

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

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NOTICE OF MEETING

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

February 25, 2015

10:00 AM

1/ Legislative Office Building, 1020 N Street, Room 100
Sacramento, California 95814

FINAL AGENDA ITEMS

ITEM NO.		PAGE NO.
1.	Roll Call	1
2.	Funding Status - Informational	2
3.	Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4 - 13)	11
*4.	Approval of Minutes – November 20, 2014	11
*5.	Recovery of Funds	12

* Proposed Consent Calendar

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

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*6.	Angelo Coast Range Reserve Improvements Mendocino County	\$682,000.00 16

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Regents of the University of California, Berkeley (UCB), for a cooperative project with National Science Foundation for infrastructure improvements on UCB's Natural Reserve System property, located ±20 miles west of Laytonville in Mendocino County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for grants to the University of California for the Natural Reserve System for the construction and development of facilities that will be used for research and training to improve the management of natural lands and the preservation of California's wildlife resources. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)(3)]

*7.	San Joaquin Wetlands Associates Settlement (MID Eminent Domain) Stanislaus County	\$0.00 19
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To consider authorizing the Department of Fish and Wildlife to accept a perpetual conservation easement over 44± acres of natural and managed wetlands, upland habitats, and riparian areas on 12 privately-owned parcels in western Stanislaus County as part of a Settlement Agreement related to the Modesto Irrigation District's Westley to Rosemore Transmission Line Project.

*8.	Glen Deven Redwood Forest Restoration Monterey County	\$190,000.00 22
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To consider the allocation for a grant to the Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT) for a cooperative project with Natural Resources Conservation Service for forest thinning and redwood/hardwood habitat restoration work on six± acres, located on BSLT's Glen Deven Ranch, approximately ten air miles south of Carmel in Monterey 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), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a)]

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*9.	Allensworth Ecological Reserve, Expansion 57 Tulare County	\$0.00 27

To consider the acquisition of two separate parcels totaling four± acres of land as an expansion of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Allensworth Ecological Reserve for the protection of habitat supporting the San Joaquin kit fox and other species 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.

*10.	Puma Canyon, Expansion 5 (Saylor) San Bernardino County	\$44,000.00 30
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To consider the allocation for a grant to Transition Habitat Conservancy to acquire six± acres of land, to conserve lower montane chaparral and woodland habitat for the benefit of deer, mountain lion and other wildlife species, located in Puma Canyon on the lower northern slopes of the San Bernardino Mountains, near the community of Pinon Hills in San Bernardino County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat to protect deer and mountain lions. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)]

*11.	Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve, SLC Lease Amendment Santa Barbara County	\$0.00 33
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To consider a proposal to expand the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (Reserve) in Vandenberg Village, California by adding 175± acres of land under the jurisdiction of the California State Lands Commission (CSLC); and to amend an existing management lease between the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and CSLC to add the 175± acres to the lease and manage and maintain the additional acreage as part of the Reserve.

*12.	Western Riverside MSHCP (2013), Evandel – Wilson Riverside County	\$146,200.00 37
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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 grant to the Authority, to acquire 80± acres of land in western Riverside County for the protection of habitat that supports threatened and endangered species; and to increase regional wildlife

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habitat corridors and linkages located within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, near the community of Murrieta. 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 Section (Proposition 117) 2786(b/c)]

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| *13. County of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan 2011 (PWRG)
San Diego County | \$227,090.00 | 42 |
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To consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the Endangered Habitat Conservancy (EHC), and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board grant to EHC for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to acquire fee title to 79± acres of land to protect habitat that implements or assists in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans and the no cost transfer of the property to CDFW located near El Cajon in San Diego County. The purpose of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source which allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat that implements or assists in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c)]

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| 14. Independence Lake Forest Enhancement
Sierra County | \$410,000.00 | 46 |
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To consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for a cooperative project with the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Forest Foundation, Truckee Meadows Water Authority, and the Bella Vista Foundation to restore forest stand ecology and reduce fuel loads on 200± acres of forest owned by TNC, located approximately 15 miles north of the City of Truckee in Sierra 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), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a)]

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15.	American River Headwaters Placer County	\$3,500,000.00 50

To consider the allocation for a grant to American River Conservancy for a cooperative project with the California Natural Resources Agency and private donations to acquire 9,955± acres of land to help preserve alpine forests and meadows, wildlife corridors, habitat linkages, and to provide future wildlife oriented public use opportunities, on the headwaters of the Middle and North Forks of the American River in Placer County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that 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 Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a)]

16.	Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, Lower Napa River Unit, Ponds 6, 6A, 7, 7A and 8 Napa County	\$0.00 55
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This project is being withdrawn from consideration at this time.

17.	East Sacramento County Blue Oak Legacy Area, Expansion 3 (Graves) Sacramento County	\$810,000.00 56
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To consider the allocation for a grant to the Sacramento Valley Conservancy to acquire 100± acres of land for the protection of oak woodlands, riparian habitat, and grassland, and to provide habitat linkages and corridors between existing protected lands that support several native species and to provide future wildlife oriented public use opportunities, located approximately six miles south of the city of Folsom and three miles north of the community of Rancho Murrieta in Sacramento 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)]

18.	San Joaquin River Parkway, Jenco Farms Fresno County	\$911,400.00 60
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To consider the acquisition of 23± acres of land on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife under the Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit

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Act Program for a cooperative project with the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) for the protection of riparian and oak woodlands habitat and for future wildlife oriented public use opportunities, and the eventual transfer of control and possession to the SJRC. The property is located within the San Joaquin River Parkway, southwest of the junction of Friant Road and Rice Road in Fresno County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of 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), Public Resources Code Section 75050(f)]

