

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

1807 13TH STREET, SUITE 103
 SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814
 (916) 445-8448
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www.wcb.ca.gov

NOTICE OF MEETING**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**

May 26, 2005
 10:00 A.M.
 1/State Capitol, Room 2040
 Sacramento, California 95814

FINAL AGENDA ITEMS

ITEM NO.	PAGE
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2. Funding Status – Informational	2
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*5. Approval of Minutes – February 24, 2005, Meeting	6
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*7. Knoxville Ranch Wildlife Area, Expansion 1 (Fund Transfer), Napa and Yolo Counties	\$7,268,930.00 12

To consider shifting a portion of a previously approved Board project known as the Knoxville Ranch Wildlife Area, Expansion 1, to an alternative fund source. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (a) and Section 2786 (b/c)]

* Proposed Consent Calendar

1/ These facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities

- *8. San Bruno Mountain, Brisbane Acres, Expansions 2 and 3, San Mateo County \$10,000.00 12

To consider the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$274,700.00 and approval of an Agreement to Subgrant those funds to the City of Brisbane, together with an allocation of \$10,000.00 to cover State-related costs, to facilitate the acquisition of 9± acres located on San Bruno Mountain, for the protection and preservation of wildlife habitat. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (b/c)]

- *9. Liberty Farms Wetland Restoration, Solano County \$135,000.00 14

To consider an allocation of a grant to the California Waterfowl Association for a cooperative project with the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the landowner and the Department of Fish and Game to restore 975± acres of seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands, 575± acres of upland grasslands, and 84± acres of riparian habitat. The project is located on privately-owned property approximately fifteen miles south of the City of Davis, at the southern terminus of Liberty Island Road. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (d) IWCP]

- *10. Sutter Creek Riparian Restoration, Amador County \$25,000.00 16

To consider an allocation of a grant to Central Sierra Resource Conservation & Development, Inc., for a cooperative project to restore 4± acres of riparian habitat on Sutter Creek, located on private property that is approximately 4.8 miles upstream of the City of Sutter Creek. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (e/f)]

- *11. Live Oak Wetland Restoration, Sutter County \$100,000.00 19

To consider an allocation of a grant to the California Waterfowl Association for a cooperative project with the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, the landowner and the Department of Fish and Game to restore 226± acres of seasonal wetlands, 96± acres of semi-permanent wetlands and 158± acres of associated upland grasslands, and enhance 188± acres of existing wetlands located ten miles west of the City of Live Oak on West Butte Road, two miles southwest of Gray Lodge Wildlife Area. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (d) IWCP]

- *12. Department of Fish and Game Land Management Plans, \$67,000.00 21
Northern California - North Coast Region, Phase II,
Shasta and Tehama Counties

To consider a grant to the California Wildlife Foundation, Inc., for project administration in the preparation of one (1) land management plan for the mouth of Cottonwood Creek Wildlife Area. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650]

13. New and Alamo Rivers Wetland Master Plan, Phase I, \$805,000.00 23
Imperial County

To consider an allocation of a grant to the Salton Sea Authority for Phase I of a cooperative project with the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, to develop a comprehensive master plan for the development of future wetland habitats along the New and Alamo Rivers, including the analysis of existing wetlands, development of water treatment alternatives, conceptual designs and preparation of environmental documents. [Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79568]

14. Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, Expansion 2, \$12,350,000.00 25
Orange County

To consider the acquisition of 15± acres of publicly-owned land located in unincorporated Orange County about 0.1 mile south of Warner Avenue and 0.3 mile northeast of Pacific Coast Highway to be added to the Department of Fish and Game's Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve for the protection of upland wildlife habitat. [Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a)]

15. Santa Catalina Island Nonnative Plant Removal, \$500,000.00 27
Los Angeles County

To consider an allocation of a grant to the Santa Catalina Island Conservancy for a cooperative project to remove selected nonnative plant species from the island, and to restore certain areas with native plants. The project area is located on land owned by the Conservancy. [Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a)]

16. San Joaquin River Riparian Habitat, Expansion 13, \$1,720,000.00 28
Fresno County

To consider a cooperative proposal to acquire 134± acres of real property together with any rights the owners may claim to an additional 15± acres of land within the area of the San Joaquin River bed subject to the sovereign claims of the State Lands Commission, located on the southerly side of the San Joaquin River at the northerly terminus of N. Milburn Avenue in the City of Fresno, and the subsequent transfer of this property to the San Joaquin River Conservancy for inclusion in the San Joaquin River Parkway for the preservation and protection of riparian and aquatic habitat. [Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.355]

17. Southern and Northern California Fisheries \$2,572,295.00 31
Restoration Projects, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara,
Mendocino, Sonoma and Napa Counties

To consider an allocation for an interagency agreement with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to assist in a cooperative project to fund fifteen separate steelhead and salmon restoration projects, under DFG's Fisheries Restoration Grant Program, located within various coastal range watersheds throughout California. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (northern counties) and Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a) (southern counties)]

18. El Chorro Ranch Conservation Area, \$1,220,000.00 33
Santa Barbara County

To consider the allocation of a grant to the California Rangeland Trust to assist in the acquisition of a conservation easement over 887± acres of real property located near the town of Lompoc in western Santa Barbara County. The primary purpose of the conservation easement is to protect rangeland and wildlife habitat conditions of the property, together with the continued wildlife, water quality, watershed and open space benefits that occur from livestock grazing. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (f)]

19. Working and Learning Among Oaks, San Luis Obispo County \$107,618.00 35
- To consider an allocation for a grant to the University of California, Berkeley, for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game and the Board to provide public education and outreach regarding the conservation and preservation of oak woodlands to K – 6 grade school students and, secondly, to owners and operators of working landscapes containing oak woodlands. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (f)]
20. River Island Farms Wetland Restoration, Sacramento County \$129,000.00 39
- To consider an allocation of a grant to the California Waterfowl Association for a cooperative project with the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the landowner and the Department of Fish and Game to restore 447± acres of seasonal wetlands and 50± acres of semi-permanent wetlands to compliment the existing 300± acres of associated native upland nesting habitat that has been established by the NRCS. The project is located on Tyler Island in the Sacramento/San Joaquin River Delta, approximately two miles east of the City of Isleton. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (d) IWCP]
21. Laguna de Santa Rosa Ludwigia Eradication Project, Sonoma County \$500,000.00 41
- To consider an allocation of a grant to the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game and the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) to eradicate *Ludwigia hexapetala*, an invasive nonnative aquatic weed, on 115± wetland acres of the Laguna Wildlife Area, six miles east of Santa Rosa. The Sonoma County Water Agency will actively cooperate by eradicating Ludwigia on 35 acres of water channels near Rohnert Park. Both sites are located within the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed, the largest freshwater marsh west of the Central Valley. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (d) Other]
22. Sacramento River Fish Screen Reclamation Districts 307 and 999, Yolo County \$250,000.00 45
- To consider an allocation of a grant to the Family Water Alliance for a cooperative project with Reclamation District's (RD) 307 and 999, and the Central Valley Project Improvement Act's Anadromous Fish Screen Program to construct a retrievable, self-cleaning fish screen at RD 307's Sacramento River water intake just north of the community of Clarksburg. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650]

23. Sacramento River Wildlife Area, Princeton Unit, \$650,000.00 47
Expansion 1, Colusa and Glenn Counties

To consider the acquisition of 257± acres of land located on the easterly side of the Sacramento River near river mile 162, southeasterly of the town of Princeton lying in both Colusa and Glenn Counties, for the preservation and protection of riparian and aquatic habitat. [Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(2) and Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 b/c]

24. Wetland Conservation Easement Program, \$1,190,000.00 49
Rudd Farms, Butte and Sutter Counties

To consider the acquisition of a conservation easement over 437± acres of privately-owned land located nine miles west of the town of Live Oak for the protection of wildlife habitat. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (d) IWCP]

25. Ash Creek Wildlife Area Wetland Enhancement, \$93,000.00 51
Lassen County

To consider an allocation of a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc., for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game to enhance 170± acres of permanent wetland habitat on the Department of Fish and Game's Ash Creek Wildlife Area, located approximately two miles north of Bieber and one mile east of the Bieber Lookout Road. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (d) Other]

26. Pine Creek Reservoir Public Access Improvements, \$87,107.00 53
Modoc County

To consider a cooperative project with the County of Modoc to pave a parking area, construct a barrier-free trail and install a vault-type restroom at the Department of Fish and Game's Pine Creek Reservoir Public Access located approximately nine miles southeast of the City of Alturas. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 and Wildlife Restoration Fund, Minor Capital Outlay]

27. Resolution 55

To consider the approval of a resolution honoring Senator Michael Machado.

Other Business

Inquiries regarding agenda items may be directed to Al Wright, Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board, at the address and telephone number shown on the letterhead.)

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WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

May 26, 2005
10:00 A.M.
1/State Capitol, Room 2040
Sacramento, California 95814

1. Roll Call

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS

Jim Kellogg, Chairman
President, Fish and Game Commission
Tom Campbell, Member
Director, Department of Finance
L. Ryan Brodrick, Member
Director, Department of Fish and Game

JOINT LEGISLATIVE INTERIM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Senator Wesley Chesbro
Senator Sheila Kuehl
Senator Abel Maldonado

Assembly Member Patty Berg
Assembly Member Fran Pavley
Assembly Member Lois Wolk

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Al Wright

* Consent Calendar

1/These facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities

2. Funding Status as of May 26, 2005 (Informational)

(a) 2004-05 Wildlife Restoration Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act - Minor Projects \$500,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations (478,321.00)
Unallocated Balance..... \$21,679.00

(b) 2004-05 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act..... \$20,577,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations (1,246,900.00)
Unallocated Balance..... \$19,330,100.00

(c) 2003-04 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act..... \$20,620,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations (3,503,000.00)
Unallocated Balance..... \$17,117,000.00

(d) 2002-03 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act..... \$20,664,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations (12,937,363.85)
Unallocated Balance..... \$7,726,636.15

(e) 2000-01 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act (2003-04 Reappropriation)
(San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects) \$14,562,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations (11,585,230.08)
Unallocated Balance..... \$2,976,769.92

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

Continuously Appropriated [Sec. 5096.350 (a)(1), (2), (4) & (7)] ... \$36,100,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations (25,174,916.46)
Unallocated Balance..... \$10,925,083.54

- (g) 2004-05 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood
Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget
- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)..... | \$11,000,000.00 |
| Less Previous Board Allocations | (0.00) |
| Unallocated Balance..... | \$11,000,000.00 |
- (h) 2003-04 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood
Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget
- | | |
|--|----------------|
| Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)..... | \$8,500,000.00 |
| Less Previous Board Allocations | (0.00) |
| Unallocated Balance..... | \$8,500,000.00 |
- (i) 2002-03 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood
Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget
- | | |
|--|----------------|
| Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)..... | \$2,500,000.00 |
| Less Previous Board Allocations | (0.00) |
| Unallocated Balance..... | \$2,500,000.00 |
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Chapter 983, Statutes of 2002..... | \$4,800,000.00 |
| Less Previous Board Allocations | (1,568,000.00) |
| Unallocated Balance..... | \$3,232,000.00 |
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Chapter 984, Statutes of 2002..... | \$19,200,000.00 |
| Less Previous Board Allocations | (3,793,000.00) |
| Unallocated Balance..... | \$15,407,000.00 |
- (j) 2001-02 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and
Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget
- | | |
|--|------------------|
| Continuously Appropriated (Section 5096.650) | \$273,000,000.00 |
| Less Previous Board Allocations | (101,607,685.44) |
| Unallocated Balance..... | \$171,392,314.56 |
- (k) 2004-05 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and
Beach Protection Fund of 2002 Capital Outlay Budget (Section 79568)
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Budget Act..... | \$13,250,000.00 |
| Less Previous Board Allocations | (11,400,000.00) |
| Unallocated Balance..... | \$1,850,000.00 |

