

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

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

Minutes
November 21, 2013

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WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

November 21, 2013

The Wildlife Conservation Board met on Wednesday, November 21, 2013, at the State Capitol, Room 112, in Sacramento, California. Mr. Charlton H. Bonham, Director of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Chairman of the Wildlife Conservation Board, called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. Mr. John Donnelly, Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board, performed the roll call. The following Board members/staff were present at this meeting: Chairman Charlton H. Bonham; Ms. Karen Finn, Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance; Mr. Michael Sutton, President of the CA Fish and Game Commission; Mr. John Donnelly, Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board; Ms. Natalya Kulagina, Mr. Donnelly's Assistant; Ms. Rachelle Caouette, Senator Fuller's representative; Ms. Katharine Moore, Senator Pavley's representative; Mr. Lucas Frerichs, Assembly Member Gordon's representative; and Ms. Diane Colborn, Assembly Member Rendon's representative.

1. Roll Call

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS

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

Michael Cohen, Member
Director, Department of Finance
Vice, Karen Finn

Michael Sutton, Member
President, Fish and Game Commission

JOINT LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Senator Jean Fuller
Vice, Rachelle Caouette

Senator Fran Pavley
Vice, Katharine Moore

Assembly Member Richard Gordon
Vice, Lucas Frerichs

Assembly Member Anthony Rendon
Vice, Diane Colborn

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

John P. Donnelly

Wildlife Conservation Board Staff Present:

John P. Donnelly, Executive Director
Dave Means, Assistant Executive Director
Peter Perrine, Assistant Executive Director
Cynthia Alameda, Budget and Fiscal Officer
Scott McFarlin, Public Land Management Specialist IV
Natalya Kulagina, Executive Assistant
Dawn Otis-Drown, Grant Coordinator
Liz Yokoyama, Senior Land Agent
Colin Mills, Staff Counsel
Nancy Templeton, Chief Counsel
Ashley Lackey, Staff Services Analyst
Melissa Ho, Associate Budget Analyst

Elizabeth Hubert, Public Land Management Specialist IV
Jasen Yee, Associate Land Agent
Chad Fien, Public Land Management Specialist IV
Terry Roscoe, Public Land Management Specialist IV
Brian Gibson, Senior Land Agent
Celestial Baumbach, Staff Services Analyst
John Walsh, Associate Land Agent
Erin Ingenthron, Office Technician (Typing)
Teri Muzik, Senior Land Agent
Candice Marg, Associate Land Agent
Kurt Weber, Senior Land Agent

Others present:

Krista Tomlinson, CA Department of Fish & Wildlife
Terry Corwin, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
Rick Arney
Mark Engle, ANRT
Dan Medeiros, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
Doug Houston, East Bay Regional Park
Sandy Dean, Mendocino Redwood Company
Marlyce Myers, The Nature Conservancy

Joel Rojar
John Kopchik, ECCC Habitats Conservancy
Anne Maliguire
Ruth Ostroff, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Bob Nisbet, East Bay Regional Park
Greg Cox, County of San Diego
Nick Martinez, County of San Diego

Mr. Donnelly reported that agenda item #2, the funding status, provides the information to the Board and public on status of all of the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board/WCB) funds. Mr. Donnelly added that he would be happy to answer any questions on that item.

Ms. Finn commented that she noticed that there are nine old appropriations from the Habitat Conservation Fund (HCF) that total almost \$65 million from 2004-5. Ms. Finn asked if there is a reason we have so much money standing. Mr. Donnelly responded that we have not spent the money to date, but we have projects aligned for that funding. Mr. Donnelly went on to explain that up until last year, the majority of HCF appropriations were funded with either Proposition 50 or 1E dollars. Mr. Donnelly commented that it is not a problem, but it does require us to consider projects that meet both the HCF requirements, as well as bond acts themselves.

Ms. Finn commented that we have spent \$716,000 from 2013-14 HCF appropriation and asked why we don't spend some of the older funds first. Mr. Donnelly responded that it is probably related to the bond funds requirements.

Chairman Bonham asked about how the funds currently sitting on our books with projects tentatively aligned with them, will correspond with the upcoming WCB Strategic Plan (SP). Mr. Donnelly responded that he sees the SP not only implementing our priorities, but also priorities that are important through other organizations' strategic plans, such as Central Valley Joint Venture with South Wetlands Recovery project – and other similar projects and organizations, and current projects should align appropriately.

Ms. Finn commented that by the time the projects get to the Board, a lot of work is already done, and there are commitments and expectations and she wants to make sure that we're not insinuating that deals are already done. Ms. Finn asked how we communicate it to our grantees and applicants that the Board is undergoing a SP process and things may change or not. Mr. Donnelly responded that most of the people we work with understand that there is a risk that a project may not get approved by the Board. Mr. Donnelly went on to explain that all of our documents, contain a clause to indicate that decisions are not final until the Board approves it.

Chairman Bonham commented during each Board meeting, we have a very informative funding status agenda item, but it is simply a reporting of status. Chairman Bonham asked to provide, on annual or quarterly basis, a report to the Board showing the projections, remainder accounts, etc. Mr. Donnelly responded that we can certainly do that, but suggested that he would be careful for identifying specific projects as part of the discussion. Mr. Donnelly went on to explain that our funding status is

aligned on a monthly basis. Mr. Donnelly commented that, for example, under “a” in this agenda item, the Wildlife Restoration Fund amount is \$990,000, but internally we know that we have projects aligned for that funding and maybe “the working” balance is only \$100,000.

Mr. Sutton commented that it would be helpful to get such reports. Mr. Sutton added that the more transparent we can be about what our plans are for each of these funds, the better it will be.

Chairman Bonham requested WCB staff to think about adding another level of transparency as part of our funding update for the next Board meeting.

Mr. Donnelly asked if it would be helpful for the Board members to see funding aligned for tentative projects. Board members responded that would be helpful.

Mr. Sutton commented that by the time we see projects on the docket, all the preliminary work is done, and only thing we can do is approve or deny them.

Mr. Donnelly commented that he would welcome the opportunity to come and sit down with each of the Board members to go through our pending backlog of projects, so the Board members will have an understanding of what we are working on and where those projects align within the current funding.

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>-10,000.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$990,000.00

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

Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-716,000.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$19,947,000.00

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

Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
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	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-1,318,717.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$19,344,283.00
(d)	2011-12 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-10,110,496.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$10,552,504.00
(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>-18,770,480.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$1,903,520.00
(i)	2006-07 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,699,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,437,125.30</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$1,261,874.70
(j)	2004-05 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$646,714.11
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-52,000.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$594,714.11

(k)	1999-00 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund, (0005)	
	Continuously Appropriated [Sec. 5096.350 (a)(1), (2), (4) & (7)]	\$36,100,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-31,224,215.42</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$4,875,784.58
(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>-237,534,918.94</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$35,465,081.06
(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>-672,951,919.23</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$68,460,080.77
(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>-25,000.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$15,475,000.00
(p)	2008-09 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051), (2011-12 Reappropriation)	

	Budget Act (NCCP Section 75055(c))	\$25,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-7,986,798.50</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$17,013,201.50
(q)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 , (6051) (2013-14 Appropriation)	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(1))	1,279,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-1,082,790.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$196,210.00
(r)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2013-14 Appropriation)	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(2))	\$1,500,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-927,437.48</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$572,562.52
(s)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2013-14 Appropriation)	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(4))	\$2,368,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-307,874.48</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$2,060,125.52
(t)	2006-07 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, FloodControl, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051)	
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055a)	\$164,700,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-86,364,247.96</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$78,335,752.04
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055(b))	\$123,525,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-78,500,083.48</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$45,024,916.52

RECAP OF FUND BALANCES

Wildlife Restoration Fund (a)	\$990,000.00
Habitat Conservation Fund (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i) and (j)	\$66,795,710.99
Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (k)	\$4,875,784.58
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (l)	\$35,465,081.06
Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and	

Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (m)	\$68,460,080.77
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (n), (o), (p), (q), (r),(s) and (t)	\$163,452,768.10
TOTAL – ALL FUNDS	\$340,039,425.50

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

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

SUMMARY OF BOND CASH

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 10/11/13	Encumbrances through 09/30/13	Cash Balances Includes Encumbrances
Proposition 12	\$12,621,973.31	\$9,241,712.56	\$587,884.00	\$2,792,376.75
Proposition 40	\$91,808,942.78	\$68,659,612.62	\$16,530,624.51	\$6,618,705.65
Proposition 50	\$127,970,436.60	\$58,755,434.02	\$41,728,551.22	\$27,486,451.36
Proposition 84	\$293,413,688.65	\$203,603,922.39	\$23,816,272.95	\$65,993,493.31
Proposition 1E	\$65,725,202.07	\$39,632,926.13	\$19,555,297.03	\$6,536,978.91
Grand Totals	\$591,540,243.41	\$379,893,607.72	\$102,218,629.71	\$109,428,005.98

3. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4—5, 7—13)

Mr. Donnelly commented that we are prepared to present any project if the Board feels it needs more information on.

Ms. Finn had a question about agenda item #10 (please see the discussion part in the agenda item number 10).

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Chairman Bonham that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve Consent Calendar Items 4—5, 7—9, and 11—13 as proposed in the individual agenda explanations.

Motion carried.

*4. Approval of Minutes — September 4, 2013

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Chairman Bonham that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the Minutes of the September 4, 2013, Wildlife Conservation Board meeting.

Motion carried.

*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 **General Fund**
8,631.95 to the **Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund**
\$72,078.54 to the **Habitat Conservation Fund**
\$44,879.61 to the **Wildlife Restoration Fund**
\$1,144,690.52 to the **California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund**
\$1,031,965.48 to the **Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006**

GENERAL FUND

Buena Vista Lagoon, Expansion 3, San Diego County

Allocated	\$818,338.00
Expended	<u>-818,338.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Total General Fund **\$0.00**

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

Western Riverside County MSHCP (2006), Expansion 5, Riverside County

Allocated	\$10,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,368.05</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$8,631.95

Total Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund **\$8,631.95**

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND

Dry Creek Oak Woodland Corridor, Yolo County

Allocated	\$115,000.00
Expended	<u>-114,703.59</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$296.41

Eel River Wildlife Area (Salt River Unit), Humboldt County

Allocated	\$920,000.00
Expended	<u>-899,747.00</u>

Balance for Recovery	\$20,253.00
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Lower Yuba River - Excelsior - Phase II (Black Swan Ranch), Nevada County

Allocated	\$549,600.00
Expended	<u>-536,346.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$13,254.00

North Grasslands Wildlife Area Gadwall Unit Wetland Restoration, Merced County

Allocated	\$575,000.00
Expended	<u>-537,797.19</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$37,202.81

Red Bank Creek Riparian Habitat Restoration, Tehama County

Allocated	\$565,000.00
Expended	<u>-563,927.68</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$1,072.32

Total Habitat Conservation Fund **\$72,078.54**

WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND

Moss Landing Wildlife Area Public Access, Monterey County

Allocated	\$408,100.00
Expended	<u>-379,053.28</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$29,046.72

North Table Mountain Ecological Reserve, Public Access Trail, CEQA and Plans, Butte County

Allocated	\$117,000.00
Expended	<u>-101,167.11</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$15,832.89

Total Wildlife Restoration Fund **\$44,879.61**

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

Buena Vista Lagoon, Expansion 3, San Diego County

Allocated	\$298,662.00
Expended	<u>-2,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$296,662.00

Lucerne Fishing Pier, Lake County

Allocated	\$470,721.00
Expended	<u>-470,721.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

San Joaquin River Parkway, Jensen River Ranch Phase II Construction, Fresno County

Allocated	\$1,982,513.00
Expended	<u>-1,134,484.48</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$848,028.52

Total California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund **\$1,144,690.52**

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

Dry Creek Oak Woodland Corridor, Yolo County

Allocated	\$180,000.00
Expended	<u>-165,361.52</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$14,638.48

Little Chico Creek Oak Woodland Conservation Easement, and Expansions 1 and 2 (Mott, Smith and Brigham), Butte County

Allocated	\$555,000.00
Expended	<u>-542,008.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$12,992.00

Noyo River Redwood Conservation Property, Mendocino County

Allocated	\$4,010,000.00
Expended	<u>-4,002,450.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$7,550.00

San Diego County MSCP (2010) (Sloan Canyon), San Diego County

Allocated	\$1,165,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,157,687.50</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$7,312.50

San Joaquin River Parkway, Camp Pashayan #2, Fresno County

Allocated	\$190,000.00
Expended	<u>-188,082.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$1,918.00

Santa Rosa Mountains, Expansions 11, 12, and 13, Riverside County

Allocated	\$146,250.00
Expended	<u>-140,332.50</u>

Balance for Recovery	\$5,917.50
Sardella Ranch Conservation Easement, Tuolumne County	
Allocated	\$520,000.00
Expended	<u>-511,016.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$8,984.00
Vail Lake, Riverside County	
Allocated	\$970,000.00
Expended	<u>-2,394.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$967,606.00
Wilmar Ranch, Diablo Range Oak Woodland Conservation Easement, Monterey County	
Allocated	\$275,000.00
Expended	<u>-269,953.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$5,047.00
Total Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006	\$1,031,965.48

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Chairman Bonham that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the Recovery of Funds for the projects listed on pages 6 through 10 of the agenda and close the project accounts. Recovery totals include \$0.00 to the General Fund; \$8,631.95 to the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund; \$72,078.54 to the Habitat Conservation Fund; \$44,879.61 to the Wildlife Restoration Fund; \$1,144,690.52 to the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund; and \$1,031,965.48 to the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006.

Motion carried.

- *6. Strawberry Creek Riparian Restoration \$0.00
Humboldt County

This proposal was withdrawn from consideration at this time.

