

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD
 1807 13TH STREET, SUITE 103
 SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814
 (916) 445-8448
 FAX (916) 323-0280
www.wcb.ca.gov



NOTICE OF MEETING

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

February 23, 2006
 10:00 a.m.
¹ Legislative Office Building, Room 100
 1020 N. Street
 Sacramento, California 95814

FINAL AGENDA ITEMS

ITEM NO.	PAGE NO.
1. Roll Call	1
2. Election of Chair	2
3. Funding Status – Informational	2
4. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 5 - 9)	5
*5. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of November 17, 2005	5
*6. Recovery of Funds	5
*7. Famosa Slough Restoration, San Diego County	9

\$186,000.00

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Friends of Famosa Slough, for culvert repairs to improve tidal flow and support the natural restoration of Famosa Slough, a tributary to the San Diego River Estuary, located within the City of San Diego. [Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a)]

* Proposed Consent Calendar

¹ These facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities.

- *8. Yolo County Oak Woodlands Management Plan, Yolo County \$30,000.00 11

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Yolo County Planning, Resources and Public Works Department, for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game and the Board to assist Yolo County to prepare an Oak Woodlands Management Plan. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (f)]

- *9. Oak Woodlands Conservation Education and Outreach for County Planners, Statewide \$45,000.00 13

To consider the allocation for a grant to the University of California for a cooperative project with Mendocino County, the Department of Fish and Game and the Board to provide information to county planners responsible for determining whether a project within its jurisdiction may result in a conversion of oak woodlands, thus resulting in a significant effect on the environment. Through a series of workshops, web-based information, power point presentations, and office and field evaluative tools, planners will be able to assess project impacts to oak woodlands. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (f)]

10. New and Alamo Rivers Wetland Master Plan, Phase I Augmentation, Imperial County \$450,500.00 15

To consider the allocation for an augmentation of the existing grant that was previously awarded to the Salton Sea Authority to develop the first phase of a master plan for treatment of wetland sites on the New River and Alamo River on private and public land, located in the Imperial Valley, south of the Salton Sea. The augmentation will allow for collection of additional biological samples, and the preparation of a more expansive ecological risk assessment that will determine if it is appropriate to proceed with Phase II, development of environmental documents. [Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79565]

11. Carlsbad Hydrologic Unit Exotic Invasives Removal, San Diego County \$1,500,000.00 16

To consider the allocation for a grant to the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy to remove fifteen species of exotic invasive plants from the Carlsbad Hydrological Unit, stretching from the Lower Alta Creek Watershed in the north to the Escondido Creek watershed in the south, in San Diego County. [Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a)]

12. Oak Grove, San Diego County \$10,520,000.00 19

To consider the acquisition of 4,207± acres of land for the purposes of protecting a combination of habitat including riparian, wetlands and desert scrub, and also to provide access for hunting and other compatible public uses, located in northeastern San Diego County off of State Highway 79 near the community of Oak Grove. This is also to request authorization to transfer a portion of the property to the Bureau of Land Management to be incorporated in, and managed as part of, its Beauty Mountain Wilderness Area. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Sections 2786 (a, b/c) and California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650]

13. Morelli Park Boat Ramp, San Joaquin County \$325,252.00 20

To consider the allocation for a cooperative project with the City of Stockton to rehabilitate and widen the boat ramp at Morelli Park located in the City of Stockton. The existing parking area, restroom and entrance road will also be rehabilitated. [Wildlife Restoration Fund, Minor Capital Outlay]

14. Riparian Habitat Restoration, Cache Creek, Lower Reach, Phase II, Yolo County \$500,000.00 22

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Cache Creek Conservancy for a cooperative project to remove nonnative invasive plants and restore native riparian habitat at selected locations on public and private property located along Cache Creek between the Capay Dam and approximately one mile upstream from Interstate 5 in Yolo County. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (e/f)]

15. Cow Creek Conservation Area, Shasta County \$2,670,000.00 23

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Trust for Public Land to assist in a cooperative project with the Shasta Land Trust, the Department of Fish and Game and the Board to acquire a conservation easement over 6,640± acres of privately owned land located in the Cascade Range foothills east of Redding for the protection and preservation of valuable plant and wildlife habitat. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Sections 2786 (a, b/c)]

16. Six Rivers (Iaqua), Humboldt County \$2,233,000.00 25

To consider the allocation for a grant to assist in a cooperative project with the Northcoast Regional Land Trust and the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection (CDF) to acquire a conservation easement on a 4,747± acre ranch site on Kneeland Road, approximately 10 miles north of Bridgeville and 15 miles southeast of Eureka, for the purposes of protecting the property from future

development, continuation of ranching and forestry operations, protection and restoration of streams and riparian habitats, and optimization of timber productivity, all as may be consistent with wildlife habitat preservation and protection of sensitive biological resources. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40) Section 5096.650 (f) and Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(4)]

17. Resolution		27
18. Staff Report – Grant Agreement and Conservation Easement Policy	Informational	28
Report to update the Board on staff’s progress in developing policy for monitoring the conditions of easements as requested by the Board during its meeting of November 17, 2005.		
19. Staff Report – Easement Transfers	Informational	29
Report on easement transfers made over Department of Fish and Game controlled land pursuant to authority granted by the Wildlife Conservation Board on February 24, 1998.		

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

February 23, 2006

10:00 A.M.

¹ Legislative Office Building, Room 100

1020 N Street

Sacramento, California 95814

1. Roll Call

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS

Michael Flores, Member

President, Fish and Game Commission

Michael C. Genest, 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. Election of Chair
3. Funding Status as of February 23, 2006 (Informational)
 - (a) 2005-06 Wildlife Restoration Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act - Minor Projects	\$500,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(77,000.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$423,000.00
 - (b) 2005-06 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act	\$20,551,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(35,000.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$20,516,000.00
 - (c) 2004-05 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act	\$20,577,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(2,792,900.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$17,784,100.00
 - (d) 2003-04 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act	\$20,620,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(9,606,740.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$11,013,260.00
 - (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	(13,174,005.17)
Unallocated Balance	\$1,387,994.83
 - (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	(25,120,524.46)
Unallocated Balance	\$10,979,475.54

