

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

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www.wcb.ca.gov

NOTICE OF MEETING

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

February 20, 2014
10:00 AM
1/ State Capitol, Room 112
Sacramento, California 95814

FINAL AGENDA ITEMS

ITEM NO.	PAGE NO.
1. Roll Call	1
2. Funding Status — Informational	2
3. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4—10)	6
*4. Approval of Minutes — November 21, 2013	6
*5. Recovery of Funds	7

* Proposed Consent Calendar

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

ITEM NO.	PAGE NO.
*6. Star Bend Setback Levee Sutter County	\$0.00 11

To consider the acceptance of CDFW of an access easement across 0.22+/- acres of from the Levee District One of Sutter County to reestablish public access to the CDFW Feather River Wildlife Area, O'Connor Lakes Unit that was temporarily severed due to the construction of new setback levee along the Feather River, located approximately 10 miles south of Yuba City, in Sutter County

*7. San Joaquin River Bypass Riparian Restoration Merced County	\$204,000.00 14
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To consider the allocation for a grant to the National Audubon Society DBA Audubon California, for a cooperative project with the Landowner, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Center for Land-based Learning to restore and enhance ±77 acres of riparian habitat on privately-owned property adjacent to the Pick-Anderson Bypass of the San Joaquin River, approximately seven miles southeast of the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge and 14 miles northeast of the City of Los Banos in San Joaquin County. 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)]

*8. San Joaquin River Parkway, Islewood Golf Course Drinking Water, Feasibility Study Fresno County	\$20,000.00 18
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To consider the allocation for a grant to San Joaquin River Conservancy for a project to determine the feasibility of supplying drinking water to the San Joaquin River Conservancy's Islewood Golf Course property, located within the City of Fresno in Fresno County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of land and water resources located within the boundaries of the San Joaquin River Conservancy. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5)]

ITEM NO.	PAGE NO.
*9. Allensworth Ecological Reserve, Expansion 28 Tulare County	\$0.00 21

To consider the acquisition of 7+/- acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the protection of habitat supporting the San Joaquin kit fox and other rare species found within the Allensworth Ecological Reserve, to enhance habitat linkages and connectivity, as well as provide for future wildlife oriented public use opportunities, located near the city of Earlimart, west of State Route 99, in Tulare County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source. All of the funding for this project will be reimbursed from the California Department of Corrections Statewide Electric Fence Project mitigation fund assigned to CDFW.

*10. Carrizo Canyon Ecological Reserve, Expansion 1, Suzanne Adams Trust Donation Riverside County	\$10,000.00 24
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To consider the acceptance of a donation from the Trust of Suzanne Adams of 100 +/- acres of land in fee title, on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, as an expansion to the Carrizo Canyon Ecological Reserve, consisting of inland high desert, mountainous habitat supporting big horn sheep, and providing habitat connectivity, located southeast of the City of Palm Desert, on the lower eastern slopes of the San Jacinto Mountains in Riverside County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the acquisition of habitat for protection of deer and mountain lions. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Section 2786(b/c)]

11. Strawberry Creek Riparian Restoration Humboldt County	\$253,000.00 27
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To consider the allocation for a grant to the Pacific Coast Fish, Wildlife and Wetlands Association for a cooperative project with the Redwood National Park and the Fisheries Restoration Grant Program to restore approximately 1,600 linear feet of riparian habitat for coho salmon and steelhead trout on Strawberry Creek, located approximately 1.5 miles west of Orick in Humboldt 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)]

ITEM NO.		PAGE NO.
12.	Cow Creek Conservation Area, Expansion 3, Triple B Ranch Shasta County	\$650,000.00 31

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Shasta Land Trust (SLT) to acquire a conservation easement over 600 +/- acres of land, for protection of rangeland, riparian, floodplain and riverine habitat and providing habitat connectivity with the adjoining protected lands referred to as the Cow Creek Conservation Area, located north of State Highway 44 about 10 miles east of the City of Redding in Shasta County. The proposed funding source for this project is the WCB's Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), 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.

13.	Usal Forest Conservation Easement Transfer Mendocino County	\$0.00 35
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To consider the assignment of a conservation easement by the Conservation Fund to CALFIRE over 49,500 +/- acres in Mendocino County pursuant to the California Forest Legacy Program Act of 2007.

14.	Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area Little Dry Creek Habitat Restoration Butte County	\$515,000.00 38
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To consider the allocation for a grant to California Waterfowl Association for a cooperative project with North American Wetlands Conservation Council to restore 534 acres of wetlands, uplands and cereal grain habitat) at the Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area, Little Dry Creek Unit, and enhance an additional 200 acres of wetlands on an adjacent privately owned property protected in perpetuity through a CDFW conservation easement, all located seventeen miles southwest of Oroville in Butte County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows 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]

ITEM NO.		PAGE NO.
15.	Yolo County HCP/NCCP Development, Phase II Yolo County	\$700,000.00 42

To consider the allocation for a grant to Yolo Natural Heritage Program Joint Powers Agency to complete a second draft of and finalize an EIR/EIS for a Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) covering the entire County of Yolo. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for grants that implement or assist in the establishment of NCCPs in and around the Sacramento – San Joaquin Delta. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c)(SB8)]

16.	Breuner Marsh Wetland Restoration Contra Costa County	\$1,000,000.00 45
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To consider the allocation for a grant to the East Bay Regional Park District for a cooperative project with the State Coastal Conservancy and others to restore ±164 acres of wetland habitat at Breuner Marsh, located at Point Pinole Regional Shoreline five miles north of the city of Richmond in Contra Costa County. The proposed funding source for this project allows for the restoration of wetlands in the San Francisco Bay area [Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Bond Fund of 2002 (Proposition P50), Section 795729(c)].

17.	East Contra Costa County NCCP/HCP (Anna Smith) Contra Costa County	\$2,424,200.00 49
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To consider a Wildlife Conservation Board grant to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy (ECCCHC) and the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Planning Acquisition grant and the approval to sub-grant these federal funds to the (ECCCHC) for a cooperative project with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) to acquire 960± acres of land for the protection and preservation of existing regional wildlife linkages, including grassland and oak woodland savannah habitat areas within the East Contra Costa County Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan, located in the Diablo Mountain Range, west of the City of Brentwood in Contra Costa County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat for areas in and around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta that assist 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.
18.	Blue Oak Ranch Reserve Facility Improvements Santa Clara County	\$4,252,000.00 53

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Regents of the University of California to construct new staff housing and storage facilities, enhance a campground, improve existing structures for visiting researchers and upgrade roads and other infrastructure at the Blue Oak Ranch Reserve, located approximately 9 miles east of the City of San Jose in Santa Clara County. The proposed funding source for this project provides for grants to the University of California for the Natural Reserve System for the construction and development of facilities that will be used for research and training to improve the management of natural lands and the preservation of California's wildlife resources. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 84), Section 75055 (b)(3)].

19.	Round Valley Pine Creek Unit Inyo County	\$1,674,250.00 56
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To consider the acquisition of 100± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the protection of important deer winter range, wildlife corridors and riparian habitat, located 10 miles north of Bishop in the unincorporated community of Rovana in Inyo 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. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)]

20.	Sawmill Pebble Plain Ecological Preserve San Bernardino County	\$2,015,000.00 60
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To consider the allocation for a grant to the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust to acquire 166+/- acres of very rare and endangered pebble plain habitat, supporting a wide variety of endemic plant species, located just south of Big Bear Lake, in the San Bernardino Mountains, in San Bernardino County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source (Proposition 40, Section 5096.650 - statewide) that allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat to protect rare and endangered species, wildlife corridors and significant natural landscapes and ecosystems, such as old growth redwoods, oak woodlands and other significant habitat areas.

ITEM NO.		PAGE NO.
21.	Trabuco Creek Fish Passage Physical Modeling Orange County	\$338,000.00 64
	<p>To consider the allocation for a grant to Trout Unlimited for a cooperative project with the Fisheries Restoration Grant Program to construct a physical model of the proposed fish passage structure to determine the physical parameters necessary to provide passage for steelhead trout while providing flood conveyance and sediment transport on Trabuco Creek, located in San Juan Capistrano in Orange County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, protection and restoration of coastal wetlands and other wetlands connected and proximate to such coastal wetlands and upland areas adjacent and proximate to such coastal wetlands. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)]</p>	
22.	San Felipe Valley Wildlife Area, Expansion 5 (Thompson) San Diego County	\$230,000.00 67
	<p>To consider the acquisition in fee of 174+/- acres of land as an expansion to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's San Felipe Valley Wildlife Area for the protection of habitat supporting the state and federally endangered least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher and to enhance habitat linkages and connectivity, located near the community of Warner Springs, in northeastern 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. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)]</p>	
23.	Appraisal Reviews	Informational 70
24.	Strategic Plan Update	Information/Ongoing 72

PERSONS WITH DISABILITES

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 November 1, 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

February 20, 2014

1. Roll Call

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS

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

Michael Cohen, 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>-1,000,000.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$0.00
(b)	2013-14 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-5,402,936.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$15,260,064.00
(c)	2012-13 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-1,518,717.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$19,144,283.00
(d)	2011-12 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-10,280,242.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$10,382,758.00
(e)	2010-11 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-14,839,355.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$5,828,645.00
(f)	2009-10 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-18,325,750.82</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$2,342,249.18

(g)	2008-09 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2012-13 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-15,647,079.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$5,020,921.00
(h)	2007-08 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2011-12 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,674,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-18,826,933.45</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$1,847,066.55
(i)	2006-07 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,699,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,797,399.32</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$901,600.68
(j)	2004-05 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,577,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,962,032.89</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$614,967.11
(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>-31,224,215.01</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$4,875,784.99
(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>-237,238,256.94</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$35,761,743.06

(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>-674,051,919.23</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$67,360,080.77

(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>-25,000.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$4,775,000.00

(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>-4,871,875.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$10,628,125.00

(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>-8,594,048.50</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$16,405,951.50

(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>-1,073,806.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$205,194.00

(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>-909,398.48</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$590,601.52
(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>-293,236.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$2,074,764.00
(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>-86,356,697.96</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$78,343,302.04
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055(b))	\$123,525,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-80,285,083.48</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$43,239,916.52

RECAP OF FUND BALANCES

Wildlife Restoration Fund (a)	\$0.00
Habitat Conservation Fund (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i) and (j)	\$61,342,554.52
Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (k)	\$4,875,784.99
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (l)	\$35,761,743.06
Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (m)	\$67,360,080.77
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (n), (o), (p), (q), (r),(s) and (t)	\$156,262,854.58
TOTAL – ALL FUNDS	\$325,603,017.92

**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 01/22/14	Encumbrances through 12/31/13	Cash Balances Includes Encumbrances
Proposition 12	\$12,621,973.31	\$9,242,883.90	\$497,884.00	\$2,881,205.41
Proposition 40	\$91,808,942.78	\$69,066,893.71	\$16,410,216.03	\$6,331,833.04
Proposition 50	\$164,644,999.96	\$59,900,978.50	\$41,732,606.07	\$63,011,415.39
Proposition 84	\$293,413,688.65	\$218,066,719.36	\$26,548,023.19	\$48,798,946.10
Proposition 1E	\$65,725,202.07	\$44,151,855.63	\$16,034,193.46	\$5,539,152.98
Grand Totals	\$628,214,806.77	\$400,429,331.10	\$101,222,922.75	\$126,562,552.92

3. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4-10)

*4. Approval of Minutes — November 21, 2013

*5. Recovery of Funds

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

- \$0.00** to the **Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund**
- \$46,761.00** to the **Habitat Conservation Fund**
- \$0.00** to the **Wildlife Restoration Fund**
- \$6,350.00** to the **California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund**
- \$8,222.00** to the **Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002**
- \$101,262.00** 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

