

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

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

State of California
 The Resources Agency
 Department of Fish and Game
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

Minutes
 November 15, 2007

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November 15, 2007

The Wildlife Conservation Board met on Thursday, November 15, 2007, in Room 112 of the State Capitol in Sacramento, California. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 A.M. by Mr. Richard B. Rogers, President of the Fish and Game Commission. At this time he introduced Mr. Kevin Hunting, Deputy Director of Regional Operations, Department of Fish and Game; Ms. Karen Finn, Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance; John P. Donnelly, Executive Director, Wildlife Conservation Board; Ms. Mary Westlake, Office Technician, Wildlife Conservation Board; Ms. Melissa Jones of Assembly Member Lois Wolk's office; Mr. Brett Williams of Senator Patricia Wiggins' office; and Ms. Nancy Templeton, Chief Counsel, Wildlife Conservation Board. Mr. Donnelly introduced the Wildlife Conservation Board's newest employees, Senior Land Agents Carol Klein and Catherine Caldwell. At this time Mr. Rogers turned over the meeting to Mr. Donnelly.

1. Roll Call

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS

Richard B. Rogers, Chairman

President, Fish and Game Commission

Karen Finn, Program Budget Manager

Vice, Michael C. Genest, Member

Director, Department of Finance

Kevin Hunting, Deputy Director, Regional Operations

Vice, John McCamman, Member

Acting Director, Department of Fish and Game

JOINT LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Antonio Ortega

Vice, Senator Abel Maldonado

Marie Liu

Vice, Senator Darrell Steinberg

Brett Williams

Vice, Senator Patricia Wiggins

Melissa Jones

Vice, Assembly Member Lois Wolk

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

John P. Donnelly

Staff Present: John Donnelly, Executive Director
Debra Townsend, Assistant Executive Director
Dave Means, Assistant Executive Director
Catherine Caldwell, Senior Land Agent
Gary Cantrell, Research Analyst II
Bob Clark, Senior Land Agent
Scott Clemons, Public Land Management Specialist IV
Marilyn Cundiff, Public Land Management Specialist IV
Pat Dyas, Senior Land Agent
Bill Gallup, Senior Land Agent
Carol Klein, Senior Land Agent
Ashley Laurance, Office Technician
Teri Muzik, Senior Land Agent
Randy Nelson, Senior Land Agent
Peter Perrine, Public Land Management Specialist IV
Ana Safonova, Associate Programmer Analyst (Specialist)
Jenn Reed-Sanguayo, Associate Governmental Program Analyst
Nancy Templeton, Chief Counsel
Mary Westlake, Office Technician
Roxanne Woodward, Staff Services Manager I

Others Present: Linda Arcularius, Inyo County Board of Supervisors, 1st District
Chris Basilevac, The Nature Conservancy
Melva Bigelow, The Nature Conservancy
Luke Breit, Campaign for Old Growth
John Carlson, California Fish and Game Commission
Sandy L. Dean, Jr., Mendocino Forest Products Redwood Co. LLC
Angela Donlan, Department of Fish and Game
Ryan Drebek, Conservation Strategy Group
Alan Ehrgott, American River Conservancy
Wendy Eliot, Sonoma Land Trust
John M. Ferguson, Property Owner
Diana Garofalo, Department of Fish and Game
James Jones, East Bay Municipal Utility District
Chris Kelly, The Conservation Fund
Brady Moss, The Trust for Public Land
David Neubert, River Partners
Denyse Racine, Department of Fish and Game, Bishop Office
Jim Rinehart, R & A Investment Forestry
Jennifer Skondin, Conservation Strategy Group
Sara Taddo, Truckee Donner Land Trust
Cam Tredennick, The Nature Conservancy

2. Funding Status as of November 15, 2007 (Informational)

| | | |
|-----|--|-----------------|
| (a) | 2007-08 Wildlife Restoration Fund Capital Outlay Budget | |
| | Budget Act..... | \$1,000,000.00 |
| | Less Previous Board Allocations | (0.00) |
| | Unallocated Balance..... | \$1,000,000.00 |
| (b) | 2006-07 General Fund Capital Outlay Budget | |
| | Budget Act..... | \$5,000,000.00 |
| | Less Previous Board Allocations | (1,306,900.00) |
| | Unallocated Balance..... | \$3,693,100.00 |
| (c) | 2007-08 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget | |
| | Budget Act..... | \$20,674,000.00 |
| | Less Previous Board Allocation..... | (2,210,000.00) |
| | Unallocated Balance | \$18,464,000.00 |
| (d) | 2006-07 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget | |
| | Budget Act..... | \$20,699,000.00 |
| | Less Previous Board Allocation..... | (1,790,000.00) |
| | Unallocated Balance | \$18,909,000.00 |
| (e) | 2005-06 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget | |
| | Budget Act..... | \$20,551,000.00 |
| | Less Previous Board Allocations | (17,048,542.00) |
| | Unallocated Balance | \$3,502,458.00 |
| (f) | 2006-07 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget | |
| | Budget Act..... | \$15,224,000.00 |
| | Less Previous Board Allocations | (4,632,059.00) |
| | Unallocated Balance | \$10,591,941.00 |
| (g) | 2000-01 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget (2006-07 Reappropriation) | |
| | Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects) | \$14,562,000.00 |
| | Less Previous Board Allocations | (14,426,712.77) |
| | Unallocated Balance | \$135,287.23 |
| (h) | 1999-00 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget | |
| | Continuously Appropriated | |
| | [Sec. 5096.350 (a)(1), (2), (4) & (7)]..... | \$36,100,000.00 |
| | Less Previous Board Allocations | (27,024,281.69) |
| | Unallocated Balance | \$9,075,718.31 |

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

- (j) 2004-05 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget (2007-08 Reappropriation)
 - Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects) \$11,000,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations (0.00)
 - Unallocated Balance \$11,000,000.00

- (k) 2003-04 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget
 - Budget Act (2006-07 Reappropriation)
 - (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)..... \$8,500,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations(2,796,413.40)
 - Unallocated Balance \$5,703,586.60

- (l) Chapter 983, Statutes of 2002
 - (2005-06 Reappropriation).....\$4,800,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations(4,655,354.83)
 - Unallocated Balance \$144,645.17

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

- (n) 2001-02 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget
 - Continuously Appropriated (Section 5096.650) \$273,000,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations(162,580,606.64)
 - Unallocated Balance \$110,419,393.36

- (o) 2003-04 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 Capital Outlay Budget (Section 79568)
 - Budget Act (2006-07 Reappropriation)..... \$32,500,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations(20,011,970.00)
 - Unallocated Balance \$12,488,030.00

- (p) 2002-03 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 Capital Outlay Budget
 Continuously Appropriated (Sections 79565 and 79572), including Chapter 81, Statutes of 2005 \$814,350,000.00
 Less 2003-04 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565(21,000,000.00)
 Less 2004-05 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565(21,000,000.00)
 Less 2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565(4,000,000.00)
 Less 2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572(3,100,000.00)
 Less 2006-07 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79672(17,688,000.00)
 Less 2007-08 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572 (5,150,000.00)
 Less Previous Board Allocations.....(628,691,199.24)
 Unallocated Balance \$113,720,800.76

- (q) 2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects).....\$10,000,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations (0.00)
 Unallocated Balance \$10,000,000.00

- (r) 2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget Budget Act (NCCP Section 75055c)..... \$25,000,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations(25,000.00)
 Unallocated Balance \$24,975,000.00

- (s) 2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(1))..... \$14,293,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations(25,000.00)
 Unallocated Balance \$14,268,000.00

- (t) 2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(2))..... \$14,293,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations(25,000.00)
 Unallocated Balance \$14,268,000.00

- (u) 2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(3))..... \$4,762,000.00
 Less Previous Board Allocations (0.00)
 Unallocated Balance \$4,762,000.00

- (v) 2006-07 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget
 - Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055a)..... \$164,700,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations(25,000.00)
 - Unallocated Balance \$164,675,000.00

 - Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055b)..... \$123,525,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations(3,887,007.00)
 - Unallocated Balance \$119,637,993.00

- (w) 2003-04 Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget
 - Budget Act (2006-07 Reappropriation)..... \$5,000,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations(1,982,161.00)
 - Unallocated Balance \$3,017,839.00

RECAP OF FUND BALANCES

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Wildlife Restoration Fund (a)..... | \$1,000,000.00 |
| General Fund (b)..... | \$3,693,100.00 |
| Habitat Conservation Fund (c), (d) and (e)..... | \$40,875,458.00 |
| Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (f), (g) and (h) | \$19,802,946.54 |
| California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (i), (j), (k), (l), (m) and (n) ... | \$130,623,101.20 |
| Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (o) and (p) | \$126,208,830.76 |
| Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (q), (r), (s), (t), (u) and (v) | \$352,585,993.00 |
| Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund (w) | \$3,017,839.00 |

RECAP OF NATURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT ACT OF 2000

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

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Total Tax Credits Available | \$100,000,000.00 |
| Less Previously Awarded Tax Credits | (48,598,734.00) |
| Balance of Tax Credits Available | \$51,401,266.00 |

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

3. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4-8 and 10-13)

Mr. Donnelly explained that Agenda Item Number 9 (Santa Rosa Mountains, Expansion 8 Augmentation) had been removed from the consent calendar due to recent developments, and that there would be a brief presentation by staff regarding this item.

Mr. Kevin Hunting moved that the Board approve Consent Calendar items 4 through 8 and 10 through 13 as proposed in the individual agenda explanations, including the funding therein.

Motion Carried.

*4. Approval of Minutes – August 23, 2007 Meeting

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Hunting that the Board approve the minutes of the August 23, 2007 meeting.

Motion Carried.

*5. Recovery of Funds

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

- \$0.00** to the **General Fund**
- \$23,634.54** to the **Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund**
- \$55,441.10** to the **Habitat Conservation Fund**
- \$0.00** to the **Wildlife Restoration Fund**
- \$16,489.85** to the **California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund**
- \$0.00** to the **Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002**

GENERAL FUND

Turtle Bay Boat Ramp, Shasta County

| | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Allocated | \$270.00 |
| Expended | <u>-270.00</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, Lagoon Valley Lake, Solano County

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Allocated | \$220,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-203,308.96</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$16,691.04 |

Six Rivers (Iaqua), Humboldt County

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Allocated | \$1,233,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-1,232,404.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$596.00 |

Six Rivers (Price Creek Ranch), Humboldt County

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Allocated | \$169,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-169,000.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$0.00 |

Six Rivers (Sunny Brae), Humboldt County

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Allocated | \$620,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-613,652.50</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$6,347.50 |

Turtle Bay Boat Ramp (Augmentation), Shasta County

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Allocated | \$137,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-137,000.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$0.00 |

Total Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund **\$23,634.54**

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND

Humboldt Bay Coastal Reserve, Humboldt County

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Allocated | \$175,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-165,000.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$10,000.00 |

La Sierra Canyon, Los Angeles County

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Allocated | \$5,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-1,599.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$3,401.00 |

Liberty Farms Wetland Restoration, Solano County

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Allocated | \$135,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-135,000.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$0.00 |

Riparian Habitat Restoration, Bobcat to Blue Oak Ranches, Yolo County

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Allocated | \$542,500.00 |
| Expended | <u>-532,818.45</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$9,681.55 |

San Jacinto Wildlife Area, Expansions 27 and 28, Riverside County

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Allocated | \$2,780,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-2,840,244.95</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$29,755.05 |

Truckee River Canyon, Nevada/Sierra County

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Allocated | \$10,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-9,829.50</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$170.50 |

Wheeler Ridge Wildlife Area, Mono County

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Allocated | \$185,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-182,567.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$2,433.00 |

Total Habitat Conservation Fund **\$55,441.10**

WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND

Grassland Environmental Education Center, Relocation and Set-up, Merced County

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Allocated | \$90,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-90,000.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$0.00 |

Pine Creek Reservoir Public Access Improvements, Modoc County

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Allocated | \$21,679.00 |
| Expended | <u>-21,679.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$0.00 |

Rio de Los Angeles State Park, Taylor Yard Public Access, Los Angeles

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Allocated | \$77,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-77,000.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$0.00 |

