

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

1807 13TH STREET, SUITE 103
 SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95811
 (916) 445-8448
 FAX (916) 323-0280
www.wcb.ca.gov

NOTICE OF MEETING**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**

August 23, 2007

10:00 A.M.

1/ State Capitol, Room 112
 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.	Special Project Planning Account - Informational	6
5.	Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 6-17)	6
*6.	Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 15 and May 24, 2007	6
*7.	Recovery of Funds	6
*8.	Triple Creeks Conservation Area, Expansion 1 \$5,000.00 Riverside County	10

To consider the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the authorization to enter into an Agreement to Subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority to be applied toward its acquisition of a property totaling 6.24 acres for protection of threatened and endangered species and wildlife movement corridors north of the city of Murrieta, in Riverside County. [Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350(a)(5)]

* Proposed Consent Calendar

1/ These facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities.

- | | | | |
|-----|--|--------------|----|
| *9. | Solstice Creek/Corral Canyon Steelhead Restoration, Los Angeles County | \$145,000.00 | 12 |
|-----|--|--------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to the city of Malibu for a cooperative project to remove and replace the Corral Canyon bridge, a box culvert which currently blocks steelhead migration, with an open bottom bridge structure. This project is on public land approximately 0.20 mile north of where Solstice Creek enters the Pacific Ocean, in Los Angeles County. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(e)(f) (Prop. 50 SoCal)]

- | | | | |
|------|---|----------------|----|
| *10. | Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve (Augmentation and Change of Scope), Expansions 9 to 12, Monterey County | \$1,150,000.00 | 14 |
|------|---|----------------|----|

To consider an augmentation and change of scope for previously approved projects located in the Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve for the purposes of protecting a host of threatened and endangered species. [Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786(b/c) (Prop. 50)]

- | | | | |
|------|--|--------------|----|
| *11. | Portuguese Ridge Conservation Area Mariposa County | \$210,000.00 | 16 |
|------|--|--------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Sierra Foothill Conservancy to assist in the acquisition of a conservation easement over 80± acres of land near the town of Mariposa, in Mariposa County, for the preservation of wetland and upland habitat, specifically for threatened and endangered species such as the State-listed great gray owl. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(b/c)]

- | | | | |
|------|--|--------------|----|
| *12. | Laguna de Santa Rosa Middle Reach Restoration, Sonoma County | \$200,000.00 | 18 |
|------|--|--------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation for a cooperative project to restore and enhance riparian wetland habitats on private and public property located along the middle reach of the Laguna de Santa Rosa in Sonoma County. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(e/f) (Prop. 50)]

- | | | | |
|------|---|-------------|----|
| *13. | McAravy Ranch Wetland Restoration Phase II, Yolo County | \$97,000.00 | 21 |
|------|---|-------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association for a cooperative project with the Landowner, the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore approximately 79 acres of seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands, 37 acres of riparian habitat, and 44 acres of native grasslands on privately owned property located two miles east of the community of Dunnigan in Yolo County. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(d) IWCP (Prop. 50)]

- | | | | |
|------|--|--------------|----|
| *14. | Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, Napa
Plant Site Restoration, Ponds 9, 10, and Wash Ponds
Pre-Construction Activities, Napa County | \$132,000.00 | 23 |
|------|--|--------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc., to undertake pre-construction activities, including permit payments, pre-construction surveys, and bid package preparation for the Napa Plant Site Ponds 9, 10, and Wash Ponds restoration, within the Department of Fish and Game's Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, on the east side of the Napa River, north of Highway 37, in Napa County. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(d) Other (Prop. 50 SF)]

- | | | | |
|------|---|--------------|----|
| *15. | Montna Farms Wetland Restoration
Sutter County | \$150,000.00 | 26 |
|------|---|--------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc., for a cooperative project with the Landowner, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the North American Wetlands Conservation Council to restore approximately 780 acres of seasonal wetlands and 20 acres of wetland-associated uplands located on privately owned land in the Sutter Bypass approximately 15 miles south of Yuba City in Sutter County. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(d) (Prop. 50)]

- | | | | |
|------|--|--------------|----|
| *16. | Gray Lodge Wildlife Area Wells, Butte County
Butte County | \$300,000.00 | 28 |
|------|--|--------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc., to develop one or more ground water production wells at the upper end of the recently completed internal distribution system on the Department of Fish and Game's Gray Lodge Wildlife Area located in Butte County. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(d) IWCP (Prop. 50)]

- | | | | |
|------|--|--------------|----|
| *17. | Humboldt Bay Coastal Reserve, Expansion 1
Humboldt County | \$185,000.00 | 30 |
|------|--|--------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Friends of the Dunes Land Trust to assist with the acquisition of 23± acres of land to protect and preserve beach, dune, wetland, and remnant maritime forest habitat on the north spit of Humboldt Bay, about three miles southwest of Arcata and four miles northwest of Eureka, in Humboldt County. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(b/c) (Prop. 50)]

- | | | | |
|-----|--|----------------|----|
| 18. | Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead
Restoration Project, Shasta and Tehama Counties | \$9,980,000.00 | 32 |
|-----|--|----------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant for a partnership project with the Department of Fish and Game, the National Marine Fisheries Service,

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Pacific Gas and Electric Company to restore fisheries habitat along 452 miles of the lower Battle Creek and six miles of tributaries, located in Tehama and Shasta Counties [Habitat Conservation Fund, (Prop. 117), Section 2786(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f) (ERP)].

- | | | | |
|-----|--|----------------|----|
| 19. | Department of Fish and Game Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program, Statewide | \$3,862,007.00 | 34 |
|-----|--|----------------|----|

To consider the allocation of funding for an interagency agreement with the Department of Fish and Game to provide additional support for the California Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program to build a statewide vegetation mapping system to prioritize California’s diverse wildlife habitats, including wildlife corridors and habitat linkages for protection and/or restoration. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Prop. 84), Section 75055(b)]

- | | | | |
|-----|--|----------------|----|
| 20. | Ramona Grasslands, Expansion 1
San Diego County | \$2,020,000.00 | 37 |
|-----|--|----------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy, and the acceptance of a Recovery Land Acquisition Grant and a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the authorization to enter into Agreements to Subgrant the federal funds to assist in the acquisition of 1,350+ acres of real property, northwest of the community of Ramona, in San Diego County, for the protection of grasslands and related wildlife habitat which harbor threatened and endangered species, including the Stephens’ kangaroo rat, arroyo toad, San Diego fairy shrimp, and California gnatcatcher. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(b/c), and Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(b/c) (Prop. 50)]

- | | | | |
|-----|---|--------------|----|
| 21. | Walters Creek Habitat Restoration
San Luis Obispo County | \$290,000.00 | 39 |
|-----|---|--------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Bay Foundation of Morro Bay to restore 1,500 linear feet of riparian corridor along Walters Creek, including three acres of riparian habitat and three acres of seasonal wetland habitat on the Department of Fish and Game’s San Luis Obispo Wildlife Area. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650]

- | | | | |
|-----|--|----------------|----|
| 22. | Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve
Expansion 13 to 15, Monterey County | \$1,527,500.00 | 43 |
|-----|--|----------------|----|

To consider the acquisition of two parcels of land totaling 43± acres, and the allocation for a grant to the Elkhorn Slough Foundation to assist with the acquisition of 24± acres of land as an addition to the Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve, for the preservation and protection of wildlife habitat located south of the city of Watsonville, in Monterey County. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650]

- | | | | |
|-----|--|----------------|----|
| 23. | San Joaquin River Parkway

Lewis S. Eaton Trail, River West CEQA, Fresno County | \$160,000.00 | 46 |
| | <p>To consider the allocation for a grant to the San Joaquin River Conservancy to implement environmental review and public participation pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act for extension of the Lewis S. Eaton Trail through the River West Spano property located within the San Joaquin River Parkway in Fresno County. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650(b)(5)]</p> | | |
| 24. | Merced River, Expansion 1
Merced County | \$1,442,300.00 | 48 |
| | <p>To consider the acquisition of a conservation easement over 78+ acres of private land located along the Merced River for the protection of seasonal and permanent wetlands and related upland and riparian habitat, together with the purchase of a non-exclusive access easement to State Highway 59, in Merced County. The proposed acquisition also provides the right to mine up to 544,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel to be used on this property and other properties along various reaches of the Merced River for the protection and replenishment of salmon-spawning habitat. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650]</p> | | |
| 25. | Burcham and Wheeler Flat Wildlife Area
Mono County | \$1,965,000.00 | 50 |
| | <p>To consider the fee title acquisition of four, non-contiguous parcels totaling 1,160± acres of sagebrush rangeland and wet meadow habitat located 12 to 18 miles northwest of Bridgeport, to prevent further decline in sage grouse populations that depend upon the habitat for year-round forage, nesting and hiding cover, early and late brood-rearing habitat, and winter habitat. This property also provides critical migration, holdover, summer range, and fawning habitat for mule deer from the West Walker herd. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(b/c)]</p> | | |
| 26. | Lower Pitkin Marsh, Sonoma County | \$576,000.00 | 52 |
| | <p>To consider the allocation for a grant to the Sonoma Land Trust for a cooperative project with the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District and the Department of Fish and Game to assist with the acquisition of 27± acres of land for the protection of wetland, riparian, marsh, oak woodland, and grassland habitat located along the North Gravenstein Highway, near the city of Sebastopol in Sonoma County. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650]</p> | | |

- | | | | |
|-----|--|--------------|----|
| 27. | San Pablo Bay Pepperweed Removal
and Habitat Restoration, Sonoma County | \$342,000.00 | 54 |
|-----|--|--------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to The Bay Institute to provide assistance for the Students and Teachers Restoring A Watershed (STRAW) Program in removal of an introduced, non-native, noxious weed known as perennial pepperweed from public lands located on the north end of San Pablo Bay, Sonoma County, and to restore native vegetation on lands owned by the Department of Fish and Game and the State Coastal Conservancy. [Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572(c)]

- | | | | |
|-----|--|--------------|----|
| 28. | Bass Hill Lassen Creek Conservation
Easement, Lassen County | \$415,000.00 | 57 |
|-----|--|--------------|----|

To consider the acquisition of a conservation easement over 265± acres of wet meadow, sage brush, bitterbrush, and montane riparian habitats located approximately three miles southwest of downtown Susanville on Richmond Road, to protect Lassen Creek from habitat deterioration, to provide a critical wintering habitat and migration corridor for the Bass Hill Subherd of the Doyle deer herd, and to protect other threatened animal species found on the property. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(a)]

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---------------|----|
| 29. | Staff Report - Forest Conservation Program | Informational | 59 |
|-----|--|---------------|----|

This item has been withdrawn from consideration at this time.

- | | | | |
|-----|---|--|----|
| 30. | Resolution – Assembly Member Patty Berg | | 59 |
|-----|---|--|----|

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|----|
| 31. | Staff Report – Utility Easement Transfer
(Goodan Ranch Preserve), San Diego County | Informational | 60 |
|-----|---|---------------|----|

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 John P. Donnelly, Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board, at the address and telephone number shown on the letterhead.)

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

1807 13TH STREET, SUITE 103
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95811
(916) 445-8448
FAX (916) 323-0280
www.wcb.ca.gov

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

August 23, 2007

10:00 A.M.

