

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

1807 13TH STREET, SUITE 103
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State of California
 The Resources Agency
 Department of Fish and Game
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD
 Minutes
 February 15, 2007

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* Consent Calendar

** Added after the Preliminary Agenda was distributed

*** Correction to Recovery of Funds. See Page 8.

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WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

Minutes
February 15, 2007

The Wildlife Conservation Board met on Thursday, February 15, 2007, in Room 113 of the State Capitol in Sacramento, California. The meeting was called to order at 10:04 A.M. by Mr. L. Ryan Brodrick, Director of the Department of Fish and Game. At this time he introduced Mr. Fred Klass, Program Budget Manager of the Department of Finance, Mr. John P. Donnelly, Interim Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board, Senator Patricia Wiggins, Melissa Jones of Assembly Member Lois Wolk's office, and Maureen Rivera, Executive Assistant. He conveyed President Hattoy's deep regrets that he was unable to attend today's meeting and that President Hattoy is very interested in working with the Wildlife Conservation Board in the future. Attending and taking notes for President Hattoy was Ms. Adrianna Shea of the Fish and Game Commission. At this time Mr. Brodrick turned over the meeting to Mr. Donnelly.

1. Roll Call**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS**

L. Ryan Brodrick, Member
Director, Department of Fish and Game
Fred Klass, Program Budget Manager
Vice, Michael C. Genest, Member
Director, Department of Finance

JOINT LEGISLATIVE INTERIM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Senator Pat Wiggins

Melissa Jones
Vice, Assembly Member Lois Wolk

INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

John P. Donnelly

* Consent Calendar

** Added after the preliminary agenda was distributed

*** Correction to Recovery of Funds. See Page 8.

Staff Present: John P. Donnelly, Interim Executive Director
Dave Means, Assistant Executive Director
Bonnie Turner, Public Land Management Specialist IV
Gary Cantrell, Research Analyst II
Peter Perrine, Public Land Management Specialist IV
Danielle Murphy, Student Assistant
Jan Beeding, Office Technician (Retired Annuitant)
Debra Townsend, Acting Assistant Executive Director
Marilyn Cundiff, Public Land Management Specialist IV
William Gallup, Senior Land Agent
Bob Clark, Senior Land Agent
Randy Nelson, Senior Land Agent
Teri Muzik, Senior Land Agent
Mary Westlake, Office Technician
Maureen Rivera, Executive Assistant (Retired Annuitant)
Roxanne Woodward, Staff Services Manager I

Others Present: Mike Mantell, Resources Law Group
Shana Tomlinson, Van Alen Ranches
Brandon Tomlinson, Van Alen Ranches
Steve Dorrance, Dorrance Ranches, L.P.
Tasha Newman, Conservation Strategy Group
Ryan Luster, The Nature Conservancy
Robert Gilmo, Jewitt Creek Ranch
Henry Lomeli, Department of Fish and Game
Dan Efseaff, River Partners
John Carlon, River Partners
Andy Wood, California Deer Association
Karen Ferrell-Ingram, Eastern Sierra Land Trust
Paul F. Raquel, Department of Fish and Game
Michele Clark, California Rangeland Trust
Mike Conner, The Nature Conservancy
Marlyce Myers, The Nature Conservancy
Dave Dorrance, Dorrance Ranches, L.P.
Nancy Schaefer, Endangered Habitats Conservancy
Michael Beck, Endangered Habitats Conservancy
Fred Yeager, Placer Land Trust
Julia McKeever, Yolo County
Helen O'Shea, Trust for Public Land
Melissa Jones, Office of Assembly Member Lois Wolk
Jennifer Skondin, Conservation Strategy Group
John Mello, Mello Family
Ken Whittall-Scherfee
Chris Fischer, The Nature Conservancy
Henry Coletto
Terry Palmisano, Department of Fish and Game
Julie Bear, Eastern Sierra Land Trust
Dan Preece, Resources Conservation District of the Santa Monica
Mountains

Elizabeth Valdovinos, California Rangeland Trust
Ed Penny, Department of Fish and Game
Valerie Calegari, The Nature Conservancy
Lotus Vermeer, The Nature Conservancy
Bill Dorrance, Dorrance Ranch
Scott Grimes, Endangered Habitats League

2. Election of Chair.

Mr. Fred Klass nominated Mr. Bob Hattoy, President of the Fish and Game Commission, as Chairman of the Wildlife Conservation Board. Mr. Brodrick seconded the motion. Motion carried.

It is with deep regret that this recorder must report that Chairman Hattoy passed away on March 4, 2007.

3. Funding Status as of February 15, 2007 (Informational)

(a) 2006-07 General Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act	\$5,000,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....	(0.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$5,000,000.00

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

Budget Act	\$20,699,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocation	(0.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$20,699,000.00

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

Budget Act	\$20,551,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....	(1,028,542.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$19,522,458.00

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

Budget Act	\$20,577,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....	(9,627,125.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$10,949,875.00

(e) 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.....	(661,750.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$14,562,250.00

(f) 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.....(14,469,741.92)
Unallocated Balance \$92,258.08

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

Continuously Appropriated [Sec. 5096.350 (a)(1), (2), (4) & (7)] ... \$36,100,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....(27,028,521.80)
Unallocated Balance \$9,071,478.20

(h) 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

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

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

(j) 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.....(2,205,776.28)
Unallocated Balance \$6,294,223.72

(k) Chapter 983, Statutes of 2002 (2005-06 Reappropriation) ... \$4,800,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....(4,660,999.23)
Unallocated Balance \$139,000.77

(l) Chapter 984, Statutes of 2002 (2005-06 Reappropriation) . \$19,200,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....(12,868,035.43)
Unallocated Balance \$6,331,964.57

(m) 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.....(130,737,596.45)
 Unallocated Balance \$142,262,403.55

(n) 2004-05 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 Capital Outlay Budget (Section 79568)

Budget Act \$13,250,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations.....(13,089,784.38)
 Unallocated Balance \$160,215.62

(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 Previous Board Allocations.....(625,051,937.24)
 Unallocated Balance \$122,510,062.76

(q) 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.....(0.00)
 Unallocated Balance \$164,700,000.00

Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055b) \$123,525,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations.....(0.00)
 Unallocated Balance \$123,525,000.00

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

Budget Act (2006-07 Reappropriation)	\$5,000,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations.....	(859,701.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$4,140,299.00

RECAP OF FUND BALANCES

General Fund (a).....	\$5,000,000.00
Habitat Conservation Fund (b), (c) and (d)	\$51,171,333.00
Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (e), (f) and (g)	\$23,725,986.28
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (h), (i), (j), (k), (l) and (m)...	\$167,572,592.61
Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (n), (o) and (p).....	\$135,158,308.38
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (q).....	\$288,225,000.00
Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund (r).....	\$4,140,299.00

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	\$51,401,266.00

Mr. Donnelly asked if there were any questions regarding this item. There were none.

4. Project Planning Account

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

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

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

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

General Fund (IWCP)	\$25,000.00
Habitat Conservation Fund	\$50,000.00
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40)	\$50,000.00
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 84)	\$50,000.00

Mr. Donnelly asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

5. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 6 – 8 and 10 – 20)

Mr. Donnelly reported a correction to the Recovery of Funds under the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund for the City of Isleton Public Access Augmentation. The amount reflected in the full agenda as expended and the amount shown as the Balance for Recovery were inverted and the corrected amounts appear in these minutes.

Mr. Donnelly reported that the Board received the following letters of support for items on the consent calendar: Item 8, Crestridge Ecological Reserve, letters from Senator Christine Kehoe and San Diego County Supervisor Dianne Jacob; Item 14, Wheeler Ridge Wildlife Area, letters from Mono County Supervisor Duane “Hap” Hazard and Sherryl Taylor, Bristlecone Chapter President of the California Native Plant Society; and Item 15, Grasslands Regional Park Habitat Restoration, five letters from Senator Michael J. Machado, Assembly Member Lois Wolk, Robert Biggs, Chair of the Parks, Recreation and Wildlife Advisory Committee, Yolo County Planning Resources and Public Works Department, Mayor Sue Greenwald of the City of Davis, and Carolyn Hinshaw, Co-Conservation Chair of the Yolano Group of the Sierra Club.

Staff recommended that the Board approve Consent Calendar items 6 through 8 and 10 through 20, as proposed in the individual agenda explanations, including funding as noted therein, excluding item 9, and including corrections to the Recovery of Funds as described.

Mr. Fred Klass moved that the Board approve Consent Calendar items 6 through 8 and 10 through 20, as proposed in the individual agenda explanations, including funding as noted therein, excluding item 9, and including corrections to the Recovery of Funds as described. Motion carried.

*6. Approval of Minutes – October 30 and November 16, 2006 Meetings

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve the minutes of the October 30 and November 16, 2006 meetings.

Motion carried.

*7. Recovery of Funds

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

\$10.00 to the **General Fund**
***** \$18,229.40** ~~\$0.00~~ to the **Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund**
\$1,868.50 to the **Habitat Conservation Fund**
\$0.00 to the **Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund**
\$170,127.76 to the **California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund**

GENERAL FUND

City of Isleton Public Access, Sacramento County

Allocated	\$270.00
Expended	<u>-260.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$10.00

Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center, Orange County

Allocated	\$4,949.10
Expended	<u>-4,949.10</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Total General Fund **\$10.00**

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

Riparian Habitat Restoration, Lower Owens River Saltcedar Control, Inyo County

Allocated	\$490,000.00
Expended	<u>-490,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Riparian Habitat Restoration, Lower Owens River Saltcedar Control
(Augmentation), Inyo County

Allocated	\$560,000.00
Expended	<u>-560,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

*** San Joaquin River Parkway, Willow Lodge Improvements, Fresno County

Allocated	\$265,000.00	\$265,000.00
Expended	<u>-265,000.00</u>	<u>-246,770.60</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00	\$ 18,229.40

Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center, Orange County

Allocated	\$243,035.90
Expended	<u>-243,035.90</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

*** **Total Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund** ~~\$0.00~~ **\$18,229.40**

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND

China Hill, Expansions 2 and 3, Siskiyou County

Allocated	\$99,000.00
Expended	<u>-97,131.50</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$1,868.50

Live Oak Wetland Restoration, Sutter County

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

Total Habitat Conservation Fund **\$1,868.50**

HARBORS AND WATERCRAFT REVOLVING FUND

City of Isleton Public Access, Sacramento County

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

Total Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund **\$0.00**

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

City of Isleton Public Access Augmentation, Sacramento County

Allocated	\$308,135.00
Expended	<u>-274,915.86</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$33,219.14

McCloud Forest Conservation Area, Shasta/Siskiyou County

Allocated	\$5,630,000.00
Expended	<u>-5,623,664.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$6,336.00

Port Hueneme Fishing Pier Improvements, Phase II, Ventura County

Allocated	\$200,107.00
Expended	<u>-200,107.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

San Jacinto Wildlife Area, Expansion 26, (Potrero Canyon Unit), Riverside County

Allocated	\$12,157,000.00
Expended	<u>-12,026,504.50</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$130,495.50

Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center, Orange County

Allocated	\$352,015.00
Expended	<u>-351,937.88</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$77.12

Total California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund \$170,127.76

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve the following totals be recovered and that the projects be closed: \$10.00 to the General Fund; *** ~~\$0.00~~ **\$18,229.40 to the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund;** \$1,868.50 to the Habitat Conservation Fund; \$0.00 to the Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund; \$170,127.76 to the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund.

Motion carried.

*** **These minutes reflect a corrected expenditure regarding the San Joaquin River Parkway, Willow Lodge Improvements, Fresno County, which will be discussed in the Approval of Minutes at the May 24, 2007 Wildlife Conservation Board meeting.**

- *8. Crestridge Ecological Reserve, Expansions 1 and 2, \$1,967,375.00
San Diego County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Endangered Habitats League (League) for a project involving the acquisition of two privately-owned properties totaling 314.09± acres, in eastern San Diego County, for the protection of coastal sage scrub and other native habitats that are situated within a key wildlife corridor for numerous species. This proposed project also involves the acceptance of two grants from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the approval of an Agreement to Subgrant the federal grant funds to the League to be applied toward the purchase of the properties.

The subject parcels are located near the community of Crest. The area is bordered by the towns of Lakeside to the north, Alpine to the east and Jamul to the south; the boundaries of El Cajon form the western limits of the area. Primary access to this portion of the County is by way of Interstate 8, the principal east/west freeway traversing San Diego County. La Cresta Road is the primary access route into Crest, originating from the west off Greenfield Drive; from the east, Crest is accessed by Frances Drive and Mountain View Road off Harbison Canyon Road.

The proposed Expansion 1 property, containing 153.88± acres of undeveloped rural land, is located along Suncrest Boulevard, a periodically graded dirt road that bisects the northern part of the property. The site includes an elevated, gently sloping mesa that is surrounded by rolling to sloping lands that trend into steep sloping and mountainous lands in the southwest part of the property. The developable mesa lands are at an elevation ranging from 1,320 to 1,400 feet above sea level.