- *7. Cosumnes River Ecological Reserve, \$2,500.00
Access Easement Exchange
Sacramento County

This proposal was to consider the exchange of an administrative access easement with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) at the Cosumnes River Preserve providing access to the adjoining California Department of Wildlife (CDFW) Cosumnes River Ecological Reserve.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The Cosumnes River Ecological Reserve (Reserve), managed by the CDFW, is located southeast of the town of Galt in southern Sacramento and northern San Joaquin counties. The Reserve is located adjacent to the Cosumnes River Preserve (Preserve), a protected habitat area managed collaboratively by a number of conservation entities and agencies including TNC, U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Ducks Unlimited, Department of Water Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the County of Sacramento. The first Reserve acquisition by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) was approved May 10, 1990. Subsequently, through cooperative effort with various entities, the WCB to date has completed eleven expansions of the Reserve totaling 7,308± acres. Today the Reserve, combined with the Preserve, encompasses over 46,000 acres, representing one of the most significant habitat corridor connections between the Sacramento River Valley and the slopes of the lower Sierra Nevada Foothills. The types of habitats found within the Reserve include wetlands, riverine, riparian, irrigated pastures, vernal pools, annual grasslands and valley oak woodlands (bottomland). These areas provide habitat for a variety of federal and State listed special status species including the sandhill crane, Swainson's hawk, giant garter snake, Sacramento splittail and Chinook salmon. The Reserve also provides important wintering and foraging areas for numerous waterfowl and other migratory birds.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

TNC wishes to replace an existing CDFW administrative access easement across TNC lands to CDFW's Shaw property with a new administrative access easement. The proposal is for CDFW to quitclaim the current easement once it has received the new administrative access easement from TNC. Levees that were constructed for agricultural purposes on TNC land currently allow access to the CDFW's Shaw property. These levees could be breached as part of a potential future restoration project on TNC lands to expand floodplain areas, thus eliminating CDFW's current access. The proposed new access easement would provide CDFW with administrative access to the Shaw property via an existing and different route. The proposed new administrative access easement has been reviewed and approved by CDFW as being comparable and acceptable.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed exchange is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program (Program) with the support and recommendation of CDFW. 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 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 that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this same authorization, the Board may also authorize the transfer or exchange of property and rights in property, including easements.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The replacement access easement to be granted to CDFW will ensure continued administrative access to the previously restored Shaw property. TNC will be responsible for maintaining the actual road surface over which CDFW will access the Shaw property.

TERMS

The administrative access easement being received is similar in length, value and utility to the current administrative access easement, requiring no improvements or compensation by either party. WCB staff will review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to acceptance of the proposed easement and quitclaim of its existing access.

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	\$	2,500.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$	2,500.00

It is estimated that \$2,500.00 will be needed to cover any project-related expenses that WCB may occur as part of this exchange.

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

This project is the exchange of an easement for administrative access that is already occurring on the affected property and involves no expansion of that use. The grant of easement for replacement access will be over an existing road. The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment. (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3 (“CEQA Guidelines”), Section 15061(b)(3).) The project is also categorically exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities, as the operation or permitting of existing public or private facilities and topographical features. Subject to the approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$2,500.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code 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.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Chairman Bonham that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$2,500.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code 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.

Motion carried.

- *8. Santa Cruz Sandhills, Zayante (Dowd and Dumas) \$772,600.00
Santa Cruz County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for grants to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC) and acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Recovery Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to LTSCC for a cooperative project with the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation (RLFF) to acquire in fee 14± acres of land and a separate 37± acre conservation easement for the protection of habitat essential to the recovery of several State and federally endangered species, located in the Sandhills in Santa Cruz County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject properties (Property) are located within the Zayante Sandhills region of Santa Cruz County, approximately 6 miles north of the City of Santa Cruz and west of the City of Scotts Valley. The Property contains unique, intact habitat communities found on rocky outcrops and slopes consisting of sandy Zayante soils. Zayante soils are derived from marine deposits occurring over 15 million years ago. These areas support diverse assemblages of endemic plants and insects, including four endemic and federally listed endangered plant species that are known to only exist in the Sandhills: the Santa Cruz wallflower, the Ben Lomond spineflower, the Ben Lomond buckwheat and the silver leaf (Bonny Doon) manzanita. Located near the Property in the Sandhills are the South Ridge Conservation Area, Ben Lomond Sandhills Preserve, and the Randall Morgan Preserve - protected habitat areas managed cooperatively by Santa Cruz County, City of Scotts Valley and LTSCC.

The Property has been identified in the California Department of Fish and Game's (CDFW) Conceptual Area Protection Plan for the Santa Cruz Sandhills. The proposed project would permanently protect and improve the management of rare sandhills habitat essential to the long-term recovery of several federally listed endangered species including the Mount Hermon June beetle, Zayante band-winged grasshopper and four plant species described above.

Assembling a network of interconnected, protected habitat blocks will promote long-term persistence of the endangered species and unique communities within the approximately 4,000 acres of remaining Sandhills habitat. Ongoing development and encroachment into the Sandhills threatens to eliminate important habitat and irrevocably sever connectivity. Protection of the Property will increase the size and connectivity of existing protected habitat, thus facilitating dispersal, gene flow, and natural disturbance processes that maintain viable populations.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Dowd

This property is 37± acres of undeveloped land with a small meadow, rising up to rolling to steep hills covered with various grasses and trees. Bean Creek, located on the southern boundary, provides a riparian corridor and supports a small population of steelhead trout. The entire property will be protected by a conservation easement in favor of the LTSCC. The conservation easement allows a 1-acre building envelope in a location that will minimize impacts to the Sandhills and riparian habitat on the property. Further restrictions on the type and size of dwelling, roads and utilities in the building envelope are also addressed in the conservation easement.

Dumas

The LTSCC will acquire fee title to this 14± acre property. The terrain consists of fairly steep hillsides vegetated with scrub, grasses and various trees. A small portion of this property was used as a quarry at one time, but this use has been abandoned and will be reclaimed with native vegetation once the property is acquired. The remaining and majority portions of the property are in a natural state, and are home to a variety of animal and bird species.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant and subgrant for this project are being made 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 the acquisitions of properties. Under the Program the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife oriented recreation opportunities. These activities are carried out in conjunction with CDFW, which evaluates the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE)/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund. The USFWS grant proposed for acceptance for this project has also been reviewed and approved by CDFW as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition Grant selection and review process.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The LTSCC will manage the Property in conjunction with other properties it owns in the surrounding area. The conservation easement and the WCB grant agreement require a baseline report be completed for the Dowd property to outline the specific conservation values of the Property. The baseline report will provide an accurate representation of the Property at the time of acquisition and is intended to serve as an objective information baseline for monitoring compliance with the terms of the conservation easement. The conservation easement, WCB grant agreement, and subgrant agreement require annual monitoring by the LTSCC. For both the Dowd and Dumas properties staff from WCB, CDFW, and USFWS will have access once every three years to assess compliance with the terms, covenants and conditions of the grant and subgrant agreements.

To help offset the costs associated with the stewardship of the Property, the LTSCC also has available \$30,000 in funding provided by RLFF.

TERMS

The Dowd 37± acre conservation easement has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$925,000.00. The Dumas 14± acre fee acquisition has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$470,000.00. Some of the costs associated with the planning and appraisal work for the project were funded by the RLFF. The appraisals have been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and USFWS. The Property owners have each agreed to sell their property interests for its approved fair market value. The USFWS funds require a non-federal match that is being provided by the WCB grant agreements and funds from the LTSCC. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grants and USFWS subgrants to the LTSCC provide that staff of 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 each acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can seek specific performance of the grant, or, in the case of Dumas fee acquisition, require the grantee to transfer a conservation easement to WCB or another qualified holder.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the projects is as follows:

Dowd Property (Conservation Easement)	
WCB	\$473,000.00
RLFF	156,000.00
USFWS subgrant funds	<u>296,000.00</u>
Total Purchase Price	\$925,000.00

Dumas Property (Fee Title)	
WCB	\$239,600.00
Land Trust of Santa Cruz County	19,000.00
RLFF	61,000.00
USFWS subgrant funds	<u>150,400.00</u>
Total Purchase Price	\$470,000.00
Other Project Related Costs	60,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$772,600.00

It is estimated that an additional \$60,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related administrative costs, including appraisal costs and DGS appraisal review. Under the terms of the USFWS grants, the WCB may seek partial reimbursement of these costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of these two acquisitions are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786 (b/c), which allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat on which threatened, endangered, fully protected and unique species or natural communities naturally exist.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$772,600.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code section 2786 (b/c) for the grants and to cover internal project-related expenses; accept the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$446,400.00 and authorize the subgrant of these funds to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish these projects; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Chairman Bonham that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$772,600.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code section 2786 (b/c) for the grants and to cover internal project-related expenses; accept the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$446,400.00 and authorize the subgrant of these funds to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish these projects; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

- *9. Amargosa - Tecopa Hot Springs \$56,750.00
Inyo County

This proposal was to consider the acquisition by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition grant to acquire 80± acres of land in Inyo County for the protection of wetland and upland habitat areas and linkages supporting the State and federally-listed endangered Amargosa vole (Vole) and Amargosa niterwort (Niterwort).

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject properties (Property) consist of two non-contiguous parcels under the same ownership, located in the community of Tecopa Hot Springs which is approximately 2 miles north of Tecopa and 65 miles southeast of Death Valley National Park off the Death Valley Road/Highway 127 in the Mojave Desert. The community of Tecopa Hot Springs was established because of the abundant natural hot springs occurring in the area. These natural springs, hot and cold, support wetland habitat required by both the Vole and Niterwort.

The Property is adjacent to the eastern shore of Grimshaw Lake which provides important wetlands for migrating waterfowl and is surrounded by meadows, marshes and pastures. The lake watershed eventually drains two miles south into the Amargosa River. Historically, the Amargosa River corridor has been the primary location for the Vole, but due to habitat modification, invasive species such as salt cedar, water diversion and groundwater withdrawals along the river, only a fraction of the suitable vole habitat remains. In August of 1999, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approved \$250,000 for riparian habitat restoration along the Amargosa and Mojave rivers to restore them back to a proper functioning condition by removing large quantities of the invasive salt cedar and restoring native riparian vegetation.

Most of the land surrounding the community of Tecopa Hot Springs has been subdivided into relatively small residential lots. Many of these sites are developed with winter homes and trailers that are mostly occupied during the cooler winter, fall and spring months. Due to this development and its impact on habitat, the CDFW developed the CDFW Amargosa /Tecopa Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) that identifies 213 acres of some of the last remaining wetland habitat areas in the vicinity of Tecopa Hot Springs. All of these identified properties could be disked, filled, or burned, or have structures erected at any time that could impact habitat. Another habitat conversion threat comes from the common practice of drilling wells for natural hot spring water. This lowers the water table and reduces the water available for endangered species and their habitat.

The CAPP integrates with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Amargosa River Area of Critical Environmental Concern land management and protection strategy, which encompasses 21,552 acres and creates a larger targeted corridor of interconnected habitat that water and wildlife can move through in the Amargosa River Basin area. The BLM, along with the Amargosa Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy, is responsible for the management of over 5,000 acres of protected lands that surround the Property. The parcels proposed for acquisition are two of the largest and highest priority acquisitions within the CAPP. The acquisitions will also help create linkages with other protected habitats and reduce habitat fragmentation.

The project is also consistent with action proposed under CDFW's California Wildlife Action Plan. The project is located within the Mojave Desert Region. One of the recommended conservation actions called out for this region is to secure wet habitats in the Amargosa River Basin to help protect the Vole.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Each property is square in shape and approximately 40 acres in size. The topography is fairly flat with gently rolling slopes. Neither property is improved. The outer surrounding landscape is predominately desert habitat with numerous mountain ranges. The parcels host the spring brooks of three larger springs and several small seeps, ponded areas, and approximately eight acres of Vole core habitat, defined as areas dominated by bulrush and wetlands. The Vole was listed as a California endangered species in 1980 and as a federal endangered species in 1984. The Vole is considered to be one of the most narrowly distributed subspecies of mammals known. It has been estimated that no more than one square kilometer (247 acres) of habitat for this species remains (Murphy and Freas, 1988).

The Property also supports approximately 17 acres of wet and transitional alkaline flats that contain the Niterwort. The Niterwort is a small, erect perennial plant ensuing from an extensive, heavy, underground rootstock that requires wet alkaline flats with extensive salt crust surface soil development. The Niterwort was listed as a California endangered species in 1979 and a federal endangered species in 1985.

WCB is currently exploring other potential acquisitions identified in the CAPP. CDFW desires properties acquired within this CAPP to be designated as an ecological reserve by the California Fish and Game Commission. Ecological reserves are designed to conserve areas for the protection of threatened or endangered native plants, wildlife, aquatic organisms and specialized habitat types and to provide areas for education and research.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisitions for this project are 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.) to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under the Program acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the CDFW, evaluating the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE)/ CAPP. The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee for review and approval and later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund. The USFWS grant proposed for acceptance for this project has also been reviewed and approved by CDFW as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition Grant selection and review process.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CDFW Regional staff plans to adopt a management plan based on regular site visits to study, monitor and inventory habitat resources. Personnel and operations cost are estimated to be \$1,000.00 annually. Common tasks related to the management of the Property include general site condition monitoring, exotic plant control, reporting, posting signs and biotic surveys. There is a potential for future public use opportunities that could include nature viewing, birding, photography, and educational and scientific uses. The CDFW Regional staff is exploring the possibility of a cooperative management agreement with the Amargosa Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy for the Property. Both conservancies hold numerous conservation easements in the area and have established stewardship programs that monitor and protect the habitat qualities of their lands.

TERMS

The Property was appraised as having a fair market value of \$70,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and USFWS. The Property owner has agreed to sell the Property for the approved appraised fair market value. The USFWS funds require a non-federal match that is being provided by the WCB. The terms and conditions of the proposed acquisition and USFWS 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.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$36,750.00
USFWS grant funds	<u>\$33,250.00</u>
Total Purchase Price	\$70,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	\$20,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$56,750.00

It is estimated that an additional \$20,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related administrative costs, including environmental site assessment, appraisal, and DGS appraisal review, escrow and title insurance costs. Under the USFWS grant, the WCB can seek reimbursement for these costs from USFWS.

FUNDING SOURCE

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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$56,750.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) to cover the non –federal match for the acquisition and other internal project related expenses; accept the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition Grant in the amount of \$33,250.00; 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.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Chairman Bonham that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$56,750.00 from the

Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) to cover the non –federal match for the acquisition and other internal project related expenses; accept the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition Grant in the amount of \$33,250.00; 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.

Motion carried.

10. Allensworth Ecological Reserve, Expansion 28 \$9,000.00
Tulare County

This item was pulled from the Consent Calendar for discussion.

Ms. Finn commented that it is going to cost us \$5,000 to complete a \$4,000 7-acres acquisition. Ms. Finn asked to explain the criticality of this acquisition. Mr. Donnelly responded that this acquisition is located in the part of California where the property values are very low, and explained that we are acquiring this property on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and, as it is required by Fish and Game Code, any acquisition that WCB does for CDFW, needs to be completed using an appraisal that has been reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS), and over the last few years appraisal costs have gone up, as well as the costs of the review by the DGS. Mr. Donnelly went on to explain that the CDFW has been very engaged in this particular area since 1980s. Mr. Donnelly added that this area is critical to several endangered species and will provide critical habitat linkage.

