal windows that avoid active SBKR breeding and avian nesting periods, and retention of “islands” of mature shrub structure to provide refugia.
- Hand pulling at large scale would generate significant trampling impact across SBKR critical habitat. Mitigation: hand pulling is restricted to small focused buffers around special-status

plants where the trampling footprint is acceptable; broadcast hand pulling across hundreds of acres is not pursued.

- String trimming can scatter weed seed if used after seed set. Mitigation: timing is controlled to pre-bolt/pre-flower phenology, with biologist consent required for each use.
- Hydrological reset by design temporarily inundates and scours portions of the floodplain. This is a feature, not a defect — the disturbance is what creates and maintains alluvial fan sage scrub habitat — but it does cause short-term loss of vegetation in the scoured corridor. Mitigation: the splitter structure and pilot channel locations were designed by Stantec (PC1.0 designer) to engage abandoned/degraded portions of the historic floodplain rather than high-quality intact habitat, and the engineering process incorporates hydraulic modeling to ensure controlled, predictable scour patterns.

Burning and grazing — the two other large-area non-chemical methods evaluated in the Wash Plan HCP — are not proposed under this WCB project. Prescribed fire is not feasible at this location due to proximity to residential development north of Greenspot Road, fuel loads that would carry uncontrollably in Santa Ana wind conditions, and unacceptable air quality impacts in a designated nonattainment basin. Sheep grazing was tested under prior District programs and found impractical at the spatial scale and accessibility constraints of the project area, with risks to native shrub recruitment and SBKR burrows that outweigh benefits. Both remain in the long-term management toolbox under the HCP for adaptive use in specific contexts.

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

Applicator qualification and oversight.

- All herbicide applications performed by California-licensed Qualified Applicator (QAL/QAC); product selection by California-licensed PCA. The HMMP (Section 5.3) and Plunge Creek 1.0 installation contract require certification as a California Pest Control Applicator as a minimum qualification.
- Project biologist (Origin Biological, USFWS-permitted SBKR and CAGN biologist) provides on-site biological monitoring during applications in or near sensitive resource locations and approves treatment areas in advance.
- Treatment activities are coordinated with the SBVWCD Land Resources Manager/Lead Scientist (Milan Mitrovich) and Land IQ restoration ecologist (Travis Brooks/Melissa Riedel- Lehrke); annual treatment plans are documented and submitted with the Wash Plan Annual Report.

Water quality protection (consistent with §401 Water Quality Certification, WDID 362021-07).

- Aquatic-registered glyphosate formulations used for any application within or adjacent to the Plunge Creek active channel, remnant wetted areas, and splitter/pilot channel features (see Question 4).
- Equipment storage, fueling, and staging located on upland sites with no direct drainage into the HCP Preserve, riparian areas, or sensitive habitat, per the §401 Order. Spill prevention precautions taken; project-related spills reported per §401 protocols to USFWS, CDFW, Santa Ana Water Board, and applicable jurisdictional city or county and cleaned up immediately.
- Mixing, loading, and rinsing of equipment are performed only at approved upland staging areas with secondary containment.
- Applications are not made when rain is forecast within 24 hours, when winds exceed 10 mph, or when temperature exceeds product label restrictions (typically 90°F).
- Annual Pesticide Use Reports submitted to the San Bernardino County Agricultural Commissioner and integrated into the District's Wash Plan Annual Report submitted to USFWS and CDFW each November 1.

Non-target plant species protection.

- Selective herbicide products are used wherever target life form allows (grass-selective fluazifop- P-butyl for non-native grasses); broad-spectrum glyphosate is reserved for life-form contexts where selectivity is not achievable through chemistry.
- Spot foliar treatment with backpack sprayer is the default application method; broadcast spray is used only in dense, monotypic infestations of annual broadleaved invasives where spot treatment is not operationally feasible.

- Cut-stump treatment is the default for woody perennials, delivering herbicide only to the cut surface and minimizing non-target exposure to a few mL per stem.
- Indicator dye is used in all foliar spot applications to visualize coverage and prevent overspray onto natives.
- Buffer zones are maintained around all known special-status plant occurrences. For slender-horned spineflower, a 15-meter inner buffer (target invasive cover $\leq 3\%$) and an additional 15-meter outer buffer (target invasive cover $\leq 15\%$) are managed using primarily hand removal supplemented by selective grass herbicide. Following 2024 outplanting trials that demonstrated SHSF sensitivity to herbicide drift, herbicide treatment within active SHSF populations was postponed throughout 2025; the same precautionary approach will be applied in this project, with treatment timing adjusted around SHSF emergence and reproduction.
- Pre-treatment plant surveys are performed in any treatment polygon where listed plant occurrences are not already mapped.