Total Wildlife Restoration Fund **\$0.00**

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

C Street Dock Fishing Access, Humboldt County

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Allocated | \$500,270.00 |
| Expended | <u>-500,107.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$163.00 |

Mad River Slough Wildlife Area, Expansion 1, Humboldt County

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Allocated | \$53,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-42,429.65</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$10,570.35 |

Pine Creek Reservoir Public Access Improvements, Modoc County

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Allocated | \$65,428.00 |
| Expended | <u>-65,428.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$0.00 |

Putah Creek North (Bobcat Ranch), Yolo County

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Allocated | \$6,360,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-6,354,243.50</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$5,756.50 |

Six Rivers (Iaqua), Humboldt County

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Allocated | \$1,000,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-1,000,000.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$0.00 |

Six Rivers (Price Creek Ranch), Humboldt County

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Allocated | \$314,679.00 |
| Expended | <u>-314,679.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$0.00 |

Turtle Bay Boat Ramp, Shasta County

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Allocated | \$106,740.00 |
| Expended | <u>-106,740.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$0.00 |

Total California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund \$16,489.85

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

New and Alamo Rivers Wetland Master Plan, Phase I, Imperial County

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Allocated | \$805,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-805,000.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$0.00 |

New and Alamo Rivers Wetland Master Plan, Phase I Augmentation, Imperial County

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Allocated | \$450,500.00 |
| Expended | <u>-450,500.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$0.00 |

Santa Catalina Island Nonnative Plant Removal, Los Angeles County

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Allocated | \$500,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-500,000.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$0.00 |

Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve, Shellmaker Island Wetland Restoration, Orange County

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Allocated | \$69,000.00 |
| Expended | <u>-69,000.00</u> |
| Balance for Recovery | \$0.00 |

Total Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 **\$0.00**

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, Mr. Hunting moved that the Board approve the recovery of funds for the projects listed on pages 6 through 10 of the agenda and close the project accounts. Recovery totals include \$23,634.54 to the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund; \$55,441.10 to the Habitat Conservation Fund; \$16,489.85 to the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund.

Motion carried.

- *6. Wilson Creek Riparian Corridor, Expansion 6 \$5,000.00
Riverside County

This proposal was to consider the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the authorization to enter into an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority), to be applied toward the acquisition of a privately-owned property totaling 18.9± acres in southwestern Riverside County for the protection of threatened and endangered species.

The project area is located near the unincorporated community of Aguanga, north of State Highways 79 and 371, within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). The proposed acquisition will conform to the MSHCP and will further implement joint federal, State, and local Natural Community Conservation Planning efforts in western Riverside County. The MSHCP's purpose is to preserve and protect 146 plant and animal species by acquiring lands for a habitat reserve system, and providing open space for habitat and recreation.

The property supports a mix of natural plant communities, including coastal sage scrub and grasslands, that provide important habitat for the following endangered or threatened animal species: California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo, and Quino checkerspot butterfly. The following species of special concern are also found in this area: Bell's sage sparrow, Cooper's hawk, Aguanga kangaroo rat, and Los Angeles

pocket mouse. The property is located in an important linkage area that connects the San Bernardino National Forest on the north side to the Cleveland National Forest on the south side. This property and the linkage area provide essential breeding and foraging habitat for the aforementioned species, as well as bobcats and mountain lions.

The Authority intends to manage the site to preserve threatened and endangered species and to conserve biodiversity. Additional management objectives may include preserving public access for recreational pursuits such as hiking and wildlife viewing. Management costs for the property will be provided by operating funds from Assessment District 161 and the Authority. There are no State funds to be used for the management of this property.

The owner of the property has agreed to sell the property at the appraised value of \$250,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The proposed subgrant will provide \$161,290.00 toward the purchase price from a USFWS Habitat Conservation Planning Grant. The Authority will provide the sum of \$88,710.00 as the non-federal match and the balance of the purchase price. It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed for administrative expenses by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), which includes the DGS appraisal review costs, bringing the total recommended allocation for this proposal to \$5,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for grants to protect threatened and endangered species where the funding is leveraged with other funds and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

The terms and conditions of the proposed subgrant provide that staff of the WCB will review all proposed title documents, appraisal, preliminary title report, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow for the acquisition.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$161,290.00 and approve an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority; allocate \$5,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5), for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by

Mr. Hunting that the Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$161,290.00 and approve an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority; allocate \$5,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5), for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *7. Wilson Creek Riparian Corridor, Expansion 7 \$5,000.00
Riverside County

This proposal was to consider the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the authorization to enter an agreement to subgrant the federal grant funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority), to be applied toward the acquisition of a privately-owned property totaling 352± acres, in southwestern Riverside County, for the protection of threatened and endangered species and to establish a wildlife movement corridor.

The project area is located east of Temecula and south of Hemet, north of State Highways 79 and 371, near the unincorporated community of Aguanga. Acquisition of the property will help to establish and protect a contiguous landscape linkage, habitat nodes for wildlife dispersal, and wildlife connectivity between the Cleveland National Forest and the San Bernardino National Forest. The project also conforms to the Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan and will further implement joint federal, State, and local Natural Community Conservation Planning efforts in southwestern Riverside County.

The property supports a mix of natural plant communities that are unique to this region. Although coastal sage scrub, riparian, and grassland plant communities occur elsewhere, the uniqueness of the combination has produced new and as of yet undefined communities. The desert influence on climate is very apparent by the number of plant species that make their western-most extension into the area. The mix of plant communities has resulted in habitats suitable for an abundance and diversity of species including many endemic species. Many butterfly species were identified in the area, including the federally-endangered Quino checkerspot butterfly. The area also provides breeding and foraging habitat for an abundance of wildlife including the San Diego horned lizard, orange-throated whiptail, coastal western whiptail, and the coast patch-nosed snake, all federal and State species of concern. Least Bell's vireo, coastal California gnatcatcher, Cooper's hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, golden eagle, and burrowing owls have also been identified in the area.

The Authority has proposed that the area be managed primarily to preserve threatened and endangered species and to conserve biodiversity. Additional management objectives may include preserving public access for recreational

pursuits such as hiking and wildlife viewing. Management costs will be provided by operating funds from the 2004 Assessment District 161 (AD 161) Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan funds held by the Authority. The State will have no responsibility for management of this property.

The property owner has agreed to sell to the Authority at the appraised value of \$1,670,000.00. The appraised value has been approved by the State's Department of General Services (DGS). The proposed agreement to subgrant the federal grant funds provided by the USFWS Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant will provide \$835,000.00 toward the purchase price of the property. The Authority has agreed to provide the non-federal match, and the remainder of the purchase price in the sum of \$835,000.00, from the AD 161 funds held by the Authority. It is estimated that \$5,000.00 will be needed for administrative expenses by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), which includes the DGS appraisal review costs, bringing the total recommended allocation for this proposal to \$5,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for grants to protect threatened and endangered species where the funding is leveraged with other funds and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

The terms and conditions of the proposed subgrant agreement provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for this property.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$835,000.00 and approve an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority; allocate \$5,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5), for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Hunting that the Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$835,000.00 and approve an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority; allocate \$5,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5), for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to

accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *8. Western Riverside County MSHCP and Expansions 1 and 2 \$15,000.00
Riverside County

This proposal was to consider the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the authorization to enter into an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority), to be applied toward the acquisition of three separate properties totaling 172± acres located in close proximity to the Interstate 15 corridor in the western part of Riverside County, near the community of Lake Elsinore.

The acquisitions conform to the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) and will further implement joint federal, State and local Natural Community Conservation Planning efforts in western Riverside County. The purpose of the MSHCP is to preserve and protect 146 plant and animal species by acquiring lands for a habitat reserve system, and to provide open space for habitat and recreation. The subject properties support a variety of native plant species, including thread-leaved brodiaea, Davidson's saltscale, Parish's brittlescale, smooth tarplant, round-leaved filaree, Coulter's goldfields, and little mousetail, and provide potential suitable breeding and foraging habitat for burrowing owls, a species of special concern, as well as the threatened or endangered California gnatcatcher and least Bell's vireo.

The Authority intends to manage these sites to preserve threatened and endangered species and to conserve biodiversity. Additional management objectives may include preserving public access for recreational pursuits such as hiking and wildlife viewing. Management costs of the above parcels will be provided by operating funds from Assessment District 161 and the Authority. There are no State funds to be used for the management of these properties, described below.

Western Riverside County MSHCP: The owner of the property has agreed to sell the property at the appraised value of \$1,617,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). This is a proposal to subgrant \$1,043,226.00 in USFWS funds to the Authority to assist in their purchase of 58.88± acres of land located on Cajalco Road, approximately one mile west of La Sierra Avenue, in the Lake Mathews area. The Authority has agreed to provide Riverside County Transportation Commission Funds (Transportation Funds) in the sum of \$573,774.00 to provide the non-federal match and the balance of the purchase price.

Western Riverside County MSHCP, Expansion 1: The owner of the property has agreed to sell the property at the DGS approved, appraised value of \$462,000.00. This is a proposal to subgrant \$298,065.00 in USFWS funds to the Authority to acquire 32.99± acres of land located at the northwest corner of Snake Road and Garnet Drive, in the Lake Elsinore area. The Authority has agreed to provide Transportation Funds in the sum of \$163,935.00 to provide the non-federal match and

the remainder of the purchase price.

Western Riverside County MSHCP, Expansion 2: This was a proposal to subgrant \$1,625,806.00 in USFWS funds to acquire 80± acres of land located at the southeast corner of Vista del Agua and Gafford Road, in the Lake Elsinore area. The owner of the property has agreed to sell the property for \$2,520,000.00, which is a \$40,000.00 discount from the DGS approved, appraised value of \$2,560,000.00. The Authority has agreed to provide Transportation Funds in the sum of \$894,194.00 to provide the non-federal match and the remainder of the purchase price.

The proposed subgrants will provide the Authority with a total of \$2,967,097.00 in federal funds to be applied toward the acquisition of the subject properties. It is estimated that \$15,000.00 will be needed for administrative expenses by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), which includes the DGS appraisal review costs, bringing the total recommended allocation for this project to \$15,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for grants to protect threatened and endangered species where the funding is leveraged with other funds and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

The terms and conditions of the proposed subgrants provide that staff of the WCB will review all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrows established for acquisition of the properties.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$2,967,097.00 and approve three agreements to subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority; allocate \$15,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5) for internal transaction expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Hunting that the Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$2,967,097.00 and approve three agreements to subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority; allocate \$15,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5) for internal transaction expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this

project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

9. Santa Rosa Mountains, Expansion 8 Augmentation \$.00
Riverside County

Mr. Donnelly explained that this proposed project had been removed from the consent calendar due to the recent approval of grants from the City of La Quinta (\$243,121.00) and the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (\$406,019.00) totaling \$649,140.00. Combined with two Recovery Land Acquisition Grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, these grants will provide the balance of the purchase price for the acquisition in lieu of funding by the Wildlife Conservation Board. Mr. Bill Gallup, Senior Land Agent, presented this project.

This proposal was to consider a proposed augmentation to assist in the fee acquisition of the second phase of a 100± acre privately-owned property as previously approved by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) on May 24, 2007, for the protection of habitat for peninsular bighorn sheep in the Santa Rosa Mountains. Subsequent to approval by the WCB, staff was informed that private funding which was anticipated for this project would not be forthcoming. The owner allowed the State to proceed with its purchase of nearly 50 acres of the property, which is currently in escrow, pending approval of a proposed augmentation to complete acquisition of the remaining 50 acres.

Staff recommended the acceptance of two Recovery Land Acquisition Grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and pending grants from the City of La Quinta and Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, all to be applied toward the State's purchase of this second phase.

The subject property is located in the southwestern portion of the Coachella Valley about five miles south of the downtown area of the City of La Quinta. Lake Cahuilla is about three miles north of the subject property, and the Salton Sea located about 14 miles to the southeast.

This acquisition is part of the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan and Natural Community Conservation Plan approved for the Coachella Valley portion of Riverside County. The second phase of this acquisition is part of the eighth land acquisition in the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG's) Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) for the protection of bighorn sheep. The project area within the CAPP is approximately 150,000 acres in size with 35,000± acres identified as candidates for possible acquisition.