(l)	2003-04 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 Capital Outlay Budget (Section 79568)	
	Budget Act.....	\$32,500,000.00
	Less Previous Board Allocations	(20,025,135.00)
	Unallocated Balance.....	\$12,474,865.00
(m)	2002-03 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Continuously Appropriated (Sections 79565 and 79572)	\$814,350,000.00
	Less 2003-04 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565....	(21,000,000.00)
	Less 2004-05 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565....	(21,000,000.00)
	Less Previous Board Allocations	(591,253,865.70)
	Unallocated Balance.....	\$181,096,134.30
(n)	2003-04 Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (Pursuant to Chapter 588, Statutes of 2001).....	\$5,000,000.00
	Less Previous Board Allocations	(0.00)
	Unallocated Balance.....	\$5,000,000.00

RECAP OF FUND BALANCES

Wildlife Restoration Fund (a)	\$21,679.00
Habitat Conservation Fund (b), (c) and (d)	\$44,173,736.15
Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (e) and (f)	\$14,258,479.11
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (g), (h), (i) and (j)	\$212,031,314.56
Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (k), (l) and (m)	\$195,420,999.30
Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund (n)	\$5,000,000.00

RECAP - NATURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT ACT OF 2000

Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act of 2000
Chapter 113, Statutes of 2000

Total Tax Credits Available.....	\$100,000,000.00
Less Previously Awarded Tax Credits	(33,241,234.00)
Tax Credits Awarded at August 12, 2004 Meeting	(15,000,000.00)
Chapter 715, Statutes of 2004 Tax Credits Funded by:	
Wildlife Conservation Board(\$6,000,000.00)	
State Coastal Conservancy	(\$6,000,000.00)
Department of Parks and Recreation..	(\$3,000,000.00)
Balance of Tax Credits Available.....	\$51,758,766.00

3. Special Project Planning Account Informational

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

Some appropriations now made to the Board do not include a specific budgeted planning line item appropriation necessary to begin a project without prior Board authorization. Pre-project costs are a necessary expenditure in most all capital outlay projects. The Special Project Planning Account would be used for these costs.

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

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

Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air & Coastal Protection Bond Fund	\$20,000.00
Habitat Conservation Fund	\$35,000.00
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund	\$40,000.00

- 4. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 5 – 12)
- *5. Approval of Minutes – February 24, 2005
- *6. Recovery of Funds, May 26, 2005

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.

\$0.00 to the **General Fund**
\$14,332.35 to the **Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund**
\$8,344.00 to the **River Protection Subaccount**
\$76,577.93 to the **Habitat Conservation Fund**
\$3,090.00 to the **Inland Wetlands Conservation Fund**
\$2,640.00 to the **Wildlife Restoration Fund**
\$7,000.00 to the **Special Deposit Fund**
\$53,260.04 to the **California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund**
\$1,866,787.00 to the **Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002**
\$0.00 to the **Other**

GENERAL FUND

Scott River Watershed Fish Screening Program, Siskiyou County

Allocated	\$245,782.21
Expended	<u>-245,782.21</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Wetland Habitat Restoration, Suisun Marsh, Solano County

Allocated	\$16,196.40
Expended	<u>-16,196.40</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Total General Fund **\$0.00**

**SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, AND
COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND**

Canada de Los Osos, Santa Clara County

Allocated	\$4,000,000.00
Expended	<u>-4,000,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Riparian Habitat Restoration Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area,
Howard Slough Unit, Glenn County

Allocated	\$329,000.00
Expended	<u>-315,939.65</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$13,060.35

San Joaquin River Parkway, Lewis S. Eaton Trail, River Center
Extension, Fresno County

Allocated	\$59,000.00
Expended	<u>-57,728.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$1,272.00

Total Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund \$14,332.35

RIVER PROTECTION SUBACCOUNT

Project Planning

Allocated	\$10,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,656.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$8,344.00

Total River Protection Subaccount \$8,334.00

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND

Black Forest, Lake County

Allocated	\$240,000.00
Expended	<u>-230,627.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$9,373.00

Calabasas Pond Ecological Reserve, Santa Cruz County

Allocated	\$69,568.00
Expended	<u>-69,568.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Canada de Los Osos, Santa Clara County

Allocated	\$3,475,000.00
Expended	<u>-3,468,996.58</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$6,003.42

Dairy Mart Ponds Ecological Reserve, San Diego County

Allocated	\$3,000.00
Expended	<u>-0.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$3,000.00

Project Planning

Allocated	\$50,000.00
Expended	<u>-0.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$50,000.00

Riparian Habitat Restoration, Polaris Creek, Placer County

Allocated	\$25,000.00
Expended	<u>-25,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Santa Margarita River ER, Exp 3, Riverside County

Allocated	\$2,000.00
Expended	<u>-0.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$2,000.00

Wetland Habitat Restoration (Butte Ranch), Colusa County

Allocated	\$58,000.00
Expended	<u>-51,798.49</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$6,201.51

Total Habitat Conservation Fund

\$76,577.93

INLAND WETLANDS CONSERVATION FUND

Volta Wildlife Area, Expansion 1, Merced County

Allocated	\$10,000.00
Expended	<u>-6,910.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$3,090.00

Total Inland Wetlands Conservation Fund **\$3,090.00**

WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND

Prairie Creek Fish Hatchery Transfer, Humboldt County

Allocated	\$3,000.00
Expended	<u>-360.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$2,640.00

Riparian Habitat Inventory and Assessment, Phase 2 (Augmentation),
Various Counties

Allocated	\$100,000.00
Expended	<u>-100,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Star Bend Fishing Access, Yuba County

Allocated	\$114.00
Expended	<u>-114.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Total Wildlife Restoration Fund **\$2,640.00**

SPECIAL DEPOSIT FUND

Kern County Valley Floor Habitat Conservation Plan (VFHCP), Kern County

Allocated	\$309,500.00
Expended	<u>-302,500.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$7,000.00

Total Special Deposit Fund **\$7,000.00**

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

Long Ranch Conservation Area and Expansion 1, Mariposa County

Allocated	\$1,480,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,469,562.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$10,438.00

Scott River Watershed Fish Screening Program, Siskiyou County

Allocated	\$354,217.79
Expended	<u>-319,958.82</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$34,258.97

Wetland Habitat Restoration, Suisun Marsh, Solano County

Allocated	\$428,803.60
Expended	<u>-420,240.53</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$8,563.07

Total California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund \$53,260.04

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

Project Planning

Allocated	\$25,000.00
Expended	<u>-11,835.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$13,165.00

San Francisco Baylands (Cargill Salt Ponds), Alameda County

Allocated	\$74,000,000.00
Expended	<u>-72,146,378.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$1,853,622.00

Total Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 \$1,866,787.00

OTHER

The following projects previously authorized by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) are now completed. These projects did not involve any expenditure of funds. It is recommended that the following projects be recovered and that the projects be closed. The Board action date has been included for reference purposes only.

Cache Creek Wildlife Area, Lake and Colusa County
Project approved at the August 10, 2000 meeting of the WCB

Cantara-Ney Springs Wildlife Area, Cantara Loop Expansion 1, Siskiyou County
Project approved at the August 10, 2000 meeting of the WCB

Del Mar Mesa Vernal Pool Preserve, Expansion 1, San Diego County
Project approved at the August 30, 2001 meeting of the WCB

Elk Grove Fish Hatchery-Transfer of Well and Pump Site, Sacramento County
Project approved at the August 13, 1996 meeting of the WCB

Escondido Creek Ecological Reserve, Exchange of Easements, San Diego County
Project approved at the February 18, 1996 meeting of the WCB

Grizzly Island/Joice Island Wildlife Area, Easement Transfer, Solano County
Project approved at the November 3, 1998 meeting of the WCB

Hollenbeck Canyon Wildlife Area, San Diego County
Project approved at the February 23, 2001 meeting of the WCB

Lake Tahoe Fishing Access, Pier Renovation, Placer County
Project approved at the May 14, 1996 meeting of the WCB

Mendota Wildlife Area, PG&E Power Line, Fresno County
Project approved at the February 24, 1998 meeting of the WCB

Morro Bay Dunes, San Luis Obispo County
Project approved at the November 28, 2001 meeting of the WCB

Rubicon River Wild Trout Habitat. Transfer, El Dorado and Placer Counties
Project approved at the November 13, 1997 meeting of the WCB

Shasta Valley Wildlife Area, Easement Transfer, Siskiyou County
Project approved at the November 03, 1998 meeting of the WCB

Tauhindauli Public Access, Siskiyou County
Project approved at the November 28, 2001 meeting of the WCB

Total Other **\$0.00**

- *7. Knoxville Ranch Wildlife Area, Expansion 1 (Fund Transfer), \$7,268,930.00
Napa and Yolo Counties

In order to maximize existing funding, the Board requests a \$7,268,930.00 fund shift for the Knoxville Ranch Wildlife Area, Expansion 1, Napa and Yolo Counties. This project was approved at the November 18, 2004 meeting of the Board at which time the Board allocated \$7,300,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002, Section 79565. This item requests the remaining balance of project funds be shifted to the Habitat Conservation Fund (HCF) (Prop.117), Section 2786 (a) and Section 2786 (b/c).

As of June 30, 2005, the 2002-03 Fiscal Year HCF funds are beyond the period of availability for encumbrance. Although these HCF funds were earmarked for specific projects, the projects could not be readied to meet this agenda. The projects, if they move forward, will be funded from a subsequent year appropriation of the HCF. This action will enable the Board to maximize its existing funding.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this fund shift, as proposed; allocate \$1,049,100.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (a) and \$6,219,830.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (b/c); authorize staff to enter into an appropriate agreement necessary to accomplish this fund shift; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

- *8. San Bruno Mountain, Brisbane Acres, Expansions 2 and 3, \$10,000.00
San Mateo County

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in the amount of \$274,700.00 and approval of an Agreement to Subgrant those funds to the City of Brisbane (City) together with an allocation of \$10,000.00 to cover related costs. This project is for the acquisition of 9± acres, located on San Bruno Mountain in San Mateo County, for the protection and preservation of wildlife habitat.

The subject properties consist of two contiguous properties containing 5.2 acres and 3.4 acres, and are located in the western portion of the Brisbane Acres in upper Costanos Canyon, adjacent to San Bruno Mountain State and County Park. The city limits of San Francisco are just north of the properties along the

San Francisco Bay. These properties are also adjacent to twelve other City owned parcels that are being managed for habitat preservation. Acquisition of the subject properties would place a total of 34 acres under permanent protection within the City's project area.

The properties to be acquired fall within the San Bruno Mountain Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). This Plan was the nation's first habitat conservation plan. Brisbane Acres is a 154± acre area within the HCP and consists of over 100 single parcels of land owned by numerous individuals. The subject properties contain a mosaic of grassland, coastal scrub and oak woodland, representing the three major types of habitat communities on San Bruno Mountain. Several of these parcels support habitat for the mission blue and callippe silverspot butterflies (federal endangered species) and have been identified by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the City as important for protection.

The City will own the properties and proposes that the area be managed primarily to preserve threatened and endangered species and to conserve biodiversity. Additional management objectives will include providing public access for recreational pursuits such as hiking as well as educational opportunities.

Expansion 2

The fair market value of the subject 5.2 acre property, as determined by an appraisal approved by the Department of General Services (DGS), is \$300,000.00. The City has entered into an agreement with the property owners to acquire the subject property at the approved, appraised value of \$300,000.00. To fund this cooperative project, the USFWS has awarded a Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant to the State for the City's proposed project. Staff proposes that the WCB accept the grant, and approve an Agreement to Subgrant the federal funds, in the amount of \$187,295.45 to be applied toward the purchase of the property. The balance of the funding for the project, in the amount of \$112,704.55, will be provided by the City. Staff further proposes that the WCB approve an allocation of \$5,000.00 needed for estimated project expenses, including DGS' appraisal review costs.

Expansion 3

The fair market value of the subject 3.4 acre property, as determined by an appraisal approved by the DGS, is \$140,000.00. The City has entered into an agreement with the property owners to acquire the subject property at the approved, appraised value of \$140,000.00. The acquisition grant by the USFWS also identifies the subject property and provides funding for a portion of the purchase. Staff proposes that the WCB accept the USFWS grant relative to the

subject property and that the federal funds are included in the WCB's proposed Agreement to Subgrant, in the amount of \$87,404.55. The City has agreed to pay the balance of the funding for this purchase, in the amount of \$52,595.45. It is estimated that \$5,000.00 will be needed for project expenses, including DGS' appraisal review costs.

