

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

1807 13TH STREET, SUITE 103
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State of California
 The Resources Agency
 Department of Fish and Game
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD
 Minutes
 February 20, 2008

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WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**Minutes**

February 20, 2008

The Wildlife Conservation Board met on Wednesday February 20, 2008, in Room 2040 of the State Capitol in Sacramento, California. The meeting was called to order at 10:08 A.M. by Mr. Richard B. Rogers, President of the Fish and Game Commission. He introduced Mr. John McCamman, Acting Director of the Department of Fish and Game; Ms. Karen Finn, Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance; Mr. John P. Donnelly, Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board; and Ms. Ashley Laurance, Office Technician, Wildlife Conservation Board. At this time Mr. Rogers then turned the meeting over to Mr. Donnelly.

1. Roll Call

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS

Richard B. Rogers, Chairman
President, Fish and Game Commission

Karen Finn, Program Budget Manager
Vice, Michael C. Genest, Member
Director, Department of Finance

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

JOINT LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Senator Patricia Wiggins

Diane Colborn
Vice, Assembly Member Lois Wolk

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

John P. Donnelly

Staff Present: John Donnelly, Executive Director
Dave Means, Assistant Executive Director
Debra Townsend, Assistant Executive Director
Catherine Caldwell, Senior Land Agent
Gary Cantrell, Research Analyst II
Bob Clark, Senior Land Agent
Scott Clemons, Public Land Management Specialist IV
Pat Dyas, Senior Land Agent
Chad Fien, Public Land Management Specialist IV
Bill Gallup, Senior Land Agent
Carol Klien, Senior Land Agent
Ashley Laurance, Office Technician
Teri Muzik, Senior Land Agent
Randy Nelson, Senior Land Agent
Peter Perrine, Public Land Management Specialist IV
Marie Reed, Budget Analyst (R.A.)
Jenn R. Sanguayo, Associate Governmental Program Analyst
Gail Rubin, Staff Counsel
Anna Safonova, Associate Programmer Analyst (Specialist)
Nancy Templeton, Chief Counsel
Bonnie Turner, Public Land Management Specialist IV
Mary Westlake, Office Technician
Brian Wilkinson, Public Land Management Specialist IV
Roxanne Woodward, Staff Services Manager I

Others Present: Rene Bahl, San Diego County Parks and Recreation Department
Chris Basilevac, The Nature Conservancy
Marc Beyeler, Trust for Public Land
Jerry Boles, Department of Water Resources
Jeff Calvert, CAL FIRE
Craig Carnes, Wilke, Fleury, Hoffelt, Gould & Birney, LLP
Alexander Chong, Department of Finance
Henry Coletto, California Deer Association
Terry Corwin, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
Alan Ehrgott, American River Conservancy
Kevin Knowles, Conservation Land Group
Jeff Maloney, Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority
Gregg Mangan, Bureau of Land Management
Mike Mantelli, California Deer Association
Dave Mayer, Department of Fish and Game
Kevin McKernan, Northcoast Regional Land Trust
David Neubert, River Partners
Hank Seeman, Humboldt County Public Works Department
Evelyn Sess, Department of Finance

2. Funding Status — Informational

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

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

(b) 2006-07 General Fund Capital Outlay Budget

Budget Act	\$5,000,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(1,506,900.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$3,493,100.00

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

Budget Act	\$20,674,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocation	(3,632,460.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$17,041,540.00

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

Budget Act	\$20,699,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocation	(4,210,000.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$16,489,000.00

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

Budget Act	\$20,551,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(18,060,141.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$2,490,859.00

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

Budget Act	\$15,224,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(4,697,059.00)
Unallocated Balance	\$10,526,941.00

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

Budget Act) (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects).....	\$14,562,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(14,426,712.77)
Unallocated Balance	\$135,287.23

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

Continuously Appropriated [Sec. 5096.350 (a)(1), (2), (4) & (7)] ...	\$36,100,000.00
Less Previous Board Allocations	(27,000,647.15)
Unallocated Balance	\$9,099,352.85

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

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

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

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

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

- (n) 2001-02 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund Capital Outlay Budget
 - Continuously Appropriated (Section 5096.650) \$273,000,000.00
 - Less Previous Board Allocations(162,674,116.79)
 - Unallocated Balance..... \$110,325,883.21

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

- (p) 2002-03 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 Capital Outlay Budget
 - Continuously Appropriated (Sections 79565 and 79572),
including Chapter 81, Statutes of 2005..... \$814,350,000.00
 - Less 2003-04 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565....(21,000,000.00)
 - Less 2004-05 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565....(21,000,000.00)
 - Less 2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565.....(4,000,000.00)

	Less 2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	(3,100,000.00)
	Less 2006-07 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79672	(17,688,000.00)
	Less 2007-08 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	(5,150,000.00)
	Less Previous Board Allocations	(633,701,199.24)
	Unallocated Balance	\$108,710,800.76
(q)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$10,000,000.00
	Less Previous Board Allocations	(0.00)
	Unallocated Balance	\$10,000,000.00
(r)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (NCCP Section 75055c)	\$25,000,000.00
	Less Previous Board Allocations	(25,000.00)
	Unallocated Balance	\$24,975,000.00
(s)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(1))	\$14,293,000.00
	Less Previous Board Allocations	(25,000.00)
	Unallocated Balance	\$14,268,000.00
(t)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(2))	\$14,293,000.00
	Less Previous Board Allocations	(25,000.00)
	Unallocated Balance	\$14,268,000.00
(u)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(3))	\$4,762,000.00
	Less Previous Board Allocations	(0.00)
	Unallocated Balance	\$4,762,000.00
(v)	2006-07 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 Capital Outlay Budget	
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055a)	\$164,700,000.00
	Less Previous Board Allocations	(25,000.00)
	Unallocated Balance	\$164,675,000.00
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055b)	\$123,525,000.00
	Less Previous Board Allocations	(3,887,007.00)
	Unallocated Balance	\$119,637,993.00

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

RECAP OF FUND BALANCES

Wildlife Restoration Fund (a)	\$1,000,000.00
General Fund (b)	\$3,493,100.00
Habitat Conservation Fund (c), (d) and (e)	\$36,021,399.00
Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (f), (g) and (h)	\$19,761,581.08
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (i), (j), (k), (l), (m) and (n)...	\$130,529,591.05
Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (o) and (p).....	\$121,198,830.76
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (q), (r), (s), (t), (u) and (v)	\$352,585,993.00
Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund (w)	\$3,017,839.00

RECAP OF NATURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT ACT OF 2000

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

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

3. Special Project Planning Account — Informational

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

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

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

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

California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund \$50,000.00

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

4. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 5 – 14 and 16)

Mr. Donnelly asked that item number 15 be removed from the Consent Calendar.

Staff recommended that the Board approve Consent Calendar items 5 through 14 and 16, as proposed in the individual agenda explanations, including funding as noted the individual agenda explanations, including funding as noted therein, excluding item number 15.

Ms. Karen Finn moved that the Board approve Consent Calendar items 5 through 14 and 16, as proposed in the individual agenda explanations, including funding as noted therein, excluding item 15.

* 5. Approval of Minutes — November 15, 2007 Meeting

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Karen Finn that the Board approve the minutes of the November 15, 2007 meeting.

* 6. Recovery of Funds

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

- \$31,317.94** to the **Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund**
- \$7,239.38** to the **Habitat Conservation Fund**
- \$558,646.50** to the **California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund**
- \$69,513.08** to the **Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002**

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

Hollenbeck Canyon Wildlife Area, Expansion 3, San Diego County

Allocated	\$229,000.00
Expended	<u>-213,268.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$15,732.00

San Joaquin River Riparian Habitat, Expansion 13, Fresno County

Allocated	\$1,720,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,710,662.56</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$9,337.44

Wilson Creek Riparian Corridor, Expansions 4 and 5, Riverside County

Allocated	\$10,000.00
Expended	<u>-3,751.50</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$6,248.50

**Total Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water,
Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund** **\$31,317.94**

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND

Ash Creek Wildlife Area Wetland Enhancement, Lassen County

Allocated	\$93,000.00
Expended	<u>-85,760.62</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$7,239.38

Total Habitat Conservation Fund **\$7,239.38**

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

East Elliott Preserve and Denney Canyon, San Diego County

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

El Chorro Ranch Conservation Area, Santa Barbara County

Allocated	\$1,220,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,202,499.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$17,501.00

Grasslands Conservation Area, Expansion 1, Merced County

Allocated	\$8,000,000.00
Expended	<u>-8,000,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Merced River, Expansion 1, Merced County

Allocated	\$1,442,300.00
Expended	<u>-1,433,523.25</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$8,776.75

Musty Buck Ridge Wildlife Area, Expansion 2, Butte County

Allocated	\$3,208,255.00
Expended	<u>-2,699,626.75</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$508,628.25

Project Planning (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)

Allocated	\$20,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,259.50</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$18,740.50

**Total California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe
Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund** **\$558,646.50**

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

Arroyo Burro Estuary and Mesa Creek Restoration, Santa Barbara County

Allocated	\$390,000.00
Expended	<u>-390,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Lake Earl Wildlife Area Expansion, Pacific Shores Unit, Del Norte County

Allocated	\$3,000,000.00
Expended	<u>-2,986,599.29</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$13,400.71

Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, Napa Plant Site Restoration, Phase I,
Napa County

Allocated	\$99,000.00
Expended	<u>-99,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Portuguese Bend Nature Preserve, Los Angeles County

Allocated	\$10,025,000.00
Expended	<u>-10,021,757.63</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$3,242.37

Willow Creek, Sonoma County

Allocated	\$4,250,000.00
Expended	<u>-4,197,130.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$52,870.00

**Total Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal
and Beach Protection Fund of 2002** **\$69,513.08**

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Karen Finn that the Board approve the recovery of funds for the projects listed on pages 6 through 8 of the agenda and close the project accounts. Recovery totals include \$31,317.94 to the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund; \$7,239.38 to the Habitat Conservation Fund; \$558,646.50 to the California Clean Water,

Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund; and \$69,513.08 to the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002.

Motion carried.