The acquisition of both phases of the subject property is important because it would place nearly 100 acres of foothill, "canyon mouth", and alluvial fan lands under permanent protection. Placement of this area in public ownership will add a significant buffer from the developing residential lands to the east and north. The subject property has multiple species values including habitat for peninsular bighorn sheep, desert tortoise, least Bell's vireo, and the southwestern willow flycatcher.

There is also potential habitat for several sensitive bat species including the western yellow bat, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, spotted bat, pocketed free-tailed bat, and western mastiff bat. Protection of the property would also benefit many other species that inhabit the area including mountain lion, mule deer, golden eagle, and prairie falcon.

The DFG has identified the subject property as being within a Significant Natural Area and has recommended the purchase of the property, which would be incorporated into and managed in conjunction with other existing wildlife areas and ecological reserves. The property will remain in its present state as unimproved desert land maintaining connectivity from the Coachella Valley floor to the Santa Rosa Mountains, Santa Rosa Mountains National Scenic Area, San Bernardino National Forest, and the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. The anticipated annual cost for monitoring and managing the land would be minimal due to the remoteness of the site and the very limited visitation by the public. The proposal being considered at this time would, if approved, bring the total number of acres protected within the area to over 110,000± acres.

The owners have agreed to sell the 100± acre property at the appraised value of \$3,240,000.00, as approved by the State's Department of General Services (DGS). The first phase totaling 49.8± acres (\$1,618,375.00) is currently in escrow. The USFWS has provided three grants, under both the Habitat Conservation Planning and the Recovery Land Acquisition Programs, totaling \$924,434.00, and the WCB provided \$693,941.00, which was enough to close the first phase of the acquisition.

The second phase of the acquisition, containing 49.9 acres of land, has an appraised value of \$1,621,625.00, also as approved by the DGS. Two Recovery Land Acquisition Grants from the USFWS, totaling \$972,485.00, will provide a portion of the purchase price. Two additional grants from the City of La Quinta (\$243,121.00) and the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (\$406,019.00) will provide the balance of the purchase price (\$649,140.00).

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as the acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes and Class 25, Section 15325, as the transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space. A Notice of Exemption for the first phase acquisition was filed with the State Clearinghouse following approval by the WCB on May 24, 2007. Subject to approval by the Wildlife Conservation Board, a Notice of Exemption for the second phase acquisition will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the proposed acquisition of the second phase of this project as proposed; accept two Recovery Land Acquisition Grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service totaling \$972,485.00 and the use of the federal funds, as proposed; accept pending grants from the City of La Quinta in the sum of \$243,121.00, and from the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy in the sum of \$406,019.00, to be applied toward the purchase of the second phase of the property; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Donnelly reported that the Board received a letter of support from Dr. Dan Silver, Executive Director of the Endangered Habitats League.

It was moved by Mr. Hunting that the Board approve the proposed acquisition of the second phase of this project as proposed; accept two Recovery Land Acquisition Grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service totaling \$972,485.00 and the use of the federal funds, as proposed; accept pending grants from the City of La Quinta in the sum of \$243,121.00, and from the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy in the sum of \$406,019.00, to be applied toward the purchase of the second phase of the property; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *10. Santa Rosa Plateau, Tenaja Corridor \$5,000.00
Riverside County

This proposal was to consider the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the authorization to enter into an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority) to be applied toward the acquisition of a 20± acre privately-owned property, in southwestern Riverside County, for increased protection of the Santa Rosa Plateau and threatened and endangered species.

The subject property is located on Calle Collado, south of Tenaja Road, about ten miles west of the town of Murrieta. The property is currently vacant and undeveloped, but has the potential for subdivision to five acre parcels and residential development. Interstate Highway 15 is about eight miles easterly of the subject area and is the major connector highway between Los Angeles, the Inland Empire, and San Diego.

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has recognized the importance of the property to both its Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve (Reserve) and area connectivity, and has recommended the purchase of this property as a high priority. This acquisition will allow further protection of the “plateau” and preserve the linkage between the plateau and 250,000 acres of protected public lands including the San Mateo Wilderness Area, Cleveland National Forest, and Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base to the north and to the west.

Initial acquisition of the Reserve began in 1991, and has grown through public and private acquisitions and exchanges to its current size. Development has been steady in the immediate area of the Reserve over the past ten years, with a number of homes built on privately-owned parcels near the reserve and within the corridor.

Additional construction and development within the acquisition area is considered to be detrimental to the corridor and to the free movement and migration of the many different species that live there. The DFG owns approximately 6,000 acres, and when combined with the properties owned by The Nature Conservancy, Riverside County,

and the Metropolitan Water District, the total protected area is in excess of 8,200± acres.

The plateau is a biologically diverse area and supports over 450 native plant species, 27 reptiles, 35 mammals, at least 173 bird species, and an unknown number of invertebrates. The Reserve contains over 1,500 acres of oak woodland with the last remaining, naturally occurring Engelmann oak groves in southern California. There are about 3,000 acres of native grassland crossed with bands of southern sycamore and live oak riparian woodland habitat. There are numerous vernal pool areas, extensive coastal sage scrub, and chaparral habitats. The creeks that drain the plateau contain deep pools, called Tenajas, which provide a water source most months of the year. There are 50 sensitive species (endangered, threatened, rare, and species of concern) on the Reserve, including 11 plants, 26 birds, five amphibians, four reptiles, four mammals, and several invertebrates. Large mammals using the plateau include mountain lion, deer, and badger.

The Authority proposes to own and manage the property. Their primary objective will be protection and maintenance of the habitat in conjunction with other properties to form a corridor between the DFG's Reserve and other public lands. It is anticipated that the Authority will offer passive recreational uses, compatible with protection of the biologically diverse species found in the Reserve and on the property.

The owner has agreed to sell the property to the Authority at the appraised fair market value of \$830,000.00, as approved by the State's Department of General Services (DGS). The proposed agreement to subgrant the federal funds provided by the USFWS Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant will provide \$373,500.00 toward the purchase price of the property. The Authority has agreed to provide the non-federal match and the remainder of the purchase price in the sum of \$456,500.00 using Assessment District 161 Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan funds held by the Authority. An estimated \$5,000.00 will be needed for administrative expenses by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), including review of the appraisal by the DGS, bringing the total recommended allocation for this proposal to \$5,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for grants to protect threatened and endangered species where the funding is leveraged with other funds and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

The terms and conditions of the proposed agreement to subgrant provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for this property.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as

proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish Wildlife Service in the amount of \$373,500.00 and approve an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority; allocate \$5,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650, for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Hunting that the Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish Wildlife Service in the amount of \$373,500.00 and approve an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority; allocate \$5,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650, for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *11. Triple Creeks Conservation Area, Expansion 2 \$5,000.00
Riverside County

This proposal was to consider the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the authorization to enter into an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority) to be applied toward the acquisition of a privately-owned property totaling 6± acres, in southwestern Riverside County, for the protection of threatened and endangered species and to establish a wildlife movement corridor.

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

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

State, and local Natural Community Conservation Planning efforts in southwestern Riverside County.

The Authority has proposed that the area be managed primarily to preserve threatened and endangered species and to conserve biodiversity. Additional management objectives may include preserving public access for recreational pursuits such as hiking and wildlife viewing. Management costs will be provided by operating funds from the 2004 Assessment District 161 (AD 161) Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan funds held by the Authority. The State will have no responsibility for management of this property.

The property owner has agreed to sell to the Authority at the appraised fair market value of \$325,000.00, as approved by the State's Department of General Services (DGS). The proposed agreement to subgrant the federal funds provided by the USFWS Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant will provide 100 percent of the approved, appraised value of the property, or \$325,000.00. The matching funds requirement for this federal grant has been fully met and no further matching funds will be required under the federal grant. It is estimated that \$5,000.00 will be needed for administrative expenses by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), which includes the DGS appraisal review costs, bringing the total recommended allocation for this proposal to \$5,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for grants to protect threatened and endangered species where the funding is leveraged with other funds or "in-kind" acquisitions, and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

The terms and conditions of the proposed agreement to subgrant provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for this property.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$325,000.00 and approve an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority; allocate \$5,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5) for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Hunting that the Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation

Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$325,000.00 and approve an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority; allocate \$5,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5) for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *12. Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve, Expansion 16 \$641,000.00
Monterey County

This proposal was to consider the acquisition of a parcel of land, totaling 7± acres, as an addition to the Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve for the preservation and protection of wildlife habitat.

Elkhorn Slough is a shallow estuary located approximately 100 miles south of San Francisco in northern Monterey County. The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approved the first acquisition in the Elkhorn Slough in 1979, and to date, more than 1,300± acres have been acquired by the WCB. In addition to the WCB's conservation efforts, the Elkhorn Slough Foundation (Foundation) has protected nearly 2,700± acres in the slough area. The Foundation is a community-supported land trust that works with local landowners as well as public and private partners to insure that the natural heritage and health of Elkhorn Slough is secure.

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

Elkhorn Slough is one of the few coastal estuaries in California and harbors a remarkable diversity of wildlife, including southern sea otters, harbor seals, over 340 species of birds, 100 species of fish, and many unusual plants. These include, but are not limited to, Hooker's manzanita, Monterey ceanothus, Pajaro manzanita, Monterey spineflower, western snowy plover, the California red-legged frog, the tidewater goby, and the California tiger salamander. The Elkhorn Slough is one of 27 National Estuarine Research Reserves established in the coastal zone of the United States and has been designated a State Ecological Reserve by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and a Globally Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society. The subject parcel is very valuable as part of the overall Elkhorn Slough ecosystem. The property contains coastal marsh habitat, grasslands, and oak woodlands. In addition to the high wildlife value contained within this parcel and the fish and wildlife values of the adjoining slough, the subject property may also provide recreational potential. Potential uses may include nature study, scientific research, and bird watching. The DFG currently manages the reserve and will include this property in the reserve for management purposes.

The owner has agreed to sell the property for the appraised, fair market value of \$630,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). It is estimated that an additional \$11,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related costs by the WCB, including the title and escrow fees and the DGS review costs, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$641,000.00. The purpose of this project, the protection of threatened and endangered species and a significant natural area, is consistent with the purposes of the proposed funding.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$641,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (b/c) for the acquisition and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Hunting that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$641,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (b/c) for the acquisition and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *13. Coachella Valley Ecological Reserve, Edom Hill Unit, \$5,000.00
Expansion 30, Riverside County

This proposal was to consider the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the authorization to enter into an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM) to be applied toward the acquisition of 320± acres in the Coachella Valley area of Riverside County for the protection of threatened and endangered species.

The project area is located in the Coachella Valley, approximately three miles north of Interstate Highway 10, and about two miles east of the City of Desert Hot Springs. Within a four mile radius of the subject property, there are a number of landowners protecting habitat including the CNLM, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, California State Parks, USFWS, and Friends of the Desert Mountains that combine to protect an area of about 20,000± acres.

The subject property is located in Edom Hill between the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG's) Coachella Valley Ecological Reserve (Reserve) near Thousand

Palms, and Willow Hole Ecological Reserve adjacent to Desert Hot Springs. This acquisition will allow for further protection of the desert sand habitat and the viability of the sand dependent species within the Coachella Valley.

The initial acquisition for the protection of the Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard and desert sand habitat began around 1982 through acquisitions by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and continues to grow through public and private acquisitions and exchanges. Development has been sporadic in the immediate area over the past 20 years and additional residential construction and development within the area is considered to be detrimental to the sand and desert habitat.

The DFG has identified this property as being critical to the protection of the Coachella Valley fringe-toed Lizard and has recommended the purchase of this property. When acquired, the acreage will be incorporated into, and managed in conjunction with other holdings of the CNLM. It is anticipated that the area could offer passive recreational uses, as the habitat is maintained as open space. The property is currently vacant, but has the potential for subdivision and residential development.

Preservation of the property as identified within the Edom Hill area will ensure the continued success of the Reserve and enhance the habitat for the Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard. This area also provides possible habitat for several other species that are found in the Coachella Valley including the flat-tailed horned lizard, Coachella Valley milk vetch, Palm Springs pocket mouse, Palm Springs ground squirrel, and the Coachella giant sand treader cricket.

