

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

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NOTICE OF MEETING

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

August 28, 2014
10:00 AM
1/ State Capitol, Room 112
Sacramento, California 95814

FINAL AGENDA ITEMS

ITEM NO.		PAGE NO.
1.	Roll Call	1
2.	Funding Status - Informational	2
3.	Special Project Planning Account - Informational	11
4.	Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 5 – 14)	11
*5.	Approval of Minutes – May 22, 2014	11
*6.	Recovery of Funds	12

* Proposed Consent Calendar

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

ITEM NO.		PAGE NO.
*7.	Swiss Ranch Conservation Easement, Expansion 5, Calaveras County	\$500,000.00 14

To consider the acquisition of a 329± acre conservation easement by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for protection of oak woodland, conifer, mixed chaparral and important migratory deer habitat corridors connecting the upper and lower Sierra mountain and foothill areas for the Rail Road Flat deer herd, in Calaveras County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat, including native oak woodlands, to protect deer and mountain lions. [Habitat Conservation fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)]

*8.	Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander (King), Santa Cruz County	\$40,000.00 18
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To consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition grant and an Environmental Enhancement Mitigation Program (EEMP) grant for a cooperative project with the Trust for Public Land to assist with the acquisition of 40+/- acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the protection of the Santa Cruz long toed salamander located southeast of the City of Aptos in Santa Cruz County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)]

*9.	San Joaquin River Parkway, Sycamore Island Pond Isolation, Planning and Design Augmentation, Madera/Fresno County	\$73,000.00 22
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To consider the allocation for an augmentation to an existing grant to the Department of Water Resources for a cooperative project with the San Joaquin River Conservancy (Conservancy) to complete preliminary and final design, prepare analyses and environmental review in compliance with CEQA, and prepare permit documents to allow for the enhancement of riparian habitat and the stabilization of ponds on the Conservancy's Sycamore Island property in Fresno and Madera Counties adjacent to the San Joaquin River. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of land and water resources located within the boundaries of the San Joaquin River Conservancy. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2002 (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5)]

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*10.	San Joaquin River Parkway, San Joaquin Hatchery Public Access and Trail Augmentation, Fresno County	\$300,000.00 26

To consider the allocation for an augmentation to an existing grant to the California Department of Water Resources to improve public fishing access and enhance riparian habitat on the San Joaquin River and to improve recreational access to the Department of Fish and Wildlife’s San Joaquin Hatchery within the San Joaquin River Parkway, located on the south bank of the San Joaquin River one quarter mile downstream of the Highway 206 bridge in Fresno County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for river parkway projects identified by the San Joaquin River Conservancy. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75050(f)]

*11.	Amargosa Tecopa Hot Springs, Expansions 1 – 3, Inyo County	\$29,550.00 30
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To consider the acquisition of 4+/- acres and a conservation easement over 2+/- acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition grant for the protection of wetland and upland habitat areas supporting the State and federally-listed endangered Amargosa vole and the Amargosa niterwort, located in the community of Tecopa Hot Springs, in Inyo County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)]

*12.	Allensworth Ecological Reserve, Expansion 41 - 49, Tulare County	\$0.00 35
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To consider the acquisition of 12 separate parcels of land totaling 29+/- acres by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the protection of habitat supporting the San Joaquin kit fox and other rare species found within the Allensworth Ecological Reserve and to enhance habitat linkages and connectivity, located near the city of Earlimart in Tulare County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which is being provided by the California Department of Corrections Statewide Electric Fence Project mitigation fund assigned to CDFW.

ITEM NO.		PAGE NO.
*13.	Western Riverside MSHCP (2013) - North Peak El Toro, Riverside County	\$95,000.00 38

To consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority); and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to the Authority to acquire in fee 47± acres of land in western Riverside County for the protection of habitat that supports threatened and endangered species; and to increase regional wildlife habitat corridors and linkages located within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species; and which allows for the acquisition of habitat on which unique species or natural communities naturally exist. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)]

*14.	Western Riverside MSHCP (2013) - Patterson, Riverside County	\$160,500.00 42
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The proposal is to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority); and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to the Authority to acquire in fee 29± acres of land in western Riverside County for the protection of habitat that supports threatened and endangered species; and to increase regional wildlife habitat corridors and linkages located within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species; and which allows for the acquisition of habitat on which unique species or natural communities naturally exist. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)]

15.	Sacramento River Boating Access, Red Bluff River Park, Tehama County	\$970,000.00 46
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To consider the allocation for a grant to the City of Red Bluff (City) for a cooperative project with the Department of Parks and Recreation, Division of Boating and Waterways, to construct a boat launch facility compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act that includes a 2-lane boat ramp, improved parking, a new restroom, picnic areas and pedestrian paths. The proposed project is located on property owned by the City and the State Lands Commission, in the City of Red Bluff in Tehama County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized

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uses of the proposed funding sources, which allow for the development of public access facilities for hunting, fishing and other wildlife compatible recreational activities. [Wildlife Restoration Fund, Local Assistance and the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a)]

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| 16. | Leininger Ranch Habitat Improvement,
Tehama County | \$271,000.00 | 49 |
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To consider the allocation for a grant to the Tehama County Resource Conservation District, for a cooperative project with the landowners, the U. S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to improve water features and enhance wildlife habitat on two ranches in Tehama County: the Leininger Ranch and the C&R Ranch, located approximately ten miles east and 17 miles west of the City of Corning, respectively. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for projects to assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration and wildlife protection. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(4)].

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| 17. | Truckee River Watershed Forest Enhancement,
Sierra/Nevada County | \$965,000.00 | 52 |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to the National Forest Foundation for a cooperative project with the U.S. Forest Service, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, and the Truckee River Watershed Council to protect and enhance habitat, restore forest stand ecology and reduce fuel loads in the federally-owned Tahoe National Forest, located generally ten miles north of the City of Truckee in Nevada and Sierra Counties. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for forest conservation and protection projects in order to promote the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests through forest conservation, preservation and restoration of productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas, redwood forests and other forest types, including the conservation of water resources and natural habitats for native fish, wildlife and plants found on these lands. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a)]

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|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----|
| 18. | American Basin Conservation Easement
(High Ridge Ranch),
Yuba County | \$805,000.00 | 58 |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association to acquire a conservation easement over 226± acres of land for the protection of giant

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garter snake, Swainson’s hawk, black rails, and wetlands, located near the City of Marysville, in Yuba County. The purposes of this acquisition project are consistent with the proposed funding sources, which allow for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered threatened or fully protected species [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786 (b/c)], and for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands . [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786 (d) , Inlands Wetlands Conservation Program].

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|-----|----------------------------------------------|----------------|----|
| 19. | El Dorado Ranch Phase 1B
El Dorado County | \$4,810,000.00 | 62 |
|-----|----------------------------------------------|----------------|----|

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to The American River Conservancy (ARC) to acquire in fee 1,080± acres of land for the protection and preservation of riparian and woodland habitat, that includes native fisheries and oak woodlands, and to provide for potential future wildlife oriented public use opportunities on land fronting the Cosumnes River. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding sources that provide funding for the acquisition and protection of habitat to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species and to protect corridors linking separate habitat areas, to prevent habitat fragmentation, and to protect significant natural landscapes and ecosystems and other significant habitat areas. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a), and the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)]

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| 20. | Mark West Creek (McCullough II),
Sonoma County | | 66 |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------|--|----|

This project is being withdrawn from consideration at this time.

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|-----|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----|
| 21. | Martinelli Ranch Conservation Easement,
Marin County | \$1,510,000.00 | 67 |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Marin Agricultural Land Trust to acquire a conservation easement over 238± acres of land for the protection of threatened and endangered species habitat and significant wildlife corridors, located west of Bolinas Lagoon in Marin County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of habitat to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, to provide corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent habitat fragmentation, and to protect significant natural landscapes and ecosystems and other significant habitat areas. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a)]

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22.	Alameda County Stock Pond Habitat Enhancement, Alameda County	\$200,000.00 72

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Alameda County Resource Conservation District, for a cooperative project with the landowners, the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the State Coastal Conservancy to enhance wildlife habitat on existing stock ponds on private properties in Alameda County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for projects to assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration and wildlife protection. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(4)]

23.	San Vicente Redwoods (Cemex) Forest Conservation Easement, Santa Cruz County	\$10,060,000.00 75
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To consider the allocation for a grant to Save the Redwoods League for a cooperative project with the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, Peninsula Open Space Trust, Semprevirens Fund and the State Coastal Conservancy to acquire a forest conservation easement over 8,532± acres of working forest lands, forest reserve areas and habitat linkages, located near the town of Davenport in Santa Cruz County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for forest conservation and protection projects in order to promote the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests through forest conservation, preservation and restoration of productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas, redwood forests and other forest types, including the conservation of water resources and natural habitats for native fish, wildlife and plants found on these lands. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Fish and Game Code Section 75055(a)]

24.	San Joaquin River Parkway, Owl Hollow Improvements, Fresno County	\$860,340.00 81
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To consider the allocation for a grant to the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust, Inc. (Trust) for a cooperative project with the San Joaquin River Conservancy for the construction of public access, recreation, and education improvements at the Trust's Owl Hollow property, a six-acre site located along the San Joaquin River one and a half miles east of Highway 41, in Fresno County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for river parkway projects identified by the San Joaquin River Conservancy Board. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75050(f)]

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25.	Salinas River Riparian Enhancement, Monterey County	\$1,110,000.00 84

To consider the allocation for a grant to Resource Conservation District of Monterey County for a cooperative project with the Monterey County Agriculture Department, the Monterey County Water Resources Agency and Central Coast Wetlands Group to conduct a watershed-based, invasive non-native plant control and riparian restoration project along the Salinas River between Soledad and the Monterey County line in Monterey County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat and aquatic habitat for salmonids and trout to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E)]

26.	Cayucos Fishing Pier Replacement, San Luis Obispo County	\$750,000.00 88
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To consider the allocation for a grant to San Luis Obispo County for a cooperative project with the State Coastal Conservancy and the Community Foundation of San Luis Obispo County to replace the Cayucos Fishing Pier, located on property owned by the Department of Parks and Recreation and the State Lands Commission in the City of Cayucos, San Luis Obispo County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the development of public access facilities for hunting, fishing and other wildlife compatible recreational activities. [Wildlife Restoration Fund, Local Assistance]

27.	Pismo Preserve, San Luis Obispo County	\$4,010,000.00 91
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To consider the allocation for a grant to The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County for a cooperative project with the State Coastal Conservancy and others to acquire in fee 879± acres of land to protect native grasslands, oak woodlands, coastal scrub and wildlife corridors, and to provide the potential for future wildlife oriented public use opportunities near Pismo Beach in San Luis Obispo County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to prevent habitat fragmentation, and to protect significant natural landscapes and ecosystems and other significant habitat areas. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a)]

28.	Careaga Canyon Ranch Conservation Easement, Santa Barbara County	95
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This project is being withdrawn from consideration at this time.

ITEM NO.		PAGE NO.
29.	Gateway Ranch, Los Angeles County	\$1,660,000.00 96

To consider the allocation for a grant to The Trust for Public Land for a cooperative project with the City of Santa Clarita to acquire fee title to 302 +/- acres of land for protection of upland coastal scrub, oak woodland, coastal watersheds and important habitat linkages located near the intersection of Interstate 5 and Highway 14 between the San Gabriel Mountains and Santa Susana Mountains, south of the City in Los Angeles County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species and coastal upland and coastal watershed lands in southern California. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a), Section 2786 (a)(Proposition 50l) and Section 2786(b/c) (Proposition 50 SoCal)]

30.	CDFW Vegetation Classification and Mapping, Phase II, Statewide	\$1,560,000.00 100
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To consider the allocation for a grant to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to support the existing Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program, which creates high-resolution, detailed vegetation maps that are used to identify high-value acquisition lands and restoration targets and for the development of land management plans. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which can be used for the development of scientific data, habitat mapping and other research information necessary to determine the priorities for restoration and acquisition statewide. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)]

31.	Strategic Plan	Action 103
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To consider adopting the Wildlife Conservation Board Strategic Plan. The Plan provides a high-level blueprint for WCB decision-making and establishes the primary framework for implementing the WCB vision over the next five years.

**32.	Executive Session (Not Open to the Public)	103
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THE BOARD MAY MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 11126(e)(1) TO DISCUSS PENDING LITIGATION TO WHICH THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD IS A PARTY, JAMULIANS AGAINST THE CASINO VS. CALIFORNIA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD, ET AL., SACRAMENTO COUNTY, SUPERIOR COURT, CASE NUMBER 34-2014-80001894 (CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT).

** Added after Preliminary Agenda was distributed.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITES

Persons with disabilities needing reasonable accommodation to participate in public meetings or other CDFW activities are invited to contact the Department's Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator Melissa Carlin at (916) 651-1214 or Melissa.Carlin@wildlife.ca.gov. Reasonable Accommodation requests for facility and/or meeting accessibility should be received by August 4, 2014. Requests for American Sign Language Interpreters should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event, and requests for Real-Time Captioners at least four weeks prior to the event. These timeframes are to help ensure that the requested accommodation is met.

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

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WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

August 28, 2014

1. Roll Call

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS

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

Michael Cohen, Member
Director, Department of Finance

Michael Sutton, Member
President, Fish and Game Commission

JOINT LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Senator Jean Fuller
Senator Fran Pavley
Senator Lois Wolk

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

John P. Donnelly

2. Funding Status Informational

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

(a) 2014-15 Wildlife Restoration Fund, (0447)

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

August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	\$1,000,000.00
Total Project Development	<u>0.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00

(b) 2014-15 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)

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

August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-2,810,000.00
Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$17,853,000.00

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

Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-8,221,875.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$12,441,125.00

August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-1,399,550.00
Total Project Development	<u>-7,398,340.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$3,643,235.00

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

Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-2,583,717.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$18,079,283.00

August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-1,110,000.00
Total Project Development	<u>-1,770,000.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$15,199,283.00

(e)	2011-12 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-11,441,471.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$9,221,529.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-200,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-4,122,000.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$4,899,529.00
(f)	2010-11 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-15,134,255.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$5,533,745.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-5,250,000.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$283,745.00
(g)	2009-10 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,756,339.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$911,661.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-500,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-140,000.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$271,661.00
(h)	2008-09 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2012-13 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-16,308,804.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$4,359,196.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-400,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-3,959,196.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00

(i)	2007-08 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2011-12 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,674,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,880,657.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$793,343.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-180,250.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-50,000.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$563,093.00
(j)	2006-07 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,699,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,784,871.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$914,129.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-500,000.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$414,129.00
(k)	2004-05 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,577,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,962,036.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$614,964.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-610,250.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-4,714.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00
(l)	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>-31,224,215.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$4,875,785.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$4,875,785.00

(m)	2004-05 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund, (6029)	
	Reappropriated 14/15	\$11,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-6,073,452.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$4,926,548.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-73,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$4,853,548.00
(n)	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>-240,892,407.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$32,107,593.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-9,623,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-6,961,000.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$15,523,593.00
(o)	2003-04 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002, (6031) Colorado River Reappropriated 06/07, 10/11, & 14/15 (Section 79568)	
	Reappropriated 06/07, 10/11, & 14/15 (Section 79568)	\$32,500,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-21,904,443.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$10,595,557.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$10,595,557.00
(p)	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>-680,548,697.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$60,863,303.00

	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-22,409,000.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$38,454,303.00
(q)	2010-11 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2014-15 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$3,380,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$3,380,000.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$3,380,000.00
(r)	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>-190,200.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$4,609,800.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-1,160,340.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-3,449,460.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00
(s)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2014-15 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$10,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-2,889,082.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$7,110,918.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-7,110,918.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00
(t)	2009-10 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2014-15 Reappropriation)	

	Chapter 2, Statutes of 2009 (SB 8)	\$3,425,988.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$3,425,988.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$3,425,988.00
(u)	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>-7,996,075.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$7,503,925.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-7,190,070.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$313,855.00
(v)	2008-09 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051), (2014-15 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act (NCCP Section 75055(c))	\$25,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-10,066,048.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$14,933,952.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-8,505,385.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$6,428,567.00
(w)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 , (6051) (2014-15 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(1))	\$25,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-23,379,568.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$1,620,432.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$1,620,432.00
(x)	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))	\$205,194.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$205,194.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$205,194.00
(y)	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>-966,398.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$533,602.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-295,682.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$237,920.00
(z)	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>-746,236.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$1,621,764.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-471,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$1,150,764.00
(aa)	2006-07 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051)	
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055a)	\$164,700,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-96,139,123.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$68,560,877.00
	August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-11,025,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-33,405,000.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$24,130,877.00
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055(b))	\$123,525,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-84,935,083.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$38,589,917.00

August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-1,560,000.00
Total Project Development	-9,600,500.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$27,429,417.00

RECAP OF FUND BALANCES

Wildlife Restoration Fund (a)	\$1,000,000.00
August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-1,000,000.00
Total Project Development	0.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00

Habitat Conservation Fund (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k)	\$73,531,975.00
August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-7,210,050.00
Total Project Development	-23,194,250.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$43,127,675.00

Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (l)	\$4,875,785.00
August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$4,875,785.00

California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (m), (n)	\$37,034,141.00
August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-9,696,000.00
Total Project Development	-6,961,000.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$20,377,141.00

Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (o), (p)	\$71,458,859.00
August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	-22,409,000.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$49,049,859.00

Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (q), (r), (s), (t), (u), (v), (w), (x), (y), (z), (aa)	\$152,096,367.00
August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-14,216,340.00
Total Project Development	-69,557,015.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$68,323,012.00