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| 19. | East Contra Costa County NCCP/HCP
(Viera/Perley)
Contra Costa County | \$882,500.00 | 64 |
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To consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy (ECCCHC), and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board grant to the ECCCHC for a cooperative project with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) to acquire 260± acres of land for the protection and preservation of existing regional wildlife linkages, including grassland and oak woodland savannah habitat areas within the East Contra Costa County Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan, located in the Diablo Mountain Range, about 6 miles southeast of the Town of Clayton in Contra Costa County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat for areas in and around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta that assist in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c)]

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| 20. | Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands
Habitat Enhancement
Santa Barbara County | \$841,000.00 | 68 |
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To consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy for a cooperative project with the National Park Service to eradicate invasive weed species and to map vegetation on Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands, located approximately 20 miles west of Ventura Harbor in Santa Barbara County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the development, rehabilitation, restoration, acquisition and protection of habitat that promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species and protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)]

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| 21. County of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan 2011 (multiple parcels)
San Diego County | \$1,625,295.00 | 73 |
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To consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the Endangered Habitats Conservancy (EHC), and to consider three Wildlife Conservation Board grants to EHC to acquire a total of 634± acres from three separate landowners for the protection of wildlife corridors and habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species located near the city of El Cajon. The purposes of the projects 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)].

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| 22. Western Riverside MSHCP (2013),
Evandel – Bergstein
Riverside County | \$218,565.00 | 78 |
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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 grant to the Authority, to acquire 108± 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, near the community of Murrieta. 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) Section 2786(b/c)]

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| 23. Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition,
City of Carlsbad (Cielo del Norte, Phase II)
San Diego County | \$10,000 | 83 |
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(This project was added after the Preliminary Agenda was published.)

To consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant and the approval to Subgrant these federal funds to The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) for a cooperative project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to acquire fee title to 242+/- acres of land for the protection of California gnatcatcher habitat in San Diego County. The

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purpose of this project is consistent with the proposed funding source, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c), that allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat that implements or assists in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans.

24. State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) Informational 87

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has embarked on an important effort to prepare a state wildlife action plan (SWAP) for fish and wildlife conservation using a comprehensive, internally consistent, and digitally accessible framework for assembling scientific information and designing conservation strategies with a wide array of stakeholders. First prepared in 2005 and now being updated for 2015, the SWAP is a requirement mandated by Congress for a state to receive federal funding through the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants (SWG) Program. Using the *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation* as the planning framework, SWAP 2015 will identify the species of greatest conservation need for each target ecosystem, define their key ecological attributes, and prescribe measures to best protect the ecosystems from human-caused threats and environmental stresses, importantly including climate change. The SWAP update seeks to create a flexible but scientific process to respond to changing challenges, including population growth, the need for renewable energy, and global climate change. The SWAP will integrate and promote implementation of common goals and objectives from multiple sectors. CDFW seeks to make best use of limited resources while developing lasting partnerships and increasing public participation in the conservation and management of California's valued natural resources. The Board will be given a short briefing on the 2015 update to the SWAP.

25. California Streamflow Enhancement Program Informational 87

Proposition 1 (Water Bond), approved by California voters on November 4, 2014, authorizes \$200,000,000 to the WCB (section 79733, subject to appropriation by the Legislature) for projects that result in enhanced stream flows. Information on draft program guidelines and timing of program implementation will be discussed.

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 February 12, 2015. Requests for American Sign Language Interpreters should be submitted at least two weeks

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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 is no longer needed, please contact the Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator immediately.

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WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

February 25, 2015

1. Roll Call

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS

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

Michael Cohen, Member
Director, Department of Finance

Jack Baylis, Member
President, Fish and Game Commission

JOINT LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Senator Jean Fuller
Senator Fran Pavley
Senator Lois Wolk

Assembly Member Marc Levine
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>-1,000,000.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$0.00
February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	\$.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>-2,860,000.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$17,803,000.00
February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-2,800,060.00
Total Project Development	<u>-6,979,344.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$8,023,596.00
(c) 2013-14 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-12,216,929.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$8,446,071.00
February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-7,990,500.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$455,571.00
(d) 2012-13 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-4,228,979.00</u>
Unallocated Balance	\$16,434,021.00
February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	<u>-2,032,283.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$14,401,738.00

(e)	2011-12 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-11,391,923.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$9,271,077.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-3,679,164.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$5,591,913.00
(f)	2010-11 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-15,141,371.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$5,526,629.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-4,572,209.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$954,420.00
(g)	2009-10 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-20,281,064.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$386,936.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-44,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-317,000.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$25,936.00
(h)	2008-09 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2012-13 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-16,685,396.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$3,982,604.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-3,982,604.00</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>-20,063,475.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$610,525.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-610,525.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00
(j)	2006-07 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,699,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,833,298.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$865,702.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-803,368.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$59,334.00
(k)	2004-05 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,577,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,982,286.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$594,714.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-594,714.00</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>-31,295,515.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$4,804,485.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-54,485.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$4,750,000.00

(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>-6,343,452.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$4,656,548.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$4,656,548.00
(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>-249,166,204.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$23,833,796.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-9,271,500.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$14,562,296.00
(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
	February 2015 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>-680,544,372.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$57,484,598.00

	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-23,629,000.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$33,855,598.00
(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
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-3,380,000.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00
(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>-2,535,880.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$2,264,120.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-911,400.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-1,352,720.00</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
	February 2015 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)	\$8,500,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-5,074,012.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$3,425,988.00
	February 2015 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
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	882,500.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-6,621,425.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00
(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>-10,060,889.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$14,939,111.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-227,090.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-7,859,793.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$6,852,228.00
(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>-23,404,568.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$1,595,432.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-1,595,432.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00
(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))	\$1,279,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-1,098,806.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$180,194.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-0.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$180,194.00
(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>-991,399.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$508,601.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-304,682.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$203,919.00
(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>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$2,368,000.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-325,000.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$555,764.00
(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>-122,128,644.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$42,571,356.00
	February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-4,100,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-19,241,500.00</u>
	Projected Unallocated Balance	\$19,229,856.00
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055(b))	\$123,525,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-87,145,046.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$36,379,954.00

