

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

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SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95811
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NOTICE OF MEETING

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

September 4, 2013

1:00 PM

1/ State Capitol, Room 2040
Sacramento, California 95814

FINAL AGENDA ITEMS

ITEM NO.	PAGE NO.
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* Proposed Consent Calendar

1/ These facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities (more information on page vii)

ITEM NO.		PAGE NO.
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| *7. Leininger and C&R Ranches
Habitat Improvement, CEQA and Design
Tehama County | \$60,000.00 | 11 |
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To consider the allocation for a grant to the Tehama County Resource Conservation District, for a cooperative project with the landowners and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to initiate planning, design, and environmental review on two ranches in Tehama County: the Leininger Ranch and the C&R Ranch, located approximately 10 miles east and 17 miles west of the City of Corning, respectively. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for projects to assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration and wildlife protection. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(4)]

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|---|--------------|----|
| *8. CDFW Land Management Plan
Knoxville Wildlife Area
Napa County | \$172,500.00 | 14 |
|---|--------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to the California Wildlife Foundation for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to complete and deliver a land management plan for the CDFW's Knoxville Wildlife Area located north of Lake Berryessa in Napa County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the preparation of land management plans for properties acquired in fee by the Wildlife Conservation Board. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a)]

- | | | |
|--|--------------|----|
| *9. Puma Canyon, Expansions 3 and 4
San Bernardino County | \$558,000.00 | 16 |
|--|--------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Transition Habitat Conservancy for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Office of Spill Prevention and Response to acquire two separate properties totaling 137± acres, to conserve lower montane chaparral and woodland habitat for the benefit of deer, mountain lion and other wildlife species, located in Puma Canyon on the lower northern slopes of the San Bernardino Mountains, near the community of Pinon Hills in San Bernardino County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat to protect deer and mountain lions. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)]

ITEM NO.			PAGE NO.
*10	Burcham and Wheeler Flat, Expansion 1 (Winter) Mono County	\$225,000.00	20

To consider the fee title acquisition of 75± acres of land as an expansion to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Burcham and Wheeler Flat for the protection of eastern sierra mountain sagebrush scrub areas that provide important habitat for mule deer and the greater sage grouse, located 15 miles northwest of Bridgeport, near the intersection of U.S. 395 and S.R. 108, commonly referred to as Sonora Junction in unincorporated Mono County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat to protect deer and mountain lions. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)]

*11.	Western Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) (2012) - Nelson Riverside County	\$88,000.00	24
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To consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant (Section 6 Grant) and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority); and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board grant to the Authority to acquire in fee 119± acres of land for protection and recovery of threatened and endangered species and expand regional wildlife habitat corridors and linkages located within the Western Riverside County MSHCP, north of the City of Wildomar, in southwestern Riverside County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat that implements or assists in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c)]

ITEM NO.			PAGE NO.
12.	Gray Lodge Wetland Enhancement and Pump Restoration Butte County	\$1,038,000.00	29

To consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to enhance 560± acres of wetland habitat and install a pump that will help supply water to all of CDFW's 9,168-acre Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, located approximately six miles west of the City of Gridley in Butte County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding sources, which allow for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass in the Central Valley [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d) (Proposition 1E), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program]; and for the acquisition, preservation, restoration or establishment of wetland habitat in the Central Valley. [Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Proposition 12), Public Resources Code Section 5096.350(a)(1)(A)]

13.	Dos Rios Riparian Restoration Stanislaus County	\$1,392,000.00	32
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To consider the allocation for a grant to the River Partners for a cooperative project with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Department of Water Resources and others to restore 599± acres of riparian habitat, located at the confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin rivers in Stanislaus County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat and aquatic habitat for salmonids and trout to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E)]

ITEM NO.			PAGE NO.
14.	San Joaquin River, Hidden Valley Ranch Stanislaus County	\$3,010,000.00	36

To consider the allocation for a grant for a cooperative project with the River Partners, Department of Water Resources and the Packard Foundation, to acquire in fee 466± acres of valley floodplain and riverine habitat for protection of threatened and endangered species located approximately 10 miles west of the City of Modesto, just south of the confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin rivers, in Stanislaus County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species, to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass and allow continued agricultural use. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) (Proposition 1E)]

15.	Palo Verde Ecological Reserve, Expansion 3 Riverside County	\$420,000.00	41
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To consider the fee title acquisition of 36± acres of land for the protection of riparian and riverine habitat and a wildlife corridor supporting several threatened and endangered species as an expansion of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Palo Verde Ecological Reserve, located along the Colorado River near the City of Blythe in eastern Riverside County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect unique species, natural communities and rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species and enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Section 2786(b/c) (Proposition 1E)]

ITEM NO.	PAGE NO.
16. San Diego River (Palmer) San Diego County	\$676,000.00 44
<p>To consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the Endangered Habitats League, and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board grant to the Endangered Habitats League to acquire in fee 9± acres of land for the protection of watershed function, wildlife linkages and habitat that will support the continued recovery of the State and federally threatened and endangered species located near the community of Alpine, in central San Diego County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species, to acquire habitat on which unique species or natural communities naturally exist, and to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786 (b/c)]</p>	
17. San Dieguito River Riparian Habitat Restoration San Diego County	\$1,005,000.00 48
<p>To consider the allocation for a grant to the River Partners for a cooperative project with the City of San Diego to restore 100± acres of riparian and oak woodland habitat on the City of San Diego property located just upstream of Lake Hodges, near Escondido in San Diego County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat and aquatic habitat for salmonids and trout to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E)]</p>	
18. Strategic Plan Update	Informational 51

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Persons with disabilities needing reasonable accommodation to participate in public meetings or other CDFW activities are invited to contact the Department's Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator Tina Johnson at (916) 651-1214 or Tina.Johnson@wildlife.ca.gov. Reasonable Accommodation requests for facility and/or meeting accessibility should be received by August 19, 2013. Requests for American Sign Language Interpreters should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event, and requests for Real-Time Captioners at least four weeks prior to the event. These timeframes are to help ensure that the requested accommodation is met.

If a request for an accommodation has been submitted but due to circumstances is no longer needed, please contact the Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator immediately.

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WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

September 4, 2013

1. Roll Call

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS

Charlton H. Bonham, Chair
Director, Department of Fish and Wildlife

Ana Matosantos, Member
Director, Department of Finance

Michael Sutton, Member
President, Fish and Game Commission

JOINT LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Senator Jean Fuller
Senator Fran Pavley
Senator Lois Wolk

Assembly Member Richard Gordon
Assembly Member Anthony Rendon
Assembly Member Das Williams

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

John P. Donnelly

2. Funding Status — Informational

The following funding status depicts Capital Outlay appropriations by year of appropriation and by fund source and fund number.