El Dorado Ranch, El Dorado and Amador Counties

Allocated	\$965,483.00
Expended	<u>-965,483.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Total Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund \$0.00

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND

Arrastre Canyon, Los Angeles County

Allocated	\$125,000.00
Expended	<u>-125,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Conaway Ranch Conservation Easements (GGS,SH and TriCB), Yolo County

Allocated	\$4,035,000.00
Expended	<u>-4,035,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	0.00

Garden Bar Preserve, Nevada County

Allocated	\$252,000.00
Expended	<u>-244,016.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$7,984.00

Lassen Foothills, Expansion 8 (Lower Deer Creek Falls), Tehama County

Allocated	\$1,100,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,088,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$12,000.00

San Diego River (Palmer), San Diego County

Allocated	\$676,000.00
Expended	<u>-666,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$10,000.00

San Joaquin River, Hidden Valley Ranch, Stanislaus County

Allocated	\$3,010,000.00
Expended	<u>-3,005,339.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$4,661.00

Yuba Highlands Conservation Easement - Phase II, Yuba County

Allocated	\$1,104,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,091,884.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$12,116.00

Total Habitat Conservation Fund **\$46,761.00**

WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND

Arrastre Canyon, Los Angeles County

Allocated	\$350,000.00
Expended	<u>-350,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Total Wildlife Restoration Fund **\$0.00**

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

Conaway Ranch Conservation Easements (GGS,SH and TriCB), Yolo
County

Allocated	\$3,800,000.00
Expended	<u>-3,800,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

El Dorado Ranch, El Dorado and Amador Counties

Allocated	\$2,034,517.00
Expended	<u>-2,034,517.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Garden Bar Preserve, Nevada County

Allocated	\$1,200,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,200,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Mackerricher State Park (Sec.6-2008 RLA), Mendocino County

Allocated	\$15,000.00
Expended	<u>-8,650.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$6,350.00

Total California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund \$6,350.00

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

Arrastre Canyon, Los Angeles County

Allocated	\$135,000.00
Expended	<u>-126,778.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$8,222.00

Total Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 \$8,222.00

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

Arcata Community Forest - Humphry, Humboldt County

Allocated	\$190,000.00
Expended	<u>-184,425.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$5,575.00

San Diego County MSCP/HCPA 2009 (Kemerko), San Diego County

Allocated	\$578,750.00
Expended	<u>-572,814.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$5,936.00

San Joaquin Multi-Species Conservation Plan (2007), (2008), (2009) San Joaquin and Contra Costa Counties

Allocated	\$90,000.00
Expended	<u>-13,588.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$76,412.00

San Joaquin Multi-Species Conservation Plan (2008)-Thomas North, Contra Costa County

Allocated	\$393,755.00
Expended	<u>-389,755.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$4,000.00

Upper Mission Creek / Big Morongo Canyon Conservation Area, Expansion 1, Riverside County

Allocated	\$20,000.00
Expended	<u>10,661.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$9,339.00

Total Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 **\$101,262.00**

- *6. Star Bend Setback Levee \$0.00
Sutter County

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a public access easement (Easement) over 0.22+/- acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) from Levee District One (LD One) of Sutter County. The Easement is needed to reestablish access from Star Bend road to the CDFW Feather River Wildlife Area, O'Connor Lakes Unit that was temporarily severed due to the construction of a new setback levee along the Feather River.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The Easement is located at the terminus of Star Bend road, a public road located south of Yuba City, on the west side of the Feather River, just east of Highway 99, in Sutter County. In the past, access from Star Bend road provided public and CDFW operational access to CDFW's O'Conner Lakes Unit, part of the 2,500 +/- acre CDFW Feather River Wildlife Area (FRWLA).

The FRWLA spans land located within and adjacent to the Feather River floodplain, beginning just south of Yuba City and extending south along the river to the Sutter Bypass. The FRWLA is home to a host of plant and animal species, and maintains extensive riparian, floodplain, wetland, and riverine habitat areas. There are a variety of public uses allowed and managed by CDFW within the FRWLA including hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, and bird watching.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In order to provide improved flood protection along the west bank of the Feather River, south of Yuba City, a new setback levee was recently constructed. Prior to construction of the setback levee, Star Bend road terminated at the location of the old levee where there was a gravel parking area and gate providing public pedestrian and CDFW operational access to the adjacent CDFW O'Conner Lake Unit. The setback levee project relocated the terminus of Star Bend road and the levee approximately 300 yards to the west of the levee's original location, on property owned by LD One. This effectively severed legal access from the new terminus of Star Bend road to the CDFW's O'Conner Lakes Unit.

The proposed Easement will reconnect legal access from the new Star Bend road terminus, over the levee, across LD One property, to CDFW's O'Conner Lakes Unit. As part of the project, gravel parking area and gate will be constructed at the new terminus of Star Bend road along with a gravel driveway connecting Star Bend road to an existing unpaved road on the O'Conner Lakes Unit. The Easement will allow CDFW vehicular access and public pedestrian access to CDFW's property, similar to what existed prior to construction of the new setback levee.

AUTHORITY PROGRAM

Granting of the proposed Easement is being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Land Acquisition Program. The Land Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, *et seq.*) and the WCB is authorized to transact real property or rights in real property on behalf of the CDFW. Section 1348(c) of the Fish and Game Code authorizes the WCB to acquire interests in real property on behalf of CDFW.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The proposed Easement continues existing access and use to CDFW's O'Conner Lakes Unit. There are no additional lands being acquired or opened up to public use provided by this project. The project does not create any additional management responsibilities or costs to CDFW.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$0.00
Total Purchase Price	\$0.00
Other Project-Related Costs	<u>\$0.00</u>
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$0.00

LD One will cover all related administrative costs associated with the transfer and recording of the Easement.

FUNDING SOURCE

There is no funding source for this project.

CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW

The Levee District One of Sutter County, as lead agency, completed the Environmental Impact Report for the Feather River Setback Levee Project at Star Bend (SCH No. 2006052087) pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff considered the Environmental Impact Report and has prepared proposed, written findings as a responsible agency documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal and findings by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; 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.

- *7. San Joaquin River Bypass Riparian Restoration \$204,000.00
Merced County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the National Audubon Society DBA Audubon California, for a cooperative project with the landowner, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the Center for Land-based Learning to restore and enhance ±77 acres of riparian habitat on privately-owned property adjacent to the Pick-Anderson Bypass of the San Joaquin River, approximately seven miles southeast of the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge and 14 miles northeast of the City of Los Banos in San Joaquin County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The proposed project site is located on property owned by the Bowles Farming Company (Property) in the heart of an ecologically significant area known as the Grasslands, a mosaic of wetlands and agricultural lands farmed using wildlife-friendly practices. The ±77-acre project site is near three protected wetland complexes: seven miles southeast of the FWS's San Luis National Wildlife Refuge, four miles south of the FWS's Merced National Wildlife Area, and seven miles east of the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Los Banos Wildlife Area. The lands immediately surrounding the project site are farmed with a variety of row crops. Bowles Farming Company is currently growing tomatoes, alfalfa, and corn.

The project is located within and adjacent to the Pick-Anderson Bypass (Bypass), which is a water delivery channel that parallels the San Joaquin River as it passes through the Property on its way to the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge. The four-mile long channel is a remnant of an old slough that passes through the Property and is one of a network of historic off-river waterways. When the Bypass was constructed, levees were built on either side of the slough to contain flood waters and the slough was partially straightened. The flood-abating effects of the Bypass were negligible and attempts to divert water from the San Joaquin River were eventually halted. However, the channel was used and continues to be used to deliver water for irrigation. The Bypass currently flows during flood events, and throughout the summer as an irrigation conduit.

The Bypass has remnants of the once extensive riparian habitat associated with the San Joaquin River. These habitats are now almost non-existent on the San Joaquin River itself, especially in this reach. As such, the proposed project has the potential to result in a significant increase in riparian habitat on the San Joaquin River watershed. Due to its relation to the State and federally protected wetland habitats discussed above and the site's ability to support a healthy riparian community, this project has unusually high ecological potential for this region.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Most of California's Central Valley floodplain and river forests have been lost and what is left continues to be severely degraded by agricultural development, urbanization and hydrological modifications. The consequences of these changes include increased erosion from unstable stream banks and canals as well as introduction of agricultural runoff from adjacent fields. Large scale loss of riparian habitat in the Central Valley has also had major impacts on riparian bird populations, with severe population declines for many species, including important conservation targets such as Swainson's Hawk, Least Bell's Vireo, and Yellow Warbler.

The goal of this project is to restore riparian habitat along those sections of the Bypass on the Property that have been degraded by past disturbances and enhance the riparian habitat that remains. The habitat along the Bypass is a mix of mature fairly intact riparian habitat, degraded riparian scrub, and previously farmed edges. The total size of the restoration site is ±77 acres. Approximately 47 acres of the site have little or no existing riparian habitat, and will be restored to mature riparian forest. Restoration practices on the remaining ±30 acres of remnant degraded riparian habitat will include weed control, and the planting of native grasses and forbs. Bowles Farming Company, working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff, has initiated weed control activities in the native habitat sites at the Property. The project area is approximately four miles long, and the average width of the restored riparian habitat will be 100 feet on each side of the Pick-Anderson Bypass, for a total of 200 feet wide.

Completion of the project will benefit populations of native pollinators and an array of migratory songbirds that once depended on the San Joaquin River riparian corridor. The habitat on the river no longer exists; therefore, this project will provide the habitat and migratory corridor once provided by the river. Increases in habitat complexity associated with the project also hold the potential to benefit the federally threatened Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle. Elderberries are well established along the project site, but these beetles do better in a mix of elderberries and native riparian forest. In addition to restoration of native habitat and wildlife corridors, the project will help improve degraded water quality and sediment runoff by establishing native grasses, sedges, and rushes along the Bypass.

The project is expected to serve as an excellent regional example of successful implementation of conservation projects on a working agricultural landscape. Throughout the restoration process, and with the permission of the landowner, Audubon and FWS will bring interested parties—funders, neighbors, landowners, agency staff, local government officials -- to the project site to experience on-the-ground restoration implementation. Audubon and USFWS staff will work with the Center for Land-Based Learning (CLBL) and their Student and Landowner Education

and Watershed Stewardship (SLEWS) Academy to implement hands-on restoration education programs for high school students on the Property and provide training opportunities for the East Merced, Grasslands, and San Luis Resource Conservation Districts to participate in the planning, installation, and maintenance of the site.

Finally, Point Blue Conservation Science will conduct avian population monitoring at the site in coordination with Audubon California to determine the avian response to the restoration effort.

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

The project will be located on private land owned by the Bowles Farming Company, and management of this project will be incorporated into wildlife-friendly agricultural practices on the Property. Audubon California and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff will provide technical assistance to Bowles Farming Company through the twenty-five-year project life. The Bowles Farming Company will be responsible for management activities, pursuant to terms of the Grant Agreement and habitat management plan, to ensure the successful establishment and maintenance of the restored riparian habitat. If at any time during the life of the project, the landowner does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires the Grantee to refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding for the project is as follows:

Task Descriptions	WCB	Audubon	Land owner	Other partners	Total
Project Management	\$35,000	\$13,000	\$1,500	\$12,000	\$61,500
Restoration	\$107,546	\$0	\$8,207	\$60,419	\$176,172
Education Program	\$53,501			\$27,510	\$81,011
Avian Monitoring				\$20,648	\$20,648
Contingency 2.5%	\$7,953			\$0	\$7,953
<u>Total</u>	\$204,000	\$13,000	\$9,707	\$120,577	\$347,284

Additional partners include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, East Merced Resource

Conservation District, the Center for Land-Based Learning, and Point Blue Conservation Science.