- (g) 2005-06 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget
- | | |
|---|----------------|
| Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects) | \$1,545,000.00 |
| Less Previous Board Allocations | (0.00) |
| Unallocated Balance | \$1,545,000.00 |
- (h) 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 |
- (i) 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 | (118,507.00) |
| Unallocated Balance | \$8,381,493.00 |
- (j) 2002-03 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget
- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| Budget Act (2005-06 Reappropriation)
(San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects) | \$2,500,000.00 |
| Less Previous Board Allocations | (2,424,726.00) |
| Unallocated Balance | \$75,274.00 |
| Chapter 983, Statutes of 2002 | \$4,800,000.00 |
| Less Previous Board Allocations | (1,654,700.23) |
| Unallocated Balance | \$3,145,299.77 |
| Chapter 984, Statutes of 2002 | \$19,200,000.00 |
| Less Previous Board Allocations | (10,710,925.00) |
| Unallocated Balance | \$8,489,075.00 |
- (k) 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 | (112,242,655.45) |
| Unallocated Balance | \$160,757,344.55 |

(l)	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	(12,169,751.38)
	Unallocated Balance	\$1,080,248.62
(m)	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	(20,011,970.00)
	Unallocated Balance	\$12,488,030.00
(n)	2003-04 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Continuously Appropriated (Sec. 79565 and 79572)	\$814,350,000.00
	Less 2003-04 BA Transfer to HCF from Sec.79565	(21,000,000.00)
	Less 2004-05 BA Transfer to HCF from Sec.79565	(21,000,000.00)
	Less 2005-06 BA Transfer to HCF from Sec.79565	(4,000,000.00)
	Less 2005-06 BA Transfer to HCF from Sec.79572	(3,100,000.00)
	Less Previous Board Allocations	(620,480,888.79)
	Unallocated Balance	\$144,769,111.21
(o)	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)	\$423,000.00
Habitat Conservation Fund (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f)	\$49,313,360.00
Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (e) and (f)	\$12,367,470.37
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (g), (h), (i), (j) and (k)	\$193,393,486.32
Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (l), (m) and (n)	\$158,337,389.83
Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund (o)	\$5,000,000.00

RECAP OF 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	(48,241,234.00)
Balance of Tax Credits Available	\$51,758,766.00

- 4. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 5-9)
- *5. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of November 17, 2005
- *6. Recovery of Funds

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

- \$61,387.26** to the **Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund**
- \$39,049.50** to the **Habitat Conservation Fund**
- \$780.78** to the **Wildlife Restoration Fund**
- \$0.00** to the **River Protection Sub account**
- \$17,574.00** to the **California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund**
- \$37,931.93** to the **Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002**

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

East Elliott Preserve (City of San Diego), San Diego County

Allocated	\$5,010,000.00
Expended	<u>-5,001,474.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$8,526.00

East Elliott Preserve (City of San Diego), San Diego County

Allocated	\$3,005,050.00
Expended	<u>-2,992,122.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$12,928.00

Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, Water Distribution System, Phases IV and V,
Butte County

Allocated	\$1,490,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,489,997.94</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$2.06

Point Benicia Fishing Pier Improvements, Solano County

Allocated	\$252,270.00
Expended	<u>-252,210.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$60.00

San Joaquin River Riparian Habitat, Expansion 12, Madera County

Allocated	\$1,332,604.00
Expended	<u>-1,300,031.75</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$32,572.25

Soquel Demonstration State Forest, Santa Cruz County

Allocated	\$312,000.00
Expended	<u>-304,701.05</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$7,298.95

Total Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, \$61,387.26
Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND

Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve, Expansion 5, San Luis Obispo County

Allocated	\$2,120,000.00
Expended	<u>-2,120,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

East Elliott Preserve (City of San Diego), San Diego County

Allocated	\$14,950.00
Expended	<u>-0.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$14,950.00

Feather River Parkway, Expansion 1, Sutter County

Allocated	\$5,000.00
Expended	<u>-0.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$5,000.00

Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, Water Distribution System, Phases IV & V Augmentation,
Butte County

Allocated	\$595,000.00
Expended	<u>-595,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Riparian Habitat Restoration, Upper Little Lake Ranch, Inyo County

Allocated	\$45,800.00
Expended	<u>-45,800.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

River Island Farms Wetland Restoration, Sacramento County

Allocated	\$129,000.00
Expended	<u>-129,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

San Bruno Mountain, Brisbane Acres, Expansion 2 and 3, San Mateo County

Allocated	\$10,000.00
Expended	<u>-867.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$9,133.00

Sands Meadow, Tuolumne County

Allocated	\$447,000.00
Expended	<u>-442,033.50</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$4,966.50

Sands Meadow (Disposal), Tuolumne County

Allocated	\$5,000.00
Expended	<u>-0.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$5,000.00

Total Habitat Conservation Fund **\$39,049.50**

WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND

Los Banos Wildlife Area, Observation Pier, Merced County

Allocated	\$35,000.00
Expended	<u>-34,219.22</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$780.78

Total Wildlife Restoration Fund **\$780.78**

RIVER PROTECTION SUB ACCOUNT

San Joaquin River Riparian Habitat, Expansion 12, Madera County

Allocated	\$5,302,396.00
Expended	<u>-5,302,396.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Total River Protection Sub account **\$0.00**

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

Pleasants Valley Conservation Area, Solano County

Allocated	\$1,018,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,009,202.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$8,798.00

Sierra Valley Conservation Area, Expansion 2, Sierra County

Allocated	\$310,000.00
Expended	<u>-301,224.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$8,776.00

**Total California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe
Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund** **\$17,574.00**

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

Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve, Expansion 5, San Luis Obispo County

Allocated	\$6,000,000.00
Expended	<u>-5,969,658.07</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$30,341.93

Fall River Valley, Expansion 1, Shasta County

Allocated	\$163,000.00
Expended	<u>-155,410.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$7,590.00

**Total Water Security, Clean Drinking Water,
Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002** **\$37,931.93**

*7. Famosa Slough Restoration, San Diego County \$186,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant for a cooperative project with the Friends of Famosa Slough to assist in the restoration of Famosa Slough through the repair of an existing culvert that will increase tidal flow to the slough. Famosa Slough is located at the junction of West Point Loma Boulevard and Famosa Boulevard, one-half mile south of Interstate 8 in the City of San Diego.

Famosa Slough is a 37± acre Wetland Preserve owned and managed by the City of San Diego. It was historically part of the Mission Bay/San Diego River estuary system before the San Diego River Flood Control Channel was built in the 1950's that reduced its connection to the River. The Slough is tidally flushed and supports a wide diversity of wetland wildlife and vegetation.

