

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
 May 25, 2006

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WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

May 25, 2006

The Wildlife Conservation Board met at the State Capitol, Room 113, in Sacramento, California on May 25, 2006. The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Mr. Michael Flores, Chairman of the Wildlife Conservation Board. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Board members, Mr. Ryan Brodrick, Director, Department of Fish and Game, Mr. Fred Klass, Department of Finance, Mr. Al Wright, Executive Director, Ms. Mary Morgan, Vice for Assembly Member Patty Berg, Ms. Andrea Harvey, Vice for Fran Pavley, and Ms. Victoria Marmolejo, Executive Assistant for the Board.

1. Roll Call

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS

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

JOINT LEGISLATIVE INTERIM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mary Morgan, Vice
Assembly Member Patty Berg
Andrea Harvey, Vice
Assembly Member Fran Pavley

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Al Wright

Staff Present: Al Wright, Executive Director
John Donnelly, Assistant Executive Director
Dave Means, Assistant Executive Director
William Gallup, Senior Land Agent
Bob Clark, Senior Land Agent
Randy Nelson, Senior Land Agent
Linda Drake, Senior Land Agent
Teri Muzik, Senior Land Agent
Debra Townsend, Senior Land Agent
Marilyn Cundiff, Public Land Management Specialist
Peter Perrine, Public Land Management Specialist
Bonnie Turner, Public Land Management Specialist
Scott Clemons, Public Land Management Specialist
Tony Chappelle, Public Land Management Specialist
Roxanne Woodward, Budget Officer
Ajit Bindra, Associate Budget Analyst
Gary Cantrell, Research Analyst II
Victoria Marmolejo, Executive Assistant
Ginger Wiseman, Office Technician
Jan Beeding, Office Technician
Chlondez Waters, Office Technician

Others Present: Dan S. Allred, Quail Ranch Golf Club
Brett Furnas, Associate Biologist, Department of Fish and Game
Jim Well, Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Fritz Reid, Chairman, Central Valley Joint Venture
Jim Mazza, The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County
Steve Dettman, American Land Conservancy
Beth Huning, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture
Sandra Huddleston, San Joaquin River Conservancy
Debra Hamilton, Department of Fish and Game
Ed Penny, Department of Fish and Game
Anthony Sorace, Golden Rule Church Association
Mark Biddlecomb, Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Shayne Green, Northcoast Regional Land Trust
Lauren Ward
James Bernard, Mendocino Land Trust
Kerry O'Toole, American Land Conservancy
Dean Kwasny, Department of Fish and Game
Dave Widell, Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Brian Bartholomew, Landowner Representative
Tracy Livingston, Seabiscuit
Janae Scruggs, Grassland Environmental Education Center
Chris Hildebrandt, Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Steve Thompson, US Fish and Wildlife Service
John McCamman, Department of Fish and Game
Su Corbaley, Coastal Conservancy
Connie Best, Pacific Forest Trust
Jake Jacobson, The Nature Conservancy
Darla Guenzler, California Council of Land Trusts
David Chang, Agricultural Community Office
Irene Anderson, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

2. Funding Status (Informational)

(a) 2005-06 Wildlife Restoration Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act - Minor Projects	\$500,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(402,252.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$97,748.00

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

Budget Act	\$20,551,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(35,000.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$20,516,000.00

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

Budget Act	\$20,577,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(3,287,900.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$17,289,100.00

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

Budget Act	\$20,620,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(19,967,107.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$ 652,893.00

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

Budget Act (2003-04 Reappropriation) (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$14,562,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(13,141,432.92)
Unallocated Balance	\$1,420,567.08

- (f) 1999-00 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget
 - Continuously Appropriated [Sec. 5096.350 (a) (1), (2), (4) & (7)] .. \$36,100,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations (26,346,223.45)
 - Unallocated Balance..... \$ 9,753,776.55

- (g) 2005-06 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget
 - Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)..... \$1,545,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations (0.00)
 - Unallocated Balance..... \$1,545,000.00

- (h) 2004-05 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget
 - Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)..... \$11,000,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations (0.00)
 - Unallocated Balance..... \$11,000,000.00

- (i) 2003-04 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget
 - Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)..... \$8,500,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations (118,507.00)
 - Unallocated Balance..... \$8,381,493.00

- (j) 2002-03 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget
 - Budget Act (2005-06 Reappropriation)
(San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects) \$2,500,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations (2,424,726.00)
 - Unallocated Balance..... \$75,274.00

 - Chapter 983, Statutes of 2002..... \$4,800,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations (1,729,700.23)
 - Unallocated Balance..... \$3,070,299.77

 - Chapter 984, Statutes of 2002..... \$19,200,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations (11,693,351.00)
 - Unallocated Balance..... \$7,506,649.00

(k) 2001-02 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Continuously Appropriated (Section 5096.650) \$273,000,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations (115,063,155.45)
 Unallocated Balance..... \$157,936,844.55

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

Budget Act..... \$13,250,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations (12,169,751.38)
 Unallocated Balance..... \$1,080,248.62

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

Budget Act..... \$32,500,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations (20,011,970.00)
 Unallocated Balance..... \$12,488,030.00

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

Continuously Appropriated (Sections 79565 and 79572) \$814,350,000.00
 Less 2003-04 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565.... (21,000,000.00)
 Less 2004-05 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565.... (21,000,000.00)
 Less 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 Previous Board Allocations (622,579,456.86)
 Unallocated Balance..... \$142,670,543.14

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

Budget Act (Pursuant to Chapter 588, Statutes of 2001)..... \$5,000,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations (0.00)
 Unallocated Balance..... \$5,000,000.00

RECAP OF FUND BALANCES

Wildlife Restoration Fund (a) \$97,748.00.00
 Habitat Conservation Fund (b), (c) and (d) \$38,457,993.00
 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (e) and (f) \$11,174,343.63

California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks
and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (g), (h), (i), (j) and (k)..... \$189,515,560.32
Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and
Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (l), (m) and (n) \$156,238,821.76
Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund (o) \$5,000,000.00

RECAP OF NATURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT ACT OF 2000

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

Total Tax Credits Available..... \$100,000,000.00
Less Previously Awarded Tax Credits (48,241,234.00)
Balance of Tax Credits Available..... \$51,758,766.00

Mr. Al Wright welcomed the Board members and the general public in attendance and asked if there were any questions. He welcomed and introduced Ms. Andrea Harvey, Vice for Fran Pavley who had arrived at the meeting.

The Board was presented with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Great Blue Heron Award. Presenting the award to the Board were Dr. Fritz Reid, Chairman, Central Valley Joint Venture, Ms. Beth Huning, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture, Mr. Steve Thompson, Manager, California/Nevada US Fish and Wildlife Service, Mr. Ryan Broddrick, Director, Department of Fish and Game and Mr. Mike Chrisman, Secretary, Resources Agency. Mr. Wright welcomed back Secretary Chrisman, who had chaired the Board five years ago.

Mr. Broddrick, a member of the National American Wildlife Management Planning Committee, stated that he had the pleasure on behalf of the committee, as well as Mr. Steve Thompson, representing the US Fish and Wildlife Service to present to the Board, the National Great Blue Heron Award. The award is given in recognition of the Board's collaboration and work with the joint ventures in the State of California that represent a combination of state, federal and local levels, private landowners, and non-government agencies that are working partnerships to create habitats consistent with implementing North American Water Fowl Management Plan.

Mr. Broddrick stated that the Board had received another prestigious award presented in February 2006, in Ohio. The National Wildlife Management Institute (NWMI) presented their President's Award for 2006, to the Board in recognition of exceptional and significant contributions to the scientific management of natural resources.

Mr. Steve Thompson stated that he has had the opportunity to travel and work across the country and has seen many joint ventures and different activities and stated that this is one of the best joint ventures in the country, making it one of the best in the world. He also stated that this could not have been made successful, had it not been for the Board. He then thanked Chairman Flores, and particularly Mr. Al Wright, Mr. Mike Chrisman, and Mr. Ryan Broddrick, and many others. He pointed out that this is the highest award given, and is for work that is done on the ground with people who get things done for the wildlife and the birds. He then went on to say that it is incredible how the Board thinks of the resources first, gets the wildlife conservation done, and how the Board thinks of the citizens of this great state of California. This is a resource enjoyed by all the citizens of the world. You are the best in the state, country and perhaps in the world. He went on to say Mr. H. Dale Hall, Director, US Fish and Wild Service called to state how proud he is of the activities that are completed on the ground and get accomplished by the Board and what a great honor it is to be a small part of that. He thanked the Board and the joint ventures and passed on his congratulations.

Dr. Reid stated there are five habitat joint ventures in California due to the size of the state of California; most other states have only one. Many of the joint ventures were in the audience. He gave his congratulations and stated how proud he is and thanked the Board for their continued efforts.

Mr. Wright asked the Board staff to gather and took a few minutes to thank them. He stated that they are a unique group of people, about twenty plus strong who work all over California and do it through partnerships, a professional and fun group of people to work with.

Mr. Wright stated that the second award, the President's Award, a beautiful pintail duck was received from the NWMI. This was another prestigious award which was presented to the Board in Ohio in March of 2006. This was an opportunity for Mr. Wright to share with the NWMI all the wonderful work that is being done in California. Mr. Wright took them on a brief verbal tour of California. He shared the types of work the Board does, such as the coho recovery being done on the north coast, the restoration work in the San Francisco bay, taking barriers out of historic steelhead streams in southern California streams so that steelhead runs can start again, the habitat work being done with the natural community conservation plans in southern California, San Diego and Riverside, the restoration of the lower Colorado river, and in the Central Valley about 70,000 acres have been restored with the help of partners since 1990. He then thanked his staff, and all the partners.

3. Special Project Planning Account Informational

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

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

The Board, at the May 6, 1986 meeting, authorized the Executive Director to use up to 1% of a budgeted appropriation to set up and maintain an appropriate planning account with the provision it would be reported to the Board as an informational item at the next meeting.

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

Habitat Conservation Fund..... \$20,000.00
Department of Fish and Game's, Ecosystem Restoration Program

Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund..... \$20,000.00

4. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 5-18)

Mr. Wright asked the Board that Item 16 (China Hill, Expansions 2 and 3), in addition to the agenda write-up include authority for staff to transfer the property from the Department of Fish and Game to the City of Yreka, consistent with what has been done with other adjacent parcels in that area.

Mr. Wright received letters of support for consent Item Number 7, Carpinteria Creek Arundo Removal and Restoration; Board of Supervisors, Santa Barbara County; Item Number 10, Volta Wildlife Area Wetland Enhancement, Mr. Bill Gaines, President, California Outdoor Heritage Alliance; Item Number 11, Newman Land Company Wetland Restoration, Ludwigia Eradication,

Dr. Rudolph A. Rosen, Director, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Western Regional Office; Item Number 12, Laguna de Santa Rosa Ludwigia Eradication, Assembly Member Noreen Evans; Item Number 13, Wetland Habitat Restoration, Willow Creek Wildlife Area, Phase II, Mr. Bill Gaines, President,

California Outdoor Heritage Alliance; Item Number 15, Wetland Habitat Restoration, Phase II; Shasta Valley Wildlife Area, Mr. Bill Gaines, President, California Outdoor Heritage Alliance; and Item Number 17, Ash Creek Wildlife Area, Wetland Enhancement, Phase II, Mr. Bill Gaines, President, California Outdoor Heritage Alliance, and Patricia Cantrall, Supervisor District III, County of Modoc.

Mr. Ryan Broddrick moved that the Board approve Consent Calendar Items 5 through 18, as proposed in the individual agenda explanations, including the modification proposed to item 16 by Mr. Wright and including funding as noted therein.

Motion carried.

Mr. Wright stated that Item Number 24 was removed from consideration.

- *5. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of February 23, 2006

Mr. Ryan Broddrick moved that the minutes of the meeting of February 23, 2006 be approved as written.

Motion carried.