Pollinator protection.

- Foliar herbicide applications avoid the peak bloom periods of native nectar-producing species (woolly star, California buckwheat, scale-broom, brittlebush) to the extent target weed phenology allows. Most invasive annual grass treatment occurs January–April, before the principal native pollinator bloom; perennial woody invasive cut-stump treatment occurs in fall after bloom completion.
- Glyphosate and fluazifop-P-butyl are not classified as acutely toxic to bees by U.S. EPA, but applications are nonetheless made early in the morning or late in the day when honey bees and native pollinators (including the project area's confirmed slender-horned spineflower pollinator, the native cuckoo wasp documented in the District's University of Redlands collaboration) are less active.
- No insecticides are used in conjunction with the herbicide program.

Wildlife protection (HCP Covered Species).

- All treatment activities are conducted under the HCP's avoidance and minimization measures (HCP Section 5.5) and the existing Section 10(a)(1)(B) Incidental Take Permit (USFWS TE78703D-0, May 2020), the Section 7 Streamlined Biological Opinion for the Plunge Creek 2.0 component, the Safe Harbor Agreement (CDFW SHA No. 2089-2020-002-06), and the §401 Water Quality Certification (WDID 362021-07).
- SBKR pre-treatment trapping and burrow surveys are performed at the Mature RAFSS Linkage Area enhancement polygons by Origin Biological prior to any ground-disturbing activity; trapping informs treatment polygon configuration and protective measures.
- Pre-construction nesting bird surveys for cactus wren and CAGN are conducted prior to fall ground-disturbing work; herbicide application occurs outside nesting season for these species (typically March 15–August 31).

- Aquatic-registered glyphosate formulations protect downstream amphibian populations (the District's recharge basins host one of the larger Southern California Western spadefoot populations).

Treatment polygons are delineated to retain mature shrub structure as wildlife refugia rather than clearing entire blocks, and adaptive triggers in the monitoring program (Task 4) detect and respond to any unintended wildlife impacts.

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

No, complete invasive weed control across the project area using only non-chemical methods is not feasible at the spatial scale, target species mix, and habitat sensitivity context of this project. The reasons are species-specific and site-specific:

Annual non-native grasses (200+ acres):

- Hand pulling at this scale would require crews of dozens of workers operating across SBKR critical habitat for weeks at a time during the growing season. The trampling and burrow-collapse impacts to SBKR — the species the treatment is intended to benefit — would substantially exceed any benefit. The project area supports the largest extant SBKR population in the watershed.
- Mowing on alluvial fan terrain is operationally constrained by boulder fields, mature shrub structure, and protected-species avoidance. Repeated mowing also tends to favor low-growing annual grasses over the deeper-rooted native shrubs, exactly the wrong outcome.
- Prescribed fire is not feasible (see Question 6): residential adjacency, fuel/wind conditions, and air quality regulation make safe prescribed burning at this site impractical.
- Sheep grazing was evaluated and found impractical at the spatial scale and operational complexity of the project area; grazing risks SBKR burrow collapse and damage to native shrub recruitment.

Annual broadleaved invasives (Sahara mustard, short-pod mustard, etc.):

- Hand pulling is feasible in small, localized buffers (and is in fact the primary method used within 30 m of slender-horned spineflower populations — see Question 6). At larger scales, hand pulling is bound by the same trampling-impact and labor constraints as for grasses. In strong Sahara mustard years (such as 2026), the species can establish across hundreds of acres in a single season; selective herbicide is the only realistic tool to prevent dominance and seed-bank reinforcement.

Perennial woody invasives (tree tobacco, castor bean, tamarisk, Spanish broom):

- Mechanical removal alone (cutting without herbicide) of these species reliably stimulates aggressive resprouting from roots and crowns, often producing more stems than were present before treatment. This has been documented in this watershed and

across California restoration practice. Cut-stump glyphosate treatment is the standard-of-practice in the California restoration community for durable control of these species, achieving 90–99% control in a single treatment cycle compared to <10% durable control with cutting alone.

Biocontrol consideration:

- Biocontrol agents have been considered for two of the project's target species but are not incorporated into the IPM approach for the reasons below.