At moderate tide levels, tidal flows are carried under the street through a single 48-inch reinforced concrete culvert. At higher tide levels, the flows are also carried by a set of large box culverts. The existing culvert system results in hydraulic constraints to tidal circulation which both mutes the overall tidal range and creates an impediment to efficient flushing of Famosa Slough at moderate and low tidal stages. The effects of the current muted conditions are limitations in wetlands and mudflats within the Slough, degradation of water quality and impacts to more significant habitat restoration opportunities.

A second 48-inch culvert crosses under West Point Loma Boulevard parallel to and a few inches west of the culvert mentioned above. When the street was widened from two lanes to four lanes in the 1960's, the City did not extend this second culvert as it was not needed for storm water conveyance due to the construction of the higher elevation double box culvert as an element of the road widening. Both ends of the second 48-inch culvert were sealed with concrete plugs. The southern end of that culvert is still visible and the northern end was buried under the fill at the northern edge of the widened road. A Feasibility Analysis has confirmed the culvert to be in good condition and capable of being restored to operational use. This can occur by removing and replacing the plugged pipe segments and adding 16 feet to the northern end. The culvert will extend out of the roadway embankment and be the same length, elevation, and slope as the eastern culvert.

The culvert extension project is an essential hydrological element of the Famosa Slough Enhancement Plan 1994. The enhancement plan has been endorsed by the resource and regulatory agencies, the City of San Diego; and community and environmental organizations; and, since the plan's adoption numerous elements of work have been completed through state and federal grant assistance, local governmental support, and community-based funding and labor investments. To date approximately 50% of the overall work called for in the enhancement plan has been implemented or is underway.

The feasibility of restoring this culvert was verified by the City using funds provided by the State Coastal Conservancy, on behalf of the Southern California Wetland Recovery Program (SCWRP), and the City of San Diego. The City, also using funds provided by the SCWRP, later completed design and permitting for the culvert extension.

This project will make final design adjustments and permit modifications; remove the concrete plugs; drive support pilings for the culvert extension; excavate the soil for the culvert extension; remove one plugged section of pipe; extend the pipe with a 16 foot section; restore and stabilize the bank; and fund required construction monitoring by the City. The Friends of Famosa Slough will provide management of the overall project; including managing the contract, revegetating the bank, as well as monitoring and maintaining the erosion control measures installed by the contractor. These activities will be done as an in-kind contribution. The City of San Diego has passed an ordinance agreeing to long-term maintenance of the culvert.

All previous state permits that have been obtained were for a more costly implementation of this project. The current implementation will have less of a footprint and less potential for environmental impact and is thus a preferred restoration alternative to accomplish project goals. A Coastal Development Permit has been granted, but will be reviewed to determine if an amendment to modify the project description is required. A City Site Development Permit has also been issued for the project. It is anticipated that the project will be in substantial conformance with that permit and that the City will only need to make such findings. The Department of Fish and Game has expressed support for the overall Famosa Slough Enhancement Plan and has been instrumental in nearby projects, including implementation of water quality enhancement ponds at the southern end of the Slough. Remaining environmental documents and exemptions will be completed before construction begins.

The project will be funded as follows:

WCB	\$186,000.00
Friends of Famosa Slough (in-kind)	<u>2,100.00</u>
Total:	\$188,100.00

Previously funded phases of the entire Famosa Slough Restoration Plan were funded as follows:

Famosa Slough Enhancement Plan Completed 11/93		Coastal Conservancy
Treatment Ponds	\$126,000	California Regional Water Quality Control Board
	\$124,000	In-kind Donations Contractor, Volunteers & Materials
Enhancement Plan Implementation	\$540,000	Federal & Local Funds
Culvert Extension Feasibility Study	\$ 12,000	Coastal Conservancy
Culvert Extension Design	\$ 76,709	Coastal Conservancy
Upland Restoration Project (Friends)	\$367,000	State Water Resources Control Board
	<u>\$100,000</u>	In-kind Donations Contractor, Volunteers & Materials
Total Prior Funding:	\$1,345,709	

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$186,000 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.

- *8. Yolo County Oak Woodlands Management Plan, Yolo County \$30,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Yolo County Planning, Resources and Public Works Department, Parks and Natural Resources Management Division, to assist with the development of an Oak Woodlands Management Plan for Yolo County.

In 2001, the Oak Woodlands Conservation Act was enacted and authority vested within the WCB to implement the Oak Woodlands Conservation Program. The Act mandated 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.

The County has requested funds to develop an Oak Woodlands Management Plan designed to bring together conservationists, government agencies and private landowners to recommend priority areas for oak woodland conservation. In addition, the county will attempt to identify creative approaches to conserve oak woodlands and design a public outreach and education effort focusing on the conservation of oaks.

The oak woodlands remaining in Yolo County are found primarily on private land. A preliminary assessment of oak woodlands in Yolo County, completed in 2005 as part of the Yolo County Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan process, identifies approximately 84,217± acres of oak woodlands remaining in Yolo County, mostly in the northwest and west. Blue oak woodlands dominate the county, but there are also stands of interior live oak, valley oak and canyon/black oak woodlands. The assessment also identified oak woodlands in Yolo County as part of the Great Valley Oak Woodlands Association, an area that provides habitat for a variety of special status wildlife species.

The Oak Woodlands Management Plan will allow Yolo County the opportunity to better understand changes in oak woodlands over the past century and identify priority areas for voluntary conservation effort. To accomplish this effort, the county proposes to commission the services of a Coordinator, a qualified expert in the field of ecology, forestry, and oak woodlands. Staff of the Yolo County Parks and Natural Resources Management Division will assist the coordinator with any necessary research and administrative functions.

Working in cooperation with the county staff, the coordinator will perform background research into the following general areas:

- 1) Assessment of existing oak woodlands in Yolo County.
- 2) Assessment of current programs and activities focusing on oak woodland conservation and evaluation of current land uses and programs affecting oak woodlands on both private and public lands.
- 3) Identification of the status of oak woodlands in Yolo County.