The proposed Expansion 2 property, containing 160.21± acres, is located between Sycuan Summit Drive and Eucalyptus Drive, north of Dehesa Road. The rough graded road providing physical access to the site originates off Sycuan Summit Drive to the south through the Singing Hills Acres residential subdivision. The northwestern part of the property comprises a level to gently sloping elevated mesa, trending into sloping lands rising in elevation to the east; the southern half of the property is steep sloping and mountainous. The developable mesa lands are at an elevation ranging from about 1,080 feet to 1,280 feet above sea level and have unobstructed panoramic view potential for future residential home sites oriented to the south overlooking the Singing Hills Country Club and the Sweetwater River.

The subject properties are sought for open space preservation purposes as additions to the Crestridge Ecological Reserve, a 2,376-acre open space preserve that is situated north of Crest and extends to near Interstate 8. Acquired by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) in 1999, the property is administered by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG). The property was accepted by the State subject to an existing Crestridge Conservation Bank reserved by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Proceeds generated from the sale of credits have been applied toward additional acquisitions within the approved Natural Community Conservation Planning area and also provide an endowment for habitat management on the Ecological Reserve.

The subject properties contain an astounding diversity of impressive landscapes and sensitive habitat types, including Engelmann and live oak woodlands, riparian woodlands and native and non-native grasslands. However, it is largely composed of coastal sage scrub habitat for the California gnatcatcher, and habitat for over 50 other sensitive and protected species.

The acquisition of the subject properties would produce several benefits beyond preserving and protecting sensitive plant and animal species and wide swaths of contiguous sensitive habitat. First, purchase of the properties is consistent with the County's Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP). Secondly, the properties have been included in a proposed development plan and purchase would protect the properties against any possibility of negative development impacts. Thirdly, the proposed acquisitions would add to a large, continuous block of biologically diverse habitat as a crucial habitat linkage for lands in the MSCP and the USFWS's San Diego National Wildlife Refuge, the only viable linkage between land south of Interstate 8 and lands to the north including the Cleveland National Forest.

The DFG is currently working with the League and the Endangered Habitats Conservancy, to transfer management (and potentially ownership) of the existing Ecological Reserve to the Conservancy as part of the larger strategy for the MSCP. In support of this regional effort, and to protect this important native habitat and linkage, the DFG fully supports acquisition of the properties. The League has agreed to accept ownership and management of the expansion properties until the Conservancy receives final approval of its 501 (c/3) status as a California non-profit corporation. The League, and ultimately the Conservancy, proposes to manage the subject properties in conjunction with the existing Ecological Reserve for protection of the biological resources on the sites. Public uses compatible with preservation of the habitat, could include hiking, photography, scientific study and education, and bird watching. The Conservancy will be establishing an endowment for the long-term stewardship of the properties.

The property owners have agreed to sell the properties to the League at the appraised value of \$5,386,000.00 for the Expansion 1 property and \$2,403,500.00 for the Expansion 2 property (\$7,789,500.00 total purchase price). The appraised values have been approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The USFWS has offered to provide two grants to the State, totaling \$5,842,125.00, to assist in the acquisition of the subject properties. Staff recommends that the WCB approve the acceptance of these grants and the approval of an Agreement to Subgrant the federal funds to the League to be applied toward the purchase of the properties. Staff further recommends that the WCB approve a grant to the League, in the amount of \$1,947,375.00, funding the balance of the purchase price. It is estimated that an additional \$20,000.00 will be needed for the appraisal and appraisal review costs by the DGS, bringing the total recommended allocation for the proposal to \$1,967,375.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that the WCB will review and approve all proposed 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 escrow accounts for the purchase of these properties.

This proposed acquisition is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and under Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of an ownership 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 recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; approve the acceptance of two grants from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, totaling \$5,842,125.00, and the approval of an Agreement to Subgrant the federal grant funds to the Endangered Habitats League; allocate \$1,967,375.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(6), for the grant and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; approve the acceptance of two grants from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, totaling \$5,842,125.00, and the approval of an Agreement to Subgrant the federal grant funds to the Endangered Habitats League; allocate \$1,967,375.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(6), for the grant and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

*9. Fieldstone Habitat Conservation Plan, San Diego County

This item was withdrawn from consideration at this time.

*10. Seal Beach Pier Deck Rehabilitation, Orange County \$200,316.00

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a cooperative agreement with the City of Seal Beach (City) for a project to rehabilitate the deck on the City's Seal Beach Fishing Pier, which is located on the Pacific Ocean shoreline, just south of the mouth of the San Gabriel River in Orange County. The Board provided funding in 1983 to assist the City in rebuilding this pier following a storm. The City operates the pier for public fishing under a Lease and Operating Agreement with the Board. That agreement is being extended to allow for continued management of the pier following its rehabilitation.

The Seal Beach Pier provides public fishing and recreational access to a large segment of the public in Orange and Los Angeles Counties. While there are numerous fishing piers along the California coastline, the Seal Beach Pier is unique in its accessibility to inland communities. The 605 Freeway, which stretches from the 405 Freeway near the coast to the 210 Freeway at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains, terminates in close proximity to Seal Beach with almost direct route access to the pier. This connection allows people from several cities along the 605 Freeway to easily reach the Seal Beach Pier.

Since being rebuilt in 1984, the pier has supported daily foot and vehicle traffic (service trucks routinely use the pier to deliver supplies to the restaurant that is located on the seaward end of the pier). This use has caused the wooden decking material (Douglas fir) to become worn and uneven. While the deck still has much of its structural capacity, it is uncomfortable to walk on and very difficult to traverse with hard-wheeled equipment such as baby strollers and wheel chairs.

Members of the public expressed a firm desire to keep the deck covered in wood, rather than concrete or some other covering. Following an exhaustive study of many different potential decking materials, the City decided to use an imported hardwood called Greenheart. This exotic hardwood is grown exclusively for commercial uses in Africa. Greenheart is more durable and stronger than softwoods, such as Douglas fir, and provides a better structural material with a useful life several times longer. Imported hardwoods are also very dense, with high fire resistant ratings, and many types have natural resistance to damage from fungus and insects, including marine borers.

The project will replace and rehabilitate worn surface decking over most of the 1,640 foot length of the pier. The total deck surface area is 43,959 square feet, and the area to be rehabilitated by this project is approximately 40,641 square feet. This work will be done in accordance with the plans and specifications to be prepared by or under the direct supervision of the City of Seal Beach. In order to avoid closing the pier to the public during rehabilitation, the work will be done at night over the next two years.

This project will ensure that the public will be able to continue its free use of the Seal Beach Pier for many years to come.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

City of Seal Beach	\$1,134,900.00
Wildlife Conservation Board	200,000.00
<u>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING</u>	<u>\$1,334,900.00</u>

Project costs will be for mobilization, traffic control, replacement of decking, replacement of deteriorated stringers, overnight work charges, construction management, engineering and administration. The City will be installing a sign for this project. In addition to the costs listed above, an additional \$316.00 will be required for Department of General Services' review costs, bringing the allocation necessary for the Board's portion of the project to \$200,316.00. It is anticipated that the project will qualify

for participation under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF). WCB has submitted an LWCF application for this project to the California Department of Parks and Recreation, who administers these federal funds in coordination with the National Park Service. If approved, the Board will be reimbursed for 50 percent of the project costs.

The Department of Fish Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The City has filed a Notice of Exemption for this project in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City has agreed to manage and maintain the property for twenty-five years pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Lease and Operating Agreement.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$200,316.00 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.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$200,316.00 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.

Motion carried.

- *11. Marshall Canyon Conservation Corridor, Expansion 1, \$1,740,000.00
Los Angeles County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Trust for Public Land (TPL) for a project involving the acquisition of 64± acres of privately-owned land lying in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. The subject parcel is located along Miller Ranch Road in the Marshall Canyon area north of and adjacent to the City of Claremont in unincorporated Los Angeles County. This irregularly-shaped parcel is bounded by Marshall Canyon Regional Park on the north and west and by Claremont Hill Wilderness Park on the east. The 64± acres comprise the second phase of a project that has increased the size of Marshall Canyon Regional Park by some 310 acres, the majority of which was funded by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB).

Acquisition of this addition to the Marshall Canyon Regional Park would promote future conservation of dwindling biological resources in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, protect open space and watershed, preserve wildlife corridor linkages, augment a critical buffer between the Angeles National Forest and the urban area and provide new passive recreation areas. The project area supports well-developed and diverse riparian woodlands. These represent important stopover and over-wintering sites for a wide variety of migratory birds, as well as essential habitat for resident

species, including deer and mountain lion. Several rare and endangered birds are likely to inhabit the project area, including the California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo and the southwestern willow flycatcher. The property has a moderate to high potential of supporting the rare or endangered Nevin's barberry, Braunton's milkvetch, slender-horned spineflower and thread-leaved brodiaea.

An appraisal of the property has been approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The total estimated value is \$1,925,000.00. The proposed WCB grant would provide the TPL with partial funding of up to \$1,735,000.00 to facilitate its acquisition of the subject property. The TPL will, in turn, convey the property to the County of Los Angeles to own and manage as part of the Marshall Canyon Regional Park. The County of Los Angeles will contribute \$190,000.00 to the purchase. It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed for appraisal review costs by the DGS, bringing the total recommended allocation for the proposal to \$1,740,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that the WCB will review and approve the property being proposed for acquisition. The grant further provides that staff of the WCB will review and approve all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow accounts for the purchase of these properties.

This proposed acquisition is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and under Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of an ownership 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 recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,740,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (a) P50-SoCal, for the grant and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,740,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (a) P50-SoCal, for the grant and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

*12. North Claremont Reserve, Expansion 1, Los Angeles County \$1,010,000.00

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the City of Claremont (City) for a cooperative project with the County of Los Angeles and the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy (CWC) to assist with the City's acquisition of 180± acres of privately-owned vacant land lying in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains in the northern portion of Claremont, in Los Angeles County.

The subject property would be added to the City's 1,740± acre Claremont Wilderness Park that lies to the northeast. The parcel to be acquired abuts the Wilderness Park on its northern boundary. Proposed future acquisitions by the County of Los Angeles would also connect the subject property to the Marshall Canyon Regional Park to the west, resulting in the establishment of a permanent wildlife movement corridor that will extend uninterrupted for over five miles.

Due to its high flora and fauna diversity, this undeveloped wilderness area has been designated a Significant Ecological Area by the County of Los Angeles and is a State Significant Natural Area. It is also designated critical habitat for the federally-threatened coastal California gnatcatcher. Another three dozen rare animal species are on the property or have a moderate to high probability of being present on the site. The grasslands on the property provide critical foraging habitat for various raptors, including the threatened Swainson's hawk and potential habitat for the federally-endangered San Bernardino kangaroo rat. Deer, mountain lion and black bear have been observed on the site, as well as hundreds of other non-threatened species of plants and animals.

It is proposed that the City hold title to the subject property and manage it as an addition to the Claremont Wilderness Park with advice from the CWC. The owners of the property have agreed to sell to the City for \$11,500,000.00, the appraised fair market value approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) proposed grant, in the amount of \$1,000,000.00, would provide partial funding for the purchase. The bulk of the funding will be provided by the City. It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project related costs, including the DGS' review costs, bringing the total recommended allocation for this project to \$1,010,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that the WCB will review and approve the property being proposed for acquisition by the City. The grant further provides that staff will review and approve all proposed title documents, appraisal, preliminary title report, agreement for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to the disbursement of funds directly into the City's escrow account for the purchase of the property.

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

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,010,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (a) P50-SoCal, for the acquisition and associated costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,010,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (a) P50-SoCal, for the acquisition and associated costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *13. Devereux Slough Restoration, Santa Barbara County \$261,000.00

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Regents of the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), to restore seven acres of seasonal wetlands and associated slough margin and native uplands on the UCSB's Coal Oil Point Natural Reserve. The project is located approximately one mile west of the City of Goleta in Santa Barbara County, less than a mile from two earlier Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) acquisition projects: Elwood Mesa, acquired in 2004 in collaboration with the County of Santa Barbara, and Goleta Slough Ecological Reserve, acquired by the WCB for the Department of Fish and Game in 1980. In 2006, the WCB funded a project to restore and enhance wetlands on the Goleta Slough Ecological Reserve.

The Coal Oil Point Natural Reserve (COPNR), one of 35 Reserves in the University of California's Natural Reserve System, is a relatively undisturbed coastal-strand complex of coastal and estuarine habitats. The coastal dunes support a rich assemblage of dune vegetation, while older and more stable backdunes are covered with southern coastal scrub habitat. In the heart of the reserve, Devereux Slough is a seasonally flooded tidal lagoon that dries out in the summer to form salt flats and hypersaline ponds and channels. Located adjacent to the Santa Barbara campus, the reserve provides a rich research and study experience for students in a variety of courses, including botany, ecology, biodiversity field methods, natural history, marine biology, invertebrate zoology and environmental studies.

