

San Jacinto Wildlife Area, Expansion 31, Riverside County

Last updated: 8/13/2008

Project Name: San Jacinto Wildlife Area, Expansion 31, Riverside County **Approving**

Board: Wildlife Conservation Board **Link to Board Meeting and Agenda:**

www.wcb.ca.gov

Agenda Date: August 28, 2008

Agenda Item: 16

County: Riverside

Size: Fee title to one property totaling 87 acres

Bond Section Providing Funding: Public Resources Code Section 75055(c):
Natural Community Conservation Plans

The primary purpose of this acquisition is to protect threatened and endangered species and the acquisition of land to further implement federal, state and local Natural Community Conservation Planning efforts in western Riverside County.

Initial land acquisitions for the San Jacinto Wildlife Area were completed to compensate for wildlife habitat losses resulting from the construction of the State Water Project. As opportunity and circumstance allowed, the Wildlife Conservation Board continued to acquire additional properties. The western boundary of this 9,000 acre wildlife area is contiguous with the Lake Perris State Recreation Area, placing a total of approximately 16,200 acres under public ownership and protection.

The acquisition of the property is important to the San Jacinto Wildlife Area as it will place nearly all of the southwestern shoreline of Mystic Lake under protection through either conservation easement or fee ownership. The wildlife area is also part of the Department of Fish and Game approved Natural Community Conservation Planning efforts in western Riverside County. The permanent protection of this property will contribute to the plan and provide for the protection of habitat, open space and protection for the multiple species that are native to the area.

The upland areas and hills surrounding the lowland floodplain of Mystic Lake are dominated by Riversidian sage scrub. There are areas of intermixed patches of nonnative grasslands found in both the upland and alkali flat areas. There are numerous threatened and endangered plants associated with the Mystic Lake area including the thread-leaved brodiaea, San Jacinto saltbush and spreading navarretia. The wildlife area and adjoining lands support 38 species of amphibians and reptiles. Mammal species are well represented and range from the desert shrew to the southern mule deer. The stephen's kangaroo rat, also threatened and endangered, is a resident mammal of the wildlife area.

Over 240 species of birds have been recorded on or adjacent to the wildlife area since 1982. Twenty-two overwintering raptor species are known to utilize the San Jacinto Valley including the osprey, ferruginous hawk, golden eagle and short-eared owl. The San Jacinto Valley consistently ranks in the top one to two percent in species diversity for the North American Christmas Bird Counts. Historically, the San Jacinto Valley has always been an important southern California wintering and nesting area for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl. There have been three federal or state-listed endangered birds sighted in the wildlife area including the bald eagle, the peregrine falcon and the California brown pelican.

The property will be managed by the Department of Fish and Game as an expansion to the wildlife area.

The property has an appraised fair market value of \$800,000. The property owners have agreed to sell the property at a bargain price of \$650,000.

The purposes of this project to protect threatened and endangered species and the acquisition of land to further implement federal, state and local Natural Community Conservation Planning efforts in western Riverside County. These purposes are consistent with the stated purposes of the funds provided to the Wildlife Conservation Board under Chapter 6, Section 75055(c) to implement or assist in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans and with the general priority characteristics for natural resource protection projects described under Chapter 10, Section 75071(a) Landscape/Habitat Linkages protection.