TOTAL – ALL FUNDS	\$339,997,128.00
August 2014 Board Meeting Allocation	-32,122,390.00
Total Project Development	-122,121,265.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$185,753,473.00

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

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 06/30/14	Encumbrances through 06/30/14	Cash Balances Includes Encumbrances
Proposition 12	\$12,621,973.31	\$9,242,883.90	\$494,884.00	\$2,884,205.41
Proposition 40	\$91,313,942.78	\$72,708,566.76	\$14,850,289.65	\$3,755,086.37
Proposition 50	\$164,644,999.96	\$75,042,728.52	\$30,870,265.75	\$58,732,005.69
Proposition 84	\$285,413,688.65	\$212,739,975.21	\$35,785,351.24	\$36,888,362.20
Proposition 1E	\$65,725,202.07	\$48,167,124.87	\$9,491,170.76	\$8,066,906.44
Grand Totals	\$619,719,806.77	\$417,901,279.26	\$91,491,961.40	\$110,326,566.11

3. Special Project Planning Account Informational

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

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

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

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

Habitat Conservation Fund.....\$75,000.00

4. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 5 – 14)

*5. Approval of Minutes – May 22, 2014

* Proposed Consent Calendar

*6. Recovery of Funds

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

\$98,519.50	to the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund
\$102,956.23	to the Habitat Conservation Fund
\$1,703.00	to the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund
\$4,325.00	to the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002

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

Santa Rosa Mountains, Expansion 14 - 15, Riverside County

Allocated	\$145,000.00
Expended	<u>-46,480.50</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$98,519.50

Total Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund \$98,519.50

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND

Burcham and Wheeler Flat Wildlife Area, Expansion 1 (Winter), Mono County

Allocated	\$225,000.00
Expended	<u>-225,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Cow Creek Conservation Area, Expansion 3, Triple B Ranch, Shasta County

Allocated	\$640,000.00
Expended	<u>-634,999.90</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$5,000.10

Loch Lomond Vernal Pool Ecological Reserve Exchange, Lake County

Allocated	\$25,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,592.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$23,408.00

Palo Verde Ecological Reserve, Expansion 3, Riverside County

Allocated	\$420,000.00
Expended	<u>-400,396.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$19,604.00

Puma Canyon, Expansion 3 - 4 (Saylor & Tidwell), San Bernardino County

Allocated	\$558,000.00
Expended	<u>-542,953.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$15,047.00

Quiota Creek Fish Passage, Sacramento County

Allocated	\$398,000.00
Expended	<u>-358,102.87</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$39,897.13

Total Habitat Conservation Fund \$102,957.03

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

Imperial Wildlife Area Public Access, Imperial County

Allocated	\$152,000.00
Expended	<u>-150,297.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$1,703.00

Royal Gorge, Placer and Nevada Counties

Allocated	\$3,010,000.00
Expended	<u>-3,010,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Total California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund \$1,703.00

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

Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, American Canyon, Napa County

Allocated	\$10,000.00
Expended	<u>-5,675.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$4,325.00

Total Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 \$4,325.00

- *7. Swiss Ranch Conservation Easement, Expansion 5, \$500,000.00
Calaveras County

This proposal is to consider the acquisition of a 329± acre conservation easement (Easement), on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), to prevent fragmentation and protect important habitat for the migratory Rail Road Flat and Stanislaus deer herds in Calaveras County. The Easement will also conserve and help protect oak woodland, hardwood-conifer, and mixed chaparral habitats that contribute to habitat linkages and corridors connecting the upper and lower Sierra mountain and foothill areas.

LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located in the lower slopes of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the community of Mountain Ranch, approximately 15 miles northeast of the city of San Andreas. The Property lies adjacent to and is accessible from Swiss Ranch Road. The surrounding lands are predominantly devoted to livestock rangeland, timber, rural home sites, recreational uses, and some dry farming at the lower elevations to the east. More recently a number of properties in the greater area surrounding the city of San Andreas have converted to residential development and irrigated farming uses, primarily dedicated to wine grape vineyards. The increase of rural residential development and conversion to less wildlife compatible agricultural uses in the area continues to threaten and diminish these wildlife habitat corridors and linkages.

The Property is situated in Swiss Ranch, a high priority area in CDFW's Railroad Flat Deer Winter Range Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP), which comprises almost 9,000 acres of deer winter range in Calaveras County. Swiss Ranch is part of a migration area for a significant segment of Railroad Flat and Stanislaus deer herds that traverse annually from U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Sierra Pacific timber lands. The migration continues traveling westerly over private lands until the deer reach their winter habitat in Calaveras County. During their migration deer require compatible private landscapes in which to travel, such as cattle ranches and/or timber management area lands.

The Property is located within the Railroad Flat Conceptual Area Protection Plan, comprised of three key sub-areas which are referred to as the Swiss Ranch, Sheep Ranch and Eagle Ridge. These subareas are the migration terminus for a significant segment of the Railroad Flat and Stanislaus deer herd. Lands within the CAPP are also adjacent to other conservation ownerships. The Amador/Calaveras Land Trust holds conservation easements on private property immediately adjacent to the CDFW Swiss Ranch conservation easements. In addition nearby, U.S. Forest Service, BLM, and Sierra Pacific Inc. forest lands help provide a protected migratory corridor to the lands protected by CDFW's existing conservation easements.

The CAPP provides a protective plan as a means to offset the loss of high priority landscapes to ensure the long term survival of the deer herds. A key component envisioned by CDFW is to acquire conservation easements within the CAPP area that would minimize land management costs and liabilities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is comprised of three irregularly shaped contiguous parcels that total 329± acres and is best described as having a rolling to steep topography at an elevation of approximately 2,800 to 3,000 feet above mean sea level. The Property is mountainous with undulating to rolling terrain covered with mixed conifer tree stands (pine, deciduous evergreen, and montane hardwood-conifer) interspersed with oak woodlands, chamise-redshank chaparral, and grasslands. The Property is aesthetically pleasing and offers views of the Sierra with areas of open space located in the north central portion of the Property.

There are no visible improvements except modest fencing around the perimeter with cross fencing into three pastures. Zoned as Agricultural preserve, the site currently supports livestock grazing, as well as some recreational and hunting activities. While the migratory deer are the keystone species, the site supports a myriad of resident wildlife species that include mountain lions, California spotted owl, ringtail, golden eagle, and diverse native central Sierra plants.

Approximately 75% of the deer herd winter range in this area is under private ownership. The acquisition of the Easement will help prevent further loss and fragmentation of key winter range deer habitat and migration areas and expand on the block of already protected properties in the region. Under the Easement rural residential subdivision and non-compatible agricultural uses will be prohibited. Cattle ranching will be allowed which is a compatible with management and protection of deer and other wildlife species that utilize the Property.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program. The Land Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, *et seq.*) authorizing the WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. Under the program the WCB 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 (ROC) for review and, if approved, later

transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

This project provides CDFW with an opportunity to protect wildlife habitat and linkages that benefit migratory Rail Road Flat and Stanislaus deer herds and other resident species, while minimizing management costs. The conservation easement will be held by CDFW and monitored annually in conjunction with its existing Swiss Ranch and Eagle Ridge conservation easements. CDFW estimates that 1-2 person days per year would be needed to conduct an onsite inspection to monitor the conservation easement area and to ensure compliance with the terms of the conservation easement.

TERMS

The conservation easement has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$480,000.00. 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 conservation easement for the approved appraised fair market value. Staff of the WCB 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 of the conservation easement. Once approved by the WCB, the transaction must also be reviewed and approved by DGS.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	<u>\$480,000.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$480,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$20,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$500,000.00

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

WCB FUNDING SOURCE

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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$500,000.00 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.

- *8. Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander (King), \$40,000.00
Santa Cruz County

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition grant and an Environmental Enhancement Mitigation Program (EEMP) grant to assist with a cooperative project with The Trust for Public Land for the acquisition of 40+/- acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the protection of the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property is located on Halton Lane in the Larkin Valley/Aptos Hills area of unincorporated Santa Cruz County, approximately 14 miles south of Santa Cruz, 30 miles north of Monterey, and 25 miles northwest of Salinas. The property is located near the City of Watsonville which is situated within the Pajaro Valley in south Santa Cruz County, east of Hwy 1, west of Hwy 101, and north of Hwy 152 and 129.

Agriculture is the leading industry in the Pajaro Valley, supplying much of the state, nation, and parts of the world with fruits and vegetables, fresh flowers, and nursery stock. Land uses adjacent to the subject property include single family residences on large parcels of land, agricultural properties, recreation, open space, and ranch properties.

The subject property contains a significant portion of a wildlife movement corridor between known breeding ponds for the federally endangered Santa Cruz long-toed salamander (SCLTS) and the threatened California red-legged frog (CRLF). The property also contains habitat for these two species that is utilized between mating seasons. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the SCLTS is one of the rarest amphibians in the world. Pitfall trapping studies reveal that the property supports viable populations of SCLTS.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The SCLTS life cycle relies on the ability to move freely between unique terrestrial habitats (comprised of upland coastal scrub, woodland areas of coast live oak or Monterey pine, and riparian vegetation such as arroyo willows) and aquatic habitats (shallow, freshwater, usually ephemeral ponds). The salamanders need moist, riparian migration corridors between their breeding ponds and require the close proximity of ponds to upland terrestrial habitats where they can nestle protected during non-breeding times, which is a significant portion of the year. Woodlands, coastal scrub, and chaparral are the preferred habitat for the SCLTS.

The subject property contains a mix of riparian, oak woodland, and Douglas fir forest habitat. There are low meadow areas on the property as well as steep hillsides. The upper elevations of the property contain minor ocean views and significant views of the surrounding area.

The subject property is among the highest priority acquisitions identified by CDFW in the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander Conceptual Area Protection Plan adopted in March of 2008. The project also meets specific goals of the California Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy developed by CDFW. This guiding document for statewide conservation priorities identifies urban growth and development as one of the primary stressors affecting wildlife habitat in the Central Coast Region. The SCLTS is specifically referenced as a species at risk in this region. Acquisition of the subject property will eliminate two primary threats to the SCLTS by eliminating future residential development and road construction.

This acquisition will build on major conservation efforts already completed in the Santa Cruz County Salamander Recovery Area. Completed WCB acquisitions include the 30-acre Calabasas Pond in 1999, the 289-acre Buena Vista property in 2004 the 55-acre Cerruti Pond in 2008 and the 64-acre Willow Canyon Property in 2009. These CDFW acquisitions joined the CDFW land at Ellicott Pond and became part of the USFWS-managed Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge (ESNWR).

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition for this project is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program. The acquisition program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.) and enables 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. Under this program, acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with the CDFW, evaluating the biological values of property through development of a Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and approval and later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund. The USFWS grant proposed for this project has also been reviewed and approved by CDFW as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition grant selection and review process.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The property will be managed in perpetuity by the USFWS as part of the existing ESNWR. This project builds on a long history of coordinated recovery efforts for the SCLTS in the area and enhances the network of already protected lands in the region, many of which are managed by USFWS. The current ecological functions of the property do not require intensive habitat management.

TERMS

The property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$1,050,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved the Department of General Services (DGS) and USFWS. The property owner has agreed to sell the property for the fair market value. A \$700,000.00 USFWS grant has been approved for the project and requires a non-federal match of

\$350,000.00 that is being provided by an approved Natural Resources Agency administered Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program (EEMP) grant secured by the Trust for Public Land (TPL). TPL will assign the EEMP grant to CDFW to cover the non-federal match required by the federal Section 6 grant. Once approved by the Board, the transaction will be reviewed and approved by DGS.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sec. 6 grant	\$700,000.00
Environmental Enhancement Mitigation Program grant	<u>\$350,000.00</u>
Total purchase price	\$1,050,000.00
Other projected-related administrative costs	\$40,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$40,000.00

It is estimated the projected-related administrative costs will include DGS appraisal, environmental site assessment and transaction review costs, escrow and title insurance costs.

WCB 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), which allows for the acquisition of habitat on which unique species or natural communities naturally exist and to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13 as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and 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. The CDFW has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$40,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) to cover internal project-related expenses; accept the USFWS Recovery Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$700,000.00; accept the assignment from the Natural Resources Agency of the Environmental Enhancement Mitigation Program grant in the amount of

\$350,000.00; 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.

- *9. San Joaquin River Parkway, Sycamore Island Pond Isolation, Planning and Design Augmentation, Madera/Fresno County \$73,000.00

This project is to consider the allocation for an augmentation to an existing grant to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) for a cooperative project with the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) to complete preliminary and final design, prepare analyses and environmental review in compliance with CEQA, and prepare permit documents to allow for the enhancement of riparian habitat and the stabilization of ponds on the SJRC's Sycamore Island property in Fresno and Madera Counties adjacent to the San Joaquin River.

LOCATION

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

The proposed project lies within the 347± acre Sycamore Island Fishing Access site, which was acquired by the SJRC through a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) action in 2004. The property is located within the Parkway, approximately two miles west of Highway 41, north of the San Joaquin River, and south of Avenue 7½.

Prior to public acquisition, the Sycamore Island site supported a privately-operated public fishing and camping area. The site's six large ponds—former gravel mining pits—were used on a fee basis by local anglers fishing for bass and other warm-water fish since the early 1960's. Once acquired by the State in 2005, the area was closed pending the implementation of public safety and environmental protection improvements. In 2006, the WCB and the SJRC approved funding to make improvements necessary to protect the environment and public health and safety while continuing to accommodate public fishing access. Improvements consisted of signage, eight picnic tables, a restroom, and the re-grading of the entrance road. Once these improvements were completed, the site was opened and operated by the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust (SJRPT) on an interim basis. The site has since been operated under competitively bid concession agreements, with the most recent contract being awarded to the SJRPT, which operates the site and collects user fees to cover the costs of providing waste management, sanitation, area oversight, and visitor information.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project became necessary as the result of a failure of a berm on SJRC property. The berm separated the San Joaquin River from a warm-water fishery pond, which was formed from an abandoned gravel pit, resulting in the river's "capture" of the pond. Both SJRC and DWR identified the need to re-create a stable berm within the breach between the abandoned gravel pit and the San Joaquin River. Replacing the breach with a stable berm and gravel access road and restoring native vegetation and habitat along the berm will meet objectives of both entities.

DWR's involvement stems from the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP), the result of the settlement of the *Natural Resources Defense Council v. Rodgers* lawsuit, which has the stated goal of maintaining fish populations in "good condition" in the main stem of the San Joaquin River below Friant Dam. The settlement identifies DWR as a party to the implementation of the settlement. Among the improvements contemplated by the settlement is "filling and/or isolating the highest priority gravel pits." Restoring the berm would keep native fish species out of the pit, protecting them from warm-water predators, facilitating migration, and otherwise helping meet SJRRP goals for salmon habitat restoration.

In May 2012, WCB and SJRC approved \$232,000 in funding to DWR to complete preliminary and final design alternatives, prepare analyses and environmental review to comply with CEQA, and prepare permit documents. Among the project goals was to improve property management, facilitate emergency response and improve public safety, as well as help the SJRC fulfill its mandate for habitat enhancement, public access, and recreation. The project will identify ways to isolate the pond from the river channel, which will have the potential for creating a warm-water fishery off-channel to maintain or improve recreational fishing.

Part of the scope of work was to develop several alternative designs for consideration by the SJRC Board, which then led to additional work to define alternatives further than originally planned. During the same time, DWR and SJRC began talks with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to solicit additional funding for cost-sharing of the project. These two actions resulted in a project delay because the final project description could not be completed until the SJRC Board made a final decision on the project scope.

As part of the SJRRP, DWR also looked into potential borrow sites throughout the SJRC's River West-Fresno property, located across the river from Sycamore Island, because future gravel pit filling and isolation as part of the SJRRP will likely focus on this reach as a high priority area, and pit projects will likely require large quantities of fill material to execute. DWR suggested to SJRC in early 2014 that there may be suitable fill material in this reach that could be used for the Sycamore Island Pond Isolation project at a cost savings to the project. The proposed augmentation was considered at the May 2014 SJRC Board meeting,

with a decision to direct DWR to provide a cost estimate, revised schedule, and scope for consideration of a funding augmentation to include the new fill source in the design and permitting tasks for the project.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The SJRC has an immediate need for the berm improvement and has capital improvement funding available for habitat enhancement, public access, and recreation projects. Since the DWR South Central Region Office has primary authority, responsibility, and expertise for state capital improvements associated with the SJRRP, SJRC requested that DWR develop a proposal to provide environmental compliance and design services for the proposed project. The environmental document will identify long-term management needs, and the responsible agency(s). Once the planning and environmental documentation are complete, it is expected that the SJRC will approve the request to the WCB to provide additional funding for construction.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Project Task	Original Grant Agreement 2013	Grant Augmentation 2014
Preliminary Designs	\$75,000	\$13,000
Soil Testing & Associated Permits	\$10,000	\$20,000
Final Design & Cost Estimates	\$41,000	\$5,000
Design Review	\$37,000	\$0
CEQA/Permits	\$69,000	\$35,000
TOTAL	\$232,000	\$73,000
	TOTAL	\$305,000

Project costs will be for reviewing restoration and equalization saddle alternatives, completing design, and conducting environmental review and permitting.

FUNDING SOURCE

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

STATE RECOMMENDATION

The proposed project calls for the preparation and completion of environmental review for the enhancement of habitat and stabilization of a warm-water pond on the SJRC's Sycamore Island property, within the Parkway. The proposed project

is included among the high priority projects recommended by the Interagency Project Development Committee, whose role is to evaluate projects to be considered by the SJRC Board. The project augmentation was accepted by the SJRC Board, which includes a representative from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, on June 18, 2014.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$73,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

- *10. San Joaquin River Parkway, San Joaquin Hatchery \$300,000.00
Public Access and Trail Augmentation,
Fresno County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for an augmentation to an existing grant to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to improve public fishing access and enhance riparian habitat on the San Joaquin River and to improve recreational access to the Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) San Joaquin Fish Hatchery (Hatchery) within the San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway). The Hatchery is located on the south bank of the San Joaquin River one quarter mile downstream of the Highway 206 bridge in Fresno County.