- *6. Recovery of Funds

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

\$0.00 to the General Fund
\$153,626.65 to the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund
\$2,700.22 to the Habitat Conservation Fund
\$38,074.50 to the Wildlife Restoration Fund
\$41,321.29 to the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund
\$25,716.12 to the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002

GENERAL FUND

Wetland Habitat Restoration, San Pablo Bay, Napa/Sonoma County

Allocated	\$238,119.27
Expended	<u>-238,119.27</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Total General Fund **\$0.00**

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

Riparian Habitat Restoration, Sacramento River, Turtle Bay Exploration Park, Shasta County

Allocated	\$915,000.00
Expended	<u>-821,191.60</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$93,808.40

Sacramento River Wildlife Area, Princeton Unit, Expansion 1, Colusa/Glenn Counties

Allocated	\$427,294.00
Expended	<u>-414,492.75</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$12,801.25

San Joaquin River Parkway, Habitat Restoration and Public Access Plan, Jensen River Ranch, Fresno County

Allocated	\$440,135.00
Expended	<u>-440,135.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve, Expansions 4, 5 and 6, Riverside County

Allocated	\$56,159.00
Expended	<u>-9,142.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$47,017.00

Total Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund **\$153,626.65**

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND

Canebrake Ecological Reserve (Scodie Canyon Unit), Kern County

Allocated	\$3,018,000.00
Expended	<u>-3,018,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Grasslands Ecological Reserve, Merced/Stanislaus Counties

Allocated	\$1,620,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,620,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Habitat Restoration, Herbert Wetland Prairie Preserve, Area C, Tulare County

Allocated	\$127,000.00
Expended	<u>-127,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Miller Lake Wetland Restoration, Stanislaus County

Allocated	\$110,000.00
Expended	<u>-110,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Sacramento River Wildlife Area, Princeton Unit, Expansion 1, Colusa/Glenn Counties

Allocated	\$222,706.00
Expended	<u>-222,706.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Wetland Habitat Restoration, Duck Slough, Flynn Ranch, Merced County

Allocated	\$150,000.00
Expended	<u>-147,299.78</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$2,700.22

Wetland Habitat Restoration, Frog Pond, Merced County

Allocated	\$85,000.00
Expended	<u>-85,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Total Habitat Conservation Fund **\$2,700.22**

WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND

Crystal Lake Public Access, Los Angeles County

Allocated	\$150,000.00
Expended	<u>-111,925.50</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$38,074.50

Total Wildlife Restoration Fund **\$38,074.50**

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

Grasslands Ecological Reserve, Merced/Stanislaus Counties

Allocated	\$2,300,000.00
Expended	<u>-2,300,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Hermosa Beach Fishing Pier Improvements, Los Angeles County

Allocated	\$324,270.00
Expended	<u>-324,270.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Rancho La Purisima, Santa Barbara County

Allocated	\$1,285,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,281,490.43</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$3,509.57

San Joaquin River Parkway, Habitat Restoration and Public Access Plan, Jensen River Ranch Augmentation, Fresno County

Allocated	\$98,507.00
Expended	<u>-69,092.28</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$29,414.72

Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve, Expansions 4, 5, and 6, Riverside County

Allocated	\$6,523,841.00
Expended	<u>-6,523,841.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Sierra Valley Conservation Area, Expansion 3, Plumas County

Allocated	\$458,000.00
Expended	<u>-449,603.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$8,397.00

Total California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund \$41,321.29

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

Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, Expansion 2, Orange County

Allocated	\$12,350,000.00
Expended	<u>-12,337,365.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$12,635.00

Bolsa Chica Lowlands Restoration, Orange County

Allocated	\$10,000,135.00
Expended	<u>-10,000,107.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$28.00

Wetland Habitat Restoration, San Pablo Bay, Napa/Sonoma Counties

Allocated	
\$599,180.73	
Expended	<u>-586,127.61</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$13,053.12

Total Water Security Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 **\$25,716.12**

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve the recovery of funds for the items listed on pages 9 through 13 of these minutes and close the project accounts. Recovery totals include \$0.00 to the General Fund; \$153,626.65 to the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund; \$2,700.22 to the Habitat Conservation Fund; \$38,074.50 to the Wildlife Restoration Fund; \$41,321.29 to the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund; \$25,716.12 to the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002.

Motion carried.

- *7. Carpinteria Creek Arundo Removal and Restoration, Santa Barbara County \$80,000.00

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner's Office for a cooperative project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Santa Barbara County to remove the invasive nonnative plant arundo donax (also known as giant reed) from private and public property. The project is located along approximately two and one-half miles of

the lower reach of Carpinteria Creek, in the City of Carpinteria in Santa Barbara County.

The Board has approved funding for a wide range of projects in Santa Barbara County. These have included land acquisition (Arroyo Hondo Preserve – 8/30/2001; Elwood Mesa – 2/19/2004; Elwood Monarch Butterfly Grove – 2/24/1998, Goleta Slough – 5/2/1980), and habitat restoration (Cuyama River Riparian Enhancement – 2/24/2005, and the nearby Arroyo Burro Estuary and Mesa Creek Restoration – 11/17/2005). Also on this agenda is a request for funding to enhance habitat values at the Department of Fish and Game's Goleta Slough Ecological Reserve.

Fifty years ago, Carpinteria Creek was home to plentiful runs of steelhead trout. Although recent surveys suggest that small numbers of fish may still enter the creek to spawn, anadromous populations are a mere fraction of what their numbers were in the 1940s. Despite its problems, Carpinteria Creek offers great potential for steelhead recovery. In the 1960's and 1970's the City of Carpinteria refused to allow the creek to be channelized with concrete for flood control. As a result, the channel still runs freely under open spans (rather than through culverts) at both the Union Pacific tracks and the 101 freeway. The upper reaches of the creek contain very valuable fish habitat, and a tall tree canopy runs through much of the riparian corridor. Consequently, biologists for the Department and a recent study of Santa Barbara County southern coastal creeks consider Carpinteria Creek a prime site for steelhead recovery projects.

The presence of arundo in the stream corridor lowers the biological value of the creek because arundo does not provide good nesting habitat for most birds, and does not support the same types or numbers of insects that are important food for salmonids and other fish. Arundo also tends to out-compete native vegetation, and causes damaging disruption of flood flows. This invasive plant is also well known for its thirsty uptake of water, more than three times the rate of native willows and cottonwoods. Arundo is also highly flammable, which represents not only a threat to nearby native riparian vegetation, but also a threat to adjacent houses and commercial development.

The Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition was formed in 2001 to steward the watershed for steelhead recovery, erosion, and other water quality issues. The County of Santa Barbara Agricultural Commissioner's Office was invited by the Coalition to participate in the restoration of Carpinteria Creek and was recently awarded \$42,500.00 by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission to conduct an arundo removal project located immediately upstream of the proposed project. This project has been approved by the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project, and was recommended to the Board for funding by that organization. Limited public access (bike trail and walking path) is available in the project area on City and County-owned land and via Carpinteria State Beach at the mouth of Carpinteria Creek.

In general, the project will remove arundo plants from approximately 2.5 acres of riparian corridor along Carpinteria Creek, and will restore selected areas with locally available native vegetation. The applicant will use a wide variety of removal and treatment methods tailored to meet the needs of this coastal stream. Replanting of native plants will be done largely to alleviate potential erosion problems and to speed restoration in certain areas. Revegetation will be done after the arundo growth is controlled, usually after the second treatment season. The project will be conducted in such a manner, so as to avoid impacts to several sensitive wildlife species that occur in this area, including steelhead trout, yellow warbler and Monarch butterflies. These species will also benefit from the restored riparian habitat. It is anticipated supplemental watering will no longer be needed after three years when the plants have become established. Eradication of arundo from the project areas will be declared, upon not finding any individual growth or regrowth of arundo plants within the project areas for three consecutive years.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$80,000.00
County of Santa Barbara	71,660.00
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	<u>32,200.00</u>
Total Available Funding	\$183,860.00

Project costs will be for installation of signs, vegetation removal, hauling, disposal, native plant purchase, planting labor and site maintenance, wildlife and restoration consultants, project management and administration, supplies and contingency.

The Department of Fish Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The grantee has approved a Notice of Exemption for this project, in compliance with CEQA requirements. The landowners have signed individual access agreements with the grantee, and the grantee has agreed to manage and maintain the project improvements for ten years, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement. If at any time during the life of the project the grantee is unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, they will refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left of the project life. Staff has received a letter of support from the local county supervisor whose district includes this project.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$80,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (e)(f), P50-So CA; 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. Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$80,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (e/f), P50-So CA; 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.

- *8. Blue Ridge Lookout, \$-0-
Tulare County

This proposal was to consider the transfer of 0.61± acre of property to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) to accommodate an expanded communication facilities site. The site is no longer needed by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) for use as a condor habitat study lookout.

The property is located in Tulare County approximately 80 miles southwest of Olancho Peak, 27± miles east of the City of Tulare, and 10 miles northwest of Springville on the Blue Ridge.

In 1985, the CDF transferred this property to the DFG at no cost for their use as a condor habitat study lookout. In an agreement dated November 27, 1985, a "First Right of Refusal" was reserved by the CDF and they now desire to exercise their "First Right of Refusal" to accommodate an addition to their telecommunications site at this location.

The property contains a tower, residence, garage, vault, and other miscellaneous structures. The DFG no longer conducts studies from this location. Therefore, the structures have suffered from lack of use and maintenance. Since the property has become a burden to the DFG, and because the property was transferred to them at no cost over 20 years ago, the DFG wishes to return this property at no cost, and the CDF will accept the property "as is" and has agreed to pay all costs associated with this project. The proposed transfer of the property from the Department of Fish and Game to the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act Pursuant to Section 15061 (b) (3), and the appropriate documentation will be filed with the State Clearinghouse upon approval by the Board.

Staff recommended that the Board approve 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. Klass that the Board approve 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.

- *9. San Joaquin River Parkway, \$94,600.00
Wagner Property Steward Residence,
Madera County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the San Joaquin River Conservancy to rehabilitate a single family home, replace a water pump and well, and demolish a second single family home and several out-buildings on Conservancy owned land. The project is located just below Friant Dam on the north side of the San Joaquin River.

In 2000, the Wildlife Conservation Board allocated funding on behalf of the San Joaquin River Conservancy to acquire the Wagner property to be incorporated into the San Joaquin River Parkway. This approximately 64 acre parcel was acquired to protect and enhance habitat along the San Joaquin River, provide public access opportunities, and create the opportunity for future restoration work. While preservation of the natural area was the primary purpose of the acquisition, the purchase also included two three-bedroom homes, a swimming pool, and some out-buildings. This “developed” area was acquired along with the habitat and open space in order to avoid creating a non-conforming parcel in Madera County’s 40-acre minimum zoned area. The homes were subsequently leased to the former landowners and have been vacant since their departure in the summer of 2002. Since that time the buildings and adjacent grounds have deteriorated significantly.

In March 2006, after reviewing the costs and benefits of a number of alternatives, the Conservancy’s Governing Board approved the use of its Proposition 40, Resources Bond funds administered by the Wildlife Conservation Board, to rehabilitate one of the two homes and to demolish and remove the second home and some out-buildings. It has also been determined that the well on the property is not functioning properly and needs to be replaced. The California Department of Parks and Recreation prepared a condition assessment report on the two residences and concluded that the primary home is structurally sound and with repairs could be serviceable for years with routine maintenance

performed by the tenants. Specifically, the house refurbishment will involve electrical and plumbing repairs, to meet building code standards; interior painting; fixing a damaged patio cover; replacing the garage door; replacing the shower door and vinyl flooring in the bathroom; replacing broken windows and screens; and repairing a fence.

Once rehabilitated, the home will be rented for State employee housing to serve the Department of Parks and Recreation. Rental rates and agreements will be set in accordance with state policies and procedures. The rental arrangement will provide an oversight presence in a key location, where over 244± acres of the Conservancy lands can be readily observed. The tenant will be required to provide services that benefit the Conservancy including weed abatement, gate and fence maintenance, litter control and oversight. Occupation of the property will help protect natural resources at the site. The tenant will also be required to inform the Conservancy and local enforcement agencies of any trespass, poaching, or illegal dumping activities.

Demolition is required to remove the second, more degraded residence, other nuisances, nonfunctioning equipment, and hazardous trees and out-buildings. Demolition will include testing and properly disposing of any asbestos containing materials; demolition, salvage, and disposal of the second residence; abandoning the non-functional agricultural well; dismantling a pole barn, sheds and out-buildings; removing two satellite dishes; and removing downed trees.

It is anticipated that a portion of the property will eventually be developed and opened for public use consistent with the Conservancy's legislated mission to develop and implement the San Joaquin River Parkway. The public use area will be located away from the home site. The home site may eventually be fenced to avoid conflicts with public users.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	<u>\$94,600.00</u>
Total Available Funding	\$94,600.00

Project costs will be for a new water well and connection to the steward residence; repairs to the steward residence, asbestos removal, demolition of single-family residence and out-buildings, abandonment and fill of one agricultural well and swimming pool, removal and disposal of two satellite dishes, downed trees and assorted debris.

The grantee will file a Notice of Exemption to satisfy CEQA requirements.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$94,600.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (b)(5); 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. Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$94,600.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (b)(5); 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.

- *10. Volta Wildlife Area Wetland Enhancement, \$126,000.00
Merced County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU), for a partnership project to replace the collapsed and dilapidated water supply pipeline that conveys surface water to the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Volta Wildlife Area. The partners in this proposal include DU, the DFG and the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board). The wildlife area is located 5 miles northwest of the City of Los Banos in Merced County.

The Volta Wildlife Area is owned by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and managed by the DFG. Water is supplied to the wildlife area through the Volta Wasteway and water levels are controlled through radial gates located on the wildlife area. Water stored behind these gates is then pumped into underground 36 inch and 30 inch pipelines that deliver water to the main supply canals. This system is the only water supply for more than three quarters of the wildlife area. This system is many decades old, but much of it has been upgraded in recent years. In 2003, the Board funded a project to repair and upgrade the radial gates. In addition, the DFG, with assistance from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, has upgraded the main delivery canal on the west side of the wildlife area and all the main pumps.

In March of this year, the forty year old 36 inch underground pipeline that feeds the west side of the wildlife area collapsed, eliminating all water delivery to half of the wetland acres at the wildlife area. The DFG wetland managers, concerned about the integrity of the other pipeline constructed in the same era, evaluated the 30 inch underground pipeline on the east side of the wildlife area and determined that it is also likely to fail and needs to be replaced.