Project costs will be for site preparation; weed control application; native shrub and forb installation; irrigation systems; site maintenance; and project planning, management and administration.

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), which 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.

CEQA AND DFG REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 4 of the Categorical Exemptions, California Code of Regulations, Title 4, 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 CDFW 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 \$204,000.00 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 Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

- *8. San Joaquin River Parkway,
Islewood Golf Course Drinking Water, Feasibility Study \$20,000.00
Fresno County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to San Joaquin River Conservancy for a project to determine the feasibility of supplying drinking water to the San Joaquin River Conservancy's (Conservancy) Islewood Golf Course property, located within the City of Fresno in Fresno County.

LOCATION

The San Joaquin River Parkway is defined by state law as approximately 5,900 acres on both sides of a twenty-two mile long reach of the San Joaquin River between Friant Dam in the east and State Route 99 to the west, in Fresno and Madera Counties (Public Resources Code Section 32510). The Conservancy was created in 1992 to preserve and enhance the San Joaquin River's extraordinary biological diversity, protect its valued cultural and natural resources, and provide educational and recreational opportunities to local communities. The Conservancy's mission includes providing public access and restoring habitat within the Parkway.

Islewood Golf Course, a leased facility on the Conservancy's Liddell property, is located within the City of Fresno, approximately one mile upstream of the railroad bridge across the San Joaquin River, and three miles above the Highway 99 bridge. It lies adjacent to the Millburn Unit of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's San Joaquin River Ecological Reserve.

The subject site is used for a small golf operation consistent with the Parkway Master Plan, and in the future is expected to be improved with developed trails, river access, and non-motorized boating facilities, and picnicking areas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project will complete all studies necessary to secure a non-community water system permit from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

The CDPH has provided notice to the Conservancy, as landowner, that it must secure a permit for the domestic water well at Islewood Golf Course. The permit application requires first that the applicant determine the feasibility of connecting to the nearby municipal water system. The City of Fresno water system has a 14-inch pipeline potentially available for a connection at the end of Milburn Avenue, approximately one-quarter mile from the golf shop. If that connection proves to be infeasible, the Conservancy must apply for a water system permit. The application requires a technical assessment of the well and water system, and an

evaluation of the capacity of the Conservancy to properly manage, monitor, and finance the system. The current lessee operates the golf course and operates two wells: one for irrigation, and one serving the sinks, faucets, and toilets. The lessee performs all necessary monitoring. The lessee does not provide food service, although that might be possible someday if an adequate domestic water supply can be developed.

The current lease extends until December 31, 2030, but the Conservancy has the option of buying out the lease after July 1, 2017.

The Conservancy Board has recommended that the Conservancy perform the analyses to ensure the drinking water is safe, in compliance with regulations, and cost-effectively provided. This is important now and more so if the site is expanded to include public use trails and river access. If a connection to the municipal water system is proven to be feasible, it is expected that the WCB will be requested to authorize bond funds to construct the connection.

The development of the feasibility report will consist of:

- Preparing a base map
- Conducting a site visit to confirm existing conditions
- Evaluating the existing well and system
- Determining the City of Fresno's requirements for a connection, Wastewater service, and fire protection
- Evaluating an extension of the City of Fresno's water system to site
- Preparing cost estimates for both options
- Preparing a report to discuss and recommend a preferred alternative

The work would be performed by a qualified engineering consultant secured in compliance with state contracting requirements.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project is being considered through the Public Access Program and meets the program's goal of providing public access for hunting, fishing, or other wildlife-oriented recreation statewide. Funds were allocated to the WCB within California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2002 (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code section 5096.650(b)(5), which provides for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of land and water resources located within the boundaries of the San Joaquin River Conservancy and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Should this report identify a feasible alternative, and if that project is funded and constructed, the Conservancy will be responsible for its long-term management and maintenance.

PROJECT FUNDING

The WCB is the sole funder of this project as outlined below:

<i>Project Task</i>	<i>WCB Funding Request</i>
Feasibility report	\$8,500
Prepare Permit Application	\$3,000
Prepare Technical, Managerial, and Financial Requirements Report, if required	\$5,000
Analytical testing of the water quality and well yield	\$1,000
Contingency	\$2,500
<i>TOTAL</i>	\$20,000

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2002 (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code section 5096.650(b)(5), which allows for acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of land and water resources located within the boundaries of the San Joaquin River Conservancy, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

CEQA REVIEW AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The Conservancy’s Board approved this proposal on November 20, 2013, and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15262) as a feasibility and planning study for possible future actions. 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 \$20,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a)(5); 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.

- *9. Allensworth Ecological Reserve, Expansion 28 \$0.00
Tulare County

This proposal is to consider the acquisition of 7+/- acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the protection of habitat supporting the San Joaquin kit fox and other rare species found within the Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Allensworth Ecological Reserve (Reserve), to enhance habitat linkages and connectivity, as well as provide for future wildlife oriented public use opportunities. The funding for this project will be paid directly from the California Department of Corrections Statewide Electric Fence Project mitigation fund assigned to CDFW. This project was initially proposed and withdrawn for consideration at the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB or Board) November 2013 meeting, because the Board desired staff research whether all project costs were reimbursable through the California Department of Corrections Statewide Electric Fence Project mitigation fund.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located northwest of the City of Delano, southwest of the City of Pixley, west of State Route 99, near the community of Earlimart in Tulare County. The Property lies in an area where portions of the Reserve are comprised of small parcels typified as open land, which are sparsely vegetated and dominated by grassland and valley sink areas. Much of surrounding areas outside the Reserve have been, or are currently being, converted to extensive agricultural uses including alfalfa, grapes, or orchard use. Located west of the Reserve is the Colonel Allensworth State Park. To the north are the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Pixley National Wildlife Refuge, and to the southwest is the USFWS Kern National Wildlife Refuge.

Over the last 15 years, the WCB has approved projects to help acquire and protect nearly 3,000 acres of land in and around the Reserve. The valley sink and saltbush scrub plant communities found at the Reserve represent some of the highest quality examples of these plant communities in the San Joaquin Valley. There are also a number of vernal pools found within the Reserve, supporting vernal pool fairy shrimp.

The Reserve is important to the survival and recovery of several endangered or sensitive species such as the fully protected blunt-nosed leopard lizard, the State threatened and federally endangered San Joaquin kit fox, the State and federally endangered Tipton kangaroo rat and San Joaquin pocket mouse; the State threatened San Joaquin antelope squirrel and the federally threatened Hoppings blister beetle. Other rare and important species that either reside at or frequent the Reserve include badger, greater Sandhill crane, merlin, Swainson's hawk, and the western pond turtle.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is a rectangular 7± acre parcel, with fairly level to slightly undulating topography. It is currently zoned for agricultural use and is being utilized as pastureland. The dominant vegetation is native grass. Once acquired, the Property will be managed as part of the Reserve, expanding open space and habitat areas for wildlife species. The acquisition of the site will also help improve habitat connectivity between the Reserve and the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge located to the north.

WCB PROGRAM

This project is being proposed under 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 the WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of the CDFW, grant funds to other government 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 acquires 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 Land Acquisition Evaluation/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (LAE/CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property proposed for acquisition represents a nominal addition to the Reserve and can be readily absorbed into existing CDFW operations. CDFW, as fee title owner of the Property, will be able to manage and monitor the Property within its existing budget.

TERMS

The Property owners have agreed to sell the Property for its appraised fair market value of \$4,000.00, which has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The terms and conditions of the proposed acquisition 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.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Total Purchase Price	\$4,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	<u>\$3,500.00</u>
Total Project Costs	\$7,500.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$ 0.00

It is estimated that \$3,500.00 will be needed to cover internal project-related expenses, including DGS appraisal review costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

All of project related costs will be paid directly from the California Department of Corrections Statewide Electric Fence Project mitigation fund assigned to CDFW. These mitigation funds were made available to CDFW to offset the impacts to valley floor habitat associated with electric fences constructed around correctional facilities in the San Joaquin Valley. The CDFW and the WCB have both analyzed and determined the purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source.

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 wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and habitat, 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; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

- *10. Carrizo Canyon Ecological Reserve, Expansion 1,
Suzanne Adams Trust Donation \$5,000.00
Riverside County

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a donation from the Trust of Suzanne Adams of 100 +/- acres of land in fee title, on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), as an expansion to the Carrizo Canyon Ecological Reserve (Reserve), consisting of inland high desert, mountainous habitat which supports big horn sheep and provides habitat connectivity.

LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES

The Property is located approximately 8 miles south of the town of Palm Desert, in the Santa Rosa mountains, north of state highway (Hwy 74) that runs east from the Coachella Valley across and over the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto mountains, in central Riverside County. Portions of the property provide panoramic views of the Coachella Valley to the east. Just southwest and higher up in the mountains from the Property is the Pinyon Crest development, a private subdivided residential mountain community with some 200 residential lots which represents the type of habitat fragmentation that can occur when these areas are subdivided and developed.

CDFW currently oversees the adjacent Carrizo Canyon Ecological Reserve located east of the Property and located to the north is a 640± acre Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property. Checker boarding the surrounding area are numerous other BLM properties totaling over 200,000 acres. The donation will help enhance wildlife migration corridors through the Santa Rosa and adjacent San Jacinto Mountains and buffer habitat areas from encroachment from neighboring development.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property contains steep, arid mountainous and canyon valley terrain, consisting mostly of desert scrub and chaparral habitat. Unusual plant assemblages are also well represented in the desert fan palm oasis woodland found on the canyon floor of the Property. This area is home to the largest herd of Peninsular bighorn sheep, numbering around 200 animals, which is a federally and state-listed endangered species. Additional species known to inhabit the area include golden eagles, redtail hawks, mule deer, mountain lions, bobcats, Great Plains toads, western rattlesnakes, and the federal and state listed endangered desert slender salamander.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed donation is considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Land Acquisition Program with the support and recommendation from CDFW. 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 Fish and Game Code section 1348, the Board may also authorize the acquisition of property on behalf of CDFW.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Given the Property's location adjacent to the Carrizo Canyon Ecological Reserve, additional management costs for staffing will be minimal. Public access to the Reserve currently provides for low-impact recreational activities, including hunting, hiking, bird watching, and photography. Under the terms of the Suzanne Adams Trust, an additional \$25,000.00 will be provided to CDFW to help with management costs.

TERMS

The Property has been donated to the CDFW through the last will and testament of Suzanne Adams and is now being administered by her estate trust. WCB, in conjunction with the Department of General Services, conducted site visits to the Property, whereas DGS environmental staff reviewed the Property and determined there were no noted environmental concerns or risks with CDFW accepting title to the Property. WCB staff will review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for title transfer, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to acceptance and transfer of the donated fee title from the estate of Suzanne Adams. The Property has an appraised fair market value of \$ 80,000. The Department of Finance (DOF) must approve all donations of property to the CDFW, which also requires an initial review by DGS.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$ 0.00
TOTAL Easement Price	\$ 0.00
Other Project-Related Costs	<u>\$5,000.00</u>
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$5,000.00

It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including environmental assessment, transaction review, and escrow and title insurance costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c), that allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat to protect 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 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 \$5,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, (Proposition 117), Section 2786(b/c) 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. Strawberry Creek Riparian Restoration \$253,000.00
Humboldt County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Pacific Coast Fish, Wildlife and Wetlands Association (PCFWWA) for a cooperative project with the Redwood National Park (RNP) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Fisheries Restoration Grant Program (FRGP) to restore approximately 1,600 linear feet of riparian habitat for Coho salmon and steelhead trout on Strawberry Creek, located approximately 1.5 miles west of Orick in Humboldt County.