Chairman Bonham asked if the whole allocation, or a portion of that allocation, might be reimbursable. Mr. Donnelly responded that CDFW, per WCB understanding, has received mitigation funds from the Department of Corrections, and we are looking to apply for a portion of those funds to help us offset the cost of this acquisition.

Ms. Finn commented that she would feel more comfortable if this acquisition is completely paid with funds from the Department of Corrections.

Chairman Bonham suggested that the motion for this project should be for the CDFW and WCB staff to do more due diligence on the reimbursable component relative to the project-related costs.

This proposal was to consider the acquisition of 7± acres of land by the CDFW for the protection of habitat supporting the San Joaquin kit fox and other rare species found within the Allensworth Ecological Reserve (Reserve), to enhance habitat linkages and connectivity, as well as provide for future wildlife oriented public use opportunities. Ms. Candice Marg of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

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, with 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 Wildlife Conservation Board (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 State threatened and federally endangered San Joaquin kit fox, the State and federally endangered Tipton kangaroo rat, San Joaquin pocket mouse and blunt-nosed leopard lizard; the State threatened San Joaquin antelope squirrel and the federally threatened Hoppings blister beetle. Other rare and important species that either reside in 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 (LAE)/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (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:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$4,000.00
Total Purchase Price	\$4,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	<u>\$5,000.00</u>
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$9,000.00

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

All or a portion of the funding for this project may be reimbursable from the California, Department of Corrections Statewide Electric Fence Project mitigation fund assigned to CDFW. The funds were made available to CDFW to offsets the impacts associated with electric fences constructed around correctional facilities in the San Joaquin Valley. The CDFW has determined acquisition of the Property is eligible for this funding and is currently working WCB to develop a mechanism for obtaining reimbursement.

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 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 recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$9,000.00 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.

It was moved by Chairman Bonham that the Wildlife Conservation Board direct the CDFW and WCB staff to do more due diligence on the reimbursable component relative to the project-related costs.

Motion carried.

- *11. Pismo Creek Fish Passage Improvement \$563,000.00
San Luis Obispo County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to Central Coast Salmon Enhancement (CCSE) for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Fisheries Restoration Grant Program and the County of San Luis Obispo to improve fish passage on Pismo Creek, located six miles south of San Luis Obispo in San Luis Obispo County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) box culvert and associated defective fish ladder is located on the mainstem of Pismo Creek approximately 5.3 miles upstream of the ocean. The bridge and box culvert were constructed in 1927. Riparian habitat along Pismo Creek is relatively intact, with long stretches of native habitats on both banks.

The proposed project is on private land held by Freeport-McMoRan Oil & Gas. Current zoning and the Master Plan Designation land use category is agricultural/rural. Lands adjacent to the project site and to Pismo Creek upstream of the project site are mostly small farms and vineyards, moving into grazing lands, oak woodlands and forest farther upstream. State and federally listed southern steelhead trout use the lower portion of Pismo Creek but only rarely make it past the UPRR box culvert. The mainstem of Pismo Creek, as well as all three tributaries, has been designated as critical habitat for the recovery of steelhead trout in the South-Central California Coastal Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Pismo Creek has incised and undercut the downstream end of the culvert's concrete footing over the decades following the construction of the culvert in 1927. UPRR later installed a concrete step-pool fish ladder. As the channel elevation continued to degrade, the fish ladder also became undercut and eventually collapsed. A second ladder was installed in 1972. The ladder is now considered defective by the CDFW due to ongoing sediment and debris accumulations that result from poor design of the ladder. As a result, the existing box culvert now creates an approximately eleven-foot high barrier to migrating steelhead trout.

The project involves the removal of the defective fish ladder that leads to the existing box culvert and the construction of a series of steps and pools that provide fish passage up to the box culvert on Pismo Creek. The project will restore reliable access to 7.3 miles of critical steelhead habitat upstream of the barrier and improve habitat immediately downstream of the barrier where the roughened channel will be constructed. The barrier modification will provide passage for all steelhead life stages and in all

flows. The roughened channel includes a series of steps and resting pools that will allow fish to migrate to and upstream of the box culvert. The restoration will result in a total of 8 pools along approximately 900 linear feet of creek or approximately 200,000 square feet of wetted in-channel habitat. Riparian habitat disturbed during restoration construction will be restored.

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 and in-stream restoration projects including removal of fish passage barriers and other obstructions.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Pre- and post-construction monitoring of the site will occur to evaluate steelhead passage at the project site and to provide data that can be used to inform future fish passage project design decisions by environmental protection and regulatory agencies. At a minimum, monitoring will occur one year before and three years after construction. Monitoring will include survey work to document physical and habitat conditions, flow monitoring to assess passage conditions, and fish utilization of the site.

The project, once completed and vegetation is fully established, will require minimal ongoing maintenance. CCSE and CDFW both have a long-established record of working in the Pismo Creek watershed and both organizations will have long-term involvement with the project site.

If at any time during the life of the project CCSE or the landowner do not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires CCSE 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 Summary	WCB	CCSE	FRGP	SLO County	TOTAL
1. Project Management	\$24,901	\$2,710	\$191,435	\$4,124	\$223,170
2. Permits	\$1,820	\$169	\$28,211	\$500	\$30,701
3. Project Monitoring	\$70,770	\$169	\$24,255	\$500	\$95,695
4. Final Engineering	\$23,716	\$339	\$63,532	\$1,000	\$88,586
5. Mobilization	\$0	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$100,000
6. Construction	\$441,793	\$0	\$1,067,883	\$3,876	\$1,513,551
TOTALS	\$563,000	\$3,387	\$1,475,316	\$10,000	\$2,051,703

Project costs will be for excavation of existing material, placement of slope rock, erosion control, construction of weirs and pools, placement of habitat logs, riparian habitat restoration, and project management and permits.

FUNDING SOURCE

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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

CDFW, as the lead agency, has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has considered the MND and prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Following the Board's 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 recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$563,000.00 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.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Chairman Bonham the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$563,000.00 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.

Motion carried.

- *12. Canebrake Ecological Reserve, Cap Canyon Unit, \$332,000.00
Expansion 3
Kern County

This proposal was to consider the acquisition of 360± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as a cooperative project with the National Audubon Society (NAS) for the protection of riparian floodplain and adjoining upland scrub habitat supporting mule deer, mountain lions and migratory birds, located in the southern Sierra Mountains.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located in the southern portion of the Sierra Mountains, approximately 20 miles east of Isabella Reservoir, north of State Route 178 in the Canebrake area of Kern County. The town of Onyx is located approximately four miles to the southwest of the site. The balance of the Property is bordered by vacant and unimproved lands owned by private parties, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and CDFW's Canebrake Ecological Reserve (Reserve). Located south and bordering the Property are a number of 10-acre residential ranchettes. These types of development represent the biggest threat to conversion of the habitat on the Property. Other nearby land uses include irrigated pasture and cultivated agricultural lands. The Property is also located in the Chimney Creek watershed that flows west to Canebrake Creek and on into Isabella Reservoir, which are all part of the upper watershed of the Kern River.

The Reserve is comprised of three main units, the Canebrake Creek Unit, Scodie Canyon Unit and Cap Canyon Unit, containing a combined total of approximately 2,500 acres of protected lands. The Property is located within the Cap Canyon Unit of the Reserve and is considered a priority CDFW acquisition within the Canebrake Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The Reserve provides and protects floodplain, riparian, wetland and upland scrub habitats that support State and federally listed threatened and endangered species and a number of larger mammals, such as deer and mountain lion. The Reserve adjoins federally managed lands providing connectivity and habitat linkages with protected lands to the north, south and east. In addition, these protected conservation areas help protect watershed and groundwater resources and enhance the resiliency of the Reserve to climate change by providing a variety of habitat and elevation gradients for species to move between. The Reserve also contains avian migration corridors that run through its southeast-northwest oriented canyons, linking the desert regions in the southeast to the inland valley areas in the northwest.

Located west of the Reserve and bordering Isabella Reservoir is NAS's 3,000 acre Kern River Preserve. Other conservation partners and land

managers in the area include the U.S. Forest Service, BLM, The Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These managed areas include a combination of habitat reserves along with managed public lands open for public outdoor recreation uses.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is comprised of five legal parcels and has two zoning designations: A – Exclusive Agriculture and A-1 – Limited Agriculture together with a secondary “combining” district zoning. “Combining” zoning allows landowners to combine and cluster residential development on their property, based in part on the maximum amount of development allowed on the entire property, based on current zoning. Part of the Property is situated within Chimney Creek flood plain, with the majority of the site designated as either Flood Zone A or X. Flood Zone A areas are subject to inundation by a 1-percent-annual-chance flood, generally requiring flood insurance. Flood Zone X are areas of minimal flood risk and located outside a 200 year flood plain. The Property is mostly vacant except for an abandoned 468± square foot uninhabitable single family dwelling that the landowner will remove from the Property prior to the close of escrow. A Phase 1 environmental site assessment was completed on the Property, including the abandoned structure, showing no release or threat of release of hazardous materials on the Property.

Traveling south to north, the topography of the Property is initially level then gradually changes to a more uneven surface towards the center of the site where it becomes part of the Chimney Creek floodplain. The northerly portions of the Property extend into a rugged mountainous area with steep slopes that level off at the Property’s northeasterly boundary. Habitat areas include riparian, floodplain and upland scrub. There are several rare species known to frequent the Property and surrounding areas including the southwestern willow flycatcher, yellow-billed cuckoo and western pond turtle. Other resident species include mule deer, mountain lion, bear, dove, chukar and quail.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition 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 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 WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable

wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities. These activities are carried out in conjunction with the CDFW, which evaluates the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation (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 will be maintained and managed by CDFW as an addition to the Reserve. CDFW staff will manage the parcels as part of the Reserve's upland habitats. Due to the arid landscape that characterizes these upland areas, active management needs are expected to be minimal. The Property is surrounded by fences that can be posted with signs to help protect the site from unauthorized uses or trespass. CDFW also plans to expand special hunting opportunities onto the property, similar to those already held on other units of the Reserve. Due to the juxtaposition of the Property to an existing CDFW ADA compliant trail, CDFW staff hopes to plan an extension of the ADA trail onto the Property to create additional accessible wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities. The cost of management for the Property will be absorbed under the current management budget for the Reserve.

In addition, CDFW maintains a partnership with NAS's Kern River Preserve staff, and the Desert Mountain Resource Conservation and Development Council, a local non-profit, to help eradicate noxious weeds on the Reserve and other areas in the region, as well as provide management guidance for native and sensitive bird species.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$320,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The Property owner has agreed to sell the property for the approved appraised fair market value. WCB staff will 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	\$302,000.00
National Audubon Society	<u>18,000.00</u>
Total Purchase Price	\$320,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	\$30,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$332,000.00

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

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) and 2786(a) (Proposition 1E), which allows for the acquisition of habitat, including native oak woodlands, to protect deer and mountain lions and the preservation or enhancement of wildlife values to protect or enhance habitat within a flood plain protection corridor or bypass.

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$132,000.00 from both the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)(Proposition 1E) and \$200,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) for the acquisition and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Chairman Bonham that the Wildlife Conservation

Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$132,000.00 from both the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)(Proposition 1E) and \$200,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) for the acquisition and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried with 2-0 vote with Board member Sutton abstaining.

- *13. Arroyo Sequit Fish Passage Improvements \$209,000.00
Los Angeles County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) for a cooperative project with the State Water Resources Control Board for a project to remove three in-stream barriers to steelhead trout, which will provide access to 4.5± miles of good quality habitat on Arroyo Sequit Creek, located west of the City of Malibu in the Leo Carrillo State Park in Los Angeles County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

This project is located along 32a one-mile reach of Arroyo Sequit Creek upstream of the Pacific Coast Highway bridge in Leo Carrillo State Park, located west of the City of Malibu in Los Angeles County. The site has been a State park since 1953 and was previously rangeland. Elevations onsite range from sea level to 100 feet. Inland, the creek is narrow and steep but widens out into a broader floodplain for the last half mile before entering into a small lagoon at its mouth. The wider floodplain consists of terraced floodplain, on which a developed campsite has been constructed on the generally flat upper terraces.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project area extends along Arroyo Sequit Creek from the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) bridge to one mile upstream at an existing check dam. The project site includes all aquatic and riparian habitat along this section of creek.

The most downstream 0.9-mile of Arroyo Sequit Creek between the PCH and the Upper Group Campground Crossing (Upper Crossing) is intermittent/ephemeral. Both the Lower Campground Crossing (Lower Crossing) and Upper Crossing are located within this zone. Habitat in this reach is dominated by bare creek channel where cobbles and gravel dominate; larger boulders are prevalent at the upper crossing. Islands of sporadic mulefat scrub are found within the braided channel for this entire reach and along both banks. A small grove of non-native blue gum eucalyptus and developed Mulholland Highway are found above the western top of bank of the creek, while western sycamore alder riparian woodland and associated campground and developed areas are prevalent along and above the western top of bank and ultimately transition to Venturan coastal sage scrub/chaparral outside of the project area.

A biological assessment and wetland delineation were completed in July 2013. Protocol surveys for the Federally Threatened and CA Species of Special Concern least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) were conducted in 2012. As part of the preparation for design, topographic and cross sectional surveys, geotechnical surveys, and a hydrology and hydraulics analysis were completed in late 2012 and early 2013. CEQA review,

which includes cultural resource review, was also completed.

Through the removal of three instream barriers with free span bridges, the proposed project will provide immediate access to 4.5 miles of “moderate to good quality” habitat along Arroyo Sequit Creek. The 4.4-mile increase in accessible steelhead habitat along Arroyo Sequit Creek will result in a new total of 11.5 linear miles of habitat becoming available in the Santa Monica Mountains, which is a 62% increase.

The implementation of this project will result in the entire Arroyo Sequit watershed being accessible to this imperiled species up to their natural limits. Removing these barriers would also eliminate three sources of stream channel downcutting and sediment loading to downstream habitats, resulting in improved water quality and substrate embeddedness for steelhead trout and the benthic macro-invertebrate community. This project will also restore riparian habitat associated with one-mile section of Arroyo Sequit Creek via removal of invasive weeds, re-planting areas disturbed by construction activities with native riparian vegetation, and re-contouring the creek bottom in the areas where the Arizona crossings are being removed to a more natural condition.

The proposed project also provides needed public safety and access improvements. The existing Arizona road crossings are currently flooded during high flow events and result in restriction of visitor access, access by DPR and emergency personnel to portions of the park and beach.