- * 7. Six Rivers (Valley View) \$10,000.00
Humboldt County

This proposal was to consider the acquisition of a conservation easement over 1,532± acres of privately-owned land located in Humboldt County. The proposed acquisition is a cooperative project with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the Northcoast Regional Land Trust (NRLT), and the California Coastal Conservancy under the Federal Forest Legacy Program. The purposes of the conservation easement are for protection of the property from encroaching residential development, continuation of ranching and forestry operations, protection and restoration of streams and riparian habitats, and optimization of timber productivity found on the property.

The property is located in the unincorporated community of Petrolia, approximately three miles northeast of the Bureau of Land Management's Kings Range National Conservation Area, approximately nine miles west of Humboldt Redwoods State Park and approximately nine miles southwest of the Howe Creek Ranch Conservation Area.

Approximately 45 percent of the property is forested, the majority in young growth Douglas-fir. The remainder of the property is predominately open grassland and grazing land. The terrain varies from mildly to steeply sloping and lies east and south of the North Fork of the Mattole River. The easement will protect habitat for a number of sensitive wildlife species that are commonly found on the property, including golden eagles, mountain lions, red-legged and yellow-legged frogs, red tree vole, black bear, and blacktail deer. Northern Spotted Owl have been observed on the property, and the North Fork of the Mattole River contains populations of steelhead trout, and Coho and Chinook salmon.

CAL FIRE will be the holder of the conservation easement, and will work in conjunction with the NRLT to monitor compliance with the terms and conditions of the easement. If this property is not protected, it could remain vulnerable to residential development and ownership fragmentation. The easement will implement practices that encourage and promote rangeland and forest health over time.

The property owner has agreed to sell the easement for \$1,400,000.00, the fair market value of the conservation easement interest, as determined by an appraisal approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). Federal Forest Legacy funds in the amount of \$400,000.00 will provide a portion of the acquisition price, and the balance of \$1,000,000.00 will be provided by a grant from the California Coastal Conservancy. The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) is asked to

approve an allocation for \$10,000.00 to cover transaction expenses, including DGS' appraisal review costs, title insurance and escrow fees, which will be reimbursed by CAL FIRE, as agreed upon in an interagency agreement between CAL FIRE and the WCB. The proposed funding source allows for the acquisition of forest lands under the Federal Legacy Forest Program (16 U.S.C. Sec. 2103).

As provided in the Interagency Agreement, staff of the WCB will review all proposed title documents, appraisal, preliminary title report, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and the instruments of conveyance prior to authorizing the disbursement of funds directly to the escrow holder for the purchase of the conservation easement.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the acquisition of the conservation easement under the Forest Legacy Program as proposed; allocate \$10,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop.12), Section 5096.350 (a)(4) for project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Rogers introduced Mr. Kevin McKernan, Executive Director of the Northcoast Regional Land Trust. Mr. McKernan thanked the WCB Staff, Cal Fire, and the Coastal Conservancy for their participation in this project.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Karen Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the acquisition of the conservation easement under the Forest Legacy Program as proposed; allocate \$10,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop.12), Section 5096.350 (a)(4) for project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- * 8. Montgomery Woods, Expansion 1 \$255,000.00
Mendocino County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to Save-the-Redwoods League (League) in a cooperative project with the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation to assist in the purchase of 160± acres of privately-owned land as an addition to the Montgomery Woods State Reserve (Reserve). The purposes of the acquisition are to protect habitat that promotes the recovery of threatened and endangered species, to provide open space corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent fragmentation, and to protect significant natural landscapes and ecosystems such as old growth redwoods, mixed conifer forests and oak woodlands, and other significant habitat areas.

The property is located approximately ten miles northwest of the City of Ukiah in the Big River watershed and is accessed via Orr Springs Road. Montgomery Woods is an excellent example of both a magnificent coastal redwood grove and a beautiful fern forest. The Reserve was originally acquired in the 1940s through the efforts of the League, and donated to the DPR. The acquisition of this property will protect a contiguous block of land and increase the size of the Reserve to approximately 2,420 acres.

The proposed acquisition will protect habitat for 19 sensitive wildlife species that have the potential to occur on the property, including American peregrine falcon, northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, Pomo bronze shoulderband snail, golden eagles, ring-tailed cat, mountain lions, bobcats, and white-tailed kites. A stream containing coho salmon and steelhead flows through the property, feeding into the Big River. The property contains undeveloped grasslands, woodlands, and conifer forests, including a small grove of old growth and second growth redwood trees.

It is proposed that the property will be directly conveyed to DPR, which will manage it as part of the Reserve. If these lands are not protected, they remain vulnerable to residential development and ownership fragmentation.

The property owner has agreed to sell the property for \$496,000.00, the appraised fair market value of the property as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approve an allocation for a grant to the League in the amount of \$246,000.00 to provide a portion of the necessary funding for the purchase of the property. The balance of \$250,000.00 will be provided by a grant from the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation. It is estimated that an additional \$9,000.00 will be needed for administrative expenses, which includes the DGS' appraisal review costs, bringing the total recommended allocation for this proposal to \$255,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for grants to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, to provide open space, and to prevent habitat fragmentation, and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that the WCB staff will review all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and the instruments of conveyance prior to authorizing the disbursement of funds directly to escrow for the purchase of the property.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve a grant to Save-the-Redwoods League as proposed; allocate \$255,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Prop. 84), Section 75055 (b) for the grant and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Karen Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve a grant to Save-the-Redwoods League as proposed; allocate \$255,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Prop. 84), Section 75055 (b) for the grant and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- * 9. South Fork American River, Lower Canyon Unit, Expansion 2 \$360,000.00
El Dorado County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the American River Conservancy (Conservancy) to assist in the acquisition of 40± acres of vacant land with more than 1,000 feet of frontage on the South Fork American River, approximately three and one-half miles from Folsom Lake, in western El Dorado County. Acquisition of this parcel will assist in the completion of a seven-mile trail corridor linking the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area with Highway 49 near Coloma and Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park. The State Resources Agency (Proposition 50 River Parkways Grant Program) will also grant funds to complete this acquisition.

The purpose of the acquisition is to protect blue and valley oak woodland and riparian areas, along with the sensitive and endangered species potentially resident within and dependent upon this habitat. The property may support more

than a dozen special-status aquatic and upland species, including: California red-legged frog, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, California horned lizard, northwestern pond turtle, yellow-breasted chat, Cooper's hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, foothill yellow-legged frog, white-tailed kite, ring-tailed cat, great blue heron, Brandegee's clarkia, and Layne's ragwort. Bank swallow, a state threatened species, is known to occur throughout the project area. In addition, more than one hundred species of birdlife and mammalian species inhabit the area, including black bear, fox, bobcat, mountain lion, and river otter. Five native fish species also occur, including rainbow trout, Sacramento pikeminnow, California roach, Sacramento sucker, and riffle sculpin.

The acquisition will also provide the last, critical trail linkage in completing the larger South Fork American River Parkway project, which includes a 20-mile length of river canyon stretching from Placerville to Folsom Lake. The project will contribute toward a longer regional trail envisioned along the length of the American River from Sutter's Fort in Sacramento to Sutter's Mill in Coloma.

The subject parcel is adjacent to property owned and managed by the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM). It is proposed that the Conservancy complete the acquisition and hold title to the property, until the subject parcel fee title can be transferred to the BLM. The area will be managed for wildlife protection with limited public access, with the goal of maintaining and protecting the existing populations of sensitive wildlife species. The State will have no responsibility for management of the property.

The Conservancy proposes to purchase the property from the owner at the appraised fair market value of \$905,000.00, as approved by the State's Department of General Services (DGS). The State Resources Agency has approved a grant to the Conservancy providing \$550,000.00. The remaining balance required and proposed for WCB funding is \$355,000.00. It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed to cover administrative expenses by the WCB, including review of the appraisal by DGS, bringing the total recommended allocation for this proposal to \$360,000.00. The purpose of this project, the protection of habitat that includes significant natural landscapes and ecosystems such as oak woodlands and riparian areas, is consistent with the purposes of this funding source.

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

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve a grant to the American River Conservancy for this project as proposed; allocate \$360,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (Prop. 84), Section 75055 (b), for the grant and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Karen Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve a grant to the American River Conservancy for this project as proposed; allocate \$360,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (Prop. 84), Section 75055 (b), for the grant and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *10. San Joaquin Hatchery Public Access, Phase I \$187,676.00
Preconstruction Planning and Design
Fresno County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for an interagency agreement with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to fund preconstruction planning and design of Phase One of a public access project at the San Joaquin Fish Hatchery in partnership with the San Joaquin River Conservancy (Conservancy). The hatchery is located upstream of Fresno on the San Joaquin River, in the town of Friant, Fresno County.

The San Joaquin Fish Hatchery is one of the most visited areas of the San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway). It presently serves thousands of visitors each year. Many of the visitors are school children. However, the site is not universally accessible, provides little interpretive information, no picnicking or gathering area, has poor visitor parking and vehicle access (provided via a residential road) and has no facilities to provide public access to the river.

Phase One will allow planning and design options for hiking trails, an outdoor classroom for visiting students, adequate parking and circulation for buses, picnicking facilities, and a wetland demonstration area. The project includes a segment of the multiple-purpose Parkway trail, connecting Lost Lake Park to Friant Road at a central intersection in the community.

The project represents a strong partnership between the Conservancy and the DFG to develop and support the Parkway. The DFG will provide a number of services to implement the later phases of this project, including California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance, project management, vegetation removal, and installing minor structures. The DFG is working on installing an

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant public restroom, and will operate and maintain the trails, trailhead, parking area, picnicking and river access in conjunction with its fish hatchery operations once the entire project has been completed.

Eventually, under the DFG's leadership, and in partnership with the Conservancy and the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust, a multiple-agency visitor center is planned to provide outreach to those visiting the Parkway, and to educate the public about river restoration and river resources. Community walkways and bikeways will connect the site to Friant Cove and to the Parkway lands down river in Fresno and Madera Counties.

The fish hatchery will be a focal point for providing Parkway visitor information and for providing public education about fishery management as the San Joaquin River Restoration Program proceeds. The proposed project will incorporate planning for maintaining Parkway facilities in an attractive setting, and the initial foundation for the planned multi-agency center.