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

DESCRIPTION	COST ESTIMATE
Background Research	\$ 2,475.00
Identify Priority Areas	2,475.00
Public Outreach Process	7,725.00
Draft Oak Woodlands Plan	9,915.00
Final Oak Woodlands Plan	6,000.00
Board of Supervisors Resolution	610.00
Printing & Distribution	<u>800.00</u>
 Total Estimated Project Cost	 \$30,000.00

This project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15322, Class 22, because the project adopts educational and training programs that involve no physical alteration in the area. Staff will file the Notice of Exemption following WCB approval of the project.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$30,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40) Section 5096.650 (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.

- *9. Oak Woodlands Conservation Education and Outreach for County Planners, Statewide \$45,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the University of California for a cooperative project with Mendocino County, the Department of Fish and Game and the Board to provide information to county planners responsible for determining whether a project within its jurisdiction may result in a conversion of oak woodlands, thus resulting in a significant effect on the environment. Through a series of workshops, web-based information, power point presentations, and office and field evaluative tools, planners will be able to assess project impacts to oak woodlands.

In 2001, the Oak Woodlands Conservation Act was enacted and mandated the WCB to implement the Oak Woodlands Conservation Program. The Act mandated 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, this proposal is designed to provide information to county planners responsible for implementing the requirements of SB 1334, Chapter 732, Statutes of 2004. Specifically, the law requires a county to determine whether a project within its jurisdiction may result in a conversion of oak woodlands and result in a significant effect on the environment. Further, if a county determines that there may be a significant effect to oak woodlands, the county shall require one or more specified mitigation alternatives.

County planners are required to evaluate the impact of projects on oak woodland resources. Evaluating an impact to oak woodlands is a difficult and extensive process. County planners want to do the right thing; however, most planners have little experience or training to make these determinations.

Reacting to the requirements of SB 1334, county staff throughout the state are requesting help and assistance on how to assess potential impacts on oak woodlands. Further, county staff are uncertain as to how to determine significance and identify thresholds of significance as required by Public Resources Code Section 21083.4.

To assist county planners and others interested in conserving oak woodlands, UC Cooperative Extension staff is working in cooperation with staff from the Integrated Hardwood Range Management Program, the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Department of Fish and Game to develop an educational and informational program designed to assist county planners with evaluating potential impacts to oak woodlands.

Specifically, UC Cooperative Extension staff proposes the following:

- 1) To conduct five statewide educational workshops for county planners on how to assess oak woodlands and how to develop appropriate planning strategies to promote long-term resource protection and conservation. Workshops will be held on the North Coast, the Bay Area, the Sierra Foothills/Sacramento area, the Central Coast and Southern California.
- 2) To develop a web-based source of information addressing frequently asked questions on how to assess and evaluate project impacts to oak woodlands. It is proposed the web-based information be located on the Integrated Hardwood Range Management Program website.
- 3) To develop a decision matrix for field assessments to be used for evaluating project impacts, levels of significance, thresholds of significance, on-site and off-site mitigation options.
- 4) To provide each county planning department throughout the State with two copies of the recently published, peer-reviewed document, *A Planner's Guide to Oak Woodlands, 2nd edition*.
- 5) To develop a PowerPoint presentation designed for local cooperative Extension staff and personnel to take to county planning offices and provide hands on assistance to county planners and their staff. This presentation material will address the requirements of SB 1334 and highlight how planning can effectively promote oak woodland conservation.

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

Prepare for and conduct 5 Workshops	\$ 25,450.00
Planners Guide, 2 nd edition	3,500.00
Website Programmer & Designer	6,500.00
Supplies	5,500.00
Subtotal:	<u>\$40,950.00</u>
University Administrative Costs:	\$4,050.00
Total Estimated Project Cost	\$45,000.00

This project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15322, Class 22, because the project adopts educational and training programs that involve no physical alteration in the area. Staff will file the Notice of Exemption following WCB approval of the project.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$45,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (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.

10. New and Alamo Rivers Wetland Master Plan, \$450,500.00
Phase I Augmentation, Imperial County

This proposal is to consider an augmentation to an existing grant to the Salton Sea Authority to complete and expand on portions of Phase I of a master plan study to develop wetland sites along the New and Alamo Rivers. The New and Alamo Rivers are located in the Imperial Valley and flow north into the Salton Sea. The master plan is being developed in coordination with the Salton Sea Advisory Committee, the Department of Water Resources and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG).

The master plan has been split into two phases. Phase I consists primarily of the scientific analysis of wetlands and wetland designs in terms of impacts on biota and cost effectiveness for water quality treatment. Phase II is essentially development of programmatic environmental documents in order to proceed with implementation of the plan. Phase I was further split into two portions in order to allow for peer review and modification of the test results, if needed, prior to completing the final report for Phase I. The original grant for the first portion of Phase I was approved by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) at the May 26, 2005, meeting (New and Alamo Rivers Wetland Master Plan, Phase I).

Both the New and Alamo Rivers receive water and a wide variety of contaminants from agricultural drains, municipal sources, and industrial sources, including nutrients, silt, coliform bacteria, pesticides, selenium and other chemicals. Because of the concern with accumulation of these contaminants in the wetlands and its effect on wildlife, the WCB applied the phased approach in order to allow opportunities to review, and modify the work plan, if needed, prior to moving onto subsequent portions or phases.

Through the peer review meetings under Phase I involving the WCB staff, the Salton Sea Authority, private consultants and the Departments of Water Resources and Fish and Game, it was determined that additional biological and water sampling from the existing treatment wetlands, as well as other locations on the New and Alamo Rivers and agricultural drains were needed. It was also determined

that the results should be evaluated through a more comprehensive “predictive ecosystem risk assessment,” rather than the “scoping ecological risk assessment” that had been originally planned under Phase I. It is anticipated that this sampling and analysis can be completed by the end of August 2006.

In addition to the expanded sampling and assessment, this augmentation will also fund the final tasks to complete the second portion of Phase I. These include development of wetland/treatment concepts, an operation and maintenance plan for the wetlands, a Phase I final report and program management. Once complete, the Phase I final report will undergo peer review to determine if Phase II of the master plan will be funded (development of programmatic environmental documents). This effort will also facilitate the inflow of federal dollars available through the Bureau of Reclamation for developing wetlands along the New and Alamo Rivers.

The proposed funding breakdown for the augmentation is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$450,500.00
Salton Sea Authority	<u>100,000.00</u>
Total Available Funding	\$550,500.00

The Department of Fish Game has reviewed and helped develop the scope of work for this augmentation and has recommended approval of Phase I for funding. The Department of Water Resources and their consultants on the Salton Sea Restoration Study have also provided peer review and consultation on this project.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$450,500.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79565; 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. Carlsbad Hydrological Unit Exotic Invasive Removal, \$1,500,000.00
San Diego County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy for a cooperative project with the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) to remove exotic invasive plants and restore native habitat on public and private property located within the Carlsbad Hydrologic Unit (CHU) in San Diego County.