Tamarisk leaf beetle (*Diorhabda* spp.). USDA-approved biocontrol agent for *Tamarix* spp. and established in some Southwestern U.S. river systems. Not adopted because: (a) the agent is not reliably established in the upper Santa Ana River watershed and intentional release would require USDA APHIS coordination and an environmental review process beyond the project schedule and scope; (b) *Diorhabda* defoliation has been documented to coincide with southwestern willow flycatcher nesting, raising concerns at sites with riparian-obligate listed birds; (c) the targeted tamarisk infestation at this site (within the Plunge Creek active channel) is small in extent and is more efficiently and predictably controlled by cut-stump treatment than by waiting for biocontrol establishment. Spanish broom — no USDA-approved biocontrol agent is currently registered in California. Tree tobacco, castor bean — no USDA-approved biocontrol agents are registered. Sahara mustard, *Bromus* spp., other annual grasses — no host-specific biocontrol agents are commercially available or USDA-approved for these species in California restoration contexts. Research efforts on annual grass biocontrol (e.g., the head smut fungus *Ustilago bullata* for cheatgrass) remain experimental.

- In summary: biocontrol is not currently a viable substitute for the project's herbicide use because (1) the principal target weeds have no USDA-approved biocontrol agent in California, (2) the one available agent (tamarisk leaf beetle) is not established locally and would not provide timely or predictable control at the scale required, and (3) the project's tamarisk footprint is small enough to be efficiently addressed by cut-stump treatment.

The IPM approach therefore integrates the maximum feasible application of non-chemical methods (mechanical scraping, sand spreading, hydrological reset, hand pulling around special-status plants, native seeding/cactus salvage to restore competitive native cover) with selective and spot-targeted herbicide use where chemical control is necessary to achieve durable invasive suppression. The herbicide footprint is minimized in the design; it is not eliminable without abandoning the restoration objectives or causing unacceptable collateral impact to the Covered Species the project is intended to recover.

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

The project as scoped allocates approximately \$1,050,000 to Nakae & Associates over the 3-year grant term for the integrated mechanical/manual/chemical invasive species management program (covering Elements 4 and 5 of the Mechanical Means component plus follow-on treatment in scraped/seeded enhancement areas) across approximately 200 acres of recurring

annual treatment plus the 74 acres of new active enhancement and the perennial exotic control in the Plunge Creek active channel. This figure reflects time-and-materials pricing structured for the project's mix of selective herbicide application, cut- stump perennial control, hand pulling within sensitive-species buffers, mechanical scraping support, and biological-monitor coordination.

Estimated cost for a hypothetical non-chemical-only program (where physically feasible):

- Annual non-native grass control (200+ acres): Hand pulling at industry-standard production rates of approximately 0.5–1.0 acre per crew-day for dense annual grass infestations would require approximately 180–360 crew-days per annual cycle. Restoration crew rates in Southern California currently run approximately \$4,500–\$6,000 per crew-day (5–person crew with biologist supervision). Annual grass-only hand pulling cost: approximately \$810,000–\$2,160,000 per year, or \$2,430,000–\$6,480,000 over the 3-year grant term. This range carries substantial uncertainty because hand pulling alone does not provide durable control; repeated re-treatment two to four times per growing season would likely be necessary, pushing the upper end of the range toward \$5–10 million per cycle. These estimates do not account for the unacceptable trampling impact to SBKR critical habitat, which renders the approach infeasible regardless of cost.
- Annual broadleaved invasive control (Sahara mustard, etc., across overlapping 180+ acres): Approximately \$300,000–\$900,000 per year for hand pulling at scale, similarly subject to multiple-pass requirements and the same SBKR trampling constraint.
- Perennial woody invasive control (tree tobacco, castor bean, tamarisk, Spanish broom in the Plunge Creek active channel): Cutting alone (no herbicide) would require initial removal plus a minimum of 5–10 years of intensive resprout management to achieve plant mortality. Estimated cost: approximately \$150,000–\$300,000 over the grant term, with ongoing follow-on costs of \$40,000–\$80,000 per year in perpetuity to manage resprouts. Practical effectiveness would remain low without herbicide; durable control is unlikely.
- Hand pulling within sensitive-species buffers (already in the project scope as a non-chemical method, no incremental cost beyond what is budgeted).

Total estimated 3-year project cost for a non-chemical-only program: approximately \$3,000,000– \$8,000,000 (versus approximately \$1,050,000 in the integrated IPM scope), with the upper end approached if multiple-pass treatment cycles are needed and if specialized contracts are required to coordinate the labor surge. Long-term management cost in perpetuity: approximately \$300,000–\$700,000 per year for non-chemical-only management of this acreage at maintenance level, versus approximately \$50,000–\$100,000 per year under integrated IPM (the District's current HCP annual habitat management herbicide line item is approximately \$80,000–\$110,000 across the entire 1,659-acre HCP Preserve).

Additional personnel/contracts that would be required:

- Approximately 2–3 additional restoration crews (10–15 additional crew personnel) for the duration of each annual treatment cycle, sourced through contracts with

regional restoration crew providers (e.g., conservation corps programs, vegetation management contractors).