1/ State Capitol, Room 112
Sacramento, California 95814

1. Roll Call

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS

Richard B. Rogers, 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 Abel Maldonado
Senator Darrell Steinberg
Senator Patricia Wiggins

Assembly Member Jared Huffman
Assembly Member Lois Wolk
Assembly Member (Position Vacant)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

John P. Donnelly

* Consent Calendar

1/ These facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities

- 2. Election of Chair
- 3. Funding Status as of August 23, 2007 (Informational)

(a) 2007-08 Wildlife Restoration Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act	\$1,000,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....	(0.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$1,000,000.00

(b) 2006-07 General Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act	\$5,000,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....	(1,306,900.00)
Unallocated Balance.....	\$3,693,100.00

(c) 2007-08 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act	\$20,674,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocation	(0.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$20,674,000.00

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

Budget Act	\$20,699,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocation	(1,790,000.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$18,909,000.00

(e) 2005-06 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act	\$20,551,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....	(2,274,542.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$18,276,458.00

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

Budget Act	\$15,224,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....	(4,627,175.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$10,596,825.00

(g) 2000-01 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget (2006-07 Reappropriation)

Budget Act) (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects).....	\$14,562,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....	(14,451,512.52)
Unallocated Balance	\$110,487.48

(h) 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.....(27,024,281.69)
Unallocated Balance \$9,075,718.31

(i) 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

(j) 2004-05 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget (2007-08 Reappropriation)

Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects) \$11,000,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....(0.00)
Unallocated Balance \$11,000,000.00

(k) 2003-04 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act (2006-07 Reappropriation)
(San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects) \$8,500,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....(2,671,934.28)
Unallocated Balance \$5,828,065.72

(l) Chapter 983, Statutes of 2002 (2005-06 Reappropriation) ... \$4,800,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....(4,655,579.23)
Unallocated Balance \$144,420.77

(m) Chapter 984, Statutes of 2002 (2005-06 Reappropriation). \$19,200,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....(17,389,523.93)
Unallocated Balance \$1,810,476.07

(n) 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.....(158,744,806.64)
Unallocated Balance \$114,255,193.36

(o) 2003-04 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 Capital Outlay Budget (Section 79568)

Budget Act (2006-07 Reappropriation) \$32,500,000.00

Less Previous Board Allocations.....(20,011,970.00)
Unallocated Balance \$12,488,030.00

(p) 2002-03 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 Capital Outlay Budget

Continuously Appropriated (Sections 79565 and 79572), including Chapter 81, Statutes of 2005 \$814,350,000.00
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 2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565(4,000,000.00)
Less 2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572(3,100,000.00)
Less 2006-07 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79672(17,688,000.00)
Less 2007-08 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572 (5,150,000.00)
Less Previous Board Allocations.....(623,199,199.24)
Unallocated Balance \$119,212,800.76

(q) 2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects) \$10,000,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....(0.00)
Unallocated Balance \$10,000,000.00

(r) 2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act (NCCP Section 75055c) \$25,000,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....(0.00)
Unallocated Balance \$25,000,000.00

(s) 2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(1)) \$14,293,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....(0.00)
Unallocated Balance \$14,293,000.00

(t) 2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(2)) \$14,293,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....(0.00)
Unallocated Balance \$14,293,000.00

(u) 2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(3)) \$4,762,000.00

Less Previous Board Allocations.....(0.00)
 Unallocated Balance \$4,762,000.00

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

Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055a) \$164,700,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations.....(25,000.00)
 Unallocated Balance \$164,675,000.00

Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055b) \$123,525,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations.....(25,000.00)
 Unallocated Balance \$123,500,000.00

(w) 2003-04 Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act (2006-07 Reappropriation) \$5,000,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations.....(2,009,701.00)
 Unallocated Balance \$2,990,299.00

RECAP OF FUND BALANCES

Wildlife Restoration Fund (a) \$1,000,000.00
 General Fund (b)..... \$3,693,100.00
 Habitat Conservation Fund (c), (d), and (e) \$57,859,458.00
 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (f), (g), and (h) \$19,783,030.79
 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (i), (j), (k), (l), (m), and (n). \$134,583,155.92
 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (o) and (p)..... \$131,700,830.76
 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (q), (r), (s), (t), (u), and (v)..... \$356,523,000.00
 Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund (w) \$2,990,299.00

RECAP OF NATURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT ACT OF 2000

Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act of 2000
 Chapter 113, Statutes of 2000 and Chapter 715, Statutes of 2004

Total Tax Credits Available \$100,000,000.00
 Less Previously Awarded Tax Credits (48,598,734.00)
 Balance of Tax Credits Available \$51,401,26

Note: Items a, c, q, r, s, t, and u funding is contingent upon approval of the 2007-08 State budget.

4. 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 1% of a budgeted appropriation to set up and maintain an appropriate planning account with the provision it would be reported to the Board as an informational item at the next meeting.

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

Habitat Conservation Fund	\$35,000.00
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 84)	\$75,000.00

5. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 6-17)

*6. Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 15 and May 24, 2007

*7. Recovery of Funds

The following projects previously authorized by the Board are now complete, 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.

- \$24,915.75** to the **Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund**
- \$473,011.60** to the **Habitat Conservation Fund**
- \$0.00** to the **Wildlife Restoration Fund**
- \$35,745.28** to the **California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund**
- \$27,540.00** to the **Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund**

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

Larkin Valley Complex, Santa Cruz County

Allocated	\$1,560,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,559,884.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$116.00

Project Planning

Allocated	\$35,000.00
Expended	<u>-10,200.25</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$24,799.75

Total Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund **\$24,915.75**

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND

Accornero Wetland Restoration, Merced County

Allocated	\$48,000.00
Expended	<u>-48,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Arroyo Seco River Conservation Area, Monterey County

Allocated	\$1,350,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,313,382.50</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$36,617.50

Buena Vista Creek, San Diego County

Allocated	\$2,155,000.00
Expended	<u>-2,155,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

McAravy Ranch Wetland Restoration, Yolo County

Allocated	\$55,000.00
Expended	<u>-55,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Newman Land Company Wetland Restoration, Merced County

Allocated	\$52,000.00
Expended	<u>-52,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Pine Hill Ecological Reserve, Salmon Falls Unit, Expansion 4, El Dorado County

Allocated	\$48,000.00
Expended	<u>-47,483.25</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$516.75

Riparian Habitat Restoration, Bear Creek, Colusa County

Allocated	\$300,000.00
Expended	<u>-202,269.10</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$97,730.90

Roberts Ranch Wetland Enhancement, Merced County

Allocated	\$88,000.00
Expended	<u>-88,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Volta Wildlife Area Wetland Enhancement, Merced County

Allocated	\$126,000.00
Expended	<u>-126,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Wetland Conservation Easement Program, Rudd Farms, Butte and Sutter Counties

Allocated	\$1,190,000.00
Expended	<u>-867,983.90</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$322,016.10

Wetland Habitat Restoration, Honey Lake Valley (Honker Heaven)
Augmentation, Lassen County

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

Wetland Habitat Restoration, Shasta Valley Wildlife Area, Phase II, Siskiyou County

Allocated	\$150,000.00
Expended	<u>-138,869.65</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$11,130.35

Wheatville Farms Wetland Restoration, Fresno County

Allocated	\$485,000.00
Expended	<u>-485,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Willow Creek Ecological Reserve Exchange, Sacramento County

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

Total Habitat Conservation Fund \$473,011.60

WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND

Scotts Flat Reservoir Day Use Area Fishing Float, Nevada County

Allocated	\$125,214.00
Expended	<u>-125,214.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Total Wildlife Restoration Fund \$0.00

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

Sacramento River Fish Screen Reclamation Districts 307 and 999, Yolo County

Allocated	\$250,000.00
Expended	<u>-250,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

San Joaquin River Parkway, Wagner Property Steward Residence, Madera County

Allocated	\$94,600.00
Expended	<u>-59,079.12</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$35,520.88

Yolo County Oak Woodlands Management Plan, Yolo County

Allocated	\$30,000.00
Expended	<u>-29,775.60</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$224.40

Total California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund \$35,745.28

OAK WOODLANDS CONSERVATION FUND

Millerton Preserve, Van Alen Ranch Oak Woodlands, Madera County

Allocated	\$1,150,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,122,460.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$27,540.00

Total Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund \$27,540.00

- *8. Triple Creeks Conservation Area, Expansion 1 \$5,000.00
Riverside County

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the authorization to enter into an Agreement to Subgrant the federal grant funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority), to be applied toward its acquisition of a privately owned property totaling 6.24± acres, in southwestern Riverside County, for the protection of threatened and endangered species and to establish a wildlife movement corridor.

The Triple Creeks Conservation Area (conservation area) is located north of Temecula and south of Hemet. The property is located west of State Highway 79, east of Interstate Highway 215 south of Scott Road, south of the unincorporated community of Winchester. The 13,000-acre Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve is located east of the conservation area and the Johnson Ranch is located southeast of the area.

The conservation area is a mix of oak riparian, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, annual grasslands, and agricultural fields. The habitat complex supports a diverse native and wildlife community including a number of State and federally listed threatened and endangered species including the Quino checkerspot butterfly, Coastal California gnatcatcher, Least Bell's vireo, Swainson's hawk, California orcutt's grass, Munz's onion, and the Stephens kangaroo rat. This acquisition, in addition to protection of the habitat and wildlife species, will help to establish and protect a contiguous landscape linkage, habitat nodes for wildlife dispersal, and wildlife connectivity within a rapidly developing area. The project also conforms to the Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan and will further implement joint federal, state, and local Natural Community Conservation Planning efforts in southwestern Riverside County.

The Authority has proposed that the area be managed primarily to preserve threatened and endangered species and to conserve biodiversity. Additional management objectives may include providing public access for recreational pursuits such as hiking and wildlife viewing. Upland game hunting opportunities may be available with adequate space for safe separation of public users. Management costs will be provided by operating funds from the 2004 Assessment District 161 (AD 161) Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan funds held by the County. The State will have no responsibility for management of these properties.

The property owner has agreed to sell to the Authority at the appraised fair market value of \$335,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The proposed Agreement to Subgrant the federal grant funds provided by the USFWS Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant will provide 75 percent of the approved appraised value of the property, or \$251,250.00. The Authority has agreed to provide the remainder of the purchase price for the property totaling \$83,750.00 from the AD 161 funds held by the County.

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) authorize the acceptance of the USFWS grant and the approval of the proposed Agreement to Subgrant the federal grant funds to the Authority to be applied toward the purchase of the property. It is estimated that an allocation of \$5,000.00 will be needed for project-related expenses, which includes DGS appraisal review costs. The proposed funding source allows for grants to protect threatened and endangered species where the funding is leveraged with other funds and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

The terms and conditions of the proposed Agreement to Subgrant provide that staff of the Board will review and approve all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow accounts established for these properties.

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act requirements and is proposed as exempt under Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of an 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 this project as proposed; authorize the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the USFWS in the amount of \$251,250.00, and approval of the Agreement to Subgrant the federal grant funds to the Authority; allocate \$5,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5) for project related-expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

- *9. Solstice Creek/Corral Canyon Steelhead Restoration \$145,000.00
Los Angeles County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the city of Malibu for a partnership project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the California State Coastal Conservancy to remove an existing concrete box culvert that blocks steelhead passage on Solstice Creek, and to replace that culvert with a pre-cast open bottom bridge. The existing crossing lies within the city of Malibu's right-of-way easement, on Corral Canyon Road in Solstice Canyon, approximately 0.20 mile north of the Pacific Coast Highway and the Pacific Ocean. The project is adjacent to a unit of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area on the east, and Solstice Canyon provides a wildlife connection to Malibu Creek State Park at the top of Corral Canyon Road.

The Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) has a long history of acquisition and development projects in Los Angeles County. Most recently, two significant habitat restoration projects were approved in the vicinity of the proposed project: Las Flores Creek Stream Restoration (2005) and Malibu Lagoon State Park Restoration (2007).

The California Department of Fish and Game Steelhead Restoration and Management Plan for California (1996) notes in the Executive Summary that "recovering southern steelhead stocks from impending extinction will be the highest priority for the Department of Fish and Game steelhead management." Various federal and state agencies have been implementing a plan to restore fish access to Solstice Creek in the Santa Monica Mountains because there is historical evidence of the fish presence and because it has excellent water quality, diverse and sensitive, benthic macroinvertebrate populations, and optimal water temperatures to support steelhead trout.

Multiple fish passage barriers have been removed upstream of this project that is being completed in partnership with federal, state, and local agencies and organizations. When all fish barriers are removed, 1.8 miles of spawning and rearing habitat will be accessible to steelhead.

The specific objective of this project is to remove an existing 43-foot long Corral Canyon Road concrete box culvert and replace it with a two-lane, pre-cast, open-bottom bridge. The existing crossing is the only access road to approximately 100 private residences and a trailhead to public parkland and, therefore, cannot be decommissioned. The pre-cast open-bottom bridge, as proposed, is the preferred option and will span far enough to allow for dynamic channel stability. In addition to the removal of the existing concrete box culvert and bridge replacement with an open-bottom structure, the project includes roadway resurfacing, drainage replacement, and stream bank revegetation and restoration.