Approximately 50 acres of the COPNR's 158 acres of natural habitat were converted to agriculture in the past, and have yet to recover completely. Over the last seven years, the COPNR has initiated an aggressive restoration program, and with the support of volunteers, grants, and partnerships with local environmental groups, the COPNR has restored more than 20 acres of dunes, slough margin, beach, and coastal scrub areas. The COPNR is planning on restoring the remaining 30 acres over the next few years.

The proposed project, a tier-one priority project in the Work Plan of the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project, is the first phase of this larger effort. The proposed project will restore and enhance the biological functions of approximately

seven acres of the Devereux Slough margin, habitat critical to many species on the COPNR. This area, located on the western margin and a portion of the eastern margin of Devereux Slough, has been invaded by exotic plants, including such trees as eucalyptus, tamarisk, *Acacia*, and *Myoporum*, as well as many annual weeds. The project will remove exotic invasive trees, control the invasive annual weeds, and propagate and plant native plants on seven acres adjacent to the Slough.

Restoration of the margins of Devereux Slough will directly benefit several rare plants, butterflies, fish and birds. Removal of non-native trees that provide perches for avian predators will greatly enhance habitat value for rare birds including the western snowy plover (federally threatened), the California least tern (federally endangered) and the Belding's savannah sparrow (state endangered). Restoring the margins of the slough will benefit estuarine fish such as the tidewater goby (federally endangered), butterflies such as the wandering skipper, listed by The Nature Conservancy as a globally imperiled species, and the world's smallest butterfly, the western pygmy blue, and many endemic and sensitive plants including one federally-listed endangered plant, the Ventura salt marsh milkvetch. The results of earlier restoration efforts have been rewarding and unprecedented; the threatened Western Snowy Plovers and the endangered California Least Terns, species that had not bred at COPNR for at least 30 years, successfully nested immediately after the removal of *Acacia* from the nearby dunes.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$261,000.00
UCSB	86,270.00
<u>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING</u>	<u>\$347,270.00</u>

Project costs will be for invasive weed removal, propagation and planting of native plants, monitoring and planting maintenance, and project design, construction supervision and administration.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. UCSB will complete the appropriate notice to satisfy CEQA requirements and has agreed to manage and maintain the property for ten 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.

The COPNR and the project are supported by many people in the community. The project will be accomplished with the help of many volunteers; based on previous restoration projects on the site, a minimum of 10 volunteers per week are expected to assist with the restoration efforts. In addition, public trails through the site are very popular and hundreds of children and adult groups visit the COPNR each month. Guided tours are offered by the COPNR Director at least monthly to teach visitors about the conservation of the natural resources on site and the impacts associated with

invasive species. Students at UCSB will be involved in restoration activities, not only to learn the latest restoration techniques, but also to monitor the success of the effort, helping to guide future restoration efforts up and down the California coast. Finally, the WCB has received letters of support from the U.S. Geological Survey, the City of Goleta and the Santa Barbara Audubon Society.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$261,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$261,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *14. Wheeler Ridge Wildlife Area, Mono County \$185,000.00

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Eastern Sierra Land Trust (ESLT) to assist in a cooperative project with the California Deer Association, Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) to acquire a conservation easement over 10.28± acres of privately-owned land, located in Mono County, for the protection of a Round Valley deer herd migration corridor and preservation of sensitive wildlife habitat.

The property is located just off Lower Rock Creek Road, approximately five miles southwest of Tom's Place/Crowley Lake and 20 miles northwest of Bishop. The property is within the only migratory corridor for the Round Valley mule deer herd and is located in a very narrow strip of land (approximately one mile wide) that is located between Wheeler Ridge, a rocky outcrop of the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains on the west, and Lower Rock Creek canyon/gorge on the east. State Highway 395 is also a man-made barrier for the deer and is located about two miles east of the subject property. Potential development is a real threat with the completion of numerous residences and given the growing trend towards the subdivision of larger property into rural residential subdivisions. Habitat loss and disturbance associated with rural subdivisions and recreational, energy and commercial developments are considered the top factors impacting the deer herd size and viability.

Protection is critical to the diverse habitats and the primary purpose of acquisitions in this wildlife area is to preserve, maintain and enhance critical Round Valley mule deer winter range, holding area and migration corridor habitat. The secondary purpose is to maintain and enhance opportunities for deer hunting and wildlife viewing and to preserve habitat for the numerous other species that utilize this region. Species that will

benefit include mule deer, Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep, mountain lion and neo-tropical migratory and riparian obligate birds, raptors, upland game species, upland mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

The ESLT will be responsible for managing and monitoring the conservation easement. Under the grant agreement, WCB staff will accompany the ESLT not less than once every three years during monitoring visits and evaluate compliance with the terms and conditions as outlined in the conservation easement.

The market value of the proposed conservation easement is \$430,000.00, as determined by an appraisal approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the easement for \$200,000.00, a bargain price to the ESLT. The ESLT has secured a grant of \$50,000.00 from the California Deer Association to assist in the acquisition and necessary expenses. The proposed \$175,000.00 grant from the WCB will fund the balance of the purchase price. It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project related expenses including the appraisal and appraisal review charges by the DGS, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$185,000.00.

This grant incorporates all of the revised and adopted standards as approved by WCB on August 17, 2006, and the terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that the WCB staff will review and approve all documents associated with the proposed purchase, including title documents, appraisal, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance, prior to disbursement of funds into escrow for the purchase.

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

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

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$185,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (a), for the grant and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish the project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *15. Grasslands Regional Park Habitat Restoration, Yolo County \$542,663.00

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the County of Yolo to assist in the eradication of non-native plant species and to restore 551± acres of grassland and vernal pool habitat within the Grassland Regional Park, Yolo County. The County proposes an aggressive non-native invasive species management and habitat enhancement program over the next three years in both the upland grasslands and vernal pools of Grasslands Regional Park to enhance habitat for special-status species including: Crampton's tuctoria, Colusa grass, alkali milk-vetch, burrowing owl and northern harrier.

Grasslands Regional Park consists of approximately 620 acres of primarily undeveloped land located 2.5 miles southeast of the City of Davis and west of the Yolo Bypass. The footprint of the site is bounded on the north by County Road 35, on the south by County Road 36, and is roughly situated between County Road 104 on the east and County Road 105 on the west. This site includes Yolo County's Grasslands Park and the adjacent Davis Communications site, whose ownership will pass from the Air Force to Yolo County this year. Together, these properties make up one of the largest contiguous upland grassland areas in Yolo County and have some of the best examples of alkali vernal pools. The grasslands provide habitat for species such as burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), and Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), while the seasonal wetlands and alkali vernal pools on the project site sustain populations of some of the most endangered plants and invertebrates in the Central Valley, including the special status species: Colusa grass (*Neostapfia colusana*), alkali milk-vetch (*Astragalus tener var. tener*), vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardii*), and California linderiella (*Linderiella occidentalis*). The site also contains the largest, and one of the only known remaining populations, of the federally and state listed Crampton's tuctoria (*Tuctoria mucronata*).

Due to various site disturbances and lack of habitat management, the Davis Communications site, and to a lesser extent Grasslands Park, have become dominated by non-native invasive species including perennial pepperweed, yellow star thistle and swamp grass. These weedy species aggressively compete with native species for resources and threaten the survival of endangered vernal pool species on the site. Yolo County recognizes the importance of protecting the rare alkali vernal pool and grasslands habitats that are critical to at-risk and endangered species and is in the process of acquiring the Davis Communications site so that the natural resources on the site can be protected. Acquisition alone, however, does not result in conservation. If left unmanaged, the habitat value of the site is likely to continue to degrade while sensitive species face additional competition from non-native invasive perennial broad-leaved vegetation and annual grasses. This is of particular concern due to a recent arson fire, which cleared 300 acres of the site and is likely to exacerbate the growth of perennial pepperweed and yellow starthistle in the following months. The anticipated flourishing of non-native vegetation will exacerbate the loss of habitat if nothing is done. However, this situation can be utilized as an opportunity to flush the non-native seed bank on the site and greatly improve both grassland and vernal pool habitats if aggressive management is promptly implemented.

The majority of the proposed non-native invasive species management strategies are based on the results of studies and experiments conducted on the site from 2003 through 2005 as part of a CALFED ERP-02-P46 study grant. This study provided three years of detailed baseline data and results from associated small-scale experiments conducted on the project site that were designed to identify methods to eradicate non-native plants from vernal pools and uplands. The proposed project also integrates additional invasive species management and habitat restoration strategies based on results from other grasslands sites and recommendations by field experts. Management methodologies and monitoring results will be clearly described and documented so that results and information gathered can be used as part of the site's adaptive management strategy. These records will also provide a resource for land managers at other sites with similar management objectives.

This project is consistent with the Yolo County Parks and Open Space Master Plan and Grasslands Park Master Plan. The site is also identified in the Yolo County HCP/NCCP Ecological Baseline Report as a critical site for vernal pool complexes. The Friends of Grasslands Park have contributed hundreds of hours of volunteer work towards planting oaks and native grasses on the site over the last 15 years and have stated their interest in continuing to volunteer time towards native grass plantings and invasive species abatement on the site. The local chapter of the Sierra Club has also stated their interest in volunteering at the project site.

Project funding sources are as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$542,663.00
County of Yolo	49,600.00
Bureau of Reclamation	106,190.00
City of Davis	12,000.00
<u>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING</u>	<u>\$710,453.00</u>

Project costs will be for the eradication of isolated populations of perennial pepperweed from vernal pools and grassland, the reduction of non-native invasive annual grass competition and other perennial weed species in specific areas, enhancement of grassland habitat for at-risk ground nesting bird species, site clearing and obstruction removal, and seeding with native species to restore impacted grasslands.

The Department of Fish and Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The County of Yolo will complete all CEQA requirements and comply with any additional environmental statutes or requirements before this project is implemented.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed, allocate \$542,663.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650, to fund this project as proposed; 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.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$542,663.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650, to fund this project as proposed; 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.

Motion carried.

- *16. Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, Water Distribution System, Phase VI, \$560,000.00
Butte County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc., (DU) for a partnership project with the North American Wetlands Conservation Council and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) for the final phase of a project to reconstruct the water distribution system on the DFG's 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 (WCB) 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. The water conveyance and drainage system for the wildlife area was pieced together over the years from the independent systems developed by the original landowners and has never been adequate to efficiently deliver or drain water from the area.

In 1997, DU completed a detailed survey of the wildlife area and, knowing that funds for such a large effort were not available to construct the entire project, developed a six phase plan for upgrading the entire water delivery and drainage system. Phase I was completed in 2001 through a North American Waterfowl Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant, and subsequent phases were completed each year with funds from the DFG, WCB and other NAWCA grants. Specifically, WCB funded Phase II and assisted with Phases IV and V.

Phase VI is designed to construct approximately 10,500 linear feet of new water delivery canal and improve 8,800 linear feet of existing water delivery infrastructure. In addition, 950 linear feet of new drainage ditch will be constructed in the southwest area of the wildlife area. As part of these improvements, approximately 50 inline water control structures and 30 turnout field unit delivery structures will be evaluated and installed, replaced or upgraded, as needed, and two existing pumps will be refurbished and relocated. More than 900 tons of erosion protection rock will be placed to protect new structures, and new levees will be reinforced with gravel. These proposed improvements to the water distribution system will supply quality surface water to the remaining 2,330 acres of the Wildlife Area not enhanced with earlier phases.

Gray Lodge 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.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$560,000.00
Department of Fish and Game	240,010.00
NAWCA	332,516.00
Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (In-kind)	28,000.00
<u>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING</u>	<u>\$1,160,526.00</u>

Project costs will be for site preparation, earthwork, canal excavation, water control structures, pipes and canal gates, erosion protection rock, road gravel, installation of signs, and project design, construction supervision and administration. It is anticipated that the project will qualify for participation under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF). WCB has submitted an LWCF application for this project to the California Department of Parks and Recreation, who administers these federal funds in coordination with the National Park Service. If approved, the Board will be reimbursed for 50 percent of the project costs.

The Department of Fish Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The grantee and DFG will complete the appropriate documentation to satisfy CEQA requirements.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$560,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (d) (IWCP); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$560,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (d) (IWCP); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *17. Jewett Creek Riparian Habitat Restoration, \$250,000.00
Tehama County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for a partnership project to restore 87± acres of riparian habitat on private land located along Jewett Creek in Tehama County. The project is located on the west side of the Sacramento River approximately fifteen miles northwest of Chico, and is directly across the river from several hundred contiguous acres of publicly owned riparian habitat, including the Merrill's Landing Unit of the Sacramento River Wildlife Area and portions of the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge. Other partners include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the landowners.