LOCATION

The project site is located on the low gradient reach of Strawberry Creek within RNP, approximately 1.5 west of the City of Orick in Humboldt County. The project area is on the floodplain approximately 1.2 miles upstream of the confluence with Redwood Creek's South Slough and 2 miles upstream of the mouth of Redwood Creek. Historically, the project site was cleared of riparian forest and the stream was realigned from its historic bed when the property was a privately-owned ranch. Now this area is part of RNP and set aside in perpetuity for conservation.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The PCFWWA, in collaboration with RNP and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), through the FRGP, is proposing to restore habitat for anadromous salmonids, including the State- and federally-listed threatened Coho salmon and federally-listed threatened steelhead trout, in Strawberry Creek, a tributary to Redwood Creek estuary in northwestern Humboldt County.

Strawberry Creek, a low gradient tributary of the Redwood Creek estuary, once supported a productive coastal cutthroat trout fishery and healthy populations of Coho salmon and steelhead. By the mid-1950s, a large portion of the Orick valley floor had been converted to agricultural use. Strawberry Creek was straightened and channelized, and adjacent forested wetlands were cleared and drained. Stream alteration created conditions favoring invasive grasses, which filled in the stream channel and reduced aquatic habitat. The ditch-like configuration of the creek and lack of riparian vegetation greatly reduced salmonid habitat quality in Strawberry Creek. The grass-filled channel blocks fish passage, decreases water quality by reducing dissolved oxygen and raises water levels, which aggravate flooding on adjacent lands.

Flowing directly into the estuary of Redwood Creek, Strawberry Creek is critical for providing much needed refugia and winter rearing habitat for salmonids. The CDFW's Recovery Strategy for California Coho Salmon identified lower portions of the Redwood Creek watershed, which includes the lower portions of Strawberry Creek, as having the highest restoration

potential in the Redwood Creek watershed. The estuary has been significantly impaired following construction of flood control levees in the late 1960s that caused major physical changes to lower Redwood Creek, including loss of riparian vegetation and restructuring of the estuary. Levee construction largely disconnected Redwood Creek and its estuary from off-channel over-wintering rearing habitat that is critical for Coho salmon survival and recovery.

The project will restore about 2.2 acres of wetland and riparian habitats adjacent to Strawberry Creek. It entails construction of about 1,600 linear feet of stream channel as a wetland slough channel and construction of smaller side channels extending into the surrounding wetland area. The slough channels and side channels will increase habitat complexity and provide off-channel refugia. Large wood habitat structures will be installed within the wetland channels to provide cover habitat for salmonids and other aquatic organisms. A 25-foot wide riparian vegetation corridor, totaling about 2 acres, will be planted along each side of the 1,600 foot restored channel and will be composed of densely planted Sitka spruce, red alder, and live willow cuttings.

Four stream crossing sites on the upslope abandoned roads require treatment to protect the downstream channel restoration efforts. The stream crossings will be decommissioned and excavated using CDFW protocols, saving a conservatively estimated 775 cubic yards of sediment from delivery into Strawberry Creek. Work will include temporary access for culvert installation, installing boulder weirs and boulder steps, excavation for culvert installation, and installing gravel for roadway reconstruction.

If this grant is approved, stream channel realignment work is expected to begin in summer of 2014. In conjunction with this excavation, the adjacent streamside reed canary grass will be grubbed using heavy equipment to remove the grass and their roots. To lessen re-invasion and competition from the fast growing reed canary grass, the area will be mulched using cardboard and burlap overlain with shredded redwood bark as a weed barrier.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and meets the program's goals of native fisheries restoration, restoration of wetlands that fall outside the jurisdiction of the Inland Wetland Conservation Program such as coastal, tidal, or fresh water habitats, and in-stream restoration projects including removal of fish passage barriers and other obstructions.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

A restoration planning report was completed for the entire Strawberry Creek, extending from the South Slough estuary upstream 9,000 feet to the upper reaches of the watershed within RNP. The report evaluated the hydraulic, hydrologic, topographic, geomorphic and biological characteristics of Lower Strawberry Creek. It also provided recommendations for restoring self-sustaining stream channels and wetlands within Strawberry Creek with suitable fish habitat and access, water quality and biological productivity to support non-natal rearing of salmonids. Implementation of this plan is occurring throughout the watershed in a phased, prioritized approach. Biological surveys for salmonids in Strawberry Creek within and downstream of the project have been on-going since 2008 and will continue during and after project implementation. Cultural resource surveys that were required for CEQA compliance have been completed.

The PCFWWA has agreed, pursuant to the grant agreement, to ensure that the National Parks Service (NPS) will maintain the site as part of the RNP for the 25-year life of the project. If at any time during the life of the project, the RNP does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that the PCFWWA refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

Task	FRGP	NPS	WCB	Total
Project Management/Permitting	\$101,990	\$67,990	\$38,000	\$207,980
Channel and Wetland Reconfiguration	\$106,616	\$94,670	\$169,300	\$370,586
Riparian Vegetation Restoration	\$89,010	\$0.00	\$45,700	\$134,710
TOTAL	\$297,616	\$162,660	\$253,000	\$713,276

Project costs will be for project construction management and permitting; erosion and sediment control; earthwork; acquisition and placement of log structures; culvert acquisition and installation; installation of boulder weirs and boulder steps; installation of gravel for roadway reconstruction; weed removal; and planting of riparian vegetation.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f), which provides funding for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian and aquatic habitats for salmonids and trout and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

As Lead Agency, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration and prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file a Notice of Determination 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 adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$253,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f); 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.

12. Cow Creek Conservation Area,
Expansion 3, Triple B Ranch \$640,000.00
Shasta County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Shasta Land Trust (SLT) to acquire a conservation easement over 600 +/- acres of land (Property) located in Shasta County, to protect rangeland, riparian, floodplain and riverine habitat and provide habitat connectivity with the adjoining protected lands referred to as the Cow Creek Conservation Area.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The Property is a privately owned rangeland parcel located in the Cascade Range foothills, north of State Highway 44 about 15 miles east of the City of Redding in Shasta County. The Property is more specifically located on South Cow Creek Road, east of Millville and Palo Cedro. The Property has been operated as ranch, grazed and farmed, since the 1860's and is bisected by two creeks, Old Cow Creek and South Cow Creek. Each creek runs through the Property in an east to west direction and ultimately both creeks flow to the Sacramento River via Cow Creek. Current land uses in the area include agriculture, recreation, residential and protected natural resources.

The Property is listed within the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Cow Creek Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) as a priority property for protection. The Plan encompasses the Cow Creek watershed, comprised mainly of foothill areas that support expansive oak woodlands, riparian and stream corridors and grassland areas. The WCB refers to this area as the Cow Creek Conservation Area and has funded several major conservation easement acquisitions within the Cow Creek Conservation Area, including Cow Creek Ranch totaling about 5,000 acres, the Hathaway Ranch totaling about 6,600 acres and the JS Ranch totaling nearly 6,000 acres. The SLT also holds the approximately 5,000 acre Rickert Brothers Ranch conservation easement, which is also located within the Cow Creek Conservation Area. With the purchase of the proposed conservation easement, the total protected lands in the area will grow to more than 22,000 acres.

Cow Creek is the most Northerly uncontrolled tributary to the Sacramento River. The main stem of Cow Creek originates from the confluence of Old Cow Creek and South Cow Creek, both of which run through the Property. This Cow Creek watershed supports several species of anadromous fish including fall-run Chinook salmon and the federally threatened northern steelhead trout. South Cow Creek has been recognized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as one of the most important for fall run Chinook salmon spawning areas within the Sacramento River watershed.

The protected lands within the Cow Creek Conservation Area also support an abundance of other wildlife species including the gray fox, Canada goose, Rocky Mountain elk, California quail, American kestrel, red-shouldered hawk, gopher snake, barn swallow, western blue bird, western meadowlark, red-tailed hawk, Columbia black-tailed deer, bushy-tailed woodrat, western harvest mouse, western fence lizard, California vole, Botta's pocket gopher, northwestern pond turtle and western gray squirrel.

Acquisition of a conservation easement over the Property is consistent with several regional conservation plans including the goals and desired outcomes of the Sacramento River Conservation Program Area defined by SB 1086 (Nielsen, 1986), which focuses on preserving riparian habitat and reestablishing continuous riparian habitat along the Sacramento River between Chico and Redding. The project is also consistent with actions proposed under CDFW's California Wildlife Action Plan (Plan). The project area spans two regions in the Plan, the Central Sierra Nevada and Cascade region and the Central Valley region. Both regions identify as important conservation actions protection and restoration of habitat connectivity along rivers and protection of water resources for wildlife.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is marginally improved with several pumps to provide water to ponds on the Property. There are a number of miscellaneous barn and farm structures to provide support to the grazing activities. The Property contains a variety of habitats, including grassland, oak woodlands, floodplain, riparian, riverine and wetland. Acquiring a conservation easement over the Property will help protect these valuable habitats and the multiple species of plants and animals found in and around the Property, including deer, elk and mountain lion as well various anadromous fish runs including Chinook salmon and the federally threatened northern California federal steelhead trout.

Under the terms of the proposed conservation easement, the Property owner will retain the right to two undeveloped separate ranch steads, one of 2 acres and the other 5 acres. How and where these sites are situated is constrained under the terms of the conservation easement to limit any impacts to the Property's resource values. In addition the Property owner will also retain the right to maintain current improvements on the Property, covering approximately 10 acres. All other development rights will be permanently extinguished by the conservation easement. In addition, the proposed conservation easement forbids the Property owner to "permanently transfer, encumber, lease, sell or otherwise separate any water rights from the Property". The SLT will work with the landowner to develop a future public access program on the Property that will allow docent led tours up to 4 times a year as per the terms of the conservation easement.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant and conservation easement for this project is being considered under the land acquisition program at the WCB. 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 the DFG, which evaluates the biological values of property through development of a Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The CAPP is then submitted to DFG's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and approval and later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Under the terms of the proposed WCB grant, SLT will hold the conservation easement and monitor the Property for compliance with its terms and conditions. A stewardship fund will be established between the Property owner and SLT to provide for this monitoring and oversight.

TERMS

The Property owner has agreed to sell a conservation easement to the Shasta Land Trust for \$625,000. The appraised fair market value of \$650,000 has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that WCB staff must review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary reports, documents connected with the purchase and sale including escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance, as well as baseline report and monitoring protocol prior to disbursement of funds into an escrow account established for the transaction. In the event of breach of the grant terms, the WCB can seek specific performance or require the grantee to transfer the conservation easement to WCB or another qualifying entity approved by WCB.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

WCB Grant Allocation	\$625,000.00
Total Purchase Price	\$625,000.00
Other Project-related Costs	<u>\$ 15,000.00</u>
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$640,000.00

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

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding sources which are the WCB's Habitat Conservation Fund Section 2786(b/c) and Section 2786(b/c) (Proposition 1E), that allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species within a floodplain or flood corridor.

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 project as proposed; allocate \$640,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Funds, Section 2786(b/c) and Section 2786(b/c) (Proposition 1E), to cover the grant amount and internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

13. Usal Forest Conservation Easement Transfer \$0.00
Mendocino County

This proposal is to consider the authorization for Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE) to accept a conservation easement over 49,500+/- acres in Mendocino County currently held by The Conservation Fund (TCF), pursuant to the California Forest Legacy Program Act of 2007. The conservation easement conserves and protects an economically sustainable working forest, oak woodlands, grasslands and important habitat for native fish, wildlife and plants.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The conservation easement covers property known as the Usal Tract (Property) located east of Highway 101 and the community of Leggett in the northwest corner of Mendocino County. The Property is bounded on the west by the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park and the Pacific Ocean. Several major fish-bearing creeks located on the Property flow into the south fork of the Eel River, which runs along most of the Property's eastern boundary. The Property is accessible from an established network of State, county, and private roads. There is a well-developed system of internal roads with all mainline roads in place.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In July 2011, WCB approved the allocation of a grant to TCF to assist with the acquisition of the conservation easement. The WCB Grant Agreement (Grant) acknowledges TCF's intent to transfer the conservation easement to CALFIRE at some point in the future. The Grant approves such a transfer so long as CALFIRE agrees to hold, administer, maintain, enforce and defend the conservation easement in a manner consistent with the Grant, including the purposes of the Grant to preserve the Property in its natural scenic, forested, open-space condition and to preserve productively managed forest lands.