- One additional full-time biological monitor to supervise the expanded labor footprint and document compliance with SBKR and listed plant avoidance (~\$120,000 per year fully loaded).
- Logistical support for crew transport, water, sanitation, equipment storage at remote treatment sites.
- Expanded waste handling and offsite disposal of pulled biomass (mustard and other broadleaf material that would set seed if left on site).

Even setting aside cost, the foregoing analysis confirms that a non-chemical-only program is operationally infeasible at this site for the reasons described in Question 8: the trampling and disturbance impacts of the labor footprint required to substitute for selective herbicide use would harm the listed species the project is intended to recover, and durable control of perennial woody invasives without cut- stump herbicide is not practically achievable.

For California Department of Fish and Wildlife owned/managed properties only:
Have you worked with CDFW's Pest Control Advisor to develop an integrated pest management plan that uses the safest and most effective herbicide formulation(s) and application method(s) for your project?

Not applicable. The project is located on lands owned and managed by the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District (SBVWCD) within the Wash Plan HCP Preserve, with a small portion of project benefit area on adjacent BLM-administered land. No portion of the project occurs on CDFW-owned or CDFW-managed property. The CDFW letter-of-support requirement (for projects on CDFW lands) is similarly N/A and is documented as such on the WCB Application Checklist. The project's IPM framework is developed in consultation with CDFW under the Wash Plan Habitat Conservation Plan and Implementing Agreement (USFWS TE78703D-0; CDFW Section 2081 coverage in process), the existing CDFW Safe Harbor Agreement (CDFW SHA No. 2089-2020-002-06), and ongoing coordination with CDFW Region 6 staff. Nakae & Associates engages a California-licensed Pest Control Adviser (PCA) for product selection and tank-mix specification; the District's land management team (Milan Mitrovich, Land Resources Manager/Lead Scientist) and Land IQ's restoration ecologist (Travis Brooks, Melissa Riedel-Lehrke) provide ongoing IPM oversight integrated with the HCP's adaptive management framework.



Dense cover of annual grasses and shrub species degrade the Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub habitat that many sensitive species depend on.



Characteristic Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub habitat that was enhanced with mechanical treatment methods of soil scraping, sand spreading, and seeding.

Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation

June 29, 2026

California Wildlife Conservation Board
Attn: Cara Allen
Wildlife Conservation Board
715 P Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Support for San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust's Grant Application – Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration

Dear Ms. Allen,

The Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation (Nation) is pleased to submit this letter in support of the San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust's (SBVCT) grant application to implement the Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration Project (Project). SBVCT, in partnership with the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, plays a critical role in managing and restoring the Upper Santa Ana River Wash Plan Preserve. This Project represents a significant and timely opportunity to restore approximately 325 acres of historic floodplain habitat along the Santa Ana River and Plunge Creek in San Bernardino County.

The proposed Project will restore and enhance Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub habitat through integrated mechanical restoration, hydrological improvements, and scientific research. Key components include active restoration of stream terraces, expansion of flow distribution and recharge through the Plunge Creek Conservation Project, and innovative ecological research to support species recovery. This effort will provide substantial regional benefits, including:

- Restoring critical habitat for federally listed species such as the San Bernardino kangaroo rat;
- Improving groundwater recharge and long-term water reliability in the Bunker Hill subbasin;
- Increasing climate resilience through restoration of natural floodplain processes; and
- Strengthening habitat connectivity across the Wash Plan Preserve.

The Project builds upon an established and durable framework, including the Wash Plan Habitat Conservation Plan, and leverages strong partnerships with federal, state, tribal, and local stakeholders. It is also uniquely positioned to take advantage of a limited post-fire restoration window following recent watershed disturbances, making timely implementation essential.



As a regional stakeholder committed to sustainable resource management, the Nation recognizes the importance of this Project in advancing ecological restoration, groundwater sustainability, and climate resilience in the San Bernardino Valley. SBVCT has demonstrated the technical expertise, partnerships, and long-term management capacity necessary to successfully implement this Project and ensure lasting benefits. For these reasons, the Nation supports the Project and respectfully encourages favorable consideration of SBVCT's application. Should you have any questions, please contact Jason Laird, Manager of Cultural Lands and Ethnobotany, at Jason.Laird@sanmanuel-nsn.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn R. Valbuena". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Lynn R. Valbuena, Chairwoman
Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation

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CHAIR OF THE
HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS



PETE AGUILAR
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
33RD DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE

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HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND
RELATED AGENCIES

HOUSE DEMOCRATIC STEERING
AND POLICY COMMITTEE

June 30, 2026

The Honorable Jennifer Norris
Executive Director
California Wildlife Conservation Board
715 P Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Support for San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust's Grant Application – Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration

Dear Director Norris,

I am writing to express my support for the San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust's application for funding under the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program. SBVCT is seeking \$3.28 million in funding to complete the Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration Project. If approved, the project will restore approximately 325 acres of historic floodplain habitat along the Santa Ana River and Plunge Creek in San Bernardino County.