This project is one of the latest in a series of riparian restoration projects that have been implemented by the Board within the floodplain of the Sacramento River since 1996. Based upon 1938 aerial photography, Jewett Creek Ranch once included dense stands of riparian forest along the creek and in its floodplain area. Previous owners had removed most of the floodplain habitat in attempts to cultivate walnuts. TNC acquired this property in 1999, and developed a ranch management plan that called for continuing the production of walnuts while restoring the riparian habitat that had been removed. In 2006, TNC found a buyer for the property who agreed to purchase the property with the inclusion of a permanent conservation easement, held by TNC. This easement allows the restoration to occur and protects the restored area and other existing habitat features. Jewett Creek Ranch includes 294 total acres, with 143 acres in walnut production.

In general, the project will restore 70± acres with riparian forest and 17± acres of the Jewett Creek streambed will be planted with native grasses and sedges. This will add to the existing 60 acres of remnant riparian habitat. Once restored, the property will contain 147 acres of remnant and restored riparian habitat that is protected by a permanent conservation easement.

Plant communities planned for habitat restoration are based on site assessments, including soil profile, topography, flood frequency, depth to groundwater at base flows, weed community and the existing remnant riparian community. Species composition of the restored areas is determined by the ecological objectives, existing native species at and around the property, and available understory seed. Jewett Creek will be planted with a mixed riparian forest (45 acres), valley oak riparian forest (25 acres), and native grass and sedges in the Jewett Creek waterway (17 acres). In preparation for the restoration on the property, TNC removed 70 acres of walnuts in the restoration area in 2005. The area to be restored will have had two years of fallowing at the time of restoration (spring 2008). After the fields are disked and landplaned, the irrigation system will be installed. Plants and seedlings will be installed following a site layout plan, and plants will be maintained (irrigation, weed control, protection from herbivore damage) for approximately three seasons.

Significant riverine and permanent aquatic habitat is associated with Jewett Creek and the active floodplain of the Sacramento River. The year-round, relatively cold waters of the main river channel support a variety of native invertebrate, fish and other wildlife species, including a number of rare, threatened and endangered species. Results to date indicate that the restoration activities along the Sacramento River area are successfully providing habitat for a diverse community of landbirds, including Cooper's hawk, Osprey, yellow-breasted chat, yellow-billed cuckoo and bank swallow. Restoration of this property is also likely to benefit bald eagle and Swainson's hawk.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$250,000.00
The Nature Conservancy	47,591.00
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	13,500.00
Landowner (cash and In-kind)	10,500.00
<u>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING</u>	<u>\$321,591.00</u>

Project costs will be for project management and monitoring, project design, administrative costs, materials, plant propagation, site preparation, cutting collection, planting, vegetation maintenance (irrigation labor and supplies, weeding, disking, spraying, mowing, predator control, herbicides, etc.), project sign and contingency.

The Department of Fish and Game 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. TNC and the landowner have agreed to manage and maintain the property for twenty-five years, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the existing conservation easement and grant agreement. If at any time during the life of the project, TNC or 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.

The Jewett Creek project has been coordinated with the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum, and that group has indicated their support for the project. This project is also part of TNC's Sacramento River Project that seeks to conserve and restore a 30,000 acre riparian corridor between Red Bluff and Colusa. The project is also consistent with both the Central Valley and Riparian Habitat Joint Ventures.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$250,000.00 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.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$250,000.00 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.

Motion carried.

- *18. Humboldt Bay Wildlife Area, Lower Janes Creek, \$240,000.00
Expansion 1, Humboldt County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the City of Arcata (City) to assist in a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) to acquire 27.3± acres of privately-owned land located in Humboldt County for the protection of inter-tidal salt marsh, mud flats and the preservation of sensitive plant, riparian and aquatic habitat.

The property is located approximately one-half mile southwest of the downtown area of the City. The property has frontage on State Highway 255 known as Samoa Road, and also has frontage on Lower Janes Creek/McDaniel Slough. The City's Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary is located to the south and the DFG's Mad River Slough Wildlife Area is located adjacent and to the west of the subject property. The property is within the tidal influence of Humboldt Bay and, although it has historically been used for grazing, it is currently vacant and unimproved. Development of the land is a possibility and acquisition by the City will protect and preserve the land in its present condition and provide opportunity for restoration as part of the McDaniel Slough Marsh Enhancement Project.

The property was originally part of the Humboldt Bay's extensive inter-tidal salt marsh and mud flats prior to the construction of a levee along the northern shore of the Bay. Much of Lower Janes Creek/McDaniel Slough lowlands were reclaimed during the late 1800's when the dikes and levee were constructed. Later, tide gates were installed on the Creek to prevent salt water intrusion upstream onto the subject and adjacent grazing land. Under natural conditions, tidal action kept the lower channel clear of vegetation and flood flows flushed sediment through to the Bay. The tide gates and sedimentation in the lower reaches of the Creek have resulted in excessive flooding upstream during storm events that coincide with high tides. Once acquired, the City will be able to enhance habitat values on the parcel and in the Lower Janes Creek/McDaniel Slough area. The enhancement proposed with this acquisition project involves restoring natural flows to the Creek by removing the tide gates and thus improving habitat and water quality values for a number of species including the Coastal cutthroat trout, Coho salmon, steelhead trout, Chinook salmon and the tidewater goby.

The City will be responsible for management and maintenance needs of the property. Under the grant agreement, the DFG or the WCB staff will access the property with City personnel not less than once every three years and evaluate compliance with the terms and conditions as outlined in the grant.

The property owner has agreed to sell the property to the City for the appraised value of \$235,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The proposed grant by the WCB will fund \$230,000.00 of the purchase price, with the City contributing \$5,000.00 toward the acquisition. It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed for project related expenses, including appraisal review charges by the DGS, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$240,000.00. The City will also be providing "in-kind" services totaling approximately \$8,500.00 for the appraisal, survey, lot line adjustment and annexation fees.

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

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

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$240,000.00 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 the project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$240,000.00 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 the project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *19. Mad River Slough Wildlife Area, Expansion 1, \$53,000.00
Humboldt County

This proposal was to consider the acquisition of 40± acres of privately-owned land located in Humboldt County, for the protection of seasonal freshwater wetlands and foraging and roosting habitat for shorebirds around Humboldt Bay. The property is located in the City of Arcata (City), approximately one mile west of the downtown area on Old Samoa Road. The property can be accessed from Old Samoa Road and is an in-holding within the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG's) Mad River Slough Wildlife Area (Wildlife Area). Easterly of the Wildlife Area is the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary.

The property was originally part of Humboldt Bay's extensive inter-tidal salt marsh and mud flats prior to the construction of a levee along the northern shore of the Bay. Much of the lowlands around the Bay were reclaimed during the late 1800's when dikes and a levee were constructed. Later, tide gates were installed along the levee to help freshwater drainage and to prevent salt water intrusion on the land side of the levee, including the subject property and adjacent agricultural grazing land.

The purchase of this in-holding will allow for a more efficient use of the recently completed enhancement of 14± acres of riparian habitat, and the construction of a series of basins totaling 40± acres with water control structures to retain freshwater for longer periods of time. This property would also provide more latitude for the current tidal restoration planning efforts along the easterly boundary of the Wildlife Area as well as relieving constraints associated with drainage impacts on private land. The existing site conditions of the subject have high potential for wetland enhancement efforts, including riparian planting and providing shallow open water habitats for wetland associated wildlife.

In its current condition the site supports a number of wildlife species, including shorebirds, wading birds and waterfowl using seasonal ponds and wetlands. Roosting areas for shorebirds are limited within the Humboldt Bay area and this parcel, when added to the existing Wildlife Area, would provide a solid block of undisturbed land for roosting and foraging. During the drier periods, many raptor species are expected to be utilizing the site, including the northern harrier, white tailed kite, barn owl and the short-eared owl. Many species of birds including sparrow, finch, mourning dove and swallows are also expected to utilize the site.

The property owner has agreed to sell the property for the appraised value of \$360,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The DFG's Office of Spill Prevention and Response has agreed to fund \$327,000.00 of the acquisition from funds from the Sierra Pacific Industries – Humboldt Bay 2003 settlement on deposit with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. It is proposed that the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approve an allocation of \$33,000.00 for the remainder of the purchase price. It is estimated that an additional \$20,000.00 is needed to cover project related costs, including the appraisal, environmental assessment, title and escrow fees and review charges by the DGS, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$53,000.00.

The DFG proposes to manage the property as an expansion to the Wildlife Area. The primary management objective is the preservation and possible enhancement of the freshwater wetlands. Management costs are expected to be minimal in this case as the acquisition will enable the DFG to manage the entire area as one unit and not have to work around the 40± acres of privately-held land.

The acquisition project has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and is proposed as exempt under Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and under

Section 15325, Class 25, as the transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space, habitats or historical resources. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$53,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650, for the acquisition and project related expenses; approve the acceptance of \$327,000.00 from the Department of Fish and Game's Office of Spill Prevention and Response Fund on deposit with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation from the Sierra Pacific Industries – Humboldt Bay 2003 settlement; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish the project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$53,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650, for the acquisition and project related expenses; approve the acceptance of \$327,000.00 from the Department of Fish and Game's Office of Spill Prevention and Response Fund on deposit with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation from the Sierra Pacific Industries – Humboldt Bay 2003 settlement to be applied toward the purchase price; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish the project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *20. Lake Redding Fishing Access Improvements, Shasta County \$326,158.00

This proposal was to consider a cooperative project with the City of Redding (City) to widen and lengthen the Lake Redding Boat Ramp and replace eight steel guide pylons for the boarding float. The Lake Redding Fishing Access is located on lands owned by the City and the State on the left bank of the Sacramento River just west of Highway 273, three miles southwest of Keswick Dam in the City.

The Lake Redding Fishing Access was originally constructed in 1964. The single lane boat ramp provides the only place to launch motorized and non-motorized craft within a five-mile stretch of the Sacramento River from Keswick Dam downstream to the Anderson-Cottonwood Irrigation District (ACID) dam which forms Lake Redding. Recent improvements made to the ACID dam allow for increased salmon and steelhead use on this portion of the river, making it a popular fishing area. The City estimates that over 1,000 boats launch here each year. The facility was partially upgraded in 2004 with funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and the Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW). This project made improvements to the above-water portions of the facility, including a new parking lot, barrier-free restroom, boarding float and walkways. The in-water work was not completed at this time because the City wanted to start work right away and the lengthy permitting process for in-water work would have prohibited this.

In general, the proposed project will finish the improvements already begun to the facility by now completing the below-water work. Specifically, the boat ramp will be widened from one lane to two lanes to improve user access. The ramp will also be lengthened to be usable year-round. The ramp is currently not usable from mid-October to mid-April when water levels are lower than the end of the ramp. In addition, the deteriorating 42 year old boarding float guide pylons will be replaced.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$326,000.00
Department of Boating and Waterways	310,000.00
City of Redding	60,020.00
<u>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING</u>	<u>\$696,020.00</u>

WCB project costs will be for construction of the ramp including mobilization, clearing, dewatering, excavation, rock slope protection, fish gravel, aggregate base, the cast in place ramp and water pollution control. DBW and the City will share in the costs for the previously listed items and they will fund project design, environmental permitting, barriers, temporary fencing, replacement of the guide piles and construction management. In addition to the costs listed above, an additional \$158.00 will be required for Department of General Services' review costs, bringing the allocation necessary for the Board's portion of the project to \$326,158.00. The project has been approved for Federal participation under the Sport Fish Restoration Act which will provide the Board with a 75 percent reimbursement of all project costs.

The Department of Fish Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The grantee has completed the appropriate notice to satisfy CEQA requirements and has secured the necessary permits for construction of the project. The City is already under agreement with the WCB to manage and maintain the property through 2025, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the existing Lease and Operating Agreement. The City has expressed a willingness to extend this agreement once it nears expiration.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$326,158.00 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.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$326,158.00 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.

Motion carried.

21. Malibu Lagoon State Park Lagoon Restoration, \$417,200.00
Los Angeles County

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (RCDSMM) in partnership with the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to provide support for the design, environmental permitting, engineering, wetland delineation, and monitoring of the Malibu Lagoon restoration project in Malibu Lagoon State Park, Los Angeles County. Ms. Bonnie Turner briefly described this project and its location.

The Malibu Lagoon restoration project is planned to occur in two phases. Phase I entails the relocation and demolition of the existing on-site park facilities, including a parking lot, driveway, restroom and other ancillary facilities, and reconstructing them at a location closer to the main entrance to the park. Phase II consists of the restoration on the lagoon habitat, in part, occurring within the area where the existing park facilities are located. Phase II will be implemented in two parts. Part 1 represents the design and permitting needed for the lagoon restoration work. Part 2 is the actual restoration of the lagoon, including public access trails. Part 1 of Phase II represents the project to be funded under the proposed grant.