LOCATION

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

The proposed project is located on and adjacent to the Hatchery, all of which is owned and operated by CDFW. The two-acre Hatchery site, located at 17372 Brook Trout Drive in Friant, is one mile west of Friant Dam and adjacent to Lost Lake Park.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Hatchery is one of the most visited areas of the Parkway, serving thousands of visitors seven days a week. Many of the visitors are school children. However, the site provides little interpretive information, has poor parking and vehicle access via a residential road, no trails, and minimal facilities for public access to the river. To rectify these shortcomings, a project was initiated in 2011 when CDFW requested assistance from DWR to develop preconstruction planning, and complete engineering design and final construction drawings for a project to improve public access at the Hatchery. The project would provide hiking trails, an outdoor classroom, adequate parking and circulation for buses, and picnicking facilities and includes a segment of the multiple purpose Parkway trail, connecting Lost Lake Park to Friant Road at a central intersection in the community. In September 2011, the WCB and SJRC approved \$2,300,000 in funding to DWR to construct the project, which included the preparation of design documents and bid specifications, and to provide construction contract oversight, management, and surveys.

Conceptual drawings and preliminary designs for the project include the Parkway trailhead entrance at the northwest corner of Friant and Flemming Roads with a

trail providing strategic viewing of the Hatchery, and a segment of the multiple-purpose Parkway trail connecting Lost Lake Park to Friant Road at a central intersection in the community. In an effort to meet visitors' basic needs, drinking water, rest areas, bike racks, and parking lot are to be provided. In addition, an outdoor seating classroom, solar lighting, and a trail bridge are also included in the design. The trail will lead to the San Joaquin River to provide fishing opportunities on the river. All public access improvements will be constructed to American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Interpretive signs also will be added along the trail, river, and Hatchery to provide the public with a better understanding of the Hatchery's role in fish production and in protecting California's native fisheries, CDFW's role in river restoration efforts, and increase general awareness of California's precious natural resources. Landscaping will include native plantings for the trailhead entrance, parking lot, and around the proposed seating area, and irrigation will be installed to maintain the new plants.

To date, DWR has nearly completed the project design, including the outdoor classroom, stairs, parking lot, trail, pre-fabricated steel bridge, road sign and kiosk, and other miscellaneous features, such as electrical, potable water, and irrigation systems. Construction, originally set to begin in 2012, is now slated to start in the spring or fall of 2015. It is anticipated that construction will take approximately 4-6 months to complete.

The project has required a high level of interagency coordination to address multiple projects at the Hatchery, and significant unanticipated delays primarily affecting DWR's operations budget have persisted. Delays resulting in increased project costs are as follows: 1) a change to the project parking lot design was required following construction of an adjacent CDFW leach field; 2) new designs for a swale and drain pipe to route storm water to existing Hatchery drainages were required after the County of Fresno indicated drainage to Friant Road would not be permitted; 3) trail design realignment and a change in finish materials and specifications were required due to a separate CDFW project to construct a Salmon Conservation and Restoration Facility at the Hatchery as part of the San Joaquin River Restoration Program; 4) two-year protocol level surveys for California Tiger Salamander and Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp were required by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, affecting projected wage and material costs for construction; and 5) remaining trail alignment revisions are required to accommodate a new CDFW Small Fry Trail and Stormy Creek project at the site, which will provide additional components to the planned Hatchery trail system, including a children's exploratory trail with nature-playscape features and a bio-swale to treat and convey storm water, featuring infiltration galleries, native vegetation, and water quality interpretation.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The project's planned facilities must comply with the Lost Lake Regional Park Master Plan, Fresno County General Plan, the mission of the CDFW, and the San Joaquin River Parkway Master Plan. Once the project is complete, operations

and maintenance will be the responsibility of the CDFW, providing additional amenities to an existing public access program at the Hatchery.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Project Task	Original Grant Agreement 2011	Grant Augmentation 2014
State Operations (bid/specs, project)	\$407,900	\$228,000
Design and Engineering	\$235,000	\$0
Construction	\$1,587,000	\$72,000
TOTAL	\$2,230,000	\$300,000
	TOTAL	\$2,530,000

Project costs will be for the construction of a trail, drinking water fountains, rest areas, bike racks, a parking area, an outdoor seating area, solar lighting, a trail bridge, interpretive signs, landscaping and irrigation, preconstruction planning, complete engineering drawings and specifications, contract management and construction oversight. The augmentation is necessary to finalize design, solicit bids, and complete construction.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75050(f), which provides for the construction of river parkway projects identified by the SJRC and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

CEQA REVIEW AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

As lead agency, CDFW (then known as the Department of Fish and Game) prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CDFW adopted the MND in May 2011. Staff considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared by CDFW and has prepared proposed written findings in compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

The proposed project is included among the high priority projects recommended by the Interagency Project Development Committee, whose role is to evaluate projects to be considered by the SJRC Board. The project augmentation was accepted by the SJRC Board, which includes a representative of CDFW, on June 18, 2014.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this augmentation as proposed; allocate \$300,000.00 from the from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75050(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.

- *11. Amargosa Tecopa Hot Springs, Expansions 1 – 3, \$29,550.00
Inyo County

This proposal is to consider the fee acquisition of 4± acres and a conservation easement over 2± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition grant for the protection of wetland and upland habitat areas that support the State and federally-listed endangered Amargosa vole (Vole) and the Amargosa niterwort (Niterwort), located in the community of Tecopa Hot Springs, in Inyo County.

LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES

The subject properties (Properties) consist of four parcels, two contiguous with the same ownership and two non-contiguous with different ownerships, all within the community of Tecopa Hot Springs. Tecopa Hot Springs is located 65 miles southeast of Death Valley National Park off of Death Valley Road/Highway 127 in the Mojave Desert. The community of Tecopa Hot Springs was established because of the abundance of natural hot springs occurring in the area. These natural springs support wetland habitat required by both the Vole and Niterwort.

The Properties are adjacent to the eastern shore of Grimshaw Lake, which also provides important desert 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 was the primary location for the Vole, but due to habitat modification; invasive species such as salt cedar, water diversions, and groundwater withdrawals along the river, only a fraction of 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 the two rivers back to a proper functioning condition by removing large quantities of 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 development and its impact on habitat, 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 under current land uses and zoning can be cultivated, filled, burned, or developed at any time, thereby causing detrimental impacts to wildlife habitat. Another threat to habitat is attributed to the common practice of drilling wells for natural hot spring water. Drillings lower the water table and reduce the water available for endangered species and their habitat.

The CAPP integrates with the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Amargosa

River Area of Critical Environmental Concern land management and protection strategy, which encompasses 21,552 acres and creates a larger corridor of interconnected habitat that water and wildlife can move through in the Amargosa River basin area. BLM along with the Amargosa Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy are responsible for the management of over 5,000 acres of protected lands in the immediate vicinity. The proposed acquisitions will also help enhance linkages with other protected habitats and reduce habitat fragmentation.

The project is consistent with action proposed under CDFW's State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). The project is located within the Mojave Desert Region of the SWAP. One of the recommended conservation actions identified for this region is to specifically secure wet habitats in the Amargosa River Basin to help protect the Vole and other species dependent on these rare wet desert habitats.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In November 2013, WCB approved the first fee acquisition of approximately 40± acres of land to support habitat protection and the creation of corridor linkages for the Vole and Niterwort in the Tecopa Hot Springs Community. The proposed project will expand and incorporate the ownership of three additional and separate ownerships totaling approximately 6± acres of land, described below.

Expansion 1 (Lagumina)

Expansion 1 is a fee acquisition of two contiguous square parcels 3± acres in size having the same ownership. The property is unimproved with the east end abutting land owned by BLM.

Expansion 2 (Catalano)

Expansion 2 is a fee acquisition of a 1± acre square parcel. The property is unimproved and its eastern boundary abuts land owned by the BLM.

Expansion 3 (Rogers)

Expansion 3 is the acquisition of a conservation easement encumbering a square parcel that totals 2± acres. The property contains two non-permanent structures, a mobile home and storage shed. Under the terms of the conservation easement, the existing improvements can remain and be maintained while the remaining property cannot be developed, and must be maintained in its current natural state. The south end of the property abuts land owned by the BLM.

The topography of the Properties is fairly flat with gently rolling slopes. Private property and BLM lands adjoin the Properties, with the property managed by BLM containing large areas of core Vole and suitable Niterwort habitat. The Properties have important wetland as well as upland habitat supporting stands of Olney's bulrush providing necessary refuge areas for the Vole's long term survival. 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.

The Properties also support wet and transitional alkaline flats that are suitable habitat for the Niterwort. The Niterwort is a small, erect perennial plant issuing 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.

CDFW desires properties acquired within this CAPP to be designated as an ecological reserve by the California Fish and Game Commission. Ecological Reserves, authorized by the California Legislature in 1968, 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 Code 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/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (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 plan to adopt a management plan based on regular site visits to study, monitor, and inventory habitat resources. Personnel and operation costs 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 Properties. 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 Properties have been appraised as having a fair market value of \$42,000.00. Specifically, the Lagumina fee acquisition has an appraised value of \$26,000.00; the Catalano fee acquisition has an appraised value of \$11,000.00; and the

Rogers conservation easement has an appraised value of \$5,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and USFWS. The property owners have agreed to sell their 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	\$22,050.00
USFWS grant funds	<u>\$19,950.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$42,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$7,500.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$29,550.00

It is estimated that an additional \$7,500.00 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.

WCB 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(bc), that allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$29,550.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(bc), to cover the non-federal match for

the acquisition and other internal project related expenses; accept the USFWS Recovery Land Acquisition Grant in the amount of \$19,950.00, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project, and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

- *12. Allensworth Ecological Reserve, Expansion 41 - 49, \$0.00
Tulare County

This proposal is to consider the acquisition of 12 separate parcels of land totaling 29+/- acres by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the protection of habitat supporting the San Joaquin kit fox and other rare species found within the area of the CDFW Allensworth Ecological Reserve (Reserve) and to enhance habitat linkages and connectivity.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject properties (Properties) are located in the southeast region of the San Joaquin Valley, near the City of Earlimart, in Tulare County. The Properties lie in an area comprised mostly of small parcels typified as open land, sparsely vegetated, and dominated by grassland and valley sink areas. If acquired they would be managed as part of the Reserve. Much of the area outside the Reserve has, or is currently being, converted to extensive agricultural uses including alfalfa, grapes, or orchard use. Other protected lands in the vicinity include the Colonel Allensworth State Park located to the west. To the north is 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) approved projects to help acquire and protect nearly 3,000 acres of land that is now part of 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 including the State and federally endangered blunt-nosed leopard lizard, the Tipton kangaroo rat, and San Joaquin pocket mouse; the State threatened and federally endangered San Joaquin kit fox, the State threatened San Joaquin antelope squirrel, and the federally threatened Hoppings blister beetle. Other rare and important species that either reside at or frequent the Reserve include badger, greater Sandhill crane, merlin, Swainson's hawk, and the western pond turtle.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Properties consist of 9 separate property ownerships ranging in size from approximately 1.25 to 10.04 acres, totaling 29.34 ± acres, and are being proposed for acquisition as Expansions 41-49 of the Reserve. The Properties are currently zoned for agricultural use and are being utilized as pastureland. Their topography ranges from fairly level to slightly undulating, and the dominant habitat is native grasses. If acquired, the Properties will be managed as part of the Reserve, expanding open space, habitat connections, grasslands and habitat areas for wildlife species. The acquisition will also help improve habitat connectivity

between the Reserve and the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge located to the north.

WCB PROGRAM

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Properties proposed for acquisition represent a nominal addition to the Reserve and can be readily absorbed into existing CDFW operations. CDFW has advised WCB that CDFW will be able to manage and monitor the Properties within its existing budget.

FUNDING SOURCE

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

TERMS

Each of the Property owners has agreed to sell its Property for appraised fair market value as shown below. The total purchase price is \$104,000.00. The appraised values (all included in one appraisal report), have been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The Properties are being acquired separately from the nine different landowners. The terms and conditions of the proposed acquisitions 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 separate acquisition.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding and fair market values for the Properties is as follows:

Expansion 41	\$ 26,000.00
Expansion 42	\$ 8,000.00
Expansion 43	\$ 6,000.00
Expansion 44	\$ 5,000.00
Expansion 45	\$ 5,000.00
Expansion 46	\$ 9,000.00
Expansion 47	\$ 10,000.00
Expansion 48	\$ 10,000.00
Expansion 49	\$ 25,000.00
Total Purchase Price	\$104,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	\$ 30,000.00
Total Project Costs	\$134,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$ 0.00

It is estimated that \$30,000.00 will be needed to cover internal project-related expenses, including title and closing costs. These costs will also be charged to California Department of Corrections Statewide Electric Fence Project mitigation fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

- *13. Western Riverside MSHCP (2013) - North Peak El Toro, \$95,000.00
Riverside County

This proposal is to consider 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 Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority) and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to the Authority to acquire 47± acres of land in western Riverside County for the protection of habitat that supports threatened and endangered species, and to increase regional wildlife habitat corridors and linkages located within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (WRC MSCHP).

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property, known as the El Toro property (Property), is located on El Toro Road, north of Dew Drive in an area referred to by locals as the North Peak community in the city of Lake Elsinore in Riverside County. The neighborhood's general boundaries are Interstate 15 to the east; Cajalco Road to the north, Interstate 15 to the west; and State Highway 74 to the south. The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of ranchettes, traditional homes and mobile homes, built on 5 to 20 acre lots. Lake Elsinore is considered a bedroom community that has experienced tremendous growth during the 1980s, currently the city is about 85% of total planned build-out. Its major commercial corridor is located along State Highway 15, and runs north to south at the east side of the city.

The Property lies within the WRC MSHCP, which covers an area of 1.2 million acres and 146 species. The WRC MSHCP was implemented under the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) program. The NCCP program is a cooperative effort that includes both private and public partners that identifies and protects biodiversity within the State for the protection of plants, animals and their habitat under the State's Natural Community Conservation Planning Act of 1991. Both the USFWS and WCB have partnered in several acquisitions to assist in the Authority's efforts to reach a goal of protecting and conserving approximately 346,000 acres of existing public lands and another 153,000 acres of non-public land identified within the WRC MSHCP/NCCP.

The WRC MSHCP/NCCP complements the habitat conservation planning process of the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), which was enacted to protect endangered species and the ecosystem upon which they depend. The Act also encourages the development of multi-species, ecosystem-based plans that provide for the conservation and recovery of both listed and unlisted species. Riverside County encompasses a mixture of natural communities across a topographically diverse landscape that includes several natural communities that are declining due to land conversion. Within the WRC MSHCP there are six established target core habitat areas. Each core habitat area is representative of

the particular ecosystem that supports populations of both sensitive and unlisted species. With respect to the El Toro property, the site is situated in what is known as the Western Core/Linkage habitat area. The Western/Core Linkage area extends from the city of Murrieta north of Lake Elsinore and includes several miles on either side of Interstate 15. This linkage is necessary for maintaining habitat connections in the western portion of the WRC MSHCP by enhancing the linkage from existing reserves such as the Lake Mathews-Estelle Mountain Reserve and Cleveland National Forest.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is comprised of two irregularly shaped parcels that have frontage along El Toro Road. Although the Property is currently not zoned, the planning commission has approved a rezoning of the property to Rural Mountainous, with a minimum lot size of 10 acres. Its general plan designation is Hillside Residential with a ½ acre to 10-acre minimum lot size. The site is unimproved and has a mountainous rolling to steep terrain best described as rough raw land.

The Property is located on the northern portion of the Western/Core Linkage area and serves as habitat for the Federal/State endangered coastal California gnatcatcher and least Bell's vireo, as well as the Federal endangered/State threatened Stephens' kangaroo rat. Acquisitions in this area will contribute to species recovery by conserving the habitats upon which they rely, including coastal sage scrub, grasslands, and clay soils. Furthermore, the Western/Core Linkage area is essential for maintaining the genetic viability of these species. This habitat area also provides ecosystem responses to climate change by incorporating elevational gradients.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Code Section 1300, *et seq.*) authorizing WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisition of properties. Under the Program, the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities. The Property was reviewed and approved by CDFW under its NCCP program, substantiating the biological values of the Property and recommending it for funding. 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 Property will be managed by the Authority as part of the WRC MSHCP reserve system plan, which serves to provide permanent habitat protection for populations of federal and state-listed endangered and threatened species that occupy the reserve and to increase regional wildlife habitat cores and linkages that will connect existing habitat reserve areas throughout western Riverside County. As part of its obligation under the WRC MSHCP reserve system plan, the Authority is responsible for the financing and development of an endowment account to cover in perpetuity project monitoring, operations, and management costs. The Authority also retains a Reserve Manager to ensure that management actions are consistent with the reserve system plan.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$255,000.00. 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. USFWS funds in the amount of \$164,985.00 require a non-federal match in the amount of \$90,015.00 that is being provided by a grant from the WCB. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and USFWS subgrant funds to the Authority, provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the grantee to encumber the Property with a conservation easement in favor of the State or another entity approved by the State and seeks reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$ 90,015.00
WCB – subgrant of USFWS funds	<u>\$164,985.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$255,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$ 4,985.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$ 95,000.00

It is estimated that an additional \$4,985.00 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including the DGS appraisal review. The Authority, as project proponent, will fund all other project-related administrative costs for the acquisition, including but not limited to the environmental site assessment, appraisal, survey, escrow, and title insurance costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), 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 to implement the Habitat Conservation Program.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this acquisition project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$164,985.00 and approve the Agreement to Subgrant federal funds to the Authority; and allocate \$95,015.00 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; and authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

- *14. Western Riverside MSHCP (2013) - Patterson, Riverside County \$160,500.00

This proposal is to consider 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 Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority) and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to the Authority to acquire 29± acres of land in western Riverside County for the protection of habitat that supports threatened and endangered species, and to increase regional wildlife habitat corridors and linkages located within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (WRC MSHCP).