Additionally, the Arizona crossings are narrow and shared by both pedestrians and vehicular traffic. The new free span bridges are wider and will reduce conflicts between pedestrians and automobiles. The scour and sediment deposition resulting from the existing crossings contributes to buildup of a sandbar in the stream channel and the redirection of the stream towards its eastern bank. This has caused increased erosion along the eastern bank of Arroyo Sequit Creek, resulting in the loss of at least five adjacent campsites (and the associated recreational opportunities and revenues), and threatens additional park infrastructure, including utilities and septic system leach lines.

A final key element of the project is that it would also improve 12 acres of riparian habitat associated with Arroyo Sequit Creek via invasive weed removal.

The project will result in the following:

- Steelhead access to the entire Arroyo Sequit Watershed (4.4 miles) will result in a new total of 11.5 linear miles of habitat becoming available in the Santa Monica Mountains, which is a 62% increase.
- 12 acres of improved riparian habitat (western sycamore alder riparian woodland, mulefat scrub, and Coast live oak riparian woodland) through invasive weed removal.

- Increase of 1,300 sq. ft/ 0.03 acres of riparian habitat via removal of three in-stream barriers. This includes 58 linear feet along Arroyo Sequit Creek.
- Increased public access and safety during flood events to beach and park areas.

The proposed project schedule is April 15, 2014 to March 31, 2015. Existing crossing demolition and new road and bridge construction are anticipated to last two-three months, one month of that involves waiting for the cement poured for the bridge abutments to cure. Work within California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) jurisdictional areas will be dictated by project permits, but is anticipated to be between April 15 - Nov 1, 2014, or when surface water (and steelhead trout and other aquatic species) are not present at the two Arizona crossings. For areas above the low-flow channel that require re-vegetation, plantings would be installed during the rainy season (likely November 1, 2014 or later) after the first wetting winter rains, and installation is anticipated to be completed by March 2015. To avoid noise and other impacts on park visitors, construction work hours at the site will be as follows:

- M-Th: 7:30 am-7 pm.
- Fri: Haul/cement trucks 7:30 am- 3pm, all other work 7:30 am-7:00 pm
- Weekends and Holidays: No haul or cement trucks or loud activities like demolition/jackhammering are permitted; 8:00 am-6:00 pm for other activities.

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 and in-stream restoration projects including removal of fish passage barriers and other obstructions.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

DPR will replace two in-stream barriers with two freespan bridges. The third in-stream barrier will simply be removed. The two bridges will be maintained as part of DPR's ongoing facilities maintenance program, overseen by the Angeles District Maintenance Chief. Bridges will likely require less maintenance than the existing Arizona crossings. DPR will continue to maintain the areas where weeds are removed and the riparian zone as a whole as part of its ongoing resource management efforts managed by the Senior Environmental Scientist. Riparian plantings will occur in areas directly disturbed by project construction, and it is anticipated that 3-5 years of maintenance will ensure establishment. After the native plantings are well established, weed removal will occur as needed in these areas as part of DPR's ongoing invasive weed management program. DPR has agreed, pursuant to the grant agreement, to maintain the site for the 25-year life of the project.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Item	WCB	SWRCB	DPR	TOTALS
Personnel Services	\$0	\$156,500	\$25,000	\$181,500
Operating Expenses	\$0	\$7,000	\$14,000	\$21,000
Construction Monitoring	\$0	\$21,000	\$20,000	\$41,000
Construction Contracts	\$209,000	\$1,270,500	\$ 129,887	\$1,609,387
TOTALS	\$209,000	\$1,455,000	\$ 188,887	\$1,852,887

Project costs will be for project design, engineering and planning, construction management, removal of two Arizona crossings and a small check dam, installation of two bridges, weed removal, and planting of riparian vegetation.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(a), which provides funding for the acquisition, protection, and restoration of coastal wetlands, upland areas adjacent to coastal wetlands and coastal watershed lands in southern California, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

CDFW 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 15302, Class 2, as the replacement or reconstruction of existing facilities at the same site and with substantially the same purpose and capacity and Section 15304, Class 4, as a minor alteration to land, water and/or vegetation which does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$209,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(a); 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.

As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Chairman Bonham that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$209,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(a); 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.

Motion carried.

14. Lake Tahoe Fishing Access Boat Ramp \$681,000.00
Placer County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Tahoe City Public Utilities District (TCPUD) for a cooperative project with the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association to rehabilitate the boat ramp at Lake Tahoe Public Access Facility on Lake Forest Road, located two miles northeast of Tahoe City in Placer County. Ms. Elizabeth Hubert of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

Lake Tahoe is the second largest alpine lake in the world, after Lake Baikal. It is an extremely popular place for California residents and visitors to recreate. Eighty percent of the Tahoe Basin is in public ownership, which allows for access to many parks, beaches, and undisturbed shoreline.

The Lake Forest Boat Ramp, located two miles northeast of Tahoe City, offers the public safe and convenient access to Lake Tahoe where they can fish, swim, view wildlife, and recreate. The boat ramp also provides the greatest launch capacity in North Lake Tahoe and the greatest depth, so the public can still access Lake Tahoe in drought years. The boat ramp is also near other public facilities including the adjacent Pomin Park, an 11-acre site that includes a ball field, a large lawn area, picnic tables, restrooms, and a campground that are all open to the public and heavily used. Many California residents and visitors regularly use the Lake Forest Boat Ramp, campground, and Pomin Park based on its proximity to the lake and amenities.

The Lake Forest Boat Ramp is the most heavily used public launching facility and is open longer in the season than any other boat ramp in North Tahoe. Annual boat launches at this facility have a 10 year average of 3,425 launches. There is a public pier that is fully accessible pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act providing access to fishing and viewing wildlife while enjoying the spectacular view of Lake Tahoe. Additionally, the project area is surrounded by the most heavily populated portion of the North Tahoe region, and the boat ramp and park serve a broad base of the community and visitors. In the peak of summer, over 5 million visitors come to Lake Tahoe annually. The Lake Forest Boat Ramp is the closest public boat ramp to Interstate 80, which provides easy access to users from all over the State.

Over the years, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) has been involved in several rehabilitation projects on the site, having replaced the restroom, rehabilitated the parking lot, and constructing a fishing pier and breakwater to better protect boaters when high winds can produce

dangerous boat retrieval conditions.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Lake Forest Boat Ramp rehabilitation project includes the design, permitting, and construction of a new concrete boat ramp and the dredging of sediment from the toe of the ramp to return the lake bottom to the original design elevations. The proposed new construction has a greater footprint than the existing ramp. The current boat ramp is approximately 4,384 square feet, and the proposed boat ramp will be larger at 5,965 square feet.

The existing boat ramp at Lake Forest was constructed in 1963, has significant structural deterioration, and is at the end of its useful life. The primary components of the boat ramp (the boat ramp layout, lane width, the head of ramp, the toe of ramp and the slope) will be constructed according to California Department of Boating and Waterway's Handbook design criteria. The new ramp will still have three launching lanes, but they will be designed to current standards. The new lanes will be wider, 15 feet wide, which is enlarged from the current width of 12 feet to allow for safer launches and retrievals at Lake Forest during the busiest weekends. The new ramp will be designed with robust side cutoff walls for erosion control to prevent any undermining of the ramp. The project also includes the removal of the accumulated sediment at the toe of the ramp to return the basin to the previous dredging elevation of 6,219'. This will enable boating operations at lower lake levels, allowing the facility to remain open during drought conditions.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Public Access Program and meets the program's goal of providing public access for hunting, fishing, or other wildlife-oriented recreation statewide.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The TCPUD will provide long-term management of the project. The property is owned by the State of California, and TCPUD has been maintaining the Lake Forest Boat Ramp on behalf of WCB since 1973 and will continue to do so for the 25-year life of the project. TCPUD is responsible for the daily operations and maintenance of the Lake Forest Boat Ramp, keeping the facility open for recreational use all year long. Operation of the facility is funded with both user fees collected at the site for parking, and property tax revenues. All user fees collected by TCPUD are used to maintain the facility. TCPUD's annual park maintenance and operations budget is just over \$2 million annually.

If at any time during the 25-year life of the project the TCPUD does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that the TCPUD refund to the State of California an amortized

amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

Project Task	Total Costs	WCB	NLTRA	TCPUD
Design Consultant Services	\$98,570	\$0	\$35,000	\$63,570
TCPUD Design Oversight	\$14,430	\$0	\$0	\$14,430
Construction Oversight	\$104,000	\$104,000	\$0	\$0
Ramp replacement	\$452,000	\$452,000	\$0	\$0
Dredging	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$794,000	\$681,000	\$35,000	\$78,000

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the WCB's Wildlife Restoration Fund, which allows for the development of public access facilities for hunting, fishing and other wildlife compatible recreational activities and is consistent with the objectives of this project. WCB staff have applied for assistance through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sport Fish Restoration Act. If successful, the SFRA will reimburse WCB for 75% for project costs.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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 15302, Class 2, as the replacement or reconstruction of existing facilities at the same site and with substantially the same purpose and capacity and Section 15304 as a minor alteration of land. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$681,000.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund; 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.

Ms. Hubert introduced Ms. Cindy Gustafson, General Manager, and Mr. Bob Bolton, Director of Parks and Recreation from Tahoe City Public

Utility District, who were in the audience and available to answer questions.

Mr. Sutton commented that it is good to see cost-sharing on the part of local authorities. Mr. Sutton commented that this is another project for which we have a prospect for reimbursement from federal government and asked to provide more details about that. Mr. Donnelly responded that this is a very realistic prospect and the reimbursement would come from the Fish Restoration Program funds. Mr. Peter Perrine, Assistant Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board, added that every year the US Fish and Wildlife Service provides funds directly to the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), and only WCB can apply for those funds. Mr. Perrine went on to explain that those funds are for fishing access and boating access-only projects. Mr. Perrine said that we also apply for the Department of Parks and Recreation Division Boating and Waterways funds as well. Chairman Bonham went on to explain that the funds mentioned by Mr. Perrine are the federal funds produced by contributions by sportsmen when they make purchases of angling-related equipment which is the federal act that was a little later in time but similar in effect to the Pittman–Robertson Act that generates revenue from hunters when they purchase ammunition and rifles.

Ms. Cindy Gustafson, General Manager of the Tahoe City Public Utility District (TCPUD) introduced herself before the Board and spoke in support of this project. Ms. Gustafson said that TCPUD has operated the facility for about 50 years and thanked the WCB for many years of strong support. Ms. Gustafson commented that it is the busiest public boat launch at Lake Tahoe, including South Lake Tahoe, and it is open all year around. Ms. Gustafson thanked the WCB for considering this project.

Chairman Bonham asked if there were any additional questions or comments about this agenda item. There were none.

It was moved by Chairman Bonham that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$681,000.00 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund; 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.

Motion carried.

15. East Contra Costa County HCP/NCCP (Roddy Ranch) \$ 4,846,875.00
Contra Costa County

The proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy (ECCCHC), as well as the acceptance of two U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grants and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the ECCCHC for a cooperative project with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) to acquire 1,885± 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), located in the Diablo Mountain Range. Mr. Brian Gibson of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located at the base of the Diablo Mountain Range, west of Deer Valley Road, south of and partially within the City of Antioch and partially within unincorporated Contra Costa County. 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, Round Valley Regional Preserve and Los Vaqueros Reservoir watershed lands. Surrounding land uses include existing natural park lands, wildlife mitigation lands, private cattle ranching and a golf course that is an in-holding within the Property boundaries. There are also several other small ranch in-holdings within the Property. Urban uses have been encroaching over the last 20 years on open space heading toward, and are currently within 1 mile east of the Property.

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. Over the past several years the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), USFWS, ECCCHC and EBRPD have partnered to acquire just over 9,000± acres of habitat within the ECCC HCP/NCCP, helping protect essential habitat and connectivity for multiple wildlife species. The project is also consistent with action proposed under California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) California Wildlife Action 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 1,885± acres in size and is currently operated as a cattle ranch. The terrain includes three broad valleys separated by two well-defined ridges. Elevations along the valley floors range from 250 to 500 feet. The northerly ridge elevations range from about 460 to 860 feet, while the southerly ridge elevations range from approximately 660 to 1,020 feet. Habitat types found on the Property include alkali grassland, alkali wetland, chaparral, grassland, oak savanna, oak woodland, pond, seasonal wetland, and wetland. This varied terrain of the Property also provides benefits to wildlife in terms of future climate change resiliency.

The size and terrain, including three distinct sub-watersheds, provide major ecosystem benefits to species both on and off the Property by linking wildlife areas 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.

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 on behalf of the CDFW and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. The project has been reviewed and approved by the CDFW under its NCCP 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

When acquired, the Property will be managed by the EBRPD. 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 area. It is anticipated that the area will offer opportunities for future passive recreational uses that are allowed 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 \$14,245,000.00. 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, foundation funds and a WCB grant to ECCCHC. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and the USFWS subgrant to the ECCCHC provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the grantee to encumber the Property with a conservation easement and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

WCB Grant	\$ 4,841,875.00
USFWS subgrant funds	\$ 4,841,875.00
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation (see Note)	\$ 1,000,000.00
East Bay Regional Park District	<u>\$ 3,561,250.00</u>
Total Purchase Price	\$ 14,245,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	\$ 5,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$ 4,846,875.00

Note: The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation funding has been requested but is not yet approved at this time. EBRPD will provide these funds if the Foundation cannot.

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 75055(c) (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 NCCPs.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$4,846,875.00 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; approve the acceptance of Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant funds from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$4,841,875.00 and approve the subgrant of the federal funds to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Gibson introduced Mr. John Kopchik, Executive Director of the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy (ECCCHC), and Mr. Bob Nisbet, the Assistant General Manager of the East Bay Regional Park District (ERBPD), who were in the audience and available to answer question.

Mr. Sutton commented that this is a complex project with a lot of partners and asked if the Moore Foundation has approved its grant to support this acquisition. Mr. Gibson responded that he does not think the Foundation has approved the grant at this point. Mr. Gibson went on to explain that there is an understanding if the Moore Foundation grant does not come through, then the ERBPD will provide the needed funding to close.

Mr. Donnelly asked when we should hear about the decision. Mr. John Kopchik, Executive Director of the ECCCHC, introduced himself before the Board and said that we should find out the status of the Moore Foundation grant in early 2014.

Mr. Sutton commented that EBRPD has a habit of grazing cattle on a lot of their land, and asked if they are planning to continue grazing on this particular property once it is acquired. Mr. Gibson responded that they will renew and continue grazing on this property.

Chairman Bonham asked if the acquisition cuts off ingress to the apparent inholding. Mr. Gibson responded that the inholding is 40 acres in size and

will continue to have legal access.

Mr. Sutton commented that one of the justifications for this acquisition is that it is the part of an HCP/NCCP, and those documents probably speak to the issue of the impact of grazing on the listed species and asked if that has been taken into account for this particular project. Mr. Donnelly responded it has been taken into account and went on to explain that ECCCHC and EBRPD operate a successful grazing program in the area.