The restoration project will provide improved water circulation, remove non-native vegetation, restore native vegetation, and provide additional educational and public use values of the lagoon. Malibu Lagoon is currently home to two federally listed endangered species, the tidewater goby and Southern California steelhead trout. In addition, the Lagoon hosts an abundance of avian species, including seasonal occurrence of the federally threatened western snowy plover and endangered California least tern, and is a critical stop-over for migrating birds along the Pacific Flyway.

The lagoon is a 31-acre shallow water embayment and coastal wetland complex occurring at the terminus of the Malibu Creek Watershed, the second largest watershed draining into Santa Monica Bay. The lagoon empties into the Pacific Ocean at world famous Malibu Surfrider Beach, renowned as a surfing and recreational destination that hosts approximately 1.5 million visitors every year.

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

In 1983, the DPR initiated restoration work on the lagoon. This involved excavation of three channels with sloping mudflats to reintroduce tidal flow. The mudflats rose to create pickleweed marshes and upland habitat. The channels were seeded with salt marsh plants and series of boardwalks were created to allow access by the public. In 1996 Caltrans funded a successful restoration program to mitigate impacts incurred during the Malibu Lagoon Bridge Replacement Project. Specific restoration measures,

coordinated by the RCDSMM and the DPR, included the very successful tidewater goby habitat enhancement project and the revegetation of areas disturbed by construction activities.

The problems of Malibu Creek and Malibu Lagoon and its adjacent coastal waters are acute and well documented. The lagoon is currently listed as impaired under the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) for benthic impacts, pathogens, nutrients, eutrophication, swimming restrictions and shellfish harvesting. Studies have indicated high pathogen concentrations in the lower Malibu Creek, the lagoon and surf zone that could potentially impact the health of swimmers and surfers. The current configuration of channels causes poor circulation, eutrophication and low dissolved oxygen levels in the lagoon. Large algal blooms result in the dry season, further depleting oxygen, endangering fish and other aquatic organisms. In the summer when direct flows to the ocean are impeded by the build up of sand bars, circulation is further reduced worsening the problem.

In September, 2003, the Lagoon Technical Advisory Committee (LTAC) was formed to guide development of the Malibu Lagoon Restoration and Enhancement Plan (Plan), representing the best available science from their respective fields. The LTAC was comprised of ten members and correspondents, including representatives of the Coastal Commission, the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP), ULCA, UCSB, and the LA Natural History Museum. The LTAC provided input on baseline data needs and reviewed all viable restoration alternatives.

The overall objective of the Plan is to restore the biological and physical functions of the lagoon to improve lagoon and coastal water quality, including management of water, habitat and access, while minimizing impacts to the existing system. The restoration goals include increased tidal flushing, improved water circulation, improved coastal water quality, increased holding capacity, reduced predator encroachment, restoration of typical salt marsh hydrology, increased wildlife habitat, creation of a nesting island for least terns and western snowy plovers, creation of channel connections to the lagoon and integration of public access with habitat protection. Major components of this project include slope improvements to the western edge of the lagoon, improvements to the existing boat house channel and the creation of a new channel along the southern edge of the west lagoon. A comprehensive monitoring plan will be implemented throughout the project to ensure that Plan objectives are met and adverse impacts are avoided.

Partners on the project include DPR, the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC), the RCDSMM and Heal the Bay. Heal the Bay has managed the development of the Plan and is currently involved in the water quality monitoring. The RCDSMM managed the environmental review process for the Plan. Final design, construction drawings, permitting and pre-construction monitoring for Phase I is currently underway, managed by the RCDSMM and supported by a combination of SCC funds, and a Proposition 13 grant from the SWRCB. Construction of Phase I will be managed by DPR and funded by a combination of SCC funds and SWRCB Prop 13 funds. SWRCB has also awarded a Proposition 50 grant in the amount of \$3,000,000 to SCC to implement Phase II.

The funds requested in this grant application would support the design, permitting, and pre-, during and post-construction biological and water quality monitoring for Phase II. These aspects of the project are being managed by the RCDSMM working in cooperation with its partners. The DPR will also manage the construction aspect of the lagoon restoration (Phase II) and will assume responsibility for the long-term maintenance and management of the lagoon.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project (Part 1 of Phase II) is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$417,200.00
State Coastal Conservancy	79,146.00
State Water Resources Control Board	504,100.00
<u>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING</u>	<u>\$1,000,446.00</u>

The Department of Fish Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. All environmental documentation required for this project will be completed and approved by the DPR before planning is completed.

Mr. Donnelly reported that the Board received letters of support for this project from Senator Sheila Kuehl, Assembly Member Julia Brownley, Craig Shuman, Director of Reef Check California Program and Mark Abramson, Malibu Creek Watershed Stream Team Manager, Heal the Bay.

Ms. Turner reported that Dan Preece, Manager of the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains, was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Klass requested clarification regarding the tidal action and the proposed improvements for water circulation in this area. Mr. Brodrick asked if the SWRCB's \$3,000,000 had been secured, as noted in this narrative. Ms. Turner confirmed that those funds were secured, in addition to the funding as listed above.

Mr. Brodrick asked if there were any comments or questions. There were none.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$417,200.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$417,200.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

22. Topanga State Park Rodeo Grounds Berm Removal and Restoration,
Los Angeles County

This item was withdrawn from consideration at this time.

23. San Jacinto Wildlife Area Wetland Restoration, \$680,000.00
Riverside County

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association (CWA) for a project to restore and enhance 520± acres of wetland, riparian and upland habitats on the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) San Jacinto Wildlife Area (Wildlife Area). The project is located approximately 25 air miles southeast of the City of San Bernardino and two miles north of the community of Lakeview in Riverside County. Mr. Peter Perrine briefly described this project and its location.

Since 1986, the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) has been very active in the San Jacinto Valley, acquiring available lands near Mystic Lake, a seasonal lake that lies in the heart of the valley. The first parcels, totaling more than 4,700 acres, were acquired for mitigation for impacts associated with the California State Water Project. Since then, the Board has approved an additional 27 acquisitions to the Wildlife Area, increasing its size to more than 9,000 acres. The western boundary of the Wildlife Area is contiguous with the Lake Perris State Recreation Area, placing a total of approximately 16,200 acres under public ownership and protection.

The Wildlife Area sits within the San Jacinto Valley, which as a whole is remarkably diverse, with habitats consisting of coastal sage scrub, annual grasslands, and palustrine emergent and forested wetlands. The Wildlife Area is the biological heart of the valley, containing the best remnants of these habitats and nearly all of the shallow Mystic Lake. Mystic Lake has a surface area of 3,000 acres when fully flooded, with a maximum depth of five to six feet.

While the Board has been active in acquiring property for the Wildlife Area, this will be the first opportunity the Board has had to assist with the necessary restoration work. Most of the protected area was once farmed, and very little remains of the vast native wetland habitats that ringed the lake. Indeed, the first European to enter the valley described a "large and pleasing lake as full of white geese as of water". Through dams and diversions, and with the channelization and realignment of the San Jacinto River, those bountiful wetlands nearly disappeared. Even so, the display of wetland and upland wildlife that can be seen on these remnant marshes, especially during the migration season, rivals any other southern California freshwater wetland. Enhancing and enlarging these valuable habitats is critical to hundreds of species of birds and other wildlife.

The project will enhance 213± acres of existing wetland and riparian habitats and restore 307± acres of adjacent weedy uplands back to seasonal wetlands. Existing wetland habitat will be enhanced through a complete redesign of existing wetland units,

and infrastructure will be added to allow for appropriate wetland management. New wetlands will be created from previously leveled agricultural fields. Perhaps most importantly, the proposed project will construct a master water delivery and drainage system for both the restored and enhanced wetlands, add a lift pump and pipeline to allow for recirculation of water throughout the units, and install all infrastructure needed to independently fill and drain every wetland unit. This design will allow the DFG to significantly increase the size and quality of wetland habitat, and to do so with the most efficient use of the small amount of available water.

The San Jacinto Wildlife Area is listed as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society, where it is identified as “quite simply one of the most important bird areas in southern California”. The area is one of more than 1800 Christmas Bird Counts from all over North America, and has traditionally been one of the top sites in the nation for the number of species recorded. Species that should benefit from the proposed wetland restoration work include many species of migratory birds and waterfowl, including white faced ibis, white-fronted geese and ruddy ducks. Riparian species that will benefit include western wood-pewee, Bullock’s oriole and vermilion flycatcher. The least Bell’s vireo, a federally listed endangered species, nested on the Wildlife Area for the first time ever in 2004 in previously restored riparian habitat. The proposed project will increase that habitat, and it is expected that more birds will use the area in the future as more habitat is installed and existing habitat matures. Other species of concern that are currently found on the Wildlife Area, and are expected to benefit from wetland and riparian restoration activities, include bald eagles, western snowy plovers and tri-colored blackbirds.

The Board’s project costs of \$680,000.00 will be for earthmoving to delevel existing ponds and install new levees, the installation of pipelines and water control structures, the installation of a lift pump, a new well, planting of tules, riparian trees and perennial grasses, gravel for levee tops and a new parking area, the installation of a sign, and project design, construction supervision and administration. It is anticipated that the project will qualify for participation under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF). The Board submitted an LWCF application for this project to the California Department of Parks and Recreation, who administers these federal funds in coordination with the National Park Service. If approved, the Board will be reimbursed for 50 percent of project costs.

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

Mr. Perrine stated that although this agenda originally noted that the Board would be handling the CEQA documents, he clarified that the CWA and the DFG would be responsible for obtaining all of the appropriate documents and permits.

Mr. Perrine reported that Mr. Chadd Santerre was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Broddrick stated that this has been a longstanding priority area for the DFG and the Board in terms of acquisition around the San Jacinto area and that there are nearly six million customers within an hour's drive from this wildlife area. He stated this area has been a major focus for acquisition and was glad to see this restoration proposal.

Mr. Broddrick asked if there were any comments or questions. There were none.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$680,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (d) (Other); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$680,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (d) (Other); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned. Motion carried.

24. Santa Cruz Island Habitat Restoration, \$1,078,000.00
Santa Barbara County

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy of California (TNC) for a project to map the invasive weeds, develop a weed control plan, eradicate or control certain invasive weeds, and plant native vegetation on the 73-square-mile TNC-owned portion of Santa Cruz Island. The island is located 25 miles off the coast between the cities of Santa Barbara and Ventura, in Santa Barbara County. Mr. Peter Perrine briefly described the project and its location.

The Santa Cruz Island is the largest of the Channel Islands. Collectively called the "Galapagos Islands of North America", these islands have never been part of the mainland and have evolved an amazing diversity of plant and wildlife species. In all, more than a thousand species of plants and animals can be found in the island's hills, steep canyons, broad valleys and along the nearly 77 miles of coastline. Twelve of these species are found nowhere else on earth.

The apparent richness of the island attracted early settlers to the island, who believed that the land could also support grazing animals and agricultural crops. For more than a century, the island did support these uses, but over time, too much grazing, the clearing of land that could not support agriculture and the introduction of non-native weeds depleted the native habitats, some to near collapse. Golden eagles, attracted to the island by the year-round supply of feral piglets, began nesting on the island in the 1990s, and while not feasting on pig, would hunt the native Santa Cruz Island fox. These foxes, unused to being considered prey, were reduced from 1,500 animals to fewer than 100 in less than a decade.

For the last 28 years, TNC, and later, the National Park Service, have been slowly reversing this trend, first by removing cattle in the 1980s, then sheep in the 1990s, and the last of the feral pigs removed just this year. Golden eagles have been captured and moved to the mainland, and native bald eagles, which do not eat foxes and do compete with golden eagles for hunting territories, have been reintroduced to the island. The first recorded breeding of bald eagles in more than 40 years occurred on the island in 2006.

As a result, the native vegetation has begun to rebound. Bishop pines have been colonizing hills that once were grazed to bare dirt by the feral sheep, rare Santa Cruz Island silver lotus have crept back, literally, from the crevices on the sea cliffs, the only locations that could not be reached by the sheep, and native grasses again can be found in the meadows. Still, the island is far from healed. Non-native plant species are the most problematic threat on the island today. Known populations of habitat-modifying weeds continue to expand, and can be very difficult to remove, especially in the more rugged and inaccessible parts of the island.

TNC is proposing to expand their weed control efforts through a two-year process that will involve completing an island-wide weed map, developing a comprehensive weed control strategy, implementing an invasive plant program to remove or control the weeds of highest concern, reestablishing populations of native plants, establishing a monitoring program to evaluate success and to implement adaptive management methods for long-term goals, and expanding the community and educational outreach program on the island. Through these actions, Santa Cruz Island will move ever closer to a fully functioning island-wide natural ecosystem.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$1,078,000.00
The Nature Conservancy	149,441.00
<u>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING</u>	<u>\$1,227,441.00</u>

Project costs will be for the island-wide weed map, the development of a weed treatment strategy, weed removal, establishment of a native plant nursery and propagation of native plants, native plant restoration, community outreach materials, and project design, construction supervision and administration.

