

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**

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

Minutes  
 June 2, 2011

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**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**

Minutes

June 2, 2011

The Wildlife Conservation Board met on Thursday, June 2, 2011, at the State Capitol, Room 112 in Sacramento, California. Mr. John McCamman, Acting Director of the Department of Fish and Game, called the meeting to order at 10:05 A.M., introduced himself, Ms. Karen Finn, Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance; Ms. Rachelle Caouette, Senator Fuller's Representative; Mr. Lucas Frerichs, Assembly Member Gordon's Representative; and Mr. John Donnelly, Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board. Mr. Donnelly introduced his Executive Assistant, Ms. Natalya Kulagina.

1. Roll Call

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS

John McCamman, Chairman  
Acting Director, Department of Fish and Game

Karen Finn, Program Budget Manager  
Vice, Ana Matosantos, Member  
Director, Department of Finance

JOINT LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Senator Jean Fuller  
Vice, Rachelle Caouette

Senator Lois Wolk  
Vice, Courtney Taylor

Assembly Member Richard Gordon  
Vice, Lucas Frerichs

Assembly Member Jared Huffman  
Vice, Diane Colborn

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

John P. Donnelly

Wildlife Conservation Board Staff Present:

John P. Donnelly, Executive Director  
Dave Means, Assistant Executive Director  
Peter Perrine, Assistant Executive Director  
Roxanne Woodward, Budget and Fiscal Officer  
Scott McFarlin, Public Land Management Specialist IV  
Debbie Townsend, Senior Land Agent (R.A.)  
Natalya Kulagina, Executive Assistant  
Liz Yokoyama, Senior Land Agent  
Colin Mills, Staff Counsel  
Nancy Templeton, Staff Counsel  
Brian Gibson, Senior Land Agent  
William Gallup, Senior Land Agent

Erin Ingenthron, Office Technician  
Jasen Yee, Associate Budget Analyst  
Terry Roscoe, Public Land Management Specialist IV  
Randy Nelson, Senior Land Agent  
Chad Fien, Public Land Management Specialist IV  
Celestial Baumbach, Office Technician  
Mary Westlake, Staff Services Analyst  
Teri Muzik, Senior Land Agent  
Jon Wilcox, Senior Land Agent  
Marilyn Cundiff, Public Land Management Specialist IV  
Tony Chappelle, Public Land Management Specialist IV  
Roland Shield, Research Analyst

Others present:

Melanie Gogol-Procurat, Department of Fish and Game  
Jordan Traverso, Department of Fish and Game  
Thomas Lupo, Department of Fish and Game  
Conrad Jones, Department of Fish and Game  
Eric Haynes, Department of Fish and Game  
Brian Dewey, Department of Finance  
Shryl Thomas, Department of Finance  
Barry Brewer, Assembly Member Chesbro's Office  
Trish Chapman, State Coastal Conservancy  
John Carlson, California Waterfowl Association  
Carolyn Shoulders, National Park Service  
Don Kemp, Redwood Forest Foundation  
Art Harwood, Redwood Forest Foundation  
Richard Gienger, Redwood Forest Foundation  
Chris Kelly, The Conservation Fund  
Paul Mason, Pacific Forest Trust  
John Kopchik, East Contra Costa County Habitat  
Conservancy  
Norman Nick, Nick Ranch

David Sutton, Trust for Public Land  
Virginia Esperanza Lorn, Trust for Public Land  
Carl Somers, Trust for Public Land  
Joe Navari, Ducks Unlimited  
Jake Jacobson, The Nature Conservancy  
Ryan Luster, The Nature Conservancy  
Coleen Cory, The Nature Conservancy  
Donna Meyers, Big Sure Land Trust  
Sharon Farreze, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy  
Ben Harwood, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy  
Don Scaggs, CA/NV Snowmobile Association  
Tasha Newman, California Strategy Group  
Robert Hill, Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County  
Mark Landgraf, Peninsula Open Land Trust  
Virginia Handley, Paw Pack  
Cecily Harris, County of San Mateo  
Megan Geremia, Aprea & Micheli  
Fred Nick, Nick Ranch  
Juanell Nick Hepburn, Nick Ranch

Mr. Donnelly acknowledged that two new members joined the Legislative Advisory Committee of the Wildlife Conservation Board: Senator Lois Wolk and Senator Jean Fuller. Mr. Donnelly welcomed new members and their staff to the Board.

Mr. Donnelly moved on to the next item on the agenda, the Funding Status. Mr. Donnelly pointed out that now we capture and provide a summary of bond cash in our agenda. Mr. Donnelly said if unless the Board members feel differently, we will continue to provide the information in this format. Mr. Donnelly went on to explain that this information represents the amounts of general obligation bond proceeds that we have received through the bond sales back in 2009-2010 and it covers Propositions 12, 40, 50, 84 and 1E and it shows the expenditures and encumbrances the Board has made to date, and also the residual cash balance is shown there as well.

Ms. Finn thanked Mr. Donnelly for presenting this information and added that the Department of Finance will be monitoring bond proceeds expenditures among State departments to ensure the bond sale is efficient. Mr. McCamman asked if the cash balance includes all bond proceeds that had been sold or if it includes the bond proceeds that were authorized. Mr. Donnelly responded that it does not include authorization through the bonds themselves; it is only the bonds that had been sold and the cash that it is available to us. Ms. Finn pointed out that the authority is shown in the same table.

Mr. McCamman asked if there were any comments of concerns on this agenda item. There were none.

2. Funding Status – Informational

(a) 2010-11 Wildlife Restoration Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act	\$1,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-1,000,000.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$0.00

(b) 2010-11 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-35,000.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$20,633,000.00

(c)	2009-10 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-3,161,390.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$17,506,610.00
(d)	2008-09 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-10,621,440.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$10,046,560.00
(e)	2006-07 Habitat Conservation Fund Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act	\$20,699,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-12,236,727.30</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$8,462,272.70
(f)	2006-07 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (2010-11 Reappropriation)	\$15,224,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-12,800,109.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$2,423,891.00
(g)	1999-00 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget	
	Continuously Appropriated [Sec. 5096.350 (a)(1), (2), (4) & (7)]	\$36,100,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-27,515,085.39</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$8,584,914.61
(h)	2004-05 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund Capital Outlay Budget (2010-11 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$11,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-4,224,430.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$6,775,570.00
(i)	Chapter 983, Statutes of 2002, Oak Woodlands Conservation Act	
	Budget Act (2009-10 Reappropriation)	\$4,800,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-4,586,689.51</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$213,310.49

(j)	2001-02 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund Capital Outlay Budget	
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 5096.650)	\$273,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-191,102,551.33</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$81,897,448.67
(k)	2003-04 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 Capital Outlay Budget (Section 79568)	
	Budget Act (2010-11 Reappropriation)	\$32,500,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-21,681,299.35</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$10,818,700.65
(l)	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
	2003-04 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-21,000,000.00
	2004-05 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-21,000,000.00
	2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-4,000,000.00
	2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-3,100,000.00
	2006-07 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-17,688,000.00
	2007-08 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-5,150,000.00
	2008-09 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-1,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-660,430,078.61</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$80,981,921.39
(m)	2010-11 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)	\$3,380,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$3,380,000.00
(n)	2009-10 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
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$10,000,000.00

(o)	2008-09 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
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$10,000,000.00
(p)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget (2010-11 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$10,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-75,000.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$9,925,000.00
(q)	2009-10 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (NCCP Section 75055(c))	\$10,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	-0.00
	2010-11 Budget Act Reversion	<u>-3,000,000.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$7,000,000.00
(r)	2009-10 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Chapter 2, Statutes of 2009 (SB 8)	\$24,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-978,930.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$23,021,070.00
(s)	2008-09 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (NCCP Section 75055(c))	\$25,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-4,808,900.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$20,191,100.00
(t)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget (2010-11 Reappropriation)	



	Budget Act (NCCP Section 75055(c))	\$25,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-13,884,942.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$11,115,058.00
(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)(1)), (2010-11 Reappropriation)	\$14,293,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-11,060,968.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$3,232,032.00
(v)	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)), (2010-11 Reappropriation)	\$14,293,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-11,634,444.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$2,658,556.00
(w)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, FloodControl, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(4)), (2010-11 Reappropriation)	\$4,762,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-1,795,600.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$2,966,400.00
(x)	2006-07 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055(a))	\$164,700,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-16,985,000.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$147,715,000.00
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055(b))	\$123,525,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-71,267,009.50</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$52,257,990.50

**RECAP OF FUND BALANCES**

Wildlife Restoration Fund (a)	\$0.00
Habitat Conservation Fund (b), (c), (d) and (e)	\$56,648,442.70
Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (f) and (g)	\$11,008,805.61
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks	

and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (h), (i) and (j)	\$88,886,329.16
Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (k) and (l)	\$91,800,622.04
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (m), (n), (o), (p), (q), (r),(s), (t), (u), (v), (w) and (x)	\$303,462,206.50

**RECAP OF NATURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT ACT OF 2000**

Chapter 113, Statutes of 2000 and Chapter 715, Statutes of 2004 Tax credits awarded through June 30, 2008	\$48,598,734.00
Chapter 220, Statutes of 2009 (effective January 1, 2010) Tax credits awarded	\$0.00

**SUMMARY OF BOND CASH PROCEEDS**

The following summary provides the status of the up-front general obligation bond sale proceeds that the Wildlife Conservation Board has received since the spring of 2009.

<b>Bond Act</b>	<b>Authorized GO Bond Proceeds</b>	<b>Expenditures &amp; Encumbrances</b>	<b>Cash Balance</b>
Proposition 12	\$7,214,165.15	\$4,898,047.49	\$2,316,117.66
Proposition 40	\$52,487,474.69	\$35,074,705.96	\$17,412,768.73
Proposition 50	\$99,161,920.79	\$74,252,313.62	\$24,909,607.17
Proposition 84	\$185,719,637.97	\$115,184,230.51	\$70,535,407.46
Proposition 1E	\$37,485,238.22	\$7,839,356.25	\$29,645,881.97
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$382,068,436.82</b>	<b>\$237,248,653.83</b>	<b>\$144,819,782.99</b>

3. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4—12, and 14—16)

Mr. Donnelly reported that item #13 (Carmel River Lagoon Ecosystem Protective Barrier, Monterey County) was withdrawn from consideration at this time.

Mr. Donnelly reported that a letter of support was received for items #15 (Western Riverside County MSHCP (2006), Expansions 6—9, Riverside County), and item #16 (San Diego County MSCP/HCPLA 2009 (Gibson), San Diego County) from Mr. Dan Silver, Executive Director of the Endangered Habitats League.

Mr. McCamman asked if there were any questions or comments about the agenda items on Consent Calendar. There were none.

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the Consent Calendar Items 4—12 and 14—16 as proposed in the individual agenda explanations.**

\*4. Approval of Minutes — February 24, 2011

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the Minutes of the February 24, 2011 meeting.**

\*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 is recommended that the following totals be recovered and that the projects be closed.

- \$2,794.82 to the General Fund**
- \$75,084.39 to the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund**
- \$456,543.27 to the Habitat Conservation Fund**
- \$38,101.36 to the Wildlife Restoration Fund**
- \$5,156.70 to the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund**
- \$621,852.96 to the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002**
- \$58,614.52 to the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006**

**GENERAL FUND**

Canada de los Osos Ecological Reserve Riparian Habitat Restoration, Santa Clara County

Allocated	\$127,200.00
Expended	<u>-124,405.18</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$2,794.82
<b>Total General Fund</b>	<b>\$2,794.82</b>

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

Riparian Habitat Restoration, Feather River Wildlife Area, O'Connor Lakes Unit, Fund Shift, Sutter County, Sutter County

Allocated	\$500,350.00
Expended	<u>-425,265.61</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$75,084.39

**Total Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund \$75,084.39**

**HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND**

Carpinteria Creek Arundo Removal and Restoration, Santa Barbara County

Allocated	\$80,000.00
Expended	<u>-77,255.20</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$2,744.80

Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, Water Distribution System, Phase VI, Butte County

Allocated	\$560,000.00
Expended	<u>-559,992.71</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$7.29

Riparian Habitat Restoration, Feather River Wildlife Area, O'Connor Lakes Unit, Sutter County

Allocated	\$1,307,000.00
Expended	<u>-853,208.83</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$453,791.17

Sacramento River Riparian Restoration, Del Rio Site, Phase II, Glenn County

Allocated	\$511,000.00
Expended	<u>-510,999.99</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.01

**Total Habitat Conservation Fund \$456,543.27**

**WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND**

Shaver Lake Boat Launch Boarding Float, Fresno County

Allocated	\$156,000.00
Expended	<u>-117,898.64</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$38,101.36

**Total Wildlife Restoration Fund** **\$38,101.36**

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

Cahuenga Peak, Los Angeles County

Allocated	\$705,000.00
Expended	<u>-700,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$5,000.00

DFG Land Management Plans, Sacramento Valley-Central Sierra Region,  
Phase I, Various County

Allocated	\$244,000.00
Expended	<u>-243,867.68</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$132.32

Tuolumne River Riparian Restoration, Big Bend, Stanislaus County

Allocated	\$146,550.00
Expended	<u>-146,525.62</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$24.38

**Total California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe** **\$5,156.70**  
**Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund**

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

Los Cerritos Wetlands, Orange County

Allocated	\$5,180,000.00
Expended	<u>-5,174,064.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$5,936.00

Lower Colorado River Ecological Reserve (Travis Donation), Riverside  
County

Allocated	\$5,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,250.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$3,750.00

Scott, Shasta and Klamath Rivers Fish Screen Improvements, Siskiyou  
County

Allocated	\$132,107.00
Expended	<u>-68,579.45</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$63,527.55

Wetland Habitat Restoration, San Pablo Bay, Phase II,  
Marin/Sonoma/Napa County

Allocated	\$999,790.00
Expended	<u>-451,150.59</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$548,639.41

**Total Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002**    **\$621,852.96**

**SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006**

Oak Hills Ranch, Yolo County

Allocated	\$2,296,000.00
Expended	<u>-2,293,261.48</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$2,738.52

Red Bank Creek (Big Bluff Ranch), Tehama County

Allocated	\$3,960,000.00
Expended	<u>-3,956,732.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$3,268.00

Scott Valley, Siskiyou County

Allocated	\$3,237,700.00
Expended	<u>-3,213,314.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$24,386.00

Shasta Big Springs Ranch, Siskiyou County

Allocated	\$10,330,000.00
Expended	<u>-10,319,938.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$10,062.00

Truckee Basin (Independence Lake), Nevada County

Allocated	\$5,510,000.00
Expended	<u>-5,500,920.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$9,080.00

Western Riverside County MSHCP (2006), Expansion 1, Riverside County

Allocated	\$5,000.00
Expended	<u>-920.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$4,080.00

Whitewater Floodplain, Expansion 1, Riverside County

Allocated	\$5,000.00
-----------	------------

Expended	-0.00
Balance for Recovery	\$5,000.00

**Total Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006** **\$58,614.52**

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the Recovery of Funds for the projects listed on pages 7 through 11 of the agenda and close the project accounts. Recovery totals include \$2,794.82 to the General Fund; \$75,084.39 to the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund; \$456,543.27 to the Habitat Conservation Fund; \$38,101.36 to the Wildlife Restoration Fund; \$5,156.70 to the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund; \$621,852.96 to the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002; and \$58,614.52 to the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006.**

**Motion carried.**

- \*6. Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge \$579,000.00  
La BARRANCA Unit, Riparian Restoration  
Tehama County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for a cooperative project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to restore 147± acres of riparian habitat located on the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge La BARRANCA Unit in Tehama County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The La BARRANCA Unit is located along the west bank of the Sacramento River at River Mile 239.5R, five miles south of Red Bluff in Tehama County. The 1,066-acre La BARRANCA Unit is owned by the USFWS and managed as part of the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge (SRNWR). The La BARRANCA Unit is bounded on the east by the Sacramento River, the west by privately owned orchards and the south and north by other portions of the SRNWR that have been previously restored or are already comprised of remnant habitat.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project will accomplish the following three goals: 1) restore 147± acres of riparian floodplain habitats to complement adjacent remnant and restored forests, 2) promote the recovery of neotropical migrant and

resident birds and other terrestrial species including Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and 3) improve floodplain and in-channel conditions for anadromous fish such as Chinook salmon and steelhead trout. The project will also provide numerous benefits for the growing human population of the Central Valley through improved water quality, flood damage reduction, increased recreational opportunities, and improved aesthetics.

Specifically, 103 acres of valley oak riparian forest, and 44 acres of open grassland will be restored. Over time, the area will dynamically evolve in complexity through the processes of erosion, scour, overbank flooding and sediment deposition. These processes will drive the pattern of plant succession that dictates its use by wildlife. Restoring 147± acres on the La Barranca Unit will complement 955 previously restored acres in the reach. Upon completion of the project, there will be a total of 3,032 restored acres in the Red Bluff reach of the SRNWR.

The proposed work at La Barranca Unit will entail removing an existing decadent walnut orchard, preparing the field for planting by disking, modifying the existing irrigation system to provide water to the new seedlings, hand planting native riparian plants, and maintenance for three years using selective herbicide application, mowing, hand weeding and irrigation.

#### WCB PROGRAM

This project is funded through the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program and meets the program's goal of increasing riparian habitat across California by implementing riparian habitat restoration projects.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The ecological goal for the project is to plant a diverse mosaic of riparian communities. Non-native invasive weeds that inhibit seedling establishment of native riparian vegetation and a diminished flood disturbance regime limit natural establishment of floodplain riparian communities make it necessary to conduct active horticultural restoration such as planned for the project. The project is intended to facilitate the establishment of native riparian habitat that would not return without active restoration.

The project's management objectives, which are implementation standards for achieving the ecological objectives, are to meet or exceed survival of at least 80% planted woody and herbaceous plants by December 2012.

Staff with TNC will implement the project. TNC will oversee plant materials collection and propagation, site preparation and design, planting,



maintenance, monitoring, and reporting during the 3-year restoration implementation phase of the project. The US Fish and Wildlife Service will manage the project site in the long term as set forth in its SRNWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan. In addition, the USFWS will consider opening the site to appropriate public recreation opportunities upon completion of the restoration implementation.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$579,000.00</b>
Grantee (TNC)	\$123,341.00
Landowner (USFWS)	\$35,000.00
<b><u>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING</u></b>	<b><u>\$737,341.00</u></b>

Project costs will be for project management and monitoring; project planning and design, administrative costs, materials (grass seed, cartons, stakes), plant propagation, site preparation, cutting collection, planting, vegetation maintenance (irrigation, labor and supplies, weeding, disking, spraying, mowing, predator control, herbicides), and installation of a project sign.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(e/f)(1E)] that allows for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of aquatic habitats for salmonids and trout, and of riparian habitat within a floodplain or flood corridor.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

Staff has reviewed the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH# 2006022142) for the project prepared by the Department of Water Resources as the lead agency. Staff considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting the WCB's compliance with CEQA. Upon the Board's approval, staff will file a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse. DFG has provided a letter of support for the project.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$579,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Fish and Game Code Section 2786 (e/f), (1E); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$579,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Fish and Game Code Section 2786 (e/f), (1E); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

- \*7. Wheeler Ridge Wildlife Area, \$550,000.00  
Expansion 3  
Mono County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to Eastern Sierra Land Trust (ESLT) for a conservation easement over 108± acres of land to preserve, maintain and enhance important Round Valley mule deer winter range, holding area and migration corridor habitat. The acquisition expands on existing adjacent public lands owned by the Bureau of Land Management and previous Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) conservation easement projects.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The property is located just off Lower Rock Creek Road, approximately five miles southwest of Tom's Place/Crowley Lake and 20 miles northwest of Bishop. The property is within the only migratory corridor for the Round Valley mule deer herd and is located in a very narrow strip of land (approximately one mile wide) between Wheeler Ridge, a rocky outcrop of the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains on the west, and Lower Rock Creek canyon/gorge on the east. The WCB previously approved a number of grants beginning in 2007 to assist in the acquisition of a conservation easement and fee title for protecting the Round Valley mule deer herd within the Wheeler Ridge Conceptual Area Protection Plan. To date 43 acres have been protected and, with the addition of this proposed easement, the total protected area will be about 151 acres.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Potential residential development is a real threat with the completion of numerous residences in the project area and given the growing trend towards the subdivision of larger parcels into rural residential subdivisions. Habitat loss and disturbance associated with rural subdivisions and recreational, energy and commercial developments are considered the top factors impacting the deer herd size and viability.