The wildlife area is made up of wetlands and uplands, and provides habitat for more than 150 species of bird, more than 20 species of mammals and 25 species of reptiles and amphibians. Thousands of waterfowl use the wildlife area in winter, including mallards and American widgeon, and shorebirds and other waterbirds are common. The wildlife area is one of the few sites in the grasslands that consistently support the giant garter snake, (State and Federal Listed Threatened Species) which requires water year round. This project is mandatory for the DFG to maintain these critical habitats.

The proposed funding breakdown for the pipeline replacement project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$126,000.00
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	<u>11,556.00</u>
Total Available Funding	\$137,556.00

Project costs will be for the installation of 340 feet of 36 inch underground steel pipeline and 440 feet of 30 inch underground plastic pipeline, with necessary couplings and fittings; and project design, construction supervision and administration.

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.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$126,000.00 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 this meeting, it was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$126,000.00 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.

- *11. Newman Land Company Wetland Restoration, Merced County \$52,000.00

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU), for a cooperative project with the landowner, the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), DU, and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to restore approximately 232 acres of seasonal wetlands, 40 acres of semi-permanent wetlands and 60 acres of associated uplands. The project is located on privately owned property approximately three miles northeast of the City of Gustine in Merced County. The project site lies adjacent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's San Luis National Wildlife Refuge and less than one mile south of the China Island Unit of the DFG's North Grasslands Wildlife Area.

The site has been recently enrolled in the NRCS Wetland Reserve Program and has been protected with a perpetual federal easement. This voluntary program offers landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. The NRCS provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts. The WCB and the NRCS have a long and cooperative history together, protecting and restoring wetland habitat throughout the Central Valley and California. The Newman property is a prime example of this cooperation, with the NRCS and the USFWS providing funds for its protection and assisting the Board, the landowner and the other partners in the restoration efforts.

The Grasslands is one of the most important wetland areas in California, containing nearly one third of all managed wetlands in the State. It has been recognized by the Ramsar Convention, as a Wetland of International Importance, one of only 22 sites so recognized in the United States. Most of the 180,000± acres of wildlife habitat are privately owned, but there are also nearly 50,000 acres of wetlands and uplands on the USFWS' National Wildlife Refuges and nearly 19,000 acres of wildlife habitat on the DFG's Los Banos, North Grasslands and Volta Wildlife Areas. The Central Valley Joint Venture (CVJV) considers this area to be of critical importance to breeding and wintering waterfowl and other wetland dependent species. The CVJV draft implementation plan calls for the protection and enhancement of an additional 20,000 acres of restorable lands within the San Joaquin Basin, which includes the Grasslands. The CVJV Plan also recognizes that certain areas of the western Grasslands are at risk to development. Lying near the rapidly expanding City of Gustine, this site will provide valuable wildlife habitat in its own right, but will also serve to buffer existing public wetlands from the disturbance of a growing community.

The project calls for the restoration of wetlands through the construction of a system of levees and water control structures that will allow the landowner to precisely manage water levels on the property to maximize wetland habitat values. Swales will be cut through previously laser-leveled fields, and islands, submerged mounds, peninsulas, and tree berms will be constructed to increase wetland diversity. Seven hundred willows, button willows and cottonwoods will be planted to begin the revegetation of the riparian forests on the site. Native grasses will be planted on 40± acres. To appropriately manage the water on the property, eleven water control structures will be installed. Once the habitat work is complete, managed wetlands such as this will provide wintering habitat for bird species such as northern shovelers, western sandpipers, and green-winged teal. Breeding birds that may benefit include mallards, cinnamon teal and northern harriers. Mammals, amphibians and reptiles will also benefit, including species such as raccoons, beavers and the Pacific Tree frog.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$52,000.00
U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service	94,723.00
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	76,600.00
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	5,281.00
Landowner (Cash)	<u>10,000.00</u>
 Total Available Funding	 \$268,604.00

Project costs will be for the water control structures; earthmoving; riparian planting; upland seeding; installation of a fence to control cattle grazing; and project design, construction supervision and administration.

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

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

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$52,000.00 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 this meeting, it was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$52,000.00 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.

- *12. Laguna de Santa Rosa, Ludwigia Eradication Project Augmentation, \$60,000.00
Sonoma County

This proposal was to consider an augmentation of the original grant to the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation for a partnership project with the Sonoma County Water Agency, the Marin-Sonoma Mosquito Vector Control District, and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to add an additional 2,300 linear feet of channel to the eradication area of the invasive aquatic plant species, ludwigia hexapetala, located at the north end of the DFG Laguna Wildlife Area near Sebastopol in Sonoma County. This project will clear the final reach of the primary infestation area which will result in a clear channel from the Occidental Road Bridge to the Guerneville Road Bridge. As stated in the earlier grant request, the project has high urgency because ludwigia infestations – by hosting the mosquito vectors of West Nile virus – pose a health threat to residents of the Santa Rosa plain and local wildlife populations. This project was originally approved by the Board at the May 25, 2005, meeting for an allocation of \$500,000.00.

Some of the bird species most vulnerable to the West Nile virus are the most numerically and ecologically dominant species in the Laguna de Santa Rosa ecosystem, including herons, egrets, raptors, and corvids. Horses in surrounding farms are also vulnerable to the virus and may also have unknown effects on other mammals in the wildlife area.

Results of the first year of spraying have been very successful in eliminating the gross population of ludwigia that exists in the wildlife area channels. This year's spraying will continue to eradicate any new growth and eliminate standing ludwigia in previously sprayed channels. This adaptive management method will result in more rapid waterflow within these channels that, in turn, will reduce flooding in the neighboring private fields so that agricultural crops may once

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

The DFG will be responsible for maintaining copies of all environmental documentation required for work performed on the DFG property.

Contributing partners in this five-year eradication project are:

WCB (Approved 5/26/05)	\$500,000.00
WCB (Proposed Augmentation)	60,000.00
Sonoma County Water Agency	450,000.00
Santa Rosa Subregional Wastewater System	450,000.00
Marin-Sonoma Mosquito & Vector Control Board	<u>100,000.00</u>
Total Available Funding	\$1,560,000.00

The augmentation will allow additional funding for years 2 and 3, for project management and implementation, including materials, application costs, harvesting, removal and composting for the eradication of ludwigia on the DFG lands. Other partners will contribute to the project's implementation for remaining years 4 and 5, along with monitoring and research needs on all affected properties. The DFG has reviewed this augmentation proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$60,000.00 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.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$60,000.00 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.

- *13. Wetland Habitat Restoration, Willow Creek Wildlife Area, \$135,000.00
Phase II, Lassen County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU), for a partnership project to complete a master plan initiated in Phase I, provide more reliable water to nearly 300 acres of wetland and upland habitats, restore and enhance approximately 109 acres of upland habitat, and improve vehicular access on the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Willow Creek Wildlife Area. The partners in this proposal include DU, the DFG, the North American Wetlands Conservation Council (NAWCC) and the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board). The wildlife area is located adjacent to Highway 139, approximately 15 miles north of the City of Susanville.

The Willow Creek Wildlife Area is located in one of several broad flat valleys between Honey Lake to the south and the Klamath Basin to the north. It was acquired by the Board in 1988 to provide wetland habitat, mainly for migrating waterfowl and other wetland birds moving between the larger basins to the north and south. This particular valley is especially important because it has a reliable water source, providing a critical foraging location for these birds even in the driest of years. However, when the site was acquired, it had been modified over the decades to maximize cattle production, not wildlife, and ponds and ditches that had been excavated to provide summer irrigation water were of little use to migrating waterfowl. This project is a continuation of an earlier project that restored three of the old water storage ponds to provide high quality wildlife habitat. The project will complete a master plan for the wildlife area; to install a pump in a newly drilled well; rehabilitate approximately one mile of a main water supply canal; restore approximately 109 acres of upland habitat by recontouring the land, reconstructing an irrigation ditch and replacing the slide gate outlets, and seeding the field with a perennial pasture mix; and improve an existing dirt levee road through the placement of gravel road base.

The wildlife area provides tremendous habitat value for a wide range of wetland and grassland dependent species. The project will directly benefit at least two State Listed Endangered Species: the bald eagle, and the threatened greater sandhill crane. At least 6 bald eagle nests are found within 20 miles of the wildlife area, and 13 eagles were once seen in a single tree on the area. As many as six pairs of greater sandhill cranes nest on the wildlife area every year.

Special status species expected to benefit directly from the project include white-faced ibis, long-billed curlew, northern harrier and short-eared owl, all of which nest on the wildlife area or nearby. Waterfowl and shorebirds depend on the area for both breeding habitat and for foraging during migration. Species that will benefit from improvements to the breeding habitat include mallards, gadwalls and black necked stilts. Improvements to the fall and spring foraging habitat will benefit such species as northern pintails and long-billed dowitchers.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$135,000.00
Department of Fish and Game	14,860.00
NAWCC	47,175.00
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	<u>25,224.00</u>
Total Available Funding	\$222,259.00

Project costs will be for the completion of the master plan; installation of a new pump; canal renovation, which will include the replacement of all necessary structures; the renovation of upland areas; upland seeding; the placement of base rock on access roads; and project design, construction supervision and administration.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The DFG and the DU will prepare and file appropriate environmental documents and secure any required permits.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$135,000.00 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.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$135,000.00 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.

- *14. Upper Mattole River Watershed Rehabilitation (Change of Scope), \$0.00
Humboldt and Mendocino Counties

This proposal was to consider the approval of a request from Sanctuary Forest, Inc. (Grantee) for a change of scope and continued use of grant funds for the Upper Mattole River Watershed Rehabilitation project, which was previously approved for funding by the Board on February 24, 2005. This is a cooperative project involving the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The project is being implemented on public and private lands located near and along the Upper Mattole River and tributary streams in Humboldt and Mendocino Counties.

When the Board approved the initial grant funding for the project, \$893,000.00 it was approved with a condition that stated, "if the Grantee was successful in receiving a grant of funds from the NOAA, then the Board's share would be reduced by a pro-rata amount". The Grantee subsequently received the \$150,000.00 grant from the NOAA, and is now proposing to use these funds to implement and administer additional work under the existing project. The work will occur on sites not included, under the original project scope and is to a large degree, a product of the positive results and feedback that has occurred so far from the landowners involved with this project.

The estimated cost of rehabilitating the new sites is \$150,000.00. The Grantee is requesting the Board waive the requirement that the NOAA funds be used to reduce the Board's original grant funds, and be allowed to expend these funds on additional restoration work.

The Grantee has identified eight new high priority sediment delivery sites, located along or near Thompson Creek. The Board staff has prepared an amendment to the Grant Agreement which would allow the new sites to be added to the project, and would allow the Grantee to use the remaining grant funds to repair those sites and perform other tasks in the overall project area. This amendment is also subject to Board approval, and will be executed following approval.

The Pacific Watershed Associates, working under contract for the Grantee, has assessed the interested properties and identified the highest priority sites. The eight sites chosen for rehabilitation include four sites for rehabilitation of stream crossings to facilitate fish passage, and four sites for the repair of road surfaces to improve drainage and reduce sediment problems. One of the stream crossings is both a sediment problem and a fish passage barrier. The recommended treatments include reshaping and rocking the roads, installation of a culvert to accommodate fish passage, and installation of rock grade control structures in one of the streams. All of the stream crossing sites will include excavation of large volumes of sediment that is stored or "perched" upstream of the culvert inlets. Rehabilitation of the eight sites will result in an estimated sediment savings of 4,900 cubic yards. That amount of sediment will not enter the streams or be transferred to the Upper Mattole River. These sites have been reviewed by the DFG, who agree with the priorities, and have recommended that they be added to the project.

If the Board approves this request, the Grantee will add the new sites to the project, and will begin work on them this summer. It is anticipated that the additional sites will be completed within the time period allotted for construction in the grant agreement (November 30, 2008).

The Grantee will obtain a signed landowner agreement from each of the new landowners, and will continue to maintain and monitor the rehabilitated sites for ten years, as specified in the grant agreement. The new sites are all on private land. The proposed work will provide a direct, measurable benefit to the fisheries resources of the Upper Mattole River Watershed, which is an important public resource.

No new funding is being requested for this project. The estimated cost of rehabilitating the new worksites is \$150,000.00, which will come from the remaining grant funds. All work activities are described in a revised Work Plan and Budget that are included in the amended Grant Agreement.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The DFG will include this project in their programmatic CEQA document and procedures they follow under the Fisheries Restoration Grant Program. If at any time during the life of the project, the Grantee is unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, they will refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this request as proposed; allow Sanctuary Forest, Inc., to use the remaining grant funds for the amended project, and allow the new work sites to be added to the project; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve this request as proposed; allow Sanctuary Forest, Inc., to use the remaining grant funds for the amended project, and allow the new work sites to be added to the project; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *15. Wetland Habitat Restoration, \$150,000.00
Shasta Valley Wildlife Area, Phase II,
Siskiyou County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU), for a partnership project to enhance approximately 121 acres of wet meadow, seasonal wetland (moist soil), and semi-permanent wetland habitats through the rehabilitation of the water delivery system on the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Shasta Valley Wildlife Area. The other partners in this proposal include the DU and the DFG. The wildlife area is located 10 miles east of the City of Yreka and immediately south of Ball Mountain Road in Siskiyou County.