On September 11, 2013, The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection approved a resolution authorizing CALFIRE to accept Grant responsibility for the acquisition of the conservation easement on the Property (Resolution). In addition, the Director for CALFIRE has requested that WCB staff act as its land agent and seek authorization from WCB for CALFIRE to accept the conservation easement from TFC pursuant to the California Forest Legacy Program Act of 2007.

WCB PROGRAM

The California Forest Legacy Program Act of 2007 (Act) is set out in Division 10.5 of the California Public Resources Code, Sections 12200 – 12292. Public Resources Code Section 12240 establishes the California Forest Legacy Program (Program) and states that WCB may acquire conservation easements on behalf of CALFIRE pursuant to the Act.

Effective January 1, 2013, California Government Code Section 15853 (f) (Property Acquisition Law) specifically exempted the acquisition of conservation easements made pursuant to the Act from review and approval of the Public Works Board. Acquisitions of conservation easements on behalf of CALFIRE made pursuant to the Act may instead be carried out by WCB. If the proposal is approved by WCB, the transaction is also subject to review and approval by the Department of General Services (DGS).

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CALFIRE will hold, manage and be responsible for the monitoring and enforcement of the conservation easement in perpetuity per the terms of the Grant. The terms and conditions of the Grant will remain unmodified and in full force and effect after the transfer to CALFIRE.

TERMS

Under this proposal, WCB would authorize CALFIRE to accept an assignment of the conservation easement. Concurrently with the assignment, and as authorized by the Resolution, CALFIRE would also accept the obligations of TCF to WCB as Grantee of the Grant. At the time TCF acquired the conservation easement, the landowner established an endowment fund in the amount of \$200,000.00 to assist TCF with the expenses associated with the monitoring and management of the conservation easement. TCF has agreed to transfer the endowment to CALFIRE at the time the conservation easement is transferred.

PROJECT FUNDING

No state funding will be required for this transaction. The conservation easement is being proposed for assignment to CALFIRE as a no cost transaction. In addition to the endowment funds that TCF has agreed to transfer to CALFIRE, the federal Forest Legacy Program has committed to provide funds to CALFIRE to cover administrative expenses related to the management and monitoring of the conservation easement. All costs associated with the DGS transaction review would also be covered by the federal Forest Legacy Program funds.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The proposed action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which only applies where a public agency proposes to carry out or approve a discretionary project (Pub. Resources Code, § 21080, subd. (a).). Here, the proposal is for WCB to authorize CALFIRE to accept the assignment of an existing conservation easement. Although that action requires WCB discretionary approval under the Act, the transfer of the conservation easement from TCF to CALFIRE is not a project for purposes of CEQA as it will not and is not expected to result in any direct change or any reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change to the environment.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; authorize CALFIRE to accept the assignment of the conservation easement and assume the obligations of the Grantee under the conservation easement; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CALFIRE to proceed substantially as planned.

14. Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area
Little Dry Creek Habitat Restoration \$515,000.00
Butte County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association (CWA) for a cooperative project with the North American Wetlands Conservation Council to restore ±534 acres of wetlands, uplands and cereal grain habitats at the Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area, Little Dry Creek Unit, and enhance an additional ±200 acres of wetlands on an adjacent privately-owned property protected in perpetuity through a CDFW-held conservation easement, all located seventeen miles southwest of Oroville in Butte County.

LOCATION

The Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area (UBBWA) currently consists of three units, the ±1,521 acre Llano Seco Unit, the ±4,010 acre Howard Slough Unit, and the ±3,762 acre Little Dry Creek Unit. The UBBWA is located within the Butte Basin, a low-lying area extending south and east of the Sacramento River from near Chico on the north to the Sutter Buttes on the south. Historically the Butte Basin consisted of a braided network of sloughs, channels, and oxbows resulting from the meanderings of the Sacramento River and Butte Creek, and comprised a significant portion of the wetland habitat available for wintering, migratory, and breeding birds in the Central Valley.

The UBBWA was created to protect and restore historically important wetland, upland, and riparian habitat systems. UBBWA staff, working with many partners over the years, has transformed the Little Dry Creek Unit from a monoculture of rice to a diversified habitat complex providing year-round wildlife habitat. The previously restored units over the years have established new wetland and riparian habitats, funded by WCB, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, and the California Duck Stamp Program.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The portion of the project site at UBBWA is the only remaining unrestored acreage on the Little Dry Creek Unit, with fields still laid out as they were when this land was privately farmed. Currently it is managed as a mix of seasonal wetlands, semi-permanent wetlands, fallow uplands, and a couple of units planted to corn specifically for sandhill cranes. There is little topographic diversity within any of the units, they are for the most part level fields as constructed in the past for rice production.

The farming that took place allowed for efficient manipulation for crop production; however, the basic infrastructure to allow for habitat management, needs to be developed. Reworked fields with built-in

diversity of habitat types and an enhanced water delivery system will significantly increase management capabilities and habitat quality. The development and expansion of desired seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands along with significant blocks of seeded perennial upland grasses will provide ideal brood rearing, nesting cover and wintering habitat for wetland and upland dependent bird species. In addition, a portion of the project will be dedicated to the production of cereal grains specifically to provide food for wintering sandhill cranes.

The project will reconstruct the existing level fields through the construction of new levees, swales, islands and water control structures. The new wetland and upland units will provide much more diverse habitats, with areas that can be flooded easily, either seasonally or semi-permanently, and upland areas with greater topographic relief. The restoration efforts will provide CDFW staff with the infrastructure to provide high quality upland and wetland habitats for dependent wintering, migrating, and resident species.

The proposed improvements will allow the CDFW to more efficiently move water around the units. Improved irrigation, flood up and draw down water on seasonal wetlands will increase seed production of moist soil plants within the wetland basins. Upland areas will see increased stature and development of high quality perennial grasses for nesting cover. These enhanced practices will lead to much higher quality habitat for all dependent species as described above. Secondly, increased control of the water supplies will lead to a reduction in mosquito production in known problem areas helping to reduce mosquito abatement costs. It is anticipated that with the expansion of upland nesting cover and the development of areas that can be managed as semi-permanent wetlands, waterfowl and upland bird species reproductive success will increase.

The project also includes the enhancement of ±200 acres of the privately-owned Mom's Farm property located immediately adjacent to the UBBWA. The restoration work on Mom's Farm is funded in part through the federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) program and by the landowners. WCB acquired a perpetual conservation easement over the Mom's Farm in 1994 and the property was restored at that time. Since its original restoration 20 years ago, restoration biologists have revolutionized restoration design and construction. This project will renovate existing seasonal wetland units, thereby improving habitat for wintering waterfowl, and will reduce mosquito production and make management of the property more efficient.

The project will benefit a wide variety of wetland and upland species including breeding and wintering waterfowl, wintering shorebirds and grassland species such as Lincoln's and savannah sparrows. In addition, the project site is especially important for thousands of wintering sandhill

cranes. Finally, the proposed project will assist with the Central Valley Joint Venture's (CVJV) goal of restoring 17,395 acres of seasonal wetland habitat in the Butte Basin, as outlined in the CVJV's 2006 Implementation Plan.

WCB PROGRAM

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CWA will ensure that the restored and enhanced habitats on Mom's Farm is operated, used and maintained throughout the twenty-five-year project life pursuant to the management plan described in the Grant Agreement. If at any time during the life of the project, CWA does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

The restored habitats on the UBBWA will be managed CDFW staff pursuant to the management plan for the UBBWA. The restored habitats and upgraded infrastructure will allow CDFW to manage the site to provide improved habitats with less effort and at a lower cost.

PROJECT FUNDING

Item	WCB	Moms Farm	NAWCA	TOTALS
Earth Work/Water Control	\$404,395	\$26,385	\$24,985	\$455,765
CWA Project Management	\$63,700			\$63,700
Topographic survey			\$1,400	\$1,400
Contingencies	\$46,905			\$46,905
TOTAL	\$515,000	\$26,385	\$26,385	\$567,770

Project costs funded by WCB will be for earth work (levees, swales, islands, ground leveling), water control structures, upland restoration (planting native grasses), tule transplants, replacement of a lift pump, well refurbishment, and construction supervision and administration.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d)(Proposition 1E), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program, which allows for the

acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass in the Central Valley, and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ 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. 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 \$515,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d) (Proposition 1E); 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.

15. Yolo County HCP/NCCP Development, Phase II \$700,000.00
Yolo County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to Yolo County Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan Joint Powers Agency (JPA) to complete a second draft of a Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) and the administrative draft of an EIR/EIS for that plan covering the entire County of Yolo.

LOCATION

The proposed HCP/NCCP covers all of Yolo County, an area totaling approximately 652,603 acres.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The HCP/NCCP program was developed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to provide a unified effort by the CDFW, FWS, and numerous private and public partners to take a broad-based ecosystem approach to planning for the protection and perpetuation of biological diversity. An HCP/NCCP identifies and provides for the regional or area-wide protection of plants, animals, and their habitats, while allowing compatible and appropriate economic activity. The primary objective of the HCP/NCCP program is to conserve natural communities at the ecosystem level while accommodating compatible land use. The program seeks to anticipate and prevent the controversies and gridlock caused by species' listings by focusing on the long-term stability of wildlife and plant communities and including key interests in the process.

The JPA is preparing the Yolo Natural Heritage Program (NHP), comprised of the countywide HCP/NCCP and a local conservation strategy. The NHP will conserve 10 covered species in the plan area and the natural communities on which these species depend. This NHP will both mitigate for the impacts to habitat from covered activities over the 50-year plan term and conserve natural communities in the plan area. The JPA released the first administrative draft of the NHP on June 28, 2013; this project will complete the second administrative draft, the third public review draft and the Administrative Draft of the EIR/EIS.

The NHP covers the entire Yolo County area totaling approximately 652,603 acres and including six categories of community types (broad habitat classifications), 28 habitats within those community types, and further refined to 104 vegetation types. The NHP is designed to provide the basis for regulatory guidance for 11 species over a 50-year period. Activities proposed to be covered by the plan, include planned urban development, infrastructure projects, agricultural activities, and certain

conservation-related actions. Impacts from covered activities are preliminarily estimated to total approximately 19,000 acres.

What sets the Yolo NHP planning effort apart from others is that it is not driven by developer interests or significant amounts of planned urban development, but rather by a desire to protect, preserve, and integrate the agricultural landscape with habitat protection and regional conservation strategies.

This proposed WCB Grant is a critical part of the funding necessary to complete the NHP. In addition, it will provide the 25% matching fund requirement for a recently awarded Section 6 planning grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The grant will directly result in preparation of the following:

- Completion of the 2nd Administrative Draft of the NHP.
- Completion and commencement of implementation of public outreach plan (including revised/updated web site).
- Completion of Public Review Draft of the NHP.
- Completion of Administrative Draft of the EIS/EIR.
- Completion of draft implementing agreement.
- Completion of draft conservation easement template.
- Completion of draft HCP/NCCP application
- Various staff reports and presentations.

Expected timeline for completion of above tasks is as follows:

December 1, 2014: Release of the 2nd Administrative Draft of the NHP to CDFW and FWS.

May 1, 2015: Release of Draft NHP to the public for review.