Protection is critical to the diverse habitats and the primary purpose of acquisitions in this area is to preserve, maintain and enhance critical Round Valley mule deer winter range, holding area and migration corridor habitat. The secondary purpose is to maintain and enhance opportunities for deer hunting and wildlife viewing and to preserve habitat for the numerous other species that utilize this region. Species that will benefit include mule deer, Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep, mountain lion and neo-tropical migratory and riparian obligate birds, raptors, upland game species, upland mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program. The Land Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.) to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this program acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG by evaluating the biological values of property through development of a Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The CAPP is then submitted to DFG's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and approval and later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

When acquired, this conservation easement will be held and monitored by the ESLT. It is anticipated that the area could offer opportunities for passive recreational uses as the habitat is maintained in conjunction with other properties within the Wheeler Ridge Wildlife Area.

TERMS

The property owners have agreed to sell the conservation easement to ESLT for an appraised market value of \$540,000.00, which has been approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that WCB staff will review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary reports, documents connected with the purchase and sale that include escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds into the established escrow account. In the event of breach of the grant terms, the WCB can seek specific performance or require that title to the conservation easement be transferred to WCB or another qualifying entity.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$540,000.00</b>
<b>TOTAL Purchase Price</b>	<b>\$540,000.00</b>
<u>Other Project Related Costs:</u>	\$10,000.00

**WCB Total Allocation**

**\$550,000.00**

It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including DGS appraisal review costs.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resource Code Section 5096.650(a), that allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat to protect rare and endangered species, wildlife corridors and significant natural landscapes and ecosystems, such as old growth redwoods, oak woodlands and other significant habitat areas.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION**

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 a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for approval.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$550,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund, (Proposition 40), Public Resource Code Section 5096.650(a) for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$550,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resource Code Section 5096.650(a) for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

- \*8. North Grasslands Wildlife Area \$575,000.00  
Gadwall Unit Wetland Restoration  
Merced County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association (CWA), for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to restore and enhance 623± acres of wetland and upland habitat on the DFG's Gadwall Unit of the North Grasslands Wildlife Area located east of the City of Los Banos in Merced County.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The project is located on DFG's North Grasslands Wildlife Area, Gadwall Unit, approximately two miles east of the City of Los Banos. The property, acquired by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) in two separate actions in 1999 and 2009, lies in western Merced County and is part of the Grasslands Ecological Area (GEA). The GEA encompasses over 160,000 acres of wetlands and associated grasslands. It has been recognized as a Globally Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society and American Bird Conservancy, and as one of forty Internationally Significant Shorebird Habitats by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. The GEA typically winters about twenty percent of the waterfowl in the Pacific Flyway. Restoration of this property will help further the completion of the Central Valley Joint Venture's goal to protect or restore some 200,000 acres of wetlands in the Central Valley. Waterfowl, shorebirds and other waterbirds will greatly benefit from the restoration of seasonal wetland habitat found on the subject property.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will restore 526± acres of property into wetland and upland habitat, as well as enhance 97± acres of existing wetland habitat. Together these areas will be managed in a more cohesive and efficient manner for wildlife and water distribution. The project will remove existing infrastructure, including old fencing and obsolete ditches. The project will also restore a more natural topography to the previously leveled ground to create the wetland and upland units. Lastly, a lift pump will be rehabilitated and water distribution infrastructure, including water control structures, will be installed to control water in the wetlands.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Inland Wetland Conservation Program (Fish and Game Code Section 1400, et seq.) and meets the program's goal of assisting the Central Valley Joint Venture's mission to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands and associated habitats.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The project will be on a portion of DFG's North Grasslands Wildlife Area, Gadwall Unit and management of this project will be incorporated into the existing management of the entire Gadwall Unit.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$575,000.00</b>
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Project costs will be for earthwork, water distribution infrastructure, debris removal, and project management and administration.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program, (1E). This funding allows for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands within a floodplain or flood corridor in the Central Valley, and is consistent with the objective of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$575,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program, (1E); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$575,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program (1E); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

- \*9. San Joaquin River Parkway, Sycamore Island \$100,000.00  
North Channel Crossing, Planning and Design  
Madera County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to plan and design a bridge or culvert to replace the existing culvert crossing at the North Channel at Sycamore Island, within the San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway) located downstream of the State Highway 41 crossing in Madera County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The Parkway is defined in State Legislation as approximately 5,900 acres on both sides of a twenty-two mile long reach of the San Joaquin River between Friant Dam in the east and State Route 99 to the west, in Fresno and Madera Counties. The San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) was created in 1992 to preserve and enhance the San Joaquin River's extraordinary biological diversity, protect its valued cultural and natural resources and provide educational and recreational opportunities to the local communities. The SJRC's mission includes both public access and habitat restoration within the Parkway.

The proposed project is within the 347± acre Sycamore Island Fishing Access site, acquired by the WCB in 2004, and located within the Parkway, approximately two miles west of Highway 41, north of the San Joaquin River and south of Avenue 7½.

Prior to public acquisition, the Sycamore Island site had supported a privately operated public fishing and camping area. There are six large ponds, former gravel mining pits on the site that, for a fee, have been used by local anglers fishing for bass and other warm water fish since the early 1960's. At the time of the public acquisition of the property, the area was closed pending the implementation of public safety and environmental protection improvements. Once these improvements were implemented, the San Joaquin River Parkway Trust operated the facility on an interim basis. Currently, the SJRC manages the site and collects user fees to cover the costs of waste management, sanitation, area oversight, and visitor information.

In 2006 the WCB and the SJRC approved funding to make improvements necessary to protect the environment and public health and safety while continuing to accommodate public fishing access. Improvements consisted of signage, eight picnic tables, a restroom and re-grading of the entrance road.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The North Channel of the San Joaquin River bisects Sycamore Island and is crossed by a public access road. The unarmored culvert bridge at the channel is inadequate to convey normal flows, and the roadway is eroded and too narrow for emergency response vehicles. The pipe is not only too small but also too short, creating a very steep slope on both sides of the road at the bridge. The road is necessary to reach one-half of the property, not only for public access to the river and ponds, but also for patrolling, monitoring, and emergency response.

The proposed project calls for reviewing alternatives to the existing culvert, environmental review, design, and permitting. First, DWR will review alternatives, which may include, but are not limited to the following: an armored and properly sized earthen and corrugated metal pipe culvert, a concrete box culvert, and a prefabricated steel bridge. Upon completion of the review, a recommendation will be presented to the SJRC Board, and if approved, DWR will proceed with design of the selected alternative.

Once an alternative is selected and designed, it is expected that staff will return to the SJRC and WCB Boards to request funds for construction, and that DWR will provide construction through a subsequent agreement.

### WCB PROGRAM

The WCB's Public Access Program provides the basis for WCB's ability to provide public access statewide. In addition, funds were allocated to the WCB within the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resource Code Section 5096.650, that allows for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of land and water resources located within the SJRC boundaries.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Once approved and constructed, it is expected that a new crossing will provide safe access to the southern half of Sycamore Island and the San Joaquin River for recreation, patrolling, monitoring, and emergency responses.

The following design standards and constraints will be considered:

- The new crossing should be designed for loads adequate for rural fire response vehicles;
- The project area may not exceed one-half acre if it must meet conditions of a Nationwide Permit for discharges to waters of the U.S.;
- Fill soil (if any) must come from an on-site borrow area to minimize hauling costs; spoil material (if any) must be deposited in appropriate areas, or may be used to improve site roadways and drainage;



- The constriction in the channel at the existing culvert will be removed to improve flow and reduce erosion;
- The bridge should allow safe vehicle traffic (one lane) and pedestrian use, year-round;
- The project site does not at this time contain endangered species; however, any elderberries in the vicinity will need to be avoided;
- The crossing is within the 100-year floodplain and the designated floodway; in accordance with the pending Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, flood protection standards on the San Joaquin River may change by 2012.

Planning considerations will include whether or not to pave the crossing, the width of the vehicle and any pedestrian lanes, and whether and how they should be physically separated.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$100,000.00</b>
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Project costs will be for reviewing alternatives, environmental review, design, and permitting.

#### FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5), that allows for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of lands located within the boundaries of the San Joaquin River Conservancy.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

There is no possibility that this project, which involves feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions which have not been approved, adopted or funded, may have a significant effect on the environment. It is therefore exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15262. WCB staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval by the WCB. The project was approved by the SJRC Board March 9, 2011 to be considered by the WCB.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$100,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to

accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$100,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

- \*10. Santa Cruz Long-Toed Salamander, \$60,000.00  
Larkin Valley  
Santa Cruz County

This proposal was to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Recovery Land Acquisition grant, the allocation of non-federal matching funds by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and the acquisition in fee of 8.5± acres of land by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) for the protection of breeding habitat for the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander and to provide possible future wildlife-oriented public use opportunities.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property is located on Larkin Valley Road in the northwest end of the Larkin Valley near the Aptos Hills. The portion of the property along Larkin Valley Road includes increasingly steep sloping topography with the frontage along Metiver's Way and Ardilla Canyon Road being comprised of the riparian corridor and biotic habitat area. The frontage along Metiver's Way includes the water crossover of the intermittent creek known as Ellicott Slough (formerly known as Harkins Slough). The property is part of a larger complex of co-managed USFWS and DFG reserve areas in the immediate vicinity that protect habitat for the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander. These separate protected areas allow for access to breeding ponds and dispersal of the salamanders to upland areas, and also provide protection for other wetland species as well.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The primary species that will benefit from this project, either as a movement corridor, dispersal area, upland habitat, or as a new breeding location are the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander (SCLTS), California red-legged frog (CRLF), and western pond turtle.

The SCLTS is listed as endangered by both the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). The CRLF is listed as threatened under the ESA and as a Species of Special Concern by the State of California. The western pond turtle is recognized as a Species of Special Concern by the State of California and as sensitive by the U.S. Forest Service.

The subject parcel is located 1,000 feet downstream of a primary breeding pond for the SCLTS on the Calabasas Unit of the Ellicott National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) and contains an intermittent stream channel and associated flood plain of Ellicott Slough, a tributary to the Watsonville sloughs area, bordering the Pajaro River. The stream flows from northwest to southeast in the northern third of the parcel and the remainder of the property slopes gently upward from the channel. The parcel is covered with grasses throughout the year and a row of willows borders the stream.

For both SCLTS and CRLF, acquisition of the subject property would provide protection of an area that is dispersal and foraging habitat, functions as upland sheltering habitat, and is essential in regaining a corridor that would allow dispersal to other breeding complexes.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program. The Land Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.) and enables the WCB to pursue acquisitions on behalf of the DFG accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions, or subgrant federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. The USFWS grant proposed for this project has also been reviewed and approved by DFG as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition grant selection and review process.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The proposed plan for management will be to enter into an agreement with the Refuge, similar to one that exists for the Santa Cruz long-toed Salamander Ecological Reserve, to manage the land for the SCLTS and CRLF. The Refuge has agreed to enter into such agreement for this parcel. Appropriate public access will be considered once the specific biological properties of the parcel have been reviewed.

#### TERMS

The property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$160,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and USFWS. The property owner has agreed to sell the property for the

fair market value of \$160,000.00. The USFWS funds require a non-federal match that is proposed to be provided by the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resource Code Section 5096.650(a), from WCB. The terms and conditions of the proposed acquisition provide that WCB staff review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds. Once approved by the Board, the transaction will also be subject to review and approval by the DGS.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$ 40,000.00</b>
USFWS Section 6 Grant	120,000.00
TOTAL Purchase Price	160,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	20,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB Allocation</b>	<b>\$ 60,000.00</b>

It is estimated that an additional \$20,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including DGS appraisal and transaction review, escrow and title insurance costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resource Code Section 5096.650(a), that allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat to protect rare and endangered species.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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 a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$60,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a) for the

property acquisition and to cover the internal project-related expenses; accept the USFWS Recovery Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$120,000.00; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$60,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a) for the property acquisition and to cover the internal project-related expenses; accept the USFWS Recovery Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$120,000.00; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

- \*11. San Joaquin Fish Hatchery (Hovannisian Property) \$28,500.00  
Fresno County

This proposal was to consider a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) to acquire approximately 0.15± acres of land for potential future public access to the San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway) and San Joaquin Fish Hatchery (Hatchery). The property is located within the boundaries of the SJRC and the acquisition was approved by the SJRC Board on September 8, 2010.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The Hovannisian property is comprised of one small, contiguous irregularly-shaped parcel totaling 6,400 square feet or approximately 0.15± acre in Fresno County. The subject property is located six miles east of State Highway 41 and 1 mile southwest of Millerton Dam and immediately south of the San Joaquin Fish Hatchery in northeastern Fresno County. The lot is near the center of the town of Friant, along the west side of North Friant Road, between Flemming Street and Granite Street. East Wagner Street is immediately east of the site and currently a paper street (i.e., a street shown on maps but that does not actually exist) with no paved roadway.

This nearly level, unimproved, commercially zoned site is adjacent to the Parkway and the Hatchery. Nearby land uses consist of single family residences, a post office, and small commercial and retail establishments.

The property across East Wagner Street is the Friant Station site which was approved for purchase by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) on May 22, 2008.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The subject property is land-locked; however, an unimproved county right-of-way runs from Friant Road between the Hovannisian and Friant Station parcels. With purchase of the Hovannisian parcel, the road right-of-way could be abandoned, offering greater space for potential future visitor access in combination with the Friant Station property.

WCB PROGRAM

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5), that allows for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of lands located within the boundaries of the San Joaquin River Conservancy planning area.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The subject property, situated adjacent to the Hatchery, would be available to implement possible future projects which may develop from SJRC's current planning, design and study phase. The DFG will take possession of the property and proposes to manage it as part of the existing Hatchery facilities. Actual jurisdiction may be transferred to the SJRC in the future subject to approval by the SJRC Board and concurrence by the DFG.

TERMS

The Department of General Services (DGS) approved the appraised fair market value of the property at \$21,000.00. The property owners agreed to sell the property to the State for the appraised fair market value of \$21,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed agreement provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)</b>	<b><u>\$21,000.00</u></b>
TOTAL Purchase Price	21,000.00
Other Project Related Costs:	7,500.00

**Total WCB Allocation**

**\$28,500.00**

It is estimated that an additional \$7,500.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including DGS appraisal review and title and escrow costs.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5), that allows for the acquisition of lands within the boundaries of the San Joaquin River Conservancy. This funding provides for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of land and water resources consistent with the SJRC's mission and the San Joaquin River Parkway Master Plan and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION**

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements. The SJRC as lead agency, certified a Final Environmental Impact Report for San Joaquin River Parkway Interim Master Plan pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in December 1997. Staff considered the Final Environmental Impact Report and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$28,500.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5) for the acquisition and project-related expenses; authorize possible future transfer of jurisdiction from the Department of Fish and Game to the San Joaquin River Conservancy; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$28,500.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5) for the acquisition and project-related expenses; authorize possible future transfer of jurisdiction from the Department**

**of Fish and Game to the San Joaquin River Conservancy; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

- \*12. San Joaquin River Parkway, Lewis S. Eaton Trail \$40,000.00  
River West CEQA Augmentation  
Fresno County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for augmentation of a previously approved grant to the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) for a cooperative project with the City of Fresno to implement environmental review and facilitate public participation for a proposal to extend the Lewis S. Eaton Trail from its terminus in the City of Fresno's Woodward Park through the SJRC's Spano property located immediately west of State Highway 41 in Fresno County.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The Parkway is defined in State Legislation as approximately 5,900 acres on both sides of a twenty-two mile long reach of the San Joaquin River between Friant Dam in the east and State Route 99 to the west, in Fresno and Madera Counties. The SJRC was created in 1992 to preserve and enhance the San Joaquin River's extraordinary biological diversity, protect its valued cultural and natural resources and provide educational and recreational opportunities to the local communities. The SJRC's mission includes both public access and habitat restoration within the Parkway.

The proposed project is within the 360± acre SJRC Spano property (Property), located within the San Joaquin River Parkway, west of Highway 41 and Woodward Park, south of the San Joaquin River.

The WCB approved purchase of the Property during its August 2001 meeting. The acquisition was one of six approved by the Board in a cooperative project with the SJRC which included a total of 1,000± acres. The Property was purchased for preservation, restoration and enhancement of habitat and to provide appropriate public recreational and educational opportunities.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The current proposal is to augment a project to complete planning and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review to extend the Lewis S. Eaton Trail from its terminus in the City of Fresno's Woodward Park through the Property. The original planning project was authorized by the SJRC on May 10, 2007, and by the WCB on August 23, 2007. The SJRC



entered into an agreement with the City of Fresno for the project in February 2008. By late 2008, the City and its consultants completed the resources assessment of the site, developed a conceptual plan, and held a well-attended public workshop. The SJRC authorized a \$25,000.00 augmentation on December 11, 2008, for the purpose of Planning Department Review; however, due to the freeze on bond funds that immediately followed SJRC's action, the augmentation was not presented to the WCB and did not go into effect. In December 2008 the project was suspended due to the State freeze on bond fund expenditures and awards.

The City and the SJRC began to reinitiate the project in mid-2010. A series of agreement time extensions, a City Council reappropriation, and other administrative processes were necessary before City staff and consultants could re-assess the project, its scope of work and its budget.

The SJRC authorized an additional \$40,000.00 in funds for the project on March 9, 2011, to provide for Planning Department Review, additional public meetings, and reassessment of the biological resources of the project site since the previous assessment is now considered out of date.