The Shasta Valley Wildlife Area was acquired by the Wildlife Conservation Board in 1990, to maintain and increase the remarkable biological diversity of the Shasta Valley. Substantial wetland, upland and riparian habitat exists throughout the Valley, but few sites provide the quality found here. Most of the wetlands on the wildlife area are seasonal, providing high quality foraging habitat for migrating waterfowl and many other species. Surrounding uplands are irrigated to maximize cover for ground nesting birds and to provide a critical food source for many species of wildlife. These habitat types require intensive management and make strong demands on the area's water delivery system. Unfortunately, that aging system, built piecemeal over many decades, is in need of rehabilitation.

The proposed project is a continuation of a larger effort to rehabilitate much of the wildlife area's water delivery system. In 2002, the Board funded a project that included the renovation of the main pump into the wildlife area, the rehabilitation of some of the existing ditch system and the installation of a pipeline. In addition, the Board funded a master plan that catalogued existing

infrastructure and identified those portions most in need of renovation. As a result of that plan, additional needs were prioritized, and funding from the DFG and from the North American Wetland Conservation Act was obtained. This project, the renovation of approximately 1,000 feet of a main water supply ditch and the installation of approximately 2,700 feet of pipeline, will implement the highest remaining priority for the wildlife area. Additional phases have been identified and funds are in place. Altogether, these improvements will allow the DFG to manage the entire wildlife area as specified in the management plan, and to do so with less water and staff time. Any excess water would then be available to benefit spawning salmon and steelhead trout in the Little Shasta River, which flows through the wildlife area to the Klamath River.

The wildlife area is one of the most diverse sites in northern California, with three permanent lakes, hundreds of acres of high quality wetlands and uplands, and excellent riparian habitat. As such, wildlife use on the site is phenomenal. The completion of this project will directly benefit at least two listed species, the bald eagle and the greater sandhill crane, and many species of special concern, including the short-eared owl and western pond turtle. In addition, the enhanced wetlands will benefit many species of waterfowl and other wetland dependent species including mallards, gadwalls and willets. Enhanced uplands will benefit grassland-nesting birds, such as meadowlarks and northern harriers. Finally, the more efficient use of water on the wildlife area will allow for more water to be used to benefit fish in the Little Salmon River. This is especially critical in the Klamath River basin, where salmon and other aquatic species are particularly vulnerable to drought conditions.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$150,000.00
Department of Fish and Game	2,120.00
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	<u>14,967.00</u>
Total Available Funding	\$167,087.00

Project costs will be for the rehabilitation of approximately 1,000 feet of the main water delivery ditch below Trout Dam; the installation of approximately 2,700 feet of 12 inch diameter pipe along with associated water control structures and irrigation valves; and project design, construction supervision and administration.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The DFG and the DU will obtain any necessary environmental clearance and permits.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$150,000.00 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.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$150,000.00 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.

- *16. China Hill, Expansions 2 and 3, \$99,000.00
Siskiyou County

This proposal was to consider the acquisition of 24± acres of vacant land in the northern portion of the City of Yreka in Siskiyou County and the acceptance of a Recovery Land Acquisition Grant from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. China Hill is a small northeast-trending ridge which parallels Interstate 5, northeast of downtown Yreka. China Hill is bounded roughly by State Route 3 to the south, by Juniper Drive on the east and northeast, and Interstate 5 on the northwest.

The subject properties are home to a significant population of endangered plants known as Yreka phlox. Yreka phlox is listed as endangered by the State and Federal government and is ranked as S1.1 ("less than six Element Occurrences or less than 1,000 individuals on less than 2,000 acres; very threatened") by the DFG's Natural Diversity Data Base and is on the California Native Plant Society's List 1B ("plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere"). The China Hill Yreka phlox population occurs on an open ridge and adjacent slopes surrounded by juniper woodland. The shallow soils derived from serpentine support scattered western junipers and buckbrush. Important components of the vegetation include rabbitbrush, several species of buckwheat and perennial grasses. Other plants observed in the area include spring gold, woolly sunflower, silverleaf phacelia and small onion. At China Hill, Yreka phlox often occurs on nearly bare serpentine soil and is reported to be most dense on west-facing slopes.

The City currently owns approximately 222 acres on China Hill which support Yreka phlox and manages the land for the benefit of the phlox. The City's management objectives for the subject properties are the same as the ones the City has established for its adjacent property and include protecting the area and its unique natural elements. Public use goals include passive natural resource related activities including nature study, photography and hiking. The City will also encourage scientific and educational use. Specific recommendations for conservation and protection of the Yreka phlox will be developed in a Yreka phlox recovery plan which will be implemented by the City in conjunction with government agencies (State, County and/or Federal) and private citizens and organizations. Consistent with long-range planning purposes, the WCB staff present the following two proposals for Board consideration:

China Hill, Expansion 2: This is a proposal to expend grant funds from the USFWS to acquire 11± acres of land which is adjacent to City property on its northern and southern boundaries. The property has been appraised and the owner has agreed to sell to the WCB at the DGS-approved appraised value of \$136,000.00.

China Hill, Expansion 3: This is a proposal to expend grant funds from the SFWS to acquire 13± acres of land which is adjacent to City property on its northeasterly boundary. The property has been appraised and the owners have agreed to sell to the WCB at the DGS-approved appraised value of \$70,000.00.

The total appraised value of the two parcels is \$206,000.00. The USFWS will provide \$122,000.00 in Section 6 funds from the Recovery Land Acquisition Program. An allocation of \$84,000 is required to cover the balance of the purchase price. It is estimated that an additional \$15,000.00 will be needed for project related expenses for the above referenced grants, for a total allocation of \$99,000.00.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the acceptance of the Section 6 grant; allocate \$99,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop 117), Section 2786 (b/c) to cover a portion of the purchase price and to pay for project 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.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve the acceptance of the Section 6 grant; allocate \$99,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop 117), Section 2786 (b/c) to cover a portion of the purchase price and to pay for project 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.

- *17. Ash Creek Wildlife Area Wetland Enhancement, Phase II, \$100,000.00
Lassen County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association (CWA) for a cooperative project with the Pit River Resource Conservation District and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to enhance approximately 100 acres of seasonal wetland and riparian habitats on the northeastern portion of DFG's Ash Creek Wildlife Area, located on the north side of Highway 299 between Bieber and Adin in Lassen County.

The Wildlife Conservation Board initially acquired 11,525± acres in the heart of Big Valley in 1985 to protect a variety of habitats, including riparian forest, wet meadows, sage steppe, upland native grasslands and a 3,000± acre marsh known as Big Swamp. Over the years through various Board actions, the area has grown to nearly 15,000± acres. In 1988, the Board funded a small project to improve levees and add water control structures to allow the DFG to better manage the site. In 2005, the Board funded a wetland enhancement project to develop open water habitats in the Big Swamp portion of the wildlife area.

The northeastern portion of Ash Creek Wildlife Area is a relatively undisturbed area, containing a series of seasonal swales that drain the hills to the north into Ash Creek. For many decades prior to the Board's acquisition of the property, the areas between the swales were farmed or heavily grazed, but never leveled.

Over the years the swales lost much of their native vegetation and became eroded and undercut. Cutting across the lowest part of these swales, at the upper reaches of the Ash Creek floodplain, is a water supply canal, which continues to provide a critical irrigation need for managed wetlands on the wildlife area. This canal has fallen into disrepair, and cannot efficiently deliver water to the western portions of this part of the wildlife area. A siphon on this canal system that takes irrigation water under Ash Creek has begun to fail, and this would eliminate the possibility of providing water into this area.

The goal of this project is to restore wetland and riparian habitats in the old swales by installing several low water control structures in the swales. Above these structures, the banks of the undercut channels will be laid back to spread out and retain the spring runoff. Several shallow ponds will be constructed to provide additional diversity. These actions will prevent further erosion of the swales and encourage the deposition of sediment and the revegetation of native wetland species. Aspens will be planted on the recontoured swales and on constructed islands to reestablish this rare habitat in the valley. The canal and siphon will be rehabilitated to provide reliable and efficient water delivery to this portion of the Wildlife Area. Finally, a small parking lot will be constructed near the restoration site to provide additional public access to this part of the area.

Habitat improvements, as outlined above should provide benefits to a host of wildlife species. Spring water in the newly constructed swales and ponds will provide critical foraging areas for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds as they head farther north to their breeding grounds. Waterfowl that breed here such as mallards and cinnamon teal will use these areas for pair bonding, prior to nesting in the surrounding uplands. Aspens are of particular interest to the wildlife area, because of their importance to deer and other wildlife species, and because of the relative lack of this important habitat type in the near vicinity.

Funds have been requested from the Pit River Resource Conservation District but have not been approved as of yet. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$100,000.00
Pit River RCD	<u>7,000.00</u>
Total Available Funding	\$107,000.00

Project costs will be for the installation of six water control structures; earthmoving; the rehabilitation of the water supply canal and siphon; the planting of aspens; the seeding of all disturbed upland areas; the installation of a small gravel parking lot; and project design, construction supervision and administration.

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

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$100,000.00 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.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$100,000.00 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.

- *18. Lake Earl Wildlife Area, Expansion 34, \$33,000.00
Del Norte County

This proposal was to consider the acceptance of a grant from the State Coastal Conservancy for the acquisition of a conservation easement over an 8.5± acre portion of a privately owned parcel, as an expansion of the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Lake Earl Wildlife Area (LEWA). The acquisition will allow for the further protection of Lake Earl and its associated coastal dune, wetland, upland and forest habitats, the continued development of the wildlife area, the protection and enhancement of threatened and endangered species habitat, and the improvement of public access to the LEWA. The subject parcel is located north of Crescent City near the east shore of Lake Earl on Lakeview Drive.

The LEWA was acquired, as a result of the Keene-Nedgedly Act of 1975, which directed the DFG and the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to jointly evaluate and acquire certain specified coastal lands for the purpose of protecting, enhancing and managing wetlands. Together the two agencies have acquired over 11,000 acres in the Crescent City area, extending from near Point Saint George north to the Smith River. Of the total, approximately 5,762 acres have been purchased by the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) and are managed by the DFG. This includes all of Lakes Earl and Talawa (under lease from the California State Lands Commission). These lakes are actually coastal lagoons that periodically breach the barrier island, thereby allowing the interchange of fresh and saltwater. This natural breaching has been replaced in recent times by artificial breaching as a means of lowering water elevations and increasing lands available for livestock grazing and urban development.

Lake Earl is a shallow estuarine lagoon that supports a variety of wetland plant communities, including submerged aquatics in deeper, relatively freshwater areas of the estuary. Freshwater aquatic plants are used extensively by migrating waterfowl. These wetland communities provide habitat for a large number of water-associated species. Sitka spruces grow to the edge of the lake shore and are used by both Peregrine falcon and Bald eagle.

The nonnative perennial grasses are managed on the LEWA as foraging habitat for the Aluetian Canada goose. Over 95 percent of the Aluetian Canada goose population stages in the agricultural fields on or adjacent to the LEWA. Over 240 species of birds have been recorded in the area since 1982. Historically, the Lake Earl complex has been an important northern California wintering, stopover and nesting area, for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl. Three Federal or State listed endangered birds, have been sighted in the LEWA, including bald eagle, Peregrine falcon and the California brown pelican.

The acquisition of the subject conservation easement would assist in protecting these unique resources, which lie adjacent to or between existing state lands and urban residential development. Placement of this easement will help facilitate lake level management and habitat protection and restoration, and would add significant buffer for the LEWA. The DFG has identified the subject property as being within a Significant Natural Area (Lake Earl) and has recommended the purchase of this easement

The Grantor has agreed to sell at the DGS approved fair market value of \$130,000.00. The interest to be acquired is a conservation easement that would cover 8.5± unimproved acres of the Grantor's 12.4± acre parcel.

It is intended that this parcel be acquired using a \$130,000.00 grant from the State Coastal Conservancy. In addition, \$33,000.00 is needed for appraisal, escrow, and title fees, and DGS review costs.

There are no claims of sovereign State land ownership within the subject property. The proposed acquisition is exempt from CEQA under Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of lands for wildlife purposes and under Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of ownership interest in land to preserve existing natural conditions and historical resources.

Staff recommended that the Board approve the project as proposed; approve acceptance of the \$130,000.00 grant from the State Coastal Conservancy directly into escrow for acquisition costs; allocate \$33,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop.40), Section 5096.650 to pay project expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve the project as proposed; approve acceptance of the \$130,000.00 grant from the State Coastal Conservancy directly into escrow for acquisition costs; allocate \$33,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop.40), Section 5096.650 to pay project expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

19. San Jacinto Wildlife Area, \$2,870,000.00
Expansions 27 and 28, and Sale of State Land,
Riverside County

Mr. Wright introduced the San Jacinto Wildlife Area project, Expansions 27 and 28 for the acquisition of land in Riverside County. Letters of support were received by Dr. Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League, Ms. Jane Block, President, Riverside Land Conservancy, and Mr. Bill Gaines, President, California Outdoor Heritage Alliance. Mr. Bill Gallup briefly described the project and its location.

The proposal was to consider the acquisition of 194± acres (Expansion 27) and 16.75± acres (Expansion 28) of private land in two expansions of the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) San Jacinto Wildlife Area, and the sale of 58± acres of State land to an adjacent land owner. The expansions and sale land are located in western Riverside County southerly of Moreno Valley. The acquisition and sale transactions are with the same land owner and will allow for greater protection of Mystic Lake and its associated upland and flood plain habitat for the DFG, as well as, facilitate improved access to Gilman Springs Road for the adjacent land owner and safety and roadway improvements for the general public using the wildlife area.