The Conservancy's Interagency Project Development Committee has indicated its full support for the project based on the value of extending the multiple-purpose trail from Lost Lake and the improved visitor access and education at the fish hatchery. The project will complement the Lost Lake Master Plan by matching up with trail connections, wetland demonstration ponds, picnic areas, and canoe rest stops to provide a high-quality experience for those visiting the area, a goal of the County of Fresno's plans for the area.

The funding breakdown is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)	\$187,500.00
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The funds will come from the Conservancy's Proposition 40 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund, Section 5096.650 (b)(5), which can be expended on land acquisitions, habitat enhancement, public access, recreation, education, and other projects consistent with the Conservancy's mission and the Parkway Master Plan.

Project costs will be for preconstruction planning and design, and an alternative analysis of the best available options for implementing public access at the hatchery. This work will support DFG's efforts to complete its CEQA compliance for the public access project.

The planning and design work undertaken by the DFG is statutorily exempt from CEQA under Title 14 CCR, Section 15262. The proposed authorization for planning and design of public access at the San Joaquin Hatchery involves only planning for possible future actions not yet authorized or funded, and the planning will include consideration of environmental factors. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon the WCB's approval of this project.

The DFG, as well as the Conservancy, have reviewed this proposal and recommend it for funding by the WCB. In addition to the costs listed above, an

additional \$176.00 will be required for Department of General Services' review costs, bringing the allocation necessary for the WCB's portion of the project to \$187,176.00.

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$187,676.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund, (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (b)(5), a funding source consistent with the purpose of this project; 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. Karen Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$187,676.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund, (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (b)(5), a funding source consistent with the purpose of this project; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *11. Cañada de los Osos Ecological Reserve \$127,200.00
Riparian Habitat Restoration
Santa Clara County

This proposal was to consider the allocation of a grant to the California Deer Association (CDA) to undertake a riparian habitat restoration project along 2,500 feet of the Cañada de los Osos Creek and one of its tributaries within the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Cañada de los Osos Ecological Reserve (Reserve). The restoration site is located in Santa Clara County, approximately ten miles east of Gilroy, adjacent to the southern border of Henry W. Coe State Park.

The restoration site, and the riparian habitat to be restored, is located within the boundary of the 4,200 Reserve. The problem area exists on the uppermost reach of Cañada de los Osos Creek. Previous landowners used the project site for dry land hay farming and an intensive cattle feeding and watering area. The lack of weed control and overgrazing resulted in a loss of upland and riparian vegetation along this 2,500 foot stretch of creek. Additionally, the main access road runs through the project area and at one point bisects the creek at a low-water crossing in the creek bed. The loss of vegetation due to the uncontrolled grazing and road use has caused erosion along the banks, increasing water velocity and streambed downcutting, threatening to lower the water table as well as destroy existing mature riparian vegetation located on downstream private property. Also, non-native annual grasses in the vicinity provide a seed source that is threatening surrounding native perennial bunchgrass rangelands.

Upon purchase of the property by the DFG, the CDA entered into an agreement to assist in the management and maintenance of the Reserve, as well as to provide an outdoor education program for local schools. The project site offers good potential for the development of diverse riparian habitat and native grass uplands through a partnership of local school groups, volunteers, and professional contractors. This plan focuses on restoring proper hydrologic function and riparian habitat to 2,500 feet on the upper Cañada de los Osos Creek, as well as perennial native grass upland to an adjacent 45 acre field, formerly used for agricultural production and grazing.

Survival and growth of plantings will provide the first and most basic measure of project success or failure. Yearly evaluations will be conducted by local school volunteer groups supervised by biologists from the DFG and a CDA field representative. The CDA will coordinate with these local school groups to use the project site as an outdoor education center where students could help in monitoring the success of the project.

As agreed to by the DFG, the local CDA representative will manage all day-to-day restoration activities including site preparation (pre-planting and weed control), construction/planting, and any post-planting weed control as needed. The DFG will be responsible for long-term management and maintenance of the project; however, the CDA will continue to share in the long-term maintenance.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)	\$127,200.00
California Deer Association (CDA)	<u>42,300.00</u>
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING	\$169,500.00

Project costs include stream bank restoration, native plant seed and plugs, root wad structures for creek bed restoration, water well drilling, a well pump and motor, a vehicle bridge across creek, windmill repair, and project management.

The proposed funding for this project will come from the WCB's General Fund (California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program) account, which provides funding for the protection, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat statewide, and is consistent with the objectives of this project. The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB and, as lead agency, has filed a Notice of Exemption according to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15304 (d). If necessary, a streambed alteration permit will be obtained by either the DFG or the grantee before the project is implemented. Subject to approval by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption according to CEQA Section 15304 (d) will be filed with the State Clearinghouse by the WCB.

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$127,200.00 from the General Fund (California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program); authorize staff to enter into appropriate

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

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Karen Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$127,200.00 from the General Fund (California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *12. Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve, Expansion 17 \$3,483,377.00
Monterey County

This proposal was to consider a cooperative project with the Elkhorn Slough Foundation (Foundation) for the State's acquisition of a parcel of land, totaling 204± acres, as an addition to the Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve for the preservation and protection of critical tidal wetlands and grasslands habitat.

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

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

Elkhorn Slough is one of the few coastal estuaries in California and harbors a remarkable diversity of wildlife, including southern sea otters, harbor seals, over 340 species of birds, 100 species of fish, and many unusual plants. These include, but are not limited to, Hooker's manzanita, Monterey ceanothus, Pajaro manzanita, Monterey spineflower, western snowy plover, the California red-legged frog, the tidewater goby, and the California tiger salamander. The Elkhorn Slough is one of 27 National Estuarine Research Reserves established in the coastal zone of the United States and has been designated a State Ecological Reserve by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and a Globally Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society.

The subject parcel is very valuable as part of the overall Elkhorn Slough ecosystem. The property contains coastal marsh and grassland habitat. In addition to the high wildlife value contained within this parcel, and the fish and wildlife values of the adjoining slough, the subject property may also provide recreational uses. Potential uses may include nature study, scientific research, and bird watching. The DFG currently manages the reserve and will include this property in the reserve for management purposes.

The owner has agreed to sell the property for the appraised, fair market value of \$4,725,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). At the August 23, 2007 WCB meeting, the Board accepted a federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant awarded to the WCB. The remainder of that grant will be used to fund this project.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$3,443,377.00
Wildlife Conservation Board (LWCF grant)	919,000.00
Elkhorn Slough Foundation (NOAA/NERR grant)	<u>362,623.00</u>
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING	\$4,725,000.00

It is estimated that an additional \$40,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related costs by the WCB, including the title and escrow fees and the DGS' review costs, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$3,483,377.00. The purpose of this project, the protection of threatened and endangered species and a significant natural area, is consistent with the purposes of the proposed funding source.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,638,377.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (b/c), \$845,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650, for the acquisition and internal project-related expenses, and \$919,000.00 from the federal LWCF grant; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Karen Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,638,377.00 from the Habitat Conservation

Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (b/c), \$845,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650, for the acquisition and internal project-related expenses, and \$919,000.00 from the federal LWCF grant; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *13. Woodbridge Ecological Reserve, Crane Viewing Shelter \$170,176.00
San Joaquin County

This proposal was to consider a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to replace the crane viewing shelter, improve parking, and construct an entrance sign at the DFG's Woodbridge Ecological Reserve. The project is located approximately 15 miles north of the City of Stockton and two miles west of I-5, on Woodbridge Road in San Joaquin County.

The reserve is divided into two units: the 145-acre South Unit acquired by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) in 1985, and the 207-acre North Unit acquired in 1988. The acquisition of the property protects habitat for a wide range of wetland-dependent species but, most importantly, maintains roosting habitat for thousands of wintering sandhill cranes. The WCB funded a wetland enhancement project on the site in 1998 to improve crane habitat and to make the site easier for the DFG to manage.

The site, also known as the Phil and Marilyn Isenberg Crane Preserve, is a very popular crane viewing site. Guided tours of the site are held every week from October through February, and over the years thousands of people have enjoyed the nightly spectacle as hundreds of sandhill cranes fly in to roost. Unfortunately, the existing shelter is showing its age. Dry rot is beginning to undermine the structure and the concrete pad and asphalt parking area are beginning to buckle. The tours occur from late afternoon until after dusk, and the uneven walking surfaces are beginning to create safety hazards for people leaving the site during these low light situations. In the fall of 2006 a large cottonwood fell on the structure, damaging the roof. The structure needs to be replaced.

Over the years, tour leaders and the general public have been frustrated with the old shelter design. The shelter faces east, toward the roosting areas, but often the cranes fly in from the west, silhouetted by the setting sun. For these spectacular western views, visitors must stand outside the shelter in the weather and wind, which also makes them more visible to the cranes. The tours have also proven to be more popular than the existing shelter can accommodate. The DFG has had to turn away hundreds of people each year because of limited capacity, and this does not include an unknown number of people who visit the website and see that tours are filled.

The new shelter's open design will rectify these problems by allowing views from any direction, and will accommodate between 800 and 1,000 more visitors per season. The site will be constructed to be fully ADA-compliant, and the new structure will be constructed of materials that will require less maintenance. An interior interpretive/storage room will house permanent interpretive displays, materials and supplies. The parking area's damaged concrete and asphalt will be replaced, an existing dirt parking area will be graveled, and two paved ADA-compliant parking spaces will be constructed on the south side of the structure. A new perimeter fence will be constructed around the parking lot to shield the cranes from exposure to vehicle headlights, and a new monument sign will be erected on Woodbridge Road to direct visitors to areas in the reserve open to the public.

Total project cost is \$170,000.00 and includes the following: demolition and disposal of the existing viewing structure, construction of a new structure with enclosed interpretive room, new concrete sidewalks, paved ADA-compliant parking area, new gravel for the parking lot, screening fencing, a new ADA-compliant portable restroom, and the installation of a monument sign. In addition to the costs listed above, an additional \$176.00 will be required for Department of General Services' review costs, bringing the allocation necessary for this project to \$170,176.00. Funding will come from the Wildlife Restoration Fund (Minor Capital Outlay), which allows the WCB to fund improvements for wildlife-oriented public uses, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 2 of Categorical Exemptions, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15302, as a replacement or reconstruction of an existing structure that will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$170,176.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund (Minor Capital Outlay); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the DFG to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Karen Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$170,176.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund (Minor Capital Outlay); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the DFG to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *14. Canebrake Ecological Reserve, Cap Canyon Unit, Expansion 2 \$100,000.00
Kern County

This proposal was to consider the State's acquisition of two parcels of land totaling 40± acres located near the community of Onyx in Kern County as an addition to the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Canebrake Ecological Reserve, Cap Canyon Unit (Reserve), for the preservation and protection of habitat crucial to the existence of many special status species.