The CHU encompasses seven distinct coastal watersheds north of the City of San Diego. These watersheds are Loma Alta, Buena Vista, Agua Hedionda, Encinas, Escondido, Cottonwood and San Marcos. This 211 square mile (135,345± acre) area hosts a wealth of wildlife habitat and open space, as well as significant areas of development and agriculture. Each of the seven watersheds contains significant

riparian and associated upland habitat. Four of the seven watersheds support a significant coastal lagoon. These four lagoons are San Elijo, Batiquitos, Agua Hedionda, and Buena Vista.

While riparian and upland habitat remain along the creeks and lagoons, much of this habitat has been significantly reduced by dense stands of Arundo and Pampas grass. Many of these stands completely displace native vegetation and are of little or no value to native fish and wildlife. These infestations also exacerbate fire danger, and cause streambank erosion and flooding, by constricting and deflecting creek flows.

The focus of this project will be to eradicate Arundo, Pampas grass and at least 13 other invasive species from the riparian corridors and lagoons of the CHU. In the end, approximately 450 acres of habitat will be restored. The Conservancy has already accomplished considerable work mapping at least 450 acres of invasive species in the CHU. Approximately 265 acres of Arundo and Pampas grass have already been treated at least once, using funding from a grant from the RWQCB. The additional funding requested from WCB will help eradicate the additional untreated areas of Pampas grass and Arundo and at least thirteen additional species discovered during the initial treatment phase. This additional funding will also provide follow up for several years to ensure retreatment and eradication of any plants that might resprout. This project will not only ensure the success of previous work using State funds, but will complement that work and protect the resources of the CHU. It will also facilitate greater coordination among the interest groups in the area for long-term resource management with the ultimate goal of protecting the valuable natural resources within the CHU.

Much of the work to be done is on private and public land requiring permission to access. The Conservancy has secured permission to work on the properties of 275 landowners in the CHU and continues to seek the participation of more landowners. They estimate that 762 landowner access agreements still need to be secured. These agreements grant the Conservancy permission to enter the properties; eradicate invasive species; plant native species; and monitor for 10 years to ensure continued invasive control. It is likely that additional acreages of exotic invasive species will be found and the Conservancy will continue to secure funds to treat these areas in the future.

Conservancy staff will coordinate this effort with partner organizations in the CHU to develop and pursue a regional exotic invasive species control program. The proposed work, when completed, will enhance and restore in-stream aquatic and riparian habitats for fish and wildlife in the CHU and has the long-term goal of improving flow characteristics and bank stabilization of the creeks and lagoons.

In general, the project involves six tasks: project management; weed control; habitat restoration/bank protection; outreach; monitoring; and regional strategic vegetation management planning.

Weed control measures will involve mostly chemical techniques (foliar treatment with herbicides). Monitoring and retreatment will be performed as needed, to catch resprouts or new plants. Biomass reduction (mulching of dead plant material) will be performed, where possible, to provide a layer of material to inhibit invasion of secondary weeds and to aid the growth of planted native species.

On selected sites, weed control work will be followed by native vegetation planting where natural recruitment of natives is determined insufficient. As much as possible, plant materials will be obtained locally for the best plant site adaptability. Plants will be selected for revegetation to match site soil and hydrologic conditions with many nearby resident native vegetation. Plants will be selected to provide maximum diversity in structure, cover, and forage type. Irrigation will be provided, as necessary.

The Conservancy will conduct baseline and post-treatment monitoring, using photo monitoring (Global Positioning System (GPS) data), of the areas infested with exotic invasive species. The Conservancy will also monitor success of revegetation sites by recording the number of plants that survived versus the number planted. In addition to on-the-ground monitoring, aerial imagery will be used to assess vegetative changes in the CHU over time. Control, revegetation and natural recruitment will be monitored at least annually for 10 years. The Conservancy will be maintaining a GIS database, which will have all weed locations mapped, to be updated as infestations are detected, treated and retreated and controlled.

The total cost for this project is \$5,460,000.00. The breakdown of funding partners is shown below:

Regional Water Quality Control Board	\$3,960,000.00
Wildlife Conservation Board	<u>1,500,000.00</u>
Total Estimated Project Cost	\$5,460,000.00

Project costs will be for project management, landowner outreach, aerial photography, GIS mapping and database management, exotic invasive species control, revegetation and restoration, project assessment and monitoring, draft and final report, and project signage.

The Department of Fish Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The County of San Diego has filed a Notice of Exemption to satisfy CEQA requirements.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,500,000.00 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.

12. Oak Grove, San Diego County \$10,520,000.00

This proposal is to consider a cooperative project with the Wilderness Land Trust, the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Board for the acquisition of a 4,207± acre property, located in San Diego County, for the protection of riparian, wetlands, desert scrub habitat, as well as provide access for hunting and other compatible public uses.

The subject property is located on the Riverside/San Diego County line, to the north of Highway 79 near the town of Oak Grove. The Cleveland National Forest lies to the south and west, the Anza Borrego Desert State Park to the east and the Beauty Mountain Wilderness Area adjacent to the north.

Portions of the subject property are included in an area of critical habitat designated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for two federally endangered species, Arroyo toad and Quino checkerspot. Other locally significant species include mountain lion, prairie falcon, coast horned lizard, long-spined spineflower and the Mojave tarplant. Stephens' kangaroo rat has also been found in the area. More common species found on site include California quail, deer, turkey, doves and some waterfowl.

The Wilderness Land Trust, through a grant from the Resources Legacy Fund will provide a portion of the funding to acquire up to 1,050± acres of the total 4,207± acres. This portion of the property will be direct deeded from the landowners to the BLM and added to the 30,000± acre Beauty Mountain Management Area, and managed consistent with the area's current management strategy of emphasizing protection of sensitive species, open space, watershed and natural wildlife values.

The balance of the property will be acquired by the DFG for the permanent protection of the habitat and wildlife with a secondary purpose of providing compatible, wildlife dependent public use and public access to federal lands where feasible. The landowners currently allow hunting on the property and resource surveys and management approaches will determine the appropriate future hunting programs for the property. There are also recreational angling possibilities associated with four reservoirs found on-site, the largest of which is currently stocked with bass and blue gill. This pond is 6± acres and contains 30-40 acre feet of water.