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property, known as the Patterson property (Property), is located east of Interstate 15 and is situated south of Malaga Road along the east side of Hemple Street in the city of Wildomar. The Property lies at the end of a corridor of developed residential and business properties located along the edge of a frontage street that parallels Interstate 15. On the other sides of the Property, the surrounding neighborhood can best be described as an area comprised of “ranchettes,” traditional homes and mobile homes built on 5 to 20 acre lots with additional space used for equestrian, agricultural, or conservation uses.

The Property lies in the Western Core/Linkage area (WCLA), a target habitat acquisition area identified in the WRC MSHCP implemented under the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (CDFW) Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) program. The NCCP program is a cooperative effort that includes multiple local, State, federal and private/public partners that identifies and protects biodiversity within the State for the protection of plants, animals, and their habitat under the State’s Natural Community Conservation Planning Act of 1991. Their cumulative efforts are focused on the acquisition of highly-developable properties that provide essential habitat within the WRC MSHCP/NCCP’s defined core habitat areas.

The WCLA is one of the six WRC MSHCP’s core habitat areas targeted for high priority acquisitions. The WCLA extends from the city of Murrieta north to Lake Elsinore and includes several miles on either side of Interstate 15. The WCLA area is important to the Authority because lands within the WCLA provide critical linkages necessary for maintaining ecological processes in a rapidly urbanizing landscape. Riverside County ranks as the fourth largest residential development area in California. It is estimated that by 2035 there will be more than 1.2 million housing units in Riverside County, which reflects a growth rate of 51% over the next 22 years. The acquisition and conservation of properties located within this target area also link existing reserves to other reserves such as the Lake Mathews-Estelle Mountain Reserve and the Cleveland National Forest, and consolidates them into a larger reserve system that will benefit 17 federally listed

species and at least 31 sensitive unlisted species covered in the WRC MSCHP/NCCP.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is vacant and unimproved, and can best be described as trapezoid in shape and appearance. According to the Wildomar Planning Department, the site is zoned as Rural Residential, which allows residential development on ½ acre minimum lots. The site has a rolling to steep topography dominated by coastal sage scrub in an elevation that ranges from 1,424 feet to 1,828 feet as part of the western slopes of the Sedco Hills.

Since the Property lies immediately adjacent to developed residential areas, it serves as the beginning of a protected buffer of properties that will be utilized as habitat protection for several native federally listed species. The proposed acquisition will permanently protect highly developable, but essential habitat within the boundaries of the WRC MSHCP/NCCP. The key components of this acquisition are to provide permanent protection of habitat and populations of Federal/State listed endangered species such as the federally endangered quino checkerspot butterfly, Federal/State endangered least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher, and sensitive unlisted species such as the San Diego horned lizard, orange throated whiptail, Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow, western pond turtle, and bobcat and to increase regional wildlife habitat cores and linkages that will connect existing reserve areas throughout western Riverside County.

The Property is also situated in an area which contains some of the last remaining contiguous blocks of coastal sage scrub in western Riverside County. The Property's coastal sage scrub habitat is a very important ecological plant community that is essential to resident wildlife. In recent years, coastal sage scrub habitat has been destroyed and fragmented, thereby causing a degradation of ecological processes. Protecting and conserving coastal sage scrub covered properties not only provides habitat for native wildlife, but also serves to assist in the recovery of several wildlife species.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Code Section 1300, *et seq.*) authorizing WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisition of properties. Under the Program, the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities. The Property was

reviewed and approved by CDFW under its NCCP program, substantiating the biological values of the Property and recommending it for funding. 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 Property will be managed by the Authority as part of the WRC MSHCP reserve system plan, which serves to provide permanent habitat protection for populations of federal and state-listed endangered and threatened species that occupy the reserve and to increase regional wildlife habitat cores and linkages that will connect existing habitat reserve areas throughout western Riverside County. As part of its obligation under the WRC MSHCP reserve system plan, the Authority is responsible for the financing and development of an endowment account to cover in perpetuity project monitoring, operations, and management costs. The Authority also retains a Reserve Manager to ensure that management actions are consistent with the reserve system plan.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$440,000.00. 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 in the amount of \$284,680.00 require a non-federal match in the amount of \$155,320.00 that is being provided by a grant from the WCB. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and USFWS subgrant funds to the Authority, provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the 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

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$ 155,320.00
WCB – subgrant of USFWS funds	<u>\$ 284,680.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$ 440,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$ 5,180.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$ 160,500.00

It is estimated that an additional \$5,180.00 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including the DGS appraisal review. The Authority, as

project proponent, will fund all other project-related administrative costs for the acquisition, including but not limited to the environmental site assessment, appraisal, survey, escrow, and title insurance costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), 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 to implement the Habitat Conservation Program.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this acquisition project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$284,680.00 and approve the Agreement to Subgrant federal funds to the Authority; and allocate \$160,500.00 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; and authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

15. Sacramento River Boating Access, Red Bluff River Park, \$970,000.00
Tehama County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the City of Red Bluff (City) for a cooperative project with the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Division of Boating and Waterways, to construct a boat launch facility compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that includes a 2-lane boat ramp, improved parking, a new restroom, picnic areas, and pedestrian paths. The proposed project is located in Tehama County, within the City on property owned by both the City and the State Lands Commission.

LOCATION

The Red Bluff River Park is located in the City on the Sacramento River at river mile 245. Over the past 60 years, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) has approved several allocations that funded boating access projects within the City for sport fishing on the Sacramento River. In 1958, WCB first allocated funds to the City for construction of a boat launch facility on the Sacramento River. Six years later, WCB was allocated funds to replace that facility when it was flooded as a result of the construction of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's (USBR) Red Bluff Diversion Dam (RBDD), which raised the elevation of the River by more than ten feet. The RBDD, which was operated from May to October every year, was constructed to allow the Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority (TCCA) to provide irrigation water. The new boat launch facility provided access to Lake Red Bluff, the new reservoir behind the RBDD. WCB allocated additional funding in 1990 and 2000 to repair the existing facility.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Shortly after its completion in 1964, the RBDD was shown to have negative impacts on Chinook salmon by interfering with their ability to move upstream to spawning grounds. The population of adult winter-run Chinook salmon at the RBDD peaked in 1969, numbering about 118,000, but by the late 1990s had dropped to less than five percent of the 1969 total. To solve the problem, the TCCA and USBR worked with the federal and State resource agencies to construct a new pumping plant to provide a year-round water supply without reliance on the RBDD for water diversions. The implementation of this project allowed the RBDD gates to be raised permanently, providing unimpaired year-round fish passage to and from prime spawning habitat. However, raising the gates for the final time in 2011 effectively moved the edge of the river 300 feet east, leaving the existing WCB boat launch facilities of no practical use. With the ramp now out of the water, the only way to get a boat into the water is to drive onto the exposed gravel bar. As such, boat launching at the existing site is limited to boaters who are willing and able to launch in loose gravel using four-wheel-drive vehicles and light weight boats.

This project involves the development of a fully ADA accessible boat launch facility and includes a new 2-lane reinforced concrete boat ramp 30 feet wide,

elevated concrete walkways, an eight-foot wide boarding float, two ADA parking spaces, reinforced concrete boat ready area, and the replacement of the original restroom facilities with an ADA accessible restroom. Additional features at the facility include a shade structure, ADA compliant drinking fountains, trash cans, picnic tables, security lighting, signage and landscaping, as well as improvements to existing parking and expansion of vehicle trailer parking by 24 spaces.

This portion of the Sacramento River supports some of the best fishing on the river and the Red Bluff River Park facility was the primary angler access to the Sacramento River for this region. Upstream, the closest boat launching facility on the river is the Bend Bridge Park Boat Ramp 13 river miles away and managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Downstream, a U.S. Forest Service launch ramp is located just below the RBDD. Historically, boating access at the Red Bluff River Park exceeded 10,000 launches annually, and the number of launches is expected to more than double once the new facility is constructed because it will be open all year long.

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 new facility will be open without charge and should conditions change, any proposed fee structure would be approved by WCB in the future. The City will provide long-term management of the project site and has entered into a 25-year management plan with WCB that will remain in effect until the expiration date of August 27, 2039. If at any time during the 25-year life of the project, the City does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

	WCB	DBW	Red Bluff	Total
Concept, Design, Grant Application	-	-	\$15,600	\$15,600
CEQA, Permitting	-	\$69,000	\$10,000	\$79,000
Final Design, Construction Bid Documents	-	\$278,000	-	\$278,000
Construction	\$898,000	\$1,307,000	\$88,400	\$2,293,400
Project Management/Inspection/Monitoring	\$72,000	\$116,000	\$20,000	\$208,000
TOTAL	\$970,000	\$1,770,000	\$134,000	\$2,874,000

The overall project funding includes costs for planning, design, permitting and construction, as well as additional expenses for inspections and project

management. WCB specific project costs will be for construction related activities including labor and materials. WCB staff have applied for assistance through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sport Fish Restoration Act, which has been approved and will reimburse WCB for 75% of project costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding sources for this project are the Wildlife Restoration Fund and the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(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.

CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. As Lead Agency, the City of Red Bluff 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. Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$250,000 from the Wildlife Restoration Fund and \$720,000 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

16. Leininger Ranch Habitat Improvement, \$271,000.00
Tehama County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Tehama County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD), for a cooperative project with the landowners, the U. S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to improve water features and enhance wildlife habitat on the Leininger Ranch, located approximately ten miles east of the City of Corning in Tehama County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The 12,000-acre Leininger Ranch, originally a part of Leland Stanford's 33,000-acre Vina Ranch, consists of three properties located approximately five miles northeast of Vina. The Leininger Ranch is protected with a conservation easement held by The Nature Conservancy. Currently managed as a cattle ranch, the Leininger Ranch is also used for upland game and waterfowl hunting. A hunting lodge is located on one of the ridge tops and duck blinds are located adjacent to large managed ponds in the southwest portion of the property.

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

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Existing water features at the site consist of a failed stock pond which has been breached and is incapable of holding water, a second pond which is functionally impaired with sediment, and several natural springs at remote locations. Improvement of existing water features will maximize onsite water resources and will support wildlife on the property. This effort will also help wildlife move between water resources on the property with more regional watersheds.

The project will repair and develop the two existing livestock ponds and five natural springs on the property. The failed stock pond will be replaced with a concrete reinforced earthen dam with a rock blanket and spillway. A second stock pond, which is in use but degraded and unable to retain optimal water levels for wildlife or livestock, will be upgraded. Work on the second pond will consist of grading and retrofitting with an earthen dam reinforced with a rock blanket. Designs were provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The ponds' upgraded capacity will be 23 and 17 acre feet respectively.

Five springs in the uplands of the ranch will be improved through installation of stabilization, diversion, or catchment structures, according to NRCS guidelines. At these sites, appropriate structures, including headwalls, perforated drain pipe, or shallow troughs will allow for maximal use of water by wildlife and grazing stock. Spring outlets which have been overgrown will be cleared and improved. A limited amount of native rock may be used to reinforce and protect the land surface surrounding the spring outlet. Wildlife access to the springs will be preserved or enhanced.

Per NRCS specifications, both dams will be capable of passing a 50-year flood event over the top and retaining smaller flows safely. The increased capacity and stability of both ponds will allow for a broader surface area, longer retention of runoff, and more consistent seasonal water levels capable of attracting and supporting migratory birds and regional wildlife, while also encouraging natural revegetation processes.

WCB PROGRAM

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Leininger Ranch is protected by conservation easements with The Nature Conservancy Lassen Foothills protection project. The landowners have also worked closely with NRCS and TCRCD to implement environmental improvement projects on the land. As sportsmen and sportswomen, the family has a deep appreciation for the recreational and aesthetic value of wild nature, and plans to continue developing their property for the benefit of native species.

Per engineer specifications, little maintenance of the stock pond structures will be required. The landowner will monitor to ensure structural integrity of the new dams and other structures, and will maintain the health of the surrounding vegetation. Grazing practices will ensure the ponds and surrounding vegetation are preserved. The ranch will continue to pay fees to maintain its water rights.

The TCRCD will be responsible for ensuring that the property owners manage the project improvements pursuant to terms of the Grant Agreement and management plans, and to ensure the successful establishment and maintenance of the enhancement features. If at any time during the life of the project, the landowner does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires the Grantee to refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding for the project is as follows:

Task Descriptions	NRCS	USFWS	Landowner	WCB	Total
Pond & spring repairs	\$800		\$36,725	\$204,555	\$242,080
Wells	\$52,500	\$25,000	\$10,000		\$87,500
Fencing	\$80,000				\$80,000
Project management				\$50,584	\$50,584
Permits				\$7,679	\$7,679
Contingency				\$8,182	\$8,182
Totals	\$133,300	\$25,000	\$46,725	\$271,000	\$476,025

Project costs will be for pond and spring upgrades, permits, and project management.

FUNDING SOURCE

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

CEQA AND DFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The Tehama County Resource Conservation District, as lead agency, has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has considered the MND and prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB’s compliance with CEQA. Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$271,000 from Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(4); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

17. Truckee River Watershed Forest Enhancement, \$965,000.00
Sierra/Nevada County

To consider the allocation for a grant to the National Forest Foundation for a cooperative project with the U.S. Forest Service, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, and the Truckee River Watershed Council to protect and enhance habitat, restore forest stand ecology, and reduce fuel loads in the federally-owned Tahoe National Forest, located generally ten miles north of the City of Truckee in Nevada and Sierra Counties.

LOCATION

The project consists of eight project elements located in the Middle Truckee and Upper Little Truckee watersheds, within National Forest lands, under the management and direction of the Sierraville and Truckee Ranger Districts of the Tahoe National Forest. The Town of Truckee is located in the approximate center of the watersheds. The watersheds are bisected by State Route 89, which runs north-south, and Interstate 80, which runs east-west. The project's locations are within both Nevada and Sierra counties.

Of the project's eight project elements, three elements are located on the eastern side of the watershed, east of State Route (SR) 89: Prosser Creek Fish Habitat Restoration (Nevada County); Little Truckee Fish Habitat Improvement (Nevada County); and Jammer Chair Stream and Aspen Restoration (Sierra County). The remaining five elements are located on the west side of the watershed, west of SR-89: Outback Watershed Improvement (Sierra County); Phoenix Watershed Improvements (Sierra County); Johnson Canyon Restoration (Nevada County); Sagehen Forest improvements (Nevada and Sierra Counties); and Sagehen Creek Fen Restoration and Stream Stabilization (Nevada County).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A history of resource extraction, road and railroad construction, hydrologic modification, fire suppression, development, and recreational use has had serious impacts on the Truckee River watershed. The watershed is home to a number of special-status plant and animal species or species of concern identified by state or federal land management agencies such as California spotted owl, northern goshawk, and Lahontan cutthroat trout. The Truckee River is also listed as "impaired" for sediment under Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act. The watershed once supported a superb Lahontan cutthroat trout fishery but, as a result of overfishing, flow and habitat modification, competitor species and temperature changes, the majority of Lahontan cutthroat trout populations were lost from the watershed.

A broad array of fish and wildlife species reflect the diversity of plant life and habitats on the Tahoe National Forest. The forest is inhabited by at least 258 bird species, 82 mammal species, 17 reptile species, 9 amphibian species, and 21 species of fish; among those species are the California spotted owl, northern

goshawk, American marten, mountain yellow-legged frog, and Lahontan cutthroat trout. The overall goal of this effort is to ensure healthy forests and high quality and abundant water throughout the Truckee River watershed. The project will protect and enhance habitat, restore forest stand level ecology, reduce fuel loads, increase fish habitat, and enhance hydraulic complexity and connectivity.

The following describes each of the project elements:

Prosser Creek Fish Habitat Restoration Element - Prosser Creek is impounded by Prosser Dam, located 1.5 miles above the confluence with the Truckee River. Prosser Dam was completed in 1962 resulting in change to the hydrology dramatically altering Prosser Creek's bed banks and floodplains. At present, Prosser Creek, within the project area, is composed of cobble-riffle and glide, lacking cover and deep pools which act as resting locations for fish. The project will improve habitat for fish with the placement of four large boulder fields and five large log structures within the creek. The Prosser Creek Fish Habitat Improvement Program Element will result in the restoration of 1,500 feet of streambed habitat, with a total acreage of approximately 1.7 acres. The log structures will be constructed at strategic locations along the channel to improve channel complexity, encourage deeper scouring, and create escape cover habitat for fish. The four boulder fields are proposed in two locations along the channel to enhance hydraulic complexity, encourage localized bed scour, and provide cover and resting habitat for fish.