The terms and conditions of the Agreement to Subgrant with the City provide that staff will review all documents associated with the proposed acquisition including the appraisal, preliminary title report, agreement for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the City's escrow account for the purchase of these properties.

The proposed acquisitions are exempt from California Environmental Quality Act under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of lands for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and under Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of an ownership in land to preserve open space, habitats or historical resources. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notices of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Staff recommends that the Board approve these acquisitions as proposed, authorize acceptance of the \$274,700.00 Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to cover a portion of the purchase price and approve the Agreement to Subgrant these federal funds to the City of Brisbane; allocate \$10,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (b/c), for related project expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

- *9. Liberty Farms Wetland Restoration, Solano County \$135,000.00

This proposal is to consider an allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association for a partnership project with the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the landowner and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to restore 975± acres of seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands, 575± acres of upland grasslands and 84± acres of riparian habitat. The privately owned property is approximately fifteen miles south of the City of Davis at the southern terminus of Liberty Island Road in Solano County.

The site was recently enrolled in the NRCS Wetland Reserve Program and protected with a perpetual federal easement. This voluntary program offers landowners the opportunity to protect, restore and enhance wetlands on their property. The NRCS provides technical and financial support to help landowners

with their wetland restoration efforts. Typically, these lands are marginal farmlands that regularly flood. The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and NRCS have a long and cooperative history together, protecting and restoring wetland habitat throughout the Central Valley and California. Liberty Farms is a prime example of this cooperation, with the NRCS providing funds for its protection and assisting the WCB, the landowner and the other partners in the restoration efforts.

The project calls for the restoration of wetlands through the construction of a system of levees and water control structures that will allow the landowner to precisely manage water levels on the property to maximize wetland habitat values. Swales will be cut through previously laser-leveled fields and islands, submerged mounds, peninsulas and tree berms will be constructed to increase wetland diversity, tules will be transplanted throughout the 975± acres of wetland ponds, at least 15,000 willow and cottonwood cuttings will be planted to begin the revegetation of the riparian forests on the site and native grasses will be planted on 350± acres. To better manage the water on the property, 39 water control structures will be installed and 27 decrepit water control structures will be removed. To encourage colonization by a diversity of wildlife species, 24 burrowing owl structures and 50 wood duck boxes will be installed.

Located at the northern edge of the Sacramento/San Joaquin River Delta, this site will provide a critical wetland link for waterfowl using the DFG's Yolo Basin Wildlife Area to the north and wetlands and flooded grain fields to the south in the Delta. In addition, the Delta is a high priority for wetland restoration in the Central Valley Joint Venture (CVJV). The wetlands will provide resting and feeding areas for migrating and wintering waterfowl and shorebirds, such as northern shovelers and western sandpipers. Extensive riparian habitat that is planned for this site will benefit such species as yellow breasted chats and red shouldered hawks. Finally, the extensive native grassland restoration planned for this site will provide critical nesting habitat for a number of species, including western meadowlarks and savannah sparrows. This location is likely to support good numbers of burrowing owls, a California and federal species of special concern, as they are known to breed nearby and have been found on site.

Total cost for this project is estimated to be approximately \$605,000.00, with the following contributions:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$135,000.00
Natural Resources Conservation Service	470,000.00
TOTAL	\$605,000.00

Project costs will be for earthmoving, water control structures, removal of obstructions and worn out structures, planting of native grass, trees and tules, installation of wood duck boxes and burrowing owl nest structures, and project design, construction supervision and administration.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 4 of Categorical Exemptions, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15304, as a minor alteration to land. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The landowner has agreed to manage and maintain the property for twenty-five years, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Habitat Management Plan. If at any time during the life of the project, the landowners are unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, they will refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$135,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (d), IWCP; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

- *10. Sutter Creek Riparian Restoration, Amador County \$25,000.00

This proposal is to consider an allocation for a grant to the Central Sierra Resource Conservation and Development, Inc., for a cooperative project to restore riparian habitat and prevent erosion along the right bank of a section of Sutter Creek, located on private property approximately 4.8 miles upstream (east) of the City of Sutter Creek in Amador County. A majority of the project site is owned and managed by the Sutter Creek Lions Club, and a small portion is owned by another party. The site is known as the Lions Club Park. Other partners involved in the project include the Sutter Creek Lions Club, Amador County Recreation Agency, Sierra Pacific Industries and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) has approved several projects in Amador County, beginning in 1957 with funding for fishing access and access road development at Pardee Reservoir. This project was followed in 1963/64 with funding for the Lake Level Maintenance Dams on Pardee Lake, Black Rock Lake, Shriner Lake and Long Lake. In 1991 the WCB approved the acquisition of a conservation easement over property located near the City of Jackson (Sutter Creek Land Conservation Area). This easement is managed by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG).

Historical perspective shows that initial Sutter Creek degradation was a result of extensive gold mining activities. Until fairly recently (1984), the DFG noted that native trout populations were increasing. In 1995 the DFG agreed that the Lions Park site merited planting with trout and that future plants would be considered. More recently, degradation has occurred through urban and suburban encroachment. Channel encroachments from residential and commercial facilities have impacted stream function and the channel's natural ability to tolerate changes in watershed conditions. These impacts have reduced the local trout populations, according to the local residents. Through educational opportunities and public announcements, local residents and the general public will gain new insight regarding the value of riparian habitat restoration and healthy, properly functioning streams.

The long-term Sutter Creek Stream Restoration project includes approximately 580 miles of riparian corridor and 44,239 acres of water catchment in Amador County. Sutter Creek is a tributary to the Dry Creek and San Joaquin Rivers and contributes to the Sacramento Delta System. There are no significant dams or other above ground storage facilities on these channels. As a result, the benefits of restoration work in the upper watershed are far reaching. Water is of primary concern in California and Amador County. Stream channel stability, real property flooding and restoration of fish habitat and fish populations are concerns of the community. A properly functioning riparian system will provide the basic foundation for habitat and water production goals required by county and State demands.

The project site will continue to be utilized by public visitors. The beautification of activity areas and stream access walkways will enhance and encourage visitors to learn more about the riparian habitat and stream function.

Specifically, the proposed project will use log structures to improve Sutter Creek's connection to its historic floodplain, and the resulting floodplain will be enhanced with plantings of native vegetation, resulting in an enhanced floodplain of about four acres. The project will also provide environmentally compatible erosion protection for the streambank on the downstream end of the project. This project will provide enhanced habitat for many resident and migratory fish and wildlife species, and may provide the opportunity to extend habitat for steelhead trout and improve local native trout populations.

The total estimated cost of the project is \$93,000.00 with the following contributors:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$25,000.00
Amador County Recreation	29,800.00
Natural Resource Conservation Service	17,000.00
Sierra Pacific Industries (Materials)	2,000.00
National Resource Conservation Service "Earth Team" (labor)	19,200.00
TOTAL	\$93,000.00

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. Amador County approved a Notice of Exemption for this project on September 21, 2004. The applicant has developed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Sutter Creek Lions Club regarding their shared management of this project over the long term, and both private landowners have signed agreements with the applicant regarding long-term management of the project. The applicant has agreed to manage and maintain the project improvements for twenty-five years, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement. If at any time during the life of the project, the applicant is unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, they will refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

The County of Amador and both the City of Sutter Creek and the Sutter Creek Lions Club support this opportunity to restore valuable riparian habitat and improve stream function in this valuable Sierra watershed. While the City of Sutter Creek is growing, planning for development includes a concerted effort to protect the oak woodland and riparian resources in the area. This project is the first effort of its kind in the county, and is part of a long-term plan to protect and improve habitats while allowing for appropriate growth. Local volunteers will be utilized to perform weed abatement, planting projects and public information events, under the direction of the NRCS or the project manager. A letter of support was received from the Amador Land Trust.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$25,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (e/f); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

- *11. Live Oak Wetland Restoration, Sutter County \$100,000.00

This proposal is to consider an allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association for a partnership project with the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), the landowner and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to restore approximately 226 acres of seasonal wetlands, 96± acres of semi-permanent wetlands and 158± acres of associated upland grasslands and enhance 188± acres of existing wetlands. The privately owned property is located approximately ten miles west of the City of Live Oak on West Butte Road and two miles southwest of Gray Lodge Wildlife Area in Sutter County.

The site was recently enrolled in the NRCS Wetland Reserve Program and protected with a perpetual federal easement. This voluntary program offers landowners the opportunity to protect, restore and enhance wetlands on their property. The NRCS provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts. Typically, these lands are marginal farmlands that regularly flood. The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and NRCS have a long and cooperative history together, protecting and restoring wetland habitat throughout the Central Valley and California. Live Oak is a prime example of this cooperation, with the NRCS providing funds for its protection and assisting the WCB, the landowner and the other partners in the restoration efforts.

The project calls for the restoration of wetlands through the construction of a system of levees and water control structures that will allow the landowner to precisely manage water levels on the property to maximize wetland habitat values. Swales will be cut through previously laser-leveled fields; and islands, submerged mounds, peninsulas and tree berms will be constructed to increase wetland diversity. Tules will be transplanted throughout 322± acres of seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands, at least 10,000 willow and cottonwood cuttings and 750 container plants will be planted to begin the revegetation of the riparian forests on the site and native grasses will be planted on 158± acres. To better manage the water on the property, 35 new water control structures will be installed and 56 existing water control structures will be replaced or reused as appropriate.

The project is located on the upper edge of the Butte Basin, in the transition zone between the frequently flooded lands in the heart of the Basin and the foothills of the Sutter Buttes. The Butte Basin continues to be a high priority for wetland restoration by the Central Valley Joint Venture (CVJV) due to its central location, its incredible diversity, its long history of providing unmatched wildlife

habitat, and the fact that restoration here is relatively easy to accomplish and very likely to succeed. This project will help the CVJV meet its goal of 34,000 acres to be restored in the Basin.

The wetlands will provide resting and feeding areas for migrating and wintering waterfowl and shorebirds, such as northern pintail and greater yellowlegs. The riparian habitat will support such species as spotted towhees and yellow warblers, while the native grassland restoration will provide breeding habitat for a number of species, including northern harriers. Listed species that may benefit from this project include the giant garter snake and Swainson's hawk.

Total cost for this restoration project is estimated to be \$442,610.00, with the following contributors:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$100,000.00
Natural Resources Conservation District	257,640.00
Landowners	75,970.00
North American Wetlands Conservation Act	9,000.00
TOTAL	\$442,610.00

Project costs will be for earthmoving, water control structures, removal of obstructions and worn out structures, planting of native grass, trees and tules, and project design, construction supervision and administration.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 4 of Categorical Exemptions, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15304, as a minor alteration to land. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The landowner has agreed to manage and maintain the property for twenty-five years, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Habitat Management Plan. If at any time during the life of the project, the landowners are unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, they will refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$100,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (d), IWCP; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

- *12. Department of Fish and Game Land Management Plans, \$67,000.00
Northern California – North Coast Region, Phase II,
Shasta and Tehama Counties

This proposal is to consider an allocation for a grant to the California Wildlife Foundation, Inc. to provide project administration for the preparation of a land management plan for the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) Northern California-North Coast Region's, Mouth of Cottonwood Creek Wildlife Area. The DFG is the public trust steward of properties acquired throughout the State by the Wildlife Conservation Board for various purposes and, as such, follows policies relating to management and enhancement of wildlife and the habitats on which they depend, while providing appropriate public use on those lands. Because of the rapid rate of acquisitions over the last decade (most due to voter-approved bonds), some properties have gone without planning and have been minimally managed. In order to assess resources, involve the public and provide guidance to the Department's programs that relate to land management, land management plans are necessary.