Chairman Bonham asked if there any other questions or comments about this agenda item. There were none.

It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$4,846,875.00 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; approve the acceptance of Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant funds from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$4,841,875.00 and approve the subgrant of the federal funds to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

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| 16. | San Joaquin River Parkway, Ball Ranch (Quarry Site)
Fresno County | \$0.00 |
|-----|--|--------|

This proposal was withdrawn from consideration at this time.

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 17. Round Valley, Pine Creek Unit
Inyo County | \$0.00 |
|--|--------|

This proposal was withdrawn from consideration at this time.

- 18 Granite Mountain Desert \$1,785,000.00
Research Center Improvements
San Bernardino County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Regents of the University of California to construct a new administrative building and housing for visiting researchers, renovate a staff residence and laboratory, expand wireless network infrastructure, and improve the water system at the Granite Mountain Desert Research Center, located 16± miles south of Kelso in San Bernardino County. Mr. Brian Cary of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

Positioned on the eastern slopes of the Granite Mountains, the 9,000-acre Granite Mountains Desert Research Center (GMDRC) rises from desert up through pinyon- and juniper-covered ridges to Granite Peak (6,800 ft.), the highest peak in the Granite Mountains. From there, large watersheds descend precipitously to the north and east into the sandy alluvial valleys of Bighorn Basin, Cottonwood Basin, and Granite Cove. The lower slopes are characterized by fractured granitic canyon walls and outlying boulders, giving way to the east to densely vegetated alluvial fans and washes. Springs and seeps with associated wetland plants and invertebrates are common throughout the reserve.

The Granite Mountains played a significant historical role in the development of the University of California Natural Reserve System (NRS). In the 1960s, UC professors Ken Norris (UCLA) and Wilbur Mayhew (UC Riverside), through their field courses at Granite Mountains, developed the idea that eventually led to the creation of the Statewide NRS in 1965. The Granite Mountains Reserve was formally added to the NRS in 1978. In 1987, the University of California entered into a long-term cooperative agreement with the Department of the Interior and Bureau of Land Management encompassing both University and federally owned public lands, which expanded the reserve to approximately 9,000 acres (2,200 acres of which are UC-owned). The agreement provided the University of California with non-exclusive use of the federally owned lands for the purposes of conducting research and educational activities in accordance with the charter of the NRS. The 9,000-acre reserve was recognized in the California Desert Protection Act of 1994, which also transferred the federally owned lands to the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. In 1995, the University renamed the reserve the Jack and Marilyn Sweeney Granite Mountains Desert Research Center.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Every reserve is unique in the services it provides, its capabilities, and what is emphasized in its mission. What the GMDRC offers to visiting researchers and classes, as much perhaps as any field station in the

western U.S., is a tremendous natural area that is pristine, diverse, and expansive. The GMDRC is located in the eastern Mojave Desert of San Bernardino County, a region of unparalleled biological and geological diversity in California. Embedded within millions of acres of federal wilderness, landscape-level ecological processes are still functioning here. And while it is the quality of this natural area that represents the single greatest asset of the field station, the facilities and infrastructure are vital to its operation.

Over the past three decades, overall use of the GMDRC has steadily increased. Research use has grown exponentially with more than 375 academic research projects that have generated over 500 peer-reviewed publications. Development of research programs was initially slow, taking 20 years to reach 50 active research projects. In 2010, after nearly a third of a century of growth, the number of current and active research projects at the GMDRC numbered 168.

As is always the case, rapid growth is often accompanied by a concurrent demand for additional facilities and associated infrastructure. The existing administration building is not large enough for the increased staff. The sixty-year-old buildings, built by the original homesteaders, need to be refurbished and more housing is needed for visiting researchers. Just as important, however, is the need to upgrade the water supply system (wells, pumps, conveyance and storage) that services Granite Cove and to update the wireless network to allow researchers access to remote sensing devices.

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 the 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 Granite Mountain Desert Research Center and, pursuant to the Grant Agreement, will be maintained by GMDRC for thirty years.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Work Task/Category	Cost	UCR	WCB	NSF
Design Engineering and Planning	\$433,000	\$100,000	\$333,000	\$0
Construction	\$1,683,000	\$311,000	\$1,339,000	\$33,000
Operation and Maintenance	\$98,000	\$98,000	\$0	\$0
Endowment Principle for O&M	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	\$0	\$0
Contingency	\$156,000	\$43,000	\$113,000	\$0
Total Project Cost	\$3,570,000	\$1,752,000	\$1,785,000	\$33,000

UCR- University of California- Riverside
 WCB- Wildlife Conservation Board
 NSF- National Science Foundation

Project costs will be for project design, engineering and planning, construction, operation and maintenance. Construction activities will include: 1) Improvements to the water system though well development and associated infrastructure; 2) Construction of a new 2,100 sq. ft. Administrative Building to provide administrative offices, meeting room, interpretive displays and museum collections; 3) Addition of cellular towers to improve the wireless network on the reserve; 4) Renovation of the existing laboratory to rodent-proof the building; 5) Construction of a 280 sq. ft. duplex to increase lodging opportunities for an additional four researchers; 6) Renovation of the staff residence by replacing dilapidated trusses, rafters, and rooftop, updating sixty year old electrical and plumbing materials and rodent proofing the building by sealing walls and entry points.

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). This funding may be granted 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 is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15301 and 15303, as maintenance of existing facilities and construction of new small structures. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The project was vetted through the University of California Natural Reserve System’s Ad Hoc Subcommittee and recommended for funding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,785,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)(3); 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.

Chairman Bonham commented that in the agenda, it says that the number of research projects at the Center is about 100 and growing, and asked Mr. Cary if there is any current research going on. Mr. Cary responded that he does not have specific information about current research, however the Center is a working laboratory in a wilderness area.

Chairman Bonham asked to provide more information about upgrading the director's residence. Mr. Cary responded that the upgrade is about safety and welfare of the occupant (e.g. removing asbestos, improving wiring, etc.).

Chairman Bonham asked if there were any other questions or comments about this agenda item. There were none.

It was moved by Mr. Sutton that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,785,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)(3); 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.

Motion carried.

19. Goose Lake Legacy Project \$2,348,836.00
Kern County

Mr. Donnelly reported that several letters of support were received for this project from the following people: Mr. Bob Shaffer, Coordinator, Central Valley Joint Venture; Mr. Gregory Yarris, Science Coordinator, Central Valley Joint Venture; Mr. Keiller Kyle, Conservation Project Director, Audubon California; and Mr. Robert Hansen, President, Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association (CWA) to acquire 1,670± acres of land for the purpose of protecting wetlands and associated upland habitat areas in the Goose Lake watershed, supporting numerous migratory birds and threatened and endangered species. Mr. John Walsh of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located approximately 30 miles northwest of Bakersfield, south of the City of Wasco in Kern County. Interstate 5 borders much of the western boundary of the area. The adjoining lands consist of primarily irrigated agriculture including pistachios, almonds, pomegranates, cotton, etc. In addition to agriculture, nearby lands and linkages include protected wetland conservation areas enrolled in Natural Resources Conservation Service, federal easement Wetland Reserve Program. The Kern National Wildlife Refuge is located approximately ten miles north of the Property.

The Goose Lake region is an area that historically (pre-1850's) was covered by a vast expanse of shallow flooded wetlands. Flooding of these wetlands occurred through natural rain and snow run-off each spring. This natural inundation of wetlands occurred not only in the Goose Lake region, but also in the neighboring Tulare, Kern, and Buena Vista Lake beds. In total, the historic wetland complex comprised roughly 500,000 acres and formed the largest freshwater marsh west of the Mississippi River. The expanse provided a major stopover area within the Pacific Flyway for numerous migratory waterfowl and other bird species flying between northern and southern habitat regions. It also provided wintering area for vast numbers of waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds and year-round habitat for numerous resident terrestrial and aquatic-dependent species. Wetlands in the region remained in their natural state until the late 1850's when main tributaries of the basin were diverted for irrigating farmland. In 1905, full scale reclamation of the wetland habitat was underway with the construction of levees and water diversions, which eventually reduced this habitat base to less than 15,000 acres. Since the natural hydrology of the area has essentially been eliminated, wetland habitat must now be maintained with artificial water supplies. Today, the majority of the

remaining wetlands are located on federal wildlife refuges, water district managed lands, and private lands.

The Property is a California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) regional priority and listed within CDFW's Goose Lake Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The Goose Lake area is also important for waterfowl conservation plans such as the Central Valley Joint Venture (CVJV), which is tasked with implementing the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). Under these plans some of the major priorities for the area are protection and restoration of palustrine emergent habitats and wetland enhancement activities to increase wetland resource values. Habitat enhancements within the Goose Lake area will improve foraging areas opportunities that will help improve the overall body condition of waterfowl in preparation for the return migration north and for the breeding season, which in turn leads to increased reproductive success.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The acquisition consists of two non-contiguous properties which are rectangular in shape and the general terrain is fairly level. Approximately 50% of the Property acreage is alkali sink, managed seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands including mud flats, open water, emergent vegetation, shrubs and trees. The other 50% includes associated uplands and grassland area. Water conveyance systems run throughout the Property to deliver water to managed wetlands units.

In addition to the numerous waterfowl, shorebirds and other migratory bird species that utilize the Property, it also provides habitat for a number of rare, threatened, and endangered species including the state threatened and federally endangered San Joaquin kit fox, state and federally endangered blunt-nosed leopard lizard and Tipton kangaroo rat, and the state threatened San Joaquin antelope squirrel.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being made 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 the acquisitions of properties. Under the Program 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/CAPP (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

CWA, a non-profit hunter-supported conservation organization, will be responsible for managing the Property according to the terms of the grant, which provides that the Property will be used to further protect and manage the wildlife habitat, and facilitate public access, recreation and outreach through conservation programs primarily administered by CWA.

CWA is working with the Property owner to develop a stewardship fund (Fund), to be funded by the proceeds from this acquisition. The Fund will establish and help guarantee that baseline funding levels are available to meet future operating and maintenance costs.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$2,338,836.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The owner has agreed to sell the Property for the approved appraised fair market value. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant to CWA provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the grantee to encumber the Property with a conservation easement in favor of the State or another entity approved by the State and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$2,338,836.00
Total Purchase Price	\$2,338,836.00
Other Project-Related Costs	\$ 10,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$2,348,836.00

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

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the

proposed funding source, Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c), which allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat containing natural communities and for the protection of rare, endangered, threatened, or fully protected species.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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 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 recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,348,836.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Walsh introduced Mr. John Carlson, Jr. President, Mr. Jake Messerli, Vice President of Conservation Programs at California Waterfowl Association, and Ruth Ostroff, with the Central Valley Joint Venture who were in audience and available to answer questions.

Mr. Sutton asked about CWA contribution in terms of management to this project.

Mr. Walsh responded that CWA is working with the current property owner to set up a stewardship fund, which will establish and help guarantee that baseline funding levels are available to meet future operating and maintenance costs.

Mr. Jake Messerli from CWA said that CWA will be contributing a significant amount of management dollars each year, and water costs would probably be the largest expense. Mr. Messerli went on to explain that CWA expects to spend about \$200 per acre per year, and the stewardship fund will generate over \$100,000 to help with the expenses. Mr. Messerli also stated that this project is related to the Suisun Marsh acquisition by CWA that WCB approved two years ago, and will be managed in the same way. Mr. Messerli added that this project is important to CWA because of its proximity to Los Angeles and Bakersfield and located in the historic Tulare Lake basin.

Mr. Sutton asked since this is a high priority for CDFW, why CDFW is not acquiring the property. Chairman Bonham commented that CDFW has senior land management staff available for this region, but it is important for the CDFW to continue to ask over time whether it has the ability to add and maintain property. Ms. Teri Palmisano from CDFW Region 4 stated that this is a very high priority area for CDFW, and few years ago CDFW planned to purchase the land in this area to operate it as a staffed wildlife area. At this time, we don't have the staff or funding, and CWA has many of the same goals as CDFW.

Chairman Bonham asked to confirm if CWA believes that this particular property will provide recreational opportunity for hunters. Mr. Carlson from CWA responded that this is correct and added that this property also offers recreational opportunities for non-hunters.

Chairman Bonham asked if Mr. Carlson thinks of this project as an example of WCB and CDFW taking action to improve recreational opportunities, including for hunters, in California. Mr. Carlson confirmed that this is correct.

Chairman Bonham commented that this acquisition will be done through a grant, and asked how we can make sure that public access will remain available. Mr. Carlson responded that this project will be maintained similar to their Suisun Marsh property, and commented that since CWA acquired Suisun Marsh, they have already had about 900 children go through on-the-ground campground and junior hunts, and added that they have the same intent for this project.

Mr. Donnelly commented that in the terms of our grant agreement, the grant is issued for specific conservation purposes. One of the purposes for this particular project is public recreation, and CWA is required by the grant agreement to monitor the property and report back to WCB. If in the future, CWA does not operate the property pursuant to some degree of public recreation, including hunting and other recreational opportunities, then WCB can implement our remedies under the grant agreement. Mr. Donnelly went on to explain that in addition to the grant agreement, we also record a Notice of Unrecorded Grant Agreement on the title of the particular property, which provides notice to the public that there is a grant agreement in place, affecting the property.

Chairman Bonham asked if CWA will charge public for access. Mr. Carlson responded that for camps and junior hunts there are nominal fees to help offset costs. Chairman Bonham asked if CWA would charge hunters for access. Mr. Carlson responded that there would be fees imposed to hunt on the property.

Mr. Sutton asked if the seller would donate the proceeds to CWA as an endowment for management of the property. Mr. Carlson responded that this is correct. Mr. Sutton asked to clarify if we're getting an endowment to manage that land. Mr. Carlson responded that this is correct.

Mr. Sutton commented that this is a wetland area and ask if water rights go with this property. Mr. Carlson responded that water rights will be part of this acquisition, and the property will stay as a wetland.

Mr. Ruth Ostroff from US Fish and Wildlife Services, representing Central Valley Joint Venture (CVJV), spoke in support of this project. Ms. Ostroff distributed a brochure highlighting 25 years of conservation work of the CVJV and said that CVJV is guided by an implementation plan, and Tulare Basin has been identified as one of two highest priority basins. Ms. Ostroff stated that this project would bring much needed habitat to an area that is extremely difficult to work in. Ms. Ostroff thanked the Board for considering this project.

Chairman Bonham asked if there were any additional questions or comments on this agenda item. There were none.