SBVCT, in partnership with the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, plays a critical role in managing, protecting, and restoring land, water and natural resources including wetlands, wildlife habitat, endangered species habitat and outdoor recreational areas in the Upper Santa Ana River Wash Plan Preserve.

The Upper Santa Ana River Wash supports some of the rarest and most ecologically significant alluvial fan habitats remaining in Southern California. These riverine and floodplain systems occurred more broadly across the region, but have been dramatically reduced by urbanization, flood control infrastructure, aggregate mining, invasive species, altered hydrology and other land-use changes. As a result, the Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub and associated floodplain habitats found in the Wash are now exceptionally limited. Protecting and restoring these habitats is essential to the long-term viability of species like the kangaroo rat and other rare or federally listed species that depend on open, sandy, floodplain and scarce alluvial fan conditions.

The Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration project will strengthen habitat connectivity across the Wash Plan Preserve and support science-based adaptive management of rare species and habitats. It will restore and enhance Alluvial Sage Scrub habitat through integrated mechanical restoration, hydrological improvements and applied scientific research. Key components of the project include active restoration of stream terraces, innovative ecological research to support species recovery and improving flow distribution and recharge through meaningful expansion of the Plunge Creek Conservation Project.

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PETE AGUILAR
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Significantly, the Plunge Creek Conservation Project has already demonstrated the value of working with natural floodplain processes to support groundwater recharge. Rather than relying on a man-made recharge facility, Plunge Creek functions as a nature-based solution by reconnecting flows with alluvial floodplain areas where water can spread, infiltrate and recharge the groundwater basin. This approach provides multiple benefits such as improving groundwater recharge, supporting long-term water supply reliability in the Bunker Hill subbasin, restoring rare floodplain habitat and increasing resilience to climate-driven hydrologic extremes.

The project builds upon an established and durable conservation framework, including the Upper Santa Ana River Wash Habitat Conservation Plan, and leverages strong partnerships with federal, state, tribal, and local stakeholders, including the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District. Further, it is uniquely positioned to take advantage of a limited post-fire restoration window following recent watershed disturbances, making timely implementation essential.

I encourage you to give SBVCT's application your full and fair consideration, consistent with applicable law and regulations. If you have any questions, please contact Curt Lewis, Grant Program Director, in my office: Curt.Lewis@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pete Aguilar".

Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress

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June 8, 2026

California Wildlife Conservation Board
Attn: Cara Allen
715 P Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust's Grant Application – Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration Project

Dear Cara Allen:

I am writing in support of the San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust (SBVCT) and its application for funding to implement the Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration Project.

SBVCT, in partnership with the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, plays a critical role in managing, protecting, and restoring the Upper Santa Ana River Wash Plan Preserve. This project represents a significant and timely opportunity to restore approximately 325 acres of historic floodplain habitat along the Santa Ana River and Plunge Creek in San Bernardino County.

The Upper Santa Ana River Wash supports some of the rarest and most ecologically significant remaining alluvial fan habitats in Southern California. These dynamic riverine and floodplain systems once occurred more broadly across the region, but have been dramatically reduced by urbanization, flood control infrastructure, aggregate mining, invasive species, altered hydrology, and other land-use changes. As a result, the Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub and associated floodplain habitats found within the Wash are now exceptionally limited and provide irreplaceable habitat for rare, sensitive, and federally listed species, including the San Bernardino kangaroo rat. Protecting and restoring these habitats is essential to the long-term viability of species that depend on open, sandy, floodplain and alluvial fan conditions that are increasingly scarce.

The proposed project will restore and enhance Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub habitat through integrated mechanical restoration, hydrological improvements, and applied scientific research. Key components include active restoration of stream terraces, improved flow distribution and recharge through meaningful expansion of the Plunge Creek Conservation Project, and innovative ecological research to support species recovery.

Importantly, the Plunge Creek Conservation Project has already demonstrated the value of working with natural floodplain processes to support groundwater recharge. Rather than relying on a purely built or constructed recharge facility, this effort functions as a nature-based solution by reconnecting flows with alluvial floodplain areas where water can spread, slow, infiltrate, and recharge the groundwater basin while also sustaining habitat-forming processes. This approach provides multiple benefits at once: improving groundwater recharge, supporting long-term water supply reliability in the Bunker Hill subbasin, restoring rare floodplain habitat, and increasing resilience to climate-driven hydrologic extremes.