Mouth of Cottonwood Creek Wildlife Area, Shasta County

Mouth of Cottonwood Creek Wildlife Area (MCCWA) totals 903± acres and is located in south central Shasta County. The Cottonwood Creek Unit (555) is located along the north bank of Cottonwood Creek at the confluence with the Sacramento River. The Balls Ferry Wetlands Unit (348) is 3/4 mile north of the Cottonwood Creek Unit. The locations of these properties are approximately 10 miles east of Cottonwood, off Balls Ferry Road and Adobe Road.

The property within the Cottonwood Creek Unit is mostly riparian and open riverine habitat within the 100-year flood zone on Cottonwood Creek. It includes a slough oxbow area, natural and developed wetlands, some grassland and upland habitat along an upper terrace. The Balls Ferry Wetlands Unit has a large natural wetland component with the remainder as upland with some riparian habitat. MCCWA was acquired to protect and manage wetland, riparian and upland habitats.

Specific habitats found within MCCWA include: 1. Annual Grassland (Valley and Foothill Grassland); 2. Blue Oak Woodland (Interior Live Oak Forest); 3. Riverine; 4. Valley Foothill Riparian (Sycamore Alluvial Woodland, Great Valley Cottonwood Riparian Forest, Great Valley Mixed Riparian Forest, Great Valley Oak Riparian Forest, Great Valley Willow Scrub); 5. Fresh Emergent Wetland (Coastal & Valley Freshwater Marsh); and 6. Lacustrine.

MCCWA also contains two separate management areas with varying degrees of management complexity. The complexity and length of the plan will be determined by the properties' management requirements.

Plans are to be prepared per DFG guidelines, A Guide and Annotated Outline for Writing Land Management Plans (Guide), and other local or federal agency requirements as necessary. Plans are written to fulfill CEQA and CESA requirements. The end product will be suitable for CEQA review and approval. The following tasks may be required to complete the plan, depending upon individual site circumstances:

- Evaluation of existing biological and cultural resource data to determine what type of inventory work needs completion or updating;
- Resource inventory;
- Mapping of habitats;
- Identify and map any and all easements across or through DFG Lands;
- Preparation of a cultural resource assessment and management element for the plan;
- Literature search;
- Preparation of a conceptual educational component to the plan for the Balls Ferry Wetlands Unit;
- Long-term as well as immediate management goals; and
- Integration of Cottonwood Creek Wetland Mitigation Bank into area operations.

The estimated total cost for administration and preparation of this management plan is \$67,000.00. The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The Department or selected subcontractors will complete all California Environmental Quality Act requirements and obtain all necessary permits.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$67,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

13. New and Alamo Rivers Wetland Master Plan, Phase I, \$805,000.00
Imperial County

This proposal is to consider an allocation for a grant to the Salton Sea Authority (SSA) to develop the first phase of a Master Plan for the development of wetland treatment sites that will be located on the New River and Alamo River, which are tributaries to the Salton Sea, located in Imperial County. The plan will be developed in close coordination with the Salton Sea Advisory Committee (SSAC), the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG).

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) has a long history of involvement in the Salton Sea area, including the initial purchase of the Imperial Valley Wildlife Area in 1949, the Salton Sea Fisheries Project (1953), Ramer Lake (1954), Salton Sea Reef (1958), Salton Sea – Niland Marina (1960), Imperial Beach Fishing Pier (1962), Imperial Valley Warmwater Hatchery (1965), Salton Sea – West Shores (fishing access)(1983), Imperial Wildlife Area – Hazard Annex Expansion #1 (1988), and Riparian Habitat Restoration, Harper’s Well (a tributary to the Salton Sea). Perhaps the most significant investment made by the WCB in the area has been the funding provided to the DWR for the development of the Salton Sea Restoration and Enhancement Plan (September 30, 2003). This project will develop alternatives for restoring and maintaining the Salton Sea, and will produce the necessary environmental documents for implementation.

In general, the proposed project focuses on removal of pollutants from the Salton Sea through development of wetlands along the two main tributaries, the New River and the Alamo River. Both of these streams receive water and a wide variety of contaminants from agricultural drains, municipal sources and industrial sources. The goal of this project is to analyze the risks and benefits of using created wetlands to reduce the pollutant levels in these streams before the water enters the Salton Sea and to evaluate several alternative treatment methods. This includes development of a computer based water quality model to analyze these alternatives. This effort will compliment the work being developed for the restoration of the Salton Sea that also includes a water quality model to analyze different alternatives for the Salton Sea. Both water quality models will be developed so they can be used in conjunction with one another.

After Phase I is completed, the results will be analyzed to determine if development of wetlands is a viable method for treating water and providing habitat. This analysis will involve DFG and peer review by DWR staff working on the Salton Sea restoration study. If the results indicate wetlands are a viable option, a second phase will follow which will further develop the project’s alternatives and design and will complete the documentation needed to comply

with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Protection Act. Funding for the second phase would be brought to the WCB for approval, along with being presented to the SSAC.

The pollutant levels that will be reduced by the wetlands include nutrients, silt, coliform bacteria, pesticides and other chemicals. Constructed wetlands have been used widely for the treatment of several of these pollutants all over North America. Aside from the general information on the design treatment wetlands in the literature, the design of this system will be guided by performance data from two previous wetland pilot projects constructed along the New River and operated for more than three years beginning in 2001, along with information made available from the Salton Sea Restoration Study relating to water quality and wetlands. The project proponents and the Salton Sea Restoration project team have collaborated to ensure there is no duplication or overlap of effort between these projects.

Although wetlands are good at removing the pollutants listed above, they have the potential to biomagnify selenium present in the source waters and create a risk to wildlife species that will use these wetlands. To address this known concern, a significant effort in this plan will be directed to evaluating the potential impact on wildlife from the two currently operating wetlands. A plan for monitoring of selenium concentrations in the water, sediments and biota in the constructed wetlands will be developed to better understand adverse biological impacts. After the magnitude of these impacts are understood, efforts will be focused on developing several alternative methods for reducing or controlling selenium concentrations that come from agricultural drains and/or the New and Alamo Rivers, at the source of the water that enters the wetlands. These methods may include the installation of localized bioreactor treatment systems in the basins of the New and Alamo Rivers. An analysis of the cost effectiveness of these alternative treatment methods will also be conducted.

The project includes the following elements: initial data collection water quality sampling, evaluation of treatment options, land appraisals (related to siting selections), water quality modeling and development of preliminary wetland/treatment designs. The total estimated cost of the project is \$805,000.00. These tasks will be funded entirely by the WCB. The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$805,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79568, Budget Act of 2004; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

14. Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, Expansion 2, \$12,350,000.00
Orange County

This is a proposal to consider the acquisition of 15± acres of publicly-owned vacant land, located in northwestern Orange County, as an expansion to the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve (Reserve).

The Bolsa Chica area encompasses approximately 1,600 acres bounded on three sides by the City of Huntington Beach and located landward of Pacific Coast Highway. Within this Bolsa Chica area, the subject property lies about 600 feet south of Warner Avenue and about 1,600 feet northeast of the Pacific Coast Highway and is a portion of what is commonly referred to as the Lower Bench of the Bolsa Chica Mesa (Mesa). The Mesa is immediately adjacent to and overlooks the 1,200± acres of lowlands managed by the DFG, which includes the 536-acre Reserve.

The Reserve supports sensitive plant populations and provides important habitat for at least four species of endangered birds, including the California brown pelican, California least tern, Belding's savannah sparrow and western snowy plover. The DFG has jurisdiction over the Reserve pursuant to a lease with the State Lands Commission. The Reserve and the lowlands comprise one of the few remaining, largely undeveloped coastal bay and lowland ecosystems in Southern California and are thus a significant ecological resource.

Bolsa Chica is bounded on three sides by urban development and thus presents an opportunity to educate the public on coastal fish and wildlife resources. Despite its proximity to urban development, there has been long-standing regional interest in conserving and restoring Bolsa Chica. The desire of the local community to extend public ownership and preservation of Bolsa Chica beyond the Reserve and the lowlands has led to a public position favoring the acquisition of undeveloped lands in the vicinity of those currently in public ownership.

Conversely, the Mesa has been the subject of various proposals for residential development for over 30 years and the County's General Plan and zoning regulations permit residential development on the Mesa.

The property is owned by the Ocean View School District (the District), which was holding the property for a future school site. No longer requiring the parcel, the District has declared it surplus. This acquisition is conditioned on the acquisition of the 103± acres of privately-owned land that nearly surround the subject property. The acquisition of the privately-owned portion of the Lower Bench was approved by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) August 12, 2003. The acquisition is still pending.

Acquisition of the subject property, along with the rest of the Lower Bench, would augment the Reserve and the lowlands in terms of preserving a sizable upland area adjacent to public lands along the coast which contain valuable ecological resources. Although the Mesa supports fewer biologically sensitive resources than the Reserve and lowlands, the subject property is part of a larger area of grassland that is not only used for raptor foraging, but also constitutes one of the last grasslands adjacent to a coastal wetland, all within separate environmentally sensitive habitat areas.

The DFG proposes to manage the subject property as an expansion of the Reserve. Public acquisition of these coastal lands near the Reserve would enhance the Bolsa Chica experience by expanding public uses to include educational and scientific study, bird-watching, nature observations, viewing the wetlands and photography.

The District has agreed to sell the property to the State at the appraised fair market value of \$12,320,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). It is estimated that an additional \$30,000.00 will be needed to cover project costs including the appraisal, title and escrow fees, and the review charges by the DGS, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$12,350,000.00.

The proposed acquisition is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act as a Categorical Exemption under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of lands for fish and wildlife conservation purposes and under Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space. The appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse upon approval by the WCB.

Staff recommends that the Board approve the acquisition as proposed, conditioned on the acquisition of the 103± acres of surrounding property; allocate \$12,350,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a), for the acquisition and associated costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

15. Santa Catalina Island Nonnative Plant Removal, \$500,000.00
Los Angeles, County

This proposal is to consider an allocation of a grant to the Santa Catalina Island Conservancy (Conservancy) for a project to remove nonnative invasive plants and restore selected native habitat on their property, located on Santa Catalina Island in Los Angeles County. Other partners include the California Coastal Conservancy.

The preservation and restoration of natural biodiversity is one of the key conservation challenges of our time. After habitat loss, invasive species have been identified as the second greatest threat to the preservation of biodiversity worldwide and are likely to be the greatest contributor to species extinctions in island ecosystems. Santa Catalina Island (Catalina), the third largest of the eight California Channel Islands is no exception - over 240 nonnative plant species (30 percent of the Island's flora), including 76 invasive species now threaten Catalina's 422 native plant species (including 32 endemic plant taxa) and unique habitats. These nonnative invaders were probably kept in check to some degree by the equally troublesome feral goats, pigs and American Bison which formerly roamed the island. Following intensive efforts to eradicate the goats and pigs and to reduce the numbers of bison, Conservancy staff noted a tremendous expansion of several highly ranked invasive plant species, such as Italian thistle, fennel and Harding grass. Nearly 100 endangered, threatened or species of special concern, as well as imperiled and sensitive habitats, on Catalina are impacted to differing degrees by invasive plants. Catalina is home to six flora and fauna species that are listed as either endangered or threatened, of which four of them have been identified in the Federal Register as being threatened with extinction by invasive plants. Listed native species will benefit from the program actions by removing populations of highly ranked invasive plants that pose a threat to their survival.

The Conservancy has developed a comprehensive management program to aggressively protect Catalina's listed species and sensitive and rare habitats from the threat of invasive plants. The objectives of this project are as follows:

- 21 priority invasive plant species of limited distribution and abundance will be completely eradicated from the 42,000 acres of Catalina that the Conservancy manages;
- 2,160 satellite populations of two widespread priority invasive plant species will be removed using watersheds as target geographical areas;
- 696.3 acres will be cleared of invasive plant species;
- 45,929 watershed acres in 68 watersheds, nearly 9/10ths of Catalina, will be enhanced; and

- 3.1 miles of riparian areas and 1.6 acres of rivermouth/dune areas will be enhanced by outplanting with native plant species.

Since invasive species have been attributed with the cause of island species extinctions worldwide, and many of the listed species on Catalina, such as the federally endangered Catalina Island Mahogany (*Cercocarpus traskiae*) are in limited abundance, the timely implementation of this project is critical.