Outback Watershed Improvement Element - This project element is in an area that drains to the Little Truckee River. Legacy logging and road impacts have interrupted the hydrologic function of natural seeps and associated aspen stands. This proposed project element includes reclaiming a historic roadbed that intercepts groundwater along most of its length, removing a culvert in a perennial stream segment, and replacing a second culvert to allow aquatic passage. A second road will be closed to vehicles and hydrologic connectivity will be restored, and a headcut will be treated to stabilize a meadow. Roadway repair activities may include, but are not limited to, repairing and constructing additional waterbars and dips, repairing drainage structures, grading and shaping roads to reduce gully erosion, restoring natural drainage patterns, changing the cross-slope of the road bed, upgrading culverts or replacing culverts with rock low-water fords, and adding gravel to improve the road surface.

Jammer Chair Stream and Aspen Restoration Element - Legacy logging and road impacts have degraded an intermittent channel and the associated aspen stands. In 2008, the project element area was treated to remove encroaching conifers in order to promote aspen communities; in 2010, additional treatment was conducted in the project element area when two road segments were relocated away from the riparian and spring areas. The proposed element will complete restoration and return hydrologic processes to the degraded stream channel and associated riparian areas of Jammer Chair Flat. This element will include the

following items: restoration of existing incised ditches to return hydrologic function to riparian areas, springs and aspen stands, construction of riffles and grade controls to improve fish habitat, and the re-contouring of an abandoned road to improve hydrology to adjacent meadow. The work will restore approximately ½ mile of stream channel and 3 acres of meadow and riparian habitats.

Little Truckee Fish Habitat Improvement Element - The three-mile stretch of the Little Truckee River between Boca and Stampede reservoirs is one of the most highly sought after areas for fishing in the State of California but has been severely altered with the construction of the reservoirs. It is used as a conveyance reach by the Bureau of Reclamation for the transport of water. The project element area exhibits areas of high erosion and is lacking coarse woody debris and pool depth. The project proposes to enhance and improve the physical conditions on five sections of the Little Truckee River and nearby terrestrial environments to create complex, high quality aquatic fish and wildlife habitat. The main treatments for this element include the following:

- Add 200 large boulders to the channel for fish structure
- Anchor 80 adult trees to stream banks to add pool depth and habitat complexity
- Create two new backwater habitats for juvenile wild trout rearing by extending existing low velocity spawning areas through excavation and placement of logs and boulders
- Transplant 50-70 adult willows along banks to provide shade, cover, and bank stability
- Enhance spawning gravels in channel to increase wild trout reproduction by providing cover and reducing water velocity

Sagehen Creek Fen Restoration and Stream Stabilization Element – This element of the project is the restoration of the Sagehen Creek fen. Fens are peat-forming wetlands, rare in California, that are supported by nearly constant groundwater inflow, and are found in the Sagehen Basin at lower elevations along Sagehen Creek. Fens also are hotspots of biological diversity. The perennial supply of water provides refugia for plant and animal species that persist only in fens. Many of these species have the main ranges of their distribution far to the north in Alaska and Canada. The presence of water in fens makes them an important component of surrounding forest ecosystems, providing moisture and forage for animals. The lower slope of the Sagehen Creek fen is bisected by a forest road, which diverts water from the portion of the fen downslope of the road. The project will decommission the road, allowing the 300-foot section of the road that passes through the bottom of the fen, and its associated culvert system, to be removed. Once the road is removed and natural hydrology re-established, the creek banks will be stabilized utilizing native vegetation and materials.

Phoenix Watershed Improvements Element - Legacy logging and road impacts have degraded the hydrologic function in the area and erosion increased sediment

in the stream system within Independence Creek and the Little Truckee River. The Phoenix Watershed Improvements Element will install gates to limit motorized access, help restore hydrologic connectivity on 11 miles of adjacent roads, and decommission 0.5 miles of road.

Gates will be installed, or existing gates repaired, on as many as 30 Tahoe National Forest roads to reduce noise level disturbances to wildlife by restricting motorized public access. Hydrologic connectivity will be improved through road maintenance and repair activities that can include any of the following: repairing and constructing waterbars and dips; repairing drainage structures; grading and shaping roads to reduce gully erosion; upgrading or replacing culverts; improving the cross slope of the road bed; and adding gravel to improve road surface.

Johnson Canyon Restoration Element - Gregory Creek runs through Johnson Canyon and is a major tributary to Donner Lake. The watershed is steep and is underlain by fine volcanic soils that are highly erosive. Past land use has led to a poorly constructed road network. In rainstorms, this combination of soils and road network yields tons of sediment into Donner Lake. Despite degradation associated with the road network, the canyon still provides important wildlife values, one of which is a critical migration path for the Truckee-Loyalton deer herd. The objectives of the Johnson Canyon Restoration Element are to reduce erosion in the canyon, reduce the amount of sediment reaching Donner Lake and the Truckee River, and improve aquatic habitat in Gregory Creek. This project element will remove sections of a confining outside berm that directs water into the roads, raise the road surfaces, and construct dips and water crossings to reconnect the interrupted drainage network.

Sagehen Forest Improvements Element - The Sagehen Forest Improvements Element is made up of several treatment unit areas within a larger project area (the Sagehen Experimental Forest). Common objectives of all the treatment areas include the enhancement of habitat for the American marten, stand level ecological restoration and fuels reduction. Existing pockets of mature cover and decadence will be maintained, and legacy trees, those trees that are typically greater than 28 inches in diameter at breast height, will be preserved. Trees surrounding legacy trees will be removed to improve forest health and protect these important trees from wildfire. Snags and cover for nesting and denning habitat will be maintained for old growth forest sensitive species. Variable thinning will occur in order to provide ideal canopy cover percentages for martens and goshawks, improve tree species composition, reduce fire risk, and provide structural heterogeneity. Fire and fuel prescriptions (prescribed burning, pile burning) will be aimed at reducing hazardous low-lying and ladder fuels within the treatment units. All of the designations and treatments will vary in intensities depending on their topographic position on the landscape. This element will treat approximately 2,991 acres, thereby improving forest health, reducing fuel loading, and maintaining and enhancing existing old forest sensitive species habitat.

WCB PROGRAM

This project will be funded through the Forest Conservation Program and meets the program's goal of promoting the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests for all their public benefits through forest conservation, preservation and restoration of productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas, redwood forests and other forest types, including the conservation of water resources and natural habitat for native fish and wildlife and plants found on these lands.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The project areas occur on public lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service under the 1990 Tahoe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended by the 2004 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Record of Decision. These plans direct long-term management of public lands on the Tahoe National Forest in perpetuity. The Forest Service will perform long-term management of the project sites, and it has interdisciplinary teams of hydrologists, fisheries biologists, wildlife biologists and range management specialists who will continue to provide monitoring and recommended resource protection measures for any activities that occur in the area.

Funding for long-term management will come from the U.S. Forest Service Tahoe National Forest watershed budget. Past experience with this type of restoration has shown that returning natural hydrologic and geomorphic processes to the forest can reduce long term maintenance, thereby providing enhanced wildlife benefits and reduced wildfire risk at a lower cost.

PROJECT FUNDING

A table showing the partnership funding breakdown, by simplified budget line item.

Task	WCB	NFF	USFS	SNC	TU	TRWC	Total
Prosser Fish Habitat Restoration	\$188,000	\$10,000	\$188,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$30,000	\$421,000
Outback Watershed Restoration	\$26,000	\$13,000	\$26,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$65,000
Jammer Chair Stream and Aspen Restoration	\$38,000	\$2,500	\$38,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$78,500
Little Truckee Fish Habitat Restoration	\$152,000	\$70,000	\$152,000	\$0	\$184,000	\$0	\$558,000
Sagehen Creek Fen Restoration and Stream Stabilization	\$31,000	\$1,500	\$31,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$63,500
Phoenix Watershed Improvements	\$22,000	\$2,000	\$22,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$46,000
Johnson Canyon Restoration	\$78,000	\$1,000	\$78,000	\$0	\$0	\$291,000	\$448,000
Sagehen Forest Improvements	\$238,000	\$155,000	\$588,000	\$350,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,331,000

Project Management	\$75,000	\$60,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$135,000
Operating Cost	\$117,000	\$24,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$141,000
TOTAL	\$965,000	\$339,000	\$1,123,000	\$350,000	\$189,000	\$321,000	\$3,287,000
<u>Key to Acronyms</u> NFF=National Forest Foundation, SNC=Sierra Nevada Conservancy, TRWC=Truckee River Watershed Council, TU=Trout Unlimited, USFS=US Forest Service, WCB=Wildlife Conservation Board							

Project costs will be for salaries and wages; vehicle expenses; supplies/equipment; restoration contracts; monitoring; and project administration.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the WCB's Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, Public Resources Code Section 75055 (a), which provides funding for the promotion of the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests for all their public benefits through restoration of productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas, redwood forests and other forest types and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

CEQA AND CDFW RECOMMENDATION

The Tahoe Resource Conservation District, as lead agency, prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff considered the MND and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$965,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, Public Resources Code Section 75055 (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.

18. American Basin Conservation Easement (High Ridge Ranch), Yuba County \$805,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association (CWA) to acquire a conservation easement over 226± acres of land for the protection of giant garter snake, Swainson's hawk, black rails, and wetlands, as well as to enhance the wetland and flood protection corridor in Yuba County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located in the northeast portion of Yuba County in the Browns Valley, an area that transitions from the central valley floor into the lower Sierra Nevada Mountain range foothills. More specifically the Property is located east of Highway 70 and north of Highway 20 off Loma Rica Road, approximately 7 miles northeast of Marysville. To the east lies the unincorporated community of Loma Rica and to the west is a privately managed hunting reserve area. To the immediate south of the Property is the northern boundary of a rural-subdivision known as Las Quintas Del Yuba. The immediate area is characterized by rolling hills with many properties dedicated to a combination of rice ranches, grazing lands, and duck clubs.

The eastern boundary of the Property is contiguous to the 4,221± acre Saddleback Ranch property, which is protected and managed under a wildlife friendly agricultural conservation easement held by CWA. The Property also lies just to the east of a 357-acre federal wetland conservation easement and state-funded habitat restoration project commonly known as the Provo WRP or Hillside Duck Club. Additional habitat areas protected by conservation easements can be found only a few miles to the north west of the Property in the upper reaches of the American Basin. California Department of Fish and Wildlife's 5,089 acre Daugherty Hills Wildlife Area and 11,942 acre Spenceville Wildlife Area are located just to the east.

The Property lies within the American Basin, which is one of nine drainage basins that serve as the Central Valley Joint Venture's (CVJV) primary planning units for conservation work in the Central Valley. In 2005 the CVJV initiated the "American Basin Project" to address habitat conservation needs within the basin. Land that lent itself to wetland development, habitat conservation, and long-term protection of wildlife friendly agriculture was identified and strategies for their protection were developed. The conservation needs in the American Basin are among the highest of the Central Valley's nine drainage basins. The agricultural based habitats, primarily rice, are extremely important to waterfowl in the American Basin providing 95% of the food energy now available to ducks. Rice lands also provide important habitat for breeding and water birds and provide up to 50% of the food energy needs of shorebirds.

Habitat loss in the American Basin in recent years has been significant with substantial development occurring on flatter rice lands and vernal pool grasslands areas. Development and related population growth in the basin is forecasted to increase by 398,000 individuals by 2040. This growth is expected to lead to a subsequent loss of irrigated farmland in the area of up to 16%, creating the urgent need for agricultural based conservation actions and strategies.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property provides important habitat for all six major bird groups for which the CVJC has developed conservation objectives: wintering waterfowl, breeding waterfowl, wintering shorebirds, breeding shorebirds, water birds, and breeding riparian songbirds. Additionally the Property provides habitat for sensitive species including the state and federal threatened giant garter snake and the state threatened Swanson's hawk, and black rails.

The Property is irregularly shaped and has terraced elevations and rice fields with an approximate site elevation range between 100 to 190-feet above sea level. A guest residence is located on a knoll. The knoll is approximately mid-property generally along the southerly boundary and is the high-point of the Property. The terraced ponds and wetlands on the Property are integral to gravity-irrigating the Property. Unpaved roads provide access to the farming checks, as well as to the residence.

The majority of the Property is farmed to rice (150+/- acres). Water is pumped up to the two high ponds and gravity fed down to the lower rice fields. The balance of the Property includes roughly 76+/- acres of wetlands and associated upland habitats, which will be managed as breeding waterfowl habitat. The uplands contain dense nesting cover and managed wetlands used for brood rearing and molting ducks, primarily mallards, wood ducks, and Canada geese.

WCB PROGRAM

This project is being proposed under WCB's Inland Wetlands Conservation Program (Fish and Game Code Section 1400, et seq) and meets the program's goal of assisting the Central Valley Joint Venture's mission to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands and associated habitats.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Baseline Property conditions have been mapped and documented as part of the due diligence and conservation easement negotiation process. A baseline report and management plan must be completed and approved by WCB prior to funding. The grant agreement requires CWA to complete annual monitoring reports and submit them to the State.

The conservation easement and an associated stewardship fund provided by the landowner to cover annual monitoring and stewardship activities will be held and managed by CWA. The protection and management of the Property will help meet

regional habitat goals and build upon the wildlife corridors created by the adjacent properties including Saddleback Ranch and nearby federal and state wetland conservation easement areas, which were protected and restored through the joint efforts of the Natural Resource Conservation Service, CWA, and the State.

CWA currently holds conservation easements on more than 8,380 acres and owns and manages roughly 4,000 acres of wetlands and uplands, which provide the general public access to hunting and other outdoor recreation and educational opportunities. Potential future public access opportunities on the Property may include guided wetland tours, educational field trips, and hunting through CWA's Hunt Program.

TERMS

The conservation easement (Easement) has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$795,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The Property owner has agreed to sell the Easement for the approved appraised fair market value. The terms and conditions of the proposed grant to CWA 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 the distribution of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms the WCB can seek specific performance of the grant or require the Grantee to convey its interest in the conservation easement to WCB (or, at the election of WCB, another entity or organization authorized by California law to acquire and hold conservation easements and that is willing and financially able to assume all of the obligations and responsibilities of Grantee).

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$ 795,000.00
Total Purchase Price	\$ 795,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	<u>\$ 10,000.00</u>
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$ 805,000.00

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

WCB FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program. This funding allows for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

ENVIROMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATIONS

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$805,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program for the grant and to cover project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

19. El Dorado Ranch Phase 1B \$4,810,000.00
El Dorado County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to The American River Conservancy (ARC) to acquire in fee 1,080± acres of land for the protection and preservation of riparian and woodland habitat, that includes native fisheries and oak woodlands, and to provide for potential future wildlife oriented public use opportunities on land fronting the Cosumnes River.

LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located east of Highway 49 approximately four miles south of the town of El Dorado and 35 miles west of Sacramento, in southwestern El Dorado County. The Ranch lies in proximity to a nearby corridor of protected properties located along the Cosumnes River that are owned by ARC, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Pine Hill Ecological Reserve & Hope Valley Wildlife Area), the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service and borders the original El Dorado Ranch (1,059± acres) property recently acquired by ARC with funding from the Natural Resources Agency and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). The Property is also located within the Upper Cosumnes River Basin Conceptual Area Protection Plan, which helps guide efforts to preserve an intact, landscape scale ecosystem, running the entire 80 mile length of the Cosumnes River; and protect the foothill belt of the Cosumnes watershed that supports intact blue oak woodlands and a number of sensitive wildlife species.

The Cosumnes River is one of the last undammed rivers flowing from the Sierra Nevada Mountains into the greater Central Valley. The river harbors runs of steelhead and salmon, and provides habitat for otters, beavers, and the rare giant garter snake. The river and riparian corridor support numerous species including deer, mountain lion, and coyotes along with numerous migratory song birds and waterfowl.

The Property currently remains in its natural and undeveloped state. The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of open land with single-family homes situated on large lots or acreages to the south, west, and east of the Property. The area primarily supports livestock grazing activities and is noted for its scenic beauty consisting of rolling hills, riverfront properties, and open space appeal. These attributes along with the Property's close proximity to the greater Sacramento metropolitan area, make the Property appealing for more intensive development.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is comprised of two non-contiguous properties containing a total of 11 legal parcels that are zoned for agricultural use. The Property is characterized by a slightly sloping to rolling topography, covered with chaparral, sage, oak woodlands, grasslands, riparian vegetation, and riverine habitat areas along the

Cosumnes River.

The acquisition of the Property will help expand the protection of the Cosumnes River, from its headwaters to the confluence with the Mokelumne River, as an ecologically and hydrologically intact river system and expand the protection of significant riparian habitats beneficial to a number of native fishes, including salmonids, and other endemic mammals, birds and insects. The acquisition will also expand the protection of upland habitats, and help maintain wildlife corridors extending from the downstream protected areas of the Cosumnes River up into the higher foothill areas and into the El Dorado National Forest. Projects such as this also help provide protection against the effects of climate change by providing varying elevations for species to move between in order to better adapt to temperature variations. The Property is also potentially suitable for future development of public access uses and facilities.

The Property supports multiple plant and animal species such as the Nissenan manzanita, blue oak woodland, deer, mountain lion, bald eagle and northern goshawk along with a number of rare and sensitive species including riverine habitat for the state and federally threatened Chinook salmon, the California threatened central valley steelhead, the State endangered bald eagle, the State threatened red-legged frog and other rare species including the foothill yellow legged frog and northwestern pond turtle.

WCB PROGRAM

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be owned and managed by in the interim by ARC in conjunction with the original El Dorado Ranch property acquired by ARC in 2013 (mentioned above) as one property totaling 2,139 acres. In addition to the Ranch Property the

ARC, which has been in existence for over 20 years, manages a number of other properties in the area for habitat preservation and provides public use opportunities, relying on a combination of employees, volunteers, partners and members to support this effort. The acquisition of the Property will provide an opportunity for ARC to protect and preserve the Property's open space and natural resource values, and potentially afford future recreational opportunities to the public such as hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, photography and biking.