This effort will provide substantial regional benefits, including:

- Restoration of rare and critical habitat for federally listed and sensitive species, including the San Bernardino kangaroo rat

- Protection and enhancement of one of the region's last remaining examples of Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub and associated alluvial floodplain habitat
- Improved groundwater recharge and long-term water supply reliability in the Bunker Hill subbasin through a proven nature-based approach
- Increased climate resilience through restoration of natural floodplain processes, including flow dispersion, sediment movement, infiltration, and habitat renewal
- Strengthened habitat connectivity across the Wash Plan Preserve and adjacent conservation lands
- Support for long-term, science-based adaptive management of rare species and habitats

The project builds upon an established and durable conservation framework, including the Upper Santa Ana River Wash Habitat Conservation Plan, and leverages strong partnerships with federal, state, tribal, and local stakeholders, including the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District. It is also uniquely positioned to take advantage of a limited post-fire restoration window following recent watershed disturbances, making timely implementation essential.

As a regional stakeholder committed to sustainable resource management, I recognize the importance of this project in advancing ecological restoration, groundwater sustainability, and climate resilience in the San Bernardino Valley. SBVCT has demonstrated the technical expertise, partnerships, and long-term management capacity necessary to successfully implement this project and ensure lasting benefits.

I encourage your consideration of the Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration Project and of SBVCT's funding request. If you have any questions, please reach my Field Representative Ulysses Nera at Ulysses.Nera@asm.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Garcia", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert Garcia
Assistant Majority Leader
California State Assembly, 50th District



Flood Control District

www.SBCounty.gov

Noel Castillo, P.E.
Chief Flood Control Engineer

Byanka Velasco, P.E.
Assistant Director

David Doublet, M.S., P.E.
Assistant Director

July 29, 2026

California Wildlife Conservation Board
Attn: Cara Allen
Wildlife Conservation Board
715 P Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: Support for San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust Full Application – Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration

Dear Ms. Allen,

I am writing in strong support of the San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust (SBVCT) and its application for funding to implement the Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration Project.

SBVCT, in partnership with the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, plays a critical role in managing, protecting, and restoring the Upper Santa Ana River Wash Plan Preserve. This project represents a significant and timely opportunity to restore approximately 325 acres of historic floodplain habitat along the Santa Ana River and Plunge Creek in San Bernardino County.

The Upper Santa Ana River Wash supports some of the rarest and most ecologically significant remaining alluvial fan habitats in Southern California. These dynamic riverine and floodplain systems once occurred more broadly across the region, but have been dramatically reduced by urbanization, flood control infrastructure, aggregate mining, invasive species, altered hydrology, and other land-use changes. As a result, the Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub and associated floodplain habitats found within the Wash are now exceptionally limited and provide irreplaceable habitat for rare, sensitive, and federally listed species, including the San Bernardino kangaroo rat. Protecting and restoring these habitats is essential to the long-term viability of species that depend on open, sandy, floodplain and alluvial fan conditions that are increasingly scarce.

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Chief Executive Officer

The San Bernardino County Flood Control District (District) recognizes the proposed project will restore and enhance Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub habitat through integrated mechanical restoration, hydrological improvements, and applied scientific research and intends to contribute to the project through the contribution of in-kind services and materials for the delivery and spreading of native sand for use in restoration. The native material is made available following the Line Fire of September 2024 and the subsequent need by the District to protect existing public existing infrastructure from the enhanced debris flows at Plunge Creek projected over the next few years.

The District appreciates key components of the proposed project include active restoration of stream terraces, improved flow distribution and recharge through meaningful expansion of the Plunge Creek Conservation Project, and innovative ecological research to support species recovery.

Importantly, the Plunge Creek Conservation Project has already demonstrated the value of working with natural floodplain processes to support groundwater recharge. Rather than relying on a purely built or constructed recharge facility, this effort functions as a nature-based solution by reconnecting flows with alluvial floodplain areas where water can spread, slow, infiltrate, and recharge the groundwater basin while also sustaining habitat-forming processes. This approach provides multiple benefits at once: improving groundwater recharge, supporting long-term water supply reliability in the Bunker Hill subbasin, restoring rare floodplain habitat, and increasing resilience to climate-driven hydrologic extremes.