The SJRC and City project management staff discussed the project with City elected officials and developed revisions in the project proposal to address concerns raised by the public. Upon approval of the Board, the project will resume, including public meetings. The amended agreements will include a time extension to December 31, 2012, to complete the project.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The WCB's Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and Public Access Program provide the basis for WCB's ability to restore habitat and provide public access statewide. In addition, funds were allocated to the WCB from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650, that allows for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of land and water resources within the boundaries of the SJRC.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Project costs will be for resources assessment, public participation, CEQA review and project management.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$40,000.00</b>
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Project costs will be an augmentation of \$40,000.00 for an existing project to perform environmental review and facilitate public participation pursuant to CEQA for a proposed extension of the Lewis S. Eaton Trail south through the SJRC's Spano property.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5), that allows for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of lands located within the boundaries of the SJRC.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

There is no possibility that this project, which involves feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions which have not been approved, adopted or funded, may have a significant effect on the environment. It is therefore exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15262. WCB staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval by the WCB. The project was approved by the SJRC Board March 9, 2011 to be considered by the WCB.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$40,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$40,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

- \*13. Carmel River Lagoon Ecosystem Protective Barrier  
Monterey County

This item was withdrawn from consideration.

- \*14. Thousand Palms (Gabison) \$705,000.00  
Riverside County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC), and to authorize the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant as reimbursement, to acquire 70± acres of land for the protection and conservation of existing regional wildlife linkages and aeolian and fluvial sand transport areas within one of four priority areas of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Preserve (MSHCP). The acquisition will allow for the protection of blowsand habitat which is essential for recovery of the fringe-toed lizard and its protection from development that is occurring in the southern and western reaches of the Coachella Valley.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The property is located west of the City of Thousand Palms, in Riverside County. 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 surrounding topography is desert dunes and blowsands found specifically within the Coachella Valley. This habitat continues to be threatened by ongoing urban development, off-road vehicle use, invasive species, and the loss of sand source. Historically these habitats have been eliminated or degraded by the direct and indirect effects of development. The inclusion of structures and non-native plant species restrict what were once free-moving sand deposits, thus preventing replenishment of the blowsand habitats. Placement of this area into public ownership will help add a protective buffer from the developing residential and agriculture lands surrounding this project. With the support of partners, the State and the Federal Government have conserved a total of 47,800 acres within the Coachella Valley MSHCP.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The property consists of vacant desert land zoned for residential development. The acquisition will keep the property from residential subdivision protecting it in perpetuity, providing core habitat, linkages, and fluvial and aeolian sand transport corridors which are important for the Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard (CVFTL). Although the CVFTL is the only federally-listed species covered under the Section 6 grant, the land conserved provides habitat for several other listed or rare endemic species. These species include the Palm Springs pocket mouse, Coachella Valley round-tailed ground squirrel, flat-tailed horned lizard, Barrow's dune beetle, Coachella giant sand-treader cricket, Coachella

Valley grasshopper, Coachella Valley Jerusalem cricket, and the Coachella Valley milk-vetch.

### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program. The Land Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.) and enables the WCB to pursue acquisitions on behalf of the DFG and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. The project has been reviewed and approved by the DFG under its Natural Community Conservation Plan program, substantiating the biological values of the property and DFG has recommended it for funding. The USFWS grant proposed for this project has also been reviewed and approved by the DFG as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition grant selection and review process.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

When acquired, this property will be managed by the CVCC. It is anticipated that the area could offer opportunities for passive recreational uses, as the habitat is maintained in conjunction with other properties to form the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan.

### TERMS

The property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$1,000,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and the USFWS. The property owner has agreed to sell the property for the fair market value of \$1,000,000.00. To facilitate the transaction, the proposed funding will require the WCB to fund the purchase through a grant and then seek reimbursement from the USFWS. At this time, it is anticipated the entire WCB allocation will be reimbursed. The reimbursed funds will be used by the WCB to help fund future projects and the terms of the USFWS grant will be applied to the property through a recorded notice.

A non-federal match is also being provided by Caltrans in the form of a Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program (EEMP) grant. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and the USFWS subgrant to the CVCC provide for staff of the WCB to review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can

require the landowner to encumber the property with a conservation easement in favor of WCB or another approved holder and seek reimbursement of funds.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>WCB Allocation</b>	<b>\$700,000.00</b>
Caltrans EEMP Grant	<u>\$300,000.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$1,000,000.00
Other Project Related Costs:	\$5,000.00
<b>Total WCB Allocation</b>	<b>\$705,000.00</b>

It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including DGS appraisal review costs.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c), that allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat that assists in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION**

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 a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The DFG, as part of the NCCP approval process, has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for approval.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$705,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c) to cover project-related expenses; approve the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from USFWS in the amount of \$700,000.00 as reimbursement; authorize staff to enter into agreements

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

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$705,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c) to cover project-related expenses; approve the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from USFWS in the amount of \$700,000.00 as reimbursement; authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

- \*15. Western Riverside County MSHCP, \$1,704,650.00  
Expansions 6—9  
Riverside County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for four grants to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority), the acceptance of a U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant (Grant), and the authorization to enter into four Agreements to Subgrant the federal funds to the Authority for a cooperative project with the Trust for Public Land (TPL), to assist in the acquisition of four properties, totaling 714± acres, identified in the Grant. The project will help implement Western Riverside County's Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) by increasing wildlife habitat cores and linkages and providing habitat for threatened and endangered species in southwestern Riverside County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The loss of habitat in southern California has resulted in the development of several habitat conservation plans in the region, one of which is the Western Riverside County MSHCP. This plan, in total, covers a 1.2 million acre plan area and 146 species. The key component of the plan's success is to assemble a 500,000 acre conservation area to secure survival of the 146 species. This acreage goal includes approximately 346,000 acres of existing public and quasi-public lands and 153,000 acres of additional non-public land that needs to be conserved. To date, approximately 43,034 of the 153,000 acres of habitat have been acquired using a combination of local, state and federal funding. The Authority currently proposes to facilitate an acquisition project involving the purchase of four properties for the conservation area, as follows:

### Expansion 6

The first subject property, commonly referred to as the Anza Knolls site, consists of 513± acres of vacant land and is located near the southwesterly intersection of Tule Peak Road and Bonny Lane, in the community of Aguanga. This community is located near the southwestern border of Riverside County, approximately 20 miles east of the City of Temecula, just north of the intersection of Highways 371 and 79.

In general the Aguanga area is rural in nature with scattered modest single family dwellings or mobile homes on lots ranging from 5 to 20 acres. There is also significant vacant land in the area. Much of the land in the area is hilly to mountainous and generally arid except for some interspersed seasonal streams and creeks.

The subject property is located in a critical conservation area within the MSHCP. This core area of reserve lands is connected to other protected lands located further west of Tule Creek. On a regional basis, the property is located between San Bernardino National Forest to the north and the Cleveland National Forest to the south. Conserved lands in the vicinity include 395± acres adjacent and to the north of the subject, and 111± acres adjacent and to the southwest of the subject, both owned and managed by the Authority. The County of Riverside owns and manages 884± acres adjacent and to the east of the subject.

The property contains important biological resources, including vital habitat for the Quino butterfly. The subject property supports a dense chaparral plant community, comprised of red shank and ceanothus. Animal species likely to occur on the property include coyote, bobcat, mountain lion, mule deer, spotted skunk, brush rabbit, side-blotched lizard, western fence lizard, southern Pacific rattlesnake, and rosy boa.

### Expansion 7

The second subject property, commonly referred to as the Temecula Mountain property, consists of 90± acres of vacant land and is located east of Interstate 15 and east of Rainbow Canyon Road, south of the City of Temecula, and about three miles northeast of the community of Rainbow located in San Diego County.

The northwest portion of the property is located approximately 500 feet southeast of a light manufacturing facility. In addition, over 2,000 lineal feet of the subject's northerly boundary abuts lands improved with a single family residence. The Pachanga Band of Luiserno Mission Indian Reservation abuts the northeastern boundary of the subject, and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands border the subject's southern and eastern boundaries. The topography of the property is predominantly

comprised of rugged and very steep terrain, and the subject is comprised of large granite boulders.

The property is located within a special linkage area and is connected to other protected lands west of Interstate 15 which includes Temecula Creek. Conserved lands in the vicinity of the property include the Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve managed by the San Diego State University, west of Interstate 15, and BLM lands located south of the subject property.

The property contains nearly 60 acres of oak woodland and forest habitat as well as chaparral plant habitat. Animal species likely to occur on the property include Cooper's hawk, downy woodpecker, least Bell's vireo, loggerhead shrike, southwestern willow flycatcher, tree swallow, white-tailed kite, yellow-breasted chat, yellow warbler, bobcat, Los Angeles pocket mouse, mountain lion, and western pond turtle.

#### Expansion 8

The third subject property, commonly referred to as the KalMia property, consists of 100± acres of undeveloped rural land located at the foot of Kalmia Street, adjacent to the north boundary of the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve (Ecological Reserve). The area is bordered on the east by the Cities of Murrieta and Temecula, on the south by the San Diego County line, on the west by the Cleveland National Forest, and on the north by the community of Wildomar. The subject lands are within the foothills of the Santa Rosa Mountains and geographically severed from the rural residential neighborhoods comprising the greater Santa Rosa Plateau region. The neighborhood surrounding the subject is developed with a mix of older rural residential homesites and newer custom estate residences/ranchettes with associated equestrian/agricultural uses on parcels in the 1 to 10 acre size range.

The subject property is located in a critical conservation area within the MSHCP which consists of Cole Canyon Creek, Murrieta Creek, and Miller Canyon Creek. Miller Canyon Creek traverses the southerly portion of the property. This constrained linkage connects the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve with the Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve managed by San Diego State University, west of Interstate 15.

The KalMia property contains important biological resources, including chaparral habitat, coastal sage scrub habitat, and oak woodland and forest habitat. Animal species likely to be present on the property include California red-legged frog, Cooper's hawk, least Bell's vireo, southwest willow flycatcher, tree swallow, white-tailed kite, yellow warbler, arroyo chub, bobcat, mountain lion, and western pond turtle.



### Expansion 9

The fourth subject property, commonly referred to as the Murrieta 180 property, consists of 11± acres and is located south of Avocado Mesa Road and east of Via Volcano Road in the Tenaja/Santa Margarita region of the Santa Rosa Plateau. The Santa Rosa Plateau is bordered on the east by the Cities of Murrieta and Temecula, on the south by the San Diego County line, on the west by the Cleveland National Forest, and on the north by the community of Wildomar. Level to very gently sloping land containing rural residential homesites, typically in the 4 to 20 acre size range, comprise the various neighborhoods in the region. The development pattern is mostly custom detached single family residences/ranchettes with associated equestrian/agricultural uses. Undeveloped acreage, like the subject property, is a mix of private ownerships with rural residential development potential and lands owned by governmental agencies which have been set aside for open space preservation in perpetuity, including the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve and the Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve.

The subject is located in a vital conservation area within the MSHCP which is a constrained linkage connecting the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve with the Cleveland National Forest located further west. This constrained linkage already includes other publicly conserved lands, including approximately a dozen properties owned by the Authority. These conserved lands total 279± acres of additional reserve land.

The property contains vernal pool habitat and grasslands. Animal species likely to occur on the property include Riverside fairy shrimp, Santa Rosa Plateau fairy shrimp, vernal pool fairy shrimp, bobcat, mountain lion, California red-legged frog, coast range newt, Bell's sage sparrow, Cooper's hawk, grasshopper sparrow, loggerhead shrike, southern California rufous-crowned sparrow, white-tailed kite, turkey vulture, and yellow warbler.

### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grants and subgrants of federal funds for this acquisition project are being considered under WCB's Land Acquisition Program. The Land Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.) and enables the WCB to pursue acquisitions on behalf of the DFG and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. The project has been reviewed and approved by the DFG under its Natural Community Conservation Plan program, substantiating the biological values of the property and DFG has recommended it for funding. The USFWS grant proposed for this project

has also been reviewed and approved by the DFG as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition grant selection and review process.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Authority proposes to manage the properties as part of the MSHCP Reserve System (Reserve) to provide permanent protection of habitat and populations of federal and state-listed endangered and threatened species that occupy the Reserve, and to increase regional wildlife habitat cores and linkages that will connect existing habitat reserve areas throughout Western Riverside County. As part of its obligation under the MSHCP, the Authority retains a Reserve Manager to ensure that management actions, including removal of exotic species, fencing, and public access, are consistent with the MSHCP. The MSHCP sets forth the financing plan for implementation, including annual monitoring and management of Reserve lands and the establishment of an endowment to provide for monitoring and management in perpetuity. Management costs of the acquired parcels will be provided by operating funds from the Authority.

### TERMS

The acquisition project involves the acceptance of a USFWS Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant (USFWS Grant) in the amount of \$1,378,750.00, and the authorization to enter into four Agreements to Subgrant the federal funds to the Authority to assist in its acquisition of the four properties. The acquisition project also involves four proposed WCB grants to the Authority, totaling \$1,684,650.00, which will provide the 55 percent non-federal match as required by the USFWS Grant. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grants to the Authority and the subgrants of the USFWS grant funds to the Authority provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the landowner to encumber the property with a conservation easement in favor of WCB or another approved holder and seek reimbursement of funds. Specific funding information in each property is as follows:

#### Expansion 6

The appraisal found the fair market value of the 513± acre property to be \$1,360,000.00. The appraisal was reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and the USFWS. The landowners have agreed to sell the property for the fair market value of \$1,360,000.00. The proposed subgrant of federal funds will provide \$612,000.00 toward the proposed purchase by the Authority, with the proposed WCB grant providing the non-federal match and balance in the amount of \$748,000.00. It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed to

cover WCB project-related administrative costs, including review of the appraisal by the DGS, bringing the total proposed allocation for this property to \$753,000.00.

#### Expansion 7

The appraisal found the fair market value of the 90± acre property to be \$400,000.00. The appraisal was reviewed and approved by the DGS and the USFWS. The landowners have agreed to sell the property for the fair market value of \$400,000.00. The proposed subgrant of federal funds will provide \$180,000.00 toward the proposed purchase, with the proposed WCB grant providing the non-federal match and balance in the amount of \$220,000.00. It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed to cover WCB project-related administrative costs, including review of the appraisal by the DGS, bringing the total proposed allocation for this property to \$225,000.00. The TPL has negotiated this proposed acquisition and will initially enter into the WCB grant and subgrant and acquire title. The property will be transferred in a concurrent escrow to the Authority who will own and manage the property. The recommended approval of the grant and subgrant to the TPL includes approval of the Authority as the appointed “designee” or successor and assign under the agreements. The Authority will also be bound by the grant and subgrant terms.

#### Expansion 8

The appraisal found the fair market value of the 100± acre property to be \$1,050,000.00. The appraisal was reviewed and approved by the DGS and the USFWS. The landowners have agreed to sell the property for \$1,000,000.00. The proposed subgrant of federal funds will provide \$450,000.00 toward the proposed purchase, with the proposed WCB grant providing the non-federal match and balance in the amount of \$550,000.00. It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed to cover WCB project-related administrative costs, including review of the appraisal by the DGS, bringing the total proposed allocation for this property to \$555,000.00.

#### Expansion 9

The appraisal found the fair market value of the 11± acre property to be \$303,000.00. The appraisal was reviewed and approved by the DGS and the USFWS. The landowners have agreed to sell the property for the fair market value of \$303,000.00. The proposed subgrant of federal funds will provide \$136,350.00 toward the proposed purchase, with the proposed WCB grant providing the non-federal match and balance in the amount of \$166,650.00. It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed to cover WCB project-related administrative costs, including review of the appraisal by the DGS, bringing the total proposed allocation for this property to \$171,650.00.

PROJECT FUNDING

	<u>Exp. 6</u>	<u>Exp. 7</u>	<u>Exp. 8</u>	<u>Exp. 9</u>
Subgrant USFWS Fund	\$612,000.00	\$180,000.00	\$450,000.00	\$136,350.00
<b>WCB Grant</b>	<b><u>748,000.00</u></b>	<b><u>220,000.00</u></b>	<b><u>550,000.00</u></b>	<b><u>166,650.00</u></b>
<b>Total Purchase Price</b>	<b>\$1,360,000.00</b>	<b>\$400,000.00</b>	<b>\$1,000,000.00</b>	<b>\$303,000.00</b>
WCB Administrative Costs	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOC. (per project)</b>	<b>\$753,000.00</b>	<b>\$225,000.00</b>	<b>\$555,000.00</b>	<b>\$171,650.00</b>
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$1,704,650.00</b>			

It is estimated that a total of \$20,000.00 will be needed to cover internal WCB project- related administrative costs, including appraisal review costs by the DGS. The project proponents, including the TPL and the Authority, will fund all other project-related administrative costs for the acquisitions, including but not limited to environmental assessments, appraisals, surveys, escrow and title insurance costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c) that provides funding for grants to implement or assist in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans and is consistent with the objectives of the project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The proposed acquisitions have been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and are 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 and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, Notices of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The DFG is the grant applicant for the USFWS funding used for this acquisition project and has reviewed and recommends approval of this project.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this acquisition project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$1,378,750.00 and approve three Agreements to Subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority and one Agreement to Subgrant the federal funds to the Trust for Public Land and its designated successor, the Authority; allocate \$1,704,650.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (Proposition 84), Public Resources Section 75055(c) for the four grants and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this acquisition project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$1,378,750.00 and approve three Agreements to Subgrant the federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority and one Agreement to Subgrant the federal funds to the Trust for Public Land and its designated successor, the Authority; allocate \$1,704,650.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Section 75055(c) for the four WCB grants and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

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| *16. San Diego County MSCP/HCPLA 2009 (Gibson)<br>San Diego County | \$885,000.00 |
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This proposal was to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the Endangered Habitats Conservancy (EHC), and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to the EHC for a cooperative project with The Conservation Fund, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the USFWS and the WCB to acquire in fee 250± acres of land for the protection of core areas of habitat that will benefit threatened and endangered species found on the property, secure key regional wildlife

linkages and enhance the existing Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP), a joint Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP).

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property is located south of Interstate 8, on the southeast side of Montana Serena, just over one-half mile northeast of Gibson Highlands, in the Crest community of unincorporated San Diego County.

Since approximately 1996, the WCB has funded multiple acquisitions that comprise the nearby 3,000± acre Crestridge Ecological Reserve (Reserve), currently owned and operated by the EHC. The area surrounding the proposed acquisition is a significant biological area located within and adjacent to the acquisition boundary of the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). It is a key linkage area between the Refuge, the Reserve, the Lakeside archipelago, and the El Monte Valley area. Allowing this area to be developed would result in a fragmented landscape that would preclude connectivity between two large conserved areas.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The County of San Diego adopted the MSCP, which is a comprehensive, long-term habitat conservation plan that addresses the needs of multiple species and the preservation of natural vegetation communities in San Diego County. The MSCP addresses the potential impacts of urban growth, natural habitat loss and species endangerment and creates a plan to mitigate for the potential loss of covered species and their habitat due to the direct impacts of future development of both public and private lands within the MSCP area.