February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-1,523,000.00
Total Project Development	<u>-4,878,632.00</u>
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$29,978,322.00

RECAP OF FUND BALANCES

Wildlife Restoration Fund (a)	\$0.00
February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	-0.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$0.00

Habitat Conservation Fund (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k)	\$63,921,279.00
February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-2,844,060.00
Total Project Development	-30,969,997.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$30,107,222.00

Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (l)	\$4,804,485.00
February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	-54,485.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$4,750,000.00

California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (m), (n)	\$28,490,344.00
February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	-9,271,500.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$19,218,844.00

Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (o), (p)	\$68,080,155.00
February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
Total Project Development	-23,629,000.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$44,451,155.00

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)	\$120,740,363.00
February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-7,643,990.00
Total Project Development	-52,670,102.00
Projected Unallocated Balance	\$60,426,271.00

TOTAL – ALL FUNDS	\$286,036,626.00
February 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-11,019,550.00
Total Project Development	-233,190,160.00

Projected Unallocated Balance **\$41,826,908.00**

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

SUMMARY OF BOND CASH

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

Bond Fund	Authorized GO Bond Proceeds	Expenditures through 01/26/15	Encumbrances through 12/31/14	Cash Balances Includes Encumbrances
Proposition 12	\$ 12,621,973.31	\$ 9,287,343.81	\$ 450,424.09	\$ 2,884,205.41
Proposition 40	\$ 91,348,942.78	\$ 85,680,084.64	\$ 14,504,580.65	\$ (8,835,722.51)
Proposition 50	\$ 164,694,303.12	\$ 82,003,015.91	\$ 27,698,471.30	\$ 54,992,815.91
Proposition 84	\$ 255,271,862.99	\$ 242,285,591.35	\$ 27,344,654.38	\$ (14,358,382.74)
Proposition 1E	\$ 65,725,202.07	\$ 50,158,412.88	\$ 8,101,315.71	\$ 7,465,473.48
Grand Totals	\$589,662,284.27	\$469,414,448.59	\$78,099,446.13	\$42,148,389.55

Final Agenda for February 25, 2015 WCB Board Meeting

3. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4 – 13)
- *4. Approval of Minutes – November 20, 2014

* Proposed Consent Calendar

*5. Recovery of Funds

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

\$13,724.00 to the **Habitat Conservation Fund**
\$49,313.32 to the **California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe
 Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection
 Fund**
\$5,000.00 to the **Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal
 and Beach Protection Fund of 2002**
\$6,118.00 to the **Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply,
 Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection
 Fund of 2006**
\$0.00 to the **Other**

HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND

American Basin Conservation Easement (High Ridge Ranch), Yuba County

Allocated	\$805,000.00
Expended	<u>-798,936.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$6,064.00

El Dorado Ranch Phase 1B, El Dorado County

Allocated	\$2,810,000.00
Expended	<u>-2,802,340.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$7,660.00

Lower Redwood Creek Restoration, Phase II, Marin County

Allocated	\$450,000.00
Expended	<u>-450,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Round Valley Pine Creek Unit, Inyo County

Allocated	\$1,674,250.00
Expended	<u>-1,674,250.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Total Habitat Conservation Fund **\$13,724.00**

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

El Dorado Ranch Phase 1B, El Dorado County

Allocated	\$2,000,000.00
Expended	<u>-2,000,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Pismo Preserve, San Luis Obispo County

Allocated	\$4,010,000.00
Expended	<u>-4,004,920.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$5,080.00

San Joaquin River Parkway, Sycamore Island, North Channel Crossing
Construction, Augmentation, Madera County

Allocated	\$94,000.00
Expended	<u>-94,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

San Joaquin River Parkway, Sycamore Island, North Channel Crossing
Construction, Augmentation II, Madera County

Allocated	\$127,000.00
Expended	<u>-90,566.68</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$36,433.32

Shanghai Bend River Access, Sutter County

Allocated	\$10,000.00
Expended	<u>-2,200.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$7,800.00

Total California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund \$49,313.32

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

Puerco Canyon, Los Angeles County

Allocated	\$4,505,000.00
Expended	<u>-4,500,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$5,000.00

Total Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 \$5,000.00

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

East Contra Costa County NCCP/HCP (Anna Smith), Contra Costa County

Allocated	\$2,424,200.00
Expended	<u>-2,261,874.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$162,326.00

Ocean Trails HCPLA 2009 (Angeles LLC), Los Angeles County

Allocated	\$607,250.00
Expended	<u>-607,250.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Red Bank Conservation Easement Expansion (Burrows Ranch), Tehama County

Allocated	\$57,000.00
Expended	<u>-54,283.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$2,717.00

San Joaquin River Parkway, Sycamore Island, North Channel Crossing Construction, Madera County

Allocated	\$361,000.00
Expended	<u>-361,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Total Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 **\$6,118.00**

OTHER

Allensworth Ecological Reserve, Expansions 29-40, Tulare County

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

At the May 22, 2014 meeting of the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Board approved the acquisition of 22 separate parcels of land totaling 33.4+/- acres by the 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. Work is now completed on all expansions with the exception of Expansion 35. This entry is to officially close Expansions 29-34 and 36-40.

Allensworth Ecological Reserve, Expansions 41-49, Tulare County

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

At the August 28, 2014 meeting of the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Board approved the acquisition of 12 separate parcels of land totaling 29+/- acres by the 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. Work is now completed on all expansions. This entry is to officially close Expansions 41-49.

Total Other **\$0.00**

- *6. Angelo Coast Range Reserve Improvements \$ 682,000.00
Mendocino County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Regents of the University of California, Berkeley (UCB), for a cooperative project with National Science Foundation to demolish an existing house, construct a dining hall, and eight-bed bunkhouses on UCB's Natural Reserve System property, located 20± miles west of Laytonville in Mendocino County.