The property owner has agreed to sell to the CNLM at the appraised fair market value of \$1,960,000.00, as approved by the State's Department of General Services (DGS). The proposed agreement to subgrant the federal funds provided by the USFWS Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant will provide \$1,470,000.00 toward the purchase price of the property. Additional funding contributions will be provided by the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (\$418,000.00) and the CNLM (\$72,000.00). It is estimated that \$5,000.00 will be needed for administrative expenses by the WCB, including appraisal review costs by the DGS, bringing the total recommended allocation for this proposal to \$5,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for grants to protect threatened and endangered species where the funding is leveraged with other funds or "in-kind" acquisitions, and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

The terms and conditions of the proposed agreement to subgrant provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for this property.

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

filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$1,470,000.00 and approve an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the Center for Natural Lands Management; allocate \$5,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5) for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Mr. Hunting that the Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$1,470,000.00 and approve an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the Center for Natural Lands Management; allocate \$5,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5) for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

14. Iron Mountain Wildlife Area, Monte Vista \$25,000.00
San Diego County

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the purchase of a 4,056± property in rural San Diego County to protect an expanse of relatively intact and undisturbed grasslands, upland chaparral, and riparian habitat that will promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species. The property will also provide linkages to adjacent public lands to prevent habitat fragmentation. Mr. Pat Dyas, Senior Land Agent, presented this project.

The property was initially purchased by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in 2005, using \$6,221,232.00 of its own funds and a \$9,700,000.00 subgrant from the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC), for a total purchase price of \$15,921,232.00. The funds granted by the SCC to TNC were initially funds the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) granted to the SCC to be applied toward acquisition within approved Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCPs), primarily located in San Diego County. Today, to facilitate the proposed acquisition of the TNC property by the State, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has provided a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant in the amount of \$6,221,232.00 to be accepted by the WCB and applied toward the purchase of the property. Staff has requested that the SCC and TNC release any and all rights under its grant agreement for this property.

Known as the Monte Vista Ranch, the subject property is located south of the unincorporated community of Ramona, in central San Diego County, along the border with the Barona Indian Reservation. It occupies a large part of the east-west wildlife

corridor along San Vicente Creek and its major tributary canyons (Daney Canyon and Long Gulch), as well as a high mesa and surrounding rocky highlands.

The property contains a diversity of vegetation types, including oak woodland, riparian forest, coastal sage scrub, vernal swales/pools, and chaparral. Biological surveys have revealed populations of the State and federally-listed least Bell's vireo, arroyo southwestern toad, and western spadefoot toad. The endangered San Diego thornmint and nine sensitive plant species, including Palmer's grappling hook, graceful tarplant, and Orcutt's quillwort have been observed on site. Mammal species detected include mountain lion, deer, bobcat, western spotted skunk, and ringtail. Numerous raptors, including golden eagle, red-shouldered hawk, and great horned owls, along with many other species of birds make their homes in the varied habitat. Preservation is critical to retaining the east-west wildlife corridor along San Vicente Creek and maintaining a linkage between Mount Gower Open Space Preserve and the conserved habitat to the west.

This property has long been identified as especially significant for preservation in conjunction with the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG's) NCCPs in San Diego County and the San Diego County's Multiple Species Conservation Plan. Its importance was also described in the DFG's Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) for the Iron Mountain Wildlife Area. TNC purchased the Monte Vista property in 2005 with the intention of preserving the area until it could be repurchased either by the County or by the DFG. A recently approved grant from the USFWS has now provided an opportunity for the State to purchase the property from TNC. A recent offer by the San Diego County Water Agency to acquire and donate an adjacent 392± acre improved parcel (housing and community facilities) as mitigation for work they will be performing at the nearby San Vicente Reservoir makes this acquisition particularly attractive to the DFG for the possible expansion of community outreach programs in the South Coast area.

This acquisition, along with the adjacent mitigation parcel will add a total of 4,449± acres of undeveloped land in an area threatened by continuing rural residential development. TNC will be donating back \$1,000,000.00 of the purchase price in the form of a permanent endowment, the income of which will help to support the maintenance and operation of the property. The County Water Agency will be providing an additional \$500,000.00 endowment to accompany the adjacent 392± acre mitigation lands.

The subject property was purchased by TNC in 2005 at an appraised value of \$15,921,232.00, as approved by the State's Department of General Services (DGS). TNC has agreed to sell the property to the State at the 2005 value. The DGS has recently re-reviewed and approved the appraisal, concluding that the value of the property remains at least as high as it was at the time of purchase, despite current fluctuations in the real estate market. TNC has offered to sell the property to the State at the 2005 appraised value, with the State compensating TNC for their investment of \$6,221,232.00. The USFWS has provided a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant in the sum of \$6,221,232.00 for that portion of the purchase price. The balance of the purchase, in the amount of \$9,700,000.00, reflects funding originally provided in a WCB grant to SCC, and which was

subsequently provided in a subgrant from SCC to TNC. Staff of the WCB has requested that the SCC and TNC release any and all rights under its grant agreement for this property.

It is estimated that \$25,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses by the WCB including title insurance expenses, escrow fees, and review charges by the DGS, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$25,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for the acquisition of real property in conjunction with Natural Community Conservation Plans approved by the Department of Fish and Game prior to January 1, 1999, and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$6,221,232.00 and use of the federal funds toward the acquisition; allocate \$25,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(6), for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Dyas introduced Mr. Cam Tredennick and Mr. Chris Basilevac of The Nature Conservancy's San Diego office, and Ms. Karen Miner of DFG's San Diego office, who were in the audience and available to address any questions.

Ms. Karen Finn inquired as to the reason for the delay in the State/County taking title to the property. Mr. Donnelly and Mr. Dyas responded, explaining that when TNC made the original purchase in 2005, the property owners had retained a 392± parcel, and public access to the property was inadequate. The San Diego County Water Agency has now purchased and donated this parcel as mitigation land. Mr. Donnelly added that, with the contribution of management costs (a \$1,000,000.00 endowment by TNC and a \$500,000.00 endowment by the San Diego County Water Agency), this acquisition has become particularly attractive.

It was moved by Mr. Hunting that the Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$6,221,232.00 and use of the federal funds toward the acquisition; allocate \$25,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(6), for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned

Motion carried.

15. Bluebird Preserve, Expansion 1 \$5,010,000.00
Los Angeles County

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider an allocation of a grant to the Trust for Public Land (TPL) for a project involving the acquisition of 262± acres of improved privately-owned land lying in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains in the northeasterly portion of the City of Glendora. This acquisition abuts and links a previously acquired property to the Glendora Wilderness Park and the Angeles National Forest. Joining the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and TPL in a partnership to accomplish this acquisition are the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, the City of Glendora, the County of Los Angeles, and the property owner. The project was presented by Senior Land Agent, Randy Nelson.

The purpose of this acquisition is the protection of the coastal sage scrub and oak woodlands plant communities along with the sensitive and endangered species potentially resident within this habitat. Sensitive plant species include a large identified area of federally-listed thread-leaved brodiaea. Other federal species of concern and/or California Native Plant Society List 1B species identified or expected to occur on the site include Plummer's mariposa lily, San Gabriel bedstraw, Robinsons's pepper grass, intermediate mariposa lily, many stemmed live-forever, southern California black walnut, San Gabriel Mountains leather oak, and pitcher sage.

The type of habitat that would be protected by this acquisition supports the federally-listed coastal California gnatcatcher and the State species of concern Cooper's hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, cactus wren, yellow warbler, coastal rufous-crowned sparrow, coast horned lizard, and mountain kingsnake. Mountain lions, black bear, and ring-tailed cat have been observed on the property along with more common plants and animals.

It is proposed that TPL take title initially, and then convey a conservation easement to the City of Glendora, and fee title encumbered with the conservation easement to the Glendora Community Conservancy for long term management of the property.

The property is appraised at \$11,310,000.00, and that fair market value has been approved by the State's Department of General Services (DGS). Funding contributors to this project are the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (\$5,500,000.00), the City of Glendora (\$350,000.00), the County of Los Angeles (\$250,000.00), and the sellers (\$210,000.00). A proposed grant from the WCB, in the amount of \$5,010,000.00, would provide TPL with the funding necessary to facilitate its acquisition of the subject property. It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed for administrative expenses by the WCB, bringing the total recommended allocation for the project to \$5,010,000.00. The proposed funding source for this project allows for grants to protect coastal wetlands and adjacent upland areas as identified in the State Coastal Conservancy's Southern California Coastal Wetlands Inventory and is consistent with the purposes of the project.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that staff of the WCB will

review and approve the property being proposed for acquisition by TPL. The grant further provides that staff will review all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into TPL's escrow account for the purchase of the property.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$5,010,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a), for the grant and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Nelson reported that the owner of the property, Mr. John Ferguson, and Mr. Brady Moss of the Trust for Public Land were in the audience should there be any questions.

Ms. Karen Finn asked about the extent and value of the improvements on the property. Mr. Nelson explained that the improvements, such as an older residence, were considered minor, and did not add significant value to the property. A management plan will be conducted by the Glendora Community Conservancy to determine the disposition of the residence.

It was moved by Mr. Hunting that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$5,010,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a), for the grant and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

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| 16. | Lower Owens River Basin Saltcedar Control Inyo County | \$600,000.00 |
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Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation of a grant to the County of Inyo Water Department for a partnership project with the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to remove the nonnative invasive plant, saltcedar, from the channel and adjacent floodplain lands of the Lower Owens River on property owned by the City of Los Angeles, and to restore native plant diversity in those areas. The project includes land from the Los Angeles Aqueduct in the north to the L.A. Aqueduct Pumpback Station located near the Owens River Delta. The project was presented by Public Land Management Specialist IV, Scott Clemons.

The Inyo County Water Department has previously received funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and the City of Los Angeles for the removal of saltcedar from the Lower Owens River channel (2001 and augmentation in 2004). As of April 2006, the saltcedar crew completed the removal of saltcedar on and adjacent to the river channel as far as the L.A. Aqueduct Pumpback Station at Owens Lake, a distance of approximately 60 miles, and covering an area of approximately 17,000 acres. That project was a key element in preparing the Lower Owens River channel for the rewatering and restoration of 62 miles of riparian and aquatic habitat. The release of flows to the dry portion of the channel began in December 2006.

The proposed project involves work over approximately 16,000 acres of floodplain land outside the previously treated areas. Saltcedar is the dominant vegetation type in approximately 4,000 acres of the project area. The riparian floodplain saltcedar was prioritized for removal because of the timing of rewatering and the immediate threat of increasing and spreading saltcedar with the onset of flows. While the majority of saltcedar has been removed from the floodplain immediately adjacent to the Lower Owens River channel, there remain populations of saltcedar on the Owens Valley floor that are a seed source for the reinfestation of the rewatered channel.

The goal of this project is to:

- Monitor and maintain previously cleared saltcedar worksites in and adjacent to the Lower Owens River channel.
- Reduce the remaining populations of tamarisk in the Lower Owens River Basin, prioritizing those closest to the river channel. It is anticipated that during the three-year implementation period covered by the proposed grant, the project will remove approximately 1,350 acres of monoculture saltcedar stands.
- Restore native plant diversity to cleared saltcedar monoculture sites (either through natural recolonization by natives or by active planting).
- Develop a long-term monitoring and maintenance protocol for invasives in the Lower Owens River Program area.

The project will utilize the following methods:

- Chainsaw and herbicide applications by the well-trained and proven Inyo County Saltcedar Crew.
- Mechanical mowing and chipping followed by systemic herbicide to resprouts.
- Biocontrol using the most successful of four genotypes of tamarisk beetles currently being tested in the Owens Valley.
- Appropriate management practices that favor desirable native plants over non-native species.
- Possible restoration or planting (grasses) to discourage other nonnative plant establishment.
- Any new and successful saltcedar control methods appropriate to these populations.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

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| Wildlife Conservation Board | \$600,000.00 |
| Los Angeles Department of Water & Power | 600,000.00 |
| Inyo County | <u>150,000.00</u> |
| TOTAL | \$1,350,000.00 |

Project costs will be for project management and labor, services, supplies, equipment, administration and contingencies. The County of Inyo has agreed to manage and maintain the project improvements for 25 years pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement. If at any time during the life of the project the County of Inyo is unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, they will refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, as the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency, prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Lower Owens River Project pursuant to the provisions of the CEQA. Staff considered the environmental effects of the project as shown in the EIR and prepared proposed, written findings to comply with CEQA.