The DFG will work to develop cooperative management agreements with BLM and local sportsman's groups that achieve natural resource protection while implementing a public use program, including hunting and other recreational uses. Academic or educational institutions may also be interested in becoming partners in restoration, research, or interpretive programs. The landowner has approached the DFG about leasing back a portion of the property for continued agricultural production which will provide potential funding or other in-kind resources necessary for maintenance.

The appraised, fair market value of the subject property, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) is \$13,450,000.00. The property owner has agreed to sell the property at a bargain sale of \$13,000,000.00. The Wilderness Land Trust will be contributing purchase money in the amount of \$2,500,000.00.

Staff recommends the Board approve an allocation of \$10,500,000.00 for the acquisition and an additional \$20,000.00 for administrative costs including DGS review fees, a Phase I report, title and escrow fees, bringing the total allocation for WCB to \$10,520,000.00.

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

Staff recommends the Board approve the acquisition of the subject property as proposed; allocate \$7,699,500.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 [(a) \$2,832,500.00 and (b/c) \$4,867,000.00] and \$2,820,500.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 for the acquisition and related project expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

13. Morelli Park Boat Ramp, San Joaquin County \$325,252.00

This proposal is to consider a cooperative project with the City of Stockton and the Department of Boating and Waterways to improve public angling access by improving a public boat ramp facility at Morelli Park. The project is located at the intersection of the Stockton Channel and Mormon Slough in the City of Stockton.

The two-lane Morelli Park boat ramp was constructed in 1975 and is a concrete slab with two 12-foot wide lanes and one boarding float. Associated facilities on-site include a small guest dock with gangway, a 51 vehicle/trailer parking area; an access road with security kiosk; a restroom; and a day-use picnic area. The picnic area is used by anglers who fish along the banks of Mormon Slough. The ramp is a launching spot for boat anglers accessing the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Morelli Park is located on state-owned land that has been leased by the City of Stockton since 1976.

The proposed project will replace the old ramp and boarding float, with a 60 foot wide by 79 foot long four lane concrete ramp with three boarding floats. The launching lanes will be 15 feet wide. A turnaround area will be added; parking area reconfigured, expanded and repaved; access road reconfigured and repaved;

restroom will be rehabilitated to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines; sidewalk construction; slope protection and drainage installation; entry gate and kiosk replacement; lighting and electrical service installation; water and sewer lines installation; security fence installation; landscaping and irrigation installation, as well as signage installation. The city will maintain the facilities.

This project is part of a larger overall restoration of the Stockton Waterfront. To date, a new sports arena, baseball field, parking structure, hotel and conference center have been constructed. Slated for construction in the near future, in addition to this Morelli Park project, is a new marina with guest docks, a pedestrian promenade between Morelli Park and Center Street, and a public plaza across Mormon Slough from Morelli Park. The area is undergoing a major revitalization.

Total cost for this project is estimated to be \$3,169,049.00. Additional funding will be provided by a grant from the Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW) and redevelopment funds provided by the City of Stockton. The WCB funds will be used for construction of the boat ramp and the turnaround area.

DBW	\$2,367,000.00
City of Stockton	\$ 477,049.00
WCB	<u>\$ 325,000.00</u>
Total Estimated Project Cost	\$3,169,049.00

In addition to the costs listed above, an additional \$252.00 will be required for Department of General Services' review costs, bringing the allocation necessary for the Board's portion of the project to \$325,252.00.

It is anticipated that the project will qualify for federal reimbursement under the Sport Fish Restoration Act. Following approval by the Board, staff will file an application with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which, if approved, will provide the Board with a 75 percent reimbursement of all qualifying project costs.

The Department of Fish Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The grantee has completed an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration to satisfy CEQA requirements and has agreed to manage and maintain the property for 25 years, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Lease and Operating Agreement.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$325,252.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund (Minor Capital Outlay); 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. Riparian Habitat Restoration, Cache Creek, \$500,000.00
Lower Reach, Phase II, Yolo County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Cache Creek Conservancy for a cooperative project with the County of Yolo, the Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service, and over 40 private and public landowners to remove non-native invasive plants and restore native riparian habitat at selected locations on the shoreline along approximately 12 miles of Cache Creek, located between the Capay Dam and approximately 1 mile upstream from Interstate 5 in Yolo County.

This project is the second phase of work that was begun by the Conservancy in 2001 using a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). In the last four years the WCB has funded several significant restoration projects, elsewhere in the Cache Creek watershed that add up to a watershed-wide weed management strategy, including the work being done by the Bureau of Land Management along Bear Creek in Colusa County; the American Land Conservancy's project on Sulphur Creek also located in Colusa County; and most recently, the Yolo County Resource Conservation District's initial project on Cache Creek in the Capay Valley.

Because the herbicides that were used in the first phase were not approved for use next to the stream channel, the Conservancy had to leave a narrow corridor of weeds untreated. In the interim, a new formulation of herbicide with proven effectiveness (trade name: Habitat) has recently been registered in California for aquatic applications. Armed with this effective new tool, the Conservancy plans to remove the arundo and tamarisk that remains at intermittent locations in the narrow low-flow corridor along the lower reach of Cache Creek.

Four significant results illustrate the success of the first phase and allow predictions of success for the second phase:

- 1) The amount of land treated greatly exceeded the proposed goal (1,100± acres treated versus 300± acres proposed), which indicates an increasing efficiency during the project's implementation.
- 2) Revegetation efforts at selected erosion-prone areas responded with excellent growth.
- 3) Many of the treated areas have experienced healthy regrowth of native vegetation that was being suppressed by the invasive weeds.
- 4) Stopping the bloom cycle of tamarisk for three consecutive years will break the seeding cycle, further reducing populations and decreasing maintenance. It is also anticipated that once the second phase is completed, more water will be available in the lower reaches of Cache Creek which will aid the revegetation and benefit a broad spectrum of wildlife. The Conservancy's long term goal is to improve Cache

Creek's riparian corridor through weed management and restoration efforts that will benefit a broad spectrum of plant and wildlife species and return the ecosystem to some reasonable state of balance.