It is contemplated once the Property is assembled with the prior El Dorado Ranch acquisition (mentioned above) and management plans have been developed, the ARC may transfer the entire acreage to CDFW. The transfer would be a "no-cost" transaction. Regional staff has already visited both properties and expressed an interest in managing them for fishing, hunting and other outdoor recreation opportunities in an area of the State where these types of public opportunities are very limited. Under the terms of the grant the Executive Director of the WCB would need to approve the transfer, along with a transaction review and approval by the Department of General Services.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$5,940,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services. The Property owner has agreed to sell the Property for less than the approved appraised fair market value. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. Under the terms of the WCB Grant Agreement, ARC will be required to hold the Property in a manner consistent with the purposes of the grant agreement. The Property cannot be sold, transferred, exchanged or otherwise conveyed without WCB approval. In the event of default, WCB may require the ARC to convey a conservation easement over the Property in favor of the State, or another entity or organization authorized by California law to acquire and hold the conservation easement that is willing and financially capable.

PROJECT FUNDING

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$ 4,800,000.00
The American River Conservancy	\$ 120,000.00
California Wildlife Foundation, Inc.	<u>\$ 75,000.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$ 4,995,000.00
Other Project-Related Internal Costs	\$ 10,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$ 4,810,000.00

It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related administrative costs, including DGS appraisal review. The grantee will fund all other appraisal, escrow and title insurance costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding sources: the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a), and the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) that provide funding for the acquisition and protection of habitat to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species and to protect corridors linking separate habitat areas, to prevent habitat fragmentation, and to protect significant natural landscapes and ecosystems and other significant habitat areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,000,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clear Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650 (a), and \$1,800,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786 (b/c) for the grant and to cover project-related costs; and authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

20. Mark West Creek (McCullough II),
Sonoma County

This project is being withdrawn from consideration at this time.

21. Martinelli Ranch Conservation Easement, \$1,510,000.00
Marin County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) to acquire a conservation easement (Easement) over 238± acres of land for the protection of threatened and endangered species, wildlife corridors, coastal forestlands, riparian watershed, and fisheries that provide habitat for salmonids, the Northern spotted owl, and other sensitive wildlife, located west of Bolinas Lagoon in Marin County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

Martinelli Ranch (Ranch) is a 238± acre property in west Marin County located approximately two miles north of the unincorporated coastal community of Bolinas and a half mile west of Bolinas Lagoon. The community of Bolinas is located 25 miles north of San Francisco off State Highway 1 and ten miles southwest of San Rafael. The Ranch is adjacent to protected habitats and agricultural lands. Bolinas Lagoon lies immediately to the west of the Ranch and its northern and western boundaries are adjacent to the Point Reyes National Seashore, a 71,028 acre park preserve maintained by the U.S. National Park Service. The remainder of the property is bordered by private land.

The Ranch is situated within the Pine Gulch Creek watershed that flows south to Bolinas Lagoon, providing an important corridor for both terrestrial and aquatic wildlife. The Easement creates a wildlife habitat corridor that links a large landscape block of the Marin Coast range primarily comprised of the Point Reyes National Seashore, Samuel P. Taylor State Park, and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Protection of the Ranch expands the landscape block by enhancing habitat connectivity and watershed protection which is important to future survival of wildlife species in the face of climate change.

The area around the Ranch is characterized by coastal bluffs and flat interior valleys separated by rolling hills which currently support small organic farms, large residential lots, and public lands. Conversion to residential development is the primary threat to this area and its natural habitat resources and agricultural land use. The combination of the demand for land in proximity to metropolitan San Francisco and the low supply of developable land in Marin County results in elevated land prices. The area farmers face extreme pressure to sell their land for development based on the lucrative demand for their properties. This problem is exacerbated by the tendency of many of these properties to have divided ownerships creating further pressure to subdivide and sell off properties. This divided ownership oftentimes leads to land sales because multiple owners are unable to agree on how to own and manage the property. The proposed Easement will forever prevent further fragmentation and conversion of the Ranch.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Ranch consists of two irregularly shaped parcels improved with three living units and several agricultural support structures. The Martinelli family is currently operating a small scale fruit orchard and organic farm business. Outside of the farmstead area, the Ranch's topography consists of steep to moderate slopes with dense forest, patches of open grassland, and fertile floodplain supporting a mixture of diverse and biologically significant habitats. These include mixed broadleaf evergreen forest, coastal conifer forest, coastal oak woodlands, northern coastal scrub, maritime chaparral, grassland, riparian woodland, mesic sedge-rush meadow, and freshwater pond and marsh.

Along the eastern edge of the Ranch, the Pine Gulch Creek watershed runs in a north-to-south direction, bisecting a one mile stretch of the property. McCormick Creek, a perennial tributary of Pine Gulch Creek runs through the most heavily forested portion of the Ranch. Along the southwest edge of the Ranch, adjacent to the Point Reyes National Seashore, the elevation averages 700 feet and the Ranch offers distant views of the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay area.

The species biodiversity on the Ranch is high due to its proximity to the Point Reyes National Seashore. Large predators such as mountain lion, bobcat, and American badger use the Ranch as an extension of Point Reyes National Seashore and its connection to coastal habitats of Bolinas Lagoon and the Pacific Ocean. The property also provides habitat for the federally threatened coho salmon and steelhead trout, California red-legged frog, and the northern spotted owl.

The Easement incorporates three protective zones: (1) Habitat Protective Zone - a 118-acre zone where no new improvements, facilities or additions to existing improvements and facilities may be constructed. Only uses that are consistent with habitat protection are allowed such as wildlife viewing and possibly limited recreation in the form of hiking. (2) Agricultural Protection Zone – a 97 acre zone that allows 25 acres of row crops and 72 acres of mixed agriculture. A agricultural management plan will be developed in consultation with MALT to ensure agricultural uses are consistent with conservation purposes. (3) Creek Conservation Area – a 23 acre zone that includes Pine Gulch Creek and McCormick Creek and buffer zones extending from the top of both banks laterally outward fifty feet that will require a Creek Conservation Area Management Plan approved by MALT for purposes of protecting the stream, vegetation, and soil along the creeks.

Under the terms of the Easement the property owner will be allowed to use, maintain, repair and replace on the same footprints the existing residential and agricultural improvements. The Improvements are located within the agricultural areas of the easement and comprise a combined total footprint approximately 12,500 sf in size.

One very important benefit of the Easement is that it will incorporate and add additional permanency to the Pine Gulch Creek Watershed Enhancement project funded in part by the \$2,400,000.00 California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Fisheries Restoration Grant approved in 2002. The Martinelli ranch owners and two neighboring farms initiated this voluntary watershed enhancement with the National Park Service to support sustainable agriculture and enhance aquatic habitat supporting coho salmon and steelhead. The project proposes the construction of water storage ponds to enable the farmers in the area to regulate the amount and timing of pumping from Pine Gulch Creek. This will reduce the instantaneous withdrawals during low flow periods, maintaining in-stream flows necessary to support salmonids. In addition to benefiting the listed fish species, these water storage ponds present an opportunity to create high quality wetland/pond habitat ideal for several wildlife species including the California red-legged frog.

WCB PROGRAM

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

MALT will monitor and enforce the Easement by means of a baseline conditions report and management plans for the specific zones associated with the easement. MALT currently holds 72 conservation easements in Marin County, protecting 46,000± acres of land and maintains a substantial stewardship endowment that is able to support the monitoring and enforcement of the Easement in perpetuity. The Ranch will not have public access except by owner permission. However, the landowners are open to participating in the CDFW Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement program. The landowners will also allow MALT to have annual tours of the property that will be open to the public. These tours will be focused on educating the public of the need for farmland and natural resource protection.

TERMS

The Easement has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$5,600,000.00. 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 Easement for the bargain sale price of \$2,500,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant to the Marin Agricultural Land Trust provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can seek specific performance of the grant or require the grantee to transfer the conservation easement to WCB or another qualified holder.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$1,500,000.00
Marin Agricultural Land Trust	<u>\$1,000,000.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$2,500,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$10,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$1,510,000.00

It is estimated that an additional \$10,000.00 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including DGS appraisal review. The grantee will fund the environmental assessment, appraisal, escrow and title insurance costs.

WCB FUNDING SOURCE

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

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 and continued agricultural use of the area. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,510,000 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a) 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 and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

22. Alameda County Stock Pond Habitat Enhancement, \$200,000.00
Alameda County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Alameda County Resource Conservation District (ACRCD) for a cooperative project with the landowners, the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the State Coastal Conservancy to enhance wildlife habitat on eight existing stock ponds on private properties in Alameda County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

Project sites are located in the hills of Eastern Alameda County, near the Cities of Livermore, Sunol, Pleasanton and Fremont. Habitat surrounding the ponds consists of annual grassland and oak woodland. Ranchers graze the sites with livestock for production purposes, to maintain and improve habitat conditions for plants and animals, and provide vegetation management to prevent wildfires.

Projects will occur on rangelands in Alameda County that have been grazed for generations. As part of livestock management, cattle ranchers constructed multiple livestock ponds in Bay Area and California rangelands in the mid-1900's. Ponds were built on seasonal or ephemeral drainages with active natural springs. Many of the ponds are located in isolated areas on ranches, with the goal of distributing water throughout the landscape. These livestock ponds continue to provide water for grazing animals and have also become important habitat for native wildlife.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

There are an estimated 800-1000 livestock ponds in Alameda County that were built in the mid-1900's. Many of the ponds on the landscape are at risk of failure, or have already failed, due to siltation and spillway erosion. Pond repairs are not economical for ranchers, with costs ranging from ten to sixty thousand dollars. Many ranchers no longer depend on stock ponds as their primary source of livestock water, as water storage tanks and troughs have become a cheaper alternative to addressing livestock water needs on the landscape. Ponds that fail, either by drying up due to sedimentation or spillway failures, will result in a loss of valuable breeding habitat for a variety of wildlife species.

The survival and recovery of two California amphibians in Alameda County increasingly depends on existing livestock ponds and the efforts of local cattle ranchers. The California red-legged frog and California tiger salamander occur primarily on rangelands, where the primary management activity is cattle grazing. Both species are federally listed as threatened in Alameda County. The California tiger salamander is also a state listed threatened species. Much of these species' habitat has been altered or lost to development and cropland. Natural breeding habitats (slow-moving creeks and vernal pools) in particular have been affected by these uses. Stock ponds, which can provide high-quality aquatic habitat for both species in addition to other wildlife, have become a vital feature on the landscape as natural habitat is lost. Private ranches and grazed public lands hold the

majority of Alameda County's remaining habitat. The recovery of these species requires ongoing stewardship by these land managers. The ACRC and the NRCS have been working over the past 10 years to plan and implement the Alameda County Wildlife-Friendly Pond Restoration Program (Program), and to date, the ACRC has successfully implemented 20 wildlife-friendly livestock restoration projects. This Program is designed to offer incentives to ranchers to restore their ponds for wildlife. These incentives include streamlined permitting assistance, project planning and design, cost share assistance, Federal Safe Harbor assurances and engineering/biological assistance during project implementation. These cost share incentives are critical to the Program. Pond restoration is expensive, and with less expensive watering alternatives available, restoring these existing ponds with the necessary avoidance and minimization measures for habitat and species is not economically viable for many landowners.

The project consists of restoration at eight wildlife-friendly pond restoration sites and their associated rangelands. Project restoration activities will include dredging of ponds, spillway stabilization, fencing, and riparian planting to reduce sediment into ponds and provide additional wildlife value. Restoration of the livestock ponds included under this proposal will also improve water quality through sediment reduction. Pond restoration projects included under this proposal will address sediment sources from erosion and inputs of fine sediment into stream courses and San Francisco Bay.

WCB PROGRAM

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The NRCS has established conservation practice standards for livestock ponds that provide guidance for applying conservation technology on the land. Each established conservation practice has an expected lifespan, and stock pond renovations are expected to last a minimum of twenty years, based on the landowner following an O&M plan developed for that practice. Detailed O&M plans, which define the maintenance requirements, are included in the Grant Agreement and will be applied at each pond location. The Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of each livestock pond and associated lands will be the responsibility of the landowner and project landowners have entered into contracts with the ACRC to maintain these projects for the 20-year life of the project. The ACRC and NRCS will provide technical assistance during the twenty-year maintenance period. These O&M plans are a part of the grant, which requires the Grantee to assure that the landowners will maintain the improvements for the twenty-year life of the project, and if at any time during the life of the project the landowner does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires the Grantee to refund to the State of California an amortized

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

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding for the project is as follows:

Task Descriptions	NRCS	Landowner	SCC	WCB	Total
Project Management	\$0	\$0	\$17,588	\$32,630	\$50,218
Design and Planning	\$74,720	\$0	\$41,014	\$31,818	\$147,552
Biological Monitoring	\$57,600	\$0	\$17,876	\$29,752	\$105,228
Construction	\$270,000	\$36,000	\$18,000	\$36,000	\$360,000
Permits	\$14,400	\$0	\$19,552	\$33,800	\$67,752
Contingency	\$0	\$0	\$18,000	\$36,000	\$54,000
<u>Total</u>	\$416,720	\$36,000	\$132,030	\$200,000	\$784,750

NRCS = US Natural Resources Conservation Service; SCC = Coastal Conservancy

Project costs will be for project management, final design, biological surveys and permits, and construction.

FUNDING SOURCE

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

CEQA AND CDFW RECOMMENDATION

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The Alameda County Resource Conservation District, as lead agency, has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has considered the MND and prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$200,000 from Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(4); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

23. San Vicente Redwoods (Cemex) \$10,060,000.00
Forest Conservation Easement,
Santa Cruz County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to Save the Redwoods League (SRL) for a cooperative project with the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), Semprevirens Fund, and the State Coastal Conservancy to acquire a forest conservation easement (Easement) over 8,532± acres of working forest lands, forest reserve areas and habitat linkages, located near the town of Davenport in Santa Cruz County. The Easement will allow continued forest harvesting and prohibit land conversion to non-forest uses. In addition, it will help enhance protection of several watersheds, wildlife corridors, habitat linkages, and areas supporting a wide variety of wildlife species found within the Santa Cruz Mountains.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) proposed for protection by the Easement is located in the heart of the Santa Cruz Mountains, roughly two miles northeast of the town of Davenport overlooking the Santa Cruz County coastline. Access to the Property is available along the coast from Highway 1, through an adjacent protected property, Coast Dairies, which is owned by the Bureau of Land Management.

Most of the surrounding area can be described as rural, with forest and agricultural properties, interspersed with rural residential properties, including several large land holdings. The Property consists of a main block totaling 8,158± acres and the Laguna Creek block which totals 374± acres and is located approximately 1.5 miles to the east. The main block of the Property falls within the Big Creek, Little Creek, and San Vicente Creek watersheds and is located within a vast complex of mostly contiguous habitat, including Big Basin Redwoods State Park, private forestlands to the west, and several adjoining protected properties including Cal Poly's Swanton Pacific Ranch, the Coast Dairies property, Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve, and Wilder Ranch State Park. This project will help achieve landscape-level conservation goals by enhancing ecosystem functionality across ownerships and enhance wildlife habitat connectivity and corridors

The Property is the largest expanse of privately-owned forestland property in Santa Cruz County. Located 30 miles southwest of the Silicon Valley, a densely-populated urban area of 4 million people, its location makes the Property an attractive site for the development of exurban estates. Carving up the Property for development would fragment the natural landscape and eliminate the chance to create viable habitat connections and linkages with nearby protected lands. These linkages are necessary to help maintain biodiversity, make the land more resilient to man-made regional and global changes, and create an extended network of wildlife and recreational corridors. In addition, subdivision would have also reduced the opportunity for sustainable local commercial timber harvest.

The Property is identified as a conservation priority in several regional planning efforts, including the Bay Area Open Space Council's Conservation Lands Network, the SRL's Master Plan for the Coast Redwoods, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County's Conservation Blueprint, The Nature Conservancy's Central California Coast Ecoregional Plan, and the Living Landscape Initiative's Redwood Focal Area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is 8,532± acres in size and is primarily forestland, much of which has been sustainably harvested since 1957. The elevation varies from about 400 feet at the southwest boundary to 2,600 feet at the north boundary. Areas of relatively gentle topography are found at the ridge tops near the center of the site with the steepest topography found in the southern portions of the site where two creeks, Molino and San Vicente, both traverse canyons exiting the site generally at the southwest and southeast corners respectively. The current appraised highest and best use of the main block is for subdivision and relatively intensive rural residential/recreational/open space, coupled with timber harvest.

Overall, the proposed Easement would ensure the Property could not be developed and would allow for sustainable forest harvesting within certain areas. No residential or agricultural conversion would be allowed under the Easement, although limited grazing would be permitted as a vegetation management tool. In addition, there are designated riparian protection corridors and forest reserve areas where harvesting is restricted. To guide future uses, a management plan is being developed that will detail forest management practices and include management and protection measures for the watersheds, rare plants, aquatic areas, wildlife and wildlife corridors. Watershed areas will be further protected through adoption of best management practices designed to reduce erosion and sediment runoff into the creeks. Plans for future public access are also being developed, and will be consistent with allowed uses and the planned resource protection of the Property.

Within the Easement there are designated zones or areas where certain uses are allowed and restricted. On 3,669± acres, sustainable timber harvesting will be allowed. Approximately 3,951± acres are designated as Restoration Reserves, defined as areas that could benefit from habitat restoration, such as forestry restoration and thinning to speed the development of older forest characteristics and riparian and aquatic restoration to improve impaired areas. Approximately 912± acres will be managed as Preservation Reserves, where minimal activity and intrusion will be allowed, as these areas represent the most sensitive habitat types found on the Property.