The city of Malibu has completed all of the pre-project planning, permit acquisition, and design work. It is anticipated that the project construction will be completed during the fall of 2007.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$145,000.00
State Coastal Conservancy	145,000.00
Department of Fish and Game	637,815.00
City of Malibu (Cash)	239,308.00
City of Malibu (In-Kind)	16,135.00
National Park Service (In-Kind)	27,350.00
Heal the Bay (In-Kind)	12,800.00
CalTrans (In-Kind)	<u>12,000.00</u>
 TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING	 \$1,235,408.00

Project costs will be for personnel services, analysis and permits, engineering, construction administration, construction inspection, construction, revegetation, maintenance and monitoring, and stream and bank monitoring.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The DFG's Fisheries Restoration Grant Program has approved a Negative Declaration for this project, pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act. The city of Malibu has agreed to manage and maintain the project 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 city of Malibu 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.

This project is consistent with the uses allowed under the proposed funding source. The funding source is Proposition 50, Section 79572, that allows funding for restoration of coastal watersheds in the five southern California coastal counties, passed through the Habitat Conservation Fund that allows funding for riparian and fisheries projects.

Support letters have been received from California Trout and from the neighboring private landowner.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$145,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(e-f) (Prop. 50 SoCal); 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. Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve (Augmentation and Change of Scope), Expansions 9 to 12, Monterey County \$1,150,000.00

This proposal is to consider the augmentation and change of scope of four projects previously approved by the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board). At the August 17, 2006 meeting, the Board approved the acceptance of the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) grant administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the amount of \$1,484,216.00 to be used for acquisitions in the Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve area. This grant requires a 50 percent match of State funds for the land purchase.

Staff has been informed that the timeline for the federal review and disbursement can be 10 to 12 weeks, or longer. That timeline assumes the review section is not otherwise occupied with the review of new grant applications. After some research, it has been determined that the federal grant does allow for reimbursement if the need to close escrow arises prior to the completion of the federal review.

Staff recommends the Board approve the augmentation and change of scope for these four previously approved projects, as proposed; allocate \$1,150,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(b/c) (Prop. 50); 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.

To complete the proposed acquisitions in a timely manner, staff is now requesting authority to use State funds, in the amount of \$1,150,000, to close escrow on these projects and to seek reimbursement of that amount from the federal CELCP grant. The amounts previously allocated by the Board for each project and which indicate the CELCP grants to have been used are as follows:

Expansion 9 – The property owner agreed to sell Expansion 9 to the State at the approved, appraised value of \$65,000. At its meeting on August 17, 2006, the Board allocated \$32,500, with the CELCP grant providing the remainder in the amount of \$32,500.

Expansion 10 – The property owner agreed to sell Expansion 10 to the State at the approved, appraised value of \$700,000. At its meeting on August 17, 2006, the Board allocated \$350,000, with the CELCP grant providing the remainder in the amount of \$350,000.

Expansion 11 – The property owner agreed to sell Expansion 11 to the State at the approved, appraised value of \$465,000. At its meeting on February 15, 2007, the Board allocated \$232,500, with the CELCP grant providing the remainder in the amount of \$232,500.

Expansion 12 – The property owner agreed to sell Expansion 12 to the State at the approved, appraised value of \$1,070,000. At its meeting on May 24, 2007, the Board allocated \$535,000, with the CELCP grant providing the remainder in the amount of \$535,000.

It is proposed that the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(b/c) (Prop. 50), be used to fund those portions of the four expansion projects which were initially to be funded by the CELCP grant funds in the amount of \$1,150,000. Once the review of the projects is completed, NOAA will reimburse the State in that amount. The Funds will be deposited by the Board into the Wildlife Restoration Fund. Consistent with the purposes of the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786(b/c), the purpose of these projects is to protect threatened and endangered species and significant natural areas statewide.

Staff recommends the Board approve the augmentation and change of scope for these four previously approved projects, as proposed; allocate \$1,150,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(b/c) (Prop. 50); 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. Portuguese Ridge Conservation Area, Mariposa County \$210,000.00

(This proposal is subject to funding being provided in the 2007/08 State budget.)

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Sierra Foothill Conservancy (Conservancy) to assist in the acquisition of a conservation easement over approximately 80 acres of land in Mariposa County, for the preservation of wetlands, upland wildlife habitat, native oak woodlands, and threatened and endangered species including the State-listed great gray owl.

The property is located 40± miles northeast of the city of Merced, in central California. More specifically, it is approximately one mile west of Jersey Dale Road in the Clarks Valley/Snow Creek area, near the town of Mariposa. The subject property is adjacent to a 733-acre conservation easement to the northwest held by the Conservancy which, in turn, links to the Sierra National Forest.

The primary purpose of the project is to provide for the long-term viability of complete ecosystems that are facing significant threats from current and future land uses. This will be accomplished through wetland preservation, upland wildlife habitat preservation, specifically for threatened and endangered species and the preservation of native oak woodlands which are necessary for the protection of deer and mountain lions.

Protection of these ecosystems will provide essential breeding, roosting, migrating, and/or forging habitats for a wide array of Sierra Nevada species of wildlife, fish, and plants. One of these species, documented to occur on the site, is the great gray owl, which is listed as State-endangered. Many other special-status species that could potentially benefit from the proposed acquisition include the foothill yellow-legged frog, Pacific fisher, western pond turtle, California spotted owl, northern goshawk, Yosemite onion, and big-scale balsamroot.

The owners have agreed to sell the conservation easement for the appraised fair market value of \$200,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). Staff recommends the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) approve an allocation for a grant to the Conservancy in the amount of \$200,000.00 for the purchase of the easement. It is anticipated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be required to cover project-related expenses, including the DGS appraisal review costs, bringing the total proposed allocation for the project to \$210,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for grants to acquire real property for the protection of threatened and endangered species and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that the Board 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 Conservancy's escrow for the purchase of the easement.

The Conservancy will be responsible for managing and monitoring the easement. The landowner will allow the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) biologists on the property to perform various studies. The Board also has the right to enter upon the property for compliance monitoring once every three years.

The proposed acquisition is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act requirements 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 or interest in land to preserve open space, habitats, or historical resources. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Subject to funding being provided in the 2007-08 State budget, staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$210,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(b-c) for the grant and project-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.

- *12. Laguna de Santa Rosa Middle Reach Restoration \$200,000.00
Sonoma County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation (Foundation) for a partnership project with the California State Coastal Conservancy, the Community Foundation of Sonoma County, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the cities of Sebastopol and Sonoma to restore and enhance approximately 26 acres of riparian corridor, 3 acres of seasonal wetland habitat in the floodplain, and 10 acres of upland-oak woodland habitat. The project is located on private and public land along the middle reach of the Laguna de Santa Rosa near the city of Sebastopol, in Sonoma County.

Within the past 10 years, the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) has funded several significant habitat restoration projects on or near the Laguna de Santa Rosa. These include the restoration of riparian habitat immediately upstream of the proposed project location (Riparian Habitat Restoration, Laguna de Santa Rosa, approved in 1999); a watershed-wide effort to remove nonnative invasive plants from the Russian River and tributaries (Russian River Watershed Riparian Habitat Restoration, approved in 2004); and a similar effort to remove the invasive plant *Ludwigia* from several locations in the Laguna de Santa Rosa (Laguna de Santa Rosa *Ludwigia* Eradication, approved in 2005).

Stretching 14 miles south of the Russian River, the Laguna de Santa Rosa (the Laguna) is the largest tributary to the Russian River and the second largest freshwater wetland in coastal northern California and one of the most biologically diverse regions in northwestern California. The Laguna's wetlands and surrounding upland areas are home to a wide variety of wildlife and provide an important stopover for thousands of birds migrating along the Pacific Flyway. Throughout its length, the Laguna is designated as critical habitat for endangered coho salmon and steelhead trout. The broad floodplain and uplands are characterized by a biologically diverse mosaic of oak woodland, annual grasslands, and seasonal wetlands, which are home to a variety of state and federally listed plant and animal species.

Recent analysis by the Foundation indicated that 51 percent of the Laguna's main channel and its tributaries lack riparian cover. Within the project area, known as the "Middle Reach," historic land uses have reduced significant portions of the riparian corridor to a narrow strip lacking in structural diversity and failing to provide functional capacities including nesting, foraging and cover habitat, bank stabilization, shading, and filtration of overland flow. Compounding the degraded conditions is the widespread invasion of perennial pepperweed and other invasive, nonnative plant species.

Recognizing the sensitive wildlife values of the Laguna, and to encourage wildlife management, the Sonoma County General Plan designated the area encompassing the main channel and adjacent uplands as the Laguna de Santa Rosa Resource Conservation Program Boundary. The properties to be restored by this project are protected public land (city of Sebastopol and Sonoma County) and private agricultural land where the areas to be restored to wildlife habitat are protected by

“Forever-wild” conservation easements held by the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District.

The public has access to the Laguna for passive recreation in the city of Sebastopol’s Laguna de Santa Rosa Wetlands Preserve, and they can use a public trail system, which is expected to be expanded in the future to include the project area. Hunters are also known to utilize kayaks or other watercraft in the Middle Reach to access the nearby Department of Fish and Game (DFG) wildlife area.

In general, the project will expand and improve the quality of the degraded riparian forest and floodplain along this key reach of the Laguna de Santa Rosa, establishing enhanced habitat for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, an improved wildlife transit corridor, and improving water quality through increases in shading and filtration of runoff. Specifically, the project will control or eradicate 10 acres of perennial pepperweed and several other invasive nonnative plants, replant native riparian vegetation on 26 acres of channel frontage which will extend downstream for more than 1.8 miles, restore 10 acres of oak savannah woodland located upland from the larger of the two segments of the channel targeted for restoration, and manage and enhance approximately three acres of degraded, seasonal wetland swales located in the floodplain – habitat for the locally endemic and federally listed endangered Sebastopol meadowfoam.

Numerous wildlife species will also benefit from this project, including the coho salmon and steelhead trout, bald eagle, white tailed kite, northern harrier, Swainson’s thrush, loggerhead shrike, yellow warbler, common yellowthroat, yellow-breasted chat, and many other species of resident mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. This project is supported by many regional conservation plans, including the Sonoma County General Plan (1989) and the more recent North Coast Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (2005). It is consistent with the goals of the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program and the California Riparian Habitat Joint Venture.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$200,000.00
California State Coastal Conservancy	200,000.00
Community Foundation of Sonoma County	25,000.00
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	75,000.00
City of Sebastopol	<u>15,000.00</u>
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING	\$515,000.00

Project costs will be for installation of a sign, project management, planning, invasive species control, planting, irrigation, seasonal wetland management, maintenance, monitoring, and reporting.

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 WCB, the appropriate Notice of

Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The Foundation has agreed to manage and maintain the project 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 Foundation is unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, they will refund to the Board an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

This project is consistent with the uses allowed under the proposed funding source. The funding source is Proposition 50, Section 79565, that allows statewide funding for fish and wildlife habitat projects, passed through the Habitat Conservation Fund that allows funding for riparian and fisheries projects.

This project enjoys wide support from federal, state and local legislators and agencies, community groups, and private citizens. The Board has received support letters from Lynn Woolsey, Member of Congress, and State Senator Patricia Wiggins.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$200,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(e)(f) (Prop. 50); 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. McAravy Ranch Wetland Restoration, Phase II \$97,000.00
Yolo County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association (CWA) for a partnership project with the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Landowner to restore approximately 79 acres of seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands, 37 acres of riparian habitat, and 44 acres of native grasslands. The project is located on privately owned land two miles east of the community of Dunnigan in Yolo County.

The site was protected with a perpetual federal easement under the NRCS Wetland Reserve Program in 2006, and restoration was initiated in a partnership project with funds from the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) and the NRCS. Pipelines were installed, levees were constructed, and water control structures were installed. Unfortunately, as restoration was nearing completion, the landowner sold the property, and riparian plantings were not completed and wetlands were left dry. The following year the new landowner, who owns adjacent property to the north, asked that the design be modified to allow him to better manage the property as part of his existing operations. Working with this new landowner, staff with the CWA, NRCS, the Board, and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) redesigned the wetlands to allow agricultural drain water from the adjacent property to enter the wetland areas and to use an existing lift pump and return basin on the new landowner's property. With these modest changes, wetlands will now be concentrated in the northern portions of the property, and native upland grasslands will lie further south. The riparian corridor remains unchanged, though additional plantings will occur on the eastern boundary of the property.