LOCATION

The Reserve is located in the Coast Range of Mendocino County. Heath and Marjorie Angelo moved to Mendocino County in 1931 when they bought an old homestead along the banks of the South Fork of the Eel River near its confluence with Elder Creek. Over the next 25 years they accumulated nearly 3,000 acres of virgin forestland. The family sold the property to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in 1956 with the stipulation that they could live within an established preserve on the property. In 1959, the property became part of TNC's Northern California Coast Range Preserve and subsequent acquisitions thereafter brought the acreage of the preserve up to 4,320 acres. In 1994 TNC transferred the property to the University of California Natural Reserve System (UCNRS) with UCB designated as the managing campus. With this transfer came the name change to the Heath and Marjorie Angelo Coast Range Reserve (Reserve). BLM owns 3,500 acres encompassing the entire Elder Creek watershed which is designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). BLM permits Reserve users to access the ACEC. The Reserve, now encompasses roughly 9,140 acres and is one of the largest tracts of virgin coastal Douglas fir-coastal redwood forest remaining in California.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Reserve is used for dissertation research, field classes, and workshop retreats by dozens of groups and individuals from University of California and California State University campuses, as well as other national and international colleges and universities. On weekends, the Reserve has been used for field classes by university and K-12 classes. Over the last ten years, use of the Reserve by researchers and students has greatly increased and intensified. Currently, demand exceeds accommodations.

Under UC management, long-deferred repairs to the Reserve facilities began to be addressed. Significant upgrades in the form of new roofs, window, doors, plumbing, insulation, wood stoves, and solar systems were undertaken that greatly improved the ability of the Reserve to serve its users. Still, between 1989 and 1999, use increased steadily as major National Science Foundation (NSF) funding was garnered for research and student training at the Reserve, and the need for lab and classroom space became critical. In 2000, the Reserve was granted a \$1.2 million dollar gift by the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund along with \$135,000 from the Packard Foundation to build a modern lab facility at the entrance to the Reserve. In 2002, the 3500 sq. ft. Environmental Science Center

was completed providing modern and safe lab, office, and meeting space for classes and researchers. Reserve use continued its steady increase, especially when the Reserve was chosen as a collaborative field site and technology test bed for scientists in three major multidisciplinary collaborations (the National Center for Earth Surface Dynamics, an NSF Science and Technology Center; the NSF National Center for Airborne Laser Mapping; and the Keck Hydrowatch Project). While the Science Center met the need for the lab, office, and classroom space, it did not address the Reserve's housing limitations, specifically the very substandard and limited housing adjacent to the Science Center itself. In 2010, a NSF Facilities Science and Marine Lab (FSML) grant was used to design and construct a two bedroom apartment and an eight-bed bunkhouse.

The proposed project will build eight-bed bunkhouses as well as a dining hall (with showers, baths, and laundry facilities). These facilities will be built upon previously disturbed ground and the dining hall will be on the ground where the dilapidated Headquarters house currently stands. The UCNRS is required to provide a match for WCB's grant. UCNRS will be contributing \$447,000 towards construction, engineering, and design costs. In addition, a 160-acre parcel will be donated to UCNRS for incorporation into the Reserve; however, such donation is contingent upon funding and completion of this project. The donated real property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$100,000. UCNRS proposes to use this donation as part of its grant match requirement.

WCB PROGRAM

The mission of UCNRS is to contribute to the understanding and wise management of the earth and its natural systems by supporting university-level teaching, research, and public service at protected areas throughout California. Under Proposition 84, the WCB received funding to provide matching grant dollars to the UCNRS for land acquisitions and the construction or development of facilities that will be used for research and training to improve the management of natural lands and the preservation of California's wildlife resources. To implement this funding the WCB and the UCNRS developed guidelines for identifying eligible projects and the UCNRS established an Ad Hoc Advisory Subcommittee to review and set priorities for project proposals to be submitted to the WCB for funding.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Grant Agreement requires that the UCNRS will maintain the facilities for the purposes of providing space for research, administration, and educational activities for thirty years.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Project Task	Total Cost	NSF	UCNRS	WCB
Construction	\$1,134,000	\$197,000	\$357,000	\$580,000
Project Admin	\$111,000	\$75,000	\$0	\$36,000
Engineering, Design	\$82,000	\$4,000	\$63,000	\$15,000
Contingency for construction	\$102,000	\$24,000	\$27,000	\$51,000
Land Donation			\$100,000	
TOTAL	\$1,529,000	\$300,000	\$547,000	\$682,000

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 84), Section 75055 (b)(3), which provides for grants to the University of California for the Natural Reserve System for the construction and development of facilities that will be used for research and training to improve the management of natural lands and the preservation of California’s wildlife resources and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

The project was vetted through the University of California Natural Reserve System’s Ad Hoc Subcommittee and recommended for funding. The University of California, as lead agency, prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff considered the MND and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB’s compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$682,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 84), Section 75055 (b)(3), authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project, and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

- *7. San Joaquin Wetlands Associates Settlement \$0.00
(MID Eminent Domain)
Stanislaus County

This project requests the Wildlife Conservation Board to authorize the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to accept a 44± acre conservation easement (New Conservation Easement) over 12 separate parcels from the landowner, San Joaquin Wetlands Associates (SJWA or Grantor), as part of a Settlement Agreement between CDFW and SJWA related to the Modesto Irrigation District's Westley - Rosemore 230 kV Transmission Project. The 44± acres proposed for conservation are contiguous with other real properties owned by the Grantor that are encumbered with existing CDFW conservation easements totaling 574± acres (Existing Conservation Easements). WCB purchased the two Existing Conservation Easements on behalf of CDFW in 1992 (93± acres) and 1994 (481± acres) under the Wetland Conservation Easement Program.