The subject property is located in the lower reach of Cap Canyon adjacent to the existing southern boundary of the Reserve, near the South Fork of the Kern River. In addition to providing additional protection to the Cap Canyon watershed, this acquisition will enhance public access to U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands surrounding the subject property, and will heighten protection of an important wildlife corridor that extends between the Domeland Wilderness to the north and the isolated Scodie Mountains to the south.

The primary purpose of this acquisition is the preservation and protection of riparian habitat, vegetation, hydrology, and soils and the watershed of the South Fork Kern River. Specifically, this acquisition will provide protection for vegetation communities including annual grassland, pinyon-juniper, blue oak grey-pine, valley foothill riparian habitats, and habitat crucial to the existence of many special status species, such as the southwestern willow flycatcher, yellow-billed cuckoo, and the western pond turtle. If residential development were to occur within Cap Canyon, it would likely result in adverse impacts to these species and the habitat upon which they depend.

The DFG proposes to manage the property as an integral part of the existing Cap Canyon Unit of the Reserve at minimal additional expense. The Cap Canyon Unit provides protection for one of the tributaries of the South Fork of the Kern River. Development of the area would not only be injurious to animal and plant life, but would increase the likelihood of soil erosion, drying up of scarce water supplies, and other forms of environmental degradation. In addition, this acquisition will complement public access to the southern portion of the Reserve, and also to adjacent public lands owned and managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

The landowner has agreed to sell the property to the State for the appraised fair market value of \$86,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). It is estimated that an additional \$14,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including the DGS' review costs, title and escrow fees, bringing the total recommended allocation for this proposal to \$100,000.00. The purpose of this project, the protection of threatened and endangered species and a significant natural area, is consistent with the purposes of the proposed funding source.

This activity is exempt from 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 fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and under Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$100,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop.117), Section 2786 (b/c) for the acquisition and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Karen Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$100,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop.117), Section 2786 (b/c) for the acquisition and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

15. Ramona Grasslands, Expansion 2 \$25,000.00
San Diego County

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the authorization to enter into an Agreement to Subgrant the federal funds to the San Diego County Parks and Recreation Department (County) to assist in their acquisition from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) of 950± acres of real property in San Diego County for the protection of grasslands and related wildlife habitat which harbor threatened and endangered species. The property will also provide linkages to adjacent public lands to prevent habitat fragmentation. Mr. Pat Dyas briefly described the project and its location.

Known as Davis/Eagle Ranch, the subject property is located west of the unincorporated community of Ramona in central San Diego County. It consists of a lower section, near the Ramona Airport, which features rolling native and non-native grasslands and vernal pools, and a hillier upland section, much of it covered in Diegan coastal sage scrub. The property also contains an upland valley with a small amount of riparian habitat.

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

several species of raptors including golden eagle, merlin, prairie falcon, ferruginous hawk, red-tailed hawk, and burrowing owls.

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

This property has long been identified as especially significant for preservation in conjunction with the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG's) Natural Community Conservation Plan in San Diego County, and the San Diego County's Multiple Species Conservation Plan. Its importance was also described in the DFG's Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) for the Ramona Grasslands Wildlife Reserve.

TNC has been working cooperatively with the DFG and the County to acquire properties for the protection of the critical habitat located in the Ramona Grasslands. With the prior assistance by the WCB, three properties have been placed under permanent protection, bringing the total protected acreage to 3,030± acres. The County proposes to manage this site, together with the other properties it now holds at Ramona, in accordance with the County's Area Specific Management Directives which provide guidance to maintain, enhance, and monitor the conservation values of biological resources within the Preserve. The Ramona Grasslands will be managed for protection of the habitat and potentially for passive public uses including hiking, bird watching, and educational programs.

TNC purchased this property with the intention of eventually transferring it to the County for permanent protection and management. TNC has agreed to sell the property at the appraised fair market value of \$6,650,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). It is recommended that the WCB accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Grant from the USFWS in the sum of \$4,750,000.00 and approve an Agreement to Subgrant these funds to the County so that it may acquire the land from TNC. The County will be providing non-federal matching dollars in the amount of \$1,900,000.00 in order to complete the purchase. It is estimated that \$25,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses by the WCB including appraisal review and environmental assessment charges by the DGS, bringing the total recommended allocation for this project to \$25,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for grants to protect threatened and endangered species and significant natural landscapes, and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

The terms and conditions of the proposed Agreement to Subgrant provide that staff of the WCB will review and approve all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow

instructions, and the instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into an escrow.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in the amount of \$4,750,000.00, and approve an Agreement to Subgrant the federal funds to the San Diego County Parks and Recreation Department for this project as proposed; allocate \$25,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(6), for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Pat Dyas added that last week it was brought to the attention of TNC that a neighboring landowner has been encroaching on the property for a number of years. TNC and the County of San Diego have developed a new legal description, and 3.65 acres will be dropped off the purchase price of this property and sold to the encroaching landowner. Therefore the actual cost of the project will drop by \$25,000.00.

Mr. Dyas reported that Ms. Rene Bahl, Director of the San Diego County Department of Parks and Recreation, Mr. Chris Basilevac from the Nature Conservancy, and Mr. Dave Mayer from the Department of Fish and Game, were in the audience should there be any questions.

Ms. Karen Finn asked if TNC intended to transfer or sell the property to the County. Mr. Donnelly replied that TNC typically does not sell a property when other public funds are involved. They usually will try to recap the private funding they received during a transaction.

Mr. John McCamman asked if the San Diego Parks and Recreation Department had a specific management plan for the property. Ms. Bahl reported that the management plan is for passive recreation, including non-motorized trail use, and habitat management of the property.

It was moved by John McCamman that the Wildlife Conservation Board accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in the amount up to \$4,750,000.00, and approve an Agreement to Subgrant the federal funds to the San Diego County Parks and Recreation Department for this project, conditioned on the completion of the property boundary line adjustment, as proposed; allocate \$25,000.00 from the

Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(6), for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *16. Department of Fish and Game Minor Capital \$590,176.00
Outlay Wetland Projects
Butte, Merced, and Siskiyou Counties

This proposal was to consider the approval of an interagency agreement with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) for funding to restore and enhance wetland habitat on three of the DFG's Wildlife Areas: Gray Lodge Wildlife Area in Butte County, Volta Wildlife Area in Merced County and Shasta Valley Wildlife Area in Siskiyou County. The projects have all been selected as high priority projects by DFG's Comprehensive Wetland Habitat Program, and were chosen from a list of proposed wildlife area projects based on a system developed by DFG biologists which ranks the ability of the project to benefit a broad range of wetland, upland, and riparian-dependent species. The projects also qualify under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Inland Wetland Conservation Program and Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Programs. The three projects are summarized below.

Gray Lodge Wildlife Area Field 93 Water Conveyance and Restoration
Butte County - \$270,000.00

This project will take place on an area within the Gray Lodge Wildlife Area known as Field 93. This area is a 640-acre retired rice field that is currently managed as irrigated pasture and seasonal wetlands. The old rice checks still exist but without water control structures to properly irrigate and drain the field as necessary. As a result, the seasonal wetlands cannot be properly managed, and poor drainage results in Field 93 producing more mosquitoes than any other area on the wildlife area. The proposed project will remove all rice checks and associated infrastructure, improve the primary water delivery canal, restore a permanent wetland, and construct a drainage canal to allow the DFG staff to manage the site more efficiently.

Volta Wildlife Area Water Control Installation
Merced County - \$120,000.00

This project will complete an upgrade to the water delivery system on the Volta Wildlife Area. Thirty-six aging corrugated metal water control structures on approximately 2,500 acres of the wildlife area are failing due to corrosion. Many have failed completely or are leaking severely. The solution is to replace them with longer-lasting and more efficient concrete weirs and polyethylene pipes. The project contributes directly to the goals and objectives of the *Water Use and Efficiency Management Plan* that was developed for the wildlife area as part of the water contract between the DFG and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Shasta Valley Wildlife Area Senator Ditch Construction

Siskiyou County - \$200,000.00

The Shasta Valley Wildlife Area contains many miles of water supply ditches and three large water storage reservoirs, all developed over decades by many different landowners prior to acquisition by the WCB in 1991. The area's irrigation system was inefficient and a master plan for the entire water conveyance system was completed in 2004, identifying the most critical needs for attaining water efficiency. Senator Ditch, which supplies water for approximately 70 acres of wetlands and surrounding uplands, is the highest ranking renovation project on the list. This project will upgrade the outlet at South Trout Lake, which serves as the main water source for the Senator Ditch. In addition, 8,000 feet of the Senator Ditch will be reconstructed, and 16 water control structures will be installed to improve water conveyance and promote water conservation.

The total project cost for all three projects is \$590,000.00 and includes the following: project design and administration; earthwork; demolition and disposal of existing water control structures; and installation of new water control structures. In addition to the costs listed above, an additional \$176.00 will be required for Department of General Services' review costs, bringing the allocation necessary to complete all three of the projects to \$590,176.00. The proposed funding source is the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (d), which allows for funding of statewide enhancement or restoration of wetlands, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines 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.

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$390,176.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786 (d) Inland Wetlands Conservation Program, and \$200,000.00 from Section 2786 (d) Wetlands Outside the Central Valley; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the DFG to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Karen Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$390,176.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786 (d), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program, and \$200,000.00 from Section 2786 (d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the DFG to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

17. Fields Landing Public Access Improvements
Humboldt County

\$574,000.00

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the County of Humboldt (County) to expand, repave, re-stripe and realign the parking area at the Fields Landing Boat Ramp. Additional lighting will also be installed. The project is located in the unincorporated community of Fields Landing on the shore of Humboldt Bay, just south of the City of Eureka. Mr. Dave Means briefly described the project and its location.