The proposed acquisition will increase the protected block of biologically diverse habitat, augmenting habitat corridors between lands south of Interstate 8 and those to the north, including the Refuge and the Cleveland National Forest. Like the nearby Reserve, this proposed property contains a variety of landscapes and habitats, including coastal sage scrub habitat for the California gnatcatcher, and habitat for over 50 other sensitive and protected species. The San Diego thornmint, an endemic plant species whose range is restricted to the boundaries of the San Diego County MSCP, will also benefit from this acquisition.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed subgrant for this project is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program. The Land Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.)

and enables the WCB to pursue acquisitions on behalf of the DFG and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. The project was reviewed and approved by the DFG under its Natural Community Conservation Plan program, substantiating the biological values of the property and DFG has recommended it for funding. The USFWS grant proposed for this project has also been reviewed and approved by DFG as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition grant selection and review process.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The EHC will manage the subject property in conjunction with the existing and nearby DFG Crestridge Ecological Reserve and the adjacent USFWS San Diego National Wildlife Refuge. The EHC has funding and management agreements in place with DFG and USFWS to manage these properties. Compatible and future public use opportunities that may be considered for the subject property include hiking, photography, and bird watching.

TERMS

The property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$2,501,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and the USFWS. The property owner has agreed to sell the property for \$2,500,000.00. The USFWS funds require a non-federal match that is proposed to be provided by a WCB grant from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c). The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and the USFWS subgrant to the EHC provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms the WCB can require the landowner to encumber the property with a conservation easement in favor of WCB or another approved holder and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$ 875,000.00</b>
WCB – subgrant of USFWS funds	1,625,000.00
TOTAL Purchase Price	2,500,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	10,000.00

**Total WCB Allocation**

**\$885,000.00**

It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related administrative costs, including DGS appraisal review. The grantee will fund all appraisal, escrow and title insurance costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c), that allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat that assists in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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 a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The DFG reviewed this proposal and recommends it for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$885,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c) to cover project-related expenses; accept the USFWS Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$1,625,000.00 and authorize the subgrant of these funds to the Endangered Habitats Conservancy; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$885,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c) to cover project-related expenses; accept the USFWS Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$1,625,000.00 and authorize the subgrant of these funds to**



**the Endangered Habitats Conservancy; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

17. Lassen Foothills, Expansion 6 \$2,295,000.00  
(Gaumer Ranch)  
Tehama County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to acquire a conservation easement over 8,455± acres of land for protection of deer and mountain lion habitat and native oak woodlands. The property will also provide significant riparian, water quality and watershed conservation within and along the Deer Creek watershed by reducing development and impacts to downstream flood corridors. Mr. Jon Wilcox of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

#### LOCATION

The property is located about 25 miles southeast of Red Bluff, about 6 miles east of Highway 99, in southeast Tehama County. The irregularly-shaped site is a mix of terrain from mountainous to rolling hills. The acquisition will protect a key puzzle piece between the Gray Davis Dye Creek Preserve to the north, Lassen National Forest to the east, and Vina Plains Preserve to the south and southwest. Acquiring this easement is part of a larger conservation strategy by TNC and Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to conserve and link habitat in the Lassen Foothills area to protect wildlife corridors and prevent habitat fragmentation. The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approved grants for Expansions 1 through 5, beginning in 2001 to assist in the acquisition of conservation easements protecting nearly 27,000± acres of land under the Lassen Foothills Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). TNC has protected additional 55,000± acres in this vicinity using combinations of other public funds and private donations. To date, nearly 83,000 acres are protected, and with the addition of the proposed Gaumer Ranch conservation easement the total protected area will be about 91,500 acres.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The property is currently used as a cattle ranch and ranching will continue once the conservation easement is in place. Deer Creek meanders in a general east-west direction through the southern portion of the ranch. After the acquisition, the property owner will retain the right to use the property for cattle grazing with three rural home sites and recreational uses, including fishing, hunting, and most passive uses, but within limited

parameters. Management of the land will be done primarily by the land owners with limited assistance from TNC under the terms and conditions set forth in the conservation easement.

The primary purpose of the proposed acquisition is to protect blue oak woodlands and grassland habitats which provide important habitat for the east Tehama deer herd, mountain lions, cavity nesting birds and other wildlife. The subject property has frontage along Deer Creek, which is important spawning and rearing habitat for spring, fall, and late fall runs of Chinook salmon. The creek and riparian zones also provide important habitat for steelhead trout and breeding habitat and migratory corridors for migrant bird species.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program. The Land Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.) to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this program acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG by evaluating the biological values of property through development of a CAPP. The CAPP is then reviewed and considered for approval and may later be transmitted by the DFG to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

TNC will be responsible for monitoring the property according to the terms of the conservation easement, which provides that the property will be used primarily as a working landscape for open space agricultural livestock grazing practices. The conservation easement allows access to the subject property for monitoring purposes annually by the TNC and once every three years by WCB.

#### TERMS

The property owners have agreed to sell the conservation easement to TNC for an appraised market value of \$2,285,000.00, which has been approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that WCB staff must review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary reports, documents connected with the purchase and sale, including escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance, prior to disbursement of funds into the established escrow account. In the event of breach of the grant terms, the WCB can seek specific performance or require that the conservation easement be transferred to WCB or another qualifying entity.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$2,285,000.00</b>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$2,285,000.00
Other Project Related Costs:	\$10,000.00
<b>Total WCB Allocation</b>	<b>\$2,295,000.00</b>

It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including DGS appraisal review costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)(1E), that allows for the acquisition of habitat including native oak woodlands, necessary to protect deer and mountain lion habitat and for the protection of habitat within a floodplain or flood corridor.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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 a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve existing natural conditions, agricultural use and open space. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The DFG reviewed this proposal and recommends it for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,295,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)(1E) to cover the grant amount and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Wilcox introduced Mr. Jake Jacobson, Program Director from The Nature Conservancy who was in the audience and available to answer questions.

Ms. Finn asked how the public would become aware of "limited recreational use" (as it is stated in the project description). Mr. Wilcox clarified that the property will not be open for public use and there will be

limited recreational use for the property owner. Ms. Finn asked if this recreational opportunity is consistent with the terms of the WCB's Land Acquisition Program (Program). Mr. Wilcox confirmed that the Program does not require public access. Ms. Finn asked if the recreational opportunity will be provided for the land owner. Mr. Wilcox confirmed that this is correct. Mr. Donnelly clarified that while this Program does not require public access, the WCB may do projects that promote public recreational opportunities under this Program.

Mr. McCamman asked if this project is a part of the wildlife corridors in that area. Mr. Donnelly responded that it was.

Mr. McCamman asked if there were any additional questions about this item. There were none.

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,295,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)(1E) to cover the grant amount and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

At this moment, Mr. McCamman acknowledged the presence of Assembly Member Wesley Chesbro in the audience and welcomed him to the Board meeting. Assembly Member Chesbro said that he is here today to express his strong support for the projects that are very important for his district and were presented at the previous meeting of Wildlife Conservation Board in February of 2011, but were put over to allow the Board to gather and consider additional information. Assembly Member Chesbro also urged the Board to approve the grant for Baxter Ranch project on today's agenda. With regards to the item #29 (Project Update on Usal and Gualala conservation easements) on today's Board meeting agenda, Assembly Member Chesbro encouraged the Board to take the updated information and move forward as quickly as it can to approve these projects.

Mr. McCamman thanked Assembly Member Chesbro for his comments and moved to the next item on the agenda.

18. Sierra Crest Conservation Easement, Phase III \$2,420,000.00  
Sierra County

This proposal was to consider an allocation for a grant to the Truckee Donner Land Trust (TDLT) for a cooperative project with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and the Northern Sierra Partnership (NSP) to acquire conservation easements on 2,683± mountainous acres of commercial timber land for the preservation of productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas and other forest types, including the conservation of water resources and natural habitats for native fish, wildlife and plants found on such lands. The proposed acquisition of the conservation easements on the Sierra Crest III properties will keep these lands as productive working forests, promote habitat connectivity and ecological integrity within the northern Sierra Nevada, and facilitate improved management of these resources on private lands. Additionally, prohibiting private development will permanently protect access for fishing, hiking and other forms of passive recreation, and safeguard the quality of recreation on the adjoining public lands. If approved, the Sierra Crest Conservation Easement Phase III project, as a component of the larger Sierra Checkerboard Initiative (Initiative), will complete the preservation of forest cover, recreational access, and habitat linkages on approximately 7,048± acres of checkerboard lands. The Initiative has been a multi-stage effort to coordinate land management practices and reduce land conflicts in the Sierra Checkerboard area of the Northern Sierra Nevada. Mr. Brian Gibson of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The proposed conservation easements (Project) are situated mostly north of Jackson Meadows Road and Webber Lake approximately 16 miles northwest of the town of Truckee, in Sierra County. The Project straddles the Sierra Crest on and around the historic Henness Pass and includes lands in the Middle Fork Feather, Middle Yuba and Little Truckee River headwaters. It includes a portion of Lake of the Woods, which is adjacent to a popular U.S. Forest Service campground that is regularly used by the Boy Scouts of America. The conservation easements will also protect the southern flank of Webber Peak (8,092 feet) and portions of Coppins Meadow and several unnamed creeks.

This proposal complements other projects approved by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). Most recently, on February 25, 2010, the WCB approved funding for the Sierra Crest Conservation Easements, Phases I and II, a cooperative project with TDLT and the Trust for Public Land (TPL) to acquire a conservation easement on 4,365± acres in close proximity to the Phase III property. Other past WCB fee and conservation easement projects in the region include the protection of 741± acres for

the Truckee River Wildlife Area, 1,481± acres known as Waddle Ranch, 4,011± acres for the Truckee River Canyon Wildlife Area, 1,350± acres known as Gray Creek Canyon, 982± acres at Perazzo Meadows, and 2,325± acres known as Independence Lake.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The subject properties consist of five non-contiguous tracts of land, ranging in size from roughly 160 acres to 640 acres (a full section). In fact, four properties are effectively individual sections, while the fifth parcel represents a quarter section of land. Access to the subject parcels by automobile is seasonal only and the area lacks power and telephone services. The northern Sierra Nevada range is renowned for its forests and habitat, home to large mammals and wildlife including the mountain lion, bobcat, lynx, mule deer, Pacific fisher, great grey owl, bald eagle, and northern goshawk. Large portions of the Sierra Crest property are heavily forested with lodgepole pine, Jeffrey pine, western white pine, red and white fir, and mountain hemlock. Portions of the un-forested areas are covered with natural grasses. Riparian vegetation can be found adjacent to lakes and streams.

### WCB PROGRAM

This project funding proposal was submitted to the WCB through its Forest Conservation Program (Program). Program proposals are evaluated and selected for funding by WCB staff based on established criteria approved by the Board on November 17, 2007, utilizing a peer review process involving biological and forestry expertise and including the DFG. The Program seeks to preserve and restore productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas, redwood forests and other forest types, including the conservation of water resources and natural habitat for native fish, wildlife and plants found on these lands. One of the primary objectives of the Program is the protection and conservation of working forests and productive managed forestlands. Selected projects 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.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Project area will continue to be managed as a working forest which will ensure residential development will never take place within the easement area. The public will have the right to continue using the property for recreational activities, including hunting, fishing, hiking, snowshoeing, skiing, biking and horseback riding. TDLT proposes to monitor the property in conjunction with the 4,365± acres it currently monitors.

TERMS

The conservation easements have been appraised as having a fair market value of \$3,500,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by the WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the conservation easements for the fair market value of \$3,500,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant to TDLT provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can seek specific performance or require that the conservation easement be transferred to WCB or another qualifying entity.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$2,420,000.00</b>
Sierra Nevada Conservancy	540,000.00
Northern Sierra Partnership	<u>540,000.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$3,500,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB Allocation</b>	<b>\$2,420,000.00</b>

The TPL paid for the appraisal and the SNC submitted the appraisal for DGS review so there are no anticipated project related costs to be incurred by the WCB.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a), that promotes ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests and promotes the conservation and protection 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.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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

existing natural conditions, including plant and wildlife habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The project has been reviewed under the WCB's Forest Conservation Program and has been recommended for approval.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,420,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a) to cover the grant amount; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Gibson introduced Mr. Dave Sutton from the Trust for Public Land, and Mr. Carl Somers, Associate Director of the Sierra Nevada and Nevada for the Trust for Public Land, who were in the audience and available to answer questions.

Ms. Finn asked how the public would become aware of the "limited recreational use" (as it is stated in the project description). Mr. Dave Sutton from the Trust for Public Land introduced himself before the Board and commented that historically Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) allows passive recreational use on its properties and will continue to do so, but the public recreation will also be enhanced with this easement, which will exist in perpetuity, and includes the possibility of future trail construction. Ms. Finn pointed out that Mr. Sutton is with the Trust for Public Land but the grant is going to the Truckee Donner Land Trust. Mr. Gibson explained that the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the Truckee Donner Land Trust (TDLT) are working in coordination, and although the grant is for the TDLT, nobody from TDLT was able to come to today's meeting. Mr. Donnelly clarified that TPL, TDLT, as well as three other organizations make up the Northern Sierra Partnership which is a funding partner for this project. Mr. Sutton added that TPL and TDLT are co-signatories on the option agreement with SPI and have been working with WCB and other agencies in this region for about 20 years. Ms. Finn thanked Mr. Donnelly and Mr. Sutton for their comments.

Mr. McCamman asked how this easement works relative to continuing timber harvest managing opportunity. Mr. Gibson responded that SPI will continue to harvest, while portions of the conservation area will be shut down during harvest and will re-open to the public when it is safe to do so. Mr. McCamman asked if there is a different review for timber harvest plans than would otherwise be required, or if the timber harvest is separate from this easement. Mr. Sutton replied that there are some modifications in the harvest practices. According to Mr. Sutton, SPI operates in a 100-year



cycle and the easement prohibits even-aged management as well as the use of pesticide and similar chemical treatments after harvest.

Mr. McCamman asked if there were any additional questions about this item. There were none.

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,420,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a) to cover the grant amount; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

19. Eel River Peninsula \$8,559,000.00  
Lake and Mendocino Counties

Mr. Donnelly reported that several letters of support were received for this project from the following people: Congressman Mike Thompson, Congress of the United States; Assembly Member Patty Berg, CA State Assembly, District 1; Assembly Member Wesley Chesbro, CA State Assembly, District 1; Mr. John Pinches, 3<sup>rd</sup> District Supervisor, County of Mendocino Board of Supervisors; Mr. Mike Pool, State Director, United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, CA State Office; Ms. Carolyn Brown, Chief, Environmental Stewardship Branch, CA Department of Transportation, District 3; Mr. Thomas Cantreras, Forest Supervisor, United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Mendocino N.F. Supervisor's Office; Mr. Randy Moore, Regional Forester, United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region; Mr. Paul Trouette, Fish & Game Commissioner, District 3, Mendocino County Blacktail Association; Mr. Reid Haughey, President, The Wilderness Land Trust; Mr. David Drell, Board Member, and Ms. Ellen Drell, Secretary, Willits Environmental Center; Mr. Bob Hammond, Lands Program Manager, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; Mr. R.J. Gutierrez, Professor, Gordon Gullion Endowed Chair in Forest Wildlife Research, University of Minnesota; Ms. Lindsay Magnuson, Executive Director, Northcoast Regional Land Trust; Louis Huaqilin and Yvonne M. Frost, Board of Directors of Eel River Nation of Sovereign Wailaki; and Mr. Paul Kephart, Executive Director, Environmental Planning.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) for a cooperative project with the Department of

Fish and Game (DFG) to acquire a conservation easement over 8,544± acres of threatened and endangered species habitat, deer range habitat, oak woodlands and old growth forests, wildlife corridors and riparian areas. This conservation easement helps sustain healthy stands of a mixed commercial conifer species. Mr. Jon Wilcox of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The property is located east of the town of Willits and approximately 4 miles east of Highway 101 in Mendocino County. These 8,544± acre irregularly-shaped parcels are bounded by a number of publicly protected areas owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The general terrain varies from mountainous to rolling hills. Elevations range from approximately 900 feet to 3,200 feet at a peak on Willits Ridge. The current land uses on these properties are recreational and agricultural, including forestry and grazing.

The project is adjacent or in close proximity to tens of thousands of acres of public lands, including the Mendocino National Forest, the newly designated Yuki Wilderness and the San Herdin Wilderness Areas. Protection of the property will help expand and create linkages to these protected areas.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Eel River Peninsula project, while providing for environmentally sustainable land use planning and maintaining a working landscape, provides for the protection of a diverse mix of habitat communities, including oak woodlands, grasslands, interior wetlands, vernal pool, and riparian habitat.

The diverse habitat types and special habitat elements found across the Eel River project provide important wintering, breeding and migratory habitat for many species including the northern spotted owl, Cooper's hawk, foothill yellow-legged frog, northwestern pond turtle, bald and golden eagle, purple martin, and Chinook and Coho salmon. This project also provides key range habitat and migration corridors for black-tailed deer. The higher elevations provide seasonal habitat for black bear and mountain lions.

The properties include over 8 miles of the middle fork and main stem of the Eel River, these areas of the Eel River are part of the California Wild and Scenic Rivers System and provide valuable fisheries habitat for Chinook and Coho salmon. The headwaters and stream channels within the properties are relatively undisturbed. The most serious threat to water quality in this area is from erosion and sedimentation from rural roads. By

eliminating subdivision of these properties, the conservation easement will prevent further degradation of these watersheds.

The property has restricted access; however, there are potential opportunities for future limited public recreation and educational activities. The conservation easement provides additional protection, above that offered under forest protection laws, for oak woodlands, old growth forests and commercial conifers. The conservation easement also calls for the establishment of a forest management plan to be reviewed and approved every ten years by the easement holder and the WCB. Any timber harvest contemplated before the establishment of the forest management plan shall follow the Forest Stewardship Council standards. There are no current timber harvest plans underway on the project area. Nor is there any harvest plans contemplated in the near future.

### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program. The Land Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.) to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this program acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG by evaluating the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE). The LAE is then reviewed and considered for approval and may later be transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund. This project was approved by the DFG's Regional Operations Committee in March 2008, under an LAE.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

When acquired, this property will be managed by the RMEF. The RMEF will be responsible for monitoring and managing the property according to the terms of the conservation easement. The conservation easement allows access to the subject property annually by RMEF and once every three years by the WCB for monitoring purposes. The project lands are also encumbered by Land Conservation Contracts under the Williamson Act which are not affected by the terms of the conservation easement.

### TERMS

The conservation easement has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$10,414,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the conservation easement for \$8,544,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow

instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can seek specific performance or require that the conservation easement be transferred to WCB or another qualifying entity.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$8,544,000.00</b>
TOTAL Purchase Price	<b>\$8,544,000.00</b>
Other Project Related Costs:	\$15,000.00
<b>Total WCB Allocation</b>	<b>\$8,559,000.00</b>

It is estimated that an additional \$15,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including DGS appraisal review costs and independent timber review costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding sources (Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Section 2786(a)(1E), Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Sections 2786(b), (c)(1E), and California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a), that allow for the acquisition of habitat, including oak woodlands, to protect deer and mountain lion habitat, rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species, wildlife corridors and significant natural landscapes and ecosystems, such as old growth redwoods, oak woodlands and other significant habitat areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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 and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitat. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,674,333.00 from the Habitat

Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Section 2786(a)(1E); allocate \$1,000,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Section 2786(b/c), (1E), and allocate \$4,884,667.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a), for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Wilcox introduced Mr. Bob Hammond, Lands Program Manager from Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and Mr. Rich Padula, the property owner, who were in the audience and available to answer questions.