This project is consistent with the uses allowed under the proposed funding sources, the Habitat Conservation Fund and the General Fund, which allow for restoration of riparian habitat.

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings, and the mitigation and monitoring plan, and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$400,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund [Section 2786 (e/f)] (P50) and \$200,000.00 from the General Fund (California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Clemons introduced audience members Ms. Denyse Racine of the DFG's Bishop office; Ms. Linda Arcularius of the Inyo County Board of Supervisors; Mr. Thomas Brooks, Director of the Inyo County Water Department; and Mr. Douglas Daniels, Program Manager, Inyo County Administrative Services.

Ms. Karen Finn asked about the requirements for monitoring the progress/success of the proposed project. Mr. Clemons replied that progress reports are required as part of the grant agreement, and invoices submitted throughout the grant period are to include summaries of work performed. In addition, a final report (including photographic documentation) is required at the end of the three-year grant period.

Ms. Linda Arcularius, Supervisor of Inyo County's first district, made a brief statement in support of the proposed project. Serving her fourth term in office, she has been familiar with saltcedar removal/native plant restoration efforts since their infancy, and

expressed her appreciation to the Board for its support and shared vision.

Mr. Brooks presented a slide show which illustrated the processes and progress of saltcedar removal and river restoration. For example, three-man crews cut down the invasive plants, remove the slash and apply herbicide, while preserving the native vegetation. He reported that 62 miles on both sides of the river have been restored, and that this has been accomplished at below projected costs. This is the largest river restoration project in the West, and Mr. Brooks described the comeback of the vegetation, habitat, and wildlife as “astounding,” with the previously choked channel flowing again for the first time in nearly 100 years. He provided details on seasonal flows and releases and described “rapid-assessment” river monitoring, which documents the benefits and impacts of the restoration efforts, and is important for future management. Mr. Brooks reported that their greatest hope is that the river will push back the desert, and that their greatest fear is that the river will act as a vector for tamarisk seedlings. He thanked the WCB for its tremendous support, which he described as critical to their efforts since the restoration project was conceived.

Mr. Hunting moved that the Board adopt the written findings, and the mitigation and monitoring plan, and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$400,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (e/f) (P50) and \$200,000.00 from the General Fund (California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

17. Pine Hill Ecological Reserve, Salmon Falls Unit, Expansion 5 \$110,000.00
El Dorado County

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation of a grant to the American River Conservancy (Conservancy) to assist in the acquisition of 80± acres of vacant land in El Dorado County, the acceptance of a Recovery Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the authorization to enter into an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the Conservancy to be applied toward the purchase. This proposal was also to consider the authorization to accept title to the subject property from the Conservancy on behalf of the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) as an addition to the Salmon Falls Unit of the Pine Hill Ecological Reserve (Reserve). The project was presented by Senior Land Agent Randy Nelson.

The Reserve lies about five miles northeast of urban El Dorado Hills, six miles east of Folsom Lake, and about two miles north of the town of Rescue. The Reserve is a cooperative effort among the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), the Conservancy, the BLM, and the DFG. These partners hope that the Reserve will one day encompass as much as 5,000 acres. While most of the existing Reserve is under the ownership of BLM, the area is managed cooperatively by the partners listed above. To date, nearly 2,000 acres have been acquired at this Reserve either by action of the WCB, as mitigation through the Fish and Game Commission, or through transactions completed by the BLM or the Conservancy. The subject property abuts BLM lands on

the west.

The area's unique gabbroic soil type supports an extremely rich and important ensemble of rare plants found only in this general area of the world. The predominant vegetation type in this area is chamise chaparral which is primarily composed of chamise, manzanita, redbud, and interior live oak. The property supports four rare species: Layne's ragwort (federally-listed as "threatened"), red hill soaproot, Bisbee Peak rush rose, and El Dorado mule ears. These species are all endemic to the Pine Hill area of El Dorado County and are found to grow only in very specific locations within that area. According to the DFG, wildlife in this area includes resident deer and mountain lion, as well as numerous game birds, including dove, quail, and wild turkey.

This area is seriously threatened by the building of upscale homes on small acreage lots, especially those lots on or near ridge-tops (i.e. with views), which also happen to be the areas preferred by the four endemic rare plants listed above. Few such lots are left, resulting in a fast-paced market, and therefore very little habitat is left for purchase.

It is proposed that the Conservancy complete the acquisition and hold title to the property until transferring it to the DFG, after the DFG and the BLM reach an agreement for BLM's management of the subject property. The area will be managed as an ecological reserve by the management group with limited public access, and with the primary management goal of maintaining and protecting the existing populations of rare and endangered plants.

The Conservancy proposes to purchase the property from the owner at the appraised fair market value of \$520,000.00, as approved by the State's Department of General Services (DGS). The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has approved a grant to the Conservancy providing \$95,000.00 toward the acquisition. The WCB will help to fund the balance of the purchase price with a proposed agreement to subgrant the federal grant funds provided by the USFWS Recovery Land Acquisition Grant in the sum of \$318,750.00, together with a proposed \$106,250.00 grant from the WCB. It is estimated that an additional \$3,750.00 will be needed to cover administrative expenses by the WCB, including the DGS review costs, bringing the total recommended allocation for this proposal to \$110,000.00. The purpose of this project, the protection of threatened and endangered species, is consistent with the purposes of this funding.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grants to the Conservancy provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve the property being proposed for acquisition by the Conservancy. The grants further provide that staff will review all proposed acquisition-related documents prior to recommending disbursement of the USFWS funds and the WCB funds directly into escrow.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Recovery Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$318,750.00 and approve an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the American River Conservancy; allocate \$110,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650, for the grant and internal project-related expenses; authorize acceptance of title to the subject property from the Conservancy on behalf of the DFG; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Rogers asked whether there were any questions or comments. There were none.

It was moved by Mr. Hunting that the Board approve this project as proposed; accept the Recovery Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$318,750.00 and approve an agreement to subgrant the federal funds to the American River Conservancy; allocate \$110,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650, for the grant and internal project-related expenses; authorize acceptance of title to the subject property from the Conservancy on behalf of the DFG; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

18. Feather River Wildlife Area Riparian Habitat Restoration, \$781,460.00
Abbott Lake Unit
Sutter County

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation of a grant to River Partners for a partnership project with Ducks Unlimited and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to restore approximately 169 acres of riparian habitat and enhance approximately 250 acres of existing riparian forest on the Abbott Lake Unit of the Feather River Wildlife Area, which is State land managed by the DFG. The project is located on the west bank of the Feather River approximately nine miles downstream from Yuba City and 0.3 miles north of the O'Connor Lakes Unit, in Sutter County. The project was presented by Public Land Management Specialist IV Scott Clemons.

The 439-acre Abbott Lake Unit is part of the 2,522 acre Feather River Wildlife Area, and was acquired by the Board in 1985-86. Since acquisition, the property has become very popular with local hunters and anglers, providing a quality hunting experience for quail and deer, while the lake yields bass, bluegill and crappie. The area is also popular for hiking, birdwatching, etc. Access to the property is from the parking lot at the end of Star Bend Road, and a short walk north on the levee road.

The Abbott Lake Unit's riparian habitat is fragmented and degraded. This occurred in the 1960's when the land was partially cleared for orchard development. The orchard,

located in an active floodplain, proved to be unsustainable and was abandoned. During the intervening years, pockets of cottonwood, black locust and sandbar willow have reestablished themselves in part of the area that was cleared for agriculture; however, most of this self-generated habitat took place in the northern half of the Unit. This left a large area of low quality, mainly invasive weed species located between the remnant riparian forest and the self-generating new pockets of cottonwood, locust and willows. Without intervention, nonnative plants are likely to continue dominating the disturbed areas, resulting in a very long recovery period for the property.

The project will restore 169 acres of riparian habitat and enhance an additional 250 acres of existing riparian forest that was invaded by nonnative plant species. River Partners will design and install a native plant community on the disturbed areas at Abbott Lake. This design will incorporate plant species that will minimize recurring costs incurred by the Department of Water Resources for floodway maintenance. Previous experience on the O'Connor Lakes Unit has shown that it is possible to develop a "flood-neutral" planting design that will allow for efficient water conveyance through the Abbott Lake Unit without impacting downstream properties or levees. The project includes the following objectives:

- Establish self-sustaining native plant communities within a three-year period (includes irrigation and weed control)
- Plant over 23,000 native trees, shrubs and vines
- Reduce extent of invasive weeds by planting a dense, herbaceous understory
- Remove invasive weeds from existing riparian forest areas
- Monitor plants at the end of each growing season
- Evaluate project using adaptive management

This project will provide habitat for Federal and State-listed species including, but not limited to the Swainson's hawk, western yellow-billed cuckoo, Chinook salmon, steelhead trout, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, and will benefit other wildlife species, with particular emphasis on neotropical birds, waterfowl and upland game birds.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

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|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Wildlife Conservation Board | \$781,460.00 |
| Ducks Unlimited, Inc. | 106,190.00 |
| River Partners (In-kind) | <u>56,830.00</u> |
| TOTAL | \$944,480.00 |

Project costs will be for project management, planning, site preparation, irrigation system installation, planting, support of plants, monitoring administration, installation of a sign and administration.

The Department of Fish Game has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Wildlife Conservation 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 in land and vegetation on an existing officially designated wildlife area to improve habitat for fish and wildlife. Subject to approval by the Board, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. This project is consistent with the uses allowed under the proposed funding source, the Habitat Conservation Fund, which allows for restoration of riparian habitat.

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$781,460.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund Section (Prop. 117), 2786 (e/f); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Clemons introduced Mr. David Neubert, the San Joaquin Valley Regional Director of River Partners and Mr. Armand Gonzales of the Department of Fish and Game's North Central Region, who were in the audience and available to answer questions.

Ms. Karen Finn posed a question regarding the type of irrigation system to be used. Mr. Neubert reported that a drip system using well water would be implemented, and that there are abandoned wells that still need to be located.

Mr. Donnelly stated that letters of support had been received from Mr. Francis Silva, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Levee District #1 of Sutter County, and from Mr. Donald Rivers, Conservation Chair of the Sierra Foothills Audubon Society.

It was moved by Mr. Hunting that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$781,460.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund Section (Prop. 117), 2786 (e/f); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

At this time, Mr. Rogers introduced Mr. Antonio Ortega, alternate for Senator Abel Maldonado of the Legislative Advisory Committee.

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| 19. | Truckee River Wildlife Area, Gray Creek Canyon Unit Nevada County | \$15,000.00 |
|-----|--|-------------|

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the donation of three parcels of land totaling 1,343± acres to the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) by the Truckee Donner Land Trust (TDLT). Contiguous to the Union Ice Unit of the Truckee River Wildlife Area, the proposed conveyance will put the entire Gray Creek watershed into contiguous public entity ownership for long-term management of vegetation, wildlife habitat, fisheries, and water quality resources, and will provide important habitat and corridor connectivity for a number of game species. All three parcels are directly upstream and in the watershed of the Truckee River, and will contribute to improving its water quality. He introduced Senior Land Agent, Bob Clark, who presented this project.

Located approximately ten miles east of the town of Truckee on the California-Nevada state boundary line, the acquisition of the property was accomplished through a partnership effort of TDLT, the Trust for Public Land, and the Truckee River Watershed Council, and was made possible by a Resources Legacy Foundation Fund – Preserving Wild California grant, the Nevada County – Wilson Bequest Fund, and funds provided by TDLT.

The riparian corridor and high altitude mountain peaks and meadows support classic eastern slope Sierra Nevada flora and fauna, and mark a transition from habitats of the Sierra Nevada Range to those of the Great Basin. The property provides habitat and corridor connectivity for a number of important species, including mule deer, mountain lion, black bear, blue grouse, and California quail. The federally-listed threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout have had populations in Gray Creek and the Truckee River, both considered important waterways to the recovery of this native species.