BACKGROUND

MID constructed a 230-kilovolt power line and related improvements through property owned by SJWA and subject to the Existing Conservation Easements (Conserved SJWA Property). Following construction MID filed an eminent domain action to obtain transmission line and access easements over the Conserved SJWA Property and to determine the amount of just compensation to be paid to SJWA and CDFW. The parties reached an agreement in which MID paid settlement proceeds jointly to SJWA and CDFW in the amount of \$802,000.00. These funds were deposited into an escrow account.

CDFW and SJWA have reached an agreement under which, in exchange for the settlement proceeds, SJWA will grant the 44± acre New Conservation Easement to CDFW, and enhance and maintain as wetlands two separate areas totaling 15± acres of additional land owned by the Grantor. All costs associated with the agreement will be paid from the settlement proceeds with the remaining balance to be disbursed from escrow to SJWA upon recording of the New Conservation Easement.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The parcels proposed for conservation (Property) are located in western Stanislaus County near the community of Grayson lying east of I-5 and west of the city of Modesto. The Property is situated in the north central region of the San Joaquin Valley (Valley) adjacent to the San Joaquin River. Eight counties comprise the Valley which runs north to south and is the state's top agricultural producing region known for the array of fruits and vegetables grown in its fertile soil. The Valley is 250 miles long and bordered on the west by the Coastal Mountain ranges. Its eastern boundary joins the southern two-thirds of the Sierra bioregion, which features Yosemite, Kings Canyon and the Sequoia National Parks. The immediate surrounding area of the Property is agricultural land dotted with farming estates and small residential tracts. Nearby protected lands,

approximately 10 miles to the north of the Property, include the 7,000± acre San Joaquin National Wildlife Refuge and the 1,600± acre Dos Rios Ranch acquired with approved WCB grant funding in February 2012. Both areas are managed for their wetland and riparian habitats to support migratory birds and endangered species.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed New Conservation Easement area is contiguous with the Conserved SJWA Property and comprises 12 separate parcels that range from 1± to 21± acres. The parcels are generally level and range from square to irregularly shaped. The proposed New Conservation Easement will permanently preserve a mixture of riparian habitat, natural and managed wetlands, and upland grasslands on the Property. This diversity provides habitat for a broad range of bird species, including raptors, passerine and waterfowl, and other animals such as river otters, bobcats and black tailed deer.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed New Conservation Easement is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program (Program), which is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Code Section 1300, *et seq.*). Under the program WCB may authorize the acquisition by CDFW 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

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Under the terms of the New Conservation Easement the Grantor will maintain the Property as wetland, riparian and/or grassland habitat. CDFW and the Grantor will meet annually, unless otherwise agreed, to discuss and establish specific habitat management strategies which the Grantor will implement based on an Annual Work Plan prepared by CDFW. The habitat management strategies specified in the Annual Work Plan will describe the requirements to maintain or improve the quality of wetland, riparian, and grassland habitats on the Property. These strategies may include, but are not limited to, such practices as vegetation irrigation, vegetation management through disking, burning, mowing or herbicide application, and the seeding or transplanting of vegetation. The Property will remain private with no requirement to allow public access; however, hunting, fishing or the operation of a waterfowl hunting club on the Property is permitted so long as the use is carried out according to the provisions of the New Conservation Easement and applicable laws.

PROJECT FUNDING

This is a no cost project for the WCB. According to the terms of the Settlement Agreement between CDFW and SJWA, in exchange for the settlement proceeds SJWA will grant the New Conservation Easement to CDFW and enhance and maintain as wetlands, at no cost to CDFW, 15± acres of additional land owned by

Grantor. In addition, Grantor will pay the escrow fees, recording fees, messenger fees and other costs associated with escrow.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

MID, as lead agency, prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has considered the EIR and prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, staff will file a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse. CDFW has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for approval by WCB.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and authorize the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to accept the 44± acre New Conservation Easement as proposed; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

- *8. Glen Deven Redwood Forest Restoration \$190,000.00
Monterey County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT) for a cooperative project with Natural Resources Conservation Service to remove roughly 1,000 eucalyptus trees from six± acres of redwood/hardwood habitat on BSLT's Glen Deven Ranch, located approximately ten miles south of Carmel in Monterey County.

LOCATION

The Glen Deven Ranch, an 860-acre property bequeathed to the Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT) in 2001, lies at the top of Garrapata Ridge in northern Big Sur. The property ranges in elevation from 200 to 960 feet and supports diverse natural plant communities such as mixed woodland forest, central maritime chaparral, northern coastal scrub, coastal prairie grassland, and riparian woodlands.

Glen Deven Ranch spills over into two distinct watersheds – Garrapata Creek and Palo Colorado. The Garrapata Creek on the north side of the property is a anadromous fish-bearing stream that contains perennial flow and habitat for steelhead trout. Palo Colorado Creek on the south side is an ephemeral stream with a waterfall barrier to anadromous fish near the coast.

Historically, Glen Deven Ranch was home to a Depression-era Christmas-tree-growing operation, a cattle grazing program from about 1965-1985, a trout farm alongside Garrapata Creek in the 1970s, and a beekeeping operation for the last 60 years. In addition to the main house and caretaker's house near the Ranch entrance, there is a guest house, hay barn, horse stables, workshop, and outbuildings. Currently the ranch is used for occasional permit-based hikes by members of the Big Sur Land Trust and hosts up to 20 youth at a time during summer months for three-day summer camp sessions. In 2014, a total of 160 local youth participated in the program. Additional uses include hosting research by local universities including a redwood seed gathering and propagation project by UC Santa Cruz (UCSC) and a small fog/water-collection station installed by students from CSU Monterey Bay.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Glen Deven Ranch has a substantial stand of non-native, invasive species. Blue gum, *Eucalyptus globulus*, the most prolific invasive plant species on Glen Deven Ranch is invading the Garrapata Creek and Palo Colorado watersheds, posing a threat to biodiversity and risk of catastrophic wildfire. The California Invasive Plant Council considers this species a severe threat to wildlands due to vegetation structure, as well as being reproductively adept with high rates of dispersal and establishment. It is an extremely hardy tree that is fast growing, drought tolerant, frost tolerant, resistant to most insects and diseases, and has an extensive and persistent root system. Native plants are unable to grow under groves of Eucalyptus due to both the thick leaf litter that develops as well as an

alkaloid chemical compound produced by the tree that prevents growth of nearby vegetation. Eucalyptus bark and foliage have high volatile oil content that permeates the duff and soil around established trees and renders it inhospitable to native species survival.