August 15, 2015: Release of Administrative Draft of the EIR/EIS to CDFW and FWS.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Upon adoption of the HCP/NCCP and issuance of the regulatory permits, the NHP will transition to implementation, moving to land protection and habitat restoration pursuant to the adopted plan. The JPA or a successor agency will undertake the subsequent duties of long-term management, implementation, monitoring, and compliance over the 50-year term of the NHP. It is anticipated that funding for implementation will come from project fees and implementation grants.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project, as proposed, is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$700,000.00
FWS Section 6 grant	<u>\$884,000.00</u>
TOTAL:	\$1,584,000.00

Project costs will be for completing a second administrative draft of a Yolo County HCP/NCCP, circulation of that draft to the DFG and the FWS, development and circulation of a public review draft of that Plan and the development of an administrative draft of an EIR/EIS.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c)(SB8), which allows grants that implement or assist in the establishment of natural community conservation plans for areas in and around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION (IF NEEDED)

CDFW has reviewed this project and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15262), as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions. 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 \$700,000.00 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)(SB8); authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

16. Breuner Marsh Wetland Restoration \$1,000,000.00
Contra Costa County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) for a cooperative project with the State Coastal Conservancy and others to restore ±164 acres of wetland habitat at Breuner Marsh, located at Point Pinole Regional Shoreline five miles north of the city of Richmond in Contra Costa County. Additionally, this proposal is to consider the acceptance of funds from the U.S. Department of the Interior Natural Resources Damage Assessment and Restoration Fund (NRDAR), a.k.a. "Castro Cove Funds", to assist in the funding of the project and approval to apply these funds to the project.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The ±164-acre Breuner Marsh project area is located within the Point Pinole Regional Shoreline, a regional park located in the northwest part of the City of Richmond on the San Francisco Bay shoreline immediately south of the Point Pinole Peninsula. Breuner Marsh, purchased by EBRPD in 2009, is bordered by Rheem Creek to the south and merges generally with other protected marshes and upland areas to the north. The proposed project area is comprised of over 100 acres of the Breuner property, along with 30 acres of other marshes and upland areas within the Point Pinole Regional Shoreline Park.

The area is currently degraded by patches of construction debris, concrete blocks, old fences, and areas of artificial fill, its surface has been artificially modified by imported fill; and invasive weeds are widespread providing poor-quality wildlife habitat. Although degraded, the land is scenically attractive, and provides a large expanse of Bay margin open space close to urban Richmond. The public accesses the site now through a series of use trails that crisscross the area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Breuner Marsh Restoration Project will include removal of the existing structures, debris, hazardous materials, and existing non-native vegetation. Much of the southern portion of the site will be re-graded, and existing wetland areas will be enhanced by excavating new channels to reconnect them to the San Francisco Bay to allow tidal flooding. Material removed from wetland areas will be used to build upland areas with gentle slopes and to create broad transitional zone habitat that will allow for the expansion of the tidal marsh as sea level rises in line with predictions.

Following grading, the project area will be re-vegetated with appropriate native plants, and weeded and irrigated as necessary to ensure that the plants become established. Non-native invasive *Spartina* (cordgrass) will be eradicated from existing tidal marsh areas before site grading.

Two trails will be built across the project site to provide appropriate public access. The Main Trail, which will serve as a section of the Bay Trail, will begin at a new parking lot located in the south of the site, cross a new bridge over Rheem Creek to the east of the existing paved trail, and continue north parallel to the railroad tracks to connect with existing trails. The Main Trail will be paved and will cross slough and wetland areas by a variety of bridges and boardwalk segments. The Spit Trail will diverge from the Main Trail to connect to the existing fishing spit. Although the Main Trail will be for bicycle and pedestrian access, the Spit Trail will be pedestrian only. A picnic area and rest area will be built by the side of the Main Trail with appropriate interpretative signs located at intervals along the trail.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and meets the program's goal of providing for the restoration of wetlands that fall outside the jurisdiction of the Inland Wetland Conservation Program such as coastal, tidal, or fresh water habitats.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Following implementation of the restoration, a ten-year monitoring program will be conducted to determine whether the proposed restoration site has achieved functions typical of San Francisco Bay tidal marsh habitat, and will identify corrective actions if necessary.

Vegetation monitoring will include survival, plant species composition and percent cover of native plants, and surveys for invasive species. Survival of the planted shrubs serving as a buffer for the restoration site will be assessed at the end of the growing season during the first five years of monitoring. Any shrubs not surviving will be replanted (with a suitable native species as needed) to meet the target percent survivorship for that year, but concluding in the final monitoring year for vegetation monitoring, Year 5. Photographs will be taken at selected permanent photopoints to provide year-to-year visual comparison during each monitoring year.

After the first ten years of the project, the wetlands should be established and require minimal management beyond trash removal and site inspections, which EBRPD will do as part of its management of the Point Pinole Regional Park. If at any time during the twenty-five-year life of the project EBRPD does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires EBRPD to refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

Task	NRDAR	WCB	Other Funds	Total Funding
Project Planning			\$1,425,000	\$1,425,000
Weed control (three years)			\$75,000	\$75,000
Construction permits			\$200,000	\$200,000
Earthwork	\$630,000	\$800,000	\$1,690,000	\$3,120,000
Planting/establishment/monitoring	\$220,000		\$180,000	\$400,000
Public Access		\$100,000	\$2,700,000	\$2,800,000
Construction Management & Contingency	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$563,000	\$763,000
Total	\$950,000	\$1,000,000	\$6,833,000	\$8,783,000

Other funding is from the following sources: East Bay Regional Park District, State Coastal Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Coastal Wetlands Program, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and the California Department of Water Resources.

WCB project costs will be for environmental protection of habitats not directly affected by construction (Best Management Practices), site grading, native plant establishment, trail construction, and construction management.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Bond Fund of 2002 (Proposition P50), Water Code Section 79572(c), which allows for the acquisition, protection and restoration of coastal wetlands, upland areas adjacent to coastal wetlands and coastal watershed lands within the San Francisco Bay Area and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

WCB also will be accepting an advance of \$1,000,000.00 from the Castro Cove Mitigation Fund, which includes administrative costs for WCB. This fund was established based on natural resource damages resulting from historic releases of contaminants into Castro Cove from the Chevron refinery in Richmond. The settlement funds have been deposited into the Department of the Interior Natural Resource Damage and Restoration Fund (NRDAR Fund). NRDAR funds are disbursed to a State entity that has been delegated Trustee authority for purposes of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA) and/or the Comprehensive, Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). On October 5, 2007, the Governor designated the Secretary of Resources as California's Natural Resource Trustee and representative authorized to act on behalf of the public as trustee for natural resources within the purview of the Natural

Resources Agency. Pursuant to a Consent Decree entered into by the United States District Court for the Northern District of California on March 18, 2010, the Natural Resource Agency Secretary agreed to include the Wildlife Conservation Board as a State Natural Resource Trustee. This allows NRDAR funds to be advanced to WCB, for direct expenditure on projects pursuant to the Castro Cove settlement. Of the NRDAR funds received by WCB, \$50,000 will be used to cover WCB's administrative costs. Once these funds are disbursed from the NRDAR Fund to the WCB, they become State funds for purposes of a non-federal cost share match.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

As Lead Agency, the East Bay Regional Park District has prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has considered the EIR and prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse. The CDFW has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,000,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Bond Fund of 2002 (Proposition P50), Water Code Section 79572(c); approve the acceptance of \$1,000,000.00 from the Natural Resource Damage and Restoration Fund (including administrative costs) and apply those funds to the project; 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. East Contra Costa County NCCP/HCP
(Anna Smith) \$2,424,200.00
Contra Costa County

This proposal is to consider the allocation of a grant to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy (ECCCHC) as well as the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Planning Acquisition grant and the approval to sub-grant these federal funds to the ECCCHC, for a cooperative project with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) to acquire 960± acres of land for the protection and preservation of existing regional wildlife linkages, including grassland and oak woodland savannah habitat areas, within the East Contra Costa County Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (ECCC HCP/NCCP) plan area.

LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located at the base of the Diablo Mountain range, at the terminus of Briones Valley Road in an unincorporated area of Contra Costa County, approximately three miles west of the City of Brentwood and 2.5 miles south of the City of Antioch. This acquisition is a priority acquisition within the ECCC HCP/NCCP. It would protect a critical and central piece of the wildlife corridor connecting Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve to Marsh Creek State Park and Round Valley Regional Preserve. Surrounding land uses include existing natural park lands, wildlife mitigation lands, and private cattle ranching.

The ECCC HCP/NCCP designates the Property as a high priority for acquisition and protection due to its location within a critical linkage between previously conserved areas within the ECCC HCP/NCCP plan area. Over the past several years the WCB, USFWS, ECCCHC and EBRPD have partnered to acquire just over 9,000± acres of habitat within the ECCC HCP/NCCP plan area, helping protect essential habitat and connectivity for multiple wildlife species. The project is also consistent with action proposed under the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's California Wildlife Action Plan (Plan). The project is located within the Central Valley and Bay Delta region within the Plan. One of the recommended conservation actions called out for this region is protection of upland linkages and reducing the risk of habitat isolation in the eastern San Francisco Bay area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is 960± acres in size and is currently used as rural agricultural grazing land. The terrain includes one broad valley with rolling to steeply sloping terrain rising on each side. Elevations along the valley floors range from 400 to 550 feet. The northerly ridge elevations range from about 600 to 1,020 feet, while the southerly ridge elevations range from approximately 550 to 1,200 feet. Habitat types found on the Property

include annual grassland, chaparral, oak savannah, oak woodland, pond, wetland, and seasonal wetland. The Property also provides benefits to wildlife in terms of future climate change resiliency by providing and connecting with varied terrains and elevations for species movement.

The Property's size and terrain provide major ecosystem benefits to species both on and off the Property by linking with other protected lands within the ECCC HCP/NCCP) and providing habitat corridors. These linkages include a northwest-southeast movement corridor for the state threatened and federally endangered San Joaquin kit fox. Acquisition of the Property will protect suitable habitat for the conservation of the California-listed threatened red-legged frog and a variety of other rare and important wildlife species including California tiger salamander, golden eagle, western burrowing owl, Swainson's hawk, Alameda whipsnake, silvery legless lizard, western pond turtle and covered fairy shrimp.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD (WCB) PROGRAM

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

EBRPD has agreed to manage the property once it is acquired. Funding of future management activities for this Property will be provided by ECCCHC and EBRPD, in part through wind turbine and communication tower lease revenue from prior acquisitions within the ECCC HCP/NCCP plan area. It is anticipated that the Property will offer future opportunities for passive recreational uses, an allowed use under the ECCC HCP/NCCP. The habitat will be maintained in conjunction with other properties acquired by EBRPD.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$5,376,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and the USFWS. The Property owner has agreed to sell the Property for the approved appraised fair market value. The USFWS funds require a

non-federal match that is being provided by EBRPD bond funds and a WCB grant to ECCCHC. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and subgrant to the ECCCHC provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the grantee to encumber the Property with a conservation easement in favor of WCB and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

WCB Grant	\$2,419,200.00
USFWS subgrant funds	\$2,419,200.00
East Bay Regional Park District	<u>\$ 537,600.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$5,376,000.00
Other Project Related Costs:	\$ 5,000.00
Total WCB Allocation	\$2,424,200.00

It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including DGS appraisal review costs. Under the terms of the USFWS grant the WCB may seek partial reimbursement of these costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

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

CEQA

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with 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 the project as proposed; approve the acceptance of Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant funds from USFWS in the amount of \$2,419,200.00 and approve the subgrant of the federal funds to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy; allocate \$2,424,200.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(c) (SSJD-NCCP) for the grant to East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy and to cover the project-related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

18. Blue Oak Ranch Reserve Facility Improvements \$4,252,000.00
Santa Clara County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Regents of the University of California to construct new staff housing and storage facilities, enhance a campground, improve existing structures for visiting researchers, and upgrade roads and other infrastructure at the Blue Oak Ranch Reserve (BORR), located approximately 9 miles east of the City of San Jose in Santa Clara County.