DFG proposes to manage the property for the protection of the natural values of the Truckee River watershed by providing contiguous public lands to sustain critical deer migration and wildlife habitat; to protect and enhance the riparian resources, water quality and fisheries; and to protect and maintain angling, hunting and other recreational uses of the property. Operation and management costs of the property will be minimal because of its remoteness and limited access. The DFG plans to incorporate the costs of passive management into existing budgets and staffing. Additionally, TDLT has agreed to provide an endowment of \$10,000.00 for initial costs as a condition of the conveyance.

It is estimated that approximately \$15,000.00 will be required to cover project-related expenses by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), including but not limited to the DGS appraisal review costs, environmental review, and transaction review, bringing the total recommended allocation for this project to \$15,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for the acquisition of land to protect deer and mountain lion habitat and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board accept the donation of this property as proposed; allocate \$15,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786(a) for internal project-related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

interpretive opportunities.

The proposed project was presented by Teri Muzik, Senior Land Agent. She introduced Ms. Wendy Eliot, Conservation Director for the Sonoma Land Trust, who was in the audience and available to address any questions.

The property is located in southern Sonoma County, approximately eight miles south of the City of Sonoma, six miles southwest of Novato, seven miles northwest of Petaluma and 12 miles northeast of Napa, in unincorporated Sonoma County. Direct access to the property is via a dirt ranch road from Highway 121. The property is flanked on the north and south by protected lands. To the north the property borders the newly established 1,737 acre Tolay Lake Regional Park, the largest natural freshwater lake in Sonoma County, and the only remaining one in the San Pablo Bay watershed. The Infineon Raceway property, a large portion of which is protected by a conservation easement held by the District, is to the southeast.

Acquisition of the subject property represents a unique, unprecedented opportunity to ensure essential landscape-level habitat linkages in the Baylands Ecosystem. Protection of this 1,657± acre property will connect the recently acquired 1,737± acre Tolay Lake Regional Park to the DFG's Napa-Sonoma Marsh and conservation parcels linked to San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge, all part of a mosaic of over 21,000 acres of protected lands.

Acquisition of this property will provide permanent protection of wintering and refuge habitat for a variety of resident or nesting special status species, including the western burrowing owl, the California red-legged frog, Callippe's silverspot butterfly, Myrtle's silverspot butterfly, and Opler's longhorn moth, the northwestern pond turtle, white tailed kit, California horned lark, and the northern harrier. A golden eagle nesting site has also been found on the property. Several special status plant species found in the immediate vicinity include fragrant fritillary, Franciscan onion, Napa false indigo, alkali milk-vetch, Marin western flax, Jepson's leptosiphon, and Marin checkerbloom.

The DFG has identified this project as being critical to the integrity and connectivity of diverse habitats from San Pablo Bay to the headwaters of Tolay Creek in the Sonoma foothills, contributing significantly to the sustainability of adjacent conservation efforts. The Land Trust will hold title to the property for a period of two to four years, and then intends to transfer it to the Sonoma County Regional Parks for annexation to the Tolay Lake Regional Park. The District will be granted a conservation easement after the Land Trust takes title to the property.

The Land Trust has negotiated a bargain sale of the property. The property is appraised at \$14,086,000.00, and that value has been approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The landowners have agreed to sell the property for \$13,000,000.00. Funding contributions are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| The Moore Foundation | \$4,750,000.00 |
| State Coastal Conservancy | \$3,000,000.00 |

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation And Open Space District | \$2,000,000.00 |
| Sonoma Land Trust | \$250,000.00 |
| Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) | <u>\$3,000,000.00</u> |
| TOTAL | \$13,000,000.00 |

It is estimated that an additional \$20,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related costs by the WCB, including appraisal review charges by the DGS, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$3,020,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for grants to protect threatened and endangered species and significant natural landscapes, and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,020,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (b/c) (Prop. 50SF), for the grant and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Donnelly stated that letters of support were received from Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey of the U.S. House of Representatives; Senator Carol Migden of the California State Senate; Assemblymember Jared Huffman of the California State Assembly; Ms. Valerie Brown of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors; Ms. Christy Smith, Refuge Manager of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service); and Mr. Arthur Feinstein, Chair of the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture.

Mr. Donnelly also reported that he received an email from the California Outdoor Heritage Alliance expressing concern at the possible loss of hunting opportunities and, more generally, the fear of an unknown future. Mr. Donnelly addressed these concerns, stating that cooperative working relationships between the various partners and the public would be encouraged, and should take into account all possible uses and/or recreational opportunities afforded by public ownership, including hunting. Mr. Rogers stated that he shares this view.

Mr. Hunting conveyed the concerns expressed by John McCamman, the Acting Director of the DFG, relating to public access, the possible loss of hunting opportunities, and appropriate uses of the proposed acquisition. He described the perception that public ownership results in an erosion of public access and a loss of

hunting opportunities. He gave assurances that these concerns will remain 'on the radar' and that, as public ownership increases, the DFG is committed to engaging others with regard to appropriate land uses. Mr. Rogers stated that the Fish and Game Commission shares this commitment as well.

Mr. Hunting moved that the Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,020,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (b/c) (Prop. 50SF), for the grant and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

22. Staff Report - Ecosystem Restoration on Agricultural Lands (ERAL) Statewide Informational

Mr. Donnelly reported that this item was to provide information on the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Ecosystem Restoration on Agricultural Lands (ERAL) funding guidelines. The guidelines have been developed to guide the investment of \$5,000,000.00 in funding made available to the WCB under the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act (Proposition 84), Chapter 6 (d)(4), to "Assist Farmers in Integrating Agricultural Activities with Ecosystem Restoration and Wildlife Protection." The project was presented by Dave Means, Assistant Executive Director.

Mr. Means discussed the background analysis and the processes of developing the program. He explained that federal programs exist under the Farm Bill, but that the State currently has no effective way of reaching out to farming interests to protect wildlife habitats and species. Rather than utilizing the bond funds through existing WCB restoration programs, the consensus among the partnering agencies was to create specific goals and guidelines. The partnering agencies were listed in the video presentation.

This funding provides an opportunity for the WCB to work with farmers to enhance wildlife habitat on their working farms, consistent with their ongoing agricultural operations. The WCB's goal is to identify and implement, in collaboration with the agricultural community, projects that provide long-term habitat benefits for wildlife, while maintaining the economic sustainability of the agricultural operations. In addition, the WCB is looking to identify projects that have the potential to be replicated across a variety of regions in the state.

There are nearly 30,000,000 acres of farm and ranch land in California, more than half of the private land in State. Private farm and ranch lands provide the economic foundation for many rural towns and communities, as well as significant habitat for many wildlife species and habitat connectivity between protected wildlife areas. The extent to which these lands benefit wildlife depends to a large degree on the stewardship practices undertaken by individual landowners. Many agricultural landowners want to integrate

wildlife habitat benefits into their operations, but lack the capital to install, funding to manage, and in some cases, the expertise to implement and monitor wildlife-beneficial agricultural activities.

The intent of the WCB's funding is to assist landowners in developing wildlife friendly practices on their properties, practices that can be sustained and co-exist with their agricultural operations. This funding may provide a valuable complement to federal funds that will be devoted to wildlife habitat on private lands, including federal conservation programs supported by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Bureau of Reclamation, as well as other privately funded initiatives that are under development or in early stages of implementation. In recent years, federal programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (USDA) and Landowner Incentives Program (USFWS) have become critical sources of funding to support landowner investments.

This program builds on a previous funding effort from the Resources Agency – the California Bay-Delta Authority's 2005 grant program for "Integrating Agricultural Activities with Ecosystem Restoration". This program was focused on specific priority areas highlighted by the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program (including watersheds in the Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Bay-Delta Regions), and several key species that CALFED had a responsibility for benefiting in this area. Stakeholder input was derived through the Bay Delta Public Advisory Committee's Working Landscapes Subcommittee, which provided extensive input and feedback to develop the program and to determine what types of restoration projects should be evaluated and considered for funding.

The Department of Fish and Game's 2007 Wildlife Action Plan also highlights the importance of improving habitat benefits of private farm and range lands. One statewide conservation action highlighted in that plan specifically addresses the importance of wildlife improvements on private working lands:

- Federal, state, and local agencies and nongovernmental conservation organizations, working with private landowners, should expand efforts to implement agricultural and rangeland management practices that are compatible with wildlife and habitat conservation.

This grant program provides an important opportunity for the department to advance this important statewide strategy in conjunction with state and federal partners as well as non-profit conservation and agricultural organizations, and private landowners.

To develop the WCB's objectives for his effort, the WCB worked with a number of the staff and stakeholders with intimate knowledge of wildlife habitat practices that can be successfully implemented in an agricultural context, including many involved in the development of the CALFED program. The resulting guidelines expand on the ideas, concepts and approaches developed under CALFED into a statewide funding strategy for the WCB "Ecosystem Restoration on Agricultural Lands" (ERAL) funds. WCB also sought the input of other agricultural groups and organizations involved in the research and development of multi-benefit land use practices that sustain both biodiversity and farming operations. This included the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, the California Department of Conservation, along with a host of other federal, state and non-profit

organizations working in the area of agricultural conservation. The overall response has been very positive and supportive, along with a general consensus that this type of state funding is needed and has been along-time in coming.

Through this collaborative effort, the WCB developed the following required criteria:

- All projects must be located on privately owned, agricultural land where agriculture is a major land-use activity, and have a willing property owner.
- All projects must provide on-site habitat benefits to wildlife.
- All projects must be durable and include a long-term management plan and agreement that ensures that habitat features will remain on the landscape for a time period commensurate with wildlife population needs (e.g., projects undertaken on lands with agricultural or conservation easements).

In addition, the following measures were identified to make projects more desirable and competitive:

- The project provides on-site habitat benefits to State or Federal listed species and/or species of special concern or species on the brink of being listed.
- The project provides enhancement of, connection to, or expansion of wildlife habitat corridors, landscapes or other protected areas.
- The project includes a long-term monitoring plan to measure wildlife benefits, and operates in an adaptive management framework where data collection guides future management actions
- The project is located on land already protected or that will be protected with a long-term contract or easement (agriculture or conservation).
- The project complements other conservation programs, plans or strategies in the area, including, but not limited to HCP or NCCP, in the area.
- The project works with multiple landowners in the same area to provide wildlife habitat benefits on a landscape scale.
- The project provides watershed benefits.
- The project employs methodologies or approaches that can be replicated, expanded and applied in multiple agricultural areas of the state, or other programs run by other federal or state entities. This includes innovative approaches or methods that can help streamline processes, such as regulatory or permit processes, and facilitate the implementation of other similar projects.
- The project is compatible with other sustainable conservation measures.
- The project includes other funding partners in the development or implementation of the project.
- Although there is no set “cap” on the amount of funding that can be requested through the application process, project funding request less than \$250,000, are more desirable, with those closer to \$100,000 or less, being the most desirable.

- The project demonstrates collaboration with other wildlife and agricultural interest groups, agencies or programs operating in the region and, if appropriate, at the statewide level.

The following list, while not intended to be all-inclusive, provides examples of the types of projects that the WCB envisions would qualify for these funds. The WCB anticipates that there may be many other types of projects submitted, and encourages innovation in the development of proposal.

- Habitat restoration and enhancement of water corridors, streams, ditches, canals, tail water and return basins and ponds on agricultural lands.
- Vegetated filter strips, hedgerows and other wildlife buffers.
- Development of wetland areas.
- Riparian and floodplain restoration.
- Fencing to protect and enhance native habitats.
- Restoration and enhancement of native grasslands.
- Cover cropping with direct wildlife benefits.
- Agricultural habitat management activities that provide significant environmental co-benefits including water quality improvements, greenhouse gas reduction, etc.

Eligible applicants will include nonprofit conservation organizations and federal, state or local governmental agencies, including eligible resource conservation districts, agricultural land trusts, county agricultural commissions and farm bureaus. The process for submittal and review of project proposals and applications will be similar to the WCB's other restoration programs, where applications are accepted and reviewed on an open and continuous process, with DFG assisting in the review and recommendation process. Project proponents will be able to apply for funding using the WCB's Restoration Funding Application, that is used for the WCB's restoration programs, including the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program, Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and the Inland Wetland Conservation Program. All the above information will be posted on the WCB's web page, along with a broadcast notice to all interested parties and stakeholders.