The Department of Fish Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The grantee will complete the appropriate notice to satisfy CEQA requirements and has agreed to manage and maintain the property for ten 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.

The Reserve and the project are supported by many people in the community. Volunteers will assist with nursery operations, pull weeds in specified and controlled areas, and later assist with habitat restoration through out-planting and direct seeding.

As a part of the outreach program funded from TNC's share of the project costs, an existing interpretive nature trail will be improved to make it more readily accessible to the visiting public, including school groups, from the boat dock on the north side of the island. An interpretive guidebook to the trail will be updated and expanded along with posters and signage about preventing the spread of invasive species and, in collaboration with the National Park Service, an educational island restoration video will be completed that will demonstrate the importance of an ecosystem management approach to land stewardship.

Mr. Donnelly reported that the Board received several letters of support from Carl Benz, Assistant Field Supervisor, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Ventura County Supervisor Steve Bennett; Russell Galipeau, Superintendent, Channel Islands National Park; William Gillette, Agricultural Commissioner, County of Santa Barbara; Steve Junack, Herbarium Curator, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden; Carl Hutterer, Executive Director and Paul Collins, Curator of the Vertebrate Zoology Department, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History; Lyndal Laughrin, Director of U.C. Santa Cruz Island Reserve; Kathryn McEachern, Senior Plant Ecologist, U.S. Department of the Interior, Channel Islands Field Station; and Todd Keeler-Wolf, Vegetation Ecologist, Department of Fish and Game.

Mr. Perrine reported that Ms. Lotus Vermeer of The Nature Conservancy was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Brodrick asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,078,000.00 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.

It was moved by Mr. Ryan Brodrick that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,078,000.00 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.

Motion carried.

25. Arroyo Seco River Conservation Area, \$1,350,000.00
Monterey County

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the acquisition of a conservation easement over 1,674± acres of land in a cooperative project with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Resources Agency and the Monterey County Agricultural and Historical Land Conservancy for the long-term protection of the Arroyo Seco River watershed for the preservation of the Southern California steelhead trout and other wildlife and riparian habitat in Monterey County. Mr. William Gallup briefly described this project and its location.

The property is located approximately eight miles west of the City of Greenfield adjacent to Arroyo Seco Road, just westerly of its intersection of Carmel Valley Road. The property has about 9,000 feet of frontage on the Arroyo Seco River, which bisects the property, and there are two major tributary creek systems that flow to the river from the subject property. The property provides needed linkages from the Salinas Valley into Los Padres National Forest, the Ventana Wilderness and south to the Fort Hunter Liggett Military Reservation. Potential development is a real threat, and given the growing trend towards the subdivision of larger properties into residential subdivisions, this conservation easement will provide permanent protection from development.

Protection is critical to the property's diverse habitats including Central California Sycamore Alluvial Woodlands, blue oak, valley oak, coast live oak, savannahs and their associated grasslands and the Arroyo Seco River itself, with the last remaining known Southern California steelhead trout run in the Salinas River system. The property is rich with many sensitive species including the California red-legged frog, foothill yellow-legged frog, Pinnacles optioservus riffle beetle, western pond turtle and intact populations of native fish.

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) will hold title, and an endowment in the amount of \$100,000.00 will be established to provide for maintenance, operation and compliance monitoring for the conservation easement. TNC will hold the non-wasting endowment and will be responsible for managing and monitoring the easement with the earnings from the endowment. The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) or the DFG will accompany TNC staff on its monitoring visits on a regular basis to insure the owner of the property is complying with the terms and conditions of the conservation easement.

The property owner has agreed to sell the conservation easement to the State for the appraised value of \$1,303,750.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). It is estimated that an additional \$46,250.00 will be needed to cover project costs including the appraisal, environmental assessment, easement baseline documentation and vegetation report coordinated with TNC, title and escrow fees and review charges by the DGS, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$1,350,000.00.

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

Mr. Gallup reported that Ms. Valerie Calgeri and Ms. Chris Fischer of The Nature Conservancy were in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Klass requested clarification regarding the easement and management of the property. Mr. Gallup explained that the DFG will hold title to the easement and TNC will monitor/manage the property with funding from an endowment that will be established at close of escrow. Mr. Donnelly stated that this proposal meets all of the Board's easement conditions, as well as being consistent with the new grant policies.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,350,000.00 00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (b/c), for acquisition of the proposed conservation and project related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish the project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,350,000.00 00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (b/c), for acquisition of the proposed conservation and project related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish the project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

26. Dorrance Ranch, Monterey County \$3,010,000.00

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for the acquisition of a conservation easement over two non-contiguous parcels totaling 4,330± acres, for the purposes of preventing the conversion of rangeland, grazing land and grassland to nonagricultural uses, protecting the property from encroaching residential development, and to sustain the open space benefits that occur from continued livestock grazing use. Mr. Bob Clark briefly described the project and its location.

The Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Act of 2002 identified the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) as the responsible entity to implement the protection program. The purpose of the program is to protect California's rangeland, grazing land and grasslands through the use of conservation easements. To implement the program, procedures were developed for accepting applications and evaluation of

proposals that measure the project's contribution toward the purposes of the program. A number of projects have been approved and thousands of acres have been protected.

Dorrance Ranch is located approximately 10 miles south of Salinas and 15 miles east/southeast of Monterey in the Sierra de Salinas Mountain Range of Monterey County, and is accessed via San Benancio Road off the Monterey-Salinas Highway. Prominently positioned on the shoulders of Mt. Toro, the property provides spectacular views of the entire Monterey Bay, Monterey Peninsula, Salinas Valley and Carmel Valley.

Elevations on the property vary from approximately 1,000 feet to almost 3,500 feet, and the topography includes a number of ridgelines, meadows, hillsides and valleys. There are over 20 acres of wetlands associated with stock ponds and springs, and approximately four linear miles of riparian habitat that feed into the upper Carmel River watershed that is designated as critical habitat for steelhead. A portion of the property is included in the critical habitat designation for California red-legged frog, and it provides potentially suitable habitat for California tiger salamander. Other wildlife species that are commonly found on the property include badgers, bobcats, cougars, black bears, upland game birds, golden eagles, burrowing owls, migratory bird species and waterfowl. The property may also be suitable for regional California Condor recovery efforts.

The fair market value of the easement interest, as determined by an appraisal approved by the Department of General Services (DGS), is \$6,940,000.00. The property owner has agreed to sell the easement at a discounted price of \$6,000,000.00. Staff recommends that the WCB approve an allocation for a grant to TNC in the amount of \$3,000,000.00 to provide a portion of the funding required for the purchase of the conservation easement. It is anticipated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be required to cover project related expenses, including appraisal review costs, title and escrow fees and DGS' review charges, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$3,010,000.00. The balance of the purchase price is being provided by donors to TNC that may include the Central Coast Opportunity Fund, created by the Packard Foundation.

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

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

Mr. Clark reported that Ms. Chris Fischer of The Nature Conservancy and Messrs. Steve, Dave and Bill Dorrance were in the audience should there be any questions.

There were no questions or comments.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$3,010,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (f) Rangeland; 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.

It was moved by Mr. Ryan Brodrick that the Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$3,010,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (f) Rangeland; 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.

Motion carried.

27. Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve, Expansion 11, \$247,500.00
Monterey County

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal originally consisted of Expansions 11 and 12, however, Expansion 12 has been withdrawn from consideration at this time. The Elkhorn Slough is located approximately 100 miles south of San Francisco in Monterey County. Expansion 11, consisting of 11.5± acres of privately-owned land, is located three miles north of the town of Castroville. A federal grant from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) was accepted by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) at the August 17, 2006 meeting, a portion of which will be used to fund acquisition costs. Ms. Teri Muzik briefly described the project and its location.

Elkhorn Slough is a shallow estuary located in northern Monterey County. The WCB approved the first acquisition in the Elkhorn Slough in 1979 and, to date, more than 1,300± acres have been acquired by the WCB. In addition to the WCB, the Elkhorn Slough Foundation has protected nearly 2,700± acres in the slough area. The Elkhorn Slough 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 parcel is very valuable as part of the overall Elkhorn Slough ecosystem. The vegetation found on Expansion 11 consists primarily of grassland and oak woodlands and is adjacent to the wetlands of the slough. In addition to the high wildlife value contained within this parcel and fish and wildlife values of the adjoining slough, the subject property may also provide recreational potential. Potential uses may include nature study, scientific research and bird watching. The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) currently manages the Ecological Reserve and will include the subject property as part of the overall estuarine reserve.

The WCB accepted the \$1,484,216.00 CELCP grant administered by the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration at the August 17, 2006 meeting. The purpose of the grant is to protect the habitat within and around the Elkhorn Slough. Expansion 11 will use a portion of the remaining funds and efforts will be made to acquire additional properties from willing sellers in the area.

The owners have agreed to sell their property for the appraised, fair market value of \$465,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The federal CELCP grant will cover 50 percent (\$232,500.00) of the purchase price and the State's share will be 50 percent (\$232,500.00). It is estimated that an additional \$15,000.00 will be needed to cover project related costs including the appraisal, environmental reports, title and escrow fees and DGS' review costs, bringing the total proposed allocation for the State's share to \$247,500.00.

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

Ms. Muzik reported that Ms. Terry Palmisano of the Department of Fish and Game was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Klass requested clarification regarding management of the property with the existing resources. It was explained that the Elkhorn Slough Foundation assists with volunteers in managing the property as well as the Department of Fish and Game.

Staff recommended the Board approve the acquisition as proposed; authorize the acceptance of a \$232,500.00 grant from the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program to be applied toward the purchase of Expansion 11; allocate \$247,500.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (b/c), for the acquisition and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to carry out this project as proposed; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve the acquisition as proposed; authorize the acceptance of a \$232,500.00 grant from the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program to be applied toward the purchase of Expansion 11; allocate \$247,500.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (b/c), for the acquisition and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to carry out this project as proposed; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

28. Millerton Preserve, Van Alen Ranch Oak Woodlands, \$1,150,000.00
Madera County

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Rangeland Trust (CRT) to assist in a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) to acquire a conservation easement over 2,305± acres of land located in Madera County for the protection of oak woodlands, rangeland, vernal pools and riparian habitat. Mr. William Gallup briefly described the project and its location.

The project area is located in the foothills of the central Sierra Nevada Mountains, near Millerton Lake. Situated approximately six miles east of the community of O'Neals and about eight miles north of the City of Fresno, the property has frontage along the San Joaquin River, the major tributary to Millerton Lake. The area is dominated by large ranch parcels held by private owners with some federally held land adjacent to the subject property.

The Sierra National Forest is approximately 20 miles east of the subject and the Sequoia National Forest is about 40 miles southeast. The Millerton Lake State Recreational Area, which includes Millerton Lake and areas along the San Joaquin River, is about four miles south of the subject. This acquisition helps to provide linkage to the San Joaquin Ecological Reserve, Bureau of Reclamation property and San Joaquin River Conservancy land below Millerton Lake and Friant Dam.

State Highway 41, about five miles west of the subject property, provides north south access to the foothill communities of Coarsegold, Oakhurst and also to Yosemite National Park. There is a real threat of development to the entire area, given the growing trend towards the subdivision of larger properties into small residential plots.

The primary purpose for acquisition of this land in the Millerton area is to provide protection of the San Joaquin River watershed, preservation of sensitive plant and wildlife species of the Central Valley Floor and the Sierra Nevada foothills, and the maintenance of existing wildlife corridors. Specifically, acquisition of a conservation easement is intended to preserve and enhance Blue oak woodland, Blue oak–foothill pine, Valley Floor riparian and annual grassland habitats. Essential breeding, migrating, wintering, roosting and foraging opportunities exist for as many as 44 special status species, including vernal pool fairy shrimp, vernal pool tadpole shrimp, Foothill yellow-legged frog, San Joaquin roach, Sacramento hitch, hairy orcutt grass, succulent owl's clover, hartwigs golden sunburst and bogg's lake hedge-hyssop. This acquisition should also provide enhancement and protection of the water quality in Millerton Lake and the San Joaquin River downstream.

The CRT will be responsible for managing and monitoring the conservation easement. Under the grant agreement, the WCB will accompany the CRT not less than once every three years during monitoring visits and evaluate compliance with the terms and conditions as required by the easement.

The fair market value of the proposed conservation easement is \$1,120,000.00, as determined by an appraisal and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the easement for the approved appraised value. It is estimated that an additional \$30,000.00 will be needed for project related costs, including the appraisal and review costs by the DGS, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$1,150,000.00.