This site is located in the Colusa Basin, identified by the Central Valley Joint Venture (CVJV) as having a high potential for successful wetland restoration. This project will help the CVJV meet its goal of nearly 3,000 acres to be restored in the Basin, and, further, the site is located in the southern portion of the Basin, an area identified as the highest priority area within the Basin for restoration activities. Thirty seven acres on either side of Dunnigan Creek, which flows through the center of the property, will be planted with a variety of riparian species. The site is located immediately adjacent to protected properties that are currently being restored, resulting in several thousand acres of contiguous wetland/riparian habitat.

These wetlands will provide resting and feeding areas for migrating and wintering waterfowl and shorebirds, such as gadwalls and greater yellowlegs. As mentioned above, extensive riparian habitat is planned for this site, which will benefit such species as yellow warblers and song sparrows. Finally, the native grassland restoration planned for this site will provide important nesting habitat for a number of species, including western meadowlarks and savannah sparrows and wintering habitat for Lincoln's sparrows and horned larks.

The project calls for a slight modification of the system of levees and water control structures to allow the landowner to precisely manage water levels on the north side of the property to maximize wetland habitat values. Swales will be cut through the northern

fields; islands will be constructed to increase wetland diversity; and a new water control structure will be installed to manage water levels. Approximately 700 feet of pipeline will be installed to provide water to the new wetland area. In the riparian corridor, a four-canopy planting scheme will be installed, comprised of a ground cover layer, a shrub layer, a small tree layer, topped with full-sized trees. At least 20 species will be planted, resulting in a complex riparian forest. Native upland grasslands will be planted on approximately 26 acres in the southeastern portion of the property.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$97,000.00
U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service	48,898.00
California Waterfowl Association	16,423.60
Landowner	<u>20,819.30</u>
 TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING	 \$183,140.90

Project costs will be for earthmoving, water control structures, a low-flow crossing on Dunnigan Creek, native grasses, riparian habitat, a pipeline, wood duck boxes, 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.

This project is consistent with the uses allowed under the proposed funding source. The funding source is Proposition 50 that allows statewide funding for fish and wildlife habitat projects, passed through the Habitat Conservation Fund that allows funding for wetland restoration projects.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$97,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(d), IWCP (Prop. 50); 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. Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, Napa Plant Site \$132,000.00
Restoration, Ponds 9, 10, and Wash Ponds
Pre-Construction Activities, Napa County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU), to undertake pre-construction activities including permit payments, pre-construction surveys, and bid package preparation for the Napa Plant Site Ponds 9, 10, and Wash Ponds restoration project within the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, on the east side of the Napa River, north of Highway 37, in Napa county. The Napa Plant Site Restoration Project Phase 1 (Project) will restore and enhance tidal wetlands and associated transitional habitats on approximately 380 acres of former commercial salt ponds along the Napa River. This project is a partnership of DU, DFG, and the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board). It proposes to restore tidal marsh and associated habitats at the Napa Plant Site Unit of the Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area (NSMWA), in order to benefit resident, migrant, and wintering wildlife species.

The Napa Plant Site was constructed during the 1950s on lands which were previously tidal marsh with the exception of Green Island, which has elevations above tidal influence. The site currently encompasses commercial salt harvesting, processing, and shipping facilities with crystallizer and concentrating ponds operated by the former owner, Cargill, Inc., and was acquired by the Board in 2004 along with other salt ponds in south San Francisco Bay.

The site is divided into three units based on hydrologic connectivity and geography: the North Unit (205 acres), includes Ponds 9 and 10, which are located between the Northwest Pacific Railroad and Fagan Slough; the Central Unit (175 acres), includes Wash Ponds W1, W2, and W3. The Central Unit also includes Green Island, salt production facilities, the barge channel, and the site access road. Although not included in this proposal, the remaining unit, South Unit (1,080 acres), includes Ponds CB1 through CB9 and Ponds B-1, B-2, and B-3 and will be considered for restoration at a later date.

The intent of the restoration project is to restore tidal hydrology and connectivity to the site by lowering perimeter levees along the Napa River and Fagan Slough, breaching levees at strategic locations in the barge channel and along Fagan Slough, creating excavated channels and lowering internal levees within the North and Central Units. In addition, levees along adjacent properties and the Northwest Pacific Railroad will be raised and improved to provide flood protection and valuable, tidal to uplands, transitional ecotone habitat. The restoration components to be implemented are further described in the Napa Plant Site Restoration Ponds 9, 10, W1, W2, and W3 General Arrangement Plans and Technical Specifications developed by URS Corporation.

Ponds 9, 10, W1, W2, and W3 have been inactive since the early 1990's when salt production ceased. During that period, these ponds have been passively managed, and have accumulated water solely by precipitation. Evaporation has been the only means of drying these ponds. When flooding persists into the summer months, the ponds are characterized with very high salinities. Due to high pond salinities and the flooding and

drying pattern, the site currently supports limited wildlife use compared to other salt ponds and managed wetlands in the region.

The DFG plans to restore and enhance the former Napa Plant Site commercial salt ponds. Restoration planning and detailed engineering have addressed flood protection to adjacent properties, potential conflicts between wildlife, the adjacent Napa County Airport, and wildlife-oriented public access and recreation opportunities. Flood protection for adjacent property and infrastructure and potential effects on the adjacent Napa County airport and navigation and residential uses on the west side of the Napa River will be integrated with restoration planning to ensure that, at minimum, flood protection is maintained at the existing levels and restoration does not have adverse affects on existing land uses surrounding the property.

Wildlife-oriented public access and recreation opportunities will be planned at a conceptual level as part of the restoration and management plan. Public uses are expected to include a segment of the San Francisco Bay Trail (Bay Trail) for biking and hiking, identification of hunting, angling, bird watching, and environmental education opportunities.

The site is located directly adjacent to the Napa County Airport, which is a 2,045-acre general aviation airport. Additionally, the Northwest Pacific Railroad crosses through the site separating the North and Central Units. The project design takes into account these features to mitigate concerns with bird strikes and railroad levee failure.

Restored tidal marsh will provide critical habitat for the endangered California clapper rail, the salt marsh harvest mouse, and sensitive plant species. Marsh areas with extensive channel systems will also provide habitat for fish and other aquatic life. The project will also benefit resident and migrating waterfowl on wildlife area such as mallard, northern pintail, northern shovelers, American widgeon, bufflehead, green-winged teal, tundra swan, and Canada goose (including Aleutians). Other wetland associated species include white-faced ibis, double-crested cormorant, long-billed marsh wren, red-winged blackbird, great blue heron, black-crowned night heron, great egret, snowy egret, long-billed curlew, western snowy plover, western sandpiper, willet, dunlin, black-bellied plover, greater yellow legs, brown pelican, pied-billed grebe, and horned grebe. Raptors using the site include the bald eagle, northern harrier, American kestrel, and peregrine falcon.

CEQA and NEPA documentation has been completed. Authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission are pending. The purpose of this proposal is to facilitate the completion of all tasks necessary to enable project construction in 2008. This will allow the project to move forward and costs to be defined so that construction may begin as soon as permits, funding, and weather allow.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$132,000.00
-----------------------------	--------------

TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$132,000.00

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. Board funding will be used for these principle pre-construction tasks: 1) to pay regulatory agencies the negotiated fees for project authorization; 2) to perform pre-construction surveys to good-truth, existing, survey information; and 3) to provide complete bid documents, to provide bidding assistance, and to provide sealed bids for construction of the project. The bid documents will be written so that the contractor's bids will be good for 90 days. DU will time the bidding to coincide with the Board's needs for preparing and submitting a proposal for the Board's November 2007 meeting.

This project is consistent with the uses allowed under the proposed funding source. The funding source is Proposition 50, Section 79572, Coastal Wetlands that allows funding for restoration of coastal watersheds, identified in the Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Report, passed through the Habitat Conservation Fund that allows funding for wetlands projects.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$132,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(d) Other (Prop. 50 SF); 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. Montna Farms Wetland Restoration, Sutter County \$150,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc., for a partnership project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the North American Wetland Conservation Council, and the landowner to restore approximately 780 acres of seasonal wetlands and 20 acres of upland grasslands, located in the Sutter Bypass, approximately fifteen miles south of the city of Yuba City in Sutter County. The privately owned property is protected by a FWS conservation easement and is located immediately west of the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Feather River Wildlife Area.

This proposal is the Wildlife Conservation Board's (Board) fourth wetland restoration project considered in the Sutter Basin (Basin). Despite the fact that this Basin is centrally located in the Sacramento Valley and hosts hundreds of thousands of wintering waterfowl every year, most of these birds use the thousands of acres of winter flooded rice fields that are found in the Basin, which while important do not provide the habitat diversity of native wetlands. This project will assist the Central Valley Joint Venture's (CVJV) goal of restoring and protecting more than 4,000 acres of wetlands in the Basin. To date, the CVJV's partners have achieved less than 10 percent of this goal.

The project site has been laser-leveled for agricultural production. The proposed project will result in the development of infrastructure to allow for the creation and management of seasonal wetlands and adjacent uplands. Rice checks will be removed, existing levees will be strengthened and new levees constructed, swales will be cut through all wetland units, and potholes and islands built to create diversity. Thirty-seven new water control structures will be installed, and cottonwoods, willows, and tules will be planted to provide a diversity of habitats. Native grasses will be planted on the upland areas. All improvements will be constructed to withstand flood events in the bypass and are designed to not impede flood flows. These improvements will allow the landowner to efficiently manage the area to establish and maintain these valuable habitats.

Seasonal wetland habitats provide reliable feeding areas for wintering waterfowl and shorebirds, including such species as American widgeon, northern pintails, and long-billed dowitchers. Mallards and gadwalls will nest in the uplands, which should also provide nesting habitat for such species as northern harriers and western meadowlarks. Special-status species that should benefit from the proposed project include tri-colored blackbirds and white-faced ibis, both of which nest on the nearby Sutter National Wildlife Refuge and use wetlands to forage.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$150,000.00
Fish and Wildlife Service	33,500.00
North American Wetland Conservation Council	486,963.00
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	23,722.00
Landowner	<u>197,768.00</u>

TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$891,953.00

Project costs will be for site preparation; drainage canal excavation; earthmoving; water control structures; pump refurbishing; erosion protection rock, tree, tule, and native grass planting; contingencies; and environmental permitting, 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 FWS easement allows grazing but precludes all other agricultural production. 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.

This project is consistent with the uses allowed under the proposed funding source. The funding source is Proposition 50 that allows statewide funding for fish and wildlife habitat projects, passed through the Habitat Conservation Fund that allows funding for wetland restoration projects.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$150,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(d), IWCP (Prop. 50); 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. Gray Lodge Wildlife Area Wells, Butte County

\$300,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc., for a project to develop one or more ground water production wells at the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Gray Lodge Wildlife Area. The Wildlife Area is located approximately 12 miles southwest of the city of Gridley in Butte County.

The Gray Lodge Wildlife Area consists of more than 9,000 acres of seasonal and permanent wetlands, riparian habitat, oak woodlands, and upland grasslands. Acquisition of the site was initiated in 1931 by the DFG with the purchase of the 2,500-acre Gray Lodge Club. The Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) has been involved for more than 50 years, beginning in 1949 with the acquisition of more than 4,000 acres. Since then, seven separate WCB actions have increased the acreage of the wildlife area to its current size of approximately 9,200 acres. In addition, the Board has assisted in a six-phase plan for upgrading the entire water delivery and drainage system, begun in 2001, with the sixth and final phase under construction this summer.

With the completion of the water delivery and drainage system, the Wildlife Area finally has the ability to efficiently move water throughout the area once it is delivered. Currently, water is delivered to the Wildlife Area through a variety of ways: surface water from the Biggs West Gridley Water District (BWGWD), drain water from surrounding agricultural lands, floodwaters during major flood events, and deep water wells on site. Even given this diversity of water sources, adequate supply is still a problem. In 1992 with the passage of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA), a commitment was made to reliably deliver 44,000 acre-feet of water to the boundary of the Gray Lodge Wildlife Area by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR). However, due to lack of adequate conveyance capacity through BWGWD, deliveries are currently limited to approximately 29,000 acre-feet per year. It is projected BWGWD will make the appropriate improvements to their conveyance system by 2012. In the meantime, ground water is the only reliable alternative for the remaining 15,000 acre-feet, and the Wildlife Area has always depended on groundwater during the annual January-April BWGWD maintenance period.