Considering the importance of agricultural properties in supporting wildlife species in California and the connectivity of these lands with wildlife areas, corridors and linkages, the WCB sees this funding as an great opportunity to not only develop new and innovative approaches to integrate agricultural activities with ecosystem conservation, but equally important as a way to collaborate and develop new partnerships with the agricultural community.

Mr. Rogers commented that some landowners may be more willing to participate than others. Viewing the list of partnering agencies in the video presentation, he asked whether the Farm Bureau was also a partner. Mr. Donnelly confirmed this.

Ms. Finn asked about the potential applicants to the program. Mr. Means replied that non-profit entities and State and other governmental agencies were eligible to apply for funding as dictated by the requirements of the bond fund, but the program will focus on private entities. In addition, State funding could be leveraged by the use of federal funding. The eligible applicants would work directly with landowners to implement projects.

Mr. Ortega asked whether the \$5,000,000.00 in bond funds would be a one-time funding opportunity, whether any of that funding has been tapped thus far, and about the WCB's outreach efforts. Mr. Means explained that the one-time funding has not been tapped. In addition to federal and non-profit outreach efforts, and word-of-mouth within agricultural communities, the WCB will employ press releases and email outreach. There have also been discussions with Regional Conservation Districts (RCDs) regarding outreach.

Mr. Rogers acknowledged the widespread outreach of the Farm Bureau, but noted that partnering agencies such as those listed in the video presentation don't have daily contact with the average farmer. Citing the 'flood' of funding opportunities and other assistance provided by CALFED (such as those afforded to delta rice farmers), he stressed the need for careful outreach throughout the State to avoid already-saturated entities/programs.

Mr. Donnelly stressed that the ERAL Program is not the WCB's only funding opportunity for working with agricultural landowners and cited the Rangeland, Grazing Land, and Grasslands Program, as well as statewide California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program and Inland Wetlands Conservation Program. He noted that the WCB has extensive experience with these types of programs, and with the necessary outreach efforts. He added that WCB's reliance on third party outreach is due to the small size of the organization.

Mr. Hunting, commenting on behalf of the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), spoke about the idea of providing 'safe harbor' incentives/mechanisms and long-term assurances for farmers to encourage their participation. He stated that the DFG is committed and working toward that end through a small group of Conservation Incentive Programs, including ERAL.

Mr. Williams asked why the program was limited to privately-owned agricultural entities, and whether the DFG's Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area would be precluded from applying for ERAL funding. Mr. Means replied that the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area would not be eligible under the current guidelines. He explained that discussions with groups representing agricultural communities concluded that there was a need to keep the scope of the program focused on private landowners.

Mr. Rogers asked whether there were any further questions or comments. There were none.

23. Staff Report - Forest Conservation Program Adopt Program
Statewide

Mr. Donnelly introduced Marilyn Cundiff, Program Manager, who presented this project.

Ms. Cundiff described the development pressures that threaten California's forestlands such as urbanization, the building of ranchettes, and conversion of land for vineyards. These pressures, combined with projected population increases, threaten the health and economic viability of forests, water resources, and wildlife habitat.

On November 7, 2006, the people of California passed the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006, commonly referred to as Proposition 84 (Bond Act). As part of the people's initiative, the Act continuously appropriated \$180 million to the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), for a grant program for forest conservation and protection projects.

The Bond Act (Public Resources Code Section 75055 [a]), states that the goals of the grant program are to promote the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests for all their public benefits through forest conservation, preservation, and restoration of productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas, redwood forests, and other forest types, including the conservation of water resources and natural habitats for native fish, wildlife and plants found on these lands.

As reflected in the Bond Act, California's majestic forests provide a wide range of public and private benefits including recreational opportunities, habitat for fish and wildlife species, open space, scenic vistas, and commodity products crucial to California's economic wellbeing. California forestlands and ecosystems are unique and their ability to meet biological, ecological, economic, cultural, and social functions has long been a priority. Since 1864, when Abraham Lincoln signed the Yosemite Grant setting aside Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias as a State Supervised Public Reserve, Californians have cherished and protected their forests. In 1906, encouraged by a group of private influential California residents, Yosemite became a National Park.

California has about 85 million acres of forestlands, of which about half are in private ownership and range in size, species, and levels of tree canopy. According to the State Department of Finance, by the year 2040, California's population is projected to increase from 35 million people to more than 50 million. Faced with projected population increases, associated urban expansion and the continual increase in the number and size of rural ranchettes, California is at risk of losing a unique resource that provides tremendous economic, social, environmental, ecological, and cultural benefits to all the people of California.

In response to increased threats, the people of California voted to authorize a \$180 million grant program to promote the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests for all their public benefits. To help it achieve the purposes of the program, the WCB convened an advisory group to assist with the development of the Forest Conservation Program. The advisory group was comprised

of registered foresters, private landowners and industry representatives, forest managers, and representatives from the following organizations: Pacific Forest Trust, Save the Redwoods League, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, UC Cooperative Extension, UC Berkeley School of Forestry, Sierra Business Council, economic forest consultants, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, California Council of Land Trusts, Resources Agency, Department of Fish and Game, CAL FIRE, and the WCB.

The advisory group, a diverse and dedicated group of talented and passionate individuals, envisioned a Forest Conservation Program that is accountable, meets the intent of the Bond Act, and is responsive to the needs of the people of California, the forest ecosystem, private landowners and their working landscapes. To achieve this ambitious goal, four, all day workshops were convened and the advisory group worked to develop the program guidelines and selection criteria. While the workshop discussions were at times challenging and controversial, the advisory group played a critical role in assisting the WCB develop the Forest Conservation Program.

To create a grant program designed to protect, restore, and enhance forestlands and working landscapes responsive to the ecological, economic, and biological attributes of the forest ecosystem, guiding principles were developed. The principles, used in conjunction with the eligibility and selection criteria, will assist applicants to prepare project proposals that are responsive to the Bond Act language and purpose of the grant program.

To further ensure the best proposals are considered for funding from the Forest Conservation Program, the WCB will accept project proposals on a continuous basis, however; the proposals will only be evaluated during defined periods. Specifically, proposals will be evaluated in late January and early June. Proposals will be evaluated by the WCB staff and an independent team of Resource Agency professionals (with biological and forestry expertise).

Project proposals will be ranked and prioritized against the program guidelines and selection criteria. If the project merits further consideration by the WCB, applicants will be notified as appropriate. Applications that are complete and meet the minimum eligibility requirements will be reviewed against the following guiding principles, guidelines and selection criteria:

Forest Conservation Guiding Principles

- Working forests/productive managed forestlands shall be the primary emphasis of the Forest Conservation Program.
- Forest reserve areas are an important component of California's diverse native forests and shall be part of the Forest Conservation Program.
- Each project must promote the restoration and/or the maintenance of the ecological integrity and economic stability of the property in the context of the surrounding landscape and regional economy.

- The project application must articulate in sufficient detail how the project relates to an existing regional, state or local public or private planning process if applicable, and address the local priority and ecological need.
- Restoration efforts shall contribute toward the ecological integrity and economic stability of the native forest. Restoration projects must demonstrate the long-term protection of the restoration effort and be tied to the forest structure and sustainability. A long-term agreement to manage the restoration effort must coincide with the useful life of the improvements and restoration practices.
- Projects will be evaluated based on a process that ranks and prioritizes project applications based on how the project contributes toward the program goal, guidelines, and selection criteria.
- Future management activities and or restoration investment should be from committed or clearly identified and articulated funding sources to be considered part of the project.
- Overall accomplishment of the program goals can best be achieved through projects that provide the greatest economic efficiency by using the best available tool. Applicants must clearly state the objectives of the project and describe how the project will achieve the stated objectives.

In addition to the guiding principles, eligibility and selection criteria were developed. The eligibility criteria will be used to evaluate which project proposals meet minimum qualification requirements and should be considered for further evaluation. Specifically, the following project eligibility criteria were developed:

Project Eligibility Requirements

1. Acquisition of any interest in real property must be from a willing seller, supported by an appraisal [performed by a qualified, licensed, appraiser] that utilizes private market based assumptions consistent with State and if applicable, Federal appraisal standards. The interest must be held by an eligible and qualified entity.
2. The project must meet the goals of the Forest Conservation Program.
3. Project must protect and/or restore native forests on the property.
4. Restoration efforts must demonstrate a long-term commitment and agreement to manage and protect the ecological integrity of the forest consistent with the goals and guiding principles of the program. Landowners will be required to sign a long-term agreement to manage the restoration project for the useful life of the restoration effort.

For all project proposals that meet the minimum eligibility requirements, project selection criteria will be applied to elicit additional information from the applicant that further describes the merits and value of the proposal. The project application will request information to measure the proposal's compliance with and contribution toward the minimum eligibility requirements and guiding principles. Further, applicants will be

requested to explain the project goals and objectives and how the project will contribute toward each of the selection criteria, including the larger landscape, regional, and local conservation effort. In addition, the selection criteria will measure how well the project contributes toward the ecological integrity, economic stability, and efficiency of the forest. Finally, applicants will be requested to explain how they will measure and determine the success of the proposed project, and how the stated goals and objectives will be achieved.

To further assist staff and the independent review team with the evaluation of proposed projects, applications that are complete and meet the minimum eligibility requirements will be reviewed against the following selection criteria:

Project Selection Criteria -- 2 Phase Selection Review Process

Phase I: All proposals must demonstrate the ecological integrity of the property and its surrounding landscape and discuss the economic stability and address the economic efficiency of the project.

1. Project must advance ecological integrity of the property and its surrounding landscape.
2. Project must advance economic stability of the forest.
3. Project must address economic efficiency, and in consideration of such, will be evaluated for its ability to leverage as feasible:
 - (a) Private and philanthropic investment funds to reduce overall public funding and/or underwrite the productive economic value of the property.
 - (b) Multiple public funding sources, especially non-state funding, as feasible in the project area.
4. Project applications requesting funds for the acquisition of fee interests, conservation easement interests, and/or restoration efforts shall be weighed and compared against the possible lower expenditures associated with alternative options that could achieve the proposed objectives consistent with the Guiding Principles and Eligibility Requirements that will achieve most or all of the designated program goals.

Phase II: Proposals that also address one or more factors outlined in the Bond Act (Proposition 84) will be given additional consideration.

5. An acquisition or restoration project funded from the Forest Conservation Program must demonstrate one or more of the following characteristics:
 - (a) Landscape/Habitat Linkages: Properties that link to, or contribute to linking existing protected areas with other large blocks of protected habitat. Linkages must serve to connect existing protected areas, facilitate wildlife movement or botanical transfer, and result in sustainable combined acreage.
 - (b) Watershed Protection: Projects that contribute to long-term protection of and improvement to the water and biological quality of the streams,

aquifers, and terrestrial resource of priority watersheds of the major biological regions of the state as identified by the Resources Agency.

- (c) Properties that support relatively large areas of under-protected major habitat types. For projects funded from the Forest Conservation Program, the habitat types must be forestlands.
 - (d) Properties that provide habitat linkages between two or more major biological regions of the states.
 - (e) Properties for which there is a non-state matching contribution toward the acquisition, restoration, stewardship or management costs. Matching contribution can be either monetary or in the form of services, including volunteer services. In-kind or voluntary services will be converted to a monetary value at market rates. For purposes of the Forest Conservation Program, this option is supplemental to the economic requirements outlined in the eligibility requirements and the selection criteria.
6. Project may conserve, restore or provide one or more of the following:
- (a) Rare or threatened native fish and wildlife habitat.
 - (b) Conserve or restore old growth forests.
 - (c) Protects/restores native forests, including forests producing wood and related forest products that support sustainable native forest ecosystems and local economies.
 - (d) Provides public recreation access that is compatible with forest ecosystems and economic uses.

Climate Benefits

As part of the Administration's effort to develop strategies to address the impacts of climate change and to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the WCB is working with the Resources Agency and the Forest Climate Action Team (Forest CAT) subgroup. Resources Agency and the Forest CAT subgroup is working to identify opportunities and strategies on how the forest sector can reduce and/or sequester greenhouse gas emissions.