Project costs have been reviewed by staff and are as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$500,000.00
Yolo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District	\$ 30,000.00
Yolo County	\$291,000.00
USDA-ARS	<u>\$400,000.00</u>
Total Estimated Project Cost	\$1,221,000.00

Project funding will be used to accomplish weed removal and revegetation, acquisition of permits, on-the-ground monitoring, biocontrol (USDA's work with the tamarisk-eating beetles), data collection from aerial monitoring, public education workshops, administrative costs and a contingency fund.

The Department of Fish Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. Yolo County has approved an EIR which incorporates this project and fully complies with CEQA requirements.

All participating landowners have signed access permits issued by Yolo County, and the County is responsible for long-term management, monitoring and maintenance of the project until February 23, 2016.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$500,000.00 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.

15. Cow Creek Conservation Area, Shasta County \$2,670,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to The Trust for Public Land (TPL) to assist in a cooperative project with the Shasta Land Trust (SLT), Department of Fish and Game and the Board to acquire a conservation easement over 6,640± acres of privately owned land located in the Cascade foothills east of Redding for the protection of valuable watershed lands and preservation of sensitive plant, wildlife and riparian habitat.

The property is located in Shasta County approximately 100 miles north of Chico, 15± miles northeast of Redding and 2± miles south of Highway 299. The property is bordered on the east by Lassen National Forest and on the north by 300± acres of Bureau of Land Management lands and the Shasta National Forest. Oak Run Road bisects the property along its south side.

The property is within the Cow Creek watershed. This watershed is the northernmost undammed tributary system of the Sacramento River making it a particularly important resource for California's anadromous fish populations, especially fall run chinook salmon and federally threatened steelhead. Potential development is a real threat to this watershed and to this unique property, given the growing trend towards the subdivision of larger properties into ranchettes occurring along the transportation corridors of Highway 299 and Oak Run Road.

Protection is critical to the watershed's diverse habitats including blue oak foothill pine woodland, vernal pools, annual grassland, meadows, montane chaparral and mixed coniferous forests. Also found on the property is Henderson's bent grass which is listed in the California Natural Diversity Database as a special status plant species. The property is one of the largest single ownerships in the area. It contains some of the most extensive and healthiest blue oak woodland and riparian habitat in the watershed.

Within this watershed is an 80 square mile contiguous belt of blue oak woodland; one of the largest such expanses anywhere in the eastern Central Valley. It provides the essentials to meet the reproductive, sheltering and food needs of most of the wildlife species found on this property. It also provides winter range for the Cow Creek deer herd, as well as valuable migration corridors for other species. The property also contains the greater part of the Swede Creek Plains and their associated wetlands, as well as portions of Oak Run Creek, a year round stream which supports a rich array of aquatic life and provides habitat downstream of this property for chinook salmon and federally threatened steelhead.

Several historic structures are found on the property such as homesteads, a school, and a stage coach line that once traversed the Swede Creek Plains portion of the ranch, all of which date from the 19th century.

The market value of the proposed conservation easement is \$2,820,000.00, as determined by an appraisal and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the easement to the TPL for the approved appraised value. A grant in the amount of \$155,600.00 from the Resources Agency under the Sierra Cascade Program will be contributed towards the purchase price. The balance of funding in the amount of \$2,664,400.00 will be provided by a grant from the WCB. It is estimated that an additional \$5,600.00 will be required for administrative expenses, including DGS's appraisal review costs bringing the total allocation for this proposal to \$2,670,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that the WCB staff will review and approve all documents associated with the proposed purchase including title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance, prior to disbursement of funds directly into the TPL's escrow for the purchase of the easement.

The TPL proposes to subsequently transfer the conservation easement to the SLT. The SLT will be responsible for managing and monitoring the easement. Under the grant agreement, the WCB will have the ability to accompany the SLT once every three years during monitoring site visits. SLT has the right to organize up to ten public access-related visits a year for guided nature tours and similar activities.

The proposed acquisition is exempt from the 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 ownership in land to preserve open space, habitats or historical resources. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,670,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 [(a) \$1,350,000.00 and (b/c) \$1,320,000.00] for the grant amount and related 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.

16. Six Rivers (Iaqua), Humboldt County \$2,233,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Northcoast Regional Land Trust (NRLT) for a cooperative project with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) and the Board to assist in the purchase of a conservation easement on a 4,747± acre parcel of privately-owned land located in Humboldt County for the purposes of protecting the property from encroaching residential development, continuation of ranching and forestry operations, protection and restoration of streams and riparian habitats, and optimization of timber productivity found on the property.

The property is located on Kneeland Road and Showers Pass Road, approximately 10 miles north of Bridgeville and 15 miles southeast of Eureka. In close proximity to the Six Rivers' National Forest, the Headwaters Forest Reserve, and the Humboldt Redwoods State Park, approximately half the of the property is forested, the vast majority in douglas-fir, with some white-fir and redwoods. The other half of the property is predominately open grassland and grazing land. The terrain varies from mildly to steeply sloping, lies in the drainage area of the North Fork of Yager Creek, a tributary of the Van Duzen River.

The easement will protect habitat for a number of sensitive wildlife species that have the potential to occur on the property, including golden eagles, Northern spotted owls, mountain lions, red-legged and yellow-legged frogs, red tree vole, black bear, and blacktail deer. The property is traversed by streams that contain significant chinook salmon spawning areas, and the landowner intends to conduct riparian habitat restoration for steelhead trout, coho and chinook salmon. The rangeland portion of the property is sprinkled with wildflowers, oak woodlands, and

perennial grasses, and the landowner has identified some prehistoric archeological sites with artifacts dating from 600 BC.

The CDF and NRLT will be co-grantees under the Board's grant agreement. The CDF will be the holder of the conservation easement, and will work in conjunction with the NRLT to monitor compliance with the conditions of the easement. If this property is not protected, it could remain vulnerable to residential development and ownership fragmentation. The easement will implement practices that encourage and promote rangeland and forest health over time.

The fair market value of the conservation easement interest, as determined by an appraisal approved by the Department of General Services (DGS), is \$4,135,000.00. The property owner has agreed to sell the easement at a discounted price of \$3,500,000.00. Staff recommends that the Board approve an allocation for a grant to the Northcoast Regional Land Trust and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, in the amount of \$2,223,000.00, to provide a portion of the necessary funding for the purchase of the conservation easement. It is anticipated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover administrative expenses (DGS appraisal review costs, title insurance, escrow fees, etc.), increasing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$2,233,000.00. The balance of the purchase price is being provided by Federal Forest Legacy Program funds in the amount of \$1,277,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that the Board 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 authorizing the disbursement of funds directly to the escrow holder for the purchase of the conservation easement. In addition, the Board staff will have the ability to access the property for the purpose of monitoring validation no less than every three years.