Encompassing at least eight distinct vegetation types, ranging from vast stands of redwood forest to smaller pockets of the endemic Zayante Sandhill community, the Property provides habitat for a wide variety of rare and sensitive animal species, including California red-legged frog, mountain lion, peregrine falcon, the

Santa Cruz kangaroo rat, the coast horned lizard, steelhead trout, and Coho salmon. Two insects found only in the Santa Cruz Mountains occur on the Property, the Mount Hermon June beetle and the Zayante band-winged grasshopper.

The forest in several sections of the Property, because of stand structure and growing conditions, has been identified as future nesting habitat for the endangered marbled murrelet, a small seabird that nests up to 50 miles inland in the crowns of old-growth redwoods and Douglas-fir trees. Within the Preservation Reserves there are old-growth forest and older second-growth trees. One area in particular, the Laguna Creek Block contains 90 old-growth redwoods and 600 old-growth Douglas-firs and supports at least four federally endangered plant species, including the Ben Lomond spineflower, Santa Cruz wallflower, Ben Lomond buckwheat, and Bonny Doon (silver leaf) manzanita.

The Property also provides an important source of drinking water for several communities. San Vicente Creek, which originates on the Property, is the sole supply of drinking water for the residents of the town of Davenport. The City of Santa Cruz diverts water from Laguna Creek, which bisects the rugged Laguna Creek block, providing a critical source of the city's drinking water, especially during drought years.

The Property can provide important refuge for local species in the face of climate change. Due to its high elevation gradient, proximity to the coast, extensive microclimates and ecological niches, perennial water sources, and north-facing slopes, the Property can serve as a critical ecological refuge as the climate changes. Redwood forests and maritime chaparral occur only within reach of summer fog, and their protection can buffer the effects of climate change and changing weather patterns. Redwood forests intercept summer fog and the resulting fog drip contributes to groundwater recharge, which helps maintain year-round stream flows.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under the WCB's Forest Conservation Program (Program). Grant proposals are evaluated and selected for funding by WCB staff based on established criteria approved by the Board at its November 17, 2007 meeting, in most cases utilizing a peer review process involving biological and forestry expertise and input from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The Program seeks to promote the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests through conserving, preserving, and restoring productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas, redwood forests and other forest types, including the conservation of water resources and natural habitat for native fish and wildlife and plants found on these lands. One of the primary objectives of the Program is the protection and conservation of working forests and productive managed forestlands. Selected projects promote the restoration and/or the maintenance of

the ecological integrity and economic stability of the property in the context of the surrounding landscape and regional economy.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

If approved, the Property will be protected by the terms and conditions of the Easement. POST and Sempervirens will continue as interim owners until they sell or trade the property to a timber company or another third-party buyer. The League will be responsible for the long-term monitoring and enforcement of the Easement per the terms of the WCB grant agreement. Prior to closing, the League will provide the WCB with a copy of the baseline conditions report to review. The League has been in existence for ninety-six years and has twenty-nine years of experience managing and monitoring the twenty-seven conservation easements it currently holds covering over 14,500± acres throughout the redwood range. Subject to the Easement restrictions, the subject Property will be managed for sustainable timber harvesting and enhancement of the watershed, wildlife, fishery, and plant resources. The easement will allow potential future public recreation opportunities, allowing access for non-motorized and non-consumptive recreation subject to a public access management plan that is being developed.

TERMS

POST and Sempervirens came together several years ago to address the threat of subdivision and private development on the Property, which was on the market for \$36 million. That threat was temporarily resolved when they jointly bought the Property in late 2011. POST and Sempervirens was able to put together a financing structure to affect the purchase and provide time to raise additional capital. Because neither POST nor Sempervirens has the financial capacity to hold the Property over the long term, they plan to sell or trade the Property after it is protected by the Easement to a timber company or another third-party buyer. The Easement is essential to ensuring the permanent protection of the Property's conservation values.

The Easement has been appraised as having a fair market value (FMV) of \$23,225,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff, reviewed and approved by an independent appraiser hired by WCB staff, and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services. The independent appraisal review was posted on the WCB's website at least thirty days prior to the August 28, 2014 WCB Board meeting. The Property owner has agreed to sell the Easement for \$16,900,000.00, less than its approved appraised fair market value. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant to the League provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can seek specific performance of the grant or require the grantee to transfer the Easement to WCB or another qualified holder.

PROJECT FUNDING:

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Approved Fair Market Value	\$23,225,000.00
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$10,000,000.00
State Coastal Conservancy	\$ 1,900,000.00
Save the Redwoods League	\$ 2,500,000.00
Land Trust of Santa Cruz County	<u>\$ 2,500,000.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$16,900,000.00
Other project Related Admin. Costs	\$ 60,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$10,060,000.00

It is estimated that an additional \$60,000.00 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including appraisal, independent appraisal review and DGS appraisal review.

On October 3, 2013 the State Coastal Conservancy approved the \$1,900,000.00 grant to the League to help acquire the Easement along with an additional \$100,000.00 made available to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County to develop a public access plan.

WCB FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this Easement acquisition is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a). This fund source promotes ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests and promotes the conservation and protection of productive managed forest lands, forest reserve areas, redwood forests and other forest types, including the conservation of water resources and natural habitat for native fish, wildlife and plants found on these lands and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

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. The project has been reviewed under the WCB's Forest Conservation Program and has been recommended for approval. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$10,060,000.00 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(a) 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 and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

24. San Joaquin River Parkway, Owl Hollow Improvements, Fresno County \$860,340.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust, Inc. (SJRPT) for a cooperative project with the San Joaquin River Conservancy for the construction of public access, recreation, and education improvements at the SJRPT's Owl Hollow property, a six-acre site located along the San Joaquin River one and a half miles east of Highway 41, in Fresno County.

LOCATION

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

The proposed project includes Owl Hollow, which is located within the Parkway and owned and operated by the SJRPT. Owl Hollow occupies a six-acre site on the San Joaquin River, one half mile northwest of the Coke Hallowell Center for River Studies, approximately one mile upstream of a unit of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) San Joaquin River Ecological Reserve and surrounded by a Vulcan Materials sand and gravel mine operation. The SJRPT has a deeded access easement to Owl Hollow.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Every year at Owl Hollow, the SJRPT leads guided canoe trips and weekend nature walks and hosts small groups attending River Camp. The SJRPT's River Camp program and public canoe and kayak tours introduce thousands of people to the San Joaquin River every year. River Camp is a summer daytime program that enhances understanding of, and connection to, the San Joaquin River for Central Valley students entering first through eighth grades. Day campers swim, learn to canoe, explore wildlife habitat, play games, create arts and crafts, and build new friendships. Although River Camp is primarily held at Fresno County's Scout Island, an 85-acre outdoor education facility six miles away, Owl Hollow is used to accommodate small overflow groups due to the program's popularity.

SJRPT requested assistance from SJRC to help fund the construction of public access, recreation, and education improvements at Owl Hollow. The proposed improvements will increase the site's capacity to provide environmental education and supervised recreation, and will provide a much-needed public rest stop for

non-motorized boaters on the river. Public access and boating rest stop improvements at the San Joaquin Parkway are among the highest recommended priority projects of the SJRC's Interagency Project Development Committee. A paddling trip between existing public launches at Lost Lake Park and Fort Washington Beach can take four hours. The proposed rest stop would provide a clean, maintained area for picnic and restroom breaks and could reduce trespass onto private property or into the nearby CDFW Ecological Reserve. The site will also serve as a destination for scheduled nature walks from the Coke Hallowell Center for River Studies. It is expected that in the future Owl Hollow will become part of a regional public Parkway complex surrounding the Coke Hallowell Center.

The conceptual design and site plan for the project include a restroom, storage building, picnic shelter, dock, open-air amphitheater, and native landscaping. Most of the improvements are prefabricated structures that will include engineered construction drawings and simply require installation. The grant will provide for engineering and design for grading, unpaved access road improvements, foundations, an open-air amphitheater to serve as outdoor classroom seating, a well and drinking water system required by the County of Fresno, and an irrigation system for native landscaping and a grass play area. Construction is expected to begin in fall 2015 or late-summer/early fall 2016. It is anticipated that construction will take approximately 3-4 months to complete.

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. In addition, funds were allocated to the WCB within Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75050(f), that allow for the construction of river parkway projects identified by the SJRC.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The project's planned facilities must comply with the Fresno County General Plan and the San Joaquin River Parkway Master Plan. The SJRPCT will provide for the long-term operations and maintenance of the site under a Conditional Use Permit recently obtained from the County of Fresno. If at any time during the 25-year life of the project, the grantee does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Activity	Cost	SJRPCT Funds	WCB Request
Engineering & Design	\$127,395	\$0	\$127,395
Public Use Amenities	\$352,750	\$75,000	\$277,750
Site Preparation	\$312,225	\$0	\$312,225
Project Management	\$66,498	\$0	\$66,498
Bonds	\$9,975	\$0	\$9,975
Contingency	\$66,497	\$0	\$66,498
TOTAL	\$935,340	\$75,000	\$860,340

Project costs will be for the engineering and design, grading, unpaved access road improvements, foundations, outdoor amphitheater, well and drinking water system, and irrigation system for native landscaping and a grass play area, and project administration.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding sources for this project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75050(f), which provides for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of land and water resources located within the boundaries of the SJRC and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

CEQA REVIEW AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

As lead agency, the County of Fresno filed a Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in October 2011. Staff has considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration and prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB’s compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of the funding by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

The proposed project is included among the high priority projects recommended by the Interagency Project Development Committee, whose role is to evaluate projects to be considered by the SJRC Board. The project was accepted by the SJRC Board, which includes a representative with the CDFW, on June 18, 2014.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$860,340.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75050(f); 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.

25. Salinas River Riparian Enhancement, \$1,110,000.00
Monterey County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCDMC) for a cooperative project with the Monterey County Agriculture Department, the Monterey County Water Resources Agency, and Central Coast Wetlands Group to conduct a watershed-based, invasive non-native plant control and riparian restoration project along the Salinas River between Soledad and the Monterey County line in Monterey County.

LOCATION

The project area focuses on 21 miles of the Salinas River between King City and Soledad in Monterey County, as well as re-treatment on 35 miles of river upstream of King City to the San Luis Obispo County line. The project area includes the channel, floodplains and terraces of the Salinas River and is comprised of multiple riparian habitat types, including willow and cottonwood forest, native scrub, emergent wetlands, sandy terrace, floodplain bars, and open channel. This riparian corridor is surrounded by agricultural row crops, which started as ranching operations in the 18th century but later developed into intensive agriculture in the early 20th century that continues to this day. The Salinas River is a dynamic system and is the ninth longest river in California. The Salinas River is a winding, low gradient system that has highly variable flow regimes making it prone to flooding. It is the second most heavily Arundo infested riverine system in California.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Salinas River system has been invaded by the non-native invasive weed Arundo, now totaling 1,900 acres and ranging from enormous monocultures to scattered infestations mixed with native vegetation. Arundo impacts multiple critical riverine processes, including fluvial and geomorphic processes, water availability, and vegetation succession. Arundo forms extremely tall dense stands that modify flow regimes on the river and reduce flood conveyance, which triggers flooding. Arundo changes flow patterns of the river by creating a shift from a multi-channel braided laterally unstable system to a deep, fixed, single channel system. Arundo's voracious water consumption is significantly higher than native vegetation, which depletes baseline flows, impacting available water for native flora, fauna, and agriculture. All of this causes native vegetation to become over-mature and non-native vegetation over-dominant.

Removal of Arundo from the Salinas River will help normalize riverine processes, generating better flow movement, more dynamic fluvial bed movement and formation, and a broader range of native vegetation expression. All of these processes will benefit native species that evolved to these more natural riverine conditions. Reducing flood risk and sediment aggregation on the river, by restoring flow conveyance through Arundo control, will also assist agricultural

operators, and municipal and government entities in the valley which are forced to react after large scale flood events. Emergency actions result in significant impacts to the riverine system as banks are reformed, infrastructure is replaced, sediment is removed, and vegetation is cleared.

Arundo will be controlled systematically working from the top of the watershed towards the ocean. Initial treatments will utilize foliar application of wetland approved glyphosate herbicide. Applications will occur in the fall on Arundo and tamarisk. All native woody vegetation will be avoided during treatment. Dense stands of Arundo should be reduced by the following fall, one year after initial treatments occurred. The Salinas River has functional flow events that will allow native vegetation to re-colonize areas cleared of Arundo. For this reason, the limited funds available for project activities will focus on control and reduction of Arundo and will not be directed towards native planting. The project will need to have multiple rounds of re-treatments to insure greater than 95% control of Arundo by the end of the five-year project. Property owners and RCDMC will carry out watershed based re-treatments once the WCB project is completed to ensure long-term project success. The ultimate goal is to build a program that will achieve total eradication of Arundo, providing long term benefits to the Salinas River.

The Salinas River supports a diverse range of native flora and fauna. The lower Salinas River and Arroyo Seco River support steelhead. The Salinas Valley foothills and the upper Salinas watershed support numerous listed species including California red-legged frog, least Bell's vireo, San Joaquin kit fox, California tiger salamander, and arroyo southwestern toad. These listed species could extend their distributions into a more functional riverine system.

This proposed project supports several regional management plans. The Riparian Habitat Joint Venture Riparian Bird Conservation Plan (2004) identifies the Salinas River as a 'Portfolio Site' on the Central Coast because of its potential for extending least Bell's vireo habitat and it specifically emphasizes Arundo control as a critical element of the type of riparian habitat improvement work needed for that purpose, as well as for general improvement of riparian ecosystem function and health. The proposed work is compatible with the methodologies recommended within this plan for encouraging native plant species diversity, working on a landscape or watershed scale, and working compatibly with adjacent agricultural lands. In addition, the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (2013) for the Greater Monterey County region includes the RCDMC Arundo program as a highly-ranked project that meets multiple resource goals within the plan, including habitat improvement, water conservation, flood risk reduction, and restoration of special status species such as steelhead trout.

This project will support the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Salinas River National Wildlife Refuge (SRNWR), located at the mouth of the river. The SRNWR Conservation Plan (2002) includes noxious weed control as an element for increasing the native habitat value of the refuge. The north edge of the SRNWR

hosts a thriving stand of Arundo along the south bank of the Salinas River.

WCB PROGRAM

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Arundo control in project areas will continue for 4-5 years under WCB funding. Following the initial work, the RCDMC will coordinate and implement re-treatments on a rotational basis for 15 years.

All project activities on private properties will require a right of entry agreement to be obtained. Property owners participating in the program also will be encouraged to pledge on-going maintenance (re-treatment of Arundo) for the 15 year period after completion of the WCB program. Property owners are likely motivated to both participate and maintain the benefits of Arundo control on their property as it reduces flood and fire risks on both their property and all nearby properties. Where property owners are unable to pledge long-term continuing treatment maintenance, the County Ag Commissioner's Office will provide materials and financial support to complete re-treatments. Re-treatments will typically occur every two to three years depending on the level of infestation. RCDMC pledges to assist in coordinating and tracking right of entry permissions, participating in the maintenance program, as well as maintaining active environmental permits.

If at any time during the 20-year life of the project, the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County does not assure that the landowners manage and maintain project improvements, the Grant Agreement may require that it refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

ITEM	WCB	MC Ag Dept	RCDMC	MC WRA	Land-owners	CCWG/ USEPA	IRWM	Total
Project Mgmt	\$93,000	\$60,000	\$150,000		\$2,500		\$80,988	\$386,488
Outreach	\$75,000	\$45,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000		\$77,683	\$227,683
Permitting/ Biological Supervision	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$56,748				\$39,950	\$171,698
Monitoring	\$80,000	\$50,000	\$20,766	\$75,000	\$2,500	\$40,000	\$185,300	\$453,566
Veg control and re-veg	\$812,000	\$125,000		\$10,000	\$250,000	\$17,000	\$912,280	\$2,126,280
Labor Compliance							\$10,800	\$10,800
Total	\$1,110,000	\$305,000	\$237,514	\$95,000	\$265,000	\$57,000	\$1,307,001	\$3,376,515

RDMC: Resource Conservation District Monterey County; MCWRA: Monterey County Water Resources Agency; CCWG: Central Coast Wetlands Group; NRCS: Natural Resource Conservation Service; USEPA: United States Environmental Protection Agency; IRWM: Integrated Regional Water Management; MC AgDep: Monterey County Agriculture Department

Project costs will be for site preparation, foliar herbicide application, biomass reduction (i.e. mowing and hand labor biomass removal), re-treatment, re-vegetation, outreach (landowner contact for access and maintenance), project management, and project monitoring.

FUNDING SOURCE

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

CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

The Resource Conservation District of Monterey County, as lead agency, prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff considered the MND and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. CDFW has reviewed this project and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,110,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

26. Cayucos Fishing Pier Replacement,
San Luis Obispo County

\$750,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to San Luis Obispo County (County) for a cooperative project with the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) and the Community Foundation of San Luis Obispo County (Foundation) to replace the Cayucos Fishing Pier, located on property owned by the California Department of Parks and Recreation and the State Lands Commission in the City of Cayucos, San Luis Obispo County.