LOCATION

The BORR is located in Santa Clara County, situated three miles north of Mt. Hamilton Road, nine air miles from downtown San Jose, and eleven miles from the Lick Observatory on the summit of Mount Hamilton, the highest peak in the East Bay. The BORR shares a south-east border with the Joseph Grant Ranch County Park. BORR comprises 3,260 acres of mixed species oak woodland and savanna, coastal chaparral, ponds, and extensive riparian habitat including two miles of the Arroyo Hondo, the primary water source for the Calaveras reservoir. Healthy populations of California tiger salamander, Western pond turtle, and California red-legged frog occur throughout the reserve and take advantage of numerous man-made stock ponds for breeding and reproduction.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will complete site planning, engineering, architectural design, and construction for a project to enhance facilities at the field station with dormitory rooms, private apartment(s), an administrative office, common kitchen and dining hall, classrooms and meeting spaces, and a small laboratory/workshop. The project will enhance the infrastructure at a campground to provide year-round accommodations to be serviced by a common restroom and outdoor kitchen, and construct two modular staff housing units and a maintenance shop. Utility systems will be upgraded including a sanitary well, large capacity water tank, a solar photovoltaic energy system tied into the local power grid, advanced human waste management systems, and gravel road work to facilitate year-round access. These additions will dramatically enhance the suitability of BORR for continuous research, instruction, public outreach activities, and resource stewardship. Completion of these upgrades will allow BORR to accommodate up to 50 concurrent users, two residences for staff members and their families, and provide safe, year-round access for instruction, research, and training.

WCB PROGRAM

The mission of the University of California, Natural Reserve System (UCNRS) is to contribute to the understanding and wise management of the earth and its natural systems by supporting university-level teaching, research, and public service at protected areas throughout California. Under Proposition 84, the WCB received funding to provide matching

grant dollars to the UCNRS for land acquisitions, and construction or development of facilities that will be used for research and training to improve the management of natural lands and the preservation of California’s wildlife resources. To implement this funding the WCB and the UCNRS developed guidelines for identifying eligible projects and the UCNRS established an Ad Hoc Advisory Subcommittee to review and set priorities for project proposals to be submitted to the WCB for funding.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The management of this project will be incorporated into the existing management at BORR and, pursuant to the Grant Agreement, will be maintained by BORR for thirty years.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Item	WCB	UCB
Construction and Contracts	\$3,764,000	
Project Management (e.g. design, oversight, surveying)	188,000	
Contingency	300,000	
Property donation	0	\$4,252,000
TOTAL	\$4,252,000	\$4,252,000

Project costs will be for the construction and development of facilities that will be used for research and training to improve the management of natural lands and the preservation of California’s wildlife resources. The University of California, Berkeley’s (UCB) contribution came from a portion of the appraised value of a land donation that expanded the reserve.

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 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055 (b)(3), which provides for grants to the University of California for the Natural Reserve System for the construction and development of facilities that will be used for research and training to improve the management of natural lands and the preservation of California’s wildlife resources and are consistent with the objectives of this project.

CEQA AND STATE REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

The Regents of the University of California, as lead agency, prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff considered the MND and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB’s compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed

with the State Clearinghouse. The project was vetted through the UCNRS's Ad Hoc Subcommittee and recommended for funding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$4,252,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055 (b)(3); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

19. Round Valley Pine Creek Unit \$1,674,250.00
Inyo County

This proposal is to consider the acquisition of 100± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the protection of important deer wintering range, wildlife corridors, and riparian habitat located on the lower slopes of the eastern Sierra Nevada mountains which will protect winter range and migration corridors for the Round Valley deer herd and bighorn sheep.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located in the small residential community of Rovana, between Pine Creek Road and Vanadium Ranch Road, on lower slopes of the eastern Sierra Mountains, ten miles north of Bishop in northern Inyo County. This local area overlooks the Little Round Valley and the Upper Owens Valley. Nearby residential developments include the communities of Paradise and Swall Meadows located along Lower Rock Creek Road that runs north to south just east of the Property. The community of Rovana is one the few developments along the lower slopes of the Sierra Mountains that extends out into Round Valley. The Property, if developed to its current allowed zoning, would create a pinch point in the deer migration corridor that runs through Round Valley.

The Property falls within CDFW's Round Valley Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The main objectives of the CAPP are to protect the critical winter range for the Round Valley deer herd and habitat for mountain lions and the Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep Wheeler Ridge herd unit. Protection of the Property is seen as a high priority within the CAPP and critical to maintaining the Round Valley deer herd population, as well as other wildlife species that reside in Round Valley. The Round Valley deer herd has supported up to 6,000 deer in the past; however, the population declined to a low of 950 animals in 1990 due to a variety of factors. Present day population counts estimate the Round Valley deer herd to be around 2,000 animals. The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) previously approved a number of grants in beginning in 2007 to assist in acquisitions, in close proximity to this Property, for the protection of the Round Valley mule deer herd within the nearby Wheeler Ridge CAPP.

The project is also consistent with action proposed under CDFW's California Wildlife Action Plan (Plan). The project is located within the Plan's Sierra Nevada and Cascade region. One of the recommended conservation actions called out for this region is for state and federal land management and wildlife agencies to identify and protect from development those critical wildlife migration or dispersal corridors that cross ownership boundaries.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is mostly rectangular and undeveloped. The current zoning allows for medium density residential and residential ranch development. The landowner has invested and developed plans to maximize residential development on the Property.

The Property supports mature riparian habitat along two perennial waterways that run through the Property, Mill Creek and the Arcularius irrigation ditch. The riparian habitat provides forage and cover for the Round Valley deer herd in the winter and fall/spring transition periods as well as fawning cover during the summer months. Riparian habitat is extremely limited in Round Valley and serves as a focal point for wildlife. This habitat also supports wildlife movement and migration through Round Valley.

Native vegetation found on site includes Fremont's cottonwood, sagebrush, yellow rabbit brush, and bitterbrush. The general terrain of the Property consists of gently sloping alluvial material originating from Pine Creek Canyon. Preservation of this Property will not only protect an important migration corridor but will also benefit many other species such as the Sierra Nevada red fox, mountain lion, migratory songbirds, and the Wheeler Ridge Herd Unit of Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project is being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) 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 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/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (LAE/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

CDFW estimates that operation and management costs for the Property will be minimal, not exceeding \$2,000.00 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 mule deer. Management may include activities such as irrigation, stream bank stabilization, and aspen stand reforestation. Other potential habitat enhancement projects could be undertaken through support and in partnership with other non-profit organizations, such as the California Deer Association.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$1,644,250.00. 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, \$1,644,250.00. 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. Once approved by the WCB the transaction must also be reviewed and approved by the DGS.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$1,644,250.00
Total Purchase Price	\$1,644,250.00
Other Project-Related Costs	<u>\$ 30,000.00</u>
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$1,674,250.00

It is estimated that an additional \$30,000.00 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 to protect deer and mountain lions.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

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

space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,674,250.00 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 CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

20. Sawmill Pebble Plain Ecological Preserve \$2,015,000.00
San Bernardino County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust (SBMLT) to acquire 166+/- acres of rare and sensitive pebble plain habitat supporting a wide variety of endemic plant species, located just south of Big Bear Lake, in the San Bernardino Mountains in southern California.

LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located approximately one mile southeast of Big Bear City, adjacent to and northeast of the Moonridge subdivision and directly west of the Sugarloaf subdivision. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and undeveloped lands occur to the north and northwest of the Property with residential development occurring on its south and east edges. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Baldwin Lake Ecological Reserve is located approximately 3 miles to the northeast on the north shore of Lake Baldwin. Other uses in the area include two major ski resort facilities located southwest of the Property.

The Property contains one of the largest intact remaining pebble plain habitats in the area. Pebble plains are unique open areas and known as relics of the Pleistocene Age. These areas are covered with miniature rare plants and contain some of the most threatened and biologically rare plant communities found in California. In fact, only 246 acres of this type of pebble plain exist in the world, all of it in the Big Bear and Holcomb Valleys located in the San Bernardino Mountains.

Pebble plains were formed when ancient glaciers in the area receded. They have underlying dense clay soils that freeze during the winter, which causes pebbles contained in the soil to heave to the surface. Due to the unique clay soil composition and isolation from other mountain ranges, the pebble plain flora has gradually changed and adapted to the drier, desert montane climate to the degree that many of the pebble plain species are unique to only this area. The pebble plain contains important examples of California's biological diversity and is identified by CDFW as a Significant Natural Area (SNA), and within the California Natural Diversity Data Base, the pebble plain habitat is ranked as G1S1, the highest level of rarity and endangerment. There are eleven primary endemic plant species associated with pebble plain habitats, of which three are federally listed as threatened.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is currently unimproved and its topography ranges from relatively flat to moderately steep terrain with elevations from 6,880 feet to 7,101 feet with a large, centrally located plateau surrounded by a mixture

of Montane conifer, pinyon pine and juniper woodlands. The Property is currently owned by a development company, with tentative plans for custom single family residential development.

The pebble plain area covers approximately 10.2± acres within the Property, although relatively small compared to overall size of the Property it represents the second largest remaining pebble plain habitat area known to exist. Equally important the Sawmill Pebble Plain also contains all eleven of the endemic and rare species mentioned above that are associated with pebble plains; including the three federally endangered plants, the ash-gray Indian paintbrush, Bear Valley sandwort and the southern mountain buckwheat. The Property also supports other rare animal species, such as the California spotted owl, the southern rubber boa, the San Bernardino flying squirrel, the sharp-skinned hawk, Cooper's hawk, northern goshawk and the Lewis woodpecker.

Protection of this unique habitat is consistent with one of the major habitat protection goals of CDFW which is to maintain native plant species and natural communities for their intrinsic and ecological value and their benefits to people. This includes providing habitat protection and maintenance in a sufficient amount and quality to ensure the survival of all species and natural communities.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB or Board) 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 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 Property will be owned by SBMLT, which will manage it in conjunction with the adjacent USFWS property. The preponderance of the Property is natural open space, and will be maintained as such. Historic trails, some currently in disuse, may be re-established in the future for use by the public on docent led tours, connecting with other existing public use trails located to the north and south of the Property.

TERMS

The Property owners have agreed to sell the Property to the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust for \$2,200,000.00. Its appraised fair market value of \$2,522,000.00 has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The terms and conditions of the proposed grant provide that WCB staff must review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary reports, documents connected with the purchase and sale including escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds into the established escrow account. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the grantee to encumber the Property with a conservation easement in favor of WCB and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$2,000,000.00
San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust	\$ 200,000.00
TOTAL	\$2,200,000.00
Other Project-related Costs	<u>\$ 15,000.00</u>
Total WCB Allocation	\$2,015,000.00

It is estimated that the \$15,000.00 will be needed to cover internal project-related costs including the appraisal review costs by the DGS.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a), that allows for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of habitat to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, provide corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent habitat fragmentation, and protect significant natural landscapes and ecosystems and other significant habitat areas.

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 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 project as proposed; allocate \$2,015,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a)(3) for the grant and to cover internal project -related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

21. Trabuco Creek Fish Passage Physical Modeling \$338,000.00
Orange County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to Trout Unlimited for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Fisheries Restoration Grant Program to construct a physical model of a proposed fish passage structure to determine the parameters necessary to provide passage for steelhead trout while providing flood conveyance and sediment transport on Trabuco Creek, located in San Juan Capistrano in Orange County.