Existing groundwater wells at the Wildlife Area, installed many decades ago for the purpose of flooding up adjacent irrigated agricultural fields, have been used for this purpose. These wells are largely open bore construction subject to fill by siltation and/or gravel, and in some cases, to bore collapse. Production rates and efficiency of these wells continue to decrease, while repairs increase. None are designed for the purposes they are currently used for; most are located in individual fields or in the southern (lower elevation) portion of the refuge requiring water to be pumped into a field, released into a drain, and lifted a second time to enable use in the water distribution system.

This project calls for the development of as many as four water production wells, with pumps capable of delivering 5,000 gallons per minute. All wells will be situated at the top of the newly renovated water delivery system to allow the water to be efficiently used where needed throughout the Wildlife Area. Well water can be used when

BWGWD surface water is unavailable during canal maintenance, to augment surface delivery water in fall to flood the area for winter, and to add to agricultural drain water to increase flows and improve water quality. The plan is to discontinue use of older inefficient and failing groundwater wells as these new wells come on line.

The Gray Lodge Wildlife Area is unmatched in the Sacramento Valley of California for its diversity and numbers of wildlife present, with more than 200 species of birds, 30 mammal species and 25 species of reptiles and amphibians found on site. More than a million waterfowl visit the area each winter. These tremendous numbers of wildlife provide recreational enjoyment to thousands of visitors every year.

Project costs will be for the drilling of one or more wells, the installation of pumps, and project development, construction supervision, and administration. U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) currently reimburses DFG for pumping groundwater to make up for a portion of the water that BWGWD cannot deliver due to conveyance system capacity constraints. Development and operation of the new State-owned wells will be used to supply CVPIA water, and USBR has expressed interest in reimbursing or purchasing State-produced groundwater.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The Department will complete the appropriate notice to satisfy CEQA requirements.

This project is consistent with the uses allowed under the proposed funding source. The funding source is the Habitat Conservation Fund that allows funding for wetland restoration projects.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$300,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop 117), Section 2786(d) IWCP (Prop. 50); 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. Humboldt Bay Coastal Reserve, Expansion 1 \$185,000.00
Humboldt County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Friends of the Dunes Land Trust (Land Trust) for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), to assist with the acquisition of 23± acres of private land, in Humboldt County. The acquisition will allow for the protection, retention, and possible restoration of beach area, dunes, wetland, and remnant maritime forest habitat.

The subject property is located off State Highway 255, known as New Navy Base Road, about one-fourth mile north of the community of Manila, on the Somoa Peninsula. The city of Arcata is about four miles northeast and the city of Eureka is about five miles southeast.

Placement of this 23± acre property in Land Trust ownership will add additional buffer from potential residential development and other uses on the Somoa Peninsula. There are multiple purposes for this acquisition by the Land Trust including conservation of one of the very few remaining larger, undeveloped, contiguous tracts of coastal dune habitats. It is the primary objective of the Land Trust to ensure that the regional continuity of lands on the peninsula are managed for conservation and provide recreational opportunities and public access linkages with adjacent publicly owned property.

The subject property has multiple species values including habitat for the Humboldt Bay wallflower, beach layia, Western snowy plover, Black-capped chickadee, yellow warbler, Swainson's thrush, native dune grass, seashore bluegrass, beach bursage, and the sea-rocket. There is also the potential for restoration of the multiple habitats including the beach, dunes, wetlands, and remnant maritime forest areas.

The DFG has identified the subject property as being within a significant natural area and has recommended the purchase of this property which would be owned and managed by the Land Trust. It is anticipated that the area will offer only passive recreational uses with the exception of surf fishing.

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act requirements and is proposed as exempt under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and Class 25, Section 15325, as the transfer of an ownership or interest in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board), a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearing House. In addition, there are no claims of sovereign state land ownership within the property.

The property owner has agreed to sell to the Land Trust at the appraised fair market value of \$175,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The proposed \$175,000.00 grant by the WCB would provide the necessary funds to purchase the property. It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related costs, including appraisal review charges by the DGS, bringing the

total proposed allocation for this project to \$185,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for grants to protect threatened and endangered species and significant natural landscapes and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$185,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(b/c) (Prop. 50), for the grant and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

18. Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project \$9,980,000.00
Shasta and Tehama Counties

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant for a partnership project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy, California Department of Water Resources, Central Valley Project Water Agencies, Friends of the River, National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Coast Fishermen Federation Association, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), Packard Foundation, State Water Resources Control Board, The Nature Conservancy, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore fisheries habitat along 42 miles of Lower Battle Creek and 6 miles of tributaries, located in Shasta and Tehama Counties. Battle Creek Wildlife Area and the Coleman National Fish Hatchery lie just below the lower limit of the proposed restoration project.

The Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) has recently allocated funding for two projects on the Battle Creek Wildlife Area: Habitat Restoration, Battle Creek Wildlife Area, approved in 2003, and Battle Creek Wildlife Area Bridge Replacement, approved in 2007.

The Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project was funded by CALFED in 1999 for \$28,000,000. It is estimated over \$70,000,000 will be needed to complete the project. The DFG is in the process of developing an agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to restore portions of Battle Creek for the benefit of salmon and steelhead fisheries. This proposed grant, if approved, will assist the DFG in this effort by providing a portion of the necessary project funding.

The Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project is an exceptional conservation opportunity to reestablish 42 miles of prime and uniquely reliable salmon and steelhead habitat on Battle Creek and its tributaries. Successful implementation of this project will help restore populations of winter-run Chinook salmon, spring run Chinook salmon and steelhead, all of which are in danger or threatened with extinction as defined by the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA). Battle Creek offers this unique restoration opportunity because of its geology, hydrology, habitat suitability for several anadromous species, historical water allocation, and land use compatible with a restored stream environment.

Unusual in California, Battle Creek has a relatively high and stable base flow of cool water throughout the year. This is because seasonal precipitation does not rapidly run off the watershed as with streams situated farther south in the Sierra Nevada. Instead, a large portion of the annual water charge percolates through the underlying volcanic strata and emerges through the water course as cold springs. This relatively stable base flow and cold water temperature offer drought resistance not found elsewhere in the present range of anadromous fish. This ensures that species will have refuge in the Project area even during times when they become distressed in other watersheds more vulnerable to fluctuations of water flow and temperature.

PG&E will have responsibilities pursuant to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license amendment application for the continued operation of their facilities on

Battle Creek. Those responsibilities will include securing landowner easement agreements for construction, developing and implementing a monitoring plan for the facilities that will be constructed, and regulating and maintaining minimum in-stream flows for fish.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. DFG has the lead in completing the needed California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance steps for the project, and a final EIS/EIR will be issued by the partnering state and federal agencies in the future. This project is consistent with the uses allowed under the proposed funding source. The funding source is Proposition 50, Section 79550(e), CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program implementation, passed through the Habitat Conservation Fund that allows funding for riparian and fisheries projects.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$9,980,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, (Prop. 117), Section 2786(a-f) (ERP); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

19. Department of Fish and Game Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program, Statewide \$3,862,007.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation of funding for an interagency agreement with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to provide additional support for the California Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program to build a statewide vegetation mapping/classification system to prioritize California's diverse wildlife habitats, including wildlife corridors and habitat linkages, for protection and/or restoration.

In the spring 2003, the DFG established a small but innovative program in the Biogeographic Data Branch (BDB) entitled the Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program (VegCAMP). VegCAMP is devoted to the development of procedures and protocols needed to classify and map biologically significant vegetation communities and habitats throughout California. VegCAMP has evolved from previous programs within BDB, including the Natural Communities program within the California Natural Diversity Database and the Significant Natural Areas Program. VegCAMP is a synthesis of these two previous programs that enables more focused effort on developing and maintaining the maps and classification of all vegetation and habitats in the State.

The goal for DFG's Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program is the development of a complete, fine-scale, attribute-rich Statewide Vegetation map and corresponding digital GIS layer over a three to five-year period. The mapping process will use extensive field data collection to refine the vegetation classification system to label two-acre minimum mapping unit polygons delineated using recently acquired large scale aerial photography. The ultimate goal is to map from border to border across all types of land ownership and land uses. Approximately one-fifth of the state has been mapped in fine detail using the methodology promoted by the DFG's VegCAMP Unit.

The mapping products and associated GIS data layers will be immediately integrated into the following major program areas:

- Prioritizing land acquisitions for wildlife areas and ecological reserves,
- Regional conservation planning, especially Natural Community Conservation Planning and Habitat Conservation Planning,
- Wildland fire/fuels modeling for improved preparedness,
- Identifying potential rare and endangered species locations,
- Predicting and tracking the spread of invasive species,
- Early scoping for transportation projects to avoid rather than mitigate impacts,
- Identifying important wildlife corridors,

- Setting a baseline for monitoring impacts of global climate change,
- Support efforts by the administration and the legislature to bolster the conservation element in the general planning process,
- Provide a habitat-based damage assessment for inland spill events,
- Provide a data rich basis for change detection from a variety of land management practices.

Mapping and classification at the level proposed will result in a product that will be useful for modeling and predicting plant and animal distributions and associated project impacts; monitoring and evaluating the status, health, and trends of wildlife; and identifying critical habitat and conservation priorities for endangered species. Other uses include developing land management plans and assessing risks of exotic species infestations, and identification of restoration or acquisition lands and reference sites for restoration projects. Changes in habitat type or acreage can be monitored because the map can be updated in a standardized fashion; the vegetation keys we will provide will also facilitate change detection.

The DFG's present program for vegetation classification and mapping consists of two full-time staff and one temporary help position to sample, classify, and map vegetation across California; the third largest state in the U.S., consisting of over 160,000 square miles (over 100 million acres). While the DFG's Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program has managed to classify and map about one fifth of the state's vegetation, each project has been opportunistic rather than strategic in nature, and has required significant assistance from multiple external partners, including state and federal agencies (e.g., California Department of Parks and Recreation, U.S. National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management). Building a statewide vegetation classification and map is a multi-year effort. Keeping the classification and map updated should be a permanent function across California's diverse landscape. Increasing and expanding the current program is the most effective means in building a sustainable vegetation mapping program.

Three program tasks will be implemented for this program:

Task 1) Program Start-Up - This includes the hiring of additional staff and the presentation of a Report to the Legislature in January, 2008, identifying: 1) by acre and location, how much vegetation mapping is planned to be conducted in 2007-08; 2) a map of general geographic areas that the DFG and Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) believe are priority locations to conduct vegetation mapping; and 3) a map of the known wildlife corridors in the State, based on existing data available to the DFG and Board.

Task 2) Northern Sierra Nevada Foothills Project – Final Phase - This task will be conducted under contract to DFG through competitive bidding, with a VegCAMP staff person as the contract manager. The first part of this project, development of a vegetation classification of the northern Foothills, was funded by the Resources

Assessment Program for \$395,500.00 in 2004. The project area encompassed 2.49 million acres. The classification was finalized in spring 2007. But, the Final Phase mapping project proposed here can start as soon as contracting allows. The Final Phase would build on the classification data to develop vegetation mapping. Mapping would be completed within 10 to 18 months, depending on the acreage of the project area to be mapped. A detailed vegetation map of the Northern Sierra Nevada Foothills will serve as a surrogate for wildlife and plant habitat for many species and, thus, as the baseline for habitat quality and quantity monitoring. Such a map is critical for sound regional planning. Several wildlife areas and jointly-managed areas (including Tehama, North Table Mountain, Dye Creek, Daugherty Hill, Spenceville, and Pine Hill) are within the northern Foothills project area and would also benefit from detailed mapping.

Task 3) Potential Mapping Projects for High Priority as Determined by the Board and the DFG – The Board and the DFG will jointly determine those areas of highest priority for vegetation mapping, especially as priorities relate to land evaluation, habitat quality, and acquisition. The Board and the DFG will jointly determine the best methods for developing these priorities beyond the completion of the Northern Sierra Nevada Foothills project and the Southern San Joaquin Valley Counties (approximately 5.3 million acres).

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$3,861,831.00
California Department of Fish and Game (Costs of Existing Program Staff)	<u>1,530,954.00</u>
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING	\$5,392,785.00

The Board project costs will be for additional program positions, completion of the Sierra Foothills Classification Map, and prioritization of potential, additional mapping projects.