The project area is located in the San Jacinto Valley of southern California, approximately 18 miles southeast of downtown Riverside and just north of the community of Lakeview. To the northwest is the City of Moreno Valley, whose corporate limits reach the northern boundary of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. Initial land acquisitions for the wildlife area were completed during the period of 1981-1982, as part of a mitigation package developed to compensate for wildlife habitat losses resulting from the construction of the State Water Project. As opportunity and circumstance allowed, the Board has acquired additional properties. Since 1995, the Board has acquired 3,000 acres adjacent to or within Mystic Lake for the wildlife area. The western boundary of the 9,000 acre wildlife area is contiguous with the Lake Perris State Recreation Area, placing a total of approximately 16,000 acres under public ownership and protection. The current proposal being considered would, if approved, bring the total number of acres protected, including the Lake Perris State Recreation Area, to about 16,200± acres.

The acquisition of the subject property is important to the wildlife area as it will place nearly all of the easterly shoreline of Mystic Lake under public ownership. Placement of this area in public ownership will facilitate possible restoration of former farm land and add a significant land area contiguous to the existing wildlife area. The westerly edge of the property is also an excellent candidate for

a future wetlands restoration project, with that portion of the subject property in the flood plain of Mystic Lake. The property is currently improved with a small residence and miscellaneous out-buildings, several wells, work sheds and small grain silos. All improvements, except the irrigation lines and wells, will be removed under the direction of the wildlife area manager, prior to close of escrow.

The sale property totaling approximately 58 acres is comprised of about 4 acres on the west side of Gilman Springs Road, which will ultimately be deeded to the County of Riverside for roadway improvements. Land to be sold on the east side of Gilman Springs Road, totaling 53 acres will be sold to the adjacent land owner to improve access to their land and straighten, widen and make public safety improvements to Gilman Springs Road. The lands on the east side of Gilman Springs Road have been difficult to manage, as part of the wildlife area because it is physically separated by Gilman Springs Road. The proposed acquisition and sale will result in an overall net increase of 154± acres to the wildlife area and an increase of upland habitat of approximately 120± acres that will benefit the endangered Stephens' kangaroo rat.

The upland areas and hills surrounding the lowland flood plain of Mystic Lake are dominated by Riversidian sage scrub. There are areas of intermixed patches of non native grasslands which are found in both the upland and alkali flat areas. There are numerous sensitive plants associated with Mystic Lake area, including the thread-leaved brodiaea (State listed endangered and Federal proposed threatened), San Jacinto saltbush (Federal proposed endangered) and spreading navarretia (Federal proposed threatened). The wildlife area and adjoining lands support 38 species of amphibians and reptiles. Mammal species are well represented and range from the desert shrew to the southern mule deer. The Stephens' kangaroo rat (State listed threatened and Federal listed endangered species), is a resident mammal of the Wildlife Area. Over 240 species of birds have been recorded on or adjacent to the Wildlife Area since 1982. Twenty-two over-wintering raptor species are known to utilize the San Jacinto Valley, including the osprey, ferruginous hawk, golden eagle and short-eared owl. The San Jacinto Valley consistently ranks in the top 1 to 2 percent in species diversity, for the North American Christmas Bird Counts. Historically, the San Jacinto Valley has always been an important southern California wintering and nesting area for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl. There have been three Federal or State listed endangered birds sighted on the Wildlife Area, including the Bald eagle, the Peregrine falcon, and the California brown pelican.

The DFG identified the subject properties as being significant additions to the area and has recommended the purchase of the property. The land will be incorporated into and managed as part of the existing wildlife area. The net increase of land to be managed is approximately 154 acres and will offer a host of recreational uses as the habitat is restored, maintained and developed in conjunction with the wildlife area.

The specifics of each property are as follows:

San Jacinto Wildlife Area, Expansion 27: This is a proposal to acquire 194± acres of land. This property has been appraised and the value has been approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) at \$3,330,000.00.

San Jacinto Wildlife Area, Expansion 28: This is a proposal to acquire 16± acres of land. This property has been appraised and the value has been approved by the DGS at \$125,000.00.

Sale of State Property: The property to be sold as part of these transactions includes 58± acres with the majority (53 acres) located on the east side of Gillman Springs Road. The property has been appraised and the value as approved by the DGS at \$638,000.00. This amount will be deducted from the State's acquisition costs for Expansions 27 and Expansion 28 above resulting in a total cash transaction of \$2,817,000.00. It is estimated that an additional \$53,000.00 will be needed to cover appraisal costs, escrow, title insurance and the DGS review charges, bringing the total allocation required for all three proposals to \$2,870,000.00.

To help offset any additional management costs, the sellers have offered to fund a \$400,000.00 endowment for the Department of Fish and Game. The fund will be established in two phases: the first \$200,000.00 will be established upon the close of escrow of Expansions 27 and 28; the remaining \$200,000.00 will be funded when the sellers' proposed development, located on the east side of Gillman Springs Road, is entitled, marketed and the lots are sold.

There are no claims of sovereign state land ownership within the property. The proposed acquisitions are exempt from California Environmental Quality Act under Class 13, Section 15313, as acquisitions of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Class 25, Section 15525, as the transfer of ownership interest in land to preserve open space. The proposed sale of State land is exempt under Class 12, Section 15312, as the State's property does not have significant values for wildlife habitat and the use of the State's property has not changed since the time of acquisition.

Staff recommended the Board approve these projects as proposed; allocate \$2,870,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop 117), Section 2786 (b/c) for the purchase price and to pay related project expenses; authorize the sale of 58± acres of State land; 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.

Mr. Gallup reported that Mr. Dan Allred, Project Manager, Quail Ranch Golf Club was present in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or public comment. There were none.

It was moved by Mr. Fred Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,870,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop 117), Section 2786 (b/c) for the purchase price and to pay related project expenses; authorize the sale of 58± acres of State land; 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.

20. Goleta Slough Ecological Reserve Restoration, \$903,312.00
Santa Barbara County

Mr. Wright introduced the Goleta Slough Ecological Reserve Restoration project located in Santa Barbara County. Letters of support were received from Ms. Karen Ramsdale, Director, Santa Barbara Airport, Dr. Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League, Ms. Ann Turner-McKibben, Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley, Ms. Jane Block, President, Riverside Land Conservancy and Mr. Bill Gaines, President, California Outdoor Heritage Alliance. Mr. Dave Means briefly described the project and its location.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer and the Federal Aviation Administration to restore and enhance the DFG's Goleta Slough Ecological Reserve. The project is located within the City of Goleta, adjacent and south of the Santa Barbara County Airport, in Santa Barbara County.

The goal of the project is to enhance and expand wetland habitat values throughout the 34.41 acres owned by the DFG in the Goleta Slough Ecological Reserve by: (a) removing non-native plant species; (b) improving hydrologic conditions to sustain wetlands; (c) removing man-made features; (d) enhancing upland habitats adjacent to wetlands; (e) providing for future tide circulation opportunities; and (f) up to five years maintenance and monitoring to ensure the success of the project.

The reserve area was once part of an estuarine ecosystem connected directly to the tidal influences of the Goleta Slough. During World War II portions of the reserve were filled in and developed, restricting tidal action and effectively eliminating the estuarine areas. Most recently the reserve area was purchased by the California Department of Transportation as a potential highway route.

Plans for the route were abandoned and the property was later conveyed to the DFG. Today, the reserve functions mostly as a freshwater wetland and upland habitat, trapping rain and run-off water from surrounding development.

The reserve is long and triangular in shape, bounded by the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) on the south, Goleta Airport Property to the west and the airport and light industrial uses to the north. A major thoroughfare, Los Carneros Road, runs north-south essentially through the middle of the reserve, dividing it into two main units connected by culverts, referred to as the West Unit and East Units.

The West Unit is approximately 12 acres in size. It contains a freshwater wetland, fed by drainage from surrounding properties and upland habitat areas, containing a mixture of coastal scrub, grasslands, intermixed with non-native vegetation. The proposed restoration work will include; removal of fill materials; grading and contouring to expand and enhance the wetland areas; removal of non-native and replanting of native vegetation within the wetland and upland areas; construction of a public access trail with interpretive signs; installation of split rail fence to provide a barrier between the reserve and a ball field that abuts southern portions of the property; and installation of a culvert under Mesa Road, which runs along the southern areas of the reserve, and a slide gate to improve management of the wetland areas.

The East Unit is approximately 22 acres in size and contains freshwater wetlands, upland areas and a tidal influences channel. It also contains two old military bunkers, roads and parking areas, used by the UCSB facilities operations. The proposed work on the western portion will include removal of non-native plants and planting of native vegetation, removal of the two bunkers, paved areas, rubble and fill, installation of a split rail fencing, grading and contouring to enhance wetland areas, and installation of culverts and slide gates to improve water control and management.

Intersecting and located on the southeast portion of the property is the Mesa ditch. Water in the ditch is tidally influenced. The project will include some work within the Mesa ditch, along with installation of tide gates to create conditions suitable for development of transitional wetlands. Whether or not this occurs will depend in part on the results of a project occurring on the adjacent airport property. This project will restore tidal wetland on portions of the airport, and will examine what effects these new tidal wetlands have on bird strikes at the airport. Depending on the results of this pilot study, the DFG, may or may not, make a decision to open up portions of the reserve to tidal influence

The grant and restoration project requires five years of monitoring for performance. Over the first two years bi monthly visits will be conducted to determine the success of removing invasive species and the regrowth of new native species. After two years, site visits will occur quarterly. The target survival rate is 80% after five years. Bird surveys will also be conducted through the first five years. Annual reports will be provided each November.

Maintenance during the first five years will include maintaining newly planted areas, including temporary irrigation systems, weeding, repairs to fencing, trash removal, paths and temporary erosion control items. After five years, the DFG will takeover maintenance responsibilities, which are expected to be minimal.

The Land Trust for Santa Barbara has entered into a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to manage the \$795,000.00 in mitigation money, dedicated to this project. These funds were intended to replace wetlands lost due to a grading violation that occurred near the Goleta Slough Ecological Reserve. This project has been selected as an appropriate use of these funds. To date portions of these funds have been used to cover planning, design and permitting costs. The funds provided by the Board will be used to share in construction and monitoring costs. Construction is scheduled to start in the summer of 2006, and be completed by May of 2008.

The total implementation cost of the project is \$1,738,312.00. The funding breakdown from the different partners is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$903,312.00
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	795,000.00
Federal Aviation Administration	<u>40,000.00</u>
Total Available Funding	\$1,738,312.00

The project has been reviewed and recommended for funding by the Southern California Wetland Recovery Project (SCWRP), and is included in the current 2006 work plan approved by the SCWRP Board of Governors. The DFG has also reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board, and will be the lead agency responsible for all CEQA documents.

Staff recommended the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$861,312.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a), and \$42,000.00 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.

Mr. Means reported that Mr. Jim Mazza, Project Manager was in the audience should anyone have any questions.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or public comment. There were none.

It was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$861,312.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a), and \$42,000.00 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.

21. San Joaquin River Parkway, Sycamore Island Fishing Access, \$61,700.00
Madera County

Mr. Wright introduced the San Joaquin River Parkway, Sycamore Island Fishing Access project in Madera County, a grant to the San Joaquin River Conservancy to construct some public access improvements on site. Mr. Tony Chappelle briefly described the project and its location.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the San Joaquin River Conservancy (Conservancy) to construct public access improvements at the Conservancy's Sycamore Island Fishing Access. The project is located within the San Joaquin River Parkway, west of Highway 41, and north of the San Joaquin River.

In 2004, the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) allocated funding on behalf of the Conservancy to acquire this approximately 347 acre parcel. The purpose of this acquisition, as approved by the Conservancy, was to protect riparian habitat along the San Joaquin River and to provide public access to the San Joaquin River Parkway. The parcel has about two miles of river frontage.

Prior to public acquisition, the Sycamore Island site had supported a privately operated public fishing and camping area. There are six large ponds, formerly gravel mining pits on the site. For a fee, local anglers have had access to fish for bass and other warm water fish since the early 1960s. At the time of the public acquisition of the property in 2005, the area was closed pending the implementation of public safety and environmental protection improvements. Furthermore, an operator needed to be secured to manage and maintain the area.

Due to the popularity of the site, the Conservancy wishes to reopen it as soon as possible. The San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust (Trust) has agreed to operate the facility on an interim basis for the next eighteen months.

The Trust will collect user fees to cover the costs of waste management, sanitation, area oversight, and visitor information. It is anticipated that at the conclusion of the Trust's eighteen month commitment, a long term operator will be ready to take over.

In general, this project will make improvements necessary to protect the environment and public health and safety while continuing to accommodate public fishing access. Camping at the site will be discontinued. Specifically the project will install signage (parking, traffic, vehicle access, boundary, ADA, rules and regulations, entrance, no trespass, and interpretive); install eight pre-cast concrete picnic tables; install one vault restroom with two toilets; and re-grade the entrance road with new gutters to control erosion. The Conservancy has also secured the services of volunteers to demolish and remove several old buildings on the site.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	<u>\$61,700.00</u>
Total Funding	\$61,700.00

Project costs will be for picnic tables, a vault restroom, traffic barriers, grading and rocking the entrance road, directional and informational signage, including an entrance sign acknowledging the Board's participation.