(a) 2013-14 Wildlife Restoration Fund, (0447)

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

(b) 2013-14 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)

Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$20,663,000.00

(c) 2012-13 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)

Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-35,000.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$20,628,000.00

(d) 2011-12 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)

Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-4,677,213.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$15,985,787.00

(e) 2010-11 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)

Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-15,390,833.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$5,277,167.00

(f) 2009-10 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)

Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-18,293,750.82</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$2,374,249.18

(g) 2008-09 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)
(2012-13 Reappropriation)

Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-15,644,079.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$5,023,921.00

(h) 2007-08 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)
(2011-12 Reappropriation)

Budget Act	\$20,674,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-16,775,217.05</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$3,898,782.95

(i) 2006-07 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)
(2013-14 Reappropriation)

Budget Act	\$20,699,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,437,125.30</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$1,261,874.70

(j) 2004-05 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)

Budget Act	\$646,714.11
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$646,714.11

(k) 1999-00 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and
Coastal Protection Bond Fund, (0005)

Continuously Appropriated [Sec. 5096.350 (a)(1), (2), (4) & (7)]	\$36,100,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-30,729,330.45</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$5,370,669.55

(l) 2001-02 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and
Coastal Protection Fund, (6029)

Continuously Appropriated (Section 5096.650)	\$273,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-237,299,160.58</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$35,700,839.42

- (m) 2002-03 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002, (6031)

Continuously Appropriated (Sections 79565 and 79572), including Chapter 81, Statutes of 2005	\$814,350,000.00
2003-04 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-21,000,000.00
2004-05 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-21,000,000.00
2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-4,000,000.00
2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-3,100,000.00
2006-07 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-17,688,000.00
2007-08 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-5,150,000.00
2008-09 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-1,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-672,990,883.49</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$68,421,116.51

- (n) 2009-10 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051)
(2013-14 Reappropriation)

Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$4,800,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$4,800,000.00

- (o) 2009-10 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051)
(2013-14 Reappropriation)

Chapter 2, Statutes of 2009 (SB 8)	\$15,500,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$15,500,000.00

- (p) 2008-09 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051)
(2011-12 Reappropriation)

Budget Act (NCCP Section 75055(c))	\$25,000,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-7,898,798.50</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$17,101,201.50

- (q) 2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 , (6051)
(2013-14 Appropriation)

Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(1))	1,279,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-1,082,790.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$196,210.00

- (r) 2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2013-14 Appropriation)

Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(2))	\$1,500,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-927,437.48</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$572,562.52

- (s) 2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2013-14 Appropriation)

Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(4))	\$2,368,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-247,874.48</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$2,120,125.52

- (t) 2006-07 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051)

Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055a)	\$164,700,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-86,324,008.50</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$78,375,991.50

Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055(b))	\$123,525,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-96,340,919.03</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$27,184,080.97

RECAP OF FUND BALANCES

Wildlife Restoration Fund (a)	\$1,000,000.00
Habitat Conservation Fund (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i) and (j)	\$75,759,495.94
Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (k)	\$5,370,669.55
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (l)	\$35,700,839.42
Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (m)	\$68,421,116.51
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (n), (o), (p), (q), (r), (s) and (t)	\$145,850,172.01

TOTAL – ALL FUNDS	\$332,102,293.43
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**RECAP OF NATURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT ACT OF
2000**

Chapter 113, Statutes of 2000 and Chapter 715, Statutes of 2004
Tax credits awarded through June 30, 2008 \$48,598,734.00

Chapter 220, Statutes of 2009 (effective January 1, 2010)
Tax credits awarded \$0.00

SUMMARY OF BOND CASH

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

Bond Fund	Authorized GO Bond Proceeds	Expenditures through 07/15/13	Encumbrances through 06/30/13	Cash Balances Includes Encumbrances
Proposition 12	\$12,621,973.31	\$9,241,712.56	\$101,000.00	\$3,279,260.75
Proposition 40	\$91,808,942.78	\$64,290,116.71	\$20,883,563.45	\$6,635,262.62
Proposition 50	\$127,970,436.60	\$58,127,692.31	\$42,272,121.07	\$27,570,623.22
Proposition 84	\$293,413,688.65	\$201,420,073.39	\$33,345,842.03	\$58,647,773.23
Proposition 1E	\$65,710,238.22	\$38,360,556.14	\$9,551,688.43	\$17,797,993.65
Grand Totals	\$591,525,279.56	\$371,440,151.11	\$106,154,214.98	\$113,930,913.47

3. Special Project Planning Account — Informational

The Board has historically used a special project account to provide working funds for staff evaluation (appraisals, engineering, preliminary title reports, etc.) of proposed projects. Upon the Board's approval of a project, all expenditures incurred and recorded in the Special Project Planning Account are transferred to the Board approved project account which then reduces the Special Project Planning Account expenditures. This procedure provides 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 is available to 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.

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

Habitat Conservation Fund.....	\$250,000.00
Wildlife Restoration Fund	\$10,000.00
Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund.....	\$100,000.00
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006	\$150,000.00

4. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4—11)

*5. Approval of Minutes — June 4, 2013

*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.

\$8,746.00 to the **Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund**

\$13,353.00 to the **Habitat Conservation Fund**

\$33,289.00 to the **California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund**

\$38,964.26 to the **Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002**

\$6,752,159.09 to the **Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006**

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

Allensworth Ecological Reserve, Expansion 26, Tulare County

Allocated	\$2,900.00
Expended	<u>-2,900.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Joshua Tree North Linkage - Section 33, San Bernardino County

Allocated	\$695,000.00
Expended	<u>-686,254.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$8,746.00

Total Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund \$8,746.00

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND

Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area, Expansion 13, Yuba County

Allocated	\$2,740,000.00
Expended	<u>-2,737,522.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$2,478.00

Habitat Restoration, Mill Creek Watershed, Del Norte County

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

Ocean Meadows, Santa Barbara County

Allocated	\$910,000.00
Expended	<u>-900,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$10,000.00

Santa Clara River Watershed, Teyton, Ventura County

Allocated	\$1,010,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,009,125.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$875.00

Swiss Ranch Conservation Easement, Expansion 4, Calaveras County

Allocated	\$555,000.00
Expended	<u>-555,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Total Habitat Conservation Fund **\$13,353.00**

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

Black Mountain Preserve, Expansion 4 (Kimble), Fresno County

Allocated	\$1,240,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,233,872.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$6,128.00

Puma Canyon, and Expansions 1 and 2 (Swart, J. Cox, and M&B Cox),
San Bernardino County

Allocated	\$488,000.00
Expended	<u>-471,175.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$16,825.00

San Antonio Valley Ecological Reserve Expansion 1, Santa Clara County

Allocated	\$868,000.00
Expended	<u>-857,664.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$10,336.00

**Total California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe
Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund** **\$33,289.00**

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

Habitat Restoration, Mill Creek Watershed, Del Norte County

Allocated	\$3,020,000.00
Expended	<u>-2,981,035.74</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$38,964.26

Total Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 **\$38,964.26**

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

Campstool Ranch, Calaveras County

Allocated	\$2,761,055.00
Expended	<u>-2,751,294.46</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$9,760.54

Laguna Mountain Skipper, Palomar Mountain (Mendenhall), San Diego County

Allocated	\$15,000.00
Expended	<u>-7,601.45</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$7,398.55

Wild Cherry Canyon, San Luis Obispo County

Allocated	\$6,735,000.00
Expended	<u>-0.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$6,735,000.00

Total Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 **\$6,752,159.09**

- *7. Leininger and C&R Ranches \$60,000.00
Habitat Improvement, CEQA and Design
Tehama County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Tehama County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD), for a cooperative project with the landowners and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to initiate planning, design, and environmental review for potential future habitat improvements on two ranches in Tehama County: the Leininger Ranch and the C&R Ranch, located approximately 10 miles east and 17 miles west of the City of Corning, respectively.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

Leininger Ranch. The 12,000-acre Leininger Ranch consists of three properties located 4.7 miles northeast of Vina off Leininger Road. Deer Creek passes within the northern and western boundaries of the ranch property. The Leininger Ranch is protected with a conservation easement held by The Nature Conservancy.

The Leininger Ranch was originally a part of Leland Stanford's 33,000-acre Vina Ranch. In addition to being currently managed as a cattle ranch, the Leininger Ranch is also used for upland game and waterfowl hunting. A hunting lodge is located on one of the ridge tops, and duck blinds are located adjacent to the large bermed ponds in the southwestern portion of the property.

The ranch contains several natural hydrological features including creeks, vernal pools and swales, and a small groundwater spring. Deer Creek flows through the northern and northwestern boundaries of the ranch property before it reaches its confluence with the Sacramento River, approximately five miles southwest of the ranch property. Deer Creek provides important aquatic habitat for numerous native fish, including anadromous salmonids, as well as invertebrates, plants, and other wildlife species. The ranch also contains several seasonal drainages, including the headwaters of the main branch of Brush Creek, as well as the West and Middle Fork tributaries of Brush Creek. These seasonal drainages provide important temporary aquatic habitat for numerous native plant, invertebrate, and wildlife species.