An additional \$176.00 will be required to cover the Department of General Services' review costs, bringing the total allocation for this project to \$3,862,007.00. The project is consistent with the uses allowed under the funding source, Proposition 84, Section 75055, that allows funds to be used for development of scientific data and habitat mapping. The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,862,007.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, Section 75055(b) to implement the project; 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. Ramona Grasslands, Expansion 1, San Diego County \$2,020,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the acceptance of a Recovery Land Acquisition Grant and a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the authorization to enter into Agreements to Subgrant the federal funds to TNC, to assist in the acquisition of a 1,350± acre real property in San Diego County. Acquisition of the property will protect an expanse of relatively intact and undisturbed grasslands, upland chaparral, and riparian habitat that will promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species. The property will also provide linkages to adjacent public lands to prevent habitat fragmentation.

The subject property is located northwest of the unincorporated community of Ramona, in west-central San Diego County. The upper part of the property is open grasslands and vernal pools, bisected by Santa Maria Creek. The creek then cuts into the surrounding hills, forming Bandy Canyon. This canyon is flanked by extensive meadows, riparian forest, and coast live oak woodland. The project area is surrounded by upland chaparral, and Santa Maria Creek, not long after leaving the property, joins Santa Ysabel Creek in the San Pascual Valley, to form the San Dieguito River.

Over 90 percent of the historic native grassland areas in San Diego County have already been lost to development. This purchase will benefit numerous species of conservation concern, among them the federally endangered Stephens' kangaroo rat, arroyo southwestern toad, San Diego fairy shrimp, and California gnatcatcher. Other notable wildlife species in the area include badger, mountain lion, bobcat, gray fox, coyote, San Diego horned lizard, granite spiny lizard, and several species of raptors, including golden eagle, merlin, prairie falcon, ferruginous hawk, red-tailed hawk, and burrowing owls.

The grasslands/vernal pool complex supports numerous sensitive plant species, including southern tarplant, spreading navarretia, and little mouseltail. In addition, intact natural habitats within the watershed, such as riparian forest, vernal pools, meadows, and seeps have been demonstrated to provide water filtration, groundwater recharge, flood control, and other benefits to water quality. The proposed acquisition will offer permanent protection to this property which is threatened by the rapidly encroaching development in the area, together with the associated impact on the natural habitat and animal life.

It is planned that fee title to this property will be transferred by TNC in the near future to the San Diego County Parks and Recreation Department for long-term ownership and management. The County proposes to manage the property as an expansion to other properties it owns in the Ramona Grasslands area, purchased in part with funding from the WCB.

The owners have agreed to sell the property for the appraised fair market value of \$11,000,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). TNC will provide \$1,000,000.00 in funding toward the purchase and has received a commitment from the Resources Agency for a Proposition 50 "River Parkways" grant, in the amount

of \$2,500,000.00. The two USFWS grants, in the amount of \$5,500,000.00, will provide a portion of the acquisition funding through proposed Agreements to Subgrant from the WCB. Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) approve a grant to TNC, in the amount of \$2,000,000.00, to provide the remaining funding for the acquisition. It is anticipated that an additional \$20,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses including the DGS appraisal review costs, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$2,020,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for grants to protect threatened and endangered species and significant natural landscapes and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that staff of the Board will review and approve all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, conservation easement, escrow instructions, and the instruments of conveyance prior to authorizing the disbursement of funds directly to the escrow holder for the purchase of the property. In addition, staff will have the ability to access the property for the purpose of monitoring validation no less than every three years.

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

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; authorize the acceptance of the Recovery Land Acquisition Grant in the amount of \$500,000.00 and the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant in the amount of \$5,000,000.00 from the USFWS, and the approval of two Agreements to Subgrant the federal funds to TNC, totaling \$5,500,000.00; allocate \$446,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(b-c) (Prop. 50), and \$1,574,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(b-c) for the grant and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

21. Walters Creek Habitat Restoration, San Luis Obispo County \$290,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Bay Foundation of Morro Bay for a partnership project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to restore riparian, floodplain, and adjacent wetland along a 1500-foot stretch of Walters Creek on DFG's San Luis Obispo Wildlife Area.

This project falls within the Morro Bay National Estuary Program's (MBNEP) State and Federally approved Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) and will benefit important habitats, species, and water quality, both on site and in the Morro Bay National Estuary downstream. Two of the largest threats to Morro Bay are: (1) the excessive sedimentation threatening the estuary's unique and abundant habitats and (2) the loss of adjacent riparian and wetland habitats. The filling in of Morro Bay with sediment is occurring at an unnaturally accelerated rate, whereby one estimate predicts that the Bay could fill completely within 300 years. In addition, steelhead and riparian habitat have been severely degraded due to various land use activities and stream alterations over the last 100+ years. The proposed project will control erosion sources, restore floodplain areas, and revegetate stream banks along 1,500 linear feet of Walters Creek, which is consistent with the CCMP. The CCMP recommends restoration of floodplain and riparian habitat in the watershed in an effort to reduce sediments and other pollutants from entering the Bay and to improve these key habitat areas. The CCMP also identifies steelhead habitat restoration as a high priority for improving ecosystem health.

A steelhead restoration plan for Morro Bay was completed in 2003 that made a number of recommendations for improving steelhead habitat in the watershed. Among those recommendations were: (1) reducing sediment loads from multiple sources such as roads and culvert crossings, (2) removing migration barriers, and (3) restoring riparian vegetation and floodplains along these streams. The restoration plan also found that high sediment loads are impacting steelhead-rearing habitat by reducing pool depth, volume, and complexity. In addition, the Steelhead Restoration and Management Plan for California identified sedimentation and migration barriers as some of the more serious impacts to steelhead in the Chorro Creek Watershed.

Walters Creek, a tributary to Chorro Creek, currently provides a limited amount of habitat for steelhead, and contains numerous erosion sites which are contributing sediment to the system. Chorro Creek is located about one mile downstream from the project site and is a well-known steelhead stream. Chorro Creek is also one of two major tributaries to Morro Bay that transports the sediment, nutrient, and bacteria loads which are contributing to the declining health of the Bay.

In May 2002 steelhead trout were observed in pools just downstream of the proposed project site where good riparian vegetation cover exists. Successfully implementing the proposed project, in conjunction with other related projects in the area, may, in fact, allow steelhead to migrate and rear further upstream by creating opportunities for new habitat development. The proposed project is also very important since it will link together with current and future MBNEP and CDFG projects in the area. These projects include the Walters Creek Grazing Management and Riparian Restoration Project

(Phase I) on Cal Poly property in the upper watershed. Another key project is the DFG's newly acquired Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve, where restoration of the historic floodplain will provide water quality and habitat benefits.

The project area includes approximately 1,500 feet of Walters Creek, which has been severely impacted by riparian vegetation removal and road construction. Sometime during the previous military ownership (circa 1940's) five roads with culverts were constructed across Walters Creek as part of a shooting range. This construction drastically changed the natural hydrology of the area. Currently, these culvert crossings are in various stages of disrepair and are causing serious erosion problems within this stretch of stream. The existing channel geometry in the project area is a relatively narrow channel incised to various degrees into historical channel and floodplain surfaces. In general, the channel appears to be incised 4-5 feet below relatively recent (last 100 years) floodplain surfaces, and current frequency of inundation of these surfaces is very low, perhaps only occurring due to backwater induced by failed culvert crossings in very large precipitation events. Incision is still occurring, working upstream from a bedrock control at the downstream end of the project and progressing as culvert crossings fail. Two head cuts are present in the stream profile within the project reach. In addition, this stretch of stream is lacking mature riparian vegetation. The loss of riparian vegetation and erosion problems caused by the culverts has minimized the use of this area by steelhead. Correcting these habitat and water quality problems will provide steelhead with additional rearing habitat in the Chorro Creek Watershed.

Project Objectives

1. Remove old road and culvert crossings that impede flow and alter habitat conditions.
2. Reduce sedimentation of steelhead habitat in Walters Creek and Chorro Creek.
3. Restore the riparian vegetation community to provide stream bank stability, and improve habitat values by increasing shade and overhead cover for aquatic species.
4. Restore historic drainage patterns and floodplain areas for water quality improvement, sediment storage, and habitat diversity.
5. Enhance three acres of adjacent wetlands.

Site Revegetation

- Channel bottom will be planted with a "living channel liner."
- Channel banks will be planted with willow cuttings, grasses, sedges, rushes, and native woody species.

- A combination of erosion control techniques consistent with the DFG's "*California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual*" (3rd Edition, January 1998) will be implemented as needed. Examples include willow mattresses, willow sprigging, and native material revetment.
- Excavated floodplain will be mulched and planted. Planting will be done in a structural gradient, including emergent aquatics and dry site species (e.g., coyote bush).
- Graded swales will be mulched and seeded.
- Newly constructed berms will be mulched and hydroseeded with native grasses.
- A temporary irrigation system will be installed to help establish growth.
- Whenever possible, existing native vegetation will be preserved or salvaged for replanting on site.
- At the end of three years, 80 percent survival of installed plants or 75 percent native cover will be achieved.
- Cuttings will be planted 2 feet on-center; containerized herbaceous plantings will be planted 2 feet on-center; containerized shrubs will be planted 4 feet on-center; and containerized trees will be planted 10 feet on-center.

Work will be performed in the fall when this stream is seasonally dry and there is less conflict with the Gun Club uses. Completion of the entire project will require approximately four to six weeks. Construction is expected to start in September 2007 and be completed by November 2007.

Extensive monitoring efforts will be conducted on the Walters Creek Restoration Project:

- As part of the DFG's Fisheries Restoration Program Grant, Walters Creek has been selected for monitoring by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. Pre-project monitoring will include establishment of permanent photo points and qualitative assessment of the site. Performance monitoring will occur annually for three years following project installation.
- MBNEP monitors restoration sites as part of their Volunteer Monitoring Program (VMP). VMP collects benthic macroinvertebrate samples and associated physical and chemical data. This allows them to compare the overall health of the stream to other streams sampled in the watershed.
- Additional monitoring will assess survivorship of the plants installed by this project. Planting success will be analyzed with biotic and abiotic factors that may limit survivorship. This will be assessed continually to adapt planting regime for maximum survivability and to guide future restoration work.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$290,000.00
Department of Fish and Game	295,904.00
National Oceanographic Atmospheric Admin.	31,250.00
The Bay Foundation	174,750.00
The Bay Foundation (In-Kind)	<u>31,858.00</u>
 TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING	 \$823,762.00

Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) project costs will be for native grass seed and rice straw, living channel liner, berm removal, channel/floodplain excavation, grade control sills and riffles, wetland water control structures, culverts, drop structures, swale grading, and installation of a sign.

This project is consistent with the uses allowed under the proposed funding source. The funding source is Proposition 40, Section 5096.650, that allows funding for restoration that promotes the recovery of threatened and endangered species. Board staff is also applying for a Coastal Impact Assistance Program Grant which could reimburse up to 90 percent of Board funds expended for this project.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal, recommended it for funding by the Board, and is a funding partner for this project via their Fisheries Restoration Grant Program. A Negative Declaration has been already been filed under the DFG's Regional General Permit.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$290,000.00 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 the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

22. Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve, Expansions 13 to 15 \$1,527,500.00
Monterey County

This proposal is to consider the acquisition of two parcels of land, totaling 43± acres (Expansions 13 and 15), and the allocation for a grant to the Elkhorn Slough Foundation to assist with the acquisition of 24± acres (Expansion 14) as additions to the Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve. The Elkhorn Slough is located approximately 100 miles south of San Francisco, in Monterey County. The subject properties are not contiguous but do fall within the boundaries of the Elkhorn Slough. Expansion 13, consisting of 24± acres, is located near the town of Moss Landing. Expansion 14, consisting of 24± acres, is located in the town of Watsonville. Expansion 15, consisting of 19± acres, is located in the town of Castroville.

This proposal also requests authorization to accept federal funds from the National Park Service, through the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (LWCF), to assist with the funding of Expansion 13. A federal grant from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration and the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) was accepted by the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) at the August 17, 2006 meeting and will assist with the purchase of Expansion 15.