It was moved by Mr. Sutton that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,348,836.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

20. Ocean Trails HCPLA 2009 \$607,250.00
(Ya Yi May and Angeles LLC Properties)
Los Angeles County

Mr. Donnelly reported that a letter of support for this project was received from Ms. Andrea Vona, Executive Director of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for two grants to the City of Rancho Palos Verdes (City), as well as the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the City to acquire two separate properties, 16± acres and 42± acres in size, for the protection and preservation of existing wildlife linkages and species associated with the Ocean Trails Habitat Conservation Plan (OC HCP) and the pending Rancho Palos Verdes Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (RPV NCCP). Mr. Brian Gibson of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The two subject properties (Property) are located within Malaga Canyon, in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes. Malaga Canyon consists of undeveloped open space in the northern part of the City within the Grandview neighborhood. The Canyon runs primarily in a north-south direction crossing under Montemalaga Drive and flowing into the City of Palos Verdes Estates. The first site, referred to as the “Angeles LLC” property, consists of 42± acres and is located along the northern and southern side of Montemalaga Drive west of Basswood Avenue. The second site, called the “Ya Yi May” property, consists of 16± acres and is located along the northern and southern sides of the undeveloped Mossbank Drive in the upper (southern) portion of Malaga Canyon.

The Property is located about two miles north of the 463± acre Portuguese Bend Nature Reserve acquisition, which was partially funded by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) in 2005, and the 163± acre Forrestal Reserve acquisition, which was also partially funded by the WCB in 1996. Surrounding land uses include single family residences, several schools and parklands.

The project is also consistent with action proposed under California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (CDFW) California Wildlife Action Plan. The project is located within the South Coast region within the plan. One of the recommended conservation actions called out for this region is that wildlife agencies and local governments should work to implement regional NCCPs, which is the primary purpose process to conserve habitat and species in the region’s rapidly urbanizing areas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Angeles LLC Property

The Angeles LLC property consists of five tax parcels grouped into three non-contiguous areas totaling 42± acres. The property is mostly coastal sage scrub with areas of grassland on steeply sloping land. There are no improvements on the property.

Ya Yi May Property

The Ya Yi May property consists of two contiguous tax parcels totaling 16± acres. The property terrain is rolling to steep hills with acreage on both sides of Mossbank Drive. The entire ownership is identified as grassland vegetation. There are no improvements on the property.

The Palos Verdes Peninsula contains the last remaining and most northern block of habitat supporting a viable coastal California gnatcatcher population on the coast in California. Acquisition of the Property will contribute to the conservation of one of the most intensely studied gnatcatcher populations in California. Combined with properties already protected within the proposed RPV NCCP, conservation of these parcels will contribute to a north-south linkage between populations of the federally listed threatened coastal California gnatcatcher and provide potential habitat for the federally listed endangered Palos Verdes butterfly, the coastal cactus wren and other rare species found on the Palos Verdes Peninsula. In addition to providing protection to existing habitat, acquisition of the Property by the City would facilitate the potential future implementation of several segments of the Malaga Canyon Trail identified in the City's Conceptual Trails Plan.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grants and subgrants for this project are 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 on behalf of the CDFW, as well as 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 NCCP program, substantiating the biological values of the Property and recommending them for funding. The USFWS grant proposed for this project has 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

When acquired, the City may enroll the Property in the RPV NCCP preserve, called the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve (Preserve). The Preserve area spans some 1,400± acres with over 30 miles of trails through rolling hills, steep canyons and rock outcrops, with significant

habitat and spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean. The Preserve is made up of ten habitat reserves and is owned by the City and managed by the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy (PVPLC). PVPLC will fund its management obligations within the Preserve, and the City would meet its ownership obligations (fuel modification, safety, etc.). It is anticipated that the area will be managed for protection of habitat areas and may also provide opportunities for passive recreational uses.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$1,114,500.00. Specifically, the Angeles LLC property has an appraised fair market value of \$659,500.00, and the Ya Yi May property has an appraised fair market value of \$455,000.00. The appraisals have been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and the USFWS. The Property owners have each agreed to sell their Property for its approved appraised fair market value. The USFWS funds require a non-federal match that is being provided by the WCB grants to the City. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grants and the USFWS subgrants to the City 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 each acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the City to encumber the Property with a conservation easement and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

WCB Grant (Angeles)	\$ 329,750.00
USFWS subgrant funds (Angeles)	<u>\$ 329,750.00</u>
Total Purchase Price	\$ 659,500.00
WCB Grant (Ya Yi May)	\$ 227,500.00
USFWS subgrant funds (Ya Yi May)	<u>\$ 227,500.00</u>
Total Purchase Price	\$ 455,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs:	\$ 50,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$ 607,250.00

It is estimated that an additional \$50,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including appraisals and DGS appraisal review costs. Under the terms of the USFWS grants, the WCB may seek partial reimbursement of these costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisitions have been reviewed for compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and each 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. Subject to authorization by the WCB, Notices of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$607,250.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(c) for the grants to the City of Rancho Palos Verdes and to cover the project-related costs approve the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$557,250.00 and approve the subgrant of the federal funds to the City of Rancho Palos Verdes; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Gibson introduced Mr. Joel Rojas, Director of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement of City of Rancho Palos Verdes, who was in the audience and available to answer questions.

Ms. Finn asked to clarify if the City will enroll the Property in the RPV NCCP preserve, called the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve (Preserve). Mr. Gibson confirmed that is the case. Ms. Finn asked if there will be passive recreational use. Mr. Gibson responded that the Property will provide passive recreational use, and will be managed by Palos Verdes Peninsula Conservancy.

Chairman Bonham asked if there were any additional questions or comments about this agenda item. There were none.

It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$607,250.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(c)

for the grants to the City of Rancho Palos Verdes and to cover the project-related costs approve the acceptance of a Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$557,250.00 and approve the subgrant of the federal funds to the City of Rancho Palos Verdes; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

Motion carried.

21. Imperial Wildlife Area Wetland Restoration \$1,000,000.00
Imperial County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Duck Stamp Program to restore and enhance 367± acres of wetlands at CDFW's Imperial Wildlife Area (IWA), Wister Unit, located six miles northwest of Niland in Imperial County. Mr. Brian Cary of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

Millions of years ago the area surrounding the Salton Sea was part of the Gulf of California. Over time sediment deposited by the Colorado River cut off the area from the Gulf, and a large freshwater lake was formed. Over hundreds of thousands of years, changing climate and realignment of rivers would result in the lake alternately forming, then drying out and reverting to desert. The last time the lake formed was in 1905, when the Colorado River was accidentally diverted into the basin during construction of the All-American Canal, and the Salton Sea as we know it was formed.

The IWA is located on the southeastern shoreline of the Salton Sea north of the City of Niland. The IWA was established in 1954 to provide over 6,000 acres of safe haven for migrating birds that visit the Salton Sea region every winter. Over the years, many seasonal and permanent wetland units were developed to provide habitat for wildlife, as well as recreational activities for the public. Over the last six years alone, six State-funded projects totaling more than \$770,000 restored 1,300± acres of wetlands on the IWA. Five of the projects were funded through CDFW's Duck Stamp Program, and one project was funded through the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). Three U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grants through the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) totaled nearly \$1,500,000 helped restore an additional 2,570± acres of wetlands.

This restoration project will be taking place near the northern boundary of the IWA. The areas to be restored are currently sitting idle, but prior to acquisition by the State these areas were used to impound water for fish production. The site contains heavy clay soils that hold water well - probably one of the reasons for its use in fish production in the past.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Because of the great regional importance of Imperial Valley's wetlands to wildlife and migrating birds of all species, the Sonoran Joint Venture identified the IWA and surrounding Salton Sea as a designated focus area in need of habitat protection, enhancement and expansion. In addition,

the WCB, NAWCA council, and CDFW have dedicated a significant amount of funds over the last six plus years for the restoration and enhancement of the area's wetlands, including those at the IWA's Wister Unit. The potential to increase the acreage of high quality wetland habitat for wildlife while also increasing the availability of usable acreage for the general public will successfully provide benefits to the goals and objectives of all the partners involved.

In total, the project will restore an estimated 207 acres of wetland habitat and establish a 5-acre permanent fishing unit, which will be incorporated into the IWA's overall public use program. At the same time, 160 acres will be enhanced with improved water conveyance infrastructure.

Currently, many of the existing wetland units on the subject site are extremely narrow, with failing perimeter levees, poor or no drainage capabilities, and have areas that cannot be flooded. This project will remove unneeded levees, refurbish existing levees, establish drainage swales, install new water control structures, and install a new pipeline to deliver water efficiently to the restored and enhanced wetlands. These activities will maximize management capabilities and increase habitat quality.

This portion of the IWA receives water from the Imperial Irrigation District. The Wister Unit is located at the end of the line for much of the Imperial Valley agricultural drain water, as well as for deliverable water diverted from the Colorado River. Both sources are currently used to flood and irrigate the Wildlife Area. The water supply is a prescribed supply and is tied to the property. The new pipelines will reduce water costs, evaporative loss, runoff, and vegetative loss associated with open ditch water delivery systems. The re-contouring and development of wetland units will reduce water usage during fall flooding and spring irrigations, as units will be developed in such a way that water will be distributed evenly and efficiently across the wetland units. The project will also clean up and remove dilapidated buildings and old fish farm infrastructure.

This project will help to expand and increase the quality of the existing habitat within the IWA, expand hunting and fishing opportunities for the public, and provide a more enjoyable experience for all visitors who come to the IWA to appreciate the thousands of birds and other wildlife that call this place home.

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.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

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

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Item	Cost	Duck Stamp	WCB
Earth Work/Debris Cleanup	\$744,000	\$115,000	\$629,000
Water Control Structures/Signage	\$234,000		\$234,000
Project Management	\$125,000		\$125,000
Contingency	\$12,000		\$12,000
TOTAL	\$1,115,000	\$115,000	\$1,000,000

Project costs will be for construction, site cleanup and debris disposal, and project management. Construction costs are associated with acquisition and installation of water control structure (e.g. pipelines, valves, and screwgates) and earthwork. Site cleanup and debris disposal costs include reservoir demolition, removal of dilapidated building, and disposal fees.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley, which provides funding for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands outside the Central Valley and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15304 Class 4, as a minor alteration to land. Subject to approval by the Board, 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 recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,000,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley; 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.

Mr. Cary introduced Mr. Chad Santerre with California Waterfowl Association, who was in the audience and available to answer questions.

Mr. Sutton commented that in the write up for this agenda item, it says that a portion of the IWA receives water from the Imperial Irrigation District and asked if that will continue as we restore the land. Mr. Cary responded that water rights will be available and this particular piece will stay as a wetland. Mr. Sutton said that there is a concern about dust mitigation and the fact that water levels of Salton Sea are decreasing, so we have a water issue in that area. Chairman Bonham commented that one of the potential habitat projects which could produce possible air quality benefits is to take degraded landscape and try to move it back to wetland habitat.

Mr. Peter Perrine from the WCB emphasized that results from this project, like similar projects completed in the past, will enable land managers to use water more efficiently. Mr. Perrine clarified this statement by explaining that well-designed ponds allows for water to move back and forth between individual units based on habitat management needs and does not require the use of additional quantities of water.

Chairman Bonham asked if there were any additional questions or comments about this agenda item. There were none.

It was moved by Mr. Sutton that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,000,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley; 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.

Motion carried.

22. Tijuana River Valley Mesa Trails \$1,200,000.00
San Diego County

Mr. Donnelly reported that several letters of support for this project were received from the following people: Congressman Juan Vargas, Congress of the United States, 51st District; Senator Ben Hueso, CA State Senate, 40th District; Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez, CA State Assembly, 8th District; Assembly Member Tony Atkins, CA State Assembly, 78th District; Mr. Greg Cox, Chairman, San Diego County Board of Supervisors; Mr. David Alvarez, Councilmember, City of San Diego, 8th District; Mr. Todd Gloria, Interim Mayor, City of San Diego; Mr. David W. Gibson, Executive Officer, CA Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region; Mr. John Gabaldon, President, Tijuana River Valley Equestrian Association; Ms. Paloma Aquirre, U.S. – Mexico Border Director, WILDCOAST; and Mr. Michael McCoy, DVM, President, Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the San Diego County Department of Parks and Recreation for a project to construct and rehabilitate trails, provide signs and trailhead facilities, and restore 15± acres of coastal sage habitat on the south side of the Tijuana River Estuary, located three miles south of Imperial Beach in San Diego County. Ms. Elizabeth Hubert of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The Tijuana River watershed covers approximately 1,700 square miles, 75% of which is located south of the US-Mexico border. The entire watershed empties into the Pacific Ocean through an eight square mile area north of the border, referred to as the Tijuana River Valley. The area is mostly rural or protected natural habitats and includes the Tijuana River Estuary, the Border Fields State Park, the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge, and various local parks. The proposed project falls within the County of San Diego's 1,800-acre Tijuana River Valley Regional Park (TRVRP), which lies in the central area of the valley. In 2003, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) assisted with a restoration project in Goat Canyon, which lies immediately west of the proposed project.

The TRVRP is near the densely populated communities of San Ysidro, Imperial Beach, Nestor and Tijuana, Mexico. The TRVRP contains diverse natural habitats, ranging from dense riparian forests along the Tijuana River to coastal maritime sage scrub. The project site is located within the TRVRP on two mesas overlooking the valley, adjacent to the US-Mexico border.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The TRVRP planning documents propose over 22 miles of multi-use trails and recreation improvements for County residents, which have been constructed or will be constructed in segments from multiple funding sources. Improvements will also contribute to sediment control and wildlife and habitat enhancement. An extensive trail network will support healthy living through outdoor recreation, allow visitors to enjoy natural resources, and prevent damage to sensitive habitat. TRVRP trails also connect to the regional Bayshore Bikeway and the statewide California Coastal Trail. Many of these projects have already been implemented and are being enjoyed by thousands of visitors.

The project currently proposed is to implement further improvements to public access and for habitat restoration in the TRVRP on two mesas, known as Spooner's Mesa and Monument Mesa. This project will implement approximately five miles of the proposed TRVRP multi-use trail network. This area will provide a unique trail experience overlooking Border Field State Park, the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve, and the Pacific Ocean. These trails will provide important access to the mesa tops and encourage visitors to explore and appreciate the natural areas located within the TRVRP.

Currently, the two mesas are crisscrossed with many unauthorized and unplanned use trails that have appeared over the last few decades. These trails are a major cause of sedimentation in the estuary and damage the native habitats on the hillsides. The proposed trail work will include identifying which, if any, of the existing use trails can be rehabilitated to eliminate the erosion that is currently occurring and developing a new trail system. Construction of the new trail system will include installation of stable trail surfacing, fencing, trail heads, interpretive components such as signs or overlooks, directional and facility signs, and trail amenities such as benches and bike racks. Trail construction is anticipated to be performed by the California Conservation Corps (CCC).