This project will involve the following elements: management, labor, housing for laborers, volunteer labor, transportation, supplies and operations. The total estimated cost of the project is \$1,045,889.00 with the following contributors:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$500,000.00
California Coastal Conservancy	100,000.00
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy	445,889.00
TOTAL	\$1,045,889.00

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The County of Los Angeles filed a Notice of Exemption for this project, in compliance with the requirements of CEQA. The landowner has agreed to manage and maintain the property for twenty-five years pursuant to the terms and conditions of the grant agreement. If at any time during the life of the project, the landowners are unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, they will refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$500,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

16. San Joaquin River Riparian Habitat, Expansion 13, \$1,720,000.00
Fresno County

This cooperative acquisition proposal, presented on behalf of the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC), is to consider the acquisition of 133.79± acre ownership containing riparian and upland habitat located on the south side of the San Joaquin River, at the northerly terminus of North Milburn Avenue, in the City and County of Fresno. At its April 14, 2005 meeting, the SJRC determined that the purchase of this property is consistent with the priorities of the SJRC, and also recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) allocate funds to complete the purchase, including appropriate administrative and project-related costs.

The proposed acquisition would further the goals of protecting riparian habitat along the San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to Highway 99 and would provide an opportunity for increased public access. The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) owns the adjacent property to the east (Milburn Unit) and the property proposed to be acquired would enhance the public use and access to the Milburn Unit. The acquisition may also provide an opportunity in the future for habitat restoration and enhancement work along the river and floodplain.

In 1988, the WCB began an acquisition program along the San Joaquin River to protect numerous properties and, to date, has acquired approximately 2,484 acres. Combined with properties currently in escrow and this proposed acquisition, a total of 2,950 acres will be placed under permanent protection.

The SJRC is responsible for coordinating a program to preserve and restore natural habitat along the San Joaquin River and to provide compatible public access with appropriate facilities for public use. Habitat values found along this portion of the river corridor are extensive, although some areas have degradation, requiring on-site restoration to bring habitat values back to their full potential. The property is currently encumbered with two leases. One lease is for a "pitch and putt" golf course which is consistent with the Public Access Master Plan for the SJRC and the other for gold fish production and sale. Both are midway through their 10-year terms and have renewal options. The property was historically mined for gravel, and re-growth of much of the riparian plants and trees have already taken place on this property.

Habitat types found along the river provide home to a wide variety of wildlife species. Among these are water oriented birds common to the area, which include herons, egrets, grebes and a variety of duck species. Many songbirds also inhabit the area, the use of which is fully expected to diversify and expand with the proper management of this riverine habitat. Also found along this stretch of the river are numerous raptors, including the Cooper's hawk, northern harrier, sharp-shinned hawk, prairie falcon and an occasional bald or golden eagle. Mammals found include raccoon, opossum, coyote and deer. Topography of the parcel varies from generally flat at or near the river, with slight to moderate slopes upward to portions of the bluff areas of the property.

Staff proposes that following acquisition, the property will be subsequently transferred to the SJRC through a "Transfer of Jurisdiction". The SJRC will be responsible for the overall management of the site which will ultimately be accomplished under a cooperative management agreement with the DFG, San Joaquin River Parkway Trust and other public and private entities which are partners along the parkway.

The owners have agreed to sell the subject property for \$1,700,000.00, the appraised value as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). It is estimated that an additional \$20,000.00 will be needed for administrative expenses, including appraisal, title insurance and escrow fees, environmental inspection and DGS' review costs, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$1,720,000.00.

In response to a request by staff of WCB, the State Lands Commission indicated that they have a potential sovereign interest in approximately 15± acres of land lying along the San Joaquin River at the northerly edge of the subject property. The property owner has agreed to quitclaim any right, title and interest, if any, in this 15± acres as part of this transaction at no added consideration.

The proposed acquisition is exempt for the California Environmental Quality Act under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of lands for wildlife conservation purposes and Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space. A Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse upon approval by the WCB.

The SJRC Board has passed a motion recommending that the WCB approve an allocation in an appropriate amount, from Proposition 12 (SJRC), to cover the purchase price and related costs, and has agreed to accept jurisdiction of the property after completion of the purchase.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,720,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.355 SJRC, for the acquisition and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to carry out this acquisition as described; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

17. Southern and Northern California Fisheries Restoration Projects, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Mendocino, Sonoma and Napa Counties \$2,572,295.00

This proposal is to consider an allocation for interagency agreements with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to assist in a cooperative project to fund fifteen separate steelhead and salmon restoration projects, under DFG's Fisheries Restoration Grant Program, located within various coastal watersheds throughout California.

In response to concerns over dwindling salmon and steelhead trout populations, the Fisheries Restoration Grant Program was established by DFG in 1981. The program focuses on the restoration of salmon and steelhead habitat impacted by past and present land use practices throughout California.

These land use practices include:

Creation of impassable barriers, impacting salmon and steelhead migration;

Destruction and reduction of in-stream habitat, necessary for rearing and spawning areas, attributed to reduction of associated riparian areas and channelized streams; and

Increased sediment impacting salmon and steelhead eggs and reproduction.

The focus of the DFG's program is to eliminate and alleviate these problems through actions such as the removal or modification of fish barriers, improving fish passage, in-stream habitat and riparian restoration, bank stabilization, sediment control and watershed restoration.

DFG recently announced project awards under its Fisheries Restoration Grant Program for 2005. Under the DFG program, all project proposals go through an exhaustive review by both government and non-government conservation groups. The projects that DFG has identified and requested funding assistance from WCB are ranked as high priority projects. A listing of the projects is shown on the following table.

Proposed DFG Fisheries Restoration Projects and proposed funding by the WCB:

PROJECT	COUNTY	TOTAL COST	WCB SHARE
Solstice Creek – barrier removal	Los Angeles	\$653,000.00	\$391,980.00
Arroyo Hondo – improve fish passage	Santa Barbara	804,140.00	482,484.00
Santa Ynez River Bank – riparian restoration	Santa Barbara	296,692.00	178,015.00
Gobernador Debris Basin – improve fish passage	Santa Barbara	156,805.00	94,083.00
Green Valley/Grub Creek – improve fish passage	Sonoma	42,667.00	21,334.00
Willow Creek – fish passage and sediment reduction	Sonoma	220,060.00	110,030.00
Upper Mark West Creek – sediment reduction	Sonoma	560,476.00	280,238.00
Dutch Bill Creek – barrier removal	Sonoma	72,085.00	36,043.00
Dutch Bill Creek – in-stream enhancement and bank stabilization	Sonoma	78,023.00	39,011.00
Napa River – arundo removal and riparian restoration	Napa	55,700.00	27,850.00
Dry Creek – bank stabilization	Napa	154,339.00	154,339.00
Usal Creek – in-stream enhancement	Mendocino	78,523.00	39,261.00
Camp Creek – fish barrier removal and in-stream enhancements	Mendocino	234,587.00	117,294.00
Upper North Fork Noyo River – sediment control	Mendocino	478,332.00	239,161.00
Hollow Tree Creek – in-stream restoration and sediment control	Mendocino	721,917.00	360,958.00
TOTAL		\$4,607,646.00	\$2,572,081.00

Initially, DFG was to receive additional funding for its Fisheries Restoration Grant program from the Budget Act of 2004, in an allocation to the Resources Trust Fund from tidelands oil revenues (\$6,500,000). Unfortunately, current revenue projections from the tidelands oil revenues, indicate there will be no funds available to the DFG this fiscal year from this revenue source. To assist the DFG with their shortfall, the WCB has worked with the DFG to identify priority projects that WCB could assist with funding.

Two funding sources are proposed for these projects. For the projects located in Santa Barbara and Los Angeles County, Proposition 50, coastal watershed funds are proposed. For the projects north of Santa Barbara County, Proposition 40, funds are proposed. To account for and track these two funding sources

separately, two interagency agreements have been developed. The Southern California counties' agreement is for \$1,146,652.00 and the Northern California counties' agreement is for \$1,425,519.00. The total amount proposed under this item represents the sum of both agreements. An additional \$214.00 is being requested for Department of General Services' contract review costs.

DFG or selected subcontractors will complete all California Environmental Quality Act requirements and obtain all necessary permits for these projects.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,425,626.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (northern counties) and \$1,146,669.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a) (southern counties); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

18. El Chorro Ranch Conservation Area, \$1,220,000.00
Santa Barbara County

This proposal is to consider a grant to the California Rangeland Trust to assist in the acquisition of a conservation easement over 887± acres of land located near the town of Lompoc in western Santa Barbara County. The primary purpose of the conservation easement is to protect rangeland and wildlife habitat conditions of the property, together with the continued wildlife, water quality, watershed and open space benefits that occur from livestock grazing. The subject property also provides two miles of important viewshed along the stretch of California Highway One between Gaviota and Lompoc, one of two State designated scenic highways in Santa Barbara County.

The California Legislature, in September 2002, passed the Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Act and identified the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) as the responsible entity to implement the protection program. The purpose of the program is to protect California's rangeland, grazing land and grasslands through the use of conservation easements. To implement the program, procedures were developed for accepting applications and evaluating proposals which measure the project's contribution toward achieving the purposes of the program. At the February 19, 2004 WCB meeting, the Board approved the first project proposed under the program. The project consisted of a conservation easement over a 6,983± acre portion of a 7,463± acre property known locally as the Yolo Land and Cattle Ranch.

The San Julian Valley has been in cattle and sheep grazing production since the Mission Era in the 1800s. In Santa Barbara County, grazing has always been one of the three principal historic agricultural industries along with strawberry-broccoli-lettuce operations and, more recently, wine grape production. The ranch is critically and centrally situated within the San Julian Valley and includes a mosaic of grassland (635 acres), coastal sage scrub (100 acres), coast live oak woodland (100 acres), riparian plant areas (50 acres) and vernal pools and springs (2 acres).

The subject property consists of native pasture and some farmland. It is utilized for grazing cow-calf pairs and heifers and for limited production of lima and garbanzo beans. Twenty-five acres are dedicated to farming beans to support the ranch operation. The property is fenced and cross-fenced. Springs in the higher elevation of the center of the ranch feed a water system that provides stock and domestic water. Other agricultural improvements include a large historic multi-purpose barn that is still used today, and several additional tractor sheds and outbuildings.

Due to its varied underlying geology and topography, the ranch includes a diversity of native plant communities that remain in remarkably pristine condition as well as habitat for a number of wildlife species. The ranch also provides a key portion of the valley's wildlife migration corridor as well as reliable habitat, sanctuary and breeding areas for deer, bobcat, mountain lion and gray fox. The wildlife corridor will be severely disturbed if the ranch is subdivided into smaller ranchettes.

Birds found on the property over the past several decades include a variety of hawks and owls, turkey vultures, black-shouldered kites, roadrunners, western bluebirds, mallard ducks and great blue herons.

The landowners have demonstrated a strong commitment to habitat and range improvement in recent years. About a mile and three quarters of the El Jaro Creek, a rare year-round tributary of the Santa Ynez River, runs through the property at two different points. The El Jaro Creek is home to the endangered and federally listed southern race of the Steelhead trout. The landowners have been cooperating with a private firm, Entrix, hired by the Cachuma Resource Conservation District to explore various enhancements of the fish habitat.

The conservation easement has an appraised, fair market value of \$1,200,000.00, a value approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The owners have agreed to sell the conservation easement for the approved, appraised fair market value. It is estimated that an additional \$20,000.00 will be needed for administrative costs, bringing the total amount requested for this project to \$1,220,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the grant provide that staff will review all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and the instruments of conveyance prior to the disbursement of funds.

The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of ownership of an interest in land to preserve open space. A Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse upon approval by the WCB.

Staff recommends that the Board approve the grant as proposed; allocate \$1,220,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (f), for the grant and associated costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

19. Working and Learning Among Oak Woodlands, \$107,618.00
San Luis Obispo County

This proposal is to consider an allocation for a grant to the University of California, Berkeley, for an oak woodland public education and outreach project designed to communicate the social, economic, agricultural and biological benefits associated with the conservation of oak woodlands in San Luis Obispo County.