The Glen Deven Eucalyptus population originated from six trees that were planted on the property in 1896, spreading through paths of disturbance down canyons into streams. The stands that have taken over the canyons and around the main structures on the property are the largest in the Garrapata Creek watershed. The trees in this stand are considered “ladder fuels” by local, regional and state fire agencies, referring to the ability of the tree to move fire rapidly from the ground into the canopy, thereby starting crown fires. Crown fires spread rapidly and can more easily jump roads and firelines.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife funded a watershed plan for the Garrapata Creek watershed in 2006, which identified the control of non-native species as the highest priority to improve riparian habitat and maintain watershed health. Glen Deven encompasses about 1.5 miles of the 8-mile Garrapata Creek watercourse.

As part of BSLT’s commitment to stewardship excellence at Glen Deven, staff initiated a process to determine feasible methods to address the conservation, wildfire and public safety issues posed by the Eucalyptus population at Glen Deven. From 2010 to 2012, staff conducted community stakeholder meetings and worked closely with Monterey County and pertinent regulatory agencies including the California Coastal Commission and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) to develop and submit a Timber Harvest Plan to remove 19 acres of Eucalyptus from Glen Deven. BSLT received approval for the plan in April 2012. The Glen Deven Timber Harvest Plan (THP) was the first such plan to be approved in the county in 30 years to support timber removal with habitat restoration as a primary goal of the plan.

As described in the THP, the 19-acres of Eucalyptus control will occur under a phased removal method. In areas where no native trees are present, approximately 2-5 widely spaced overstory Eucalyptus trees must be retained per acre during initial thinning. The residual trees will continue to provide habitat for wildlife until a future thinning when they will be removed. The phased removal is intended to facilitate the establishment of a new understory of native species and to retain some overstory canopy structure for bird species to perch on while native tree species take hold. The retained trees will be cut during the life of the THP preventing proliferation of Eucalyptus. Interim retention trees will be pruned to reduce the fuel ladder. In 2012 and 2013, BSLT completed the first two phases of the project on the south-facing slope in Palo Colorado Canyon. Six acres were cleared of Eucalyptus trees with ongoing stump treatments to ensure full removal.

Phase 3 will remove nearly all Eucalyptus trees, estimated at 1000 trees, from 6 acres of Redwood/hardwood habitat on the north-facing slope of Garrapata Ridge. Eucalyptus trees will be cut and removed from the slope in order to facilitate restoration and revegetation of native species. Native species growing on the slope will be released from competition and subsequent planting will enhance the assemblage of species present. The stumps will be treated promptly with the appropriate herbicide to inhibit stump sprouting. Several constraints will complicate operations, including deactivating PG&E powerlines, relocating propane and water lines, carefully removing trees next to the structures, and repairing the road and driveway after work is complete.

Native tree and shrub species will be planted in openings created by Eucalyptus removal. Reference sites near the project area were surveyed to determine the appropriate species for regeneration. Appropriate species depend on the microsite, slope and aspect, nearby species composition, and distance to the watercourse. Depending on the silvicultural method, re-vegetation species will include , Pacific madrone, coast live oak, huckleberry, big-leaf maple, canyon gooseberry, and coffee berry. BSLT is working in partnership with UCSC to propagate redwood trees from seeds collected at Glen Deven along with other species listed above. Currently, over 1200 seedlings are under the care of UCSC ready to be planted on the property. A restoration plan for Phase 3 of the project is nearing completion.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Forest Conservation Program and meets the program's goal of promoting the ecological integrity 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, wildlife, and plants found on these lands.

The Glen Deven Forest Restoration Project meets the guiding principles of the Forest Conservation Program in the following ways:

- 1) Providing protection to a Forest Reserve area connected to over 240,000 acre of publicly protected native forests. (Guiding Principle #2)
- 2) Promoting the restoration and maintenance of the ecological integrity of the Glen Deven Ranch, the surrounding Palo Colorado residential community and the network of public protected lands to which the property is connected. (Guiding principle #3)
- 3) Implementing forest restoration and protection measures within a significant natural resource area, identified for protection by the Federal Wilderness Act, the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, the California Coastal Act of 1976, the Monterey County General Plan, and the Master Plan of the Monterey Peninsula Regional Parks District.

- (Guiding principal #4)
- 4) Ensuring long-term ecological integrity and economic stability of the region through a monitoring and adaptive management plan for the entire project, a goal of promoting Eucalyptus and other non-native vegetation removal by private landowners within the region, and reducing catastrophic wildfire potential for hundreds of thousands of surrounding acres, most of which are under public ownership. (Guiding Principal # 5)
 - 5) Committing to completing all phases of the project with an active effort to raise public and private funds to support the project. (Guiding principle #7)
 - 6) Investing in the best possible approach to removal of a large and established stand of Eucalyptus trees in a highly challenging location (up to 90% slopes) by investing general operating funds into the development, approval and implementation of a THP which satisfies all the biological, archaeological, forestry, and local/state permits for the 3 to 5-year lifespan of the project. (Guiding principle # 8)

Glen Deven Ranch falls within a significant natural resource area, identified for protection by the Federal Wilderness Act, the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, the California Coastal Act of 1976, the Monterey County General Plan, and the Master Plan of the Monterey Peninsula Regional Parks District. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Joshua Creek Canyon Ecological Reserve borders Glen Deven to the east. It is two miles northwest of the Mill Creek Redwood Preserve of the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District and 3.5 miles east of the Ventana Wilderness of the Los Padres National Forest.