Ms. Finn stated that this grant is to Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), and asked how the DFG will be involved. Mr. Wilcox responded that the DFG has rights as far as reviewing the forest management plan in the future. Ms. Finn commented that, as it is stated in the project description, the project lands are encumbered by Land Conservation Contracts under the Williamson Act, and asked how this grant will differ from the Williamson Act contract. Mr. Wilcox explained that the Williamson Act is agriculture related to property tax relief, and this grant further restricts harvesting and protects oak woodlands and old growth forest.

Mr. McCamman asked if there were any additional questions or comments about this item. There were none.

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,674,333.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Section 2786(a)(1E); allocate \$1,000,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Section 2786(b/c), (1E), and allocate \$4,884,667.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a), for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

Mr. McCamman acknowledged the presence of Ms. Diane Colborn, Assembly Member Jared Huffman's representative, who joined the meeting at this moment.

20. Baxter Ranch \$2,360,242.00  
Sonoma County

This proposal was to consider a cooperative project with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to allocate funding and administer federal Forest Legacy Program funds through an interagency agreement between the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and CAL FIRE to acquire a conservation easement over 4,036± acres of land for the protection of protected species habitat and mixed conifer, oak woodland and environmentally important private forest lands located within the northern California Coastal Range. The federal grant funding for this project has been approved through the Forest Legacy Program (FLP) administered by CAL FIRE. Ms. Elizabeth Yokoyama of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property is located within the northern California Coastal Range, seven miles west of Interstate Highway (US 101) and 18 miles east of the Pacific Ocean and in close proximity to the Lake Sonoma Recreational Area in northwestern Sonoma County.

The property is part of the Wheatfield Fork of the Gualala River and Sonoma Lake watershed. The surrounding area is rural in nature and includes a trend towards rural residential development home sites. Properties have either been converted to vineyards or continue to be used for grazing and/or timber production. The trend in the area has been home site development since it is considered to be a desirable location. Without the conservation easement, Baxter Ranch will be vulnerable to ownership fragmentation and residential development occurring in the surrounding area.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Baxter Ranch property is comprised of two contiguous irregularly-shaped holdings: Upper White Oak (1,536± acres) and Moffit Ranch (2,500± acres) in Sonoma County. The total site contains approximately 4,046 acres of forestland, of which 2,450 acres are managed under a State-approved Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan. The forested areas include hardwood and conifer tree cover, Douglas fir, oak woodlands and a protected 38-acre grove of virgin redwood. According to a recent "Vineyard Potential Study," 585 acres of the Baxter property also meets requirements for viticulture development. The property was rated

as having an average to above average potential for vineyard development.

The property is mountainous with grassland cover and includes the headwaters of several creeks that drain into Lake Sonoma, the upper reaches of the Wheatfield Fork of the Gualala River, and lies in the same watershed as the FLP-protected Camp Gualala. These natural water resources sustain Coho salmon and steelhead populations, and provide habitat to diverse wildlife populations, including a number of special status species such as the California condor, bald eagle, osprey, Cooper's hawk, and merlin. The property currently supports traditional forestry, grazing practices, and recreational and hunting activities.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under the California Forest Legacy Program Act of 2007 (Act) (Public Resources Code Section 12240 et seq.) administered by CAL FIRE. The Act authorizes the Wildlife Conservation Board to administer the purchase of conservation easements on behalf of CAL FIRE to help implement the program. The Act provides that the California Forest Legacy Program may also include those activities eligible for funding under the federal Forest Legacy Program (16 U.S.C. Sec. 2103c), and the State program shall be coordinated with the federal program to the maximum amount possible. The current project has been approved through both the State and federal Forest Legacy Program project selection processes, and has been further reviewed by WCB for compliance and consistency with State program and funding requirements. CAL FIRE has entered into an agreement with the WCB to administer this project as specified in the Act.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Consistent with the purposes of the FLP guidelines, the conservation easement will prevent the future conversion of forest land and forest resources from development in northwestern Sonoma County. The conservation easement allows the continuance of existing forestry operations, ranching, agricultural uses and hunting activities which will: (i) protect water quality and supplies; (ii) protect wildlife habitat and maintain habitat connectivity to ensure biodiversity; (iii) protect riparian areas and associated ecosystems; and (iv) maintain forest sustainability.

The conservation easement restricts public access; however, there are some limited public recreational and educational opportunities. Members of a local hunting club are permitted to continue to use the property at any time during the hunting season. Also within the Moffit Easement there is a provision for the public to access the old-growth redwood grove through docent-led tours two times per year.

CAL FIRE will be the holder of the conservation easement and will be responsible for monitoring compliance with its terms and conditions of the conservation easement. CAL FIRE is authorized to acquire the conservation easement through the FLP. CAL FIRE currently holds title to and/or administers other conservation easements in Sonoma, Mendocino, and Humboldt Counties. As grantee, it will be responsible for the onsite monitoring of the property not less than once in any period of three calendar years. However, federal FLP laws and the terms of the conservation easement require that CAL FIRE monitor and report annually. CAL FIRE will utilize an approved monitoring protocol, and compare its findings to a baseline conditions report completed for this conservation easement. This monitoring will ensure that current agricultural and timber management practices remain in place. The project lands are also encumbered by Land Conservation Contracts under the Williamson Act which are not affected by the terms of the easement.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The property has been approved as having a fair market value of \$6,525,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff, and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owners have agreed to sell the conservation easement to CAL FIRE for \$5,335,332.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of breach of the grant terms, the WCB can seek specific performance or require that the conservation easement be transferred to WCB or another qualifying entity.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The WCB proposes to make a grant to CAL FIRE in the amount of \$2,350,242.00 as described below:

	Moffit	Upper White Oak	Totals
WCB	\$ 100,000.00	\$2,250,242.00	\$2,350,242.00
2006 FLP Grant	985,090.00		985,090.00
2007 FLP Grant	1,755,396.00	244,604.00	2,000,000.00
Purchase Price	\$2,840,486.00	\$2,494,846.00	\$5,335,332.00

Other Project Related Costs: 10,000.00  
**Total WCB Allocation \$2,360,242.00**

It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including the DGS appraisal and transaction review costs.



### FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Proposition 12), Public Resources Code Section 5096.350(a)(4), that allows for the acquisition and protection of forest lands, including ancient redwoods and oak woodlands and funding to meet the matching requirements of the Federal Legacy Forest Program.

### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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 a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve existing natural conditions. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The project has been reviewed under the State's Forest Legacy Program and has been recommended for approval.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,360,242.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Proposition 12), Public Resources Code Section 5096.350 (a)(4) to cover the grant amount and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Ms. Yokoyama introduced Mr. Jeff Calvert, FLP Coordination from CAL FIRE; Mr. Russ Henley, Assistant Deputy Director of the Resource Protection and Improvement, CAL FIRE; Ms. Ellen Fred from Law Office of Ellen A. Fred; and Mr. Tyler Gleason, the property owner, who were in the audience and available to answer questions.

Ms. Finn clarified that the Board's action today is just to approve the grant to CAL FIRE, and CAL FIRE still has to complete the process and get the rest of it approved through the Public Works Board. Ms. Finn asked if the landowners understand that there are still a few steps to get this project approved. Ms. Yokoyama confirmed that the landowners are aware of that.

Mr. Tyler Gleason, the property owner, introduced himself before the Board and spoke in support of this project. Mr. Gleason said that this property has been in his family for four generations. Mr. Gleason added that six years ago his family was considering subdividing and selling the

ranch, which could have been very profitable, but chose to preserve it as an open space. Mr. Gleason thanked the Board for considering this project.

Mr. McCamman asked staff to provide more details regarding CAL FIRE and Forest Legacy Program (FLP) requirements. Mr. Donnelly stated that CAL FIRE works with the federal government to obtain federal forest legacy dollars for qualified projects in California. Several years ago then-Senator Wesley Chesbro enacted the Forest Legacy Act which designates CAL FIRE as the organization responsible to carry out the FLP. A section in the Act states that the Wildlife Conservation Board may administer the program on behalf of CAL FIRE to implement the FLP. Mr. Donnelly indicated that although WCB has approved and acted on behalf of CAL FIRE in a handful of transactions in the past, it did not necessarily mean that CAL FIRE is exempt from other approvals required by law. It was brought to his attention last year that while the Act states that the WCB may administer the FLP for CAL FIRE, it does not exempt CAL FIRE from other California statutes that require the approval by the State Public Works Board (SPWB). As such, WCB may not have the authority at this point to approve the acquisition of the conservation easement on behalf of CAL FIRE. Mr. Donnelly further indicated that the action being taken by the Board today was strictly to allocate grant funds to CAL FIRE towards the project from Proposition 12 dollars which is specifically used to match FLP dollars.

Mr. Donnelly stated that the FLP has been a very popular program and both CAL FIRE and WCB have had a great relationship implementing this program.

Mr. McCamman asked if there were any additional questions or comments about this item. There were none.

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,360,242.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Proposition 12), Public Resources Code Section 5096.350 (a)(4) to cover the grant amount and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

21. Lower Redwood Creek Restoration \$1,260,000.00  
Marin County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (Conservancy) for a cooperative project with the Golden Gate National Recreation Area of the National Park Service (NPS), the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to restore natural creek alignment and function to lower Redwood Creek just upstream of Muir Beach in Marin County. Mr. Anthony Chappelle of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

Part of the UNESCO Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve, Redwood Creek flows from Mt. Tamalpais, through the old-growth redwood forest of Muir Woods National Monument, and out to the ocean at Muir Beach. The 40± acre project area is located on the lowest ¼ mile of the creek's floodplain just west of Highway 1 in southern Marin County. The watershed is 95% public land that includes federal, State, and county property. NPS owns most of the project site, extending from the levee road to the ocean and including a riparian parcel upstream of the Pacific Way Road, a county-owned road. The San Francisco Zen Center owns a small portion of the project site over which NPS has obtained a conservation easement to protect this area in perpetuity.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Redwood Creek is the southernmost stream in the United States with a regularly occurring population of Coho salmon. However, this population is listed as endangered under both the California Endangered Species Act and the federal Endangered Species Act. This population is significantly smaller than its historic population. Steelhead trout in Redwood Creek are also listed as threatened. The habitat in the project area has been diminished both in extent and quality by the loss of historic creek and floodplain habitat due to landscape modifications. Floodplains are known to provide important habitat for outmigrant Coho to feed and build body mass, thereby increasing their chance of survival upon returning to the ocean. However, the natural floodplain has been disconnected from the creek by a 1,300 foot-long levee across the site. Fish that do make it to the floodplain may be prevented from returning to the channel because only two small culverts provide a route back to the mainstem, one of which routinely fills with sediment and requires maintenance. Two other impediments to be addressed by this project are the channelization and realignment of the creek and the placement of fill in the floodplain.

This proposed project is phase three of a five-phase project. The first two phases, completed in 2009 and 2010, involved removal of fill at the lower

end of the project site where a parking lot encroached on the natural floodplain. Excavation of the new creek channel in the central portion of the floodplain to its original, natural and preferred location was also initiated. This project will complete excavation of the new creek channel tying it in hydraulically to the rest of the system. This will include 550 linear feet of new channel downstream of the previously excavated channel and 445 linear feet upstream. Most of the levee (about 1,000 LF of the total 1,300 LF) will be removed, thereby eliminating a primary obstruction to floodplain connection. Former tributary ditches and a portion of the existing Redwood Creek channel at the confluence with the new channel (downstream of the levee road) will be deepened to function as backwater habitat. A new off-channel pond and backwater complex in the lower portion of the floodplain will be constructed, and all new backwater habitats and the new Redwood Creek channel will incorporate extensive woody debris structures. Public access to the beach will be maintained through the construction of a new pedestrian bridge/boardwalk from the parking lot to the beach, with widely spaced piers (ranging from 90-foot to 120-foot spans), which will allow full long-term channel migration and unobstructed flows. Thirty thousand native riparian and wetland plants will be planted, weeds managed, and extensive on-site stewardship programs conducted.

The last two phases, to be completed after this Phase 3 project, will relocate the parking lot completely out of the floodplain and relocate the Pacific Way Bridge to a more hydrologically stable location.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The project is funded through the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program, which provides for native fisheries restoration, restoration of coastal and tidal habitats, and threatened and endangered species habitats within the State.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

NPS will conduct long-term management of the site according to project and monitoring plans, management strategies, and guidelines identified in the Final EIS/EIR for this project. The site will be managed following the 2006 NPS Management Policies, which include specific measures for land protection, biological and water resource management, stewardship and education, and visitor use of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Proposed actions are consistent with the *Redwood Creek Watershed Vision for the Future*, which was prepared by watershed stakeholders in a yearlong process to identify guiding principles and desired future conditions in the watershed.

The project has been designed to restore natural, self-sustaining ecosystem function to the mouth of Redwood Creek; as such, no

additional costs to maintain hydrologic benefits are anticipated. In fact, the restoration will eliminate the current costs related to periodic flood reduction actions, such as dredging. While removal of non-native vegetation is incorporated into site restoration over a 4-year period, future removal and sustained control of non-native plants (harding grass and cape ivy in particular) is likely to represent the only long-term cost to maintain ecosystem function. NPS and the Conservancy are dedicated to invasive species eradication at the site and will plan for the costs of long-term management and maintenance as a part of the watershed-based stewardship program. NPS is also dedicated to managing and conducting necessary maintenance of this site to meet its mission to protect resources for the enjoyment of future generations.

If at any time during the life of the project the NPS is unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, the grant agreement will obligate that an amortized amount of funds will be returned to the State of California based on the number of years left on the project life.

The project is consistent with the DFG's Recovery Strategy for California Coho Salmon, 2004 and the National Marine Fisheries Service's Public Draft Recovery Plan for the Central California Coast Coho Salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) Evolutionarily Significant Unit. It is also supported by the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$1,260,000.00</b>
National Park Service	594,000.00
State Coastal Conservancy	600,000.00
Department of Fish and Game	418,000.00
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	<u>295,000.00</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$3,167,000.00</b>

Project costs will be for mobilization/demobilization/as-builts, site preparation, earthmoving, gravel and rock, planting, winterization and erosion control and project and construction management.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a). This source provides funding allows for the restoration of habitat to provide recovery of rare and endangered species and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. All permits have been obtained for this project. The National Park Service and the County of Marin, as lead agencies under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), have certified a Final EIS/EIR for the project pursuant to the provisions of NEPA and CEQA. Staff has considered the Final EIS/EIR and has prepared proposed written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA as a responsible agency. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,260,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Chappelle introduced Mr. Benjamin Harwood and Ms. Sharon Ferrell, both Associate Directors of the Golden Gate National Park Conservancy, who were in the audience and available to answer questions.

Ms. Finn asked if WCB was involved in Phase I and II of this project. Mr. Chappelle responded that this is the Board's first involvement. Ms. Diane Colborn, Assembly Member Huffman's representative, stated that the Assembly Member is very supportive of this project.

Mr. McCamman asked if there were any additional questions or comments about this item. There were none.

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,260,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

22. San Joaquin Multi-Species Conservation Plan (Thomas) \$1,847,966.00  
Contra Costa County

This proposal was to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy (ECCCHC), as well as to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to ECCCHC for a cooperative project with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) to acquire 1,159± acre of land for the protection and preservation of existing regional wildlife linkages. Mr. Jon Wilcox of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The property is located in the City of Pittsburg, in Contra Costa County, within the Diablo range, south of Kirker Pass Road and east of the town of Clayton. This acquisition is part of the East Contra Costa County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). The acquisition will help to protect a contiguous patch of annual grasslands and vernal pool habitat in the lower elevations, as well as oaks and scrub habitat areas located along the upper elevations. The property is located within a habitat linkage running south from the Concord Naval Weapons Base to the Los Vaqueros Reservoir and beyond to the Altamont pass and eventually to the northern portions of the San Joaquin Valley. Over the past year the WCB, USFWS, ECCCHC and EBRPD have partnered to acquire just over 5,000 acres within the MSHCP planning area, protecting essential habitat and connectivity for multiple species whose populations or habitat span the two counties.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The majority of the property is mountain top with multiple level areas. Residential subdivision development has been encroaching on the project area from the north and east as the Bay Area continues to grow in population and geographic size. The subject parcels will provide for the protection and preservation of existing regional wildlife linkages, including valley floor and foothill grassland, oak woodland, oak woodland savannah, riparian woodland, emergent wetland, and vernal pool habitat areas. The acquisition will help further establish a northwest-southeast movement corridor for the endangered San Joaquin kit fox and will protect habitat for the conservation of the threatened California red-legged frog. The property has historically been vacant, with a limited amount of agriculture/grazing occurring.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant and subgrant for this project is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program. The Land Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.) and enables the WCB to pursue acquisitions on behalf of the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. The project has been reviewed and approved by the DFG under its Natural Community Conservation Plan program, substantiating the biological values of the property, and DFG has recommended it for funding. The USFWS grant proposed for this project has also been reviewed and approved by the DFG as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition grant selection and review process.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

When acquired, this property will be managed by the EBRPD. Funding of future management activities for this property will be provided by wind turbine and cell tower lease revenue from subsequent acquisitions within the MSHCP area. It is anticipated that the area may offer potential future opportunities for passive recreational uses, as the habitat will be maintained in conjunction with other properties to form the East Contra Costa County Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan.

TERMS

The property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$3,864,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and the USFWS. The property owner has agreed to sell the property for the fair market value of \$3,864,000.00. The USFWS funds require a non-federal match that is being provided by EBRPD tax revenues and a WCB grant to ECCCHC. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and the USFWS subgrant to the ECCCHC provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the landowner to encumber the property with a conservation easement in favor of WCB or another authorized entity and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>WCB Grant</b>	<b>\$1,842,966.00</b>
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WCB – Subgrant of USFWS funds (E-21-HL-3)	\$ 695,425.00
WCB – Subgrant of USFWS funds (E-26-HL-3)	\$ 939,209.00
East Bay Regional Park District	<u>\$ 386,400.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$3,864,000.00
Other Project Related Costs:	<b>5,000.00</b>

**Total WCB Allocation** **\$1,847,966.00**

It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including DGS appraisal review costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c), allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat that assists in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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 a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; approve the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant from USFWS in the amount of \$1,634,634.00 and approve the Agreement to Subgrant of the federal funds to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy; allocate \$1,847,966.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Section 75055(c) for the grant to East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy and to cover the project-related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Wilcox introduced Mr. John Kopchik, Executive Director of the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy, who was in the audience and available to answer questions.

Mr. McCamman asked staff to provide more information about passive recreational uses. Mr. Wilcox responded that the site will be managed by the East Bay Regional Park District and there will be some type of guided tours on the property. Mr. McCamman asked if no trail system is anticipated at this point. Mr. Wilcox confirmed that this is correct.

Mr. John Kopchik from the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy introduced himself before the Board and spoke in support of this project. Mr. Kopchik said that the full expectation of this property is to have it open for passive uses such as hiking and mountain biking once a sufficient management plan is in place; in the short term there only will be guided recreation. Mr. McCamman asked if there is any possibility for future hunting opportunity. Mr. Kopchik responded that there is no possibility for that.

Mr. McCamman asked if there were any additional questions or comments about this item. There were none.