C&R Ranch. The C&R Ranch is a 330-acre ranch located just east of Paskenta, in Tehama County, California, approximately 22 miles southwest of Red Bluff. The ranch lands are located in the Thomes Creek watershed and include a portion of Thomes Creek at the lower elevations and one unnamed intermittent creek and several ephemeral creeks that flow through the ranch.

Much of the lower-elevation floodplain portion of the ranch was farmed historically which removed native oaks and other woody vegetation. The ranch has been extensively grazed for decades, which has suppressed the recruitment of riparian and other native vegetation.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will consist of environmental review, planning and design for habitat improvements on both ranches.

Leininger Ranch. This grant will include design, permitting, and CEQA documentation necessary to improve two existing stock ponds and five existing year round springs. The design of the stock pond repair will be completed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). TCRCD will be the lead agency for CEQA and permitting on the project.

C&R Ranch. Work includes planning, site assessments, soil analyses, design of habitat restoration, enhancement, and hedgerow planting projects for three phases of wildlife corridor improvements on the ranch. The three phases include three fenced subunits of the wildlife corridor which are associated with an intermittent stream flowing through the center of the property. Phase A would include the downstream reach of the stream and valley terraces; Phase B would include the middle reach of the stream and several ephemeral tributaries in the central portion of the ranch, including an approximately two-acre perennial pond; and Phase C would include the upstream reach of the creek and several ephemeral tributaries in the upstream portion of the ranch.

The project will include the design of approximately 1,600-feet of hedgerow plantings as habitat for wildlife and pollinators. Site assessments will include the excavation and analysis of soil pits to gain information about soil type and subsurface hydrologic conditions. Results of the site assessments will inform designs for woody vegetation, native grass restoration, emergent marsh plantings, waterfowl nesting platforms, pond turtle basking structures, and a bat roosting structure.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Ecological Restoration on Agricultural Lands Program and meets the Program's goal of assisting landowners in developing sustainable wildlife-friendly practices on agricultural property that can co-exist with ongoing operations.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

This project consists of environmental review and planning for future restoration activities on portions of the Leininger and C&R ranches. It is expected that recommended actions from this project on the two ranches may partially be funded through a future Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) proposal. At that time, management of the project will ultimately

be incorporated into wildlife-friendly agricultural practices at each Ranch with TCRCD technical assistance to the landowners throughout the planned 25-year life of that project.

PROJECT FUNDING

<u>Task Descriptions</u>	<u>Contributors</u>			
	<u>NRCS</u>	<u>Landowners</u>	<u>WCB</u>	<u>Total</u>
Project Administration			5,400	\$5,400
Project Design	6,408	1,980	31,000	\$39,388
Permitting and CEQA	4,000		13,700	\$17,700
Project Management			9,900	\$9,900
Totals	\$10,408	\$1,980	\$60,000	\$72,388

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(4). This funding allows for projects to assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration and wildlife protection, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15262, Planning and Feasibility Studies). Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$60,000.00 from Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(4); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

- *8. CDFW Land Management Plan Knoxville Wildlife Area \$172,500.00
Napa County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Wildlife Foundation for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to complete and deliver a land management plan for CDFW's Knoxville Wildlife Area located north of Lake Berryessa, in Napa County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

Knoxville Wildlife Area (KWA) is located in the inner north coast range of California at the northeast end of Napa County about six miles north of Lake Berryessa along the Berryessa-Knoxville Road. KWA comprises over 20,000 acres of oak woodland, grassland, riparian, and chaparral habitat.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The scope of this project is to update the existing KWA land management plan (LMP) by including new land parcels, conducting basic inventories of biological resources on the new parcels, and adopting best management practices to conserve and enhance the wildlife area's natural resources. These wildlife area lands are large and have a diverse assemblage of habitat types and wildlife species. The complexity and length of the LMP will be determined by the property's management requirements.

The LMP is to be prepared according to CDFW guidelines, A Guide and Annotated Outline for Writing Land Management Plans, and other local or federal agency requirements as necessary. The LMP is to be written to fulfill CEQA and CESA requirements. The product will be suitable for CEQA review and approval.

An important part of the planning process for a LMP is inviting public input. This wildlife area is becoming more important to nearby residents as a general recreation and hunting area. The LMP must present to the public CDFW's objectives for managing the wildlife area lands and describe in some detail any potential conflicts with wildlife inherent in allowing free and uncontrolled access to the area.

The scope of work with this agreement will include delivery of a draft approved LMP and related environmental documents no later than two fiscal years from the contract start date.

WCB PROGRAM

Under Proposition 40, Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) specifically received funding to prepare management plans for properties acquired in fee by the WCB.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Cost estimate for the project:	
Plan Update Contracts	\$150,000.00
Grant Administration	22,500.00
Total Amount Requested:	\$172,500.00

WCB is the sole source of funding for the project. Project costs of \$172,500.00 will be for the preparation of the KWA LMP and for the circulation and finalization of the appropriate CEQA documentation for that plan.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a), which provides funding to prepare management plans for properties acquired in fee by the WCB and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15262, Planning and Feasibility Studies). Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed the proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$172,500.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a); authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

- *9. Puma Canyon, Expansions 3 and 4 \$558,000.00
San Bernardino County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Transition Habitat Conservancy (THC) for a cooperative project with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR), to acquire fee title to two separate properties totaling 137± acres, to conserve and protect lower montane chaparral and woodland habitat for the benefit of deer and other wildlife species that are located in the western upper Mojave Desert ecoregion.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject properties (Properties), known as Saylor (±72 ac.) and Tidwell (±65 ac.), are located within Puma Canyon, located approximately five miles south of the community of Pinon Hills, south of State Route 138. At the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) March 2013 meeting, the Board approved the Puma Canyon acquisition and expansions 1 and 2 totaling 124± acres. These properties are located next to and adjoin the Saylor property. The Tidwell property is located approximately 1/8 mile east of this block of properties.

Surrounding land uses are primarily rural/suburban home sites. Puma Canyon provides a habitat link between the southern slopes of the San Gabriel Mountains (that lie within the San Bernardino National Forest), stretching north and connecting with the southwest region of the Mojave Desert. It ranges in elevation from 4,470 to 5,658 feet and contains a unique blend of vegetative communities that only occur at the transition zone between the Mojave Desert and San Gabriel Mountain ecoregions. The general terrain in the subject area is high desert, with large washes and arroyos separated by small undulating hills and ridges that give way to steeper terrain as the Puma Canyon extends up into the San Gabriel Mountains. Pinyon pines, juniper and Joshua tree dominate the landscape and provide important habitat to many desert wildlife species.

The Properties fall within the CDFW's Puma Canyon Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). Puma Canyon plays an important role in maintaining regional landscape connectivity. The main objectives of this CAPP are to conserve and enhance biodiversity, protect threatened vegetative communities along with other rare and important plants and animals and maintain habitat linkages that help protect elevation gradients that allow species to adapt to climate change. This project and CAPP also seek to protect the upper Sheep Creek Wash watershed, infiltration area, and drainage tributary, located east of the Properties. These conserved areas help protect one of the only open space habitat linkages and corridors between the Mojave Desert and San Gabriel Mountains, also providing climate change adaption benefits to wildlife by protecting an elevation gradient between the two habitat areas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Both Properties are covered with natural vegetation consisting of desert shrubs, pinyon pines, junipers, and Joshua trees. The Properties have a series of alternating ridges and canyons running north to south, and the ridge tops afford good views of Victor Valley to the north and east. The Properties provide important habitat for wide-ranging species such as mountain lion, deer, bobcat, Cooper's hawk, golden eagles, and loggerhead shrikes, as well as other special status species such as the arroyo toad, California red-legged frog, coastal horned lizard, and the southwestern willow flycatcher.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being made under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Code Section 1300, et seq.) authorizing the WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with the acquisitions of properties. Under the Program the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife oriented recreation opportunities. These activities are carried out in conjunction with CDFW, which evaluates the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE)/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Properties will be managed and owned by THC. THC will provide stewardship and monitoring. THC expects to raise over \$1,000,000 in other funding in the next three years from foundations, corporations, State and federal grants, memberships and bequests. THC will also consider the potential for future public uses such as self-guided nature trails, hiking, horseback riding, nature viewing, and outdoor educational programs for local schools.