Elkhorn Slough is a shallow estuary located in northern Monterey County. The Board approved the first acquisition in the Elkhorn Slough in 1979 and to date more than 1,300± acres have been acquired by the Board. In addition to the Board, the Elkhorn Slough Foundation (Foundation) has protected nearly 2,700± acres in the slough area. The Foundation is a community-supported land trust that works with local landowners as well as public and private partners to insure that the natural heritage and health of Elkhorn Slough is secure.

Elkhorn Slough is an integral part of the coastal arm of the Pacific Flyway and provides habitat for a large number of migratory and resident water-associated birds. Over 90 species have been identified from this area. The waters of the slough also provide an important nursery and feeding area for many sport and commercial fishes, in addition to supporting a rich fauna of bottom and mud-dwelling organisms.

Elkhorn Slough is one of the few coastal estuaries in California and harbors a remarkable diversity of wildlife, including southern sea otters, harbor seals, over 340 species of birds, 100 species of fish, and many unusual plants. These include, but are not limited to, Hooker's manzanita, Monterey coenothus, Pajaro manzanita, Monterey spineflower, western snowy plover, the California red-legged frog, the tidewater goby, and the California tiger salamander. The Elkhorn Slough is one of 27 National Estuarine Research Reserves established in the coastal zone of the United States and has been designated a State Ecological Reserve and a Globally Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society. The subject parcels are very valuable as part of the overall Elkhorn Slough ecosystem. Expansion 13 contains tidal wetlands, riparian habitat, and grassland and oak woodlands. Expansions 14 and 15 contain grassland and oak woodland habitats. Expansion 13 is adjacent to the wetlands of the slough and Expansions 14 and 15 are upland habitat. In addition to the high wildlife value contained within these parcels and the fish and wildlife values of the adjoining slough,

the subject properties may also provide recreational potential. Potential uses may include nature study, scientific research, and bird watching. All of the properties will be included in the estuarine reserve. The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) currently manages the reserve and will include Expansions 13 and 15 as part of the ecological reserve. The Foundation will manage Expansion 14 in conjunction with their other holdings in the reserve.

The specifics of each property are as follows:

Expansion 13: The owners have agreed to sell their property for the appraised, fair market value of \$135,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The Board was awarded a grant under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (LWCF) in the amount of \$987,086.00 to assist with acquisition of properties in the Elkhorn Slough area. The LWCF grant will cover 50 percent (\$67,500.00) of the purchase price and the State's share will be 50 percent (\$67,500.00). It is estimated that an additional \$20,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related costs including the DGS appraisal review costs, bringing the total proposed allocation for the State's share to \$87,500.00.

Expansion 14: This project is a grant to the Foundation to assist with their acquisition of 24± acres. The approved fair market value of the property is \$1,375,000.00, as determined by an appraisal and as approved by the DGS. The property owner has agreed to sell the property to the Foundation for a bargain sale of \$1,250,000.00. The proposed Board grant would provide the Foundation with \$660,000.00 to assist with its acquisition of the property. The Foundation will be providing the remainder of the funding. It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related costs including the DGS review fees, bringing the total proposed allocation for the State's share to \$670,000.00.

Expansion 15: The owners have agreed to sell their property for the appraised, fair market value of \$1,500,000.00, as approved by the DGS. The Foundation will be contributing \$415,784.00 from a federal grant, and \$334,216.00 will come from the CELCP grant previously accepted by the Board. The Board will provide matching funds of \$750,000.00. It is estimated that an additional \$20,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related costs including the title and escrow fees and the DGS review costs, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$770,000.00.

Staff proposes that the total allocation necessary for the purchase of Expansions 13, 14, and 15, totaling \$1,527,500.00, be funded from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650. The purpose of these projects for the protection of threatened and endangered species and a significant natural area is consistent with the purposes of the proposed funding.

The proposed acquisitions are 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 Exemptions will be filed with the State Clearinghouse upon approval by the Board.

Staff recommends that the Board approve the acquisition of Expansions 13 and 15; authorize approval of a Grant to the Elkhorn Slough Foundation for Expansion 14; authorize acceptance of the federal LWCF grant in the amount of \$986,086.00, and the expenditure of \$67,500.00 for the purchase of Expansion 13; allocate \$334,216.00 from the previously accepted CELCP grant for the purchase of Expansion 15; allocate \$1,527,500.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650, for Expansions 13, 14, and 15, and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

23. San Joaquin River Parkway, Lewis S. Eaton Trail, \$160,000.00
River West CEQA, Fresno County

This proposal is to consider a cooperative project with the San Joaquin River Conservancy (Conservancy) to implement environmental review and facilitate public participation for a proposal to extend the Lewis S. Eaton Trail from its terminus in the city of Fresno's (City) Woodward Park through the Conservancy's River West property in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The Conservancy was created in 1992 to preserve and enhance the San Joaquin River's extraordinary biological diversity, protect its valued cultural and natural resources, and provide educational and recreational opportunities to the local communities.

The San Joaquin River Parkway is defined in State Legislation as approximately 5,900 acres within a 22-mile long stretch between Friant Dam and State Route 99 along the San Joaquin River. Part of the overall plan for the Parkway is to have a multi-use public access trail stretching its entire length. To date, approximately six miles of this trail, called the Lewis S. Eaton Trail, have been constructed between the Coke Hallowell Center to the northeast and Highway 41 to the southwest. About half of the trail is located in the City's Woodward Park and the other half stretches between Woodward Park and Old Friant Road. Another two-mile trail segment is currently under construction at River Bottom Park and Riverside Golf Course.

The San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust (Trust) applied for a \$2.3 million River Parkways Grant to construct an extension of the Eaton Trail south from its terminus near Woodward Park through the Spano property. The application was supported by the Conservancy and the city of Fresno Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services. Resources Agency grant evaluators selected the project for further evaluation and visited the project site on April 18, 2007. The project was not awarded a grant for this year, but the Trust plans to reapply in 2008 after CEQA has been completed which they hope will increase their chances of success.

The grant proposal included construction of a one-mile paved trail extension, an unpaved walking trail to the river, interpretive signage, and ancillary visitor facilities. There will be two entrance areas and on-site parking areas, to eliminate vehicle parking impacts to the adjacent neighborhood. The project will skirt the bluffs on River West-Fresno and thereby avoid any interference with or disturbance by future river restoration projects. The City has indicated its support for the project and intent to operate and maintain the trail extension through its parks budget. Vehicle entrance fees may be required.

The partner agencies must now work to complete CEQA review. The budget for this project is adequate for extensive community outreach and involvement for the project and for the site-specific environmental studies.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$160,000.00
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING	\$160,000.00

Project costs will be for resources assessment, public participation, CEQA initial study/mitigated negative declaration, and project management.

This project is consistent with the uses allowed under the proposed funding source. The funding source is Proposition 40, Section 5096.650(b5), that allows funding for development projects within the boundaries of the San Joaquin River Conservancy.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$160,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650(b5); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

24. Merced River, Expansion 1, Merced County

\$1,442,300.00

This proposal is to consider the acquisition of a conservation easement over 78± acres of vacant land and the purchase of the rights to mine up to 544,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel and the acquisition of two± miles of a non-exclusive access easement to the subject property as a cooperative project known as the Merced River Salmon Habitat Preservation Project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the Department of Water Resources. The purposes of the project will allow for the restoration and enhancement of salmon and wildlife habitat, provide habitat linkages to adjacent public lands and protected conservation properties, and protect sensitive plant and animal species that may occur on the property.

The subject property is located approximately 15 miles north of the city of Merced near the town of Snelling, in central Merced County. The site is contiguous to a 300-acre conservation easement purchased by the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) in 2002, from the same owner.

The Merced River corridor, the river, adjacent vernal pools, and grasslands form one single ecological unit. Vernal pool amphibians require the adjacent river and upland habitat to survive through the dry season. Grasses found in these uplands include succulent owl's clover, Colusa grass, San Joaquin orcutt grass, Greenes tuctoria, and others. Located on the Merced River, the property features native oak woodlands and grasslands, as well as riparian lands. The property is generally level and the property provides year-round habitat for many animals.

Water birds are heavy users of the Merced River corridor and adjacent uplands, with users such as many varieties of geese and ducks including the northern pintail, shoveler, gadwall, common goldeneye, bufflehead, merganser, ruddy duck, and other birds including the long billed curlew and egrets. Other species likely to benefit from the protection of the property include the San Joaquin kit fox, deer, and many other small mammals and invertebrates.

Threats to this habitat vary greatly depending on the individual desires and goals of the owners. Overall, this still-unfragmented habitat faces the very real threat of subdivision and development or conversion to more intense aggregate mining or agricultural use given the tremendous growth pressures occurring in the Central Valley.

The purchase is a conservation easement, with the fee ownership remaining with the current owner. The day-to-day operations and management of the property will also remain with the landowner. The property will remain closed to the public at the request of the owners, but the DFG personnel will visit the property regularly to monitor the easement as well as to prepare and mine the aggregate for use along the river.

The property owner has agreed to sell the 78± acre conservation easement over the property for \$660,000.00 and the 544,000 cubic yards of gravel for \$735,000.00, the appraised fair market value as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The owner has also agreed to sell a non-exclusive access easement for \$7,300.00 as approved by the DGS over an "all-weather" road to the property. Staff recommends that

the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) approve an allocation in the amount of \$1,402,300.00 for the purchase of the property, gravel, and access easement. It is estimated that an additional \$40,000.00 will be required to cover project-related expenses including appraisal review costs, title and escrow fees, and the DGS review charges, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$1,442,300.00. The proposed funding source allows for the acquisition of real property to protect significant natural landscapes and for salmon recovery and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

The proposed conservation easement acquisition and the access easement has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act requirements under Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an 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 covering that portion of the transaction. Additional findings and filings will be necessary before any mining activities and or any restorations begin on the subject property, adjacent properties, or in the vicinity.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,442,300.00 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 the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

25. Burcham and Wheeler Flat Wildlife Area, Mono County \$1,965,000.00

(This proposal is subject to funding being provided in the 2007/08 State budget.)

This proposal is to consider the fee title acquisition of 1,160± acres of vacant land over four non-contiguous parcels in Mono County, to be managed by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), for the purposes of preventing further decline to a small population of greater sage grouse dependent upon the habitat, providing critical mule deer habitat, and protecting sensitive plant and animal species that may occur on the property.

The parcels are located approximately 12 to 18 miles northwest of Bridgeport, near the intersection of U.S. 395 and S.R. 108, commonly referred to as Sonora Junction, in unincorporated Mono County. Surrounded by Toiyabe National Forest Land, and in close proximity to the DFG's West Walker River, Pickel Meadow, and Slinkard-Little Antelope Wildlife Areas, the property includes sagebrush rangeland and wet meadow inclusions that provide critical year-round habitat for a small population of greater sage grouse. This population of sage grouse has declined dramatically over the last 20 years due to habitat problems associated with overgrazing, fire suppression, and pinyon-juniper encroachment on sagebrush rangelands.

The two northern parcels of the property contain some rolling hills and a rugged canyon that traverses Cottonwood Creek. The entire 1,160 acres provide critical migration, holdover, summer range, and fawning habitat for the West Walker mule deer herd. Other species likely to benefit from the protection of the property include the following State-listed threatened species: wolverine, Sierra Nevada red fox, bank swallow, and willow flycatcher and the following species of special concern: western white-tailed hare, American badger, black bear, mountain lion, Townsend's big-eared bat, spotted bat, northern goshawk, bald eagle, blue grouse, and mountain quail.

The DFG estimates that operation and management costs for the property will be minimal, not exceeding \$5,000.00 per fiscal year, with said costs to be allocated from existing Lands and Facility management budgets for the northern area of the Inland Deserts Region (Region 6). The primary management objective will be to conserve, protect, and enhance critical habitat for sage grouse and mule deer, which would include activities such as meadow irrigation, stream bank stabilization, and aspen stand restoration. The property will remain open to public uses (hunting, nature viewing, hiking, etc.) but camping will be prohibited. Larger projects would be undertaken as grant funds are made available from non-profit organizations, such as the California Deer Association and Quails Unlimited.

The property owner has agreed to sell the property at the appraised fair market value of \$1,940,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) approve an allocation in the amount of \$1,940,000.00 for the purchase of the property. It is anticipated that an additional \$25,000.00 will be required to cover project-related expenses, including appraisal review costs, title and escrow fees, and the DGS review charges, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$1,965,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for the acquisition of real property to protect threatened and endangered

species, and significant natural areas statewide and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

The proposed acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act requirements and is proposed as exempt under Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an 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.