The project is consistent with the priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan to fund projects that provide resilience in the face of climate change for native wildlife species and provide species strongholds or refugia.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The BSLT has established a harvest plan, management plan, and restoration plan which will remain active throughout the twenty-five year term of the grant and beyond. If at any time during the 25-year life of the project, the BSLT 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:

Project Task	Total	WCB	BSLT	NRCS
Project Management	\$39,750	\$9,500	\$30,250	--
Project Administration	\$17,454	--	\$17,454	--
Tree Removal	\$189,325	\$150,900	\$40,000	--
Post-Harvest Repairs and Restoration	\$45,779	\$28,500	\$4,500	\$12,779
Signage	\$1,100	\$1,100	--	--
TOTAL	\$293,408	\$190,000	\$92,204	\$12,779

Project costs will be for project management and administration, site prep and mobilization, timber harvest and removal, follow-up weed control, infrastructure repair, erosion control, vegetation restoration, and installation of a sign.

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(a) 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 and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, as lead agency, prepared a Timber Harvest Plan for the project under a certified state regulatory program pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff considered the THP 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 \$190,000.00 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.

- *9 Allensworth Ecological Reserve, Expansion 57 \$0.00
Tulare County

This proposal is to consider the acquisition of two separate parcels totaling approximately four acres as an expansion of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Allensworth Ecological Reserve (Reserve), for the protection of habitat supporting the San Joaquin kit fox and other species 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. Much of the area outside the Reserve has been, or is currently being, converted to extensive agricultural uses including alfalfa, grapes, or orchard use. If acquired, the Properties would be managed as part of the Reserve. Other protected lands in the vicinity include the Colonel Allensworth State Park located to the west, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Pixley National Wildlife Refuge to the north, and the USFWS Kern National Wildlife Refuge to the southwest.

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, 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 the badger, greater Sandhill crane, merlin, Swainson's hawk, and western pond turtle.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Properties are located north of Avenue 24 and west of County Road 112, in Tulare County. The Properties total 4 ± acres and are being proposed for acquisition as Expansion 57 of the Reserve. The Properties are currently zoned for agricultural use and are being utilized as pastureland. The 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.*), which authorizes WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of 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, WCB acquires and grants funds to facilitate acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife oriented recreation opportunities. These activities are carried out in conjunction with CDFW, which evaluates the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (LAE/CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

Consistent with Goals A-1 and A-4 (environmental protection and conservation) of the Strategic Plan, the Properties provide habitat for threatened and endangered species. Additionally, the Properties will help provide resilience to the impacts of climate change for native species by providing habitat linkages and corridors for increased movement. This project has been requested and is supported by CDFW as it increases the size of the Reserve, protecting additional habitat for threatened and endangered species and providing connectivity to the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge in an effort to build a wildlife corridor between the two conservation areas.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Properties proposed for acquisition represent a nominal addition to the Reserve and, according to CDFW, can be readily absorbed into existing CDFW operations. CDFW has advised WCB that CDFW will be able to manage and monitor the Properties with existing staff and 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 each analyzed and determined that the purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source.

TERMS

The owner has agreed to sell the property for the appraised fair market value as shown below. The appraised value has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The terms and conditions of the proposed acquisition provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, agreements 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 for the Properties is as follows:

Purchase Price	\$ 18,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	\$ 3,000.00
Total Project Costs	\$ 21,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$ 0.00

It is estimated that \$3,000.00 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 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 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 WCB approve the project as proposed; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

- *10. Puma Canyon, Expansion 5 (Saylor) \$44,000.00
San Bernardino County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to Transition Habitat Conservancy (THC) to acquire approximately six acres of land to conserve and protect lower montane chaparral and woodland habitat for the benefit of deer, mountain lion and other wildlife species.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located within Puma Canyon, approximately five miles south of the community of Pinon Hills, south of State Route 138.

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

The Property falls within the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Puma Canyon Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The main objectives of this CAPP are to conserve and enhance biodiversity, protect threatened vegetative communities along with other rare and important plants and animals.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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

Over the last two years, the WCB approved projects to protect nearly 260± acres of land that is now part of the Puma Canyon Ecological Reserve.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) Land Acquisition Program (Program). The Program

is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Code Section 1300, *et seq.*), which authorizes WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property, and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with the 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. These activities are carried out in conjunction with CDFW, which evaluates the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE)/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

Consistent with Goals A-1 and A-4 (environmental protection and conservation) of WCB's Strategic Plan, the acquisition would continue to allow migration and movement of species and provide for habitat connectivity between identified habitat areas.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

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

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$34,000.00. 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 grant between WCB and THC provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the grantee to encumber the Property with a conservation easement in favor of the State or another entity approved by the State and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	<u>\$34,000.00</u>
Total Purchase Price	\$34,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	\$10,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$44,000.00

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

FUNDING SOURCE

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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$44,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) for the grant funding and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

- *11. Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve, \$0.00
SLC Lease Amendment
Santa Barbara County

This proposal is to authorize the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to amend an existing management lease with the California State Lands Commission (CSLC) to add 175± acres of land under the jurisdiction of CSLC to the leased premises.