In 2001, the Oak Woodlands Conservation Act was enacted and mandated the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) to implement the Oak Woodlands Conservation Program. The Act mandates the WCB to establish a grant program designed to protect and restore oak woodlands using conservation easements, cost-share and long-term agreements, technical assistance and public education and outreach. This project represents a public education and outreach effort to achieve the intent of the Oak Woodlands Conservation Program.

Consistent with the provisions of the Oak Woodlands Conservation Act, the University's "Working and Learning Among the Oaks" represents a two part, three-year effort designed to (1) expand student understanding and appreciation of oak woodland ecology and conservation within the working landscape of a cattle ranch; (2) promote oak woodland conservation tools and practices that can

be implemented on privately owned lands, and (3) develop and implement a rancher teaching and evaluation tool to measure and evaluate the short and long-term application of oak conservation practices.

Part 1 -- Santa Margarita Oak Woodlands Trail Project, Learning Among the Oaks

The first phase of the project will provide hands on environmental, conservation and oak woodland educational opportunities for grammar school children attending the Santa Margarita School in San Luis Obispo County. To accomplish this goal, the private landowners of the historic Santa Margarita Ranch, located adjacent to the Santa Margarita School, have donated approximately 15 acres and a hiking trail to the Santa Margarita School District for supervised, public educational opportunities. In addition, the landowners have agreed to work with the school administrators/teachers and the 4-H Science Experiences and Resources for Informal Educational Settings (4-H SERIES) coordinator and provide talks to the schoolchildren on operating a working cattle ranch amongst the oak woodlands.

The California Conservation Corps will construct an educational hiking trail. To accommodate the learning interests of students in the primary (K-3) and middle (4-6) grades, a ¼-mile and ½-mile loop will be constructed. The path will be identified by mowed grass and numbered markers that correspond to printed materials. The materials for teachers and students will identify the major features of oak woodlands, grasses and species of oak trees.

In addition, stewardship demonstration areas will provide opportunities to involve students in the implementation and observation of conservation practices and habitat enhancement tools utilized by the rancher. Interactive activities will include installing owl, bat and songbird nesting boxes, collecting acorns, and planting oak seedlings and native grasses. The Native Tree Committee of San Luis Obispo County will also be participating through their successful acorn harvest and oak seedling development program with the Atascadero High School. High school students will grow seedlings from acorns harvested by the elementary students. When ready to plant, the seedlings will be distributed to local vineyards and neighboring ranches.

This collaborative project was developed by a coalition of partners consisting of the landowners of the Santa Margarita Ranch, the Santa Margarita School, the Atascadero Unified School District, high school and university students (who will be serving as trail docents/activity leaders). In addition, project sponsors include the University of California Cooperative Extension of San Luis Obispo and the Native Tree Committee, comprised of volunteers dedicated to improving the preservation of native oaks through cooperative and educational measures.

Finally, the local 4-H science education specialists will be providing curriculum resource guidance and the local California Conservation Corps will be maintaining the trail and educational pathway.

PART II – Oak Woodland Owner Outreach and Program Evaluation

The second phase of the project will develop and provide educational and outreach efforts that demonstrate to landowners the profitability of agriculture with the conservation of natural resources. A series of “tailgate” meetings will be held on local ranches. The “tailgate” meetings will be modeled after the award winning Central Coast Vineyard Team (CCVT), a grower group of individuals whose mission is to promote sustainable vineyard practices on the central coast of California.

The CCVT tailgate meetings were highly successful and drew good attendance because they were short in length (half day), were held at sites where growers could witness the sustainable practices being discussed, provided opportunities for grower-to-grower information exchanges and provided take home tips presented in a user-friendly format.

Following the CCVT tailgate model and philosophy of “bring knowledge or expertise to the ranch and demonstrate how to use it,” this proposal will bring ranchers, growers and private land managers and developers together for a series of tailgate meetings targeted to demonstrate sustainable agriculture in oak woodlands. Eighteen meetings will be held, six per year for three years.

The series of “tailgate” meetings will provide growers and ranchers with information that, according to agriculturists and extension advisors, is useful and beneficial to growers and ranchers interested in preserving oak woodlands:

- Habitat enhancement through agriculture;
- How to establish oaks;
- Managing oaks around the ranch and ranchettes;
- Monitoring and evaluation of natural resources;
- The benefits of biodiversity to agriculture; and
- Cost/Benefit ratios of oak woodland enhancement through agriculture.

In addition to the tailgate meetings, this proposal will provide an annual tour. The tour will bring oak woodland conservation stakeholders together to see successful conservation, habitat enhancement and oak regeneration projects implemented on working landscapes. The tour may include vineyards developed without the removal of any native oaks, a cattle ranch that has restored and enhanced wildlife habitat, a development that maximizes preservation of habitat

through agricultural clustering and a landscape irrigation system designed with the conservation of native oaks in mind. Special efforts will be made to attract attendance from the more than sixty conservation-related organizations and agencies at work in San Luis Obispo County. One of the goals of the tour is for building stewardship alliances.

The final component of this proposal will be to measure the benefits of this education and outreach effort and the effectiveness of the teaching methods. Ranchers will be given an opportunity to evaluate and measure where they were with respect to being good stewards prior to the series of informational tailgate meetings and again after the meetings. The before and after evaluation will measure the effectiveness of the tailgate meetings as a tool for preserving oak woodland habitat.

Key collaborators in this project include the local farm advisor, university natural resource specialists, Department of Fish and Game biologists, NRCS Conservationists, San Luis Obispo County Planning Department and representatives from farming and ranching organizations. In addition, members of the CCVT will help develop, publicize and announce the availability of the “tailgate” meetings.

Cost estimates for this project, which have been reviewed and approved by staff, are as follows:

PART I -- Santa Margarita School Trail Project	(\$26,000.00)	
Initial Trail Clearing (CCC)		\$ 1,000.00
Sign, gate and markers		1,500.00
Habitat Enhancement Materials		1,500.00
Trail Maintenance (CCC for 3 years)		3,000.00
4-H Coordinator		10,500.00
Prepare Teacher & Docent Guides		2,500.00
Oak Seedlings Materials		3,000.00
Resource/Activity Materials		1,000.00
Hands-on Science Materials		<u>2,000.00</u>
Part I Grant Cost:		\$26,000.00

PART II -- Tailgate Meeting, Ag Tour & Evaluation	(\$71,835.00)	
Program Assistant Salary/SRA II		\$52,792.00
Benefits (SRA @ 23%)		12,143.00
Tailgate Meetings (18)		1,800.00
Fact Sheets		3,600.00
Evaluation System		600.00
Phone		<u>900.00</u>
Part II Grant Cost:		\$ 71,835.00
UC Berkeley Contract Administration:		<u>9,783.00</u>
TOTAL PROJECT COST:		\$107,618.00

Consistent with Public Resources Code, Section 15061 (b) (3), this project is not subject to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$107,618.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop 40), Section 5096.650 (f), per the Oak Woodland Conservation Act; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

20. River Island Farms Wetland Restoration, Sacramento County \$129,000.00

This proposal is to consider an allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association for a cooperative project with the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the landowner and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to restore approximately 447 acres of seasonal wetlands and 50± acres of semi-permanent wetlands to compliment the existing 300± acres of associated native upland nesting habitat that was previously established by the NRCS. The privately owned property is located on Tyler Island in the Sacramento/San Joaquin River Delta, approximately two miles east of the City of Isleton in Sacramento County.

The site is unique in that it is protected jointly by the NRCS and the DFG. The NRCS initially placed a thirty-year wetland easement on the property, then, in February 1998, the WCB acquired a perpetual conservation easement to protect the land after the NRCS easement expired. After the acquisition was completed, the NRCS provided financial support to assist the landowner with the initial wetland restoration efforts, which were completed in 2003. Unfortunately, this initial effort, once flooded, did not provide the desired habitat benefits. Ponds were deeper than necessary and much of the higher portions of the wetlands

could not be flooded. On the other hand, native grasslands, established in 2004, have been much more successful; waterfowl and other birds have already begun to nest there.

Surveys of the property show that the high points in the wetland units can be lowered and the deep pond bottoms can be raised to provide more diverse and productive wetlands. Swales will be cut through all the pond bottoms from inlet to outlet to provide improved flooding and drainage ability. Islands, submerged mounds, peninsulas and tree berms will be constructed to increase wetland diversity. At least 4,800 willow and cottonwood cuttings will be planted to begin the revegetation of the riparian forests on the site.

Located in the heart of the northern Sacramento/San Joaquin River Delta, this site will provide much needed wetland habitat for waterfowl moving between the larger wetlands in the north Delta and Yolo Basin and the wetlands and flooded grain fields to the south in the Delta. The Delta continues to be a high priority for wetland restoration by the Central Valley Joint Venture (CVJV).

These wetlands will provide resting and feeding areas for migrating and wintering waterfowl and shorebirds, such as greater white-fronted geese and black-necked stilts. The riparian habitat that is planned for this site will benefit such species as song sparrows and tree swallows. Mallards and ring-necked pheasants are already confirmed to be breeding in the extensive native grasslands on site. Other species that will benefit include northern harriers and, possibly in this area of the Delta, short-eared owls, a California species of special concern.

Total cost for this project is estimated to be approximately \$258,000.00, with the following contributors:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$129,000.00
Natural Resources Conservation Service	129,000.00
TOTAL	\$258,000.00

Project costs will be for earthmoving, planting of trees, project design, construction supervision and administration.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 4 of Categorical Exemptions, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15304, as a minor alteration to land. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The landowner has agreed to manage and maintain the

property for twenty-five years, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Habitat Management Plan. If at any time during the life of the project, the landowners are unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, they will refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$129,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (d), IWCP; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

21. Laguna de Santa Rosa Ludwigia Eradication Project, \$500,000.00
Sonoma County

This proposal is to consider an allocation for a grant to the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation for a cooperative project with the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA), the Marin-Sonoma Mosquito Vector Control District, and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to eradicate 115± acres of an invasive aquatic plant species, *Ludwigia hexapetala*, found on the DFG Laguna Wildlife Area near Sebastopol, and within 35± acres of Laguna de Santa Rosa waterways in Sonoma County. This project has high urgency because *Ludwigia* infestations, by hosting the mosquito vectors of West Nile virus, may pose a health threat to residents of the Santa Rosa plain and local wildlife populations.

Ecosystem Impacts

The Laguna de Santa Rosa ecosystem is the second largest freshwater wetland in California, west of the Central Valley. It is set in an open space/agricultural area of approximately 30,000 acres within a rapidly urbanizing portion of the North Bay Area. More than 250,000 people reside within 10 miles of the wetland. *Ludwigia* has engendered a public health threat because it creates protective habitat for the species of mosquitoes that carry West Nile virus that reached Sonoma County in 2004. Densely growing *Ludwigia* sharply inhibits mosquito control efforts, producing populations more than 100 times greater than normally considered acceptable. The Laguna de Santa Rosa is a stop-over on the Pacific Flyway, and hosts a very diverse bird community. More than 200 bird species are known to be permanent or seasonal residents, and more than a third of these are known to be affected by West Nile virus. Thirty-four Laguna bird species are considered priority species of the Riparian Habitat Joint Venture, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) for Coastal California wetlands and the DFG. Some of the bird species most vulnerable to West Nile

virus are the most numerically and ecologically dominant species in the Laguna de Santa Rosa ecosystem, including herons, egrets, raptors and corvids. Horses in surrounding farms are also vulnerable to the virus, which has unknown effects on mammalian wildlife.

By growing over surrounding vegetation and developing a thick mat of woody perennial stems and decaying plant matter, *Ludwigia* is also a direct threat to the diversity of native plant and animal communities. This mat inhibits the recovery and recruitment of other plant species, and eliminates open-water habitats that are important foraging grounds for birds and other wildlife. As the *Ludwigia* biomass decomposes, microbial growth reduces dissolved oxygen in the water, impacting fish and invertebrate populations. Eighteen species of fish are found in the Laguna, including threatened populations of steelhead that use Laguna channels for seasonal passage to upstream breeding habitats. Current efforts to protect and enhance wetland habitats for migratory birds and waterfowl on the Pacific Flyway are substantially limited by *Ludwigia* growth, especially in the Laguna Wildlife Area where more than 100 acres of floodplain are close to being a *Ludwigia* monoculture.