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) has a long history of involvement in the development of the County-owned Fields Landing Public Access area. In 1958, WCB approved funding for the initial construction of the facility, including a concrete boat ramp and gravel parking area. At the time, this was the only public boat ramp on south Humboldt Bay, and the County has operated and maintained the facility since it opened. In response to substantially increasing public use of the facility, the County, with the WCB's assistance in 1974, extended the boat ramp for low tide launches, added a concrete boarding walkway, expanded the parking area and installed a restroom. In 1988, the WCB approved funding to install a boarding float at the ramp to further facilitate boat launching. In 1999, the WCB approved funding to upgrade the restroom to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, and to replace the aging boarding float.

The Fields Landing Public Access is an extremely popular destination for anglers and hunters endeavoring to experience the myriad outdoor sporting opportunities in Humboldt Bay and on the North Coast. During times of peak use, the existing parking lot is frequently filled to capacity, leaving some users to park offsite on nearby streets. The project will address this issue by increasing parking capacity, improving traffic flow, and enhancing public safety at the Fields Landing Public Access. Specifically, the project will add a total of 34,000 square feet of paved area for parking. This will be accomplished by both expanding the existing parking area on County-owned land, and by constructing a new 21,800 square foot parking area on adjacent Humboldt Bay Harbor Recreation and Conservation District (District) property. Three new light standards will be installed on the County parcel and two new light standards will be installed on the District parcel. One of the light standards will be designed to support a tsunami warning siren. New signage and control measures to notify drivers of the presence of the boat ramp at the foot of Railroad Avenue will also be installed.

The existing parking area will be expanded by squaring off the rounded perimeter on the south side and extending the paved area to the property line. Landscaped islands on the west side will be removed and pavement will be extended westward. Failing sub-grade fill will be repaired at three locations, and the entire parking area and ramp approach will be re-surfaced with asphalt and re-striped, with new curbing installed as needed. Tie-down lanes will be provided near the boat ramp. Parking space design will emphasize efficient use of space and smooth traffic flow, and will comply with ADA standards for accessible parking spaces.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$574,000.00
Pacific Gas & Electric Co.	<u>7,000.00</u>
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING	\$581,000.00

Project costs will be for mobilization; signage and speed humps; removal and replacement of asphalt concrete dike; clearing and grubbing; roadway excavation; erosion control/landscaping; aggregate base; asphalt concrete and asphalt concrete surfacing; rock slope protection; parking stall markings and bumpers; light standards; tsunami siren controller; installation of tsunami siren; permitting; and preliminary and construction engineering.

The proposed funding source for this project is the Wildlife Restoration Fund (Minor Capital Outlay) that allows funding for wildlife-oriented public uses and improvements, and is consistent with the objectives of this project. It is anticipated that the project will also qualify for Federal participation under the Sport Fish Restoration Act. After approval by the WCB, staff will file the appropriate application with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service which, if approved, will provide the WCB with a 75 percent reimbursement of all qualifying project costs.

The County has agreed to manage and maintain the facilities for 25 years, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement. The District has agreed to allow the public and the County access to their property for 25 years. If, at any time during the life of the project, the County is unable to manage and maintain the project improvements, they will refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

The Department of Fish Game (DFG) has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The County, as lead agency, prepared a Negative Declaration for the project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff considered the Negative Declaration and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA.

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$574,000.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund (Minor Capital Outlay); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the DFG to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Means reported that Mr. Hank Seeman, from the Humboldt County Public Works Department was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Donnelly stated that a letter of support had been received from Assembly Member Patty Berg.

At this time Mr. Rogers introduced Ms. Diane Colborn, alternate for Assembly Member Lois Wolk.

It was moved by John McCamman that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$574,000.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund (Minor Capital Outlay); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

18. Wetland Conservation Easement Program, Bird Haven Ranch \$440,000.00
Glenn County

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the acquisition of a conservation easement over 259± acres of privately-owned land located in Glenn County. The proposed acquisition is a cooperative project with the California Waterfowl Association (CWA) and the private property owner. The purposes of the conservation easement are for protection of seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands, grasslands, riparian forests. Mr. Pat Dyas briefly described the project and its location.

The property is located along the west bank of Howard Slough, north and east of the unincorporated community of Afton, east of the Sacramento River, and south of State Highway 162. It is adjacent to the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Howard Slough and Little Dry Creek Units of the Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area. The property has been intentionally flooded in winter and, due to its location, provides wildlife benefits to many wetland-dependent migratory birds, including such species as northern pintail, white-fronted geese, and greater yellowlegs. The property is often flooded in summer as well, which benefits giant garter snakes, and other state and federally-listed threatened species.

The proposed 259± acre easement is part of a larger 2,446± acre property which is managed by the landowner to provide benefits to waterfowl and other wildlife through a mosaic of restored wetlands, riparian habitat, and wildlife-friendly agriculture. The easement parcel has been laser leveled for rice production, is mostly open ground, and contains a strip of riparian habitat bordering Howard Slough. The easement will allow for the continuation of agricultural use through grazing. The easement will also allow the continuation of private recreational uses such as hunting, fishing, operation of a hunting club, and youth hunter education, provided such activities are consistent with maintenance of the easement lands as wetland habitat, and are approved by the DFG. The project site may be modified in the future to develop high quality upland and wetland habitat, though no plans have been developed. The DFG will be responsible for monitoring the easement and will develop an annual management plan for the property to maximize wildlife benefits.

The property owner has agreed to sell the easement for \$1,038,420.00, the fair market value of the conservation easement interest, as determined by an appraisal approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). Private grant funds procured by the CWA in the amount of \$623,000.00 will provide a portion of the acquisition price, with the balance of \$415,420.00 proposed to be funded by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). It is estimated that an additional \$24,580.00 will be required for administrative expenses, including DGS' review costs, escrow fees, and closing costs, bringing the total recommended allocation for this proposal to \$440,000.00. The purpose of this project, the acquisition of an interest in land for the protection of wetlands and upland habitat in the Central Valley area of California, is consistent with the proposed funding source.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the acquisition of the conservation easement as proposed; allocate \$440,000.00 from the General Fund (Inland Wetlands Conservation Program) for the acquisition and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Dyas reported that Mr. Dean Kwasny, from the DFG's Wildlife Branch, was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. McCamman asked if the hunt programs were going to be operated by DFG.

Mr. Kwasny replied that this particular project is owned by one individual and hunted by him and his family. He is very active with the CWA and invites youth hunters to come out and use the facilities.

It was moved by Ms. Karen Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the acquisition of the conservation easement as proposed; allocate \$440,000.00 from the General Fund (Inland Wetlands Conservation Program) for the acquisition and project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

19. Bear Creek Watershed Habitat Restoration \$475,000.00
Colusa County

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for a cooperative project with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Cal-Fire, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF), National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), U.C. Davis, and a private livestock operator to eradicate non-native invasive plants and enhance wildlife water sources within the Bear Creek watershed, and to increase native plant species establishment along Bear Creek through re-vegetation, all located within the BLM's Cache Creek Natural Area. The project is located within a few miles of the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Indian Valley Wildlife Area, just to the northwest in Lake County, and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) funded Bear Valley Conservation Easement, due north of the Highway 20 and Highway 16 intersection. Mr. Scott Clemons briefly described the project and its location.

Bear Creek is a tributary to the upper watershed of Cache Creek, flowing north to south. This project is one of several approved by the WCB within the Cache Creek watershed over the last decade. In 2002, the WCB approved funding for the initial work on saltcedar removal on the BLM's Bear Creek property. The project, however, was excluded from treating tamarisk within ten feet of the creek due to limitations on the available herbicide. A new formulation is now available for use over the water, and this project will help complete the eradication of saltcedar along the entire 17 mile reach of Bear Creek managed by the BLM. Combined with the other projects in the Cache Creek watershed, a majority of the tamarisk and other non-native species have been removed, leading to significant recovery of native plants and riparian habitat within the entire watershed area.

A major focus of this project is to improve 120± acres of riparian habitat along 8± miles of Bear Creek and tributaries currently infested with several non-native invasive plant species including saltcedar, Ravenna grass, and perennial pepperweed. As these weeds are reduced, some natural regeneration of native plants will occur. To help induce and speed up the reestablishment of native vegetation that also helps block and eliminate the recurrence of non-native plants, some native plant re-vegetation will be conducted. The BLM estimates that approximately 34 acres of riparian area will need to be re-vegetated, covering up to two miles of stream. This will result in improved riparian habitat for a variety of wildlife species, from tule elk to a host of neotropical birds. Public access for hunting, hiking, bird watching, etc. is also available on the site, through several developed entry points.

Other restoration priorities for this project include enhancement of 12 functioning water sources covering 9± surface acres located throughout the BLM Bear Creek lands, and weed control on 362± acres of meadows scattered throughout the area. These actions will provide year-round high quality habitat as well as additional sources of fresh water for wildlife during the hot summer months.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$475,000.00
BLM	200,000.00
NRCS	10,000.00
Cal-Fire	70,000.00
RMEF	155,000.00
NWTF	16,500.00
UC Davis	75,000.00
Private livestock operator	<u>80,000.00</u>
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING	\$1,081,500.00

Project costs will be for invasive plant control, water development and maintenance, re-vegetation, erosion control, administration, botanical inventories and monitoring, consulting, signs, and contingency.

The proposed funding sources for this project are the WCB's Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (e/f), and the General Fund (California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program). Both sources provide funding for the protection, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat statewide and are consistent with the objectives of this project. The Department of Fish Game (DFG) has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. This project also supports the objectives of the California Riparian Habitat Joint Venture and the Cache Creek Coordinated Resource Management Plan.

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.

Staff recommended that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$395,100.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Section 2786 (e/f), and \$79,900.00 from the General Fund (California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the DFG to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Clemons reported that Mr. Gregg Mangan, from the Bureau of Land Management, was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Donnelly stated that letters of support were received from Ms. Debra Chase, Executive Director of Tuleyome, and Mr. K. Mike Ford, Sr. Regional Director of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

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

It was moved by John McCamman that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$395,100.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786 (e/f), and \$79,900.00 from the General Fund (California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

20. Feather River Wildlife Area, Riparian Habitat Restoration \$1,311,000.00
Nelson Slough Unit, Phase I
Sutter County

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to River Partners for a cooperative project with the Center for Land Based Learning and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to restore approximately 250 acres of riparian habitat on a portion of the Nelson Slough Unit of the Feather River Wildlife Area, located on the inside of the Feather River's west levee, approximately 17 miles south of Yuba City. Mr. Scott Clemons briefly described the project and its location.