PROJECT FUNDING

The Properties have been appraised as having a combined fair market value of \$553,000.00 and are broken out as follows: Saylor \$310,000.00 (72± ac) and Tidwell \$243,000.00 (65± ac). The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The terms and conditions of the grants between WCB and THC provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all

title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the grantee to encumber the Properties with a conservation easement in favor of the State or another entity approved by the State and seek reimbursement of funds.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$538,000.00
CDFW-OSPR	15,000.00
Total Purchase Price	\$553,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	\$20,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$558,000.00

The funds from CDFW Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) were received from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). These funds come from legal settlements arising from small hazardous waste spills. NFWF administers the funds through OSPR, and both NFWF and OSPR have reviewed and determined the project is eligible for this funding. There are no mitigation related requirements or conditions placed on the property as a result of these funds.

It is estimated that an additional \$20,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related administrative costs, including DGS appraisal review.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a), which allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat and to protect deer and mountain lions.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$558,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) for the grant funding and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

- *10. Burcham and Wheeler Flat, \$225,000.00
Expansion 1 (Winter)
Mono County

This proposal is to consider the fee title acquisition of 75± acres of land as an expansion to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) proposed Burcham and Wheeler Flat Wildlife Area, for the protection of eastern Sierra mountain sagebrush scrub areas that provide important habitat for mule deer and the greater sage grouse.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located approximately 15 miles northwest of Bridgeport, near the intersection of U.S. 395 and S.R. 108, commonly referred to as Sonora Junction. This area falls within the lower western slopes of the Sweetwater Mountain range that straddles the Nevada and California border. To west is the main stem of the Walker River. The Property lies within an approved CDFW Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE). The LAE identifies a number of priority properties within the proposed Burcham and Wheeler Flat Wildlife Area, for protection and conservation of habitat important to the greater sage-grouse, a California Species of Special Concern. The primary habitat is Sierra mountain sagebrush and scrub, which also support deer herds that range and forage in the Sweetwater Mountains and the Walker River watershed.

On March 23, 2010 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) published its 12-month finding(s) for multiple petitions to list the greater sage grouse under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). In these findings, the Service designated greater sage grouse in the Bi-State area of California and Nevada as a distinct population segment (DPS). The Service also found that listing the greater sage grouse Bi-State DPS as threatened or endangered was warranted, but precluded by higher priority listing actions. As a result of these findings, the greater sage grouse Bi-State DPS was identified as both a distinct listing entity separate from greater sage grouse range-wide and a candidate for listing under the ESA. The greater sage grouse Bi-State DPS currently has a listing priority number of 3 (a relatively high priority). A proposed rule regarding listing of the DPS is anticipated in September 2013.

Since 2002, the greater sage grouse Bi-State Local Area Working Group (LAWG) has provided the forum and the catalyst for cooperative sage grouse conservation efforts in the Bi-State area. The LAWG was extremely active during development of the Nevada Governor's 2004 Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Plan for Nevada and Eastern California, and the LAWG continues to be a model for cooperative sage grouse conservation efforts today. The 2004 plan provided the focus for the implementation of multi-jurisdictional sage grouse conservation actions in the Bi-State area until 2012, when the plan was updated and replaced

with the Bi-State Action Plan for Conservation of the Greater Sage-grouse Bi-State Distinct Population Segment.

Other protected lands in close proximity to the Property include the 1,160±-acre CDFW managed original Burcham Flat and Wheeler Flat acquisition, funded and approved by the WCB in 2007. The Burcham Flat and Wheeler Flat managed area is surrounded by Toiyabe National Forest Land. Other CDFW protected lands in close proximity include the West Walker River, Pickel Meadow, and Slinkard-Little Antelope Wildlife Area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is covered with native vegetation consisting of high Sierra sagebrush and scrub rangeland areas, with wet meadow inclusions that provide year-round habitat for a small population of greater sage grouse. This population of greater sage grouse has declined dramatically over the last 20 years due to habitat problems associated with overgrazing, fire suppression, and pinyon juniper encroachment on sagebrush rangelands. The Property also provides migration, holdover, summer range and fawning habitat for the Walker River, Sweetwater Mountains and Mono Lake mule deer herds. Other species likely to benefit from the protection of the Property include the Sierra Nevada red fox, bank swallow, willow flycatcher, western white-tailed hare, American badger, black bear, mountain lion, Townsend's big-eared bat, spotted bat, northern goshawk, bald eagle, blue grouse, and mountain quail.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being made under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Code Section 1300, et seq.) authorizing the WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with the acquisitions of properties. Under the Program the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife oriented recreation opportunities. These activities are carried out in conjunction with CDFW, which evaluates the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE)/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The CDFW estimates that operation and management costs for the Property will be minimal, not exceeding \$5,000.00 per fiscal year, with said costs to be allocated from existing lands and facility management budgets for the northern area of the Inland Deserts Region (Region 6). The primary management objective will be to conserve, protect, and enhance habitat for greater sage grouse and mule deer. Management may include activities such as meadow irrigation, stream bank stabilization, and aspen stand reforestation. The Property has been, and will remain, open to public uses (hunting, nature viewing, hiking, etc.) but camping will be prohibited. Other potential habitat enhancement projects could be undertaken through support and in partnership with other non-profit organizations, such as the California Deer Association and Quail Unlimited.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$210,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). As part of its due diligence, WCB staff will review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds into the escrow account established for the acquisition. This project will also undergo transaction review and approval by DGS, prior to transmitting funding and documents to escrow.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$210,000.00
Total Purchase Price	\$210,000.00
 Other Project-Related Costs	 \$15,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$225,000.00

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

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a), which allows for the acquisition and protection of deer and mountain lion habitat.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as

exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and habitat. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$225,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) for the acquisition funding and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

- *11 Western Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) (2012) - Nelson Riverside County \$88,000.00

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant (Section 6 Grant) and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority); and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to the Authority to acquire in fee 119± acres of land near the City of Wildomar in southwestern Riverside County for the protection of habitat that supports threatened and endangered species; and to increase regional wildlife habitat corridors and linkages located within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan area (Western Riverside County MSHCP).

WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MSHCP

The Western Riverside County MSCHP represents a combined and approved federal Habitat Conservation Plan and California Natural Community Conservation Plan. On August 20, 2012, Authority received a Federal Financial award in the amount of \$4,000,000.00 from the United States Department of Interior – USFWS, Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund – 2012 HCPLA (aka U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant) for the conservation and recovery of both listed and unlisted species within the Western Riverside County MSHCP. The Western Riverside County MSCHP is in its seventh year of implementation with an approved plan to assemble a 500,000-acre reserve area. Within the 500,000 acre reserve, the Authority's goal is to protect 153,000 acres. As of December 6, 2011, with the assistance of WCB, a total of 44,714 acres of habitat have been acquired by Authority using a combination of local, State and federal funding. These projects also assist in fulfilling the California and federal governments' funding and conservation commitments as they relate to this regional planning effort.