The Conservancy will file a Notice of Exemption to satisfy CEQA requirements and will be obtaining the necessary permits and approvals from the County of Madera and the State Lands Commission for the project. The Conservancy has agreed to manage and maintain the property for 25 years, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement.

The Conservancy's approved the funding proposal at its May 11, 2006 meeting

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$61,700.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (b)(5); 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.

Mr. Chappelle reported that Ms. Sandra Huddleston, San Joaquin River Conservancy was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or public comment. There were none.

It was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$61,700.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (b)(5); 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. Grassland Environmental Education Center, \$90,000.00
Relocation and Set-Up, Merced County

Mr. Wright introduced the Grassland Environmental Education Center, Relocation and Set-up project in Merced County, a proposal to consider a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. for the relocation of a building in the Los Banos Wildlife Area. A letter of support was received from Mr. Bill Gaines, President, California Outdoor Heritage Alliance. Ms. Bonnie Turner briefly described the project and its location.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU) for the relocation and infrastructure installation of the Grassland Environmental Education Center (Center) at the Los Banos Wildlife Area, located in Merced County.

The Center was established in the mid 1990s through the cooperation of the Grassland Water District, private partners and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG). It provides California curriculum standards-based wetland ecology fieldtrips to over 1,000 kindergarten through twelfth grade students each year. It is located on property operated by the Tri-Valley Growers. Because of business decisions made by Tri-Valley Growers, the DU has proposed to relocate the center to the 32 acre nature trail and interpretive marsh area located on the Los Banos Wildlife Area, just north of the Henry Miller Road entrance.

The new location of the center will provide a destination for school field trips, from the five neighboring counties (Merced, Stanislaus, Fresno, San Joaquin, and Santa Clara), and serve as a venue for festivals, receptions, and celebrations. The Center will be placed near the head of an interpretive trail and marsh area, directly accessible from the main parking lot. The interpretive area includes a 1/3-mile loop trail that is open to the public year-round, along with interpretive panels, and a new viewing platform that was funded by the Board last year, and overlooks the wetland area. In addition there are plans to make additional Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access improvements and construct a 2/3-mile graveled trail that will meander through seasonal and permanent wetlands, riparian areas, and grassland areas within the wildlife area. The panels from the Center's old site will also be used along the longer loop within the interpretive marsh.

The infrastructure required to set up the Center includes building a gravel parking area, providing a concrete ADA approved parking area, perimeter fencing, walkways, utility hook-ups and a septic system, and providing a ramp for ADA accessibility to the center doorway. The management of the Center will continue through the partnership already existing between the DFG and the Grassland Water District.

The proposed funding breakdown for the Center's relocation and infrastructure project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	<u>\$90,000.00</u>
Total Funding	\$90,000.00

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The DFG will be responsible for fulfilling all environmental, ADA and other state requirements and permits for buildings located on State property.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$90,000.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund (Minor Capital Outlay); approve acceptance of reimbursement funding from the Department of Fish and Game in the amount of up to \$40,000.00 for this project; authorize staff to enter into all appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Ms. Turner reported that Chris Hildebrandt, Ducks Unlimited, and Dean Kwasny, Department of Fish and Game, partners in the project, were in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or public comment.

Mr. Hildebrandt, Regional Biologist, San Joaquin Valley, Ducks Unlimited Inc. stated that he wished to thank the Board for considering this request and also for the Board's continued support to the DFG and DU. He stated that this proposed relocations site would be a more stable site for the Grassland Environmental Education Center than it would be on private land.

Mr. Flores asked how many children visit the site. Ms. Turner stated that about 1,000 children per year at present. But, the Center would also be used for festivals and other celebrations which serve the immediate five counties in the area.

Ms. Janae Scruggs, Coordinator, Grassland Environmental Education Center presented letters of support from students who have visited the Center. She noted that there have been many efforts from the community in support of this project, such as Charleston Elementary School which raised \$7,000.00 toward this effort. It is a community-based project. Since the Center has opened, it has been visited by over 13,000 students, even though it is not open year round. Should this project be approved, this number would increase and the Grassland Education Center would be open year round.

It was moved by Mr. Flores that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$90,000.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund (Minor Capital Outlay); approve acceptance of reimbursement funding from the Department of Fish and Game in the amount of up to \$40,000.00 for this project; authorize staff to enter into all appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

23. Cache Creek Conservation Area, \$880,000.00
Colusa County

Mr. Wright introduced the Cache Creek Conservation Area in Colusa County, a request for a grant to the American Land Conservancy to assist in the acquisition of a conservation easement. A letter of support was received from Mr. Rich Burns, Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, and Mr. Bill Gaines, President, California Outdoor Heritage Alliance. A letter was also received by Colusa County Attorney Mr. Henry E. Rodegerdts, who, while he complimented the Board in the interest to preserve agricultural lands, said he thought we could use our money elsewhere. Ms. Linda Drake briefly described the project and its location.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the American Land Conservancy (Conservancy) to assist in the acquisition of a conservation easement over 3,140± acres of privately owned land, located in southwestern Colusa County. This project is to prevent the conversion of rangeland, grazing land and grassland to nonagricultural uses and to ensure the continued protection of valuable plant and wildlife habitats that result from livestock grazing.

The property is located south of Redding, northwest of Sacramento and east of the Mendocino National Forest. More specifically, it lies west of Interstate 5 and Williams, and north of Highway 20, near its junction with Highway 16. The adjacent property to the north is the Bear Valley Ranch which is covered by a conservation easement purchased with a grant awarded by the Board in 2001. The Bear Valley Ranch was acquired to prevent subdivision and development and also to protect the extensive wildflower resources in Bear Valley. The land to the south is owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and was acquired for the protection of Tule elk.

The acquisition will protect rangeland, grassland, open space and wildlife habitat on the property and prevent the cutting of native oaks for firewood. The property is currently used as a working cattle ranch and this use will continue once the conservation easement is in place. The primary land use threatening ranches along the Highway 20 corridor is the subdivision of land into "ranchettes". A secondary threat is the commercial harvest of oaks for firewood.

Animal species that will benefit from this acquisition include Tule elk, wild turkey, deer, and quail, as well as numerous non-game species including migratory birds and small mammals. Tule elk inhabit both the Bear Valley property to the north and the BLM lands to the south. This acquisition will provide excellent linkage between these lands not only for the Tule elk, but also for a host of other animal species as well.

The market value of the proposed conservation easement is \$875,000.00, as determined by an appraisal and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the easement to the Conservancy for the approved appraised value. A grant in the amount of \$875,000.00 will be provided by Board. It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be required for administrative expenses, including the DGS's appraisal review costs, bringing the total allocation for this proposal to \$880,000.00.

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

The Conservancy will be responsible for managing and monitoring the easement. There are no provisions for public access in the easement. Under the grant agreement, the Board will have the ability to accompany the Conservancy once every three years during site monitoring visits to assure compliance with the WCB grant agreement.

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

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$880,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (f), (Rangeland) for the grant amount and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Ms. Drake stated that Mr. Steve Dittman and Ms. Kerri O'Toole, American Land Conservancy, Mr. Lauren Ward, representing the property owner, and Ms. Ashley Payne, property owner, were in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or public comment.

Kerri O'Toole, Conservation Director, American Land Trust, thanked the Board for their support of this project. She stated that this is an important component of a much greater conservation effort to protect the Cache Creek National Wildlife Area and this 3,000 acres was a critical piece to protecting important wildlife habitat in the region and protecting the oak woodlands from being cut, as well as, subdivisions and ranchettes. The American Land Trust looks forward to working with the Board in regards to other projects in the area.

It was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$880,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (f), (Rangeland) for the grant amount and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

24. Yolo County Riparian Restoration (CREP),
Yolo County

This item was withdrawn from consideration at this time.

25. Lassen Foothills, Expansion 5, \$1,510,000.00
Tehama County

Mr. Wright introduced the Lassen Foothills project, Expansion 5, located in Tehama County, a proposal for a grant to The Nature Conservancy to acquire a conservation easement over 13,000 acres of vernal pools and grasslands north of Chico. Mr. Bill Gallup briefly described the project and its location.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for a cooperative project to acquire a conservation easement over 13,217± acres of land for the preservation and protection of oak woodlands, mixed riparian, chaparral, vernal pools and grasslands. The property is located about 25 miles southeast of Red Bluff, about 7 miles easterly of the community of Vina in Tehama County.

Acquiring this easement is part of a larger conservation strategy by TNC and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to link together public and private lands to create a landscape-scale reserve that will protect extensive wildlife corridors and prevent habitat fragmentation. The Board previously approved a number of grants for Expansions 1 through 4, beginning in 2001 to assist in the acquisition of a conservation easement protecting nearly 14,000± acres of land under the Lassen Foothills conservation strategy. TNC has protected an additional 55,000± acres in this vicinity using combinations of other public funds and private donations. To date nearly 70,000 acres have been protected, and with the addition of this proposed easement the total protected area will be about 83,000 acres.

The property is currently used as a cattle ranch and ranching will continue once the conservation easement is in place. Deer Creek meanders in a general east-west direction through the northerly portion of the ranch. Several small creeks, including Rattlesnake, Singer and Campbell Creeks traverse the ranch in an east-west direction and provide additional riparian habitat. After the acquisition, the property owner will retain the right to use the property for cattle grazing with ranch headquarters, a rural home site and recreational uses, including fishing, hunting, and most passive uses, but within limited parameters. Management of the land is primarily done by the land owners with limited assistance from TNC through the terms and conditions set forth in the conservation easement. Staff of the Board will have the ability to accompany TNC no less than every three years during site monitoring visits.

The primary purpose of the proposed acquisition is to protect blue oak woodlands and grassland habitats which provide critical habitat for the east Tehama deer herd, mountain lions, cavity nesting birds and other wildlife. The subject property has frontage along Deer Creek, which is an important spawning and rearing habitat for spring, fall and late fall "runs" of chinook salmon. The creek and riparian zones also provide important habitat for steelhead trout and breeding habitat and migratory corridors for neo-tropical and migrant bird species. Rattlesnake, Singer and Campbell Creeks are seasonal, but provide important juvenile salmon rearing habitat during the winter, spring and early summer. The grasslands and portions of the oak woodlands have vernal pools that support threatened and endangered species including several varieties of fairy shrimp. The grasslands support a number of threatened and endangered plant species including Sanford's arrowhead, slender orcutt grass and Boggs Lake hedge-hyssop.

The property owner has agreed to sell a conservation easement to the TNC for \$3,405,000.00, a price below the appraised value, as approved by the Department of General Services. CALFED has agreed to contribute \$1,905,000.00 toward the purchase of the conservation easement. The Board's proposed grant to TNC would contribute \$1,500,000.00 to cover the remaining balance of the purchase price. It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project costs, including the DGS review charges, bringing the total amount requested for this project to \$1,510,000.00.

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. Subject to approval by the Board, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$670,299.00.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (f), (Oak Woodlands), and \$839,701.00 from the Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund, for the grant 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.

Mr. Gallup stated that Mr. Jake Jacobson, Project Manager, The Nature Conservancy was present in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or public comment.

**Mr. Klass asked how the cooperative is being used in this project.
Mr. Gallup stated that the DFG and CALFED will be providing the funding for this project.**

It was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$670,299.00.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (f), (Oak Woodlands), and \$839,701.00 from the Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund, for the grant 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.

26. Ridgewood Ranch Conservation Area, \$2,167,500.00
Mendocino County

Mr. Wright introduced Ridgewood Ranch Conservation Area project, located in Mendocino County. A proposal for a grant to the Mendocino Land Trust, for a cooperative project with the Department of Conservation, other State and Federal partners for a conservation easement. Letters of support were received from Senator Wesley , Assembly Member Patty Berg, David Bengston, Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer, Mendocino County, Mayor Karen Oslund, City of Willits, and Ms. Janet Cobb, President, California Oak Foundation. Ms. Linda Drake briefly described the project and its location.

This project was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Mendocino Land Trust (MLT), for a cooperative project with the Department of Conservation and various federal, state, and private sources to acquire up to 4,500 acres in one or more conservation easements near the town of Willits in Mendocino County for the purpose of protecting and preserving northern California's anadromous fisheries, oak woodland, conifer forest, rangeland, riparian habitat and vernal pools.

The property is located in Mendocino County between the cities of Ukiah and Willits. State Highway 101 bisects the Ranch. The eastern half is accessed via a paved road just south of the 39.5 mile marker along Highway 101. The property borders Highway 101 on both sides for 3 miles. The Jackson Demonstration State Forest is another 6 miles to the northwest.

The purpose of this acquisition is to protect and preserve many outstanding natural resources on the property, including scenic vistas of oak woodland, conifer forest, rich rangeland, 5 miles of fish bearing streams and 16.5 miles of Class II watercourses, open space, an abundance of riparian habitat, and thriving vernal pools of the rarest type found in California. In addition, this property is

home to the celebrated depression era equine hero, a racehorse named Seabiscuit. He spent his retirement at Ridgewood Ranch. The Ranch has many historic buildings and haunting memories which take you back to days of long ago. This project will help preserve those recollections forever. The threat of development and subdivision of the property is very likely in the near future. The property's location between the cities of Ukiah and Willits, proximity to Highway 101, topography, and scenic character all combine to make this a highly developable property.