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) has recently approved funding for two similar projects located within the Feather River Wildlife Area: The O'Connor Lakes Unit restoration project was approved on August 13, 2003 and is nearing completion; and the Abbott Lake Unit project was approved on November 15, 2007, and work is just beginning there.

The Nelson Slough Unit was acquired by the WCB in 1989 for the preservation and reestablishment of riparian habitat within the levees of the Feather River. Prior to the WCB acquiring the site, it was used for crop production with the majority of its historic riparian habitat removed. Since being acquired, natural regeneration of the riparian forest has been slow on most of the site. Non-native plants have taken over and dominate most of the area at this time. While some habitat values do exist on site, if fully restored the property has the potential for providing a larger and more viable habitat for deer, migratory waterfowl, giant garter snakes, beaver, upland birds, small mammals and assorted furbearers. The DFG currently manages passive public access, including an annual public youth hunting program for upland game birds on the site.

To develop plans for restoration, the site was divided into three potential restoration cells of 250 acres each. Under this proposal, Cell II will be restored, and was chosen first because it is the most heavily invaded by non-native weeds, and has greatest restoration potential of the three cells. It currently has a small strip of riparian forest along Nelson Slough, which is the toe drain along the river side of the levee. Small pockets of cottonwood, black locust and sandbar willow have become reestablished in the center of the area, surrounded by weeds. A focus of the restoration will be to install plant species that support the multi-use aspects of the site. The plant design will include large areas of low growing

herbaceous species which support current recreational uses (upland game bird hunting) and assist in meeting the habitat needs of the many wildlife species that use the unit. A combination of native shrubs, vines and trees will be distributed over the unit in a design that will minimize recurrent costs incurred by the Department of Water Resources for floodway maintenance. A flood-neutral design (as was done on the two previous Feather River Wildlife Area projects) will allow for efficient water conveyance through the lower Feather River drainage. The restoration project will also include aggressive control of existing patches of nonnative invasive plants.

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$1,311,000.00
River Partners	95,345.00
Center for Land Based Learning	<u>9,135.00</u>
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING	\$1,415,480.00

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

The proposed funding source for this project is the WCB's General Fund (California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program) that can be expended on statewide riparian habitat restoration projects and is consistent with the objectives of this project. This project also embodies the principles of the Riparian Bird Conservation Plan as developed by the California Riparian Habitat Joint Venture, and compliments the bird habitat-based recommendations of the Central Valley Joint Venture's Implementation Plan. The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board.

The 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.

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,311,000.00 from the General Fund (California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the DFG to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Clemons reported that Mr. Dave Neubert, from the River Partners, was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Donnelly stated that letters of support were received from Mr. Paul Olson, Regional Occupational Program Teacher at Las Plumas High School; Mr. Daniel D'Agostini, 7th/8th Grade Teacher at Barry Elementary School; and Ms. Carol Sue Taylor, Assistant Principal and Environmental Engineer located in the area.

Mr. McCamman took a moment to acknowledge the importance of partners in the management of the DFG's assets. He stated that participation of our partners, such as, the River Partners and the Center for Land Based Learning is essential for accomplishing our core mission for fish and wildlife in the State.

It was moved by Ms. Karen Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,311,000.00 from the General Fund (California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program); 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. Upper Cosumnes River Basin, Expansion 2 \$1,465,000.00
El Dorado County

Mr. Donnelly reported that this proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the American River Conservancy (Conservancy) to assist in the acquisition of 320± acres of vacant land located on both sides of the North Fork Cosumnes River, 45 miles east of Sacramento, in El Dorado County. This acquisition is part of a landscape-scale endeavor to preserve the last free-flowing river system on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. Joining the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and the Conservancy in a partnership to accomplish this acquisition are the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation (Preserving Wild California Grant Program) and the State Resources Agency (Proposition 50 Sierra Nevada-Cascade Grant Program). Ms. Catherine Caldwell briefly described the project and its location.

The purpose of the acquisition is to protect riparian, valley oak and blue oak forest habitat, along with the sensitive and endangered species potentially resident within and dependent upon this habitat. The subject lands are immediately to the east and upstream of spawning gravels for the fall-run Chinook salmon, listed by the State as a Species of Special Concern and a federal candidate species. Project lands are also identified as critical habitat for the California red-legged frog within the draft recovery plan issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS May, 2000). (The California red-legged frog is listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act, and is a State Species of Special Concern.) A number of other sensitive wildlife species occur within the project area, including the bald eagle, California spotted owl, northern goshawk, foothill yellow-legged frog, and northwestern pond turtle, of which the latter four are U.S. Forest Service Sensitive Species and California Species of Special Concern. Other wildlife in this area includes resident deer and mountain lion, as well as numerous game birds, such as dove, quail, and wild turkey.

The Conservancy has recently purchased property adjacent to the subject parcels, and is in the process of transferring those neighboring properties to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). It is proposed that the Conservancy complete the acquisition and hold title to the property until transferring it to the BLM. The area

will be managed for wildlife protection with limited public access and with the primary management goal of maintaining and protecting the existing populations of sensitive wildlife species. The State will have no responsibility for management of the property.

The Conservancy proposes to purchase the property from the owner at the appraised fair market value of \$2,800,000.00, as approved by the State's Department of General Services (DGS). The Resources Legacy Fund Foundation has approved a grant to the Conservancy providing \$518,177.59 toward the acquisition. The State Resources Agency has also approved a grant to the Conservancy providing \$820,000.00, and the Conservancy will contribute \$1,822.41 to the purchase price. The remaining balance required and proposed for WCB funding is \$1,460,000.00. It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed to cover administrative expenses by the WCB, including review of the appraisal by the DGS, bringing the total recommended allocation for this proposal to \$1,465,000.00. The purpose of this project, the protection of sensitive habitat and wildlife species, including without limitation, native oak woodlands necessary to protect deer and mountain lion habitat, is consistent with the purposes of the proposed funding source.

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

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve a grant to the American River Conservancy for this project as proposed; allocate \$1,465,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (a), for the grant amount and to pay for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Ms. Caldwell introduced Alan Ehr Gott, Executive Director of the American River Conservancy.

Mr. Ehr Gott stated that he has been working with DFG and WCB for 19 years and with the closure of this acquisition the Conservancy has achieved protection for 10,000 acres of river frontage. Mr. Ehr Gott thanked the DFG, the WCB, and staff for their financial and technical assistance, and for their good humor and dedication to protecting the best wildlife, recreation, and scenic landscapes that

California has to offer. According to Mr. Ehrgott the WCB has provided \$9,500,000.00 in purchase funding for 18 of the Conservancy's 68 acquisitions. For every dollar that the WCB contributed, the Conservancy has been able to raise an additional six dollars in purchase funding from other public and private sources. Altogether the Conservancy has raised \$55,000,000.00 over the last 19 years to protect 3,900 acres fronting the upper Consumnes River, 3,700 acres fronting the South Fork American River, 230 acres fronting the North Fork American River, and 2,000 acres of endangered species habitat within the Pine Hill Ecological Preserve. On behalf of the Conservancy Mr. Ehrgott thanked the WCB and staff for the exceptional work they have provided in keeping California a healthy and vibrant place to live.

Mr. Donnelly expressed his appreciation to the Conservancy for their working relationship with WCB, and thanked Mr. Ehrgott for his appreciation of the WCB processes and timelines.

Mr. McCamman thanked Mr. Ehrgott and added that the Conservancy's ability to turn WCB dollars into other contributions is essential.

It was moved by Ms. Karen Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve a grant to the American River Conservancy for this project as proposed; allocate \$1,465,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Prop. 117), Section 2786 (a), for the grant amount and to pay for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

At this time Ms. Karen Finn excused herself from the meeting.

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| 22. | Santa Cruz Sandhills | \$1,510,000.00 |
| | Santa Cruz County | |

Mr. Donnelly stated that this proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (Land Trust) for a cooperative project with the Moore Foundation, the Packard Foundation, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to assist with the acquisition of 189± acres of land in Santa Cruz County for the protection of one of the rarest ecosystems in the United States and critical habitat that supports four plants and three animals found nowhere else in the world. The proposal also includes the acceptance of a Recovery Land Acquisition Grant from the USFWS and the authorization to enter into an Agreement to Subgrant the federal funds to the Land Trust to assist with funding of the project. Ms. Teri Muzik briefly described the project and its location.

The property is located on Geyer Road, approximately one half mile west of the City of Scotts Valley, six miles north of the City of Santa Cruz, and four miles east of the town of Felton. That portion of the property containing most of the former

quarry site can be accessed from Geyer Road. A more rugged, mountainous portion of the property can be accessed from East Zayante Road.

The purpose of this acquisition is to protect a biological community found only on outcrops of sand soil. The Sandhills began more than ten million years ago, when a vast, shallow sea covered the Central Valley and emptied into the Pacific Ocean near Santa Cruz. As the Santa Cruz Mountains formed, the sand that was deposited on the ancient sea floor was lifted up. Today, these sand deposits are found on ridges near the towns of Felton, Ben Lomond, Scotts Valley, and Bonny Doon. Fossils of sand dollars, sea cows, extinct sharks, and other ancient ocean species can be found in the Sandhills. Found only in the central portion of the county, the Sandhills are estimated to have originally covered 6,000 acres. More than 40 percent of the habitat has been removed by sand quarrying and development, leaving less than 4,000 acres of critical habitat.

Preservation and management of the Sandhills habitat will also benefit coastal rivers and the larger community, for which the Sandhills provide important ecosystem services. Rainfall percolates through the sand soil into the Santa Margarita Aquifer, which enhances summer flows in the San Lorenzo River at its tributaries, Newell Creek, Bean Creek, and Zayante Creek. These streams support populations of the Central California Coast Evolutionary Significant Units of steelhead trout, which is federally threatened, and Coho salmon, which is federally endangered. Among the rare and/or endangered species known to exist in the Sandhills are the Zayante band-winged grasshopper, the Mount Hermon June beetle, the Santa Cruz kangaroo rat, the Santa Cruz wallflower, Ben Lomond spineflower, Ben Lomond buckwheat, and Bonny Doon manzanita.