Western Riverside County is considered one of the most ecologically important areas in the United States, containing a diversity and abundance of wildlife and plant species and contains the most listed species of any region in California. The Western Riverside County MSHCP represents one of the largest, most complex regional habitat conservation plans in the U.S., covering a total area of 1.2 million acres and 146 species, 29 of which are State or federally listed. Within the plan it identifies six major target acquisition areas that include the Western Core/Linkage, Alkali Playa/Vernal Pool Area, Temecula Creek Watershed, Santa Rosa Plateau, San Timoteo Canyon and B Canyon Area. The proposed federal award will be used to acquire lands identified in the Western Riverside MSCHP that have important benefits for listed species,

and will sustain ecosystem processes that support their habitats. The Authority's property acquisition selection criteria include consideration of the property's biological value, vulnerability to development, and proximity to existing conservation lands.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located one mile east of the I-15 freeway in the northern portion of the City of Wildomar and is more specifically situated on the westerly terminus of Linny Court and Lost Road, which extends north to south about 1,000 feet easterly of the Property. The Property is in an area that has rolling hills to steeper terrain, and is in close proximity to freeways, major surface streets, and suburban and rural development. The immediate area is mostly undeveloped with the exception of a few rural residences located to the east of the Property in low lying areas. The Property is bordered on the west and south by lands currently under the ownership of the Authority and represents the first proposed land acquisition under the approved 2012 USFWS Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant.

The Property is situated in one of the Western Riverside County MSCHP target areas, known as the Western Core/Linkage. This habitat linkage is necessary for maintaining ecological processes in a rapidly developing landscape. The acquisition of the Property will improve the habitat connections in the western portion of the Western Core/Linkage by enhancing the linkage from existing California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) reserves such as the Estell Mountain Ecological Reserve located to the northwest and the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve located to the south. Parcels in this area provide habitat for State and federally listed endangered least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, the State threatened and federally endangered Stephens' kangaroo rat, and the federally threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, quino checkerspot butterfly, and the thread-leaved brodiaea. The connectivity provided by the Western Core/Linkage area is essential in maintaining the genetic viability for the listed and sensitive species being conserved, and provides ecosystem responses to climate change by incorporating elevation gradients that will allow species and vegetation communities to shift upward in elevation.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is an L-shaped parcel zoned by the City of Wildomar as Rural Residential and is designated under the local General Plan as Rural Mountainous. The site is characterized by rolling to steep terrain with elevated hillsides split by a narrow valley that extends from the northeast corner to the center of Property. Vegetation is moderate to heavy over most of the site with numerous boulders and rock out-croppings. The only visible improvements on site are dirt roads and old abandoned water well. Protection of the Property will help support and provide habitat for the

State and federally listed southwestern willow flycatcher and the federally threatened quino checkerspot butterfly and the thread-leaved brodiaea.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.) authorizing WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. Under the Program, the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities. The Property has been reviewed and approved by CDFW under its Natural Community Conservation Plan program, substantiating the biological values of the Property and recommending it for funding. The USFWS grant proposed and accepted for this project has also been reviewed and approved by CDFW as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition grant selection and review process.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be managed by the Authority as part of the Western Riverside County MSHCP reserve system, which serves to provide permanent habitat protection for populations of federal and State-listed endangered and threatened species that occupy the reserve, and to increase regional wildlife habitat cores and linkages that will connect existing habitat reserve areas through Western Riverside County. As part of its obligation under the plan, the Authority retains a Reserve Manager to ensure that management actions are consistent with the plan. The plan provides for the financing and implementation of an endowment for the monitoring and management of the Property in perpetuity. Management costs for parcels acquired under the Western Riverside County MSHCP will be provided by the Authority's operating funds.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$270,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and USFWS. The Property owner has agreed to sell the Property for the approved appraised fair market value of \$270,000.00. The USFWS funds in the amount of \$189,000.00 require a non-federal match in the amount of \$81,000.00 that is being provided by a grant from the WCB. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and USFWS subgrant to the Authority provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title

documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the subgrantee to encumber the Property with a conservation easement in favor of the State or another entity approved by the State and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$ 81,000.00
WCB – subgrant of USFWS funds	189,000.00
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$270,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	\$ 7,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$ 88,000.00

It is estimated that an additional \$7,000.00 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including the DGS appraisal review. The Authority, as project proponent, will fund all other project-related administrative costs for the acquisition, including but not limited to the environmental site assessment, appraisal, survey, escrow, and title insurance costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this acquisition project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$189,000.00 and approve the Agreement to Subgrant these

federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority; allocate \$88,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c) for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

12. Gray Lodge Wetland Enhancement and Pump Restoration Butte County \$1,038,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to enhance 560± acres of wetland habitat and install a pump that will help supply water to all of CDFW's 9,168-acre Gray Lodge Wildlife Area (Wildlife Area), located approximately six miles west of the City of Gridley in Butte County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The project lies within the CDFW's Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, located approximately six miles west of the City of Gridley in Butte County. The Wildlife Area is a mosaic of wetlands, riparian habitat and uplands, supporting many species of wildlife, especially the hundreds of thousands of wintering waterfowl and shorebirds that depend on this site every year. Over the last few years, Gray Lodge Wildlife Area staff worked diligently with many partners, including the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), to successfully complete the construction of a master water delivery system. The new infrastructure has dramatically increased the capability to deliver water supplies with increased efficiency and control to the entire wildlife area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will enhance 560± acres of wetland habitat at Fields 46, 48, 55, 56, 57, and 59 at the Wildlife Area. These ponds have substantial topographic variation and do not have proper drain and fill capabilities. These fields cannot be irrigated efficiently or effectively during the summer to promote moist soil vegetation. The project will improve wetland topography to provide wetland diversity and improve water management, install water control structures, and restore nesting cover. This project will also install a pump in an existing well that was drilled as part of a previous project and will help supply water to the entire 9,200± Wildlife Area. The pump will be located at the upper end of the water distribution system, and water from the well can then be pumped directly into the distribution system and used throughout the entire Wildlife Area. The project will benefit waterfowl and other wetland dependent wildlife by providing wintering and migratory wetland habitat.

The project is located in the Butte Basin, one of nine basins in the Central Valley. The project is consistent with the Central Valley Joint Venture's Implementation Plan (CVJVIP), which identifies annual wetland habitat enhancement goals for each of the nine basins. The CVJVIP calls for 3,362 acres of wetland enhancement per year within the Butte Basin.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Inland Wetland Conservation Program and meets the program's goal of assisting the Central Valley Joint Venture's mission to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands and associated habitats.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The project will be on a portion of CDFW's Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, and management of this project will be incorporated into the existing management of the Wildlife Area. The improved water management capabilities associated with this wetland enhancement will allow CDFW managers to provide improved wetland habitat through more efficient water delivery and drainage, with less staff time.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

	<u>Cost</u>	<u>DU</u>	<u>CDFW</u>	<u>NAWCA</u>	<u>WCB</u>
Earthwork, Site Prep	\$479,298		\$42,040	\$72,833	\$364,425
Water Control Structures, Pump	\$433,985		\$4,814	\$15,300	\$413,871
Plant Establishment	\$16,405		\$3,525		\$12,880
Survey, Design, Project Mgmt & Project Admin	\$256,776	\$36,245	\$21,561	\$20,852	\$178,118
Contingency	\$68,706				\$68,706
Total Project Costs	\$1,255,170	\$36,245	\$71,940	\$108,985	\$1,038,000

Project costs will be for surveys, design, earthwork, water control infrastructure, plant establishment, and project management and administration.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding sources for this project are the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d)(Proposition 1E), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program; and the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Proposition 12), Public Resources Code Section 5096.350(a)(1)(A). These funding sources allow for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetland habitat in the Central Valley and wetland habitats within a floodplain or flood corridor, and are consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 4 of Categorical Exemptions, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15303 as the installation of small new equipment and Section 15304 as a minor alteration to land. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The DFW has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$543,116.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d)(Proposition 1E), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program and \$494,884.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Proposition 12), Public Resources Code Section 5096.350(a)(1)(A); authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