The Forest Conservation Program may be able to contribute toward this effort. To the extent the forest grant program can facilitate opportunities that are consistent with the Forest CAT subgroup strategies, WCB will encourage such opportunities through its grant program. Working with the Resources Agency, WCB staff will continue to assist with opportunities that compliment the Administration's effort to address the impacts of climate change and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Moreover, pursuant to the provisions of Fish and Game Code Section 1356, (Chapter 469, Statutes of 2007), the WCB, when it prioritizes the use of available funds for proposed acquisitions, with regard to the priority of a proposal to acquire forestland, may consider and take into account the potential of that proposed acquisition to beneficially reduce or sequester greenhouse gas emissions. The law further states that the WCB may use policies, protocols, or other relevant information developed by the

California Climate Action Registry as a basis for determining a project's potential to reduce or sequester greenhouse gas emissions. Consistent with the provisions of the law, if the intent of a proposed project is to reduce or sequester greenhouse gas emissions, applicants will be requested to explain how the project will reduce or sequester greenhouse gas emissions.

As funded projects compliment and contribute toward the opportunities and strategies developed by the Resources Agency and the Forest CAT, the WCB will continue to assist with efforts designed to reduce and/or sequester greenhouse gas emissions.

To accomplish the intent of the grant program as authorized in the Bond Act, staff recommended the Board approve the suggested guidelines, eligibility and selection criteria; authorize staff to proceed with the development and distribution of the application package; and authorize staff to proceed with the implementation of the Forest Conservation Program substantially as proposed.

Ms. Cundiff presented a slideshow which summarized the purpose, guiding principles, and eligibility and selection criteria of the proposed Forest Conservation Program. The presentation included a list of the participants in the Forest Conservation Program Advisory Group, summarized the administrative process, and provided some bullet points on the subject of climate benefits. She thanked all of the participants in the Advisory Group for their contributions and dedication. She described the process of reaching consensus and establishing the guidelines and criteria over four day-long meetings as long, passionate, difficult, but very productive.

There was an inadvertent omission in the 'Project Eligibility Requirements' on Page 50 of the Final Agenda. The first requirement states that an "acquisition must be from a willing seller supported by an appraisal using market-based assumptions consistent with State/Federal appraisal standards." An important addition to this condition is that special attention shall be paid to the assumptions of development value on un-entitled raw land.

Mr. Donnelly explained that the proposed Forest Conservation Program had been withdrawn from the August 23, 2007 Board agenda because of concerns expressed by some members of the timber industry about their lack of representation and/or participation in the planning process. He acknowledged the oversight and thanked the industry representatives for their interest and subsequent participation.

Mr. Donnelly reported that he had received a letter from the Campaign for Old Growth expressing support of the program while recommending modifications for carbon sequestration, and for old growth. Mr. Donnelly explained that, at this point, it would be premature to recommend tougher greenhouse gas standards until more of a consensus has been reached between industry, the scientific community, and policymakers.

Mr. Rogers introduced Mr. Luke Breit, representing the Campaign for Old Growth (CFOG). Mr. Breit explained that he advocated minor modifications in the Forest Conservation Program which would put more emphasis on old growth. He cited CFOG's sponsorship of the proposed Heritage Tree Preservation Act legislation (in 2003 and 2006), and involvement with Governor Schwarzenegger's Climate Change

Action Plan. He noted that there is scientific evidence that old growth trees are tremendous repositories for carbon sequestration. In response to a question from Mr. Rogers, Ms. Cundiff explained that CFOG's recommendations had been discussed and considered, reiterating that the issue of carbon sequestration has been deferred until more information becomes available, and until there is consensus on the role of forestry and carbon sequestration.

Mr. Rogers introduced Ms. Melva Bigelow of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), who spoke on behalf of Mr. Louis Blumberg, a forest conservation expert for TNC who participated in the Advisory Group. She expressed TNC's appreciation and support for WCB's efforts in establishing the Forest Conservation Program, noting that the program fulfills the requirements of the Bond Act, and can also be used to promote California's landmark Climate Change Action Plan. She relayed TNC's continued interest in the ongoing development of assessment criteria.

Mr. Rogers introduced Mr. Sandy Dean, Chairman of the Mendocino Redwood Company, and point of contact for a group of concerned north coast landowners and timber companies. He reported that Mendocino Redwood Company is a 10 year old company which manages some 230,000 acres of forestland, describing their certified management practices and tangible ecological accomplishments. He expressed his appreciation to the WCB for putting the Forest Conservation Program on hold in order to consider their concerns and to allow their participation in the development of criteria and guidelines. While they support the Forest Conservation Program guidelines, over time they would prefer that more explicit ecological goals and objectives be identified, such as those that would address fish habitat, wildlife corridors, and the protection of old growth. He added that a greater clarity of mission would encourage competition between program applicants, and result in greater ecological achievements for the money spent.

Mr. Rogers introduced Mr. James Rinehart of R & A Investment Forestry, who participated in the Advisory Group meetings. Describing himself as a forest and conservation economist, he stated that his company was previously associated with large institutional investments in forestland, but since 2001 has emphasized the interface between conservation and financial investment. He expressed his appreciation and support of the efforts of Mr. Donnelly and Ms. Cundiff, acknowledging the difficulty of assembling such a diverse group to develop the program criteria and guidelines. Noting that there was mostly agreement between the various participants, he expressed his willingness to participate in developing additional elements of the program in the future.

At this time, Mr. Rogers acknowledged the presence of Mr. John Carlson, President of the Fish and Game Commission.

Ms. Finn asked a question relating to how and whether the program applications and/or projects would relate to local community planning. Ms. Cundiff explained that, for example, if an area in need of protection/restoration has been identified (by local planners or by the California Wildlife Action Plan), the applicant should be aware of this need. The issue should be referenced in the application along with an explanation of

whether and/or how the proposed project would relate to local and state planning efforts.

Ms. Finn also inquired as to what types of applicants/entities were envisioned to be participants in the program. Ms. Cundiff replied that there were many possible applicants for the acquisition of forestlands, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs), special districts, and/or joint powers authorities. These entities could buy, hold, and/or restore these working landscapes; the lands could be sold back to private entities with conservation easements. A long-term management plan would establish the objectives for the forestlands, and allow for different land use combinations.

Ms. Liu complimented the WCB for the inclusiveness of the planning process while acknowledging the difficulty of incorporating climate benefits. She asked about incentives for applicants to address carbon sequestration in their applications. Ms. Cundiff cited the Fish and Game Code (Section 1356, Chapter 469, Statutes of 2007), which authorizes the WCB to give priority to projects that reduce/sequester greenhouse gas emissions, adding that the climate benefits of a proposed project will be stated in the program applications. Ms. Liu urged vigilance as greenhouse gas policies develop over time to prevent 'backsliding' on the part of projects that receive this priority.

Mr. Hunting stated that the DFG has worked closely with the WCB on climate issues. He cited existing programs such as DFG's Timber Harvest Review, the Natural Communities Conservation Program (NCCP), and the Resource Agency's Climate Action Team for Forestry. He envisions the dovetailing of these programs with the Forest Conservation Program to help set greenhouse gas standards.

Mr. Rogers referred to the issue of defining practices and/or setting standards for carbon sequestration, of unraveling its "biological and chemical truths," and stated that this has become the mission of the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Department of Fish and Game, and the Fish and Game Commission.

Ms. Jones asked whether criteria regarding greenhouse gas emissions/carbon sequestration would be added and/or changed. Ms. Cundiff stated that the Board was being asked to adopt the current eligibility criteria and that, as knowledge in this area evolves and improves, new selection criteria can be incorporated into the program.

Responding to Mr. Dean's earlier comment, Mr. Donnelly reported that the WCB and the DFG are participating in Statewide Conservation Strategy Planning, and that the forest element can be incorporated into existing processes. He expressed his gratitude and appreciation to all of the Advisory Group participants for their time, effort, and commitment.

Mr. Rogers stated that this is 'Stage 1' for establishing standards of carbon sequestration, encouraged continued participation, and assured that improvements and/or additional elements will continue to be added.

Ms. Finn added that Governor Schwarzenegger has stressed the need for accountability as it relates to the spending of bond funds, and that the taxpayers need to be informed of the expectations, goals and objectives of programs before bond funds are spent, as well as the progress of programs that spend those funds.

Mr. Donnelly thanked Ms. Cundiff for her efforts on behalf of the proposed program.

Mr. Hunting moved that the Board approve and adopt the Forest Conservation Program pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84), including the suggested guidelines, eligibility and selection criteria; authorize staff to proceed with the development and distribution of the application package; and authorize staff to proceed with the implementation of the Forest Conservation Program substantially as proposed.

Motion carried.

At 12:07 P.M. the public was dismissed from the meeting and invited to wait outside the meeting room until adjournment following the Closed Session.

24. Executive Session (Not Open to the Public)

Pursuant to the authority of Government Code Section 11126, the Board met in Closed Session at 12:10 P.M. to discuss pending litigation to which the Wildlife Conservation Board is a party, Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley vs. California Department of Fish and Game, Wildlife Conservation Board, et al., Riverside County, Superior Court Case Number 477696 (California Environmental Quality Act).

Pursuant to Government Code Section 11126 (e)(1), a state body may hold a closed session to confer with, or receive advice from, its legal counsel regarding pending litigation when discussion in open session concerning those matters would prejudice the position of the state body in the litigation.

Present:

Richard Rogers, President, Fish and Game Commission
Kevin Hunting, Deputy Director, Regional Operations, Department of Fish and Game
Karen Finn, Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance
Antonio Ortega (Vice, Senator Abel Maldonado)
Marie Liu, (Vice, Senator Darrell Steinberg)
Brett Williams (Vice, Senator Patricia Wiggins)
Melissa Jones (Vice, Assembly Member Lois Wolk)
John P. Donnelly, Executive Director, Wildlife Conservation Board
Mary Westlake, Office Technician, Wildlife Conservation Board
Nancy Templeton, Senior Staff Counsel, Department of Fish and Game
Angela Donlan, Senior Staff Counsel, Department of Fish and Game
Peter Perrine, Public Land Management Specialist IV, Wildlife Conservation Board
Dave Means, Assistant Executive Director, Wildlife Conservation Board

The Closed Session was adjourned at 12:31 P.M.

25. Reconvene Open Session

Mr. Donnelly reported that the Board conferred with legal counsel on the issues being litigated, and that no formal action was taken during the closed session.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:32 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

John P. Donnelly
Executive Director

PROGRAM STATEMENT

At the close of the meeting on November 15, 2007, the amount allocated to projects since the Wildlife Conservation Board's inception in 1947 totaled \$2,004,800,569.65. 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, Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, 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.

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| A. Fish Hatchery and Stocking Projects | \$16,006,219.06 |
| B. Fish Habitat Preservation, Development & Improvement..... | 40,243,222.41 |
| Reservoir Construction or Improvement | \$ 5,605,699.00 |
| Stream Clearance and Improvement | 29,995,078.19 |
| Stream Flow Maintenance Dams | 542,719.86 |
| Marine Habitat..... | 646,619.07 |
| Fish Screens, Ladders and Weir Projects..... | 3,453,106.29 |
| C. Fishing Access Projects | 52,006,649.26 |
| Coastal and Bay..... | \$ 4,612,013.11 |
| River and Aqueduct Access | 16,738,441.93 |
| Lake and Reservoir Access | 9,703,429.18 |
| Piers..... | 20,952,765.04 |
| D. Game Farm Projects | 146,894.49 |

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| E. Wildlife Habitat Acquisition, Development and Improvement | 1,836,845,526.74 |
| Wildlife Areas (General) | \$382,255,203.06 |
| Miscellaneous Wildlife Habitat Development | 16,007,817.32 |
| Wildlife Areas/Ecological Reserves, (Threatened, Endangered or Unique Habitat)..... | 663,212,833.57 |
| Land Conservation Area | 10,051,715.18 |
| Inland Wetlands Conser. Grants & Easements..... | 21,920,497.94 |
| Riparian Habitat Conser. Grants & Easements..... | 57,697,160.49 |
| Other Wildlife Habitat Grants | 685,700,299.18 |
| F. Hunting Access Projects | 484,898.57 |
| G. Miscellaneous Projects (including leases)..... | 19,074,423.12 |
| H. Special Project Allocations | 1,277,118.13 |
| I. Miscellaneous Public Access Projects | 38,182,474.80 |
| State Owned | \$1,643,230.19 |
| Grants | 36,539,244.61 |
| 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 | \$2,004,800,569.65 |