In 2002, the USFWS approved a Recovery Land Acquisition Grant in the amount of \$500,000.00 for the purpose of protecting the Sandhills of Santa Cruz County from further habitat loss. The WCB has authority to subgrant these federal funds and will enter into an Agreement to Subgrant with the Land Trust to apply the federal grants funds toward the purchase of the property.

The property was appraised for \$4,400,000.00. The appraisal was reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The landowners have agreed to sell the property to the Land Trust for a bargain sale of \$4,100,000.00. Private funding sources are providing funds in excess of the purchase price to assist with the management of the property. The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$1,500,000.00
Wildlife Conservation Board (USFWS grant)	500,000.00
Moore Foundation	2,150,000.00
Packard Foundation	<u>250,000.00</u>
TOTAL	\$4,400,000.00

It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related costs by the WCB, including the DGS' appraisal review fees, bringing the total

proposed allocation for this project to \$1,510,000.00. The purpose of this project, the protection of threatened and endangered species and a significant natural area, is consistent with the purposes of the proposed funding.

The terms and conditions of both the proposed grant and subgrant agreements provide that staff of the WCB review all proposed title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into an escrow for the acquisition.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve a grant to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County for this project as proposed; accept the Recovery Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$500,000.00 and approve an Agreement to Subgrant the federal funds to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County; allocate \$1,510,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Prop. 84), Section 75055 (b)(1), for the acquisition and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Ms. Muzik reported that that Ms. Terry Corwin from the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and Mr. Kevin Knowles from the Conservation Land Group were in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Donnelly stated that a letter of support was received from Assembly Member John Larid.

Mr. McCamman asked what, if any, were the rehabilitation plans for this project.

Ms. Muzik introduced Ms. Terry Corwin, Executive Director of the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County.

Ms. Corwin stated that the sandhills are challenging from a management standpoint because there are not large contiguous acres of them. This is why the Land Trust conducted a \$1,200,000.00 capital campaign, aside from the acquisition cost, in order to raise money to be permanently associated with the management of this property.

It was moved by John McCamman that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve a grant to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County for this project as

proposed; accept the Recovery Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$500,000.00 and approve an Agreement to Subgrant the federal funds to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County; allocate \$1,510,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Prop. 84), Section 75055 (b)(1), for the acquisition and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

23. San Joaquin River Riparian Habitat, Expansion 14 \$6,435,500.00
Fresno County

Mr. Donnelly stated that this cooperative acquisition proposal, presented on behalf of the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC), was to consider the purchase of a 323± acre ownership containing wildlife habitat located near the San Joaquin River in the County of Fresno. The purpose of the acquisition is for the protection and preservation of wildlife corridors and riparian and upland habitat adjacent to the San Joaquin River. Mr. Bill Gallup briefly described the project and its location.

The acquisition property is located approximately 10 miles northeast of the City of Fresno, about three miles westerly of the town of Friant, on Old Friant Road near its intersection with the Friant Expressway. The site is adjacent to the San Joaquin River on the north and there are private ownerships on the east and west. Topography of the parcel is generally flat near the river, and ranges from slight to moderate slopes to the south and west, near Old Friant Road.

In 1988, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) began an acquisition program along the San Joaquin River to protect numerous properties and, to date, has acquired approximately 2,950± acres. Cooperatively, the SJRC is responsible for coordinating an acquisition program to preserve and restore natural habitat along the San Joaquin River, from Friant Dam to State Highway 99, and to provide compatible public access with appropriate facilities for public use. At its April 14, 2005 meeting, the SJRC determined that the subject property is a high priority for acquisition and recommended that the WCB allocate funds to complete the purchase. Upon completion of this acquisition, a total of 3,273± acres along the San Joaquin River will be placed under permanent protection.

The property is currently encumbered with two leases. The majority of the property is under one lease for mining and a gravel plant operation, and the second lease is for a single family residence with a month to month tenancy. Both leases would be assigned to the State at the close of escrow and revenues/rents paid in advance, if any, will be paid to the State at the conclusion of the transaction. The gravel plant lease and conditional use permit are set to expire in the year 2014, and there are no plans to extend the lease period. Habitat values found along this portion of the river corridor are limited and some

areas have degradation as a result of the gravel and mining lease, requiring on-site restoration to bring habitat values back to their full potential. Restoration and maintenance of the site by the gravel plant operator is required after the expiration of the lease under the terms of the conditional use permit issued by the County of Fresno.

Habitat types found along the river provide home to a wide variety of wildlife species. Among these are water oriented birds common to the area and which include herons, egrets, grebes, and a variety of duck species. Many songbirds also inhabit the area, the use of which is fully expected to diversify and expand after the required restoration and with the proper management of this habitat. Also found along this stretch of the river are numerous raptors, including the Cooper's hawk, northern harrier, sharp-shinned hawk, prairie falcon, and an occasional bald or golden eagle. Mammals found in the area include raccoon, opossum, coyote, and deer.

Staff proposed that following acquisition of the property, jurisdiction be transferred immediately to the SJRC through a "Transfer of Jurisdiction". The SJRC will be responsible for the overall management of the site which will ultimately be accomplished under a cooperative management agreement with the Department of Fish and Game, the San Joaquin River Parkway Trust, and other public and private entities which are partners along the parkway.

The owners have agreed to sell the subject property for \$6,385,500.00, the appraised value as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). It is estimated that an additional \$50,000.00 will be needed for project-related expenses, including appraisal, title insurance and escrow fees, environmental inspection, and the DGS' review costs, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$6,435,500.00. The proposed funding source specifically allows for the acquisition of lands along the San Joaquin River as recommended for purchase by the SJRC, and this acquisition project is consistent with that funding source.

In response to a request by staff of the WCB, the State Lands Commission indicated that they have a potential sovereign interest in land lying adjacent to and along the San Joaquin River at the northerly edge of the subject property. The property owner has agreed to quitclaim any right, title, and interest, if any, as part of this transaction at no added consideration.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$6,435,500.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air,

Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (b)(5), for the acquisition and internal-related project expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. McCamman inquired as to where the DFG's Willow Lodge property was in relation to this project. Mr. Donnelly replied that it was southwest of this property.

It was moved by John McCamman that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$6,435,500.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Prop. 40), Section 5096.650 (b)(5), for the acquisition and internal-related project expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

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| **24. | Morro Bay Wildlife Area
San Luis Obispo County | \$810,000.00 |
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This Item was withdrawn from consideration at this time.

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| 25. | Santa Monica Bay, Rancho Corral Canyon
Los Angeles County | \$2,010,000.00 |
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Mr. Donnelly stated that this proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to assist in the cooperative project with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC), the Trust for Public Land, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) to acquire approximately 825 acres of land in four phases. Phase I (covering 320 acres) was completed in December of 2007, and this proposal, covering 116 acres, is considered Phase II. Phases III and IV are expected to be completed by September of 2008. Ms. Carol Klein briefly described the project and its location.

The property is located within the Corral Canyon Creek watershed along the coastal slope of the Santa Monica Mountains. Specifically, the property is situated between Malibu Creek State Park to the north and MRCA's Corral Canyon Park to the south, and lies on the east side of Corral Canyon Road approximately one mile north of the Pacific Coast Highway, and directly north of the Malibu city limits. The Corral Canyon watershed and the Rancho Corral Canyon property are part of a major core coastal habitat area that drains into Santa Monica Bay.

Primary vegetation communities in the Corral Canyon watershed include coastal sage scrub, chaparral, oak woodlands and riparian forests. These communities provide habitat for a host of wildlife species and serve as an essential wildlife corridor and habitat linkage for deer, mountain lion and bobcat. In addition, the property contains a portion of Corral Canyon Creek which supports habitat for California newts, red-legged frog, steelhead trout, and southwestern pond turtle, as well as numerous neotropical bird and raptor species.

Residential subdivisions exist to the north, east, and west of Rancho Corral. The subject property consists of individual legal parcels with Certificates of Compliance. Acquisition of the property will protect the Corral Canyon watershed from further development and will provide a connection from the Coast Trail to the Backbone Trail, affording additional public access along an approximately 60 mile trail system from the coast to the interior of the Santa Monica Mountains.

The property has been considered and recommended as a priority by the Southern California Wetlands Project. Upon completion of the acquisition, the property will be owned and managed by the MRCA.

The purchase price of the total 825-acre proposed acquisition will not exceed the \$17,200,000.00 market value indicated in an appraisal reviewed and approved by Department of General Services (DGS). The WCB will assist in funding Phase II of the acquisition with the \$2,000,000.00 grant being proposed at this time. It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses by the WCB, which include the DGS' review costs, for a total recommended allocation for this proposal to \$2,010,000.00. The purpose of this project, to acquire and protect coastal watershed lands and upland areas adjacent to coastal wetlands, is consistent with the purposes of this proposed funding source.

The terms and conditions of the proposed grant to the SMMC provide that the WCB staff will review and approve the proposed acquisition property. The grant further provides that staff will review all proposed acquisition-related documents prior to recommending disbursement of the WCB funds directly into escrow.

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve a grant to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for this project, as proposed; allocate \$2,010,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a), for the grant and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Donnelly stated that a letter of support was received from Senator Sheila Kuehl.

Ms. Klein reported that Mr. Marc Beyeler from the Trust for Public Land and Mr. Jeff Maloney from the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority were in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Maloney reported to the Board that the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority would be taking title to the land and providing management.

Mr. McCamman inquired as to what the management would include.

Mr. Maloney replied that the MRCA has a full, fire trained, ranger staff, as well as a full natural resources staff that is capable of any restoration that may be required.

Mr. McCamman asked if public access is one of the MRCA's concerns.

Mr. Maloney replied that it is one of their long term goals to open up a coastal slope trail.

It was moved by John McCamman that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve a grant to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for this project as proposed; allocate \$2,010,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Prop. 50), Section 79572 (a), for the grant and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- 26. Los Cerritos Wetlands
Orange County

This item had been withdrawn from consideration.