LOCATION

The physical modelling effort will evaluate various flows through a reach of Trabuco Creek located at the Metrolink light rail bridge crossing approximately 0.5 mile downstream of the I-5 crossing of Trabuco Creek in the City of San Juan Capistrano, Orange County. The project site is near the Trabuco Creek/Oso Creek confluence, approximately 2.2 miles upstream of the Trabuco Creek/San Juan Creek confluence. The project area is within a critical habitat area for the endangered southern steelhead, as identified by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), California Coastal Conservancy and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Trabuco Creek Fish Passage Physical Modeling Project involves developing a physical model for a potential project to replace an existing grouted rock drop structure with an engineered fishway. The structure protects a pipeline and the Metrolink light rail crossing of Trabuco Creek. The structure is a complete barrier to southern steelhead trout, an at-risk species, preventing its passage to miles of excellent spawning habitat in the upper watershed.

The intent of this work is to evaluate the performance and refine the design of a proposed fishway to ensure that it provides effective fish passage conditions in terms of water depths, velocities and energy dissipation factors for juvenile and adult steelhead for design flows as specified by the CDFG and NMFS, while minimizing sediment accumulation within the fishway and maintaining upstream and downstream channel stability. The model will demonstrate that the replaced structure will not be subjected to excessive erosion or deposition, and will remain structurally stable at the expected flood discharges. The model will provide a hands-on demonstration of the design concept to project stakeholders including project design and construction engineers, environmental agencies, and public and private contributors to enable effective collaboration, permitting and implementation.

The preliminary design for the fishway involves a series of cascades and rock pools in the upstream portion and a roughened channel in the downstream portion. The project will be designed for fish passage at flows between 1 cubic foot per second (cfs) and 425 cfs (50% of 2-year flow). The fishway structure would replace an existing grade control for the stream that protects a pipeline and the Metrolink bridge infrastructure. Stability of the structure during flood events is therefore important both for longevity of the fish passage improvements and for protection of infrastructure.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and meets the program's goal of providing for native fisheries restoration, restoration of threatened and endangered species habitats, and in-stream restoration projects including removal of fish passage barriers and other obstructions.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The project design is based on present and future predicted conditions within the project reach. The methods and technologies being employed are well-proven technologies that have been previously used on other projects. The design incorporates steelhead specific fish passage and habitat criteria, stakeholder input and other technical criteria (i.e. regulatory floodplain requirements), infrastructure impacts, and geomorphic stability. The project will be designed to be self-maintaining with minimal long-term management needs for sediment removal.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project, as proposed, is as follows:

TASK	WCB	FRGP	Total
Model Design & Construction	\$162,000	\$30,400	\$192,400
Model Testing	\$128,000	\$46,194	\$174,194
Reporting	\$43,000	\$5,400	\$48,400
Administration	\$5,000		\$5,000
TOTAL	\$338,000	\$81,994	\$419,994

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(b), which can be used for the development of scientific data, habitat mapping and other research information necessary to determine the priorities for restoration and acquisition statewide, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

The project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15262), as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions. 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 \$338,000.00 from Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b); 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.

22. San Felipe Valley Wildlife Area,
Expansion 5 (Thompson) \$230,000.00
San Diego County

This proposal is to consider the acquisition in fee of 174+/- acres of land as an expansion to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) San Felipe Valley Wildlife Area (SFVWLA) for the protection of habitat supporting the state and federally endangered least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher and to enhance habitat linkages and connectivity.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The Property lies in the Volcan Mountain-San Felipe Valley area of northeastern San Diego County, more specifically southeast of the community of Warner Springs, east of rural Highway 79 and south of San Felipe road. The general land uses consist of rural land uses, publicly protected lands, and large areas of valley and mountain open space. The Volcan Mountains contain the headwaters of the San Dieguito River and San Felipe Creek which have been a conservation priority for CDFW dating back to the early 1990's. Located adjacent to SFVWLA are Bureau of Land Management and County of San Diego owned and protected lands. Major habitat types in the Volcan Mountain-San Felipe Valley area include coastal sage, coastal chaparral, oak woodlands, interspersed with conifer and riparian forests along the western slopes of the mountains that transition drastically to arid, high desert areas found on the eastern slopes. Protection of these areas has helped create a landscape linkage and protect wildlife corridors between protected desert habitats located east of the mountains, including the Anza Borrego Desert State Park, and the coastal watershed and forested areas located to the west found within the Santa Ysabel Open Space Preserve and the Cleveland National Forest.

Acquisition of the Property will expand the SFVWLA to the northeast. In 1995, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB or Board) approved the initial SFVWLA acquisition, consisting of 566± acres, together with a 200± acre donation. Additional expansions have occurred over the last ten years bringing the total acreage of the SFVWLA to 14,550± acres.

The San Diego National History Museum has identified the San Felipe Valley as one of the most important inland flyways for migratory birds in San Diego County. Two bird species, the federal and state listed endangered Least Bell's vireo and the federal listed endangered and state listed threatened Southwestern willow flycatcher utilize the San Felipe Valley. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have designated this area as critical habitat for these same bird species. The San Felipe Valley is also important to the survival and recovery of California Species of Special Concern such as the Cooper's hawk, golden eagle, American badger, and

the ringtail cat.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is an irregular 174± acre parcel consisting of somewhat level to steep topography and includes two stream gullies that run north and south, fed by year round springs. It is currently zoned to allow one dwelling per 8 acres. The dominant vegetation consists of various communities of oak and fir trees, with riparian corridors.

Acquisition of the Property will provide additional protected habitat for the federal and state listed endangered Least Bell's vireo and the federal listed endangered and state listed threatened Southwestern willow flycatcher. The Property will also help enhance habitat connectivity between the desert habitats to the east and the coastal watershed and forested areas to the west.

WCB PROGRAM

This acquisition is being proposed under 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 the WCB to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this Program acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the CDFW, which evaluates the biological values of the 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

Once acquired, the Property will be managed as part of the SFVWLA, expanding open space and habitat areas for wildlife species and potential future public use opportunities. The SFVWLA is well known in southern California for superb hunting, wildlife viewing, hiking and wildlife research. The Property will help support additional habitat and species diversity, as well as offer potential for increased public access opportunities. CDFW feels because of the remote and unimproved condition of the Property staff will be able to easily absorb the addition of the Property within the current management, operations and budget of the SFVWLA.

TERMS

The Property owners have agreed to sell the Property for its appraised fair market value of \$210,000.00, which has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The terms and conditions of the proposed acquisition 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.

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	<u>\$ 20,000.00</u>
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$230,000.00

It is estimated that \$20,000.00 will be needed to cover internal project-related expenses, including the appraisal, DGS appraisal review costs and DGS transaction review costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the Habitat Conservation Fund, Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species, and in which unique species or natural communities exist.

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 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 \$230,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) to cover the acquisition cost and 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.

23. Appraisal Reviews

Information Item

It is the current policy of the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) to have the Department of General Services (DGS) review and approve all real estate appraisals (Appraisal) used to support the allocation of grant funds to acquire real property. This policy is consistent with the policy statement issued by the Natural Resources Agency (Agency), dated March 30, 2011, pertaining to Third Party Appraisal Review. Over the last year the WCB has seen a dramatic increase in the number of Appraisals reviewed and rejected by DGS. This information item is provided so the Board can be brought current on this issue.

In preparation for this information item, WCB analyzed the DGS appraisal rejections to determine if there is any cause as it relates to current WCB appraisal practices. Currently on WCB projects requiring allocations greater than \$5,000,000.00, the WCB contracts out the appraisal. On projects under \$5,000,000.00, appraisals can be contracted out by the WCB or by the project proponent. As far as whether or not the Appraisal was contracted out by WCB or by project proponents there does not appear to be any significant difference in terms of appraisal rejections. The same can be said regarding the size, value or location of the property. In reading through the rejections the reasons stated cover a fairly wide range of issues, including questions about the highest and best use and development potential of subject properties, quality of comparable sales data, market adjustments made for the comparable sales data, the range of values used to determine fair market value, adequate consideration and clarification of title issues, competency of the appraiser, concerns over existence and the type of access available to subject properties, differences and adjustments made for before and after valuations on conservation easements, etc.

As reported at the November 2013 Board meeting, DGS Appraisal rejections and costs have increased dramatically over the last year. Looking closely at these numbers, a more telling factor is appraisal rejections rates in some cases have increased recently to as high as 70%; compared to a 25% to 30% that has been more of a historical norm. This sudden rise in rejections has caused concerns with many WCB partners and willing landowners, causing delays, loss of projects, forfeiture of costs incurred by non-profits and other partners preparing projects for WCB consideration and also putting at risk the WCB's ability to utilize federal matching funds that are time sensitive.

Other impacts include frustration and some ill will between WCB, our partners and the appraisal industry, which has in part led to most appraisers charging more to work on WCB Appraisals. Some partners have also indicated the inability to have appraisals approved is impairing their credibility with private landowners, based on their ability to complete

projects in a timely manner. This has resulted in lost opportunities to protect lands and potentially putting at risk the conversion of important resource lands to private development.

As a result, numerous discussion between Agency, legislative members and staff, WCB, other state Agencies, federal partners, project proponents, professional appraisers and DGS management have been occurring over the last 3 months to address this issue. Recently the DGS agreed to change some of their review practices, one of the more important ones being, prior to issuing a rejection DGS will engage WCB and the contract appraiser to address concerns raised during the review; providing an opportunity for DGS and the appraiser to reconcile concerns prior to DGS completing their review.

At the same time WCB partners have been requesting WCB adopt practices similar to other State Conservancies, where instead of DGS appraisal reviews some other form of third party appraisal review is provided. For WCB this could occur either by contracting out for an independent third party Appraisal review or in the case where federal funds are the major source of funding, utilize a federal Appraisal review.

To date WCB staff has been reluctant to seek a policy change where DGS review would not be obtained. Over the last month, WCB has seen an improvement in the ability to work with DGS regarding resolving and approving appraisals. At this point the WCB will continue to monitor these activities and can report back to the Board to ensure the Board is kept aware of this issue.

24. Strategic Plan Update

Information/Ongoing

MIG, the Wildlife Conservation Board's contractor for its Strategic Plan, administered an online questionnaire seeking feedback on the draft WCB Strategic Plan. The questionnaire targeted individuals and organizations involved or interested in the conservation field (i.e., conservation planners and advocates, and individuals who have completed projects with the Wildlife Conservation Board). The questionnaire was online from December 16th-until February 1st.

The goal of the questionnaire was to provide an opportunity to comment on the proposed WCB Strategic Plan elements. Specific questions focused on the following:

- Mission Statement
- Vision Statement
- Values Statement
- Guiding Principles
- Goals, Performance Measures, Objectives and Strategic Directions

A total of 61 people completed the questionnaire. All questions were optional, so not every participant provided an answer to every question. For this reason, specific results are reported based on question response levels (vs. the total number of questionnaire participants).

Overall, a strong majority of respondents agree with WCB's draft strategic plan framework. Of WCB's Mission, Vision, Values and Guiding Principles:

- Approximately 70-75% of respondents indicated that they "Agree" with the statements as they are proposed.
- Approximately 20-25% of the respondents "Agreed, with changes" and provided their comments for improvement.
- No more than two respondents indicated that they "Disagreed" on any proposed statement, and included their comments.

Of WCB's goals, performance measures, objectives and strategic directions, a strong majority of respondents indicated they "Agree" as proposed. However, there is more variation on the level of agreement than with the mission, vision, values and guiding principles, with a higher percentage of respondents indicating they "Agreed, with changes."

In addition to the questionnaire, public workshops to solicit feedback on WCB's Strategic Plan were held in Ontario, San Jose and Redding during the month of January. Staff will present the results of the workshops as well as discuss the overall results of the comments received through the questionnaire process and recommend a course of action to finalize WCB's Strategic Plan.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITES

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 November 1, 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.