Wildlife Area Habitat Impacts

Ludwigia now dominates the perennial wetlands of the Laguna Wildlife Area, a 539-acre complex of wetlands, riparian woodlands and oak savannah. As a whole, this wildlife area supports the greatest number of rare, endangered and unique species found in Sonoma County. The management objectives for this area include “protection of existing natural habitats, restoration of historic natural habitats, reintroduction of extirpated species, [and] enhancement of wetlands.” The adjoining seasonal wetlands and uplands in the Laguna Wildlife Area maintain a rich diversity of plants, including many rare vernal pool species. Some 232 bird species have been observed in the vicinity of the project area, including many species with high conservation value. There is a large heron and cormorant rookery within one mile north of the project area, on protected land owned by the City of Santa Rosa. Common mammals include deer, badger, river otters, weasels, hares, rabbits and raccoons. The Laguna Wildlife Area is accessible to the public for fishing and seasonal hunting, as well as wildlife viewing. Within the last ten years, portions of the upland have undergone riparian restoration, and the wildlife area also contains blocks of mature riparian forest.

County Water Channels

The Sonoma County Water Agency-owned Laguna channels, where the other severe *Ludwigia* infestation occurs, are part of a large system of waterways that were originally re-contoured to drain the land and accelerate movement of flood

waters off urban and agricultural lands on the Santa Rosa plain. The water-levels in these channels fluctuate greatly throughout the year, depending on rain events. Summer water levels are generally very low, and the Laguna becomes ponded, not actively flowing into the Russian River. The Sonoma County Water Agency is in the process of restoring the riparian vegetation along these channels. Existing easements allow for 25-50 ft of riparian buffer zone along each side of the channel. In the more mature restoration areas, willows and other trees provide much-needed bird habitat in an otherwise agricultural and urban-fringe area.

Regional Restoration Planning

Plans for *Ludwigia* eradication in the Laguna de Santa Rosa were developed through a joint effort by the Sonoma County *Ludwigia* Task Force, convened in January 2003 to address the public and environmental health threats posed by this invasive species. More than 50 local scientists, agency representatives, elected officials and environmental activists have contributed to the planning effort.

The *Ludwigia* removal project is part of a very large watershed and regional planning effort. The Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation has been funded by the California Coastal Conservancy to develop a watershed restoration and management plan for the Laguna de Santa Rosa. Local agencies and environmental groups have identified the Laguna as a focal point for environmental restoration, including restoring the riparian corridor, improving water quality, restoring fish, bird and wildlife habitats and increasing public access. The Nature Conservancy has recognized it as a top-priority area for preservation and restoration in Northern California. Point Reyes Bird Observatory Conservation Science has expressed strong interest in the Laguna as an important area for bird habitat conservation. The University of California Extension and the Sotoyome Resource Conservation District have active programs to assist local agricultural producers to improve the quality of surface waters entering the Laguna. Scientists from the USDA's Agricultural Research Service and Sonoma State University are developing ecological research programs to study the *Ludwigia* invasion in Sonoma County. Collectively, this restoration is a long-term process and it is already well underway. *Ludwigia* is the worst invasive species in the Laguna watershed. Once controlled, many other environmental restoration projects can successfully proceed.

At this time, staffs of the DFG and SCWA are preparing individual Statewide General Permits for aquatic herbicide application (General Permit No. CAG 990005), at the two project sites, under the supervision of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (NCRWQCB). CEQA documentation is

not required under this permit, as the herbicides being considered (glyphosate and triclopyr-based products) are not priority pollutants. NCRWQCB will issue permits before applications begin. The National Marine Fisheries Service supports the implementation of this project, and does not believe that there will be negative impacts on salmonid species. The DFG will be responsible for maintaining copies of all environmental documentation required for work performed on DFG property.

Neighboring landowners are supportive of this project because they are concerned about the risk of West Nile virus and the general degradation of the wetland. Local government agencies and municipalities are also very supportive, with representatives on the Sonoma County *Ludwigia* Task Force and are contributing matching funds to the *Ludwigia* control effort.

The total cost for this five-year eradication project is estimated to be approximately \$1,500,000.00, with the following contributors:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$500,000.00
Sonoma County Water Agency	450,000.00
Santa Rosa Subregional Wastewater System	450,000.00
Marin-Sonoma Mosquito & Vector Control Board	100,000.00
TOTAL	\$1,500,000.00

The WCB will provide funding for a total of three years for project management and implementation, including materials, application costs, harvesting, removal and composting for the eradication of *Ludwigia* on DFG lands. Other partners will contribute to the project's implementation for remaining years four and five, along with monitoring and research needs on all affected properties.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$500,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (d), Other; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

22. Sacramento River Fish Screen Reclamation Districts 307 and 999, Yolo County \$250,000.00

This is a proposal to consider an allocation for a cooperative project with the Family Water Alliance (FWA), Reclamation District 307 (RD 307) and Reclamation District 999 (RD 999) to construct and install a self-cleaning, retractable fish screen at RD 307's water intake siphon located on the right bank of the Sacramento River, approximately one mile north of the City of Clarksburg in Yolo County.

The Sacramento River and Bay/Delta watersheds have historically supported some of the largest runs of salmon and steelhead on the West Coast. In recent years there has been a significant decline in these populations. Concurrent with the declines in these anadromous species have been declines in other less well known fish species including the delta smelt and the Sacramento splittail. These declines have resulted in federal as well as state listing as endangered or threatened of several Sacramento River fish populations including winter run Chinook salmon, spring run Chinook salmon, central valley Steelhead and delta smelt. The Sacramento splittail was recently de-listed but its population is being monitored and is a source of concern for fisheries biologists. The causes of these declines are numerous including unfavorable ocean conditions, over-harvest, habitat loss and degradation, and declining water quality.

Water diversions have also contributed significantly to the decline of fish populations in the Sacramento River. The entrainment of fish by these diversions is a significant loss to populations already experiencing the many other negative population pressures already listed. Furthermore, the killing or "take" of individuals of species listed as endangered or threatened under the Federal or the State Endangered Species Act without a take permit is illegal putting the operators of unscreened diversions at risk of prosecution. Consequently the screening of water intakes in areas with endangered, threatened and/or candidate fish species like the Sacramento River is a high priority for the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). NMFS considers fish screening an essential element of a successful recovery program for California's threatened and endangered anadromous fish species. NMFS regulations call for the installation of fish protective devices on all unscreened water diversions over the range of all listed anadromous salmonids in California. This includes the Sacramento River. All of the larger intakes for municipal water systems and large irrigation and water districts have either been screened or are in the process of being screened in the Sacramento River watershed. However there is a class of smaller intakes which have not been widely screened to date. RD 307's 42-inch siphon carrying from

70 to 100 cubic feet of water per second (CFS) during the irrigation season is one of this class and is a high priority for screening according to DFG and NMFS.

The current proposal from FWA is to construct and install a state of the art, retrievable, self-cleaning fish screen on Reclamation District 307's 42-inch siphon on the Sacramento River. This siphon typically pumps 30,000 to 35,000 gallons of water per minute during the irrigation season and at peak flow can pump up to 45 thousand gallons per minute. The siphon itself is located on RD 307 land but is operated through mutual agreement by RD 999. The water diverted by the siphon supplies both of these Reclamation Districts which include 33 farms on approximately 25,000 farmable acres. Crops produced with this water include safflower, corn, alfalfa, figs, walnuts, grapes, wheat and tomatoes. A total of about 100 diversions behind the siphon will be effectively "screened" as a result of this project. Consequently, this project will benefit endangered and threatened species as well as provide farmers access to "fish friendly" water. It has been favorably reviewed by the Central Valley Project Improvement Act's Anadromous Fish Screen Program (CVPIA AFSP) which includes both NMFS and DFG as members.

The screen itself will consist of four cylindrical screens on one intake manifold. Associated items include a docking inlet, trash rack, retrieval track, service platform and storage shed. The screen will meet DFG and NMFS fish screening criteria as well as criteria for structure placement, approach velocity, sweeping flows and screen openings. The fish screen will be monitored closely during construction, installation and throughout the year following installation. A four-man Occupational Safety and Health Administration-certified dive team will conduct monthly monitoring during the first irrigation season after installation. Monitoring will include diver observation and videotaping of the screen operation, interviews with the screen operator RD 999, documentation of any needed repairs or adjustments and an evaluation of the hydraulic performance of the screen. Monitoring is intended to identify any problems with the operation and function of the screen. Adjustments and/or repairs will be made based on monitoring data. The DFG Fish Screen and Fish Passage Project will also be monitoring the function of the screen periodically.

The total cost for this project is estimated to be approximately \$636,784.80, with the following contributions:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$250,000.00
Central Valley Project Improvement Act	318,784.80
Reclamation Districts	68,000.00
TOTAL	\$636,784.80

The project costs funded by the Board will be engineering and design, site preparation and survey, screen and storage shed fabrication and project administration. The matching funds will be used for all of these items plus permitting and contractor monitoring.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The FWA will obtain all necessary permits for the project including a DFG 1603 Streambed Alteration Agreement, Army Corps permit, Reclamation Board permit and Section 7 consultation with NMFS. It is anticipated that DFG will file a Categorical Exemption as part of its 1603 process to satisfy CEQA.

RD 999 has agreed to operate and maintain the screen and associated facilities pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement through the year 2020. It is expected that the screen will function well beyond this date however. RD 999 will receive technical and educational assistance throughout all phases of the screening process.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; allocate \$250,000.00 from California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 for project costs; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

23. Sacramento River Wildlife Area, Princeton Unit, Expansion 1, \$650,000.00
Colusa and Glenn Counties

This proposal is to consider the acquisition of 257± acres of land located on the east side of the Sacramento River, southeasterly of the community of Princeton, in Colusa and Glenn Counties. The land lies westerly of River Road and the levee system of the Sacramento River in an area known as Boggs Bend. In addition to the above acreage, approximately 50± acres have been identified as State sovereign land and will be quitclaimed to the State through this transaction to release any ownership interest in the property.

Adjacent to the northwest, across the Sacramento River, is a portion of the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Sacramento River Wildlife Area, Princeton Unit. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) owns land immediately southwest of the subject that is currently in walnut production. Access to the subject is from River Road over the levee as well as through TNC property from the south.

The property will be managed by the DFG as an expansion to the Princeton Unit located on the west side of the river. The expansion will increase the value and use of the wildlife area for resident and neo-tropical migratory waterfowl, and

other avian species that migrate through northern California and the Sacramento Valley. The property has direct river frontage with the Sacramento River and also has an abandoned meander that is now an oxbow that is well over 100 acres in size that retains water year-round. The river bank has been slowly eroding and has created sheer banks that provide nesting opportunities for bank swallows, a California threatened species. The open farm fields on the north and the open meadow on the south provide excellent foraging areas for raptors as well as nesting opportunities for the many ducks in the area. The property will provide increased public access and recreation along the Sacramento River.

The proposed expansion falls under the purview of the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum (SRCAF). The SRCAF involves both private and public landowners along the Sacramento River, including representatives from seven counties and State and federal resource agencies. On June 17, 2004, the project was presented to SRCAF by TNC (the option holder) and the project was approved in principle with no formal opposition raised concerning the acquisition. The northerly portion of the subject land in Colusa County, approximately 40 acres, is currently in agricultural use and is under a Williamson Act Agricultural Preserve Contract. The southerly 18± acres of the land in Glenn County are in agricultural use and are not under a Williamson Act Agricultural Preserve Contract. During Management Plan preparation, continuance of agricultural use for this portion of the land will be considered.

The management plan will be expanded for the Princeton Unit to include the subject property after the acquisition is completed. Management cost increases are considered unlikely because of the proximity of the existing Princeton Unit lands and other DFG lands along the Sacramento River.