The proposed project will also include restoration and enhancement of native habitat on both mesas. Abandoned use trails will be restored to native habitats. In addition, most of Spooner's Mesa was historically used for agriculture, and the habitat impacts from that use are still prevalent at the site. Invasive plant species dominate much of the area. The goal of the project is to restore these degraded areas to Diegan coastal sage scrub and maritime succulent scrub.

Construction of trails and restoration of habitat will help reduce erosion, sedimentation, and habitat degradation problems currently facing the Tijuana River Valley. The project will also result in improved wildlife species use and preservation of existing sensitive plant species.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Public Access Program and the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and meets the programs' goals of providing public access for hunting, fishing, or other wildlife-oriented recreation statewide and providing for restoration of wetlands and adjacent uplands that fall outside the jurisdiction of the Inland Wetland Conservation Program such as coastal, tidal, or fresh water habitats, coastal scrub, grasslands, and threatened and endangered species habitats.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (SDDPR) manages over 300 miles of trails within the County park system. Ongoing trail maintenance will be done using a combination of existing staff and contract workers as needed. Currently, the TRVRP is staffed with four full time staff and one seasonal. The TRVRP staff is responsible for the maintenance and operations within the park including such activities as erosion control, weed abatement, trail clearing and related tasks. SDDPR also contracts with the CCC for trail maintenance work. Trail maintenance is included in the current operating budget for the park and is projected to be included in future budgets.

Additionally, SDDPR partners with the South West Interpretive Association (SWIA), the Tijuana River Valley Equestrian Association (TRVEA) and WildCOAST. These non-profit organizations assist the County of San Diego in invasive plant removal, trail maintenance, and park clean up events.

SDDPR also has a Trail Crew specifically assigned to open space trail construction and trail maintenance. The crew is highly knowledgeable and skilled in the planning, development, and maintenance of all forms of recreational trails.

Habitat restoration will be performed by contracted restoration specialists who will ensure ongoing monitoring and maintenance of the restored areas during the first three years of the project. Long-term management of the restored areas will be assumed by SDDPR. SDDPR will manage the areas in accordance with the Resource Management Plan for the TRVRP. The Resource Management Plan was prepared as a guidance document to preserve and manage the biological and cultural resources within TRVRP while balancing the need to provide appropriate passive recreational opportunities. SDDPR promotes natural and cultural resource management strategies that ensure environmental preservation, quality of life, and economic development.

The project will close unauthorized trails and direct visitors to maintained trails, which will preserve biological and cultural resources and support the

City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan and Subarea Plan, while preserving local residents' recreational needs. The adaptive management plan for TRVRP ensures a balance between preservation of resources with the County obligation to provide recreational opportunities for the public within TRVRP. This project will improve recreational opportunities in this unique area and provide improved habitat for many species of wildlife that use the coastal scrub and the estuary below.

If at any time during the life of the project the SDDPR does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that the SDDPR refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

Work Task/Category	WCB	LWCF	County GF	Total
Trail Construction	\$278,930	\$278,930		\$ 557,860
Spooner's Restoration	\$325,000	\$210,000		\$535,000
Monument Restoration	\$210,000	\$210,000		\$420,000
3-Year Maintenance	\$154,000			\$154,000
3-Year Biological Monitoring	\$117,700	\$ 31,200		\$148,900
SUBTOTAL	\$1,085,630	\$730,130		\$1,815,760
Project Oversight	\$5,807	\$55,770	\$120,000	\$181,576
Contingency	\$108,563	\$73,013		\$181,576
TOTAL COSTS	\$1,200,000	\$858,913	\$120,000	\$2,178,912

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding sources for this project are the Wildlife Restoration Fund, Local Assistance, and the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(a). The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding sources, which allow for the development of public access facilities for hunting, fishing and other wildlife compatible recreational activities, and for the acquisition, protection and restoration of coastal wetlands identified in the Southern California Coastal Wetlands Inventory and upland areas adjacent and proximate to such coastal wetlands.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

As lead agency, the SDDPR 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 WCB 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 recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$309,000.00 from the Wildlife Restoration fund; allocate \$891,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(a); 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.

Ms. Hubert introduced Mr. Greg Cox, Chairman of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, and Mr. Nicholas Martinez from the Department of Parks and Recreation in San Diego County, who were in the audience and available to answer questions.

Ms. Finn asked if it was common to fund maintenance in a project. Ms. Hubert responded it's maintenance of habitat restoration covering the installation of plants and maintaining them for three years in order for the plants to be left on their own for the twenty five year period. Ms. Finn asked if it was different than the three year biological monitoring. Ms. Hubert responded yes and the biological monitoring is covered under the permitting for the project due to many sensitive species.

Mr. Cox introduced himself as Chairman of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors as well as a supervisor representing the First District which represents this area and spoke in support of this project. Mr. Cox expressed that the Tijuana River Valley is an interesting area that is about the only wetland area that is not bifurcated by a highway, transmission lines, water lines, sewer lines, etc. Mr. Cox expressed how remarkable it is because to see a total of 70 miles of illegal trails and through a concerted effort, everyone has agreed on the current 22 miles of trails. Mr. Cox said that the project has tremendously been supported by the community. Mr. Cox also said that this is going to be a great amenity and the County will contribute \$2.5 million to complete these 22 miles of trails.

Chairman Bonham thanked Mr. Cox for his support.

Mr. Martinez introduced himself as Park Project Manager from the Department of Parks and Recreation in San Diego. Mr. Martinez spoke in support of the project. Mr. Martinez expressed that they are excited that the project will be adding 5 miles of trails to their system and enhance and create habitat for Coastal Sage scrub. Mr. Martinez said most importantly this will be a final piece to an overall vision. Mr. Martinez expressed that this project will benefit the entire region, but more specifically low income

neighborhoods that surround the park. Mr. Martinez also expressed that the project also reduces habitat fragmentation, erosion and sedimentation problems that affect the valley and if approved this project will be a final piece of a decade's long effort to provide an opportunity for the public to experience the unique beauty of the area. Mr. Martinez thanked the board for their consideration.

Chairman Bonham asked if there were any additional questions or comments about this agenda item. There were none.

It was moved by Mr. Sutton that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$309,000.00 from the Wildlife Restoration fund; allocate \$891,000.00 from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Water Code Section 79572(a); 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.

Motion carried.

23. Appraisal Review and Disclosure Policy Report Informational/Action Item

This item was to provide a report to the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) on the Appraisal Review and Disclosure Policy (Policy) adopted by the WCB during its meeting of May 2012, and subsequently amended March 2013. It also is to consider minor modifications as herein proposed. Mr. Dave Means of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the review and policy report.

The Policy developed a process and set guidelines for when the WCB would contract for, and seek an independent appraisal review of, appraisals for projects considered "Substantial Acquisitions" and then disclose this review to the public no less than 30 days prior to taking action to award funding. As defined in the Policy, "Substantial Acquisition" means the grant or use of State bond funds to acquire an interest in real property for which the WCB proposes to allocate five million dollars (\$5,000,000.00) or more of State funds.

At the March 2013 Board meeting, staff was instructed to report back on the effectiveness of the new Policy after 12-18 months. Specifically, the report is to provide information represented as a percentage about the number of projects, the WCB dollar allocations impacted by the Policy, and provide a cost benefit analysis. The cost benefit analysis was to include information on the cost associated with implementing the Policy, any impact the Policy has had on staff workload necessary to complete a project, any impact the Policy has had on the appraisal industry and availability of WCB to commission appraisers and independent reviewers, and any indicators of public satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the nature of the appraisal reviews.

Since adoption of the Policy, 32 acquisition projects have been approved and \$36,000,000 has been allocated by the WCB, none of which has been subject to the new Policy. While these numbers do not include the current proposed projects in this agenda, none of them are subject to the Policy either. Therefore, in terms of the number of projects and the dollar amount of allocations impacted by the Policy to date is zero.

Currently, WCB staff has under evaluation approximately 100 acquisition projects. Of these, there are 4 projects currently underway that are considered substantial acquisitions and are subject to the Policy. Therefore, for the cost benefit analysis, some information on the costs can be provided in terms of the cost and time needed to contract out the appraisal and independent appraisal review for the four projects currently being evaluated; however, no information in terms of benefits is available at this time. It is assumed the benefits would manifest through the increased review of the appraisal, increased transparency and public

involvement and comment on projects prior to Board consideration that has yet to occur.

For the four projects potentially impacted by the Policy, staff has contracted out two appraisals; bids are being requested for a third, and the fourth is pending. All four are expected to be presented to the Board in 2014. Because the Policy requires WCB to contract out these appraisals, the combined costs of the appraisals can be shown as the total appraisal cost attributed to the Policy. The estimated cost of the three appraisals being contracted by WCB is approximately \$92,000.00. It should be noted that these three appraisals also include an additional cost attributed to requiring a separate special value component, such as water, timber or mineral values. The fourth appraisal pending should not include this additional cost, and is estimated to cost \$17,500.00. The combined total for all four appraisals would be \$109,500.00.

One question to ask is, whether or not the Policy was in place, would the WCB have contracted for the appraisal for any of the projects subject to the Policy? Since one of the projects was initiated by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)/WCB, it is reasonable to assume the WCB would have contracted for one appraisal, leaving the other three appraisals to be secured by our project partners. Consequently, if you deduct the one appraisal, the net total savings to the WCB would have been \$90,000.00.

Of the two projects currently appraised, one independent review has been contracted out, and the other is pending. The total cost of the four independent reviews is estimated to be approximately \$28,000.00. In terms of actual net costs to the WCB, we have considered the cost of three appraisals plus the independent reviews for all four for a total estimated cost at \$118,000.00 (\$90,000+\$28,000).

In terms of time added to project delivery, there are two potential scenarios described below:

- Time needed to contract an independent appraisal review only; 60-90 days (2 to 3 months) - This scenario assumes the WCB would have contracted out the appraisal regardless of the Policy and the only additional time needed was the time needed to contract out an independent appraisal review;
- Time needed to contract an appraisal and independent appraisal review; 150 to 210 days (5 to 7 months) - This scenario covers cases where a valid appraisal may have existed (completed by project partners and prepared by a qualified and licensed appraiser) at the time the project was presented to the WCB staff, but staff had to contract a new appraisal due to the Policy requirements and then contract out an independent appraisal review afterwards.

The cost-benefit analysis was also to consider any impacts the Policy has had on the appraisal industry and availability of WCB to commission appraisers and independent reviewers and any indicators of public satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the nature of the appraisal reviews. In general, most appraiser comments and responses, as can be expected, have tended to indicate displeasure with the Policy seeing it as a denunciation on their profession and credibility. This negative response could be the reason the WCB has seen a decline in the pool of qualified and experienced resource land appraisers willing to bid on projects.

Over the period of this report, the average cost of appraisals has risen by 35%, from \$6,300.00 to \$8,500.00. Looking at costs preceding the Policy, the cost of appraisals prior to the Policy was fairly stable, so the relatively rapid increase is noteworthy. Also noted was the average cost of the Department of General Services (DGS) appraisal review, which has risen by 45%, and the number of appraisals rejected has also increased from approximately 22% prior to the Policy to 35% currently. Although there should be no direct relationship between these DGS increases in costs and rejections to the Policy, it could be a symptom of the reduced pool of qualified and experienced appraisers available to WCB and indirectly due to the additional scrutiny that was placed on the DGS review process. It should be noted the increased rejections by DGS and time needed to reappraise or meet DGS stated appraisal review concerns, has impacted and delayed all WCB projects, anywhere from 1 to 9 months. In some cases a new appraisal has been required.

The Policy has also created some confusion and frustration with partners, because all other State Resource Agencies apply one set of rules regarding appraisals and disclosure while the WCB maintains a different set of rules. One related and common concern among many land trust and resource partners is figuring out and applying the different approaches and methods used by agencies to evaluate and fund resource projects. In many cases these different applications are driven by funding requirements and statutes and are difficult to alter to create uniformity. However, in certain cases, as with the Policy, most stakeholders would prefer to see unanimity among the funding agencies, rather than varying or unique policies.

To help reduce some of the impacts of the Policy, as stated above, staff was recommending the following actions by the Board.

- 1) Amend the Policy by taking out the current requirement that WCB contract out the appraisal for Substantial Acquisitions, essentially allowing other project partners to contract out appraisals consistent with current law. This would eliminate confusion over who must conduct and pay for appraisals, potentially saving 90 to 120 days in project delivery, and

saving WCB capital expenditures by allowing WCB to use appraisals already contracted out and paid for by other partners.

2) Continue with the remaining provision of the Policy as it relates to the independent review and disclosure for Substantial Acquisitions. Require staff to report back in no less than 12 months when the four Substantial Acquisitions have completed going through the process. This will provide a better indicator of the benefits to WCB in maintaining a separate Policy.

Chairman Bonham asked if any of the 32 projects that haven't triggered the policy came in at just under the 5 million dollar requirement, say \$4,999,999.99. Mr. Means responded there is one project close to \$4,500,000 the WCB is currently working on.

Mr. Bonham asked if the threshold should come down from \$5,000,000.00. Mr. Means responded he understood why that assumption could be made, but the issue being considered under this proposal is the concern from our project partners regarding the lack of uniformity between the WCB appraisal policy for "substantial acquisitions" and the other Resource agencies regarding who can and can't prepare appraisals on large value projects. Mr. Means continued explaining the difference in policies creates problems with partners and staff, and in many cases WCB becomes a somewhat of a bottleneck in the project delivery process when there are a variety of funders and partners that could also prepare the appraisal in advance or concurrently with WCB involvement per the Corbett Bill, but not under the WCB's policy for substantial acquisitions.

Mr. Bonham asked for clarifications concerning the increased rejections over on the Department of General services side since this does not seem connected to this policy since we haven't triggered this policy. Mr. Means responded that it is hard to say there is a direct connection to the policy, but it was brought up because this feedback (the impacts of the new WCB appraisal policy on certain appraisals activities) was requested when the policy was adopted by the Board.