There are no claims of sovereign State land ownership on the subject property. The proposed acquisition is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act requirements under Section 15313, Class 13 as an acquisition of lands for fish and wildlife conservation purposes and Section 15325, Class 25 as a transfer of ownership or interest in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Board, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Staff recommends that the Board approve a grant to the Northcoast Regional Land Trust and to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to assist in the purchase of the conservation easement, as proposed; allocate \$1,000,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, & Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (f), and \$1,233,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop.12), Section 5096.350 (a) (4) for grant amount and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

17. Resolution

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

Jim Kellogg

WHEREAS, Mr. Jim Kellogg has, in February 2006, completed two years of service as the Chairman of the California Wildlife Conservation Board and as President of the California Fish and Game Commission; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kellogg, with his interest in the programs of the Wildlife Conservation Board, coupled with his sound judgment and experience in California's wildlife resources and his concern for the protection of these ever declining resources, has greatly assisted the Board and its staff in carrying out its duties and responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kellogg, as Chairman of the Board, has supported the Board's program throughout his tenure, making preservation, enhancement and restoration of wildlife habitat a true priority, for all of California; and

WHEREAS, It is the desire of the Board to gratefully acknowledge his contribution to the works of the Board and the entire State of California; 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 Mr. Kellogg our sincere appreciation for his noteworthy contributions to the Board, and express our best wishes to him as he continues on with his personal endeavors; 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 Mr. Kellogg.

Staff recommends that the Board approve the resolution honoring Mr. Kellogg.

18. Staff Report - Grant Agreement and Conservation Easement Policy Informational

At the November 17, 2005, Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) meeting, the Board directed WCB staff to consider developing policies for monitoring conservation easements purchased with grant funds approved by the Board. This report is provided to inform the Board on staff progress to date and to advise Board members on future activities with respect to developing the Board policy.

In total, as of November 17, 2005, the WCB approved the expenditure of \$133.2 million for 142 projects designed to purchase conservation easements on 304,960± acres of fish and wildlife habitat, rangeland, agricultural land, open-space and wildlife corridors. The majority of these easements are held in perpetuity by regional and local land trusts, county jurisdictions and special districts.

To ensure the State's interest are sufficiently protected and assure the terms and conditions of future conservation easements are enforced, staff proposes to revise the standard Grant Agreement used to award the easement money to the Grant recipient. For purposes of consistency, staff also proposes to develop standard terms and conditions that will be contained in all Grant Agreements entered into by the Board and establish guidelines for conservation easements acquired by third parties using grant funds.

In addition to the standard elements and guidelines governing conservation easements and qualified charitable contributions, staff propose to include provisions whereby WCB staff and/or their representatives will have access to the protected property at least once every three years. The purpose of the site visit would be to confirm Grantee and landowner's compliance with the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement and conservation easement. Depending on the purpose of the easement, monitoring and review efforts may occur on an annual basis. In addition, staff proposes that all Grant Agreements contain provisions whereby the Grantee is responsible for monitoring the easement area on an annual basis. Further, the Grantee would be required to report to the WCB on the status of the annual reviews. To assure meaningful information is obtained from the Grantee staff proposes to develop minimum standards for annual monitoring reports.

Recognizing the importance of regional and local land trusts, WCB staff has been meeting with land trusts, the California Council of Land Trusts, and other state departments responsible for developing conservation easements. Staff will provide an opportunity for interested parties to comment on policy prior to presentation to the Board. While staff's outreach and information-gathering efforts are continuing, staff proposes to finalize its efforts, report, and possibly recommend for approval, at the May 25, 2006, Board meeting, policies and guidelines for the development of Grant Agreements and conservation easements.

19. Staff Report – Easement Transfers

Informational

At the February 24, 1998, Wildlife Conservation Board meeting, the Board authorized the Executive Director to transfer less-than-fee interests (easements, right of ways, etc.) in Department of Fish and Game or Wildlife Conservation Board controlled land, where the value of the interests is less than \$50,000.00. This was done to improve service to the public and reduce the cost of processing these transfers.

In addition, the Board placed two conditions on this delegation of authority, the first of which is that in all cases the grant of less-than-fee interest would be made at the request or with the recommendation of the Department of Fish and Game to assure adequate consideration of impacts on habitat and programs. Secondly, any grant made under this authority would be reported as an informational item at the next available meeting of the Board.

Pursuant to the above described process, the following easement transfers have been completed by staff.

Project Title	Transfer Type	Grantee	Size	Consideration
Lower Colorado River Ecological Reserve – Riverside County	Utility Easement Recorded 1/31/05	Southern California Edison	1.0 acre	None – reserved right for utilities
Fox Grove Fishing Access – Stanislaus County	Utility Easement Recorded 12/13/05	Turlock Irrigation District	1.99 acres	In-kind riverbed restoration
Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area - Yolo County	Access to adjacent property owner Recorded 6/21/05	Glide	2.439 acres	None – required as part of acquisition
Spenceville Wildlife Area – Yolo County	Easement for water tank Recorded 4/11/05	Smartville Fire Protection District	2.9 acres	Direct benefit to DFG having water tank on WLA
Baumberg Eden Landing Trail - Alameda County	Access Easement for trails Recorded 5/18/05	East Bay Regional Park	.541 acres 43.218 acres	None-Exchange of interests
Sutter Bypass Wildlife Area – Sutter County	Roadway Easement Recorded 1/03/03	Sutter County	.61 acres	Equivalent land exchange w/County of Sutter
Los Banos-Gatos Transmission Line – Merced County	Transmission/utility line Easement Recorded 7/29/04	USA-ODE-Western Power Area	3.73 acres	\$2907.00

Project Title	Transfer Type	Grantee	Size	Consideration
Gooden Ranch Preserve – San Diego County	Utility Easement (tunnel) Recorded 8/23/05	San Diego County Water Authority	1.52 acres	\$300.00
Crestridge Ecological Reserve - San Diego County	Drainage Easement Recorded 7/26/05	Padre Dam Municipal Water District	.6 acre	In-kind land improvement

Other Business