13. Dos Rios Riparian Restoration \$1,392,000.00
Stanislaus County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the River Partners for a cooperative project with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Department of Water Resources and others to restore 599± acres of riparian habitat, located at the confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin rivers in Stanislaus County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The project site is located in the floodplain at the confluence of two major Central Valley rivers, the Tuolumne and the San Joaquin. Historically, the project area contained a mosaic of floodplain sloughs, oxbow wetlands, oak groves and diverse shrublands and woodlands. Based on historic images, the project area was almost completely cleared and leveled for farming between 1937 and 1945, although the project area had been grazed and partially cleared even prior to 1937. In 1959, the US Army Corps of Engineers completed construction or improvements of the historic levee to meet the standards set in the San Joaquin River Flood Control Project. Since that time, flood flows have never breached the flood control levees, thus the project area has been disconnected from the rivers for over 50 years. All that remains today at Dos Rios Ranch are small remnant patches of the native herbaceous communities including mugwort, gumplant, creeping wildrye and basket sedge, and few areas containing gallery valley oak woodlands and willow scrub. Dos Rios Ranch is immediately adjacent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) 7,000-acre San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge (SJRNWR).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Almost all of the project area has been converted to agricultural uses. Currently, the project area within the Dos Rios Ranch contains no remnant native vegetation. Steenstrup Slough flows from south to north along the eastern edge of the project area. This slough follows its historic alignment, but is completely disconnected from the rivers and has been used as an irrigation supply and drain feature for decades. For this reason, it has almost entirely lost its native marsh vegetation due to its banks being cleared of vegetation, and its bed having been dredged to maintain conveyance. When the levee was constructed, the Steenstrup Slough of today is only influenced by river conditions through groundwater seepage during high water years. Currently, lands within the project area are farmed in corn-winter wheat rotation, or alfalfa. On the far eastern edge of the project area, lands naturally slope upwards at the edge of the historic floodplain, providing the potential for flood refugia for riparian-obligate mammals.

This project would restore and enhance native habitats to 599± acres of riparian habitat, ranging from 4,550 to 6,220 feet wide behind the levees of the rivers and including the banks of Steenstrup Slough. Restored habitats will provide a suitable reintroduction site for riparian brush rabbit, as well as expanded habitat areas for riparian woodrat, least Bell's vireo, and valley elderberry longhorn beetle.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program and meets the program's goal of increasing riparian habitat across California by implementing riparian habitat restoration and enhancement projects.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

During the restoration phase, Dos Rios Ranch will be held in fee title by River Partners, and maintenance will be the sole responsibility of River Partners. Anticipated maintenance during the 4-year restoration phase includes weed control, irrigation, road and levee maintenance, and access control. River Partners will maintain the property, pursuant to the grant agreement between River Partners and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), until all phases are completed and the property is transferred to an appropriate resource management agency.

Following completion of the restoration for the entire Dos Rios Ranch project (Phases 1-4), River Partners will give the property (full fee title with encumbrances) to a resource management agency for perpetual management as a wildlife preserve. While the ultimate agency is still undetermined, it is anticipated that the FWS will take ownership of a majority of the property for inclusion in the SJRNWR. The San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which includes the SJRNWR, has recently received approval from the Director of the FWS to plan and permit a Refuge Boundary Expansion that would include the entirety of Dos Rios Ranch. This expansion is expected to be approved by Congress prior to the conclusion of the restoration of this project. Additional potential agency managers include California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and/or the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The DPR has identified Dos Rios Ranch in its long-range visioning documents for the Central Valley, foreseeing campgrounds and hiking trails across the restored ranch. River Partners has begun preliminary planning in support of the potential use of a portion of the high-ground at Dos Rios Ranch as a public recreation facility; however, plans will be finalized in the coming years, and likely only within Field 20, which is not included in this phase.

Upon transfer of the restored Dos Rios Ranch to the agency or agencies listed above, long term maintenance will be the responsibility of the landowner agency (or agencies). During the restoration phase, River

Partners will work with these agencies and project partners to ensure minimal maintenance will be required to promote floodplain reconnection, maintain flood structures (such as flap gates or breaches), and maintain the habitat values targeted by this project once ownership is transferred. As over 2,500 acres of similar restoration work is underway or completed across the river at the SJRNWR, long-term maintenance needs can be readily predicted and planned for similar and adjacent future projects.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Dos Rios Restoration Phase 1	NRCS	DWR	CVPIA	WCB	River Partners	Total
Project Planning and Monitoring	-	\$312,495	\$207,388	\$109,000	-	\$628,926
Project Establishment	\$1,760,504	\$300,000	\$315,577	\$1,157,000	-	\$3,532,543
Project Administration	-	\$62,417	\$52,491	126,000	\$362,457	\$603,916
Total Project Cost	\$1,760,504	\$674,912	\$575,456	\$1,392,000	\$362,457	\$4,765,386

WCB funding will provide for:

- earthwork to construct elevated refugia and wetland swales
- installation of drip irrigation to service the elevated refugia
- planting native vegetation on elevated refugia
- project monitoring and management
- weed control and irrigation
- education and community outreach

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E), which allows for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass, and are consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The CDFW has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15304, Class 4, as a minor alteration to land, water and/or vegetation which does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,392,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

14. San Joaquin River, Hidden Valley Ranch \$3,010,000.00
Stanislaus County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant for a cooperative project with River Partners and the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to acquire in fee 466± acres of valley floodplain and riverine habitat. The proposed project will help expand on contiguous protected lands, providing important habitat for a number of listed species that reside and migrate along the San Joaquin and Tuolumne river corridors.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located along the east bank of the San Joaquin River, just upstream from the confluence with the Tuolumne River, west of Shiloh Road and approximately eight miles southwest of the City of Modesto. Surrounding land uses are primarily agricultural and rural residential. Much of the available open farmland in this area has been developed with permanent plantings, including almond, walnut and peach orchards and vineyards. There are also a number of farms growing row and field crops, such as corn, alfalfa, and wheat in many cases to provide livestock feed, as well as small to moderate sized dairies with irrigated pastures, and poultry farms.

Immediately adjacent and north of the Property is the 1,603-acre Dos Rios Ranch that was acquired and funded in part by a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), approved at its February 2012 meeting. A restoration grant for the Dos Rios property is also being proposed for consideration at this Board meeting. North of the Tuolumne River and west of the San Joaquin River, across from the Property, is the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge that encompasses approximately 7,000 acres of riparian woodlands, wetlands, and grasslands. This area combined with the Property and the Dos Rios property will create a large 8,500-acre protected habitat landscape hosting a diversity of wildlife native to California's Central Valley, as well as providing shaded river and floodplain refugia for fisheries in the San Joaquin and Tuolumne rivers. The location of this area is also in the middle of the Pacific Flyway and provides foraging and resting area for migrating waterfowl and other bird species.

Further upstream on the San Joaquin River is a large stretch of land targeted for restoration under a collaboration of federal, State and conservation groups. This project will entail a comprehensive long term effort to restore flows to the San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to the confluence of the Merced River and will restore a self-sustaining Chinook salmon fishery in the river while reducing or avoiding adverse water supply impacts from restoration flows.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is zoned "Exclusive Agriculture" – A-2-40 zoning. Current uses include a dairy farm along with irrigated field crops, including corn, winter wheat and alfalfa that provide feed supplies for the dairy operation. Improvements on the site include the related dairy infrastructure and facilities, two single family residences, a duplex unit, and other miscellaneous irrigation, road and site improvements.

The shape of the Property is irregular with its western border being the San Joaquin River. Its topography is fairly level with the majority falling within a historical Flood Zone. Central Valley Flood Protection managed and maintained levee runs through the western portion of the Property, providing flood protection for the lower farmed areas and infrastructure located in the lower areas of the historical floodplain east of the levee. However, even these lower areas have been prone to flooding during major flood events that have occurred in the past on the Tuolumne and San Joaquin rivers. As a result, there is a significant amount of flood plain and riparian habitat found on the Property, within and outside the levee.