The proposed acquisition is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and under Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of an ownership in land to preserve open space, habitat or historical resources. Subject to approval by the Wildlife Conservation Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

TNC will assign its current option to the State for the purchase of the land and associated water rights. The owner has agreed to sell the property at the Department of General Services' (DGS) approved fair market value of \$625,400.00. It is estimated that an additional \$24,600.00 will be needed for project costs including appraisal, title and escrow fees and DGS' review charges, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$650,000.00.

Staff recommends that the Board approve the acquisition, as proposed; allocate \$650,000.00 [\$427,294.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a) (2), and \$222,706.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (b/c)] for the acquisition and associated costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

24. Wetland Conservation Easement Program (Rudd Farms), \$1,190,000.00
Butte and Sutter Counties

This proposal is to consider the acquisition of a perpetual conservation easement over 437± acres of privately-owned land for wildlife conservation purposes and agricultural land preservation.

This proposal has been developed as part of the North Central Valley Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), a program set up by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). CREP is a recent refinement of the Conservation Reserve Program, a highly successful Department of Agriculture conservation program set up in 1986 which provides financial incentives to farmers and ranchers to perform certain practices on their properties that will reduce soil erosion, improve air and water quality and establish wildlife habitat. CREP furthers this program by allowing decisions to be made locally and permitting USDA to partner with states and local governments to meet locally determined high-priority conservation needs.

The North Central Valley CREP habitat improvements program has been developed for designated areas of Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Placer, Sacramento, Solano, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba Counties. The federal role in this project is to enter into contracts with area farmers to take marginal farmlands out of production for 10 to 15 years. The USDA's Farm Services Agency (FSA) will provide yearly payments to compensate these farmers for loss of production income during this time period. The State has determined that most of the State and local cost share will go toward the protection and restoration of wetland and riparian habitats. The overall goal of the program is to establish approximately 10,000 acres of upland nesting under the federal share of the program and 1,500 acres of wetlands and 500 acres of riparian forest from the State and local match. These improvements will be funded and implemented by a partnership that includes the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the FSA, California Waterfowl Association, Ducks Unlimited and local farmers. The USDA, through the FSA, will provide approximately \$19 million of the estimated \$24 million total project cost, allowing the State and non-federal partners to leverage an 80 percent federal cost share.

Farmers in the target area were contacted and provided with information on the program. Applications were received and evaluated by staff with the DFG and other partners. Applications were rated based on factors that included such characteristics as size of the property, soil characteristics, relation to other protected areas and potential for diversity of habitat. The subject property scored well on all aspects and will provide a unique mix of riparian, wetland and upland nesting habitats. The property is bounded by the Gray Lodge Wildlife Area on three sides.

This proposal offers a genuine opportunity for the WCB and its partners to work with a private landowner to provide significant wildlife benefit on a working farm. The 319± acre wetland and upland portion of the property will be managed to provide the highest quality wetland habitat, while still maintaining agricultural production through the use of cattle grazing. The 118± acres that will be protected cropland will provide significant wildlife benefit, both to breeding waterfowl and for the vast flocks of migrating birds that arrive in the Central Valley each winter. These birds rely to a great extent on flooded agricultural fields for the food they need to return to their breeding grounds farther north. In addition, this land will provide a buffer between the wetland areas established through this project the actively farmed areas to the south.

Located adjacent to and actually bounded on three sides by the 9,000-acre Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, this site will provide tremendous wildlife benefits for waterfowl, including such species as pintail, mallards and widgeon. In addition, many other animals will benefit from the increased wetland habitat, including shorebirds such as greater yellowlegs and western sandpipers, and marsh species such as soras and river otters. The project is likely to benefit several special status species such as the threatened giant garter snake and the tricolored blackbird, a species of concern to both the State and the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service.

The property rights have been appraised and the value approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) at \$1,163,000.00. It is estimated that an additional \$27,000.00 will be needed to cover project costs including the appraisal, escrow and title fees, and review charges by the DGS, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$1,190,000.00. The California Waterfowl Association has applied to the Packard Foundation for financial assistance with this project. Staff proposes that these funds be accepted, if approved, to be applied toward the purchase of the property, and the State's allocation reduced accordingly.

This acquisition is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and under Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space. The appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse upon approval by the WCB. It is expected that those portions of the project that lie in Butte County will be modified to provide high quality upland and wetland habitat, though final plans have not been developed. Upon completion of the final restoration plans, staff of the DFG and the WCB will evaluate the project and, if appropriate, additional environmental documentation will be prepared and filed at that time.

Staff recommends that the Board approve the acquisition as proposed; allocate \$1,190,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (d) IWCP, for the acquisition and associated costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

25. Ash Creek Wildlife Area Wetland Enhancement, Lassen County \$93,000.00

This proposal is to consider an allocation of a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc., for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to enhance approximately 170 acres of permanent wetland habitat on the DFG's Ash Creek Wildlife Area, located approximately two miles north of Bieber and one mile east of the Bieber Lookout Road in Lassen County.

The Wildlife Conservation Board initially acquired 11,525± acres in the heart of Big Valley in 1985 to protect a variety of habitats, including riparian forest, wet meadows, sage steppe, upland native grasslands and a 3,000± acre marsh known as Big Swamp. Over the years through various Board actions, the area has grown to nearly 15,000 acres. In 1988, the Board funded a project to enhance a small portion of the Ash Creek Wildlife Area by improving levees and adding water control structures to allow the DFG to better manage the site.

The name Big Swamp evokes an image of pristine, unspoiled nature, where wildlife in untold numbers can live undisturbed. There is some truth to this picture in that the Big Swamp is so large that human access to the center is almost impossible. But the impression that myriads of wildlife species can be found here is a bit misleading; in fact, much of the Swamp has become a sea of cattails and tules, ideal home perhaps to rails, marsh wrens and blackbirds, but overall, the diversity is limited.

The goal of this project is to increase the diversity of habitat within a small portion of Big Swamp. Work activities will consist of excavating habitat channels and small potholes in selected areas of Big Swamp, creating nesting islands and peninsulas and excavating a firebreak channel. Creating habitat channels and potholes will provide a better interspersed of open water and emergent vegetation. Creating a firebreak in Big Swamp will improve vegetation management capabilities by allowing DFG personnel to burn smaller, more manageable areas of the marsh.

Opening up the marsh will benefit a variety of species. The Big Valley/Ash Creek region supports a large waterfowl breeding population, but open water brood-rearing habitat is currently limited. Most waterfowl species nest on upland areas near open water, so building nesting islands and peninsulas will increase availability of nesting and loafing habitat for waterfowl like mallards, Great Basin Canada geese, cinnamon teal and gadwall; and creating channels and potholes will increase availability of brood-rearing habitat for these species. One duck species that breeds in dense tules, the redhead, once bred in large numbers in the swamp, but has declined drastically in the last few decades, probably due to lack of open water for broods. Other birds that breed in the tules, such as yellow headed blackbirds, would benefit from the increased invertebrate life that would result from ponds and open swales. Finally, several California species of special concern, a group that includes the black tern, least bittern and white-faced ibis, are known or thought to breed in the Valley and would benefit from open water areas for foraging.

Total cost for this project is estimated to be approximately \$97,000.00, with the DFG contributing \$4,000.00 and the rest requested from the WCB. Project costs will be for earthmoving, permitting, project design, construction supervision and administration.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The DFG will obtain any necessary permits and complete the appropriate documentation to satisfy the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$93,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (d) Other; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

26. Pine Creek Reservoir Public Access Improvements, \$87,107.00
Modoc County

This is a proposal to consider an allocation for a cooperative project with the County of Modoc (County) to improve public access at the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Pine Creek Reservoir Public Access located on the west side of Pine Creek Reservoir approximately nine miles southeast of the City of Alturas in Modoc County.

The Pine Creek Reservoir and associated facilities, including a diversion dam on Pine Creek, 4,400± feet of water pipeline and 14,200± feet of ditch to deliver water from the creek to the reservoir, were constructed in the early 1900's as part of a hydroelectric project. Subsequently, the reservoir became a popular trout fishing destination for local and regional anglers. Then, in the 1950's, the power company which owned the facilities, decided to abandon the project and remove the reservoir dam. In 1957 the DFG, with funds allocated by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), acquired the reservoir and associated water control and delivery structures in order to avoid the loss of this popular trout fishing site. The reservoir, which is located at 5,000± feet elevation, was opened as a cooperative project between Modoc County, the DFG and the WCB in 1962. It has been operated and maintained by the County since that time and is now a part of the Pine Creek Wildlife Area. The reservoir is stocked annually with about 1,000 pounds of catchable rainbow trout by the DFG and remains a very popular destination for local and regional anglers. Although there is no recent public use data for the Pine Creek Reservoir, public use of the site, according to the local wildlife biologist, is moderate but consistent, with someone almost always there fishing during the daylight hours. In general, public fishing access and associated facilities are scarce in the area making it important to keep these existing facilities in good condition and make them available to as many users as possible. In anticipation of even higher public use at this site as a result of this project, the Department hopes to increase the amount of trout stocked here annually.

In addition to the acquisition of the Pine Creek Reservoir Public Access, the WCB has funded several other improvement projects at the site over the years. In fact, some routine restoration work on the dam was funded at the time of acquisition. Then in 1965, the WCB authorized repair to a number of WCB projects in northern California that had sustained damages from the severe 1964-65 flooding. Some of these funds were expended to rehabilitate the water supply ditch and shore up part of the pipeline at Pine Creek. In 1983 the WCB allocated funds to replace the diversion dam and pipeline that bring water to the reservoir from the creek as they had reached the end of their serviceable life

span. At this time, funds were also allocated to construct a parking area and portable restroom, remove silt from the reservoir and further rehabilitate the reservoir dam.

The public access facilities at the site today have not been upgraded since 1985 and consequently their condition is less than acceptable. The parking lot has become basically a dirt turn-around area which turns into a muddy quagmire during the rainy season. Twenty years of use combined with vandalism and the ravages of time have rendered the restroom unusable, which sits abandoned on the south side of the reservoir. All that remains of the project sign is a single vertical post standing alone in the middle of the parking area. Furthermore, the reservoir is inaccessible for mobility impaired individuals who are unable to hike up the steep and uneven slope of the dam to get to the reservoir. The current proposal from the County is to re-gravel the existing parking area, pave two ADA parking spaces with asphalt, construct a barrier-free trail from the parking area to a paved fishing area on top of the dam, install safety railing where necessary and install a barrier-free one-hole vault-type restroom and project sign.

The total cost for this project is estimated to be approximately \$87,000.00 all of which is requested from the Board. Project costs will be for graveling the parking lot, paving and striping two ADA parking spaces with asphalt, constructing a barrier-free trail from the parking area to the top of the dam, paving a small fishing area with guardrails on top of the dam, installing a vault-type restroom, signage and project management.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The County filed a Notice of Exemption for the project with the County Clerk on December 16, 2004. Furthermore, the County has agreed to continue operating and maintaining the site as they have since 1962 pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Cooperative Agreement through the year 2024.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; allocate \$21,679.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund, Minor Capital Outlay, and \$65,428.00 from California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 for project costs, and General Services' review costs; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

27. Resolution

The following resolution is submitted for enactment by the Wildlife Conservation Board:

WHEREAS, Senator Michael Machado, in his capacity as an Assembly Member and Senator, served for nearly five years as a member of the Joint Legislative Advisory Committee of the Wildlife Conservation Board; and

WHEREAS, Senator Machado's personal devotion to protecting and preserving California's agricultural and natural resources, coupled with his sound judgment and experience with California's wildlife resources, has greatly assisted the Board on numerous occasions in carrying out its duties and responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Board to gratefully acknowledge Senator Machado's contributions to the work of the Board through his personal support, advice and leadership, as well as that of his great staff; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the Members of the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Joint Legislative Advisory Committee, and the Board staff convey to Senator Machado our sincere appreciation for his noteworthy contributions to the Board, and express our best wishes to him; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution be made a part of the official minutes of this Board meeting and that a copy be provided to Senator Machado.

OTHER BUSINESS