It is estimated that several threatened, endangered, or species of special concern are found on site and many occur in the Forsythe Creek and Walker Creek watersheds, such as steelhead, chinook salmon, and yellow-legged frogs. Critical wildlife habitat for golden eagle, great blue heron, bear, mountain lion, fox, deer, Cooper's hawk, osprey and numerous other species is also found on the property. The property owner is an active member of the Forsythe Creek Watershed Association, and is the largest landowner in the watershed. The property owner has completed a number of in stream restoration and habitat protection projects on the ranch and evidence of success can be seen today.

Several easements are being considered for this 5,000 acre ranch. Acquisition of a 33 acre redwood easement was completed March 2005. The California Farmland Conservancy has provided a grant to the MLT for the appraisal of the property and has committed \$1 million for an agricultural conservation easement. The Federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program will consider a \$1 million toward the agricultural conservation easement. The MLT has sought funding for a working forestland conservation easement from the Federal Forest Legacy Program and for a transportation corridor easement from the State Environmental Enhancement Mitigation Program.

Public interest in the Ranch is considerable. In the last three years, 3,000± visitors have participated in tours of the Ranch. Under the terms of the conservation easement, the property owner will provide 15 days of free limited public access to the property for wildflower walks, hiking, horseback riding, and a variety of other passive recreation activities. The MLT will monitor and manage the conservation easement. Under the grant agreement, the Board will have the ability to accompany the MLT once every three years during site monitoring visits.

This proposal is to consider the contribution of funds by the Board to the MLT to assist in the acquisition of a 1,700± acres oak woodlands conservation easement. The market value of the proposed conservation easement is \$3,125,000.00, as determined by an appraisal and approved by the DGS. The property owner has agreed to sell the easement to the MLT for the bargain sale of \$2,137,500.00. A grant in the amount of \$2,137,500.00 will be provided by the Board. It is estimated that an additional \$30,000.00 will be required for administrative expenses, including DGS's appraisal review costs bringing the total allocation for this proposal to \$2,167,500.00.

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

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

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,167,500.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650(f), (Oak Woodlands) for the grant amount and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Ms. Drake stated that Mr. James Bernard, Mendocino Land Trust, Mr. Tony Serais, Mr. Brian Bartholomew, and Ms. Tracy Livingston, representing the landowners were present in the audience should there be any questions. She stated this project was hard work and it had taken a long time to get through, it was done through a lot of cooperation and she thanked everyone involved. A special thank you was given to the Board staff member, Ms. Marilyn Cundiff who assisted her through this project.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or public comment.

Mr. Bernard stated that he was grateful to be in the audience and this was a wonderful opportunity in the 30th anniversary year to be in front of the Board. He gave thanks to the Board staff, Mr. Al Wright, Mr. John Donnelly, Ms. Linda Drake, and particularly Ms. Marilyn Cundiff, who went the extra distance with them. He also thanked their partners at the Golden Rule Church Association for their extraordinary stewardship and willingness to work with them on this conservation easement. He also thanked the Board for their support during the Big River acquisition in 2002 and looks forward to a continuing partnership with the Board in the future.

Mr. Flores asked if the representatives of the landowners could discuss public access in further detail. Mr. Tony Sorace thanked the Board staff for their efforts on this project. He stated that the program currently in place allows public tours of the property such as viewing the historical sites and the stables where Seabiscuit was housed.

Presently they have incorporated the public access into their redwood conservation easement which was done with Save-the-Redwoods League. It would be enhanced when more days are added and would incorporate Ranch tours and offer the public access to walk out to the redwood grove along a specified trail to view the redwoods and the corridor of streams about six miles long. Should this easement be approved by the Board, the corridor of streams will be preserved and will allow other areas to be opened to the public. Mr. Wright added his thanks to the staff for their work on this project.

It was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,167,500.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund, (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650(f), (Oak Woodlands) for the grant amount and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

27. Six Rivers, Expansion 1, (Price Creek Ranch), \$483,679.00
Humboldt County

Mr. Wright introduced the Price Creek Ranch project located in Humboldt County, a cooperative project with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Wildlife Conservation Board. Mr. Bob Clark briefly described the project and its location.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Northcoast Regional Land Trust (NRLT) for a cooperative project with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) and the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board), to assist in the purchase of a conservation easement on a 1,280± acre parcel of privately owned land located in Humboldt County for the purposes of protecting the property from encroaching residential development, continuation of ranching and forestry operations, protection and restoration of streams and riparian habitats, and optimization of timber productivity found on the property.

The property is located on Price Creek Road, approximately six miles southwest of Fortuna and five miles west of Rio Dell. Contiguous to the Howe Creek Conservation Area, and in close proximity to the Headwaters Forest Reserve, Humboldt Redwoods State Park, and Kings Range National Conservation Area, approximately half of the property is forested, the majority in douglas fir and grand fir. The other half of the property is predominately open grassland and grazing land. The terrain varies from mild to steep sloping and lies in the drainage area of Price Creek and Sweet Creek, tributaries of the Eel River system.

The easement will protect habitat for a number of sensitive wildlife species that are commonly found on the property, including golden eagles, mountain lions, red-legged and yellow-legged frogs, red tree vole, black bear, blacktail deer, badger, lynx, mountain beaver, flying squirrel and bobcat. Nesting pairs of Northern spotted owls have been observed at three locations near the Price

Creek Ranch boundary. Both Price Creek and Sweet Creek contain abundant populations of steelhead trout, and the landowner intends to conduct riparian habitat restoration for salmon and steelhead.

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

The fair market value of the conservation easement interest, as determined by an appraisal approved by the DGS is \$1,603,679.00. The property owner has agreed to sell for the appraised value.

Staff requests that the Board approve an allocation for a grant to the NRLT and the CDF, in the amount of \$473,679.00, to provide a portion of the necessary funding for the purchase of the conservation easement. It is anticipated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be required to cover administrative expenses (appraisal review costs, title insurance, escrow fees, etc.), increasing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$483,679.00. The balance of the purchase price is being provided by Federal Forest Legacy Program funds in the amount of \$130,000.00, and a grant from the State Coastal Conservancy in the amount of \$1,000,000.00.

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

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

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project, as proposed; allocate \$314,679.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (f) Rangeland, and \$169,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop.12), Section 5096.350 (a)(4) for grant amount and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Clark stated that Ms. Su Corbaley, State Coastal Conservancy, and Mr. Shayne Green, Northcoast Regional Land Trust, were in the audience and would like to speak in support of this project.

Mr. Green stated that without this project the 1,200 acre Price Creek Ranch was headed for subdivision and development in the near future. This scenario was prevented thanks to the landowner who hung on for dear life, and all the players who came to the table. This project is now part of an essentially 5,200 acre reserve that is comprised of extensive rangelands, forestlands, and stream habitats that support steelhead salmon. The most encouraging and rewarding part has come from the emergence of all the partnerships and diverse interests, such as the Board, the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the State Coastal Conservancy, the Northcoast Regional Land Trust, the private and public landowners. He acknowledged the importance of the Board's contribution to this project and also for the laqua Ranch contribution for the conservation easement on behalf of the Northcoast Regional Land Trust, he thanked the Board for its commitment to this effort and project. He thanked Mr. Bob Clark, Ms. Su Corbaley, Mr. Jack Jenkins, State Coastal Conservancy, and Mr. Jeff Talbert, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) for their commitment and perseverance on this project.

Ms. Corbaley stated it has been a pleasure to develop a partnership with the Board, and the CDF over the last eighteen months to two years, when the landowners representatives contacted them to tour the property and see the attributes that it had to offer and its value for protection. Coincidentally, adjoining this property is the Howe Creek Ranch, an acquisition in which the Conservancy was a large player in contributing funds to the project. The Conservancy is committed to investing to protect scenic habitat in that area. In May of 2005 they authorized funds for the appraisal of the property and in December of 2005, the Conservancy's Board authorized \$1,000,000.00 toward the acquisition of the property. Ms. Corbaley stated they look forward to working with the Board and the CDF on future Six Rivers to the Sea projects.

It was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$314,679.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (f) Rangeland, and \$169,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop.12), Section 5096.350 (a)(4) for grant amount and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

28. McCloud Forest Conservation Area, \$5,630,000.00
Shasta and Siskiyou Counties

Mr. Wright introduced the McCloud Forest Conservation Area project located in Shasta and Siskiyou Counties, a proposal for a grant to The Pacific Forest Trust for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game, as well as the Board. Letters of support were received from Mr. David Katz, California Director, Trout Unlimited, Mr. Bob Rynearson, Board President, Fall River Resource Conservation District, Mr. James Cook, Supervisor, Siskiyou County, Mr. James C. Cook, Supervisor, Siskiyou County, and Mr. Bob Hammond, Lands Program Manager, California, Nevada, Utah, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Ms. Linda Drake briefly described the project and its location.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to The Pacific Forest Trust (PFT), to assist in a cooperative project with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and a private funding source to acquire a conservation easement over 9,200± acres of privately owned forest land. This is a working forest conservation easement which will protect and preserve a forest landscape of prime productive timberlands while at the same time enhancing biological diversity.

The property is located northeast of Redding, east of Mount Shasta, and approximately 40 miles south of the California-Oregon border. The easement consists of two different tracts. The McCloud River Tract is located south of Highway 89 and southeast of the town of McCloud, and the Bear Creek Tract is southwest and east of the town of Pondosa in Shasta and Siskiyou counties. The Pacific Crest Trail runs through a small portion of the Bear Creek Tract. Each tract is surrounded by national forest and other private forest ownerships.

This project involves the largest working forest conservation easement with a private owner in California, and is the first to include lands owned and stewarded by a major commercial forest owner. Within the headwaters of the Sacramento River, the McCloud River Tract encompasses approximately 4,850 acres and drains into the McCloud River and the Bear Creek Tract is 4,350 acres and flows into the Fall River.

The purpose of this acquisition is to protect and preserve a unique forest landscape which will prevent future development in pristine forestlands, enhance the natural diversity and special habitats of the ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forestlands, protect water quality and flows into the Sacramento River system, and assure the perpetual harvest of high quality timber products. This guarantees a thriving forest region and provides high value jobs for the area. Habitat for more than 250 species, including threatened bald eagles, spotted owls, northern goshawks and native redband trout will be conserved and restored. The property includes spawning areas for the world-famous Fall River rainbow trout. Rare wet meadows, aspen groves and critical migratory habitat for elk and deer herds will be preserved and enhanced under the terms of the conservation easement.

The market value of the proposed conservation easement is \$7,300,000.00, as determined by an appraisal and approved by the DGS. The property owner has agreed to sell the property to the PFT for the appraised value. A grant in the amount of \$1,000,000.00 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Acres for America award, funded by Wal-Mart, and \$700,000.00 in grants from private foundations, including the Goldman Fund will be contributed towards the purchase price. The balance of funding, in the amount of \$5,600,000.00 will be awarded through a grant from the Board. It is estimated that an additional \$30,000.00 will be required for administrative expenses, including the DGS's appraisal review costs, bringing the total allocation for this project to \$5,630,000.00.

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

The PFT will be responsible for managing and monitoring the easement. The property owner will allow limited and controlled non-motorized, daytime recreational access to portions of the property for hiking, animal riding, bicycle riding, nature viewing and enjoyment. It will also provide public access to the popular McCloud Falls area and from the Pacific Crest Trail. Hunting and fishing rights will be retained by the property owner. However, they agree to provide access on a limited basis to the public consistent with traditional uses. Such access will be addressed in a public access plan to be developed by the property owner and the DFG. The DFG will be responsible for monitoring the public access. In addition, the Board staff will have the ability to access the property for purposes of monitoring validation no less than every three years.

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

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$5,630,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650, for the grant amount and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Ms. Drake stated that Ms. Connie Best, Pacific Forest Trust, Mr. John Siperek and Mr. Mike Fernice, Department of Fish and Game (DFG) were in the audience should there be any questions.

Ms. Best thanked the Board for their consideration of the grant request and the opportunity to support this project. She stated that the McCloud Forest is owned by a commercial owner, Bascom Pacific, who manages it for a pension fund. It lies at the foot of Mt. Shasta the headwaters of the Sacramento River and the heart of California's timber industry. This is part of the Klamath-Cascade eco-region, whose mixed conifer forests are among the most bio-diverse on the planet. Bascom Pacific, by agreeing to prevent development of the property, and to manage the forests to protect and restore habitat for fish and wildlife is demonstrating that commercial forestry and conservation, private and public interests are complimentary, not conflicting. She thanked the Department of Fish and Game, the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Resources Agency, and especially John Siperek and Brett Fernice for working closely with the Trust on the terms of the easement.

Mr. Klass asked to have the terms of the easement clarified; his concern was the threat of clear-cutting, should ownership change.

Ms. Best responded by stating that this current easement prevents all non-forest development and breakup of the forest and yields an older and more diverse forest with a biological habitat structure. There will be no clear-cutting in the conventional sense, there will be forest openings, but will be designed to have habitat value; as the new trees grow up through it, through something called variable retention forestry, where you leave clumps of trees in openings. There will be more generous riparian buffers than you find under the California Forest Practice Act and ones that would be managed to enhance the riparian habitat.