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; approve the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant from USFWS in the amount of \$1,634,634.00 and approve the Agreement to Subgrant of the federal funds to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy; allocate \$1,847,966.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Section 75055(c) for the grant to East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy and to cover the project-related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

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| 23. Pillar Point Bluff Complex<br>San Mateo County | \$3,010,000.00 |
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Mr. Donnelly reported that two letters of support were received for this item from the following people: Senator Leland Yee, Ph.D., CA State Senate, District 8; and Mr. Sam Schuchat, Executive Officer of the State Coastal Conservancy. Mr. Donnelly acknowledged that we did get an inquiry of concern from Mr. Doug Haaland of the Assembly Republican Office on Policy, as well as from Senator Fuller this morning which will be addressed as we are discussing this item.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the County of San Mateo (County) to acquire in fee 140± acres of land for the protection of significant natural landscapes, habitat for the protection of threatened and endangered species and to provide continued wildlife-oriented public use opportunities. Ms. Teri Muzik of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The Pillar Point Bluff Complex (Complex) consists of three individual properties located on the San Mateo coast north of Half Moon Bay. The properties are north of Pillar Point Harbor, south of Moss Beach, and west of the Half Moon Bay Airport.

A prominent viewing location, with views north to Moss Beach, the San Mateo coast to the south, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area to the east and the Farallon Islands to the west, the property's protection marks a significant contribution to County and State conservation and recreation goals. The Complex provides bluff-top continuity with the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve (Reserve), one of the oldest marine reserves in the State, which is already managed by the County.

The subject properties have been identified as a priority for acquisition because of their adjacency to the Reserve, vicinity to Pillar Point Marsh, wetlands and sensitive habitat areas, consistency with master plans of public agencies, high recreation use potential, and threat of eventual residential and commercial development.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Complex contains a low-lying meadow area, coastal scrub community, grasslands and willow riparian areas. Protection of these significant landscapes will provide habitat for many rare/threatened and/or endangered plant and animal species that may be found on or may utilize the property. These species may include the San Francisco Bay spineflower, coast lily, California red-legged frog, western pond turtle, San Francisco garter snake and the salt marsh common yellowthroat.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program. The Land Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.) to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this program acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the DFG by evaluating the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE)/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then

reviewed and considered for approval and may later be transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation by DFG to fund. The project was approved by the DFG Regional Operations Committee in February 2008.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Complex is situated in a key position on Pillar Point Ridge, halfway between the main northern section of the Reserve to the north and Pillar Point Marsh to the south. The property is identified in the San Mateo County Trails Plan as a segment of the California Coastal Trail and would provide a critical .6 mile link in this trail. The County will manage the property in conjunction with the adjacent Reserve and will preserve and protect the sensitive habitat found on the property while providing for the continuation of appropriate public wildlife-oriented recreational uses.

Potential threats to the property include sedimentation and erosion, invasive exotics and development/urbanization. Acquisition and management by the County will provide protection against these threats.

TERMS

The property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$3,816,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the property for \$3,000,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant to the San Mateo County provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the landowner to encumber the property with a conservation easement in favor of WCB or another authorized entity and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The WCB grant will fund the entire purchase price of the acquisition:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$3,000,000.00</b>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$3,000,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	10,000.00
<b>Total WCB Allocation</b>	<b>\$3,010,000.00</b>

It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including DGS appraisal review.

### FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a), that allows for the acquisition and protection habitat to protect rare and endangered species, wildlife corridors and significant natural landscapes and ecosystems, such as old growth redwoods, oak woodlands and other significant habitat areas.

### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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 a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant and animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for approval.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,010,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a) to cover the grant amount and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Ms. Muzik introduced Ms. Cecily Harris from the San Mateo County Parks; Mr. Walter Moore from the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST); and Ms. Trish Strickland from the Trust for Public Land, who were in the audience and available to answer questions.

Ms. Finn asked who owns the property now. Ms. Muzik responded that the property is owned by POST, a private non-profit organization. Mr. McCamman commented that as a private non-profit, POST may dispose of the property in a non-public way at the end of the current terms and conditions and asked Ms. Muzik to confirm that there is no easement on the entirety of this property. Ms. Muzik responded that this is correct and went on to explain that a portion is covered by an Offer to Dedicate held by the SCC. Mr. McCamman asked if, with this acquisition, the whole property will become protected. Ms. Muzik confirmed that this is correct. Ms. Muzik went on to explain (and showed it on the map) that there is development very close to this property and the project property itself is

very desirable for development. Ms. Finn asked what kind of development is there. Ms. Muzik responded that there is residential as well as commercial development in this area. Mr. Lucas Frerichs, Assembly Member Gordon's representative, commented that the property is adjacent to the Half Moon Bay airport.

Mr. Donnelly pointed out that this project includes acquisition of three separate properties. The State Coastal Conservancy's irrevocable offer to dedicate (IOD) is over 70 acres of the 119-acre parcel being acquired. The remaining acreage (50 acres) is unencumbered. Mr. Donnelly went on to explain that when the appraiser appraised the property, he appraised the 119-acre parcel as though it was encumbered by a conservation easement and decreased the value by about 30% to reflect the impact of the IOD.

Mr. McCamman commented that Senator Fuller indicated that her representative, Ms. Rachelle Caouette, may have some questions. Ms. Caouette said that the Senator asked to defer this project because she has some concerns regarding the appraisal for one of the pieces on the property. Mr. Donnelly recommended that the Board approve this project today as he did not think that a new appraisal would reflect anything different. Mr. Donnelly went on to explain that WCB has provided Mr. Haaland's office the Department of General Services reviews for these three appraisals, and while the appraisal itself was requested by Mr. Haaland, it is WCB's policy at this particular time not to release appraisals until escrow closes.

Ms. Finn asked to explain what the wildlife-oriented public use is. Ms. Muzik responded that there is a lot of wildlife on the property and because portion of the property is right on the bluff, there is wildlife viewing, bird watching and other similar activities. Ms. Muzik added that there are lots of trails that people use for hiking on the property. Ms. Finn asked if on the coast side the property goes down to the beach. Ms. Muzik responded that this is correct. Ms. Finn asked if it connects between the beach in the north and south and improves continued coast access. Ms. Muzik replied that the property connects and provides access to the Marine Reserve.

Mr. Frerichs commented that this property provides a link to the California Coastal Trail system. Mr. McCamman asked if the trail is there yet. Ms. Cecily Harris from the San Mateo County Parks introduced herself before the Board and responded that the trails are already on the bluff property. Mr. McCamman asked about County's involvement in this project. Ms. Muzik responded that the County will manage the property. Mr. Donnelly pointed out that the Coastal Trail sits on that portion of the

property that is encumbered by the State Coastal Conservancy and the remaining property is not impacted by the trails.

Mr. McCamman asked about the County's management process.

Ms. Harris responded that San Mateo County has been in discussions with POST concerning acquisition of the property for a long time to help complete lands for the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve. She also noted that this property is a part of the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary and this project has national significance. Ms. Harris stated that San Mateo County has been managing the lands for POST since 2008, so the management will continue. Ms. Harris added that the County will continue to manage habitat restoration as well as the coastal trail.

Mr. Donnelly stated that POST, as well as other land trusts, serve as an important partner in a lot of transactions that otherwise would be lost. Public agencies and departments often times do not have the ability to act quick enough to secure these properties. Mr. Donnelly went on to explain that this particular project was caught up in the bond freeze and, if the bond freeze had not occurred, the Board would have considered this project about three to four years ago. Mr. Donnelly pointed out that despite being managed by the County, the property is privately owned. Mr. Donnelly concluded that POST is a private non-profit organization and while their main mission is conservation, it does not necessarily mean that they will be in business tomorrow, but it is in the public's best interest to acquire this property on behalf of the public today to make sure it stays protected in perpetuity.

Mr. Donnelly pointed out that some might think that the small county airport nearby would actually impact the value, but, in fact, it could provide an amenity to this particular property and could conceivably enhance potential development of the property.

Mr. McCamman asked if there were any additional questions or comments about this item. There were none.

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,010,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a) to cover the grant amount and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

24. Carmel River Riparian Restoration \$2,500,000.00  
Monterey County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Big Sur Land Trust for a cooperative project with California State Parks, State Coastal Conservancy, Department of Transportation, Monterey County Water Resources Agency, Monterey County Public Works, Monterey Peninsula Water Management District, Big Sur Land Trust, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore the lower floodplain of the Carmel River, located on private property in Monterey County. Mr. Chad Fien of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The property is on 131± acres of floodplain located just upstream of the Carmel River Lagoon and east of Highway One on land known as the Odello fields (or more specifically, Odello East). The land lies within the floodplain of the Carmel River but has not been available for a typical flooding regime for over 75-years due to agricultural production on the land. Prior to the 1930s, earthen levees were built by the landowner and the entire expanse of land surrounding the Carmel River Lagoon and Odello East was put into agricultural production. The levees kept flood events out of the fields in most years with only larger flows (20-year storms and larger) spreading onto the floodplain. The construction of Highway One in the late 1930s further diminished the ecological condition of the entire coastal ecosystem by placing a physical barrier between the Carmel River Lagoon and the larger floodplain, thereby preventing hydrologic connectivity across the floodplain. Today the lower Carmel River is confined by levees on both sides, beginning near the river's mouth and running over a mile upstream. California State Parks, with funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and the State Coastal Conservancy, completed the restoration of the west side of the Odello property (west of Highway One) in 2004, restoring a 100-acre agricultural parcel adjacent to the existing lagoon and expanding the lagoon to provide summer rearing habitat and winter refuge for steelhead trout.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This restoration project involves levee removal and site grading to reconnect the active river channel with the floodplain and promote the regeneration of riparian habitat over the entirety of the floodplain. Restoration activities will involve grading to restore the land to a more naturally functioning floodplain, along with some native seeding and planting. Several off channel seasonal wetlands will be constructed at the east edge of the project site to accommodate sediment deposition during large flood events. The remaining portion of the floodplain will be graded to historic elevations with the expectation that off-channel wetlands will re-



establish with annual flood events. Riparian and wetland plantings will be used to encourage scour and floodplain depressions so that small wetlands can re-establish with hydrologic function. The project may also replace 500 feet of earthen fill under Highway One with a causeway that will connect the east side of the floodplain to Carmel River State Beach to the west of Highway One. The causeway will provide a safe corridor under the highway for wildlife traveling between Palo Corona Regional Park to the east and the Carmel River lagoon and estuary to the west.

WCB PROGRAM

This project is proposed to be funded through the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program (Fish and Game Code Section 1385 et seq.) and meets the program's goal of increasing riparian habitat across California by implementing riparian habitat restoration projects.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Restoration plantings will be monitored and managed by the Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT) following installation. Irrigation utilizing the existing well on site will be provided for the plantings until establishment is successful. Plants will be protected from deer and gopher predation and BSLT will mow the site for invasive weed control seasonally. The habitat will be self-sustaining once it becomes established by BSLT and the landowner has agreed to refrain from any activities that will compromise the integrity of the habitat and to allow access for monitoring for the life of the project. If at any time during the life of the project, the landowner is unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, the grant agreement requires BSLT to refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$2,500,000.00</b>
State Coastal Conservancy (Pending)	2,500,000.00
Big Sur Land Trust	95,000.00
Monterey County	225,000.00
US Environmental Protection Agency	778,000.00
US Fish and Wildlife Service	786,000.00
Department of Transportation	1,000,000.00
Department of Water Resources (Pending)	<u>7,074,736.00</u>
<b><u>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING</u></b>	<b><u>\$14,958,736.00</u></b>

Project costs will be for floodplain and riparian restoration, flood conveyance structure at Highway 1, project and construction supervision, engineering, design, permitting and administration.

### FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a). This funding source allows for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of habitat to promote the recovery of rare and endangered species, and to provide wildlife corridors, significant natural landscapes and ecosystems, and habitat areas and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency, as lead agency, prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). WCB staff considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration and prepared proposed written findings documenting the WCB's compliance with CEQA as a responsible agency. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,500,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Fien introduced Ms. Trish Chapman, Central Coast Regional Manager from the State Coastal Conservancy, and Ms. Donna Meyers, Director of Conservation of the Big Sur Land Trust, who were in the audience and available to answer questions.

Ms. Finn asked staff to explain how the project and funding relates to restoring riparian habitat and not necessarily focusing on fixing the flood issues. Mr. Fien responded that this project will primarily be to restore riparian habitat and to provide a wildlife corridor under Highway 1 which will have an effect of alleviating some flooding issues. Ms. Finn asked if our funding source had any restrictions on the budget items in the grant in which WCB was requested to pay. Mr. Fien responded that the analysis was done to determine that all of the budget items in which WCB would pay for are within the guidelines of the funding source.

Mr. Fien went on to explain that currently the regional park that sits adjacent to this site has public trails and there are also a few access points along the river, and part of the future plan is to include trails that connect with the existing trail system in the regional park through the floodplain and back again.

Mr. McCamman asked if this project ties into a larger plan regarding the whole Carmel River watershed and the upstream restoration project as well. Mr. Fien replied that this project is not directly tied to that project and that both projects will provide much needed habitat improvements in the watershed that will provide benefits to both aquatic and terrestrial species.

Mr. Donnelly pointed out that the motion as written in the agenda does not recognize that staff is also recommending the Board adopt written findings and requested that they adopt them as part of the motion.

Mr. McCamman pointed out that both of the Department of Water Resources and State Coastal Conservancy's funding sources are shown as "pending" and asked if any current information could be provided. Mr. Fien responded that those funding sources have not made a final determination on the Grantee's applications yet, but if that funding does not come through, the project will still restore the riparian habitat in the project area, but there would not be enough funding to create the wildlife corridor under Highway One. Mr. McCamman asked if that change is made, or if one of the funding sources does not come through, can the revised project come back to the Board. Mr. Donnelly responded that it certainly can. Mr. McCamman asked that this information be part of the motion.

Mr. McCamman asked if there were any additional questions about this item. There were none.

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,500,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a); bring this project back to the Board if some of the matching funding is not available; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

25. Carmel River, San Clemente Dam Removal \$7,000,000.00  
Monterey County

Mr. Donnelly reported that several letters of support were received for this item from the following people: Mr. James M. Sulentich, General Manager of the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District; Mr. Robert S. Brower Sr., Board Chair of the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District; Ms. Kelly McCarthy Sutherland, Attorney at Law, Lombardo & Gilles; Mr. Les Walsh, Pacific Regional Representative, National Wildlife Federation, Pacific Region – Seattle Office; Mr. Anthony Tersol, Vice Chair of Monterey Chapter, Surfrider Foundation.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) for a cooperative project with California American Water (CAW), the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the California Natural Resources Agency, the Open River Initiative, the Innovative Readiness Training Program, the Coastal Impact Assistance Program and private foundations to remove the San Clemente Dam and reroute a half-mile portion of the Carmel River, located approximately 18 miles from the Pacific Ocean on CAW property in Monterey County. Mr. Peter Perrine briefly described the project and its location and Ms. Trish Chapman of the SCC presented the project to the Board.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

San Clemente Dam is a 106-foot-high concrete arch dam located approximately 18 miles from the Pacific Ocean on the Carmel River, just downstream of the confluence of the Carmel River and San Clemente Creek. The dam is owned and operated by CAW, an investor-owned water utility that is regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). CAW provides water service to the Monterey Peninsula. The land adjacent to the dam and reservoir is largely undeveloped, consisting of steep slopes covered with dense chaparral and oak woodland. The nearest residential development, the Sleepy Hollow subdivision, is located approximately one mile downstream from the dam.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The San Clemente Dam has essentially reached the end of its useful life. When the dam was constructed in 1921, it had a reservoir storage capacity of approximately 1,425 acre-feet. Today the reservoir has been filled by more than 2.5 million cubic yards of sediment, leaving a reservoir storage capacity of approximately 125 acre-feet. At this point, the sole function of the dam is to provide a diversion point for water withdrawals from the river.

San Clemente Dam is a substantial barrier to the migration of steelhead trout. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has consistently

ranked the Carmel River as the most viable watershed for recovery of the local federally-threatened subspecies of steelhead, known as the South-Central California Coast steelhead Distinct Population Segment. Between 1999 and 2009, steelhead counts at San Clemente Dam's fish ladder ranged from approximately 95 to 804 fish per year, whereas historic returns to the river have been estimated to be as high as 12,000 to 20,000 adult fish. NMFS has stated that restoration of the Carmel River steelhead population is critical to their overall recovery. Removing San Clemente Dam would provide steelhead with unimpaired access to over 25 miles of spawning and rearing habitat and would reduce the stress on fish traveling further upstream beyond Los Padres Dam where there is over 18 miles of additional spawning and rearing habitat. In addition, the dam, as it exists today, is a potential safety risk. In 1992, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Division of the Safety of Dams (DSOD) determined that San Clemente Dam could potentially fail in the event of either the maximum credible earthquake or probable maximum flood. As a result, DSOD instructed CAW to develop a project to address this safety issue. For all of the above reasons, multiple studies conducted over the ensuing years evaluated options for strengthening, notching, or removing the dam, and included methods to improve fish passage and habitat conditions and options for removing the sediment accumulated behind the dam.

In 2006, CAW developed a proposal to strengthen the dam in place, the most cost effective method. This alternative, along with three alternatives to notch or remove the dam, were evaluated in a Draft EIR/EIS for the San Clemente Dam by DWR as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In 2007, the SCC, the NMFS and the Planning and Conservation League Foundation began working with CAW to determine whether or not the removal of the dam was feasible and to develop avenues to assist CAW in the removal of the dam. Feasibility studies were positive and in January 2008 DWR certified the FEIR/EIS for the San Clemente Dam Seismic Safety Project.

The dam removal project presents a unique opportunity to permanently solve the public safety threat of dam failure, enhance the biological connectivity of the river corridor, restore the natural sediment supply to the downstream watershed and beach, and restore an important steelhead run. However, the estimated cost of the dam removal project is \$83 million, approximately \$34 million more than the dam strengthening project. CAW has an obligation to its ratepayers to resolve the safety issue at the lowest cost possible. Therefore, additional outside funding was needed for CAW to undertake the dam removal project rather than the dam strengthening project. With the commitment of federal, State and private organizations and agencies to work with it to remove rather than

strengthen the dam, CAW submitted applications to DSOD and the CPUC to remove the dam.