Subject to funding being provided in the 2007-08 State budget, staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,965,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(b/c) for the purchase and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

26. Lower Pitkin Marsh, Sonoma County

\$576,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Sonoma Land Trust (Land Trust) for a cooperative project with the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (Open Space District) and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to assist with the acquisition of 27± acres of land in Sonoma County for the protection of wetland, riparian, marsh, oak woodland, and grassland habitat.

The property is located about one mile southeast of Forestville, one and one half miles west of the Laguna de Santa Rosa Wildlife Area, and approximately eight miles west of Santa Rosa in Sonoma County. It is in the Vine Hill area, known for its botanical diversity and sandy soils. The property can be accessed from a point off Gravenstein Highway.

The primary purpose for acquisition of this parcel is the protection and conservation of a significant wetland and riparian biotic reserve for multiple rare plant species, wetlands habitats, and associated wildlife within the Vine Hill biological area and the Pitkin Marsh. Rare plants found on the property include the state and federally listed white (or Sonoma) sedge, the Pitkin Marsh lily, and the Pitkin Marsh paintbrush. The property also contains the only known location in the western United States where four species of beaked rush occur together.

In addition to the native oak woodlands and grasslands, the property also contains several small areas historically referred to as “quaking bogs.” These are highly unusual habitats consisting of relatively small areas (generally less than 50-75 feet across) that have shallow subsurface water pooled such that the surface is buoyant and “quakes” when walked on. These areas support several sedges and rushes, as well as an assortment of semi-aquatic species. A small stand of the rare Pitkin Marsh lily occurs at the edge of one of these quaking bogs.

The Land Trust is working collaboratively with local, state, and federal partners to acquire and manage the property. Staff of the Open Space District has offered to grant \$100,000.00 to the Land Trust to be used for management activities for the first five years. The State Coastal Conservancy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff have also expressed a commitment to stewardship and restoration funding. The Land Trust is prepared to take ownership of the property and carry out restoration and management activities to protect this distinctive habitat area. There are significant educational and interpretive opportunities for the plants and wildlife of the Pitkin Marsh as well. Public use of these lands will be limited to individual study and docent-led tours.

The owners have agreed to sell the property for the appraised fair market value of \$970,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). In addition to funding for management of the property, the Open Space District is granting the Land Trust \$400,000.00 for acquisition of the property, for which they will receive a conservation easement. Staff recommends the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) approve an allocation for a grant to the Land Trust in the amount of \$570,000.00 to

provide the remaining balance of the funding required for the purchase of the property. It is anticipated that an additional \$6,000.00 will be required to cover project-related expenses, including the DGS appraisal review costs, bringing the total proposed allocation for the project to \$576,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for grants to protect significant natural areas and threatened and endangered species and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that staff of the Board will review and approve all proposed title documents, appraisal, 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 property purchase. In addition, staff will have the ability to access the property for the purpose of monitoring validation no less than every three years.

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act requirements and is proposed as exempt under Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an 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 this project as proposed; allocate \$576,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 for the grant and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

27. San Pablo Bay Pepperweed Removal and Habitat Restoration \$342,000.00
Sonoma County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to The Bay Institute to provide assistance for the Students and Teachers Restoring A Watershed (STRAW) Program in removal of an introduced noxious weed known as perennial pepperweed from public lands located on the northern end of San Pablo Bay, Sonoma County, and to restore native vegetation on lands owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), and the California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC). The project area encompasses over 1,400 acres of tidal marsh bounded on the west by the Petaluma River and on the east by Sonoma Creek.

The project area is critical to migratory birds along the Pacific Flyway and to several sensitive species populations such as the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse (*Reithrodontomys raviventris*) and California clapper rail (*Rallus longirostris*). The area contains over 60 acres of the invasive perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*) that continues to spread throughout the tidal marsh. The project will encompass removal of invasive pepperweed throughout the project area and the restoration of native plants along the marsh-upland transition zone combined with strong community involvement.

Passive restoration will occur within interior tidal marsh sites where natural colonization by native halophytes (e.g., pickleweed, jaumea, Pacific cordgrass) is expected. Active restoration will occur along the marsh-upland transition zone. This zone historically contained a unique set of native plants. Many of these species now only occur where historic marsh-upland transition is intact and has not been disturbed. The restoration of this zone is identified as a recovery action in the USFWS endangered salt marsh harvest mouse and the California clapper rail recovery plan. Seed sources from extant native plant populations within 15 miles of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge will be used to propagate plants for this project. The areas where active restoration will occur include the marsh-upland transition zone at Sonoma Baylands (State lands), Tubbs Island (Refuge), and Tolay Creek (State lands, Refuge).

The Bay Institute's STRAW Project is engaged in a tidal marsh restoration project with the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge to benefit the recovery threatened and endangered species. Through restoration of habitat, critical to the long-term future of threatened and endangered species, the project seeks to control invasive perennial pepperweed and revegetate the area with native plants. Species of native plants to be planted include: yarrow, California sagebrush, saltmarsh aster, marsh baccharis, coyote bush, blue wildrye, Western goldenrod, alkali heath, gumweed, meadow barley, spike rush, wildrye, sea lavender, sticky monkey flower, California wild rose, California figwort, and California compass plant.

Methods proposed for removal of pepperweed are taken from a perennial pepperweed control plan developed by the Refuge in partnership with the University of California at Davis. The project will use methods that have shown success in past control efforts. Perennial pepperweed will be controlled over a minimum of 70 percent of the project site. Control efforts are implemented under the direction of the Refuge with the Marin-

Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Abatement District; control efforts do not involve students. The Refuge will coordinate all control and post-control assessment efforts.

The Bay Institute's STRAW Program will coordinate eight classrooms of K-8th grade students to conduct revegetation efforts. Native plants will be planted by STRAW, the Refuge staff, and associated volunteers each year for three years. The revegetation efforts will occur at Sonoma Baylands, Tubbs Island, and Tolay Creek. The Point Reyes Bird Observatory Conservation Science will conduct classroom and field activities in bird ecology to underscore the importance of habitat restoration.

This project is expected to take approximately three years to complete and will be monitored to measure the effectiveness of the program. STRAW Staff in partnership with Refuge Staff will evaluate the project at the end of each restoration season (August, 2008 to August, 2010). Project staff will evaluate student-led efforts and critique performance and note changes for the following season. Project staff will also evaluate pepperweed control and planting efforts. Evaluations will be used to guide subsequent treatments, propagation efforts, and planting techniques.

Public awareness efforts will educate the public about the project and how to get involved as a volunteer and to increase public knowledge about the effects of invasive species and the need to control them. Restoration efforts will be photo documented and uploaded to TBI's website www.bay.org, the STRAW Network of teachers, and the TBI list serve. The Bay Institute's website will educate and inspire its visitors by telling the story of the Bay within the larger ecological context of the watershed, and provide a clearinghouse for information about the Bay and its condition. Material prepared for the website will also be available in other formats, such as DVD, which can be used by educators and the media.

The grantee will be responsible for acquiring all necessary environmental permits to accomplish this restoration.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Funding Partners (Cash):

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$342,000
Community Foundation, Sonoma County	25,000
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (The Nature of Learning)	10,000
California State Coastal Conservancy	<u>38,624</u>
Subtotal, Cash	\$415,624

In-Kind Services Partners (Non-Cash):

The Bay Institute (Community Volunteers)	\$ 3,974
San Pablo Bay Nursery (Volunteer)	12,480
San Pablo Bay Refuge (Biologist)	41,181
Sonoma Land Trust (Volunteers)	<u>6,183</u>
Subtotal, In-Kind	\$63,818

TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$479,442

Board project costs will be used for project and volunteer management, native plant propagation, mapping and control efforts, revegetation, project evaluation, and public awareness activities.

This project is consistent with the uses allowed under the proposed funding source. The funding source is Proposition 50, Section 79572, Coastal Wetlands that allows funding for restoration of coastal watersheds identified in the Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Report.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The grantee will complete all appropriate documentation to satisfy all environmental permit requirements.

Staff recommends that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$342,000, from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002, (Prop. 50); Section 79572(c); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

28. Bass Hill Lassen Creek Conservation Easement \$415,000.00
Lassen County

This proposal is to consider the acquisition of a conservation easement by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) over 265± acres of vacant land in Lassen County. The primary purpose of this acquisition is to increase the long-term viability of DFG's Bass Hill Wildlife Area, located approximately two miles southeast of the subject property. The acquisition will also prevent encroaching residential development, protect threatened animal species found on the property, protect an important wildlife migration corridor, provide linkages to nearby protected habitat lands, protect watercourses from deterioration, and provide non-motorized public recreation opportunities on the property.

The DFG's Bass Hill Wildlife Area contains approximately 5,553 acres of land that has been acquired in several separate transactions over the past 30 years. Its primary purpose is to provide an important migration corridor for the Bass Hill Sub-herd of the Doyle deer herd, in conjunction with adjacent lands owned by the Bureau of Land Management. The Wildlife Area is completely encircled by private land, which threatens the biological viability and migratory route of deer through the area, due to the pressures of residential development in the area.

The subject property, owned by the Lassen Land and Trails Trust (the Trust), is located approximately three miles southeast of downtown Susanville on Richmond Road. Containing wet meadow, sage brush, bitterbrush, and montane riparian habitats, the property contributes to a major migration corridor for the deer. Other special species likely to benefit from the protection of the property include the bald eagle, willow flycatcher, greater sand hill crane, bank swallow, Sierra Nevada red fox, and mountain lion. The easement will also protect a portion of Lassen Creek from further habitat deterioration and allow for stream and habitat restoration.

The Trust has developed a management plan for the property, which includes providing information about the benefits of habitat restoration and preservation for plant and animal species native to the area. The conservation easement allows for the construction of a visitor center or kiosk and of a trail system for non-motorized recreational and educational use by the public; any such improvements are subject to approval by the DFG prior to the commencement of construction. The easement also provides for access to the property by the DFG at reasonable times for the purpose of monitoring compliance with the terms of the easement.

The Trust has agreed to sell the conservation easement at the appraised fair market value of \$400,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) approve an allocation in the amount of \$400,000.00 for the purchase of the easement. It is estimated that an additional \$15,000.00 will be required to cover project-related expenses including appraisal review costs, title and escrow fees, and the DGS review charges, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$415,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for the acquisition of land to protect deer and mountain lion habitat and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

The proposed acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act requirements and is proposed as exempt under Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an 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 this project as proposed; allocate \$415,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(a) for the purchase and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

29. Staff Report – Forest Conservation Program Informational

This item has been withdrawn from consideration at this time.

30. Resolution – Assembly Member Patty Berg

WHEREAS, Assembly Member Patty Berg, in her capacity as an Assembly Member, has served as a dedicated member of the joint Legislative Advisory Committee of the Wildlife Conservation Board; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Berg served as a member of the Assembly Water Parks and Wildlife Committee, and provided consistent leadership and support for the Board in her legislative capacity; and

WHEREAS, through Ms. Berg’s knowledge and interest in California’s wildlife and habitats, she has furthered the cause of wildlife conservation and related recreation; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Berg, as a Legislative Advisory Committee Member, has greatly assisted the Board and its staff in carrying out its duties and responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Berg has supported the Board’s many programs throughout her tenure, making preservation, enhancement, and restoration of wildlife habitat a priority; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Board to gratefully acknowledge Ms. Berg’s contributions to the Board and to the entire State of California; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the members of the Wildlife Conservation Board and the Board staff convey to Patty Berg our sincere appreciation for her noteworthy contributions to the Board, and express our best wishes to her as she continues with her 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 Assembly Member Berg.

31. Staff Report – Utility Easement Transfer (Goodan Ranch Preserve)
San Diego County

The Wildlife Conservation Board (Board), at its February 24, 1998 meeting, authorized the Executive Director to transfer less-than-fee interests (easements, right of ways, etc.) located in Department of Fish and Game (DFG) or the 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 DFG 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 transfer has been completed by staff.

Project Title	Transfer Type	Grantee	Size	Consideration
Goodan Ranch Preserve San Diego County	Utility Easement	San Diego Gas & Electric Co.	0.089 Acre	None – Will benefit DFG.