Types of wildlife habitat found on the Property include riparian corridors, wetlands and riverine. The row and field crops also tend to support wildlife as well. Wildlife friendly crops such as alfalfa are utilized by Swainson's hawks, and harvested corn fields are frequented by large numbers of Aleutian snow geese. The presence of river and irrigation water also helps to support a diversity and abundance of native trees, shrubs and grasses, supporting populations of bird and other wildlife not otherwise seen on other nearby privately owned farmlands.

The Property hosts populations of a number of special-status species including the federally and State endangered least Bell's vireo, the State endangered willow flycatcher, greater sandhill crane and Swainson's hawk and the federally endangered valley elderberry longhorn beetle. Other important species include the northern harrier, American white pelican and yellow-breasted chat. Located on the other side of the San Joaquin River within the San Joaquin River National Refuge is a population of the federally and State endangered riparian brush rabbit, which from time to time have been known to occupy the Property. With the brush rabbit restoration improvements being planned for the Dos Rios property, there is high probability that reestablishment of a larger viable population of brush rabbits could occur shortly in the future on the combined protected areas of the Property and Dos Rios property.

WCB PROGRAM

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

authorizing the WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property, and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. Under the program the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities. These activities are carried out in conjunction with the CDFW, which evaluates the biological values of property through development of a Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be managed by River Partners, a California nonprofit corporation established in May 1998. River Partners, after acquiring the property, intends to discontinue the dairy operations but will continue with farming the Property using wildlife friendly practices, until potential future long-term habitat and restoration activities can be fully planned and developed. These practices include coordinating planting, irrigation and harvesting timelines to coincide with the needs of migratory wildlife that frequent the Property. Revenues from the farming activities will be used to offset management and monitoring costs as required under the terms of the WCB Grant Agreement. River Partners also proposes to enhance the wildlife habitat on the Property by removing non-native plants along the non-farmed riverbanks and restoring the banks with native and/or compatible plants.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$9,300,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The Property owner has agreed to sell the Property for the approved appraised fair market value, \$9,300,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can seek specific performance of the grant or require the grantee to transfer the conservation easement to WCB or another qualified holder.

The Property is subject to a Conservation Land Contract (Williamson Act). Following the transfer of title to River Partners, the Property will continue

with historical agricultural field crop operations and comply with the terms of the Williamson Act Contract.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$3,000,000.00
Dept. of Water Resources, FESSRO Program	\$3,900,000.00
Dept. of Water Resources, Flood Corridor Protection Program	<u>\$2,400,000.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$9,300,000.00
 Other Project-Related Costs	 \$ 10,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$3,010,000.00

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

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) (Proposition 1E), which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species, to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass and allow continued agricultural use.

A portion of funding for this project will be contributed by the DRW through its FloodSAFE Environmental Stewardship and Statewide Resources Office (FESSRO) Program. The FESSRO Program contribution requires that a portion of the property be eligible for advanced mitigation towards the Central Valley Flood Control Project; whereas, WCB's Grant Agreement states that WCB's contribution to the project cannot be used for purposes of mitigation. To reconcile these two requirements, the WCB's grant describes a process where in the event the Property is used for mitigation, the amount of land eligible for mitigation would be based on a pro-rata share of the FESSRO contribution. Specifically, FESSRO funding accounts for approximately 42% of the total purchase price; therefore, FESSRO could designate up to 42% of the Property acreage, or approximately 196 acres, for acquisition-related mitigation purposes. The remaining 58%, or 270 acres, of the property would not be eligible for acquisition-related mitigation. The terms of the WCB grant also require that WCB must first review and approve any future plans to use, convey or designate any of the Property for mitigation purposes.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats, and Section 15304, Class 4, as a minor alteration in the condition of land, water and/or vegetation which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,010,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) (Proposition 1E) for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

15. Palo Verde Ecological Reserve, Expansion 3 \$420,000.00
Riverside County

This proposal is to consider the acquisition of fee title to 36± acres of land adjacent to the Colorado River as an expansion of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Palo Verde Ecological Reserve (PVER) in Riverside County. This property contains native riparian habitat and the acreage will assist in implementation of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP). This acquisition will also protect a wildlife corridor for unique, rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species within a floodplain area.

CDFW, along with other State, federal, tribal, and private entities is a primary stakeholder and participant in developing and implementing the LCR MSCP. The protection of designated properties within the LCR MSCP helps to provide long term species and habitat protection along the Lower Colorado River basin for 56 covered species. Prominent species that would benefit from the acquisition of targeted properties include the southwestern willow flycatcher, yellow-billed cuckoo, elf owl, gila woodpecker, razorback sucker, and desert tortoise.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located in the Palo Verde Valley just south of the city limits of Blythe in southeastern Riverside County. Since 2002, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB/Board) has approved the acquisition of approximately 1,600 acres of land in the Palo Verde Valley to establish the PVER. The eastern boundary of the reserve is adjacent to the Colorado River and the western boundary is adjacent to active agricultural fields. The Palo Verde Valley is part of the Colorado Desert physiographic province, commonly referred to as the "low desert." The Colorado River province is bounded on the east by the Colorado River, on the south by the Mexican border, and on the west and north by the Transverse Ranges.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is a vacant, irregularly shaped parcel that contours around what was, at one time, part of the channel of the Colorado River and is located in a primarily agricultural area. The Property is identified as a Tier 1 Property in the Palo Verde Valley-Colorado River Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) developed by CDFW. Certain criteria were used to establish acquisition priorities for properties in the CAPP. Tier 1 is the highest priority. Tier 1 properties consist of those properties directly adjacent to, or in close proximity to the current Colorado River channel. They were also chosen as the highest priority for protection based upon their level of development threat, location relative to the river, current or historical importance as riparian habitat, and potential for restoration when considering water rights and existing water delivery infrastructure.

The Property has historically been used for agricultural purposes. Approximately 5 acres of the Property is an existing natural wildlife corridor that is legally restricted to open space. Habitat found in the wildlife corridor may provide important breeding and migratory habitat for the southwest willow flycatcher, elf owls, and yellow billed cuckoos as well as a linkage between the desert and river for many wildlife species.

WCB PROGRAM

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CDFW will manage and maintain the Property in its current undeveloped condition consistent with the objectives of the LCR MSCP. Partnership funding available under the LCR MSCP will be used to pay all water tolls and management costs associated with the Property. Unless absolutely necessary for species and habitat protection or public safety, it is CDFW's policy that the PVER shall be open to the public for wildlife related use. Boating, swimming and picnicking are among the most popular outdoor activities in the general area. Where appropriate, game bird hunting is also allowed. To include this property in the PVER, appropriate action and environmental compliance will be undertaken by CDFW and the California Fish and Game Commission in the future.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$390,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The Property owner has agreed to sell the Property for the fair market value of \$390,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed acquisition provide that staff of the WCB review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. Once approved by the Board, the transaction will also be reviewed and approved by DGS.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$390,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	\$30,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$420,000.00

It is estimated that an additional \$30,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related administrative costs, including DGS environmental, appraisal and transaction review costs, escrow and title insurance costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 17), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) (Proposition 1E) that allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect natural communities and rare, endangered, threatened, or fully protected species.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The proposed acquisition is 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 lands for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$420,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) (Proposition 1E) for the acquisition and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

16. San Diego River (Palmer) \$676,000.00
San Diego County

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the Endangered Habitats League (EHL), and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to EHL to acquire in fee 9± acres of land for the protection of watershed function, wildlife linkages and habitat that will support the continued recovery of the State and federally endangered least Bell's vireo, the southwestern willow flycatcher, and the federally threatened California gnatcatcher.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) fronts upon Alpine Boulevard in the northwest portion of the unincorporated East County community of Alpine, just south of the Interstate 8 freeway near the Peutz Valley Road junction. The City of El Cajon is approximately 13 miles westerly and the central business district of San Diego is about 30 miles to the west. The Property is situated within the San Diego River watershed. The San Diego River and its tributaries are one of the few areas in the region still supporting the least Bell's vireo at the time of its listing in 1986.