Ms. Finn was concerned and asked for clarification about what project proponents are upset and concerned about regarding WCB policies. Mr. Means responded it has to do with the difference in our (WCB) policy which requires WCB contract out for appraisals on substantial acquisitions but under the newly passed law (Corbett Bill) conservation groups or other agencies could prepare the appraisal in advance of WCB. Mr. Donnelly elaborated and gave an example of where the frustration comes from. Mr. Donnelly expressed that even though WCB hasn't submitted any projects that would be subject to the policy, it creates this uncertainty with our project partners because early on in developing a project there may be some uncertainty as to the level of WCB involvement and whether or not

WCB will need to prepare an appraisal. Mr. Donnelly continued to say that they (our partners) may be applying for other grant sources and sometimes need the appraisal in advance of requesting funding from other sources (private and public), but may need to wait or have two appraisals if WCB is involved and needs to contract out the appraisal. Mr. Donnelly continued and said even if it was contemplated WCB was not putting in \$5,000,000 initially, if during negotiations, or if other funding sources did not materialize, and WCB was being requested to put in more than \$5,000,000 then the entire appraisal process would need to be restarted, creating delays and reflects some of the problems with the WCB having a unique appraisal policy on resource protection projects that differs from all other agencies and funders involved in resource protection.

Mr. Means also mentioned the Corbett Bill was vetted through the land trust community and other conservation partners and if we aligned ourselves with that portion of the Corbett Bill, regarding who can and can't prepare appraisals, we could help alleviate some of the concerns and delays discussed above.

Ms. Finn requested clarification on what is causing increased rejections and the delay of projects. Mr. Means responded there are a variety of different reasons, including concerns with comparable sales, market adjustments, highest and best use, market value. As far as time delays most of these result because if the appraisal is rejected, then that begins a back and forth process where WCB works with the appraiser to respond to the concerns raised in the DGS rejection. Sometimes this process can occur up to 3 times on a given appraisal. In other cases entirely new appraisals may be contracted out. Mr. Means finished by saying the typical DGS review time over the last couple years has increased from 1-2 months to now anywhere from 2-9 months.

Ms. Finn asked if discussions with DGS have been underway and if other agencies are having the same problem with DGS. Mr. Means responded that there are discussions underway and other agencies are having similar problems.

Chairman Bonham asked what is the rationale for striking the requirement that WCB staff contract out for the independent appraisal. Mr. Means responded that the main rationale is to help avoid some of the delays mentioned above and the possibility of having to prepare a second appraisal as well as be consistent with other resource agencies in how they can accept and obtain appraisals from conservation partners. Chairman Bonham asked if the strike out means no independent appraisal will be done or will WCB not contract for independent appraisals. Mr. Means explained that it means that an independent appraisal will still be required, but the project proponents may be allowed to contract out as well as WCB.

Mr. Sutton explained his understanding of this is that under the proposed change if a potential board grantee had already prepared an appraisal for some other purpose; we could simply use that appraisal instead of contracting out our own. Mr. Means responded under the proposed change WCB could accept the appraisal if it conformed to required state standards and would still be subject to DGS review.

Ms. Finn commented that one of the reasons this came up 18 months ago was because of some sense of bias as to who was contracting the appraisals and having independent appraisers not contracted by proponents. Ms. Finn continued and said the concern was since the WCB was spending significant money, it be worthwhile to have an independent appraisal contracted out by WCB instead of the project proponents. Mr. Means responded yes there was some concern there be separation between the project proponent and the WCB on larger acquisition appraisals. Under the current proposal this would still occur regarding the independent review, but the change would allow the appraisal to be prepared by our partners similar to the processes used by all other Resource agencies.

Chairman Bonham commented for the record, he's not persuaded that the argument that the bar is set somewhere means that we operate necessarily to that bar. Chairman Bonham continued saying that as long as the Board is in accordance with statutory requirements, he doesn't see a prohibition for this entity to do something more stringent than the otherwise generally applicable standard. Mr. Means agreed and stated that the Board can set more stringent requirements, and the proposal before them was in part based on numerous concerns and suggestions made by our partners based on the impact our policy has on project timing when there are multiple partners and funders involved. Chairman Bonham asked how it is known there is an impact if the policy hasn't fully been implemented on a project. Mr. Means responded we do know on the projects that have started that fall under the new policy there have been delays. Even though these projects have not made it to the Board for consideration, all of the projects had completed appraisals that could have been submitted to DGS for approval but instead the WCB has had to contract for its own appraisal, delaying the project based on the time to have a new appraisal contracted out and completed. Mr. Means also noted that on appraisals in general there does not appear to be any difference in the DGS review and rate of rejections between whether or not the appraisal was contracted out by WCB or by our project partners so the value added by WCB contracting out the appraisal as opposed to a project partner contracting out the appraisal does not seem to be evident (in terms of DGS review and approval).

Mr. Sutton had a related concern about appraisals. Mr. Sutton said that the Board is not required to pay appraised value every time, land deals can be negotiated below appraised value on occasion. Mr. Sutton expressed that he wants to make sure that the taxpayer is not paying more than another. Mr. Sutton continued with possible potential issues concerning the speculation that the state is paying too much on lands. Mr. Sutton asked if the Board has the ability to negotiate a lower price. Mr. Means responded that the Board does have the ability to offer less understanding our process is to make full disclosure of the property's fair market value. In many cases staff may request the property be sold at a discount. However, in these same cases the project partner may go out and raise the additional funds to acquire the property so the landowner is made whole.

Mr. Means responded further stating negotiating value puts WCB staff in a difficult position because in some cases the owner may refuse to accept the lower values, which may seem like a good result if we were trying make a profit by buying low and selling high, but because this is for habitat and species protection it may mean we walk away from some important resource protection. Mr. Means continued saying that he felt offering fair market value is probably a more fair and attainable practice in terms of how we approach resource protection, but Board staff as well as our partners do seek ways to minimize WCB funding though landowner discounts whenever possible.

Chairman Bonham commented that the issues are of quite interest to Ms. Finn and him since they created and designed the policy. Chairman Bonham commented on the provisions that staff was recommending removal in the policy and asked if the policy has been applied to any project that has come before the board. Mr. Means replied that there are four projects being evaluated but none had been presented to the Board. Chairman Bonham asked if it was correct that from those four projects that WCB have obtained enough experience to recommend that we strike the requirement that the staff contract for that appraisal. Mr. Means replied that is correct.

Ms. Muzik commented that it is important to know that the appraisals contracted out for by the land trusts are all done to required state standards so they all meet the same standards as if WCB had contracted out for the appraisal. Ms. Finn commented that WCB does not have any evidence of any issues yet with the new policy.

Mr. Sandy Dean, Chairman of the Mendocino and Humboldt Redwood Company (MHRC), spoke on this agenda item. Mr. Dean stated that his company has been paying attention to the appraisal process for a while. Mr. Dean commented that his company started expressing their concerns about the validity and adequacy of appraisals for state funded north coast

conservation deals dated back to early 2011, particularly two deals, Usal and Gualala. Mr. Dean stated that the appraisal values that were being contemplated did not seem explainable and were seeking additional information how it could be justified. Mr. Dean stated that the process at the time didn't allow for any public review of the appraisal and out of that concern the Board developed the new appraisal policy.

Mr. Dean stated that the Board contracted and made appraisal reviews public starting February 2011 (the Usal project). Mr. Dean said from his company's perspective a better approach would have been to make the appraisals themselves public, but there was a lot of resistance to that. Mr. Dean stated that the appraisal review process itself surfaced significant issues, no viewing of the property, no verification of the subject facts, no verification of market date, and all information accepted as true facts. Mr. Dean said that when the reviewer was asked if the appraisal adequately supported the price being paid, the reviewer had checked no, so that raises concern that there are issues with how the appraisals are being done. Mr. Dean said that the Board asked for a review of how the appraisals and appraisal reviews are prepared. Mr. Dean added that from this a working group was formed with some twenty participants. Mr. Dean said much was discussed during this review however the WCB working group mostly disregarded his requests for actual transparency and public review of the appraisal. Further stating the working group was mostly made up of project proponents, agents for proponents and other interest mostly concerned in the process to make money. Mr. Dean pointed out that out of the working group process a couple new policies were developed, one was the adoption of the policy to use the appraisal review process for large transactions and the second was having the WCB contract for appraisals where a lot of dollars are involved.

Mr. Dean said this idea that we can have an independent appraisal contracted for by a project proponent seems kind of funny and thinks most people here have some experience with appraisers being more responsive to the person who pays for the appraisal. Mr. Dean thought that the independence here really matters and it is very hard to call an appraisal independent when it has been paid for by a project proponent. Mr. Dean pointed out why this matters and mentioned the Usal and Gualala appraisals and said when the appraisals were made available after the deals were done, they could have been easily criticized. Mr. Dean continued saying that all the value in the appraisals were based on development rights, for raw land, devoid of any infrastructure for any development, but contained no analysis of cost to develop necessary infrastructure, nor requirements for building permits, or how long it would take to absorb and sell off the developed land, and notably those appraisals relied on stale comps. Mr. Dean said these transactions occurred in 2011, but almost all the comps were from 2008 and stated that the world changed a lot from 2008. Mr. Dean said that for him it is hard to

imagine that type of appraisal would exist if it had been contracted for by a buyer as opposed to a seller. Mr. Dean said he thought that the Board asked good questions concerning the policy haven't being used yet, the information that stated about the cost of the appraisals going up and said to him would be a total conflation of the policy issue here verses the cost of doing business for smaller transactions and he thinks they are different. Mr. Dean added that the Board should not change the 5 million limit and he didn't think the appraisal review or even having the WCB contract for appraisals makes sense for things that are smaller. Mr. Dean also added that just because other state agencies have a different policy doesn't think that this one should. Mr. Dean urged the Board not to change the policy before it has been tried and then thanked the Board.

Chairman Bonham asked if there was any other public comment. There was none. Chairman Bonham expressed his perspective is not a commentary on staff who are doing hard work with difficult challenges and dwindling resources, but he was not persuaded that the Board knows enough to take a decision whether they modify or not. Chairman Bonham continued and said that he was leaning to hold the course and see how more time proves. Ms. Finn and Mr. Sutton agreed.

Mr. Donnelly expressed his appreciation to his staff for their efforts in working to implement the new policy. Mr. Donnelly said that the decision not to amend the policy is up to the Board, but thinks by being involved in this process for last several years irrespective of whether or not WCB contracts out for an appraisal or someone else contracts for the appraisal, if the appraiser does the job and does it pursuant to state standards, the Board is going to get a good and valid appraisal and thinks it is an appraisal that could be and should be supported. Mr. Donnelly continued and said by having WCB contract for the appraisals; he doesn't want that to infer that if WCB doesn't contract for an appraisal that somehow the appraisal does not meet state standards. Mr. Donnelly stated that he understood the Board would like to see the policy continued and as part of the Board's recommendation WCB would like the opportunity to report back on the policy after a number of projects had gone through the process.

Ms. Finn added that the comment about other agencies and not having a similar the policy that she would be happy to have other agencies consider the WCB policy on the other Boards she sits on based on what the Board finds with this policy.

Chairman Bonham said he was open to the idea of possible revision to the policy, and whether in the strategic plan there is any component focusing on appraisals. Chairman Bonham said that it seems to be that our Board is in a position to foster a conversation across multiple granting entities and strive for that highest standard and conformity. Chairman Bonham

continued and said lastly, he was not ready to move to amend the policy at this time but will remain open to doing the change at the next conversation check point. Ms. Finn agreed.

It was moved by Chairman Bonham that the Appraisal Policy of the Wildlife Conservation Board stays as is.

Motion carried.

24. Strategic Plan Update Informational

Staff provided an update and highlight work completed during the Wildlife Conservation Board Strategic Planning workshop held on October 22, 2013.

Mr. Sutton commented about strategic planning in general, and that it could be hard on staff. The assumption of completing a strategic plan is that something is currently wrong, and that is a misconception across the strategic planning in any organization. Mr. Sutton wanted to reassure staff that this was certainly not the case; we can always do the work better. Mr. Sutton said that the goal is to make sure the Board is getting full value for its money, is more strategic than ever before, more transparent, and more effective than ever before.

Mr. Donnelly thanked Mr. Sutton and assured the WCB that the plan will be done right.

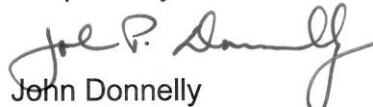
25. 2014 Wildlife Conservation Board Meeting Schedule Informational

The Board considered and adopted its 2014 meeting schedule.

February 27, 2014
May 29, 2014
August 28, 2014
November 20, 2014

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,


John Donnelly
Executive Director

PROGRAM STATEMENT

At the close of the meeting on November 21, 2013, the amount allocated to projects since the Wildlife Conservation Board's inception in 1947 totaled \$2,500,815,662.31. This total includes funds reimbursed by the Federal Government under the Accelerated Public Works Program completed in 1966, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program, the Anadromous Fish Act Program, the Sport Fish Restoration Act Program, the Pittman-Robertson Program, and the Estuarine Sanctuary Program.

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

A. Fish Hatchery and Stocking Projects	\$18,414,719.06
B. Fish Habitat Preservation, Development & Improvement	46,447,717.50
Reservoir Construction or Improvement.....	5,605,699.00
Stream Clearance and Improvement	32,671,906.86
Stream Flow Maintenance Dams	542,719.86
Marine Habitat.....	3,191,619.07
Fish Screens, Ladders and Weir Projects	4,435,772.71
C. Fishing Access Projects	58,582,868.38
Coastal and Bay	5,524,134.53
River and Aqueduct Access	21,242,257.38
Lake and Reservoir Access.....	10,813,623.43
Piers	21,002,853.04
D. Game Farm Projects	146,894.49
E. Wildlife Habitat Acquisition, Development and Improvement	2,293,775,051.49
Wildlife Areas (General)	432,393,806.48

Miscellaneous Wildlife Habitat Development.....	34,393,575.88
Wildlife Areas/Ecological Reserves, (Threatened, Endangered or Unique Habitat).....	791,766,341.39
Land Conservation Area	14,361,940.18
Inland Wetlands Conser. Grants & Easements	27,015,763.88
Riparian Habitat Conser. Grants & Easements	86,525,801.27
Other Wildlife Habitat Grants.....	907,317,822.41
F. Hunting Access Projects.....	1,366,898.57
G. Miscellaneous Projects (including leases)	38,937,374.61
H. Special Project Allocations	1,892,496.37
I. Miscellaneous Public Access Projects.....	40,716,583.77
State Owned.....	2,247,004.81
Grants.....	38,469,578.96
J. Sales and/or exchanges	535,058.07
K. Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act (tax credits awarded) ..	(48,598,734.00)
Statutory plans.....	(0.00)
Corridors, wetlands, wildlife habitat, streams and riparian habitat.....	(6,234,658.00)
Agricultural lands	(13,775,640.07)
Water and water rights	(0.00)
State and local parks, open space and archaeological resources.....	(28,588,435.93)
Total Allocated to Projects	\$2,500,815,662.31