- 27. Fieldstone Habitat Conservation Plan \$10,000.00
San Diego County

Mr. Donnelly stated that this proposal was to consider the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the authorization to enter into an Agreement to Subgrant the federal funds to the Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation (Foundation), to be applied toward the acquisition of a privately-owned property totaling 18± acres in the City of Carlsbad. The purposes of this acquisition project are for the protection of southern maritime chaparral and southern willow scrub/brackish marsh habitats, to ensure continued dispersal of the California gnatcatcher, and enhancement of a general wildlife corridor between larger habitat areas. Mr. Bob Clark briefly explained the project and its location.

The property is located on the northeast corner of the Batiquitos Lagoon in the City of Carlsbad, approximately two miles east of Interstate 5, and one-half mile north of the intersection of El Camino Real and La Costa Avenue.

This acquisition will help fulfill the objectives of acquiring as much of the Batiquitos Bluff property as possible, and will enhance existing efforts to conserve coastal sage scrub, southern willow scrub/brackish marsh and southern maritime chaparral habitats that support Del Mar manzanita, Encinitas baccharis, Orcutt's spineflower, and the coastal California gnatcatcher. The benefits of conserving the property are to increase the chances of stabilizing and recovering the species and their habitat, and to reduce the likelihood of land-use conflicts in the area.

It is proposed that the Foundation will hold title to the property and manage it in conjunction with the Department of Fish and Game's adjacent Batiquitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve and the City of Carlsbad's Aviara Trail System. The property will serve as an eastern link to the Batiquitos Lagoon North Shore Trail, an approximately two mile improved public access hiking trail that parallels the lagoon's north shore, offering a great learning experience with interpretive signage about the flora and avian wildlife of the lagoon placed along the trail. The Foundation has a long-term goal of acquiring land and easements that will eventually lead to completing a trail system around the Batiquitos Lagoon.

The owner of the property has agreed to sell the property at the appraised value of \$2,400,000.00, as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The proposed subgrant will provide \$700,000.00 toward the purchase price from a USFWS Habitat Conservation Planning Grant. The California Coastal Conservancy will provide from its Carlsbad Mitigation Fund (Public Resources Code Section 30171.5) the balance of the purchase price, \$1,700,000.00, as the non-federal match. It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed for administrative expenses by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), which includes the DGS' appraisal review costs, bringing the total recommended allocation for this proposal to \$10,000.00. The proposed funding source allows for grants to protect threatened and endangered species where the funding is leveraged with other funds and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

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

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

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$700,000.00 and approve an Agreement to Subgrant the federal funds to the Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation; allocate \$10,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5), for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Clark reported that Mr. Dave Mayer from the DFG's South Coast Region was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. Donnelly stated that a letter of support was received from Mr. Fred Sandquist, President of the Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation.

Mr. Clark further explained some of the features in the photos from the PowerPoint presentation.

It was moved by John McCamman that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$700,000.00 and approve an Agreement to Subgrant the federal funds to the Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation; allocate \$10,000.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Prop. 12), Section 5096.350 (a)(5), for internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Game to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried

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| 28. Salton Sea Interim Restoration and Management
Riverside and Imperial Counties | \$2,000,176.00 |
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Mr. Donnelly stated that this proposal was to consider the approval of an interagency agreement with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) for planning and design of interim environmental measures at the Salton Sea, in advance of the selection, development and implementation of the State's preferred alternative for restoration of the Salton Sea. The Salton Sea is located in the Imperial Valley within Riverside and Imperial counties. Imperial Wildlife Area is located on the eastern shore and to the south of the Salton Sea and provides valuable habitat for many species of wildlife. Mr. Donnelly pointed out that the Agenda item for this project indicates that the purpose is to implement the State's preferred alternative for restoration of the Salton Sea. Which is not quite accurate; what this project will do is help implement a Resources Agency- recommended State's preferred alternative. Mr. Scott Clemons briefly described the project and its location.

The Colorado River Quantification Settlement Agreement and State implementing legislation call for the implementation of a Preferred Alternative for the restoration of the Salton Sea. In 2003 the WCB approved funding for the Salton Sea Habitat Restoration and Planning Project, which produced the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report for the Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration Program. This document analyzed the environmental impacts of a range of alternatives for the future of the Salton Sea, including “no action”. Subsequently, a report was developed recommending a preferred alternative and, along with a funding plan, was submitted to the Legislature for approval in May, 2007. The Legislature has not yet taken action on the preferred alternative. Under the preferred alternative, full restoration could take up to ten years to implement. Regardless of which alternative is selected, one item included in each alternative is the need to initiate interim action to protect wildlife habitat and species as the Salton Sea continues to degrade.

The proposed interagency agreement will provide a portion of the funding necessary to (1) conduct the studies, planning and design needed to develop interim habitat restoration projects; (2) expand on monitoring of the Salton Sea’s environmental resources; (3) develop air quality mitigation strategies; (4) maintain an existing public outreach program; and (5) acquire access rights for monitoring and site investigations. The DFG is developing a separate interagency agreement to provide additional funding to the DWR. The above activities are expected to take up to two years to complete.

The WCB has approved several other projects recently in the Salton Sea watershed area for the purpose of restoring and maintaining habitat, including the New and Alamo Rivers Wetlands Master Plan (2004), the Dos Palmas Area Saltcedar Removal and Habitat Restoration (2005), and the Imperial Valley Landowner Stewardship Program (2006).

The proposed funding breakdown for the agreement is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$2,000,000.00
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Costs will be for planning and design, obtaining access rights for monitoring and site investigations, developing air quality mitigation strategies, public outreach, and resource monitoring. In addition to the costs listed above, an additional \$176.00 will be required for Department of General Services’ contract review costs, bringing the allocation necessary for the WCB’s portion of the project to \$2,000,176.00.

DWR, as the California Environmental Quality Act lead agency, prepared the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration Program, pursuant to the provisions of CEQA. Staff have considered the environmental effects of the proposed interagency agreement as shown in the PEIR and prepared proposed written findings to comply with CEQA. The DFG has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The proposed funding source is the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water,

Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Section 79565, earmarked under Senate Bill 71, Chapter 81 (2005) for acquisition, grants, or other activities that directly restore the Salton Sea and its transboundary watersheds, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

Staff recommended that the Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,000,176.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Section 79565 (SB 71); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the DFG to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Clemons reported that Mr. Jerry Bowles, from the Department of Water Resources was in the audience should there be any questions.

Mr. McCamman confirmed that even though legislature has not taken action on a preferred alternative, the Resources Agency has recommended one and that this project is consistent with whichever alternative is ultimately decided upon.

Ms. Colborn clarified that approving this project does not, in any way, commit the legislature to selecting a particular preferred project.

It was moved by John McCamman that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,000,176.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Section 79565 (SB 71); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the DFG to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

29. Wildlife Conservation Board 60th Year Report Informational

Mr. Donnelly provided an update on the status of the Wildlife Conservation Board's 60th year report, and specifically thanked Ms. Marilyn Cunndiff and Ms. Lorna Bernard for their assistance in completing the Report.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 11:33 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

John P. Donnelly
Executive Director

PROGRAM STATEMENT

At the close of the meeting on February 20, 2008, the amount allocated to projects since the Wildlife Conservation Board's inception in 1947 totaled \$2,025,117,874.25. This total includes funds reimbursed by the Federal Government under the Accelerated Public Works Program completed in 1966, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program, the Anadromous Fish Act Program, the Sport Fish Restoration Act Program, the Pittman-Robertson Program, and the Estuarine Sanctuary Program.

The statement includes projects completed under the 1964 State Beach, Park, Recreational and Historical Facilities Bond Act, the 1970 Recreation and Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Bond Fund, the Bagley Conservation Fund, the State Beach, Park, Recreational and Historical Facilities Bond Act of 1974, the General Fund, the Energy Resources Fund, the Environmental License Plate Fund, the State, Urban and Coastal Park Bond Act of 1976, the 1984 Parklands Fund, the 1984 Fish and Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Bond Act, the California Wildlife, Coastal and Park Land Conservation Act of 1988, Cigarette and Tobacco Products Surtax Fund of 1988, California Wildlife Protection Act of 1990, the Safe, Clean, Reliable Water Supply Act of 1996, the Natural Resources Infrastructure Fund, the Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund, Forest Resources Improvement Fund, the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond, Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection, and Flood Protection Fund, California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund, Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002, Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, and the Wildlife Restoration Fund. In addition to projects completed with the above funding sources, this statement includes tax credits awarded under the Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act of 2000. The tax credits are not reflected in the total amount allocated to projects.

A. Fish Hatchery and Stocking Projects	\$16,006,219.06
B. Fish Habitat Preservation, Development & Improvement.....	40,243,222.41
Reservoir Construction or Improvement	\$ 5,605,699.00
Stream Clearance and Improvement.....	29,995,078.19
Stream Flow Maintenance Dams.....	542,719.86
Marine Habitat	646,619.07
Fish Screens, Ladders and Weir Projects.....	3,453,106.29
C. Fishing Access Projects	52,006,649.26
Coastal and Bay	\$ 4,612,013.11
River and Aqueduct Access.....	16,738,441.93
Lake and Reservoir Access	9,703,429.18
Piers	20,952,765.04
D. Game Farm Projects	146,894.49
E. Wildlife Habitat Acquisition, Development and Improvement.....	1,856,804,979.34
Wildlife Areas (General).....	\$391,060,169.53
Miscellaneous Wildlife Habitat Development	16,007,817.32
Wildlife Areas/Ecological Reserves, (Threatened, Endangered or Unique Habitat)	666,129,687.07
Land Conservation Area	10,051,715.18
Inland Wetlands Conser. Grants & Easements	21,920,497.94

Riparian Habitat Conser. Grants & Easements	62,050,536.49
Other Wildlife Habitat Grants	689,584,555.81
F. Hunting Access Projects	484,898.57
G. Miscellaneous Projects (including leases).....	19,262,099.12
H. Special Project Allocations.....	1,277,118.13
I. Miscellaneous Public Access Projects	38,352,650.80
State Owned	\$1,813,406.19
Grants	36,539,244.61
J. Sales and/or exchanges.....	533,143.07
K. Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act (tax credits awarded) ...	(48,241,234.00)
Statutory plans	(0.00)
Corridors, wetlands, wildlife habitat, streams and riparian habitat	(6,234,658.00)
Agricultural lands	(13,775,640.07)
Water and water rights	(0.00)
State and local parks, open space and archaeological resources	(28,230,935.93)
Total Allocated to Projects.....	\$2,025,117,874.25