The Property is identified for protection within a Multi-Species Conservation Plan (MSCP), a comprehensive federal, State, and local habitat conservation planning program that addresses multiple species habitat needs and the preservation of natural communities for an approximate 900 square mile area in southwestern San Diego County. The Property is one in a composite of properties that make up the "bottle neck", an important and narrow habitat corridor, identified in the MSCP Crestridge/Harbinson Canyon wildlife linkage. To date, there are over 4,000 acres of protected lands within the MSCP being managed for natural resource conservation purposes.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is at or near the grade of Alpine Boulevard and slopes gently downward westerly into an ephemeral blue-line stream identified as Chocolate Creek, located within the upper San Diego River watershed. The Property contains a split level detached single-family residence that was built in 1980 with 3,173 square feet of living area and an attached 594 square foot two-car garage. Potential future uses for the building include modifications so it could be utilized as a hub for resource land management and monitoring activities within the MSCP Crestridge/Harbinson Canyon area. Additionally, the facility could be made available to conservation partner organizations with minor retrofits to provide meeting and workshop space, work stations for part-time interns and volunteers, and storage for supplies, archived materials, and storage for management and monitoring equipment.

The biological resources onsite include oak woodland, riparian, and coastal sage scrub habitat. The Property also provides suitable foraging and dispersal habitat for the State and federally endangered least Bell's vireo and the southwestern willow flycatcher. The federally threatened coastal California gnatcatcher is known to occur in this area of San Diego County and the site provides suitable breeding and foraging habitat. The Property is also a vital wildlife linkage due to its proximity to the only undercrossing of Interstate 8 within this segment of the MSCP.

WCB PROGRAM

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be cooperatively managed by ELC with the Endangered Habitats Conservancy (EHC). Currently EHC owns and/or manages approximately 4,000 acres of MSCP land within the Crestridge/Harbinson Canyon MSCP Management Unit. Additionally, State and federal wildlife agencies have asked EHC to consider accepting responsibility for additional 1,400± acres of conserved habitat lands over the next 18 months. The dwelling on the Property is centrally located to many of these lands and could be utilized to execute the many monitoring and management activities in the area. Partner conservation organizations and agencies that may utilize the building for conservation related activities include U.S. Geological Survey for monitoring, The Earth Discovery Institute for environmental education, CFWS, San Diego Management and Monitoring Program, Urban Corps of San Diego, Back Country Land Trust, and the Conservation Biology Institute for research. Given the small size of the parcel, the potential use of the building for storage of potentially expensive equipment for monitoring and management and the proximity to the highway, it is likely that any potential for future public access that might be provided would be through guided tours in conjunction with environmental studies.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$810,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and USFWS. The Property owner has agreed to sell the Property for the fair market value of \$810,000.00. The USFWS funds require a non-federal match that is proposed to be provided by the proposed WCB grant. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and the USFWS subgrant to EHL provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the landowner to encumber the Property with a conservation easement in favor of WCB or another approved holder and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$666,000.00
WCB – Subgrant of USFWS funds	144,000.00
TOTAL purchase price	\$810,000.00
 Other project related costs	 \$ 10,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$676,000.00

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

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) that allows for the acquisition of habitat containing natural communities and for the protection of rare, endangered, threatened, or fully protected species.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The proposed acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303, Class 3, as a conversion of a small structure, Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of lands for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$676,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; accept the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$144,000.00 and the subgrant of these funds to the Endangered Habitats League; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

17. San Dieguito River Riparian Habitat Restoration \$1,005,000.00
San Diego County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to River Partners for a cooperative project with the City of San Diego to restore 100± acres of riparian and oak woodland habitat on City of San Diego property located just upstream of Lake Hodges, near Escondido in San Diego County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

Located approximately 24 miles north of downtown San Diego and east of the Interstate 15 freeway, the San Dieguito River Habitat Restoration project area starts at the east end of Lake Hodges Reservoir and continues up the San Pasqual Valley in an easterly direction about one mile. The project site includes approximately 100 acres of active and passive riparian habitat restoration.

The watershed extends through a diverse array of habitats from its eastern headwaters in the Volcan Mountain to its outlet at the San Dieguito Lagoon and the Pacific Ocean. There are several important natural areas within the watershed that sustain a number of threatened and endangered species. Among these are the 55-mile long, 80,000 acre San Dieguito River Park, the 150-acre San Dieguito Lagoon, and five water storage reservoirs, the largest of which are Lake Hodges, Lake Sutherland, and Lake Poway.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Historically, the habitat at the project site suffered from unauthorized recreational use (off-road vehicles), fires, and run-off from adjacent agricultural operations. Efforts by the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department to restrict unauthorized access to the site and work with adjacent landowners to reduce run-off have had a positive impact over the past 10+ years. However, the project site continues to be a flat, previously-leveled field that is dominated by non-native grasses and forbs.

River Partners will restore habitat along the north floodplain and bank of the San Dieguito River. The 100-acre site will be approximately 0.75 river miles long, by approximately 400 yards wide on the north side of the river. The project is situated along the main channel and secondary channels of the San Dieguito River and will greatly benefit from habitat restoration activities. The restored habitat types will include but not be limited to southern coast live oak riparian forest and southern riparian forest. The project considered in this proposal will become the first phase in developing this combined 1,050 acre habitat restoration corridor within the San Dieguito River Valley.

Twenty-one animal species covered by the San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) have been detected in the Lake

Hodges/San Pasqual Valley Open Space area or in its immediate vicinity. These species include arroyo toad, San Diego horned lizard, orange-throated whiptail, Canada goose, bald eagle, peregrine falcon, northern harrier, tricolored blackbird, southwestern willow flycatcher, least Bell's vireo, rufous-crowned sparrow, California gnatcatcher, western bluebird, white-faced ibis, mountain lion, and mule deer. The National Audubon Society and American Bird Conservancy have recognized Lake Hodges and the upland habitat around it as a globally important bird area, the first site in California to receive this distinction.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program and meets the program's goal of increasing riparian habitat across California by implementing riparian habitat restoration and enhancement projects.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

During the four-year construction period, native seedlings will be installed in the field and operations and maintenance activities at the site will begin. River Partners' site work will include ongoing removal of invasive species, irrigation installation, vegetation mowing, herbicide applications, and replanting as necessary. Monitoring and reporting activities will continue through late June 2017 to assure that the plants are successfully established, four years after the start of the restoration. After project implementation is complete, long term management of the project area will be undertaken by the City of San Diego pursuant to the grant between the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and River Partners and consistent with the City of San Diego Subarea Plan of the San Diego MSCP.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

	WCB	River Partners	City of San Diego	Total
Project Development	\$913,605	\$17,621	\$477,000	\$1,408,226
Project Administration	\$91,395	\$2,379	\$40,200	\$133,974
Total	\$1,005,000	\$20,000	\$517,200	\$1,542,200

The project will be collaboration between the WCB, the City of San Diego, and River Partners. WCB's project partners will be responsible for the following components:

1. River Partners will plan and implement the project over a four year period and will remove invasive species, prepare the soil, install the irrigation system, purchase and install plants, provide for operation and management of the restored habitat, and undertake monitoring and reporting activities.

2. The City of San Diego, as landowner, will make the project site available to River Partners, acquire all necessary permits, and maintain the habitat over a 25 year period (as per the agreement with WCB). The City will also provide irrigation water at no cost from one of its wells located in or around the project area or directly from the aqueduct that passes through the property, which provides water to the City of San Diego.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E), which allows for the acquisition, restoration, or enhancement of riparian habitat to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15304, Class 4, as a minor alteration to land, water and/or vegetation which does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,005,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

18. Strategic Plan Update

Informational

Staff will provide an update and highlight work completed during the Wildlife Conservation Board Strategic Planning workshop held on August 12, 2013.