Removing any dam is complicated, and this project is certainly no exception. For example, a dam removal should not increase downstream sediment transport to the point that it smothers aquatic habitats; so all sediments deposited behind the dam usually need to be excavated before the dam can be removed. The setting for the San Clemente Dam, however, provides unique restoration opportunities. As mentioned above, the dam is located just downstream of the confluence of the Carmel River and San Clemente Creek. Upstream of the dam, the river and creek run parallel for about one-half mile, separated only by a narrow peninsula. Most of the sediment that has accumulated behind the dam is located on the Carmel River side of the reservoir. To minimize the amount of sediment to be removed, a half-mile reach of the Carmel River will be permanently bypassed and used as a sediment disposal area. To bypass the reach, a 450-foot-long channel will be cut through the narrow peninsula thereby connecting the Carmel River to San Clemente Creek, approximately 3,000 feet upstream of the dam. The rock excavated from the bypass channel will be used to construct a dike that will permanently reroute the Carmel River into the San Clemente Creek drainage and seal off the upstream end of the abandoned reservoir. The relatively small amount of accumulated sediment in the San Clemente Creek arm of the reservoir will be excavated and relocated to the abandoned reach of the Carmel River, and the sediment in the abandoned Carmel River arm will be re-graded and stabilized in place. The half-mile reach of San Clemente Creek between the dam and the bypass channel will be restored to its 1921 elevation, and a series of step-pools will be created to aid fish passage. When all project elements are in place, the dam will be removed.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The project is proposed to be funded through the WCB's Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program, which allows for the restoration of habitats for native fisheries, threatened and endangered species habitats, and in-stream restoration projects including removal of fish passage barriers and other obstructions. This project will remove a major barrier on the most critical stream on California's central coast for the recovery of steelhead trout, which is federally listed as threatened. In addition, the project will improve habitats for a wide range of species, including the red-legged frog and neotropical migrants that use the riparian habitats that will be restored.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The project should be self-sustaining once the riparian habitat has become established and the dam removed. CAW has agreed to allow

access to the project area by regulatory and funding agencies to enable them to assure that project features are maintained. Following completion of the project, CAW's long-term plan is to donate 928 acres of the project area to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for watershed conservation and compatible public access. BLM has indicated its interest in accepting the property. The property connects with Garland Regional Park to the west and the San Clemente Open Space to the east, both of which are owned and managed by the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District. When combined, the three properties would result in over 5400 acres of contiguous open space.

The project is consistent with the Monterey Peninsula Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (November 2007), a plan that coordinates more than 40 stakeholder entities involved in water resources, to "preserve the environmental wealth and well being of the Region's watersheds by taking advantage of opportunities to assess, restore, and enhance natural resources of streams and watershed areas", and to protect and enhance "sensitive species and their habitat in the Carmel River watershed".

The Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coast Basin adopted by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board in 1994 also designates several beneficial use objectives for the Carmel River. The removal of San Clemente Dam will further the following beneficial use goals of the plan: cold fresh water habitat and wildlife habitat; rare, threatened or endangered species; migration of aquatic organisms; and spawning habitat.

The Carmel River Watershed Conservancy developed an action plan in 2006 and identified a watershed-wide assessment and prioritization of fish passage barriers, the San Clemente Dam being one of them, as the highest priority for improving habitat for steelhead on the Carmel River.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

Total project cost will be \$83,000,000.00 and will be funded as outlined below.

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$7,000,000.00</b>
Coastal Conservancy	7,000,000.00
California American Water	49,000,000.00
California Natural Resources Agency	4,000,000.00
Coastal Impact Assistance Fund	750,000.00
NOAA's Open Rivers Initiative	500,000.00
NOAA's Open Rivers Initiative (requested)	2,500,000.00
To be determined	<u>12,250,000.00</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$83,000,000.00</b>

Project costs will be for the excavation of a new channel through the narrow peninsula between San Clemente Creek and the Carmel River; construction of a new dike to direct water into the new channel; construction of step pools in the new channel; removal of sediment; installation of structures to stabilize sediments that remain; riparian and upland plantings; signage; the removal of the San Clemente Dam; and project design, construction supervision and administration.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a), which allows funding for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of habitat to promote the recovery of rare and endangered species, and to provide wildlife corridors and significant natural landscapes, ecosystems and habitat areas, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The DWR, as lead agency, prepared and certified a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff considered the FEIR and prepared proposed written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA as a responsible agency. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$7,000,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Perrine introduced Mr. Robert Mclean, President of the California American Water, who was in the audience and available to answer questions.

Ms. Finn asked about the progress on getting an additional \$12 million to fund this project. Ms. Chapman confirmed that there is currently \$12 million gap, and the SCC has applied to the DFG Fisheries and Restoration Grant Program for \$7 million. In addition, because this project is going to take up to three years to construct and construction won't start



until 2013, potentially there are opportunities to receive multiple smaller grants. Ms. Chapman went to explain that potential in-kind funding source for the project is to have the military innovative readiness program construct part of the project, and the National Guard is very interested in doing that. Ms. Chapman added that they recently received an updated cost estimate that, while still in range as shown, is lower.

Ms. Finn asked about the contractor for this project. Ms. Chapman responded that the California American Water will implement the project. Mr. Donnelly commented that he received an e-mail from the Sleepy Hollow Homeowners Association stating that the amount of traffic and impacts by traveling during construction were going to be an issue for their area and asked Mr. Perrine and Ms. Chapman to provide an insight on that issue. Ms. Chapman commented that there are two accesses to the construction site and one is through a private road through Sleepy Hollow community and very little construction traffic will use this particular road. Ms. Chapman went on to explain that the SCC has not had a follow-up meeting with the Sleepy Hollow Homeowners Association (SHHA) yet, but she believes that the new construction plan will spell out in much greater detail how much construction traffic will use that route. Ms. Chapman added that there is additional mitigation that SCC can implement in terms of timing of use of the road, speed limit, etc., and that she is pretty comfortable that any SHHA concerns can be addressed and added that this project received strong support from the public.

Going back to Ms. Finn's question about additional funding needs for this project, Mr. McCamman commented that the DFG is fully committed to obtain, from different sources, the \$7 million funding for the project.

Mr. McCamman asked if there were any additional questions or comments about this item. There were none.

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$7,000,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

26. Nick Ranch Conservation Easement \$2,375,000.00  
San Luis Obispo County

Mr. Donnelly reported that letters of support were received for this item from the following people: Senator Sam Blakeslee, California State Senate, District 15; Supervisor James R. Patterson, San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors, District 5; and Mr. Adam Hill, Chair, San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County (Land Conservancy) to acquire a conservation easement over 1,337± acres of land for the protection of rangeland, grazing land and grassland areas that are beneficial to wildlife, provide wildlife habitat linkages to protected lands and allow for the continuation of working landscapes and cattle operations. Ms. Elizabeth Yokoyama of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The Nick Ranch property is located 3.5 miles east of Pozo and 10 miles southeast of Santa Margarita and Highway 101 in San Luis Obispo County. This 1,337± acre irregularly-shaped site is bounded by a number of publicly protected areas including the Machesna Mountain Wilderness to the east; the La Panza Range and Los Padres National Forest to the north and east; and the Santa Lucia Wilderness and Garcia Mountains to the west and south. Protection of the property will help expand and create linkages to these protected areas. The general terrain is considered mountainous with rolling hills. The Salinas River and Pozo Creek lie south and north of the site and the area is dotted with blue oak woodland, coastal oak woodland and open grasslands mixed with brush. The areas to the north and west area characterized by a number of small to large ranches utilized primarily for raising livestock with some undergoing fairly recent conversions over the last 20 years to vineyards. It is this conversion to vineyards along with smaller scale ranches and other residential development that threatens to break-up some of the larger scale habitat areas and linkages currently available to wildlife.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Nick Ranch is a family run cattle operation based on raising 100% organic, grass-fed beef. The property owners have implemented diversified innovative stewardship practices that promote conservation by improving grassland, wildlife habitat, and water quality. As members of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Security Program, which rewards the best conservation farmers and motivates others to become good stewards of the land, the property owners engage and practice conservation methods that support and protect both cattle and

resident wildlife. For example, to improve the grassland and water quality on the property, the landowner added a 10,000 gallon holding tank and pipeline, which increased the carrying capacity and improved resource values by increasing the availability of water for both wildlife and cattle.

The property includes a vegetation cover of open ground covered with mixed blue oak/grey pine habitat, valley oak savannah, riparian areas, chaparral and open grassland; and supports deer, tule elk, blacktail deer, bobcats, mountain lions, bears, wild hogs, turkeys and rare aquatic and plant species. Specifically, the California red-legged frog and south western pond turtle are present in the riparian areas. The ranch is also adjacent to the Bear Trap California condor release site and features suitable habitat for this species.

The Nick Ranch works with several organizations to bring school children to the ranch for educational tours and has an open house that includes a barbeque and tour at least twice a year.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under WCB's Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Program (Program) (Public Resources Code Section 10332, et seq.) Grant proposals under the Program are evaluated and selected for funding by WCB staff based on established criteria. The Program provides funding for the acquisition of conservation easements on private properties for the protection of rangeland, grazing land and grasslands. The Program seeks to prevent the conversion of rangeland, grazing land and grassland to nonagricultural uses, protects the long-term sustainability of livestock grazing and ensures continued wildlife, water quality, watershed and open-space benefits to the State of California from livestock grazing.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County will be responsible for monitoring and managing the property according to the terms of the conservation easement, which provide that the property will be used primarily as a working landscape for open space agricultural livestock grazing practices. Under the management and stewardship of the Land Conservancy, nearly 12,000 acres are now permanently protected in accordance with established Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices. The conservation easement allows access to the subject property annually by the Land Conservancy and once every three years by WCB for monitoring purposes.

#### TERMS

The conservation easement has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$2,370,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff

and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the conservation easement for the fair market value of \$2,370,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that WCB staff must review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary reports, documents connected with the purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds into the established escrow account. In the event of breach of the grant terms, the WCB can seek specific performance or require that title to the conservation easement be transferred to WCB or another qualifying entity. The subject property is also encumbered by Land Conservation Contracts under the Williamson Act that are not affected by the terms of the conservation easement.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board Grant</b>	<b>\$2,370,000.00</b>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$2,370,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	5,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB Allocation</b>	<b>\$2,375,000.00</b>

It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including DGS appraisal costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The funding source for this project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(1). The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the acquisition of conservation easements on agricultural properties for the protection of rangeland, grazing land and grassland areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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 a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve continued agricultural use, open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The project has been reviewed under the WCB's Rangeland, Grazing Land

and Grassland Protection Program and has been recommended for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,375,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(1) to cover the grant amount and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Ms. Yokoyama introduced Mr. Robert Hill, Executive Director of The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County, and Mr. Fred Nick, Mr. Norman Nick and Ms. Juanell Nick Hepburn, the property owners who were in the audience and available to answer questions.

Mr. McCamman commented that on this type of project we usually have multiple funding sources and asked why the only funding involved is the WCB funding. Mr. Donnelly responded by stating that the local land conservancies do not have the capacity to fund this project at this point, so WCB decided to move this project forward based on the project's qualifications under WCB's Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Program (Program). Mr. Donnelly stated that the WCB tries to get funding partners in all transactions; however, none was unavailable for this particular project. Mr. McCamman commented that while he understands that there might be some exceptions, having funding partners is a key element for the Board's success.

Mr. Robert Hill from The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County introduced himself before the Board and thanked the Board for considering this project. Mr. Hill commented that this project matches very well with the Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Program. He stated that the Nicks' very unique and progressive conservation methods and practices on its organic beef, grass-fed operation is a model for other ranch owners to develop a sustainable economic model.

Ms. Juanell Nick Hepburn, daughter of the property owners, introduced herself before the Board and spoke in support of this item. Ms. Nick Hepburn thanked that Board on behalf of her family for considering this project, and stated that this conservation easement will help to keep Nick Ranch intact, and secure the property for purposes of agriculture and wildlife habitat protection and prevent it from becoming a parking lot or a shopping mall.

Mr. McCamman asked if there were any additional questions or comments about this item. There were none.

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,375,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(1) to cover the grant amount and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

27. Santa Cruz Island Riparian Restoration \$300,000.00  
Santa Barbara County

Mr. Donnelly reported that two letters of support were received for this item from the following people: Superintendent Russell E. Galipeau, Jr., United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service; and Mr. Jeff Phillips, Deputy Assistant Field Supervisor, United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Office.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for a cooperative project with the National Park Service (NPS) and the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) to restore and enhance approximately 14 acres of riparian and wetland habitat in the Cañada del Puerto watershed on Santa Cruz Island in Santa Barbara County. Mr. Anthony Chappelle of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

Santa Cruz Island is located 25 miles off the coast of Santa Barbara County and is a part of the NPS's Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, recognized internationally by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as an International Biosphere Reserve for their outstanding natural and cultural resources. Santa Cruz Island is the largest of the eight Channel Islands, at 96 square miles (62,000 acres) in size and with 77 miles of rugged coastline. TNC and the NPS cooperatively manage the island as one ecological unit; 76% of the land being owned and managed by TNC and the remaining 24% percent owned by NPS. The island is biologically diverse, and is home to 12 endemic species including the endangered Santa Cruz Island fox and 10 federal or State listed endangered or threatened plants.

Santa Cruz Island contains the Channel Islands National Park's largest watershed, a 13 mi<sup>2</sup> basin that includes the entire central valley of the island. The watershed has over 11 miles of stream courses, the lower portion of which flows through Cañada del Puerto, a three mile long canyon with a seasonally dry, rocky creek bed framed by rugged mountains. The lower section of the canyon occasionally opens onto 100 yard wide wooded floodplains. At the coast, Cañada del Puerto broadens to a triangular-shaped coastal wetland complex, known as the Prisoners Harbor wetlands, before flowing into the waters of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. The near shore waters off Prisoners Harbor contain much of the Sanctuary's eel grass habitat which acts as nursery habitat for economically valuable species such as spiny lobster, crabs, calico bass and spotted sea bass.

A previous WCB funded project on the island eliminated several weed species from the entire island, controlled several other weed species to prevent their spread, and re-established native plants. This project will be a continuation of that earlier effort.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Historically, the Prisoners Harbor wetland consisted of a high flow channel emptying into a seasonally dry lagoon at the gravel bar, a groundwater-supported freshwater marsh, and an associated willow forest. During high flows, storm water would over top the creek banks into the freshwater marsh delivering nutrients and carbon to the marsh area.

During the late 19th or early 20th century, a stone wall was built on the west side of the creek as it neared the Prisoners Harbor wetlands. This structure contained the stream channel, essentially disconnecting the creek from its floodplain. Approximately half of the wetlands at Prisoners Harbor were subsequently filled with rock and sand to claim land for staging sheep and cattle before loading them onto ships at the harbor. This loss of wetlands caused a decline in the ecological functions provided by the wetlands, but also inadvertently directed the erosive power of winter flood flows toward what are now highly-valued archeological resources at a Chumash Village site.

In the mid-20th century, non-native invasive plant species including eucalyptus, among many others, were introduced to Prisoners Harbor and the Central Valley. Eucalyptus has since spread from those original plantings to more than 20 acres, primarily along the riparian corridor of Cañada del Puerto and its tributaries. Eucalyptus stands alter site hydrology by transpiring more groundwater than native species, introducing soil chemicals toxic to native plants, and out-competing native plants for nutrients, light, and water. They also limit native plant species habitat quality and extent, and severely degrade habitat quality for native animals and birds.

TNC and the NPS have made major strides to reverse these earlier trends. All feral cattle, sheep and pigs have been removed from the island, and native bald eagles have been reestablished on the island. The Santa Cruz Island fox has rebounded from near extinction in the 1990s to a healthy population of more than one thousand. TNC and the NPS have, with help from the WCB, initiated programs to reestablish ecological health to the entire island by removing weeds and planting native plants. The NPS initiated a project to completely restore the Prisoners Harbor wetland, removing the fill placed there, and restoring the wetlands to full ecological health. In support of these larger efforts, in 2010, with funding from the SCC, TNC began removing outlier populations of red gum eucalyptus farther up the Cañada del Puerto watershed and with the assistance of NPS staff, over 60 mature red gums were removed in 2010-11. Only two sources of red gums still remain in the upper watershed and in the central valley, and neither of these is likely to spread.

The red gum populations near Prisoners Harbor, however, are more likely to produce seedlings that can invade the newly constructed wetlands; thus, these are the highest priority for removal during the next restoration phase. Within this copse, priority will be given to removing red gums that lie within the creek channel or are otherwise prone to inundation during large rain events.

The work proposed here would contribute directly to the island-wide efforts and the restoration of the Prisoners Harbor wetlands. For this project, TNC will focus its efforts on the 800+ reproductively mature red gums in the lower watershed in the copse directly upstream from the wetlands restoration site in Cañada del Puerto, especially those trees that have reached reproductive maturity and those nearest the stream that are the most likely to reproduce and spread seedlings downstream. Additionally, TNC will assist with planting and maintenance of wetland plant species which will be used to fill in the restored wetland and stabilize the excavated areas. Over 25,000 native plants are currently being propagated on-island for planting in the wetland in winter 2011-12. TNC proposes to use WCB funds to hire a contractor to plant and maintain the plants for a year after planting.

In summary, red gum eucalyptus will be removed from approximately 5 acres. Native plants will be planted into 9 acres of newly created wetland and adjacent area. The project site is approximately 5,000 ft in length. The entire 40 acres of wetland and associated drainage in the project will benefit from the red gum removal and planting of native plants.



WCB PROGRAM

The project is funded through the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program (Fish and Game Code Section 1385 et seq.) and meets the program objective to restore and enhance riparian habitat statewide.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Maintenance will include follow up visits to the treated eucalyptus sites. Any eucalyptus resprouts will be retreated and any new seedlings will be removed. A team of two weed technicians will be able to revisit all treated sites in a week to perform any necessary maintenance. Since red gum removal will take place from the top of the watershed working downstream, once the red gum seed bank is exhausted, no further colonization is expected to occur in the future.

As for the wetland planting site, NPS has proposed installing a network of ground water monitoring wells in the project area and establishing vegetation plots around each well. The groundwater wells would be located primarily in the restored wetland area with three in the riparian corridor and a transducer at the natural creek bank where the berm was removed. The wells and transducer would be located within a random sample of hydrologic conditions to determine if wetland hydrology has been reestablished. Circular vegetation plots will be located around each well.

Small mammal, reptile, and amphibian surveys were completed by NPS in 2007 and will be repeated by NPS staff after the wetland project is completed. In 2007, a spring and fall bird survey was conducted in the project area by University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) and NPS staff. The survey will be repeated when the wetland restoration is completed. Other surveys and monitoring of wildlife in the project include TNC's ongoing monitoring of endangered Santa Cruz Island fox and the Santa Cruz Island scrub jay.

TNC is committed to managing and protecting island habitat well into the future, collaboratively working with the Channel Islands National Park to take on ecologically beneficial and successful restoration projects. If at any time during the twenty-five year life of the project, the TNC or the NPS is unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, the grant agreement requires TNC to refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$300,000.00</b>
The Nature Conservancy	160,904.00
State Coastal Conservancy	<u>67,764.00</u>

**TOTAL: \$528,668.00**

Project costs will be for eucalyptus removal, plant installation and maintenance, and project management and administration.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786(f)(P50 SoCal), which provides funding for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat in coastal wetlands and watershed areas in southern California and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. All necessary permits have been obtained. The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 4 of Categorical Exemptions, California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 14, Section 15304, as a minor alteration to land and Class 33 of Categorical Exemptions, CCR, Title 14, Section 15333, as a small habitat restoration project. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$300,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f)(P50 SoCal); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Chappelle introduced Ms. Coleen Corey, Santa Cruz Island Project Ecologist of The Nature Conservancy, who was in the audience and available to answer questions.

Mr. McCamman asked about if there is public access on that property. Mr. Chappelle responded that there are docent-led hikes on the property. Mr. McCamman asked if the hikes are done by the National Park. Mr. Chappelle replied that the docent he saw on the island was an employee of Island Packers, the company that provides transportation to the island, but he is sure that the National Park is also involved.