These are two key elements of the management plan. There is a limit on how much forest can be cut every decade, so that the forest gradually over time will get to be older than is typical of commercial forests.

Mr. Flores asked if the management plan is incorporated in the easement itself, or by reference. Ms. Best stated, it is by reference, but there are certain key provisions that are in the easement that are clear, monitorable, and enforceable, such as the limit on decade timber harvesting, so that you can go and measure and assure they are on track.

Mr. Wright asked if Ms. Best could expand on the recreational opportunities that the easement provides, making this a unique project. She stated that the McCloud River is located directly across from one of the most popular U.S. Forest Service campgrounds and trails in northern California, where the McCloud Falls are located. Currently, the landowners have the only bridge across the river. They will be providing access to the south side of the river that is not currently provided, except on a very limited basis. The landowners are working with the Department of Fish and Game to create a public access plan, not only along the river, but throughout the property on the roads that exist there. In addition, on the Bear Creek tract, the Pacific Coast trail goes across two corners of the property and the landowners will be providing access from the Pacific Coast trail into the high mountain meadows.

Mr. Flores asked about the hunting opportunities. Ms. Best stated that there is hunting currently on the property with landowner permission, so they will maintain the same sort of controls on hunting, but the landowners do have liability concerns also with active timber harvest; however, there will be hunting and fishing access.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or public comment.

It was moved by Mr. Flores that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$5,630,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650, for the grant amount and related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

29. California Fisheries Restoration Projects – 2006, \$1,426,565.00
Del Norte, Humboldt, Los Angeles, Marin, Mendocino, Santa Barbara,
and Siskiyou Counties

Mr. Wright introduced the California Fisheries Restoration Projects, similar to those in past meetings, a collection of fisheries projects. Mr. Scott Clemons briefly described the project and its location.

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

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

- Creation of impassable barriers, impacting salmon and steelhead migration;
- Destruction and reduction of in-stream habitat, necessary for rearing and spawning areas, attributed to reduction of associated riparian areas and channelized streams;
- Increased sediment impacting salmon and steelhead eggs and reproduction;
- Increased use of instream flows for human development or agriculture, impacting salmon and steelhead habitat.

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

The DFG recently announced project awards under its Fisheries Restoration Grant Program for 2006. Under the DFG program, all project proposals go through an exhaustive review by both government and non government conservation groups. The projects that the DFG has identified and requested funding assistance from the Board are ranked as high-priority projects and are listed in the table below:

PROJECT	COUNTY	DFG SHARE	WCB SHARE
Gobernador Creek Bridge Replacement	Santa Barbara	\$ 48,917.00	\$223,376.00
Rancho La Vina Bank Restoration	Santa Barbara	105,842.00	158,763.00
Arroyo Sequit Bank Stabilization	Los Angeles	44,358.00	66,536.00
Broadus Creek Streambank Stabilization and Riparian Revegetation	Mendocino	46,121.00	46,121.00
Manley Livestock Exclusion Fence	Siskiyou	13,330.00	13,330.00
Big Lagoon Wetland and Creek Restoration, Muir Beach	Marin	467,500.00	467,500.00
Cottoneva Creek Habitat Enhancement	Mendocino	36,039.00	36,039.00
Shasta River Joe Rice Fish Screen	Siskiyou	19,879.00	19,879.00
Jacoby Creek Water Rights	Humboldt	15,094.00	15,094.00
Yontocket Slough Riparian Enhancement	Del Norte	10,630.00	10,630.00
2005 Mill Creek Restoration Project, Phase V	Mendocino	26,750.00	26,750.00
Beck Livestock Exclusion Fence	Siskiyou	12,295.00	12,295.00
French Creek Riparian Planting and Fencing	Siskiyou	8,747.00	8,747.00
East Fork Water Quality	Siskiyou	191,073.00	191,073.00
SUB TOTALS		\$1,147,205.00	\$1,296,763.00
DFG Cost Recovery –Department Overhead @ 10%			\$129,676.00
Total WCB Cost			\$1,426,439.00

Total Project Cost \$2,573,644.00

To leverage both parties' available restoration funds, the Board staff has worked with the DFG to identify priority projects that the Board could assist with funding. This partnership will allow the DFG to fund additional deserving projects that would not otherwise be funded.

Two funding sources are proposed for these projects. For the projects located in Santa Barbara and Los Angeles Counties, Proposition 50 ,Coastal Watershed funds are proposed. For the projects north of Santa Barbara County, Proposition 40 funds are proposed. An additional \$126.00 is being requested for Department of General Services' contract review costs.

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

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$933,023.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 and \$493,542.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (e/f), P50-SoCA; 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.

Mr. Clemons stated that Ms. Gail Newton, representing the Fisheries Grant Program was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Flores asked if there were any questions or public comment.

It was moved by Mr. Klass that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$933,023.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 and \$493,542.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (e/f), P50-SoCA; 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. Wildlife Habitat Restoration, Honey Lake Wildlife Area, Phase II, \$165,000.00
Lassen County

Mr. Wright introduced the Habitat Restoration, Honey Lake Wildlife Area project located in Lassen County, a proposal for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. A letter of support was received from Mr. Bill Gains, President, California Outdoor Heritage Alliance. Mr. Peter Perrine briefly described the project and its location.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU), for a cooperative project to restore 283 acres of seasonal wetlands and enhance 121 acres of agricultural lands managed to produce food and cover for wildlife, on the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG), Honey Lake Wildlife Area in Lassen County. Project partners include the DU, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the DFG and the Board. The project will be constructed on both the Fleming and the Dakin units of the wildlife area, which are located approximately fifteen miles southeast of the City of Susanville, on the northern edge of Honey Lake.

The DFG first acquired an interest on the shores of Honey Lake in 1942 with an acquisition to provide nesting and brood habitat for resident waterfowl. In 1949, the Board provided funding for the construction of ponds, canals and water control structures on the property. Since then, the Board has continued to be active in the area, acquiring an additional 7,840 acres for the wildlife area between 1970 and 1998. While the primary purpose of the wildlife area was to provide waterfowl habitat, that purpose has been expanded to include upland and riparian habitats for a variety of species. In 1992, the Board assisted in a restoration project to provide feeding, nesting and escape cover for pheasants.

The two units of the wildlife area are located on the delta of the Susan River and receive surface water from the braided channels of that river. The Dakin Unit gets most of its water from Hartson Slough, and the Fleming Unit is fed by water from the main channel of the Susan River and from Tanner Slough. Both units also receive agricultural tailwater and several wells can be used to provide groundwater. During most years, water is very limited in the area. The DFG's management plan cites water as the major limiting factor for the development and operation of the wildlife area. Most of the adjudicated water rights are only available from early March to mid June, making irrigation provided by wells necessary during the rest of the year.

In 1995, heavy rain caused Honey Lake to rise to near record levels, inundating much of the wildlife area. The water stayed at high levels for the next several years, eroding levees, causing ice damage to many of the structures, and raising the salinity in the soils. The wildlife area needs an infrastructure that is somewhat immune to these fluctuating conditions and one that can provide water efficiently when it is scarce.

This project is a continuation of a larger project, approved for funding by the Board in 2002, to rehabilitate nearly 18 miles of water conveyance system, restore seasonal wetlands and rehabilitate uplands and agricultural lands managed for wildlife. This phase will restore approximately 283 acres of seasonal wetlands through the construction of swales and installation of water control structures, and install a pipeline to provide reliable water to approximately 121 acres of agricultural lands managed to provide food and cover to wildlife.

The Honey Lake Valley provides critical habitat for many species of wetland, riparian and upland grassland dependent species, both migratory and summer resident, and the Honey Lake Wildlife Area is the crown jewel in the center of the Valley. The improvements outlined above will provide breeding habitat for such waterfowl species as northern pintails and mallards, and other ground nesting birds, such as meadowlarks and pheasants. In the fall, thousands of migrating birds stop in the Valley, and waterfowl such as American widgeon, gadwall and white-fronted geese, and shorebirds, including dowitchers and sandpipers, will benefit from this project. Antelope frequent the agricultural areas on the Wildlife Area all year long. Special status species expected to benefit include the white faced ibis and sandhill cranes, which often forage on site.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$165,000.00
Department of Fish and Game	3,180.00
NAWCA	156,250.00
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	<u>44,646.00</u>
 Total Available Funding	 \$369,076.00

Project costs will be for the installation of eleven water control structures; earthmoving; the installation of approximately 1,320 feet of 18-inch diameter pipe with associated connectors and valves; and project design, construction supervision and administration.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. The DFG and DU will be responsible for obtaining any environmental clearances and permits.

Staff recommended that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$165,000.00 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.

Mr. Perrine stated that Mr. Mark Biddlecomb, Ducks Unlimited Inc., and Mr. John Siperek, Department of Fish and Game were in the audience should there be any questions.

It was moved by Mr. Flores that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$165,000.00 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.

31. Staff Report – Grant Agreement and Conservation Easement Policy

Informational

Mr. Wright introduced John Donnelly to present a staff update to the Board on its progress to date regarding the Board’s directive to staff to consider developing policies for monitoring conservation easements purchased with grant funds approved by the Board.

At the February 23, 2006, Board meeting, staff updated the Board on its progress to date regarding the Board’s directive to staff to consider developing policies for monitoring conservation easements purchased with grant funds approved by the Board. This report is provided to inform the Board on staff progress to date and to advise Board members on concluded activities with respect to developing the Board policy.

Staff convened a meeting on April 10, 2006 which included individuals of the land trust community, State Coastal Conservancy, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Conservation, Resources Agency, Department of Finance and staff of the Board. Participants briefly described their concerns related to grant agreements and conservation easements. Board staff then presented their issues which included five main concepts:

1. Purposes of Grant
 - Importance of articulating the relationship between funding source used to pay for the easement and the protected conservation values specifically defined and included in the grant agreement and conservation easement.
2. Easement Transfers and Extinguishment
 - Notification and approval: Role of the Board in approving transfers and what kind of notification should grantee provide to the Board.
 - Distribution of proceeds in the case of partial or full extinguishment of easement. Pre and Post Easement Documentation
 - Appraisals, baseline condition reports, transaction documents, management plans, and the disclosure of these documents.
 - What, when, and how are these documents reviewed and maintained.
3. Compliance Monitoring
 - Reporting requirements.
 - Public access validation and monitoring validation.
4. Breach of Contract and Third Party Enforcement

While significant progress was made and agreement was reached in a number of certain areas, additional follow up with participants is necessary. Consequently, the working group is scheduled to reconvene on May 16, 2006. While results of this meeting were not available prior to publication of this Board Agenda, results of the May 16 working group meeting will be presented to the Board during the May 25, 2006 meeting. No formal action on behalf of the Board will be requested at this time. Staff will propose that it will finalize its efforts, report and recommend for approval, the policies and guidelines for the development of grant agreements and conservation easements at the August 17, 2006 meeting.

Mr. Donnelly stated that since the last meeting held February 23, 2006, the Board staff has held three separate workshops with staff from members of the Land Trust community, as well as the departments within the Resource Agencies. He thanked the organizations for sharing their time, expertise, and their experience. Those involved were the State Coastal Conservancy, Department of Conservation, the Resources Agency, Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Fish and Game, The Nature Conservancy, The American Land Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land, the California Rangeland Trust, The California Conservation Fund and The California Council of Land Trusts. He asked if there were any questions

Mr. Klass thanked and congratulated the Board staff and the partners who participated in this effort. He stated that the outcome will benefit all the participants and he appreciated that everyone was able to participate and stayed with the effort. He stated that it may be a model for other conservancies around the State and that he looks forward to the finished product.

Mr. Flores thanked the Board staff and Mr. Wright for a job well done. He also thanked the public who participated at this Board meeting. He stated the next Board meeting will be held on August 17, 2006. He asked if there were any questions or public comment. There were none.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**Al Wright
Executive Director**

PROGRAM STATEMENT

At the close of the meeting on May 25, 2006, the amount allocated to projects since the Wildlife Conservation Board's inception in 1947 totaled \$1,901,259,256.97. 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	29,035,965.91
Reservoir Construction or Improvement	\$ 5,605,699.00
Stream Clearance and Improvement.....	18,787,821.69
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.....	48,073,036.40
Coastal and Bay	\$ 4,038,176.11
River and Aqueduct Access	13,545,752.93
Lake and Reservoir Access	9,703,429.18
Piers	20,785,678.18
D. Game Farm Projects.....	146,894.49
E. Wildlife Habitat Acquisition, Development and Improvement.....	1,754,040,126.27

Wildlife Areas (General)	\$376,971,787.46
Miscellaneous Wildlife Habitat Development	14,354,346.32
Wildlife Areas/Ecological Reserves, (Threatened, Endangered or Unique Habitat)	627,912,361.47
Land Conservation Area	8,043,215.18
Inland Wetlands Conser. Grants & Easements	20,521,178.81
Riparian Habitat Conser. Grants & Easements	52,022,568.50
Other Wildlife Habitat Grants	654,214,668.53
F. Hunting Access Projects	484,898.57
G. Miscellaneous Projects (including leases)	13,885,140.52
H. Special Project Allocations.....	1,301,917.88
I. Miscellaneous Public Access Projects	37,751,914.80
State Owned	\$1,678,751.07
Grants	36,073,163.73
J. Sales and/or exchanges	533,143.07
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.....	\$1,901,259,256.97