The grant incorporates all of the revised and adopted standards as approved by the WCB on August 17, 2006, and the terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that the WCB staff will review and approve all documents associated with the proposed purchase, including title documents, appraisal, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds into escrow for the purchase.

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

Mr. Donnelly reported that the Board received a letter of support from Mr. Chuck Peck, Executive Director of the Sierra Foothills Conservancy.

Mr. Gallup introduced Brandon and Shana Tomlinson, owners of the property, and Ms. Michelle Clark and Ms. Elizabeth Valdovinos from California Rangeland Trust should there be any questions.

There were no questions or comments.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,150,000.00 from the Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund for the grant and project related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish the project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,150,000.00 from the Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund for the grant and project related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish the project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

29. Grasslands Conservation Area, Expansion 1, Merced County \$8,000,000.00

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the acquisition of a conservation easement over 1,876± acres of land for the purposes of protecting critical riparian and wetland habitat, while at the same time implementing wildlife-friendly agriculture over portions of the property in Merced County. The easement will protect lands currently in agricultural production from future development. Ms. Teri Muzik briefly described the project and its location.

At the November 18, 2004 Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) meeting, the Board approved the first phase of this project consisting of the acquisition of a conservation easement over 1,718± acres of property owned by these landowners. The first phase involved property located along the east and west banks of the San Joaquin River and the north and south banks of the Merced River east of Hills Ferry Road and west of Highway 165 in the Newman/Stevinson area of southwestern Stanislaus and northwestern Merced County.

The subject property is located south of the first acquisition and is located entirely in Merced County. A portion of the property follows the San Joaquin River and the bulk of the property is located south of Highway 140. It is situated near the San Joaquin Valley Grassland Ecological Area (GEA). The GEA is the largest contiguous block of wetlands remaining in California and consists of approximately 160,000 acres of National Wildlife Refuges, State Wildlife Areas and private wildlife habitat.

The subject property contains riparian habitat as well as wetland and upland habitat which have been diminished in the San Joaquin Valley ecoregion. Existing riparian and wetland acreage is 10 percent and 5 percent of historical amounts, respectively. The riparian vegetation includes valley oak, Fremont cottonwood and willow, with California sycamore, box elder and Oregon ash also present.

The land also includes fields currently in agricultural production. These lands, and the crops they contain, provide forage and cover for numerous bird species. By protecting these lands from future development and maintaining them in "wildlife friendly" agricultural production, an open space buffer will be established between wildlife habitat

and ever expanding human encroachment. The wildlife compatible farming that will continue on the ranch provides important wintering habitat for various waterbirds plus nesting cover for ground nesting birds such as mallards, short-eared owls and American bitterns.

Specific species benefiting from the protection of these lands may include migrating willow flycatchers, Swainson's hawk, greater and lesser sandhill cranes and wintering Arctic-nesting geese. Portions of the property may also contain habitat suitable for the Giant Garter Snake, western pond turtle, tri-colored blackbird, white-faced ibis, long-billed curlew and American white pelican.

There will be limited grazing allowed on specified portions of the property to control noxious weeds and maintain the native pasture lands. The terms and conditions of the allowable grazing have been agreed upon by the parties and are set out in the conservation easement agreement.

The Department of Fish and Game has identified the subject property as being within the GEA and has recommended the purchase of this conservation easement. The easement will be monitored in conjunction with the San Joaquin River Wildlife Area, located north of the proposed acquisition. Because the property will remain in private ownership, the acquisition of a conservation easement will not require additional personnel or result in an increase in managerial costs.

The landowners have agreed to sell this conservation easement covering 1,876± acres for the appraised, fair market value of \$8,440,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services. The Great Valley Center is contributing \$470,000.00 toward the purchase of this property. The remaining purchase price, in the amount of \$7,970,000.00, will come from the WCB. It is estimated that an additional \$30,000.00 will be needed for administrative costs, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$8,000,000.00.

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

Ms. Muzik reported that Ms. Terry Palmisano of the Department of Fish and Game was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Broddrick commented that this proposal will benefit future restoration efforts along the river and expressed his support for the proposal.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$8,000,000.00 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.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$8,000,000.00 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. Motion carried.

30. Larkin Valley Complex, Santa Cruz County \$1,560,000.00

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the acquisition of 55± acres of vacant land in a cooperative project with the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the protection of the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander, red-legged frog and other species of concern, together with the acceptance of a Recovery Land Acquisition Grant from the USFWS to be applied toward the acquisition of the property. Mr. Randy Nelson briefly described the project and its location.

The Larkin Valley Complex is located approximately 11 miles east of Santa Cruz, five miles northwest of Watsonville and approximately 15 miles southwest of Gilroy. More specifically, north of the intersection of White Road, Gillette Road and Calabasas Road, in the unincorporated area of Santa Cruz County.

Two native coastal terrace prairie meadows separated by a narrow band of coyote brush scrub are located on the property. Other parts of the property contain a vegetation mosaic that consists of live oak woodland, redwood forest, northern maritime chaparral, annual grassland, willow riparian and a freshwater pond. The native coastal terrace prairie grassland and the annual grassland contain habitat for the federally and state-listed Santa Cruz long-toed salamander and the federally-threatened red-legged frog. This habitat could also support state and federally-listed threatened and endangered plant species, including San Francisco popcorn flower, Monterey spineflower, robust spineflower and Santa Cruz tarplant. The coastal terrace prairie community could also support Santa Cruz clover, considered rare plant communities by the State and the County of Santa Cruz.

The Santa Cruz long-toed salamanders exist in a classic metapopulation condition (a group of spatially separated populations of the same species that interact at some level) with a number of breeding sites historically linked together. In the last 50 to 75 years, the tenuous connections between breeding sites have been increasingly blocked and destroyed due to agriculture, urbanization and road construction. This has resulted in segmentation of the metapopulation that has created a significantly greater threat to the subspecies. Stabilization of the subspecies, therefore, will be dependant not only on protection of breeding sites, but of upland areas and corridors connecting separate populations. The seasonally ephemeral ponds that the salamanders use for breeding, as well as the adjacent upland scrub and oak woodland areas to which they migrate in the non-breeding season, are restricted naturally to a small area along approximately 25 miles of California's central coast in southern Santa Cruz County, extending inland up to about 10 miles in this area. Loss of these habitats has been the main cause for the decline in salamander populations.

The subject property lies within the Larkin Valley/Calabasas area, which provides the best potential for stabilizing and protecting the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander for a number of reasons. Development pressures are somewhat less because allowable land use densities are more stringent than at other sites and topography discourages large scale development. Ponds in the area generally have a proportionally larger quantity of upland habitat immediately adjacent and there is less likelihood that ponds or upland areas will be impacted by future development.

There are now four known breeding ponds in the immediate Larkin Valley/Calabasas area. Two are unprotected, including the pond on the subject property. Acquisition of this pond and associated upland habitat would add a third breeding pond to the Larkin Valley/Calabasas complex, and help reestablish connecting corridors for the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander. In addition, the property provides opportunities for construction of at least one additional pond.

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) will hold fee title to the property and proposes to work cooperatively with the USFWS to enter into a management agreement. The USFWS plans to expand the boundaries of the Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge to include this property. This Refuge is part of a greater system of six refuges known as the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

The TPL has, as a courtesy to the State, facilitated the sale of the subject property. The approved fair market value of the property is \$1,900,000.00, as determined by an appraisal and as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the property to the State for a bargain sale of \$1,800,000.00. The USFWS has agreed to provide a \$250,000.00 Recovery Land Acquisition Grant toward the purchase. It is proposed that the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approve an allocation in the amount of \$1,550,000.00 to make up the balance of the purchase price. It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project related expenses including the appraisal report, environmental assessment, title and escrow fees and DGS' review charges, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$1,560,000.00.

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

Mr. Nelson expressed appreciation to Ms. Helen O'Shea and The Trust for Public Land for their assistance in this project.

Mr. Donnelly reported that the Board received letters of support for this project from Santa Cruz County Supervisor Ellen Pirie and Ava Ferguson, an adjacent property owner.

Mr. John Mello, adjacent property owner and son of the late Senator Henry Mello, addressed the Board and expressed support, on behalf of the Mello Family, for this proposal.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; authorize the acceptance of a Recovery Land Acquisition Grant, in the amount of \$250,000.00 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to be applied toward the acquisition of the property; allocate \$1,560,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(3), to pay for the acquisition and project related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; authorize the acceptance of a Recovery Land Acquisition Grant, in the amount of \$250,000.00 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to be applied toward the acquisition of the property; allocate \$1,560,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(3), to pay for the acquisition and project related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

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| 31. | Big Hill Preserve and Expansion 1,
Placer County | \$1,005,000.00 |
|-----|---|----------------|

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation for two grants to the Placer Land Trust for a project involving the acquisition of fee interest in 320± acres of privately-owned land and a second project involving the acquisition of a conservation easement over 313± acres of privately-owned land. The subject parcels lie about six miles north of Auburn and about two miles west of Highway 49, in an unincorporated portion of Placer County. Mr. Randy Nelson briefly described the project and its location.

Joining the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) in a partnership to accomplish these acquisitions are the California Wildlife Foundation, Trust for Public Land (TPL), California Resources Agency, California Department of Transportation, Placer County, Emigrant Trails Greenway Trust and Placer Land Trust.

The project area supports riparian and oak woodlands and oak grasslands. Oak species include blue and valley oaks. This acquisition will also protect portions of the Bear River and Coon Creek watersheds. Listed species and species of concern are likely to inhabit the project area, including the California black rail, willow fly catcher, Townsend's big eared bat, pallid bat, California horned lizard and the foothill yellow-legged frog. In addition, the properties provide habitat to rabbits and other small mammals, deer and mountain lions.

The proposed WCB grant for the proposed Big Hill Preserve project would provide the Placer Land Trust with up to \$760,000.00 to facilitate its acquisition of the 320± acre subject property. The TPL will exercise its option to acquire the property and immediately convey the property to the Placer Land Trust to own and manage. An appraisal of the property has been approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The total estimated value is \$2,240,000.00. The other funding partners will contribute \$1,480,000.00 to the purchase, leaving \$760,000.00 to be funded by the WCB.

The proposed WCB grant for the Big Hill Preserve, Expansion 1 project, would provide the Placer Land Trust with up to \$235,000.00 to facilitate its acquisition of a conservation easement over the 313± acre subject property. An appraisal of the property has been approved by the DGS. The total estimated value is \$1,300,000.00. The other funding partners will contribute \$1,065,000.00 to the purchase, leaving \$235,000.00 to be funded by the WCB. It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed for project related expenses for both projects, including review charges by the DGS, bringing the total proposed allocation for these two projects to \$1,005,000.00.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grants provide that the WCB will review and approve the properties being proposed for acquisition. The grants further provide that staff will review and approve all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow accounts for the purchase of these properties.

These proposed acquisitions are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under Section 15313, Class 13, as acquisitions of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and under Section 15325, Class 25, as transfers of ownership interests in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Mr. Nelson reported that Mr. Fred Yeager, President of the Placer County Land Trust, was in the audience should there be any questions. There were no questions or comments.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,005,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop.117), Section 2786 (a), for the grants and project related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish these projects; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,005,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop.117), Section 2786 (a), for the grants and project related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish these projects; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

32. Truckee River Canyon, Nevada and Sierra Counties \$10,000.00

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider a donation to the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) of 3,139± acres of land adjacent to Interstate 80 and the Truckee River that runs from Floriston to the California/Nevada state line in Nevada and Sierra Counties. Contiguous to approximately six miles of riparian habitat, the property is currently the largest private land holding along the Truckee River in California. The proposed conveyance is a cooperative project between the DFG, California Resources Agency, Truckee Donner Land Trust (TDLT) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). In addition to the fee conveyance to the DFG, a conservation and public access easement on 97± acres of the contiguous riparian parcels will be conveyed to the TDLT. Mr. Bob Clark briefly described this project and its location.

The Truckee River Canyon contains many stretches of cottonwood-willow riparian vegetation along the banks of the river and its tributaries on the property, and supports six native Lahontan fish species, as well as rainbow and brown trout. It is also a possible area for reintroduction of the state and federally-listed threatened Lahontan Cutthroat Trout. The upland parcels provide winter and migratory habitat for the Verdi sub-unit of the Loyalton-Truckee mule deer herd. Other species that have been observed in the canyon and on the upland parcels include blue grouse, California quail, mountain lion, bobcat, coyote, gray fox and black bear.

The DFG proposes to manage the property for the protection of the natural values of the Truckee River Canyon by providing contiguous public lands in the watershed to sustain critical deer migration and wildlife habitat, to protect and enhance the river's riparian resources, water quality and fisheries, and to protect and maintain angling, hunting and other recreational uses of the property. Acquisition of the property will also help to facilitate legal recreational access to the river from planned access points that are included in the easement over the riparian area.