This effort will provide substantial regional benefits, including:

- Restoration of rare and critical habitat for federally listed and sensitive species, including the San Bernardino kangaroo rat
- Protection and enhancement of one of the region's last remaining examples of Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub and associated alluvial floodplain habitat
- Improved groundwater recharge and long-term water supply reliability in the Bunker Hill subbasin through a proven nature-based approach
- Increased climate resilience through restoration of natural floodplain processes, including flow dispersion, sediment movement, infiltration, and habitat renewal
- Protection of public and private property through the timely removal and use of debris flow resulting from the 2024 Line Fire
- Strengthened habitat connectivity across the Wash Plan Preserve and adjacent conservation lands
- Support for long-term, science-based adaptive management of rare species and habitats

The project builds upon an established and durable conservation framework, including the Upper Santa Ana River Wash Habitat Conservation Plan, and leverages strong partnerships with federal, state, tribal, and local stakeholders, including the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District. It is also uniquely positioned to take advantage of a limited post-fire restoration window following recent watershed disturbances, making timely implementation essential.

As a regional stakeholder committed to sustainable resource management, District recognizes the importance of this project in advancing ecological restoration, groundwater sustainability, and climate resilience in the San Bernardino Valley. SBVCT has demonstrated the technical expertise, partnerships, and long-term management capacity necessary to successfully implement this project and ensure lasting benefits.

For these reasons, District strongly supports the Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration Project and respectfully encourages favorable consideration of SBVCT's funding request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Noel Castillo', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

NOEL CASTILLO, P.E., Chief, Flood Control Engineer
San Bernardino County Flood Control District

NC:ABC:MD:mc



Via email and USPS

June 8, 2026

California Wildlife Conservation Board
Attn: Cara Allen
Wildlife Conservation Board
715 P Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, California 95814
cara.allen@wildlife.ca.gov

Subject: Support for San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust's Grant Application – Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration

Dear Ms. Allen,

I am writing in support of the San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust (SBVCT) and its application for funding to implement the Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration Project.

We understand the structure of SBVCT is a partnership with the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District which plays a critical role in managing and restoring the Upper Santa Ana River Wash Plan Preserve along with other entities involved in management, enhancement, and conservation of lands within the larger Santa Ana River Wash. This project represents a significant and timely opportunity to restore approximately 325 acres of historic floodplain habitat along the Santa Ana River and Plunge Creek in San Bernardino County.

The proposed project will restore and enhance Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub habitat through integrated mechanical restoration, hydrological improvements, and scientific research. Key components include active restoration of stream terraces, expansion of flow distribution and recharge through the Plunge Creek Conservation Project, and innovative ecological research to support species recovery.

This effort will provide substantial regional benefits, including:

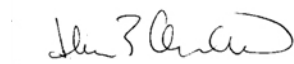
- Restoration of critical habitat for federally listed species such as the San Bernardino kangaroo rat
- Improved groundwater recharge and long-term water supply reliability in the Bunker Hill subbasin
- Increased climate resilience through restoration of natural floodplain processes
- Strengthened habitat connectivity across the Wash Plan Preserve

The project builds upon an established and durable framework, including the Wash Plan Habitat Conservation Plan, and leverages partnerships with federal, state, tribal, and local stakeholders. It is also uniquely positioned to take advantage of a limited post-fire restoration window following recent watershed disturbances, making timely implementation essential.

As a long-term regional stakeholder committed to the protection of the rare and endangered species (here, San Bernardino kangaroo rat, slender horned spineflower, Santa Ana River woolly star, California gnatcatcher and the cactus wren), and sustainable habitat management, the Center for Biological Diversity recognizes the important benefits that this project will advance - for habitat protection, and enhancement, ecological restoration, and climate resilience within a unique area in the San Bernardino Valley. The SBVCT has demonstrated the technical expertise, partnerships, and long-term management capacity necessary to successfully implement this project and ensure lasting benefits. In July 2025, a colleague and I were provided with access to the enhancement work already proceeding in the Wash. It was impressive in its success of using tried/true enhancement methods, as well as novel approaches to “renew” habitat for the species.

For these reasons, the Center for Biological Diversity supports the Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration Project and respectfully encourages favorable consideration of SBVCT's funding request. Please feel free to contact me with any questions at the contact information below.

Sincerely,



Ilene Anderson
Senior Scientist
Center for Biological Diversity
323-490-0223
ianderson@biologicaldiversity.org

cc:

Milan Mitrovich MMitrovich@sbvwcd.org
Lisa Belenky LBelenky@biologicaldiversity.org
Cameryn Brock CBrock@biologicaldiversity.org



May 23, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

California Wildlife Conservation Board
ATTN: Cara Allen
Wildlife Conservation Board
715 P Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, California 95814
<cara.allen@wildlife.ca.gov>

RE: San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust's Grant Application – Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration - *Support*

Dear Ms. Allen:

Endangered Habitats League (EHL) writes in strong support of the San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust (SBVCT) and its application for funding to implement the Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration Project. For your reference, EHL is a Southern California regional conservation group founded in 1991 and dedicated to ecosystem protection and sustainable land use. We have particular interest and experience in the alluvial fans at the base of the San Gabriel and San Jacinto Mountains, and have worked extensively on conservation in Lytle Creek and the upper Santa Ana River. We also submitted the petition to state-list the San Bernardino kangaroo rat.