LOCATION

At what is now the Cayucos State Beach, the Cayucos Fishing Pier was originally constructed in 1872 and rebuilt and lengthened into deeper water in 1876 to be used as a dock for coastal steamers. The pier became State Park property in 1920 and, through written agreement, became the responsibility of the County. The County currently manages over 14,000 acres of recreation and open space facilities including numerous coastal improvements. Extending 950 feet from the shore, the Cayucos Fishing Pier provides public access to the Pacific Ocean for recreational opportunities including sport fishing and wildlife watching. However, due to potentially hazardous and deteriorating conditions the pier has been closed to the public since July of 2013. Prior to its closure it is estimated that as many as 400,000 people visited the pier annually, of which at least 50,000 visits were for day and nighttime fishing. The pier is vital to the economic health of the City of Cayucos, whose population of approximately 2,500 relies on the pier to draw people from the County's 272,000 residents, as well as residents of the San Joaquin Valley and beyond, who visit the pier for annual events and recreational fishing.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Cayucos Fishing Pier is 950 feet long and there are 61 bents, the piles and pile caps that support the deck, each spaced approximately 15 feet apart. Engineering evaluations of the pier in the fall of 2013 determined that the pier was in serious condition due to severe deterioration of the timber piles, pile caps and cross bracing.

The proposed project will replace all missing piles and all pile supports that have been observed to have severe or major defects; currently, this includes the replacement of all bents from the tidal zone out to the seaward end of the Pier. Other project activities include replacement of pile caps, stringers, hardware, structural members, decking, fire line and railings. The section of the pier replacement is approximately 665 feet long and varies between 15 feet and 20 feet in width. If approved, construction is projected to begin in October 2014 and the project is expected to be fully completed by May 2015.

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 County is currently responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Cayucos Fishing Pier under a 20-year agreement with the Department of Parks and Recreation, which is set to expire on August 31, 2019, however, it is the intent of the parties involved to extend the agreement. Additionally, the County will enter into a 25-year management plan with the WCB pursuant to the Grant Agreement.

If at any time during the 25-year life of the project, the County does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

PROJECT FUNDING

Funding comes from a variety of sources, including the County, SCC and the Foundation. The Foundation, a county-wide public trust, has been very active in soliciting donations to assist with the replacement of the existing pier. Donations have come from all over California, many other states, and even from other countries. The proposed funding for the project is as follows:

Item	WCB	SCC	Foundation	SLO County	Total
Planning, Design and Permitting	-	-	\$105,000	\$50,000	\$155,000
Construction	\$750,000	\$750,000	-	\$1,411,490	\$2,911,490
Mitigation	-	-	-	\$50,000	\$50,000
Inspection	-	-	-	\$100,000	\$100,000
Project Escalation & Contingency	-	-	-	\$99,800	\$99,800
Project Management/Administration	-	-	-	\$78,710	\$78,710
TOTAL	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$105,000	\$1,790,000	\$3,395,000

The overall project funding includes costs for planning, design and permitting, as well as additional expenses for environmental mitigation, inspections, and utility coordination and fees. WCB specific project costs will be used only for construction related activities including labor and materials. Construction is estimated to be completed in approximately three months, depending on weather conditions.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Wildlife Restoration Fund, which allows for the development of public access facilities for hunting, fishing and other wildlife compatible recreational activities.

CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The County has obtained permits for the project from the San Luis Obispo Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Los Angeles District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and has acquired a Coastal

Development Permit Waiver granted by the California Coastal Commission. 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 15301, Class 1, as the repair or minor alteration of existing public structures or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of use and Section 15302, Class 2, as the replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities on the same site and with substantially the same purpose and capacity. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$750,000.00 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.

27. Pismo Preserve, \$4,010,000.00
San Luis Obispo County

To consider the allocation for a grant to The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County (LCSLO) for a cooperative project with the State Coastal Conservancy and the city of Pismo Beach to acquire 879± acres of land to provide corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent habitat fragmentation, to protect significant natural landscapes and ecosystems and other significant areas, and provide the potential for future wildlife oriented public use opportunities.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property), known as the Pismo Preserve, is located above the northern fringe of the city of Pismo Beach along the Santa Lucia Mountain Range, overlooking the communities of Pismo Beach and Shell Beach within a region designated by the Department of Fish and Wildlife as the Irish Hills Conservation Area.

The Irish Hills are located in western San Luis Obispo County along the northwest trending San Luis Range. They are bounded by the Los Osos and Edna valleys to the north, the Pacific Ocean to the west and south, and Price Canyon to the east. They are composed of several small coastal drainages, coastal foothills, and marine terraces. The Irish Hills offer rugged and isolated terrain with minimal development and roadways. They have good connectivity to the Los Padres National Forest via the east-west Price Canyon corridor. The general terrain in the area is primarily grassland, coastal scrub, maritime chaparral, and coast live oak woodland and features rare species of manzanita, such as Wells' manzanita, and coastal streams that support federally threatened south-central California coast steelhead, federally endangered California red-legged frog, and numerous other wildlife species.

Price Canyon is largely populated by large land holdings including ranches and refinery tank fields, both of which provide ample space for wildlife habitat, movement and corridors. Development pressures for smaller ranchettes and other smaller land use developments in the southern Irish Hills area threaten to fragment and create a bottleneck which would greatly reduce access to the Price Canyon corridor resulting in geographic isolation.

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) has made significant investments to date in the Irish Hills area, helping fund the acquisition of over 1,500 acres of property. These previous WCB investments include the Andre Ranch acquisition, a rangeland protection project in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, and the Irish Hills Conservation Area acquisition completed in 2001 in partnership with the city of San Luis Obispo.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is located both inside and outside the coastal zone. With a peak elevation of 980 feet, the Property offers vast coastal views of the entire San Luis Bay from Point San Luis to Point Sal, including panoramic views of the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes. The Property's 1.6 mile long southwestern border is within one-half mile of the shoreline. The Property features large stands of coast live oak woodland, coastal scrub and riparian habitats, and habitat for the federally threatened California red-legged frog and south-central California coast steelhead. Approximately 250 acres of the Property have been used for cattle grazing for the past several decades, and continue to be used for grazing today.

Acquisition of the Property will also protect several drainages within the Pismo Creek watershed, including one half mile of Pismo Creek proper. The Pismo Creek watershed and Pismo Creek play a significant role in the maintenance of the South-Central California Coast Steelhead. Additionally, the Pismo Creek riparian corridor is a critical wildlife corridor connecting the Irish Hills to the Santa Lucia Range. The proposed acquisition will also provide the potential for future public access and use, including a prospective coastal trail being spearheaded by the State Coastal Conservancy.

With direct access from three public roads, abundant onsite and offsite water supplies, and stunning ocean views, the Pismo Preserve property is a prime target for private residential, resort and/or commercial/retail development. Six existing wells are capable of supplying a total of 687 gallons per minute or 90 acre-feet of water. This water would be adequate to serve up to 63 homes, though local planning and zoning regulations would likely only allow up to 16 home sites and/or a mix of resort and commercial/retail uses. Approximately 20 acres located along lower elevations of the Property adjacent to the city of Pismo Beach may be suitable for annexation for commercial and/or residential development. For the past several years the seller has pursued a variety of development options including a boutique hotel on the ridge plus up to 12 homes located outside the coastal zone, and high density residential and commercial development closer to existing development within the coastal zone above Highway One/101.

The current landowner will retain a 20 acre home-site that has been carved out of the Property and was not included within the valuation of the Property for this project and proposed grant. Fifteen acres of the home-site will be encumbered by a conservation easement that will be donated to and managed by the LCSLO. The home-site is located out of the viewshed from State Route One/101 and the coastal zone and will be accessed by an existing road on the backside of the Property.

WCB PROGRAM

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

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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

LCSLO will be the sole entity responsible for management once it acquires the Property. As part of the local fundraising effort for this project LCSLO will establish an endowment account to help fund management of the Property. The LCSLO also intends to prepare a grazing management plan to allow continued cattle grazing on the Property to help manage the grassland areas.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$11,500,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant to LCSLO 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 WCB grant funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$ 4,000,000.00
State Coastal Conservancy	\$ 4,000,000.00
LCSLO Private Donations and Local Funds	<u>\$ 3,500,000.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$ 11,500,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$ 10,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$ 4,010,000.00

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

The State Coastal Conservancy approved funding for this project at its May 2014 meeting.

WCB FUNDING SOURCE

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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$4,010,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a) for the grant and to cover internal project - related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements as necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

28. Careaga Canyon Ranch Conservation Easement, \$0.00
Santa Barbara County

This project is being withdrawn from consideration at this time.

29. Gateway Ranch, \$1,660,000.00
Los Angeles County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to The Trust for Public Land (TPL) for a cooperative project with the City of Santa Clarita (City) to acquire 302± acres of land to provide recovery benefits for federally threatened and endangered species and to provide corridors linking separate habitat areas to prevent habitat fragmentation, protect significant natural landscapes and ecosystems, and provide the potential for future wildlife oriented public use opportunities.

LOCATION and SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located within a larger region of undeveloped mountainous terrain on the southern border of the City in northern Los Angeles County, northwest of the intersection of Interstate 5 and State Route 14 freeways, approximately 35 miles north of downtown Los Angeles. The Property is accessible from The Old Road, which connects to the Calgrove Boulevard off/onramp from Interstate 5 to the north.

Located within the Santa Clarita Conservation Corridor Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP), the Property is adjacent to public lands within the northern and westerly terminus of the greater Transverse Mountains ecosystem. These public lands include the Angeles National Forest and City protected open space within the San Gabriel Mountains to the east as well as Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) protected lands within the Santa Susanna Mountains to the west. These protected lands are themselves connected to additional SMMC lands, Department of Parks and Recreation lands, and Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation lands to the southwest within the Santa Monica Mountains. All of these areas, including the Property, effectively constitute a contiguous wildlands connection referred to as the “Rim of the Valley.”

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is situated in a north-south canyon pass that connects the San Fernando Valley with the Santa Clarita Valley on the north. The surrounding lands are almost entirely mountainous and undeveloped. The Property is of irregular shape and undeveloped. The Property is steep, with an 800± foot elevation differential between the high point at 2200± feet and the lowest point at 1400± feet. The zoning is A-2-1 Los Angeles County which is effectively “Heavy Agricultural” that permits churches, mobile home parks, adult care, cemeteries, golf courses, and low-density single family residences.

The Property contains oak woodlands, riparian thickets, mixed conifer forests, and sub-associations of increasingly threatened Coastal Sage Scrub and Chaparral natural communities. The apex of a portion of two major watersheds, the Los Angeles River basin and the Santa Clara River basin, as well as several perennial streams, springs and ephemeral drainages are located on the Property. Acquisition of the Property would protect an important linkage within a wildlife

movement corridor connecting areas in the San Gabriel Mountains, Santa Susana Mountains, and Santa Monica Mountains. This linkage is an area of significant habitat for the California condor in the Sespe Mountains and for the least Bell's vireo in the Santa Clara River watershed. The Property is also included within designated critical habitat for the Coastal California Gnatcatcher and provides habitat for deer, mountain lions and other species.

The Property will also protect habitat for the following federal Species of Concern: Davidson's bush mallow, Lawrence's goldfinch and oak titmouse; the following state Species of Special Concern: Blainvill's (Coast) horned lizard, coastal, southern California rufous-crowned sparrow, San Diego desert woodrat; and the following plants listed on the California Native Plant Society's Priority Lists: Parish's sagebrush, Peirson's morning glory, slender Mariposa lily, and plummer's Mariposa lily. Securing and maintaining habitat and habitat connectivity within this linkage must be accomplished because there is a window of opportunity. Natural habitat is rapidly being lost to urban development and the Property has been considered for commercial development in the recent past.

To accomplish anticipated shifting in distributions of vegetative communities and associated habitats resulting from climate change, species will need a range of large core habitat areas connected by landscape-level linkages. Regional planning and species recovery plans should continue to take into account species' habitat needs and linkages necessary to support movement and habitat fluctuations. It is important to continue the acquisition of linkages and corridors between major core habitat areas to allow for range shifts and migration of species. Acquisition of the Property will assist in completing an important linkage within a wildlife corridor which allows access to large areas of core habitat in areas of higher elevations up to over 10,000 feet. This diversity of gradients and elevations along with a wide variety of vegetative types and annual precipitation, provide wildlife an opportunity to move and adapt to future climate changes.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Code Section 1300, *et seq.*) authorizing the WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of the Department of Fish and Wildlife, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. Under the Program, the WCB acquires/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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), which evaluates the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation/Conceptual Area

Protection Plan (LAE/CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The City will own and manage the Property after its acquisition. Funds for the management of the Property will come from the City's Open Space Preservation District Fund. The City has facilitated the preservation of over 8,000± acres of open space within the upper Santa Clara river watershed. Open space, unlike developed parkland, is not intended to have improvements or infrastructure, beyond fencing, gates, ADA required access improvements, and information kiosks. Hunting and off-road-vehicles will be prohibited.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Approved Fair Market Value	\$4,800,000.00
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$1,650,000.00
City of Santa Clarita funds	\$2,000,000.00
Caltrans/Resources EEMP grant funds	\$ 350,000.00
Los Angeles County Proposition A	\$ 650,000.00
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$4,650,000.00
Other project Related Admin. Costs	\$ 10,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$1,660,000.00

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

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value (FMV) of \$4,800,000.00. 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 \$4,650,000.00, less than its approved appraised fair market value. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can encumber the Property with a conservation easement and seek reimbursement of funds.

WCB FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding sources, the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)(b/c) (Proposition 50 SoCal), which allow for the acquisition of habitat for deer and mountain lion, protection of rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species and coastal upland and coastal watershed lands in southern California.

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 recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,660,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786 as follows: [\$622,019.00 from subsection (a); \$595,714.00 from subsection (a) (P50-Statewide); \$16,267.00 from subsection (a) (P50-So Cal); \$426,000.00 from subsection (b/c) (P50-So Cal)] for the grant amount and to pay project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

30. CDFW Vegetation Classification and Mapping, Phase II, Statewide \$1,560,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to support the existing Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program, which creates high-resolution, detailed vegetation maps that are used to identify high-value acquisition lands and restoration targets and for the development of land management plans.

LOCATION

In the spring of 2003, CDFW established a small but innovative program in the Biogeographic Data Branch entitled the Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program (VegCAMP). VegCAMP is devoted to the development of procedures and protocols needed to classify and map biologically significant vegetation communities and habitats throughout California. Greatly expanded in 2007 through a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and other funding sources, approximately 35 million acres (33%) of the state have been mapped to VegCAMP's California Vegetation Classification and Mapping Standards. The natural vegetation remaining to be mapped in the state is about half the state's area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The VegCAMP high-resolution, detailed vegetation maps are used for early scoping for transportation and other large infrastructure projects to avoid rather than mitigate impacts by modeling and predicting plant and animal distributions and associated project impacts. In addition, the maps are used for monitoring and evaluating the status, health, and trends of wildlife and for assessing risks of exotic species infestations. These vegetation maps are useful because they are based on a scientific, quantifiable, vegetation classification that is derived from field data.

Statewide conservation needs for VegCAMP spatial data include:

- Regional conservation planning
- Wildlands fire/fuels modeling for improved preparedness
- Identifying individual plant and animal species distributions
- Predicting the spread of invasive species
- Early scoping for transportation projects to minimize impacts
- Prioritizing land acquisitions for parks, wildlife areas, and ecological reserves
- Identifying important wildlife corridors
- Setting a baseline for monitoring impacts of global climate change

The principal roles of the VegCAMP program include:

- Developing and maintaining a standardized vegetation classification system for California

- Implementing and updating best methods of vegetation assessment including sampling, analyzing, reporting, and mapping vegetation at multiple scales
- Training resource professionals on vegetation assessment techniques and coordinating with other agencies and organizations to ensure a statewide, standardized approach toward collecting, reporting, and interpreting vegetation data
- Developing best practices for using vegetation data for long-range conservation and management of natural lands in the state
- Conducting integrated vegetation assessments throughout the state in areas with high conservation and management interest to the CDFW and other agencies
- Archiving and distributing quality vegetation data
- Coordinating with other state, federal, and local agencies and organizations involved in vegetation assessment
- Integrating standard vegetation classification systems with species distributions to encourage unified habitat assessments and conservation efforts
- Completing and maintaining a state-wide vegetation map and classification in collaboration with other agencies and organizations
- Developing and updating the most appropriate vegetation products for conservation planning and natural resources management within the state
- Integrating the program with similar ones from other states and countries to facilitate national and international conservation and management of natural resources

This phase of the project will focus on identifying land conservation priorities statewide, with an emphasis on the Sierra foothills region.

WCB PROGRAM

Under Proposition 84, the WCB specifically received funding to be used for the development of scientific data, habitat mapping and other research information necessary to determine the priorities for restoration and acquisition statewide.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The CDFW will be responsible for maintaining and updating this information as necessary, and will assure the long-term continuation of the Program.

PROJECT FUNDING

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$1,560,000.00
CDFW	<u>\$ 440,000.00</u>
Total	\$2,000,000.00

Project costs will be for CDFW staff and contract personnel for data collection, mapping, field verification and project administration.

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for the project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b), which can be used for the development of scientific data, habitat mapping and other research information necessary to determine the priorities for restoration and acquisition statewide.

CEQA

The project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15262) because it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions which have not been approved, adopted or funded. Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file the appropriate Notice of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed the proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,560,000.00 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); authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

31. Strategic Plan

Action

To consider adopting the Wildlife Conservation Board Strategic Plan. The Plan provides a high-level blueprint for WCB decision-making and establishes the primary framework for implementing the WCB vision over the next five years.

**32 Executive Session (Not Open to the Public)

THE BOARD MAY MEET IN CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 11126(e)(1) TO DISCUSS PENDING LITIGATION TO WHICH THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD IS A PARTY, JAMULIANS AGAINST THE CASINO VS. CALIFORNIA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD, ET AL., SACRAMENTO COUNTY, SUPERIOR COURT, CASE NUMBER 34-2014-80001894 (CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT).

** Added after Preliminary Agenda was distributed.