The property owner has agreed to sell the property for the appraised value of \$2,040,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services. Funding is being provided in part by a \$1,500,000.00 Resources Agency grant from the River Parkways Grant Program. The remaining \$540,000.00 is being funded by TNC. The Resources Agency grant requires that title be conveyed to the TDLT, who will then convey the property at no cost to the DFG. Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approve an allocation of \$10,000.00 to cover estimated project related costs including review charges by the DGS.

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

Mr. Clark reported that Mr. Mike Conner of The Nature Conservancy and Mr. Paul Raquel of the Department of Fish and Game were in the audience should there be any questions. Mr. Conner addressed the Board in support of this proposal.

Mr. Klass asked if there were any terms, conditions or deed restrictions on this property. Mr. Conner stated that there is nothing in the deeds or title report that restricts them from completing these transactions as proposed. Later in the meeting Mr. Klass requested clarification regarding management plans for the acquisition.

Mr. Raquel stated that the current plan is to manage the property passively until they develop a management plan for all of the other areas, completing a comprehensive management plan for all wildlife areas in that area, with existing staff and funding. Mr. Brodrick explained it is anticipated that the area where they expect the most human intervention will be along the riparian areas where there is access to the river. It is his understanding that the TDLT has agreed to provide maintenance, independent of DFG, consistent with the easement, and that the day-to-day operations of access, garbage, etc., will be a cooperative effort and not fall entirely on DFG.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the project as proposed; authorize acceptance of 3,139± acres from the Truckee Donner Land Trust; allocate \$10,000.00 for project related costs from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve the project as proposed; authorize acceptance of 3,139± acres from the Truckee Donner Land Trust; allocate \$10,000.00 for project related costs from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

33. Sacramento River Wildlife Area Riparian Restoration, \$1,232,000.00
Wilson Landing Unit, Glenn County

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to River Partners for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to restore and enhance 338± acres of riparian habitat on the Wilson Landing Unit of the Sacramento River Wildlife Area. This property is located in Glenn County within the Sacramento River floodplain, on the east bank of the Sacramento River approximately ten miles northwest of Chico. Mr. Dave Means, on behalf of Mr. Scott Clemons, briefly described this project and its location.

This project is the latest in a series of riparian restoration projects within the Sacramento River Wildlife Area that has been approved by the Board since 1996. The historic riparian habitat that once existed on these properties had been fragmented or entirely removed, mostly for farming operations, by the time they were acquired and placed under the DFG's management. Many of these sites had been invaded by non-native, weedy plants that did not provide very good wildlife habitat. The DFG prioritized the individual units of the Wildlife Areas, and has worked closely with River Partners to

restore approximately 750 acres of riparian habitat on seven different units of the Wildlife Area. These areas are located in Butte, Glenn and Colusa Counties. The proposed restoration project at the Wilson Landing Unit is the largest to date.

The Wilson Landing Unit includes nearly 340 acres, and the middle of the site was cleared for agriculture decades ago. The property was once part of a farming operation on the west side of the river; in 1970 the river cut off the bend, isolating the property and making agricultural logistics difficult. The Board acquired the property in 1986 and assigned it to the DFG for management.

Although the Wilson Landing Unit could provide an important node of habitat along the Sacramento River, the fallow, flood-prone land currently provides limited wildlife habitat for riparian –dependent species. Without intervention, non-native plants are likely to competitively exclude native plants for decades to come.

Legal public access is available to the property only from the Sacramento River. Many hunters have discovered the resident wild pig population that lives on the site. Unfortunately, trespass through the neighboring private orchards is so frequent that a defined roadway exists. This combination of weedy vegetation and vehicular trespass has resulted in several fires on the Unit over the past few years.

River Partners proposes to restore approximately 195 acres of wildlife habitat and to enhance an additional 143 acres. The restoration will involve planting and maintaining native vegetation for three years. Enhancement actions will include controlling nonnative weeds and possibly planting native vegetation that does not require intensive maintenance. Once the project is completed, this Unit will provide critical habitat for high priority riparian-dependent wildlife species, and will provide solutions to the management issues mentioned above (vehicle trespass and fires).

This project is consistent with the Department’s Comprehensive Management Plan for the Sacramento River Wildlife Area (2003), CALFED’s Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan, the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum’s Management Plan and the Central Valley Habitat and Riparian Habitat Joint Ventures.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$1,232,000.00
River Partners (In-kind)	123,200.00
<u>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING</u>	<u>\$1,355,200.00</u>

Project costs will be for project management, planning and permitting, site preparation, irrigation installation, planting, maintenance, monitoring and reporting, installation of a sign, contingency 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 DFG will continue to manage the property after the project is completed.

The Board has received support letters from the Mount Lassen Chapter of the California Native Plant Society and from Deseret Farms of California, the adjacent landowner.

Mr. Means reported that Mr. Dan Efseaff and Mr. John Carlon of Rivers Partners and Mr. Henry Lomeli of the Department of Fish and Game were in the audience should there be any questions.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$250,100.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (e/f) and allocate \$981,900.00 from the General Fund - CRHCP; 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.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$250,100.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (e/f) and allocate \$981,900.00 from the General Fund - CRHCP; 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. Motion carried.

34. Resolutions

Mr. Donnelly reported that the following resolutions were submitted for enactment by the Wildlife Conservation Board:

Senator Sheila Kuehl

WHEREAS, Senator Sheila Kuehl, in her capacity as a Member of the Senate, has served as a dedicated member of the Joint Legislative Advisory Committee of the Wildlife Conservation Board; and

WHEREAS, Senator Kuehl served as Chair of the Natural Resources and Water Committee and as a member of the Senate Subcommittee for Resources, and provided consistent leadership and support for the Board in her legislative capacity; and

WHEREAS, through Senator Kuehl's knowledge and interest in California's wildlife and habitats, she has furthered the cause of wildlife conservation and related recreation; and

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

WHEREAS, Senator Kuehl 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 Senator Kuehl's contributions to the work of the Board and to the entire State of California, through her personal support as well as that of her staff; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the Members of the Wildlife Conservation Board and the Board staff convey to Senator Sheila Kuehl 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 Senator Kuehl.

Senator Wesley Chesbro

WHEREAS, Senator Wesley Chesbro, in his capacity as a Member of the Senate, has served as a dedicated member of the Joint Legislative Advisory Committee of the Wildlife Conservation Board; and

WHEREAS, Senator Chesbro, in his capacity as Chair of the Budget and Fiscal Review Committee, and Chair of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, provided consistent leadership and support for the Board in his legislative capacity; and

WHEREAS, through Senator Chesbro's knowledge and interest in California's wildlife and habitats, he has furthered the cause of wildlife conservation and related recreation; and

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

WHEREAS, Senator Chesbro has supported the Board's many programs throughout his tenure, making preservation, enhancement and restoration of wildlife habitat a priority; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Board to gratefully acknowledge Senator Chesbro's contributions to the work of the Board and to the entire State of California, through his personal support as well as that of his staff; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the Members of the Wildlife Conservation Board and the Board staff convey to Senator Wesley Chesbro our sincere appreciation for his noteworthy contributions to the Board, and express our best wishes to him as he continues with his personal endeavors; and, be it further

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

Assembly Member Fran Pavley

WHEREAS, Assembly Member Fran Pavley, 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, Assembly Member Pavley served as a member of the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee and as Chair of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee for Resources, and provided consistent leadership and support for the Board in her legislative capacity; and

WHEREAS, through Assembly Member Pavley's knowledge and interest in California's wildlife and habitats, she has furthered the cause of wildlife conservation and related recreation; and

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

WHEREAS, Assembly Member Pavley 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 Assembly Member Pavley'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 Assembly Member Fran Pavley 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 Pavley.

Mr. Donnelly expressed his appreciation to the Senators and Assembly Member for their participation and support while serving on the Board.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve these resolutions as proposed, that they be made a part of the official minutes of this Board meeting and that copies of these resolutions be furnished to Senators Chesbro and Kuehl and Assembly Member Pavley. Motion carried.

Mr. Donnelly expressed his appreciation to everyone and welcomed Senator Wiggins and Chairman Hattoy to the Board.

At 11:05 A.M. the public was dismissed from the meeting and invited to wait outside the meeting room until adjournment following the Closed Session.

****35. Closed Session**

Pursuant to the authority of Government Code Section 11126 (a)(1), the Board met in Closed Session at 11:10 A.M. to consider the appointment of an Executive Director to the Wildlife Conservation Board.

Pursuant to Government Code Section 11126, a state body may hold a closed session during a regular or special meeting to consider the appointment, employment, evaluation of performance, or dismissal of a public employee.

Present:

L. Ryan Brodrick, Director, Department of Fish and Game
Fred Klass, Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance
John McCamman, Chief Deputy Director, Department of Fish and Game
Maureen Rivera, Executive Assistant (Retired Annuitant), Wildlife Conservation Board
Nancy Templeton, Senior Staff Counsel, Department of Fish and Game
Senator Patricia Wiggins

The Closed Session was adjourned at 11:35 A.M.

36. Reconvene Open Session

Mr. Brodrick reported that the Board discussed the process and applicants for the Executive Director to the Wildlife Conservation Board. He stated that the Board concluded they would close the application period at a two- to four-week period to be determined and that they would set another closed session for future consideration of the process, interview and selection of the Executive Director. He stated that process would be publicly noticed with a ten-day notice, with dates to be finalized soon with the responsible DFG staff.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 11:38 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

John P. Donnelly
Interim Executive Director

PROGRAM STATEMENT

At the close of the meeting on February 15, 2007, the amount allocated to projects since the Wildlife Conservation Board's inception in 1947 totaled \$1,941,441,791.52. This total includes funds reimbursed by the Federal Government under the Accelerated Public Works Program completed in 1966, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program, the Anadromous Fish Act Program, the Sport Fish Restoration Act Program, the Pittman-Robertson Program, and the Estuarine Sanctuary Program.

The statement includes projects completed under the 1964 State Beach, Park, Recreational and Historical Facilities Bond Act, the 1970 Recreation and Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Bond Fund, the Bagley Conservation Fund, the State Beach, Park, Recreational and Historical Facilities Bond Act of 1974, the General Fund, the Energy Resources Fund, the Environmental License Plate Fund, the State, Urban and Coastal Park Bond Act of 1976, the 1984 Parklands Fund, the 1984 Fish and Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Bond Act, the California Wildlife, Coastal and Park Land Conservation Act of 1988, Cigarette and Tobacco Products Surtax Fund of 1988, California Wildlife Protection Act of 1990, the Safe, Clean, Reliable Water Supply Act of 1996, the Natural Resources Infrastructure Fund, the Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund, Forest Resources Improvement Fund, the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond, Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection, and Flood Protection Fund, California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund, Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 and the Wildlife Restoration Fund. In addition to projects completed with the above funding sources, this statement includes tax credits awarded under the Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act of 2000. The tax credits are not reflected in the total amount allocated to projects.

A. Fish Hatchery and Stocking Projects	\$16,006,219.06
B. Fish Habitat Preservation, Development & Improvement.....	28,965,149.41
Reservoir Construction or Improvement	\$ 5,605,699.00
Stream Clearance and Improvement	18,717,005.19
Stream Flow Maintenance Dams	542,719.86
Marine Habitat	646,619.07
Fish Screens, Ladders and Weir Projects.....	3,453,106.29
C. Fishing Access Projects	50,731,342.26
Coastal and Bay.....	\$ 4,038,176.11
River and Aqueduct Access	16,036,971.93
Lake and Reservoir Access	9,703,429.18
Piers.....	20,952,765.04
D. Game Farm Projects	146,894.49
E. Wildlife Habitat Acquisition, Development and Improvement	1,790,683,748.58
Wildlife Areas (General)	\$376,815,698.96
Miscellaneous Wildlife Habitat Development	15,468,042.32
Wildlife Areas/Ecological Reserves, (Threatened, Endangered or Unique Habitat).....	643,428,747.47
Land Conservation Area	8,460,415.18
Inland Wetlands Conser. Grants & Easements.....	21,258,497.94

Riparian Habitat Conser. Grants & Easements.....	55,878,643.18
Other Wildlife Habitat Grants	669,373,703.03
F. Hunting Access Projects	484,898.57
G. Miscellaneous Projects (including leases).....	14,831,640.52
H. Special Project Allocations	1,301,917.88
I. Miscellaneous Public Access Projects	37,751,837.68
State Owned	\$1,678,751.07
Grants	36,073,086.61
J. Sales and/or exchanges.....	538,143.07
K. Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act (tax credits awarded) ...	(48,241,234.00)
Statutory plans	(0.00)
Corridors, wetlands, wildlife habitat, streams and riparian habitat	(6,234,658.00)
Agricultural lands.....	(13,775,640.07)
Water and water rights	(0.00)
State and local parks, open space and archaeological resources	(28,230,935.93)
Total Allocated to Projects	\$1,941,441,791.52