Mr. McCamman asked if there were any other questions or comments about this item. There were none.

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$300,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Fish and Game Code Section**

**2786(e/f)(P50 SoCal); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

28. DFG Wildlife Corridor Mapping \$315,000.00

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) for a cooperative project to develop, distribute and maintain data on essential wildlife corridors and connectivity linkages located in the northern section of Sierra Nevada Foothills, Mariposa County north to Shasta County. Mr. Tom Lupo, Chief of the Biogeographic Branch, Department of Fish and Game, and Ms. Marilyn Cundiff of the Wildlife Conservation Board presented the project before the Board.

**BACKGROUND**

Wildlife connectivity and linkages are a key component of wildlife conservation. In 2008, AB 2785 was enacted (Fish and Game Code, Section 1930 (c)), which identifies the importance of wildlife connectivity to the long-term viability of the State's biodiversity. In addition, the State Wildlife Action Plan identified fragmentation and lack of habitat connectivity as key stressors to California's fish and wildlife.

In 2009, the California Climate Adaptation Strategy again emphasized the importance of wildlife corridors. In this plan, the presence of large pathways or corridors for movement between currently occupied habitat and habitat that will be suitable in the future under different climate change scenarios are essential to facilitate the sustainability of species.

The DFG has been charged with investigating, studying, and identifying those areas in the State that are most essential to habitat corridors and linkages. Further, consistent with Fish and Game Code Section 1930.5 (b), it is the Legislature's expressed intent the WCB use various funds to work with the DFG to complete a statewide analysis of corridors and connectivity to support conservation planning and climate change adaptation activities.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE**

In August 2007, the WCB approved the allocation of \$3.8 million to assist in the funding of the Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program (VegCAMP). This innovative effort built a statewide vegetation mapping/classification system to prioritize California's diverse wildlife habitats. VegCAMP is devoted to the development of procedures and protocols needed to classify and map biologically significant vegetation communities and habitats throughout California and resulted in the

development of fine-scale, attribute-rich statewide vegetation maps and corresponding digital GIS layers.

Another effort, the California Essential Habitat Connectivity project (CEHC) completed in 2010, identified habitat connectivity areas statewide. While this analysis provided a broad overview of remaining natural landscape blocks and potential connectivity pathways between these blocks, there was a limitation in that the CEHC map products are not suitable for use at the regional or local planning scale.

The CEHC analysis identified natural landscape blocks with a minimum size of 2000 acres, and only connected those blocks 6000 acres or greater in size. The scale was necessary for a statewide analysis, but excluded smaller habitat and connectivity areas that may be important at the local level. Finer-scale products are needed for use in local and regional planning, such as for Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCPs), Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs), implementation of the California's Climate Adaptation Strategy, and the development of local and regional connectivity plans used by local government, regional authorities, conservancies and land trusts.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Wildlife Connectivity Mapping project will address the needs of regional connectivity planning, and will begin implementing local-scale connectivity analyses. The initial effort will focus on the Sierra Nevada Foothills ecoregion, a high priority for connectivity modeling and conservation planning. This region of the State is faced with significant conservation and connectivity challenges due to high population growth, development pressure and the presence of several major highways (Hwy 80 and Hwy 50).

The Sierra Nevada Foothills ecoregion has long been a conservation priority for the DFG due to its high biodiversity, its use as critical wintering grounds for species that inhabit higher elevations in the summer (e.g., black-tailed and mule deer), and the presence of important migration corridors. These biological attributes, coupled with significant ecological stressors including development pressures, fire suppression, and water diversions, underscore the need for conservation and connectivity planning within this ecoregion.

This area includes the longest continuous block of hardwood rangeland in California, supporting a high diversity of plants and animals, including more than 330 species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, and more than 150 sensitive species tracked by the California Natural Diversity Database. More than 130 vertebrate species breed in these hardwood rangelands and the area provides important wintering grounds and migration corridors for a variety of species. Maintaining habitat

connectivity is essential to ensuring the continued persistence of these species and migration routes.

### PROJECT GOALS

1. Complete regional connectivity analyses within the Sierra Nevada Foothills, Mariposa County north to Shasta County and develop corresponding digital GIS layers at a scale suitable for use in local and regional conservation planning;
2. Establish minimum standards for fine-scale connectivity modeling needed to meet the DFG's mission and mandates;
3. Develop guidance documents for use by the DFG and regional planners on local-scale connectivity needs within different areas of the State and for different taxonomic groups and species; and
4. Assemble and distribute datasets and associated products to other government entities, stakeholders, and the public.

The wildlife connectivity mapping products and corresponding GIS data layers, as well as the associated standards and guidance documents will result in a product that will be useful for identifying essential habitat and connectivity areas for focal species and will be integrated into the following program areas:

- Land acquisition efforts for ecological reserves, wildlife areas, parks, and conservation easements and providing guidance to DFG staff on connectivity needs to be addressed during project review and planning,
- Regional conservation planning, especially NCCP/HCP and other local plans for key habitat and connectivity areas needed to achieve conservation and connectivity goals within an ecoregion,
- Transportation projects to avoid rather than mitigate impacts,

Climate change adaptation planning and identifying barriers and threats to wildlife movement.

### PROJECT TASKS

The connectivity analyses will prioritize fine-scale modeling in areas with strong development and transportation pressure, and for which fine-scale vegetation maps have been completed by the DFG's VegCAMP. Fine-scale modeling will be based primarily on focal species habitat and connectivity needs. Focal species representing diverse taxonomic groups, habitat needs, and movement needs will be selected.

A least-cost modeling method will be used to identify essential connectivity areas between habitat blocks. This method has been tested in a number of fine-scale connectivity models throughout the State, and is accepted by the scientific community. Least-cost modeling considers resistance of the landscape based on species-specific characteristics. Resistance refers to the ease at which a species can traverse an area, considering factors such as habitat type, topography, land use, and barriers (e.g., roads).

Secondly, the project is designed to establish guidance on minimum standards for fine-scale connectivity modeling needed to meet the DFG's mission and mandates. The CEHC Strategic Plan outlined a general framework for conducting fine-scale connectivity analyses, but details on specific attributes of the final fine-scale modeling products were not specified. This portion of the project will assemble a collaborative group of experts and active researchers to develop a set of standards for fine-scale connectivity map products.

Connectivity needs may vary in different geographic regions of the State. For example, whereas an essential connectivity area within a region dominated by natural habitats, such as a forest, would likely be prioritized within a relatively untouched area of habitat, an essential connectivity area within an area dominated by agricultural lands, such as the Central Valley, may be prioritized in a highly human-modified area with little remaining natural habitat. The modeling methods and assumptions to identify connectivity areas within two such disparate regions would likely be widely different. This portion of the project will assess considerations for identifying connectivity areas in different regions of the State with different habitat types, ecological processes, and levels of human impact.

Different taxonomic groups vary in the scale at which connectivity is important based on their habitat use, habitat needs, and movement needs. For example, a wide-ranging mammal may require a large expanse of connected areas and be able to utilize a wide variety of habitat types so long as habitat is continuous, while an amphibian may require a much smaller expanse of connected areas but only be able to move within a small number of habitat types. A bird may be less sensitive to barriers such as roads and fences, but may require patches of suitable habitat at regular intervals to provide cover and food. This portion of the project will review the scale at which to best treat different taxonomic groups, and examine how different connectivity modeling methods address the needs of each taxonomic group.

Species with high sensitivity to barriers, large home ranges, or set migration routes may be particularly sensitive to habitat fragmentation. This portion of the project will compile the best available information, including scientific studies and expert knowledge, on connectivity needs for species of concern most highly impacted by habitat fragmentation.

The information gathered will be made available as a resource to DFG biologists and planners.

The DFG's Biogeographic Data Branch and Biogeographic Information and Observation System (BIOS) will host data and documents for distribution. Maps and documents will be made available via the web through the use of the DFG's website, document library, and BIOS web viewer. The Biogeographic Data Branch will also make data in its data library available for use in the GIS modeling portion of the project. To facilitate the use of mapping products, guidance will be provided by DFG for regional planners on local-scale connectivity needs.

#### FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b), that allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat, promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species, facilitates the protection of wildlife habitat corridors, protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems, implements the recommendations of the California Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy and for the development of habitat mapping and other research information necessary to determine priorities for restoration and acquisition statewide as carried out by the Wildlife Conservation Board.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions which have not been approved or funded, and is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262. Upon the WCB's approval, staff will file a Notice of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse. The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$315,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Ms. Finn asked if different colors on map represent different types of vegetation. Mr. Lupo responded that they represent different communities of vegetation, like oak, Manzanita, or grasslands. Mr. Lupo went on to explain that state-wide there are more than 550 vegetation types that are mapped.

Ms. Finn asked if any other approval from California IT agencies is needed for this project. Mr. Lupo responded that this project is not an IT project and no other approval is needed. Mr. McCamman asked if the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and Caltrans will continue to participate similarly as in the earlier version of this project. Mr. Lupo replied that Caltrans continues to be interested in this topic and is going through their own funding procedure right now and expects to continue their relationship with the DFG on this project. Mr. Lupo went on to explain that there are others who are also interested in this project such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Landscape Conservation Cooperative. Mr. Lupo stated the one of the outcomes of this project is that it gives the DFG a capacity to increase its cooperative work with others. Mr. McCamman commented that partnership it is very important for the work we do.

Mr. McCamman asked if there were any additional questions or comments about this item. There were none.

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$315,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

29. Project Update

Informational

Mr. Donnelly reported that several letters of support were received for this item from the following people: Congress of the United States, Rep. Nancy Pelosi, Rep. George Miller, Rep. Doris Matsui, Rep. Lynn Woolsey, Rep. Jerry McNerney, Rep. Lois Capps, Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard, Rep. Sam Farr, Rep. Laura Richardson, Rep. Xavier Becerra, Rep. Zoe Lofgren, Rep. Judy Chu, Rep. Barbara Lee, Rep. Karen Bass, Rep. Joe Baca, Rep. Grace Napolitano, Rep. Anna Eshoo, Rep. Loretta Sanchez, Rep. Howard Berman, Rep. Henry Waxman, Rep. Bob Filner, Rep. Dennis Cardoza, Rep. Jim Costa, Rep. Jackie Seier, Rep. Michael Honda, Rep. John Garamendi, Rep. Susan Davis, Rep. Linda Sanchez, Rep. Pete Stark, Rep. Maxine Waters, Rep. Adam Schiff, Rep. Mike Thompson; Senator Noreen Evans, CA State Senate, District 2; Assembly Member Wesley Chesbro, CA State Assembly, District 1; Ms. Kendall Smith, Chair, Mendocino County Board of Supervisors; Mr. Stephen R. Horner, Area Manager, Campbell Timberland Management, LLC; Mr. Donald S. Kemp, Vice President, Redwood Forest Foundation, Inc.



At the February 24, 2011 Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) meeting the Gualala (Gualala) River Forest Conservation Easement and the Usal Redwood Forest Conservation Easement (Usal) projects were presented to the Board; the Gualala as an information item and Usal as a proposed allocation for an acquisition grant. The following is an informational follow-up to the Board on the current status of both projects. Mr. Donnelly of the Wildlife Conservation Board provided a brief status update on this item.

### Gualala

The project is a proposed grant under the WCB's Forest Conservation Program to the Conservation Fund to acquire a conservation easement over 13,913 acres of private forested land to conserve and protect an economically sustainable working forest and important habitat for native fish, wildlife and plants located approximately 20 miles west of Cloverdale in southern Mendocino County. Days prior to the WCB's February 24, 2011 Board meeting the Department of General Services (DGS) rescinded its November 10, 2010 approval of the fair market value appraisal of the conservation easement. As a result, the proposal for funding was withdrawn for consideration at the Board meeting and informational presentation was provided instead.

As part of the presentation, the Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board provided a description of the WCB appraisal process, and included a description of the Public Resources Code (Section 5096.500 et seq.) as it pertained to major acquisitions of properties involving a state expenditure of over \$25,000,000.00. After this discussion, the Board raised some concerns regarding the public disclosure of the Gualala project and the appraisal. Due to the projects anticipated high value and large acreage, the Board contemplated whether or not the Gualala project should undergo a higher level of disclosure in line with Public Resources Code (Section 5096.500 et seq.)

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Board approved a motion directing staff to commence with a new appraisal and upon receipt of the appraisal contract out and have completed an independent review of the appraisal and provide public disclosure of the appraisal review similar to Public Resources Code (Section 5096.500 et seq.). This would entail making the appraisal review available on the WCB's web page 30 days prior to any future Board action and present the project before the Board at staff's earliest opportunity, preferably by the Board's next scheduled meeting on June 2, 2011, or earlier.

To date a new appraisal of the Gualala property has been completed. Because the property has harvestable timber on site, the WCB must also contract out with a registered forester for a separate valuation of timber

values on the property. The WCB has bid out both reviews and should have awarded contracts to a California certified appraiser and a registered forester for the independent appraisal review and timber valuation review of the property prior the Board's June 2, 2011 meeting. The independent reviews are expected to be completed by July 1, 2011. If the value of the appraisal is supported by the independent review, the review will be made available on the WCB's web page 30 days in advance of the next Board meeting, anticipated to be the Board's August 25, 2011 meeting. At the same time, the appraisal, timber valuation and independent appraisal review will also be forwarded to DGS for review and if approved, the project should be ready for consideration by the Board at its August 25, 2011 meeting.

The Board has also received a copy of a new letter of support from the Congress of the United States, including California elected official from both houses to Governor Jerry Brown expressing their support of Gualala and Usal projects.

Usal

The proposed project was the consideration of a grant under the WCB's Forest Conservation Program to The Conservation Fund (TCF) to acquire a conservation easement over 49,576 acres of land to conserve and protect an economically sustainable working forest and important habitat for native fish, wildlife and plants located between the Pacific coastline and the community of Leggett in the northwest corner of Mendocino County.

The landowner, the Redwood Forest Foundation, Inc. agreed to sell the conservation easement to TCF for the Department of General Services (DGS) approved fair market value of \$20,000,000.00.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project was as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$19,500,000.00</b>
Private funding sources	<u>500,000.00</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$20,000,000.00</b>
Other project-related costs	\$ 35,000.00
<b>Total WCB Allocation</b>	<b>\$19,535,000.00</b>

The Board had the same concerns regarding the Usal appraisal as it did with the Gualala property due to the properties high value and large acreage and questioned whether it should require a higher level of

disclosure in line with Public Resources Code (Section 5096.500 et seq.) During the presentation members of the Assembly and Senate along with numerous members of the public provided testimony in support of the project. As part of the record, there was one letter of dissent entered into the record.

Ultimately consideration of the funding allocation for Usal was deferred with a motion approved by the Board directing staff to contract out and have completed an independent review of the appraisal and provide public disclosure of the appraisal review similar to Public Resources Code (Section 5096.500 et seq.) This would entail making the appraisal review available on the WCB's web page 30 days prior to any future Board funding consideration and present the project before the Board at staff's earliest opportunity, preferably by the Board's next scheduled meeting on June 2, 2011, or earlier.

For Usal, an appraisal and timber valuation has already been completed and has been reviewed and approved by DGS. A new independent appraisal by a California certified appraiser is underway and should be completed by June 6, 2011. If the review supports the current appraisal, the WCB will post the review on its web page for 30 days, and at the same time schedule the project for future consideration by the Board, either at its next scheduled meeting August, 25 2011 or earlier as necessary.

Mr. Donnelly recommended that we allow the 30-day review period for the Usal project to run its course and schedule a meeting to consider this project only, some time in early July. We will continue to expedite the Gualala River project as best as we can, and once we have an independent review as well as timber review of the appraisal in hand, we will request an expedite from the Department of General Services to complete its review. Time-wise, assuming that the reviews support the appraisals and everything is in line, we will advance to WCB's August 2011 meeting. Mr. Donnelly added that about two weeks ago he talked with Congressman Mike Thompson who expressed his strong support for both projects. Mr. Donnelly said that he will be happy to address any questions or comments about this agenda item.

Ms. Finn said that according to Senator Noreen Evan's letter that was delivered to each Board member right before the meeting today, the appraisal review for Usal Forest was completed on May 22, 2011, and Mr. Donnelly just said that the appraisal review was completed a couple of days ago, and asked to confirm when exactly was the appraisal review completed. Mr. Donnelly confirmed that the appraisal review was completed just a couple of days ago.

Mr. McCamman said that he is interested on getting a written report on public disclosure about appraisal review process. Mr. Donnelly commented that at the last Board meeting he described the appraisal process we normally go through, and Assembly Member Richard Gordon asked that the information be written up and provided to all of the Board members, which Mr. Donnelly confirmed had been done. Mr. Donnelly went on to explain that currently we are working on disclosure issues surrounding appraisals, and we are planning to present a full report and provide recommendations at the next WCB Board meeting in August.

Mr. McCamman asked if there were any additional questions or comments about this item. There were none.

Mr. McCamman directed the Wildlife Conservation Board staff to proceed as planned on this item.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

John Donnelly  
Executive Director

## PROGRAM STATEMENT

At the close of the meeting on June 2, 2011, the amount allocated to projects since the Wildlife Conservation Board's inception in 1947 totaled \$2,289,069,531.49. 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. The tax credits are not reflected in the total amount allocated to projects.

A. Fish Hatchery and Stocking Projects .....	\$16,034,719.06
B. Fish Habitat Preservation, Development & Improvement .....	44,653,887.73
Reservoir Construction or Improvement.....	5,605,699.00
Stream Clearance and Improvement .....	31,298,077.09
Stream Flow Maintenance Dams .....	542,719.86
Marine Habitat.....	3,046,619.07
Fish Screens, Ladders and Weir Projects .....	4,160,772.71
C. Fishing Access Projects .....	53,683,580.04
Coastal and Bay .....	4,612,013.11
River and Aqueduct Access .....	17,862,175.38
Lake and Reservoir Access.....	10,456,538.51
Piers .....	20,752,853.04
D. Game Farm Projects .....	146,894.49
E. Wildlife Habitat Acquisition, Development and Improvement .....	2,108,373,602.64

Wildlife Areas (General) .....	415,304,459.24
Miscellaneous Wildlife Habitat Development.....	31,794,243.45
Wildlife Areas/Ecological Reserves, (Threatened, Endangered or Unique Habitat).....	747,151,495.61
Land Conservation Area.....	12,992,940.18
Inland Wetlands Conser. Grants & Easements .....	26,286,474.07
Riparian Habitat Conser. Grants & Easements .....	74,602,924.07
Other Wildlife Habitat Grants.....	800,241,066.02
F. Hunting Access Projects.....	1,366,898.57
G. Miscellaneous Projects (including leases) .....	22,992,157.62
H. Special Project Allocations .....	2,011,372.89
I. Miscellaneous Public Access Projects.....	39,272,963.38
State Owned.....	2,286,884.42
Grants.....	36,986,078.96
J. Sales and/or exchanges .....	533,455.07
K. Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act (tax credits awarded) ..	(48,598,734.00)
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.....	(28,588,435.93)
 Total Allocated to Projects	 \$2,289,069,531.49