The SBVCT, in partnership with the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, plays a critical role in managing and restoring the Upper Santa Ana River Wash Plan Preserve. This project represents a significant and timely opportunity to restore approximately 325 acres of historic floodplain habitat along the Santa Ana River and Plunge Creek in San Bernardino County.

The ecological importance of the project can hardly be overstated. It is a pioneering endeavor in restoring active hydrology to, and otherwise restoring, the largest expanse of alluvial fan habitat that we have left — the upper Santa Ana River below Seven Oaks Dam. In 2002, the dam removed most flood flows from the system, making the current efforts an absolute necessity if the San Bernardino kangaroo rat and other fan species are to survive and recover.

The proposed project will restore and enhance Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub habitat through integrated mechanical restoration, hydrological improvements, and scientific research. Key components include active restoration of stream terraces, expansion of flow distribution and recharge through the Plunge Creek Conservation Project, and innovative ecological research to support species recovery.

This effort will provide substantial regional benefits, including:

- Restoration of critical habitat for federally listed species such as the San Bernardino kangaroo rat
- Improved groundwater recharge and long-term water supply reliability in the Bunker Hill subbasin
- Increased climate resilience through restoration of natural floodplain processes
- Strengthened habitat connectivity across the Wash Plan Preserve

The project builds upon an established and durable framework, including the Wash Plan Habitat Conservation Plan, and leverages strong partnerships with federal, state, tribal, and local stakeholders. It is also uniquely positioned to take advantage of a limited post-fire restoration window following recent watershed disturbances, making timely implementation essential.

As a regional stakeholder committed to sustainable resource management, Endangered Habitats League recognizes the importance of this project in advancing ecological restoration, groundwater sustainability, and climate resilience in the San Bernardino Valley. The SBVCT has demonstrated the technical expertise, partnerships, and long-term management capacity necessary to successfully implement this project and ensure lasting benefits. It has our confidence.

For these reasons, Endangered Habitats League strongly supports the Santa Ana River Floodplain Restoration Project and respectfully encourages favorable consideration of SBVCT's funding request.

Yours truly,



Dan Silver
Executive Director

cc: San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District

Notice of Determination

To: Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Department of Fish and Wildlife
Wildlife Conservation Board
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 99244-2090

County Clerk (County of): San Bernardino

Contact: Cara Allen
Phone: 916-926-9584

Lead Agency: San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District
Contact: Betsy Miller
Phone: 909-793-2503

SUBJECT: Filing Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code.

State Clearinghouse Number (If submitted by State Clearinghouse): 2015031022

Project Title: Santa Ana River Wash Restoration

Project Location: S.CA

CEQA Region: Inland Deserts (6)

Project Description:

Project involves constructing splitter structures and pilot channels along Plunge Creek, treating nonnative vegetation with chemical, thinning shrub density, spreading soil, lightly scraping the soil surface, seeding, planting cactus, and maintenance and monitoring activities to restore disturbance-driven processes to 325 acres of Riversidian alluvial fan sage scrub habitat, and create open habitat for special status wildlife and plants. WCB Project Tracker ID: 2025137.

This is to advise that the Wildlife Conservation Board has approved the above-described project on 8/27/26 and has made the following determinations regarding the above-described project.

☐ **Lead Agency** ☒ **Responsible Agency**

1. The Project [☒ will ☐ will not] have a significant effect on the environment.
2. ☒ An environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
☐ A Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation Measures [☐ were ☒ were not] made a condition of WCB's approval of the project.
4. A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan [☐ was ☒ was not] adopted by WCB for this project.
5. A statement of Overriding Considerations [☐ was ☒ was not] adopted by WCB for this project.
6. Findings [☒ were ☐ were not] made by WCB pursuant to the provision of CEQA.

This is to certify that the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District with comments and responses and record of the project approval is available to the General Public at: 1630 West Redlands Blvd, Suite A, Redlands, CA 92373.

Signature:

Title: Deputy Executive Director

Date:

SCH#: 2015031022

Posted:
Date Received for Filing:

22. Public Forum for Items not on the Agenda

Adjourn

ATTACHMENT A – MAP OF August 27, 2026 PROJECTS