BACKGROUND

In 1991, the State, acting through the CSLC, received 5,125± acres of land from UNOCAL as part of a settlement of antitrust lawsuits. CSLC received an additional 60± acre parcel from UNOCAL in 1995. Designated as "Sovereign Lands," these properties have unique restrictions placed on their management and use. Because the parcels contained environmentally sensitive resources, CSLC authorized a management lease dated December 4, 1999, with CDFW. The Lease (Lease No. PRC 8129.9) is for a term of 49 years and authorizes CDFW to manage, operate and maintain the 5,125± acre parcel as sovereign lands for the protection of sensitive species and habitats they support. In 2004, the Fish and Game Commission designated the 5,125± acre parcel as an ecological reserve, which was named the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve (Reserve). For reasons unknown, the 60± acre parcel was not included in the Lease.

In 1998, Santa Barbara County transferred 47± acres of land to CSLC. This parcel is situated contiguous to both the 5,125± acre parcel and 60± acre parcel obtained from UNOCAL, but was not added to the Lease.

In December 1995, a cooperative project among CSLC, Santa Barbara County, and the California Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) purchased 968± acres of land located adjacent to the Reserve and Parks' La Purisima Mission State Park (State Park). In this transaction CSLC accepted title to a 7 percent interest (68± acres) in the property, which was equal to its \$250,000 contribution towards the purchase price. Parks received the remaining 900 acres for purposes of expanding the State Park. Prior to CSLC's acceptance of the 68± acres, both Parks and CSLC signed an agreement that allowed for the partitioning of their property interests if a lease between the two parties could not be agreed upon by October 1996. A lease between the parties was never executed because CSLC's property interest was subject to the public trust, which conflicted with Parks' management needs. Consequently, on October 16, 2008, a Reciprocal Transfer of Jurisdiction was completed to transfer the 68± acres to CSLC together with an authorization to add the parcel to the Reserve. To date the 68± acre parcel has not been added to the Lease.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The proposed amendment would add the 60±, 47± and 68± acre parcels to the

existing Lease. These three parcels would become part of the Reserve, which is located off of Highway 1 between Vandenberg Air Force Base to the west, Freeport-McMoran Oil & Gas LLC oil fields to the north, and La Purisima Mission State Historic Park to the south. The Reserve surrounds the community of Vandenberg Village, California, an unincorporated area in northern Santa Barbara County which consists of more than 2,400 private homes, public schools, roads and a golf course. Beyond the southern boundary of the Reserve lies the U.S. Bureau of Prisons federal penitentiary complex in Lompoc.

CDFW manages, operates and maintains the Reserve according to the terms of the Lease and consistent with the ecological reserve designation. It is open to the public for recreational and educational purposes. The public is allowed to view the property's rich botanical diversity, which supports one of the last significant natural stands of maritime chaparral in California. It also provides habitat for numerous rare, threatened and endangered species such as the federally endangered Vandenberg monkeyflower, federally threatened vernal pool fairy shrimp, and the state-endangered seaside bird's-beak. In addition, the Reserve property includes 14 plant species found nowhere else in the world. Other wildlife species inhabiting the Reserve include badgers, bobcats, deer, mountain lions, wood rats, lizards and a variety of avian species.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Reserve is not entirely contiguous and is described as having fragmented irregular boundaries. Two (60± and 47± acres) of the three parcels to be added to the Reserve are irregularly shaped and are adjacent to each other in a north-south direction. These two parcels are located alongside and adjacent to a south central portion of the Reserve. The third (68± acre) parcel is also irregularly shaped and is located along the southeastern boundary of the Reserve. All three parcels are vacant, unimproved and located in a recreational zone.

General topography of the parcels consists of gentle to moderately sloping terrain with a surface deeply incised by river channel canyons that flow southward to the river valley plain. The parcels are largely comprised of intact natural habitat. The parcels will be used as part of a designated hiking trail system as authorized by the 2007 Burton Mesa Management Plan. Additionally, wildlife-dependent activities such as wildlife photography, bird watching, and environmental education will be allowed.

TERMS

The Lease, which expires on December 3, 2048, does not require CDFW to pay any monetary consideration. The Lease presently requires CDFW to manage, operate and maintain the Reserve at its sole expense, and to maintain a comprehensive general liability insurance policy and property damage insurance. Since it is self-insured, CDFW does not have separate insurance policies for the Reserve.

The proposed Lease amendment would: (1) add the three parcels to the Reserve for a total lease area of 5,300± acres; and (2) allow CDFW to operate and manage the additional parcels as part of the Reserve according to the terms of the Lease. CSLC authorized the addition of these properties to CDFW's lease on April 23, 2013. The effective date of the amendment will be retroactive to April 26, 2013; and all other terms and conditions of the Lease will remain unchanged and in full force and effect.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

If this project is approved, CDFW will manage the parcels added to the Lease as part of the existing Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve. CDFW manages and operates the Reserve according to a Land Management Plan which provides guidelines for the management and protection of the Reserve's habitat, wildlife, plants and fish.

The management and maintenance of the Reserve is currently funded by the Federal Grant Program, Wildlife Restoration Act that was approved by Congress in September 1937. The purpose of this act is to provide funding for the restoration of wild birds and mammals and to acquire, develop and manage their habitats. CDFW has indicated that the addition of the three parcels to the Reserve will not result in any significant new or increased management costs.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed Lease amendment 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.*), under which WCB may authorize CDFW to acquire rights in real property by various means including leases.

WCB FUNDING SOURCE

No funds are being requested for this project. There is no monetary consideration payable under the Lease or Lease amendment.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The project has been reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is proposed as exempt under both 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 WCB authorize CDFW to amend Lease No. PRC 8129.9 to add 175± acres of land under the jurisdiction of CSLC to the Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve; authorize staff and CDFW to enter into appropriate

agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

- *12. Western Riverside County MSHCP (2013) \$146,200.00
Evandel – Wilson
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 80± acres of land in western Riverside County to protect habitat that supports threatened and endangered species and increase regional wildlife habitat corridors and linkages located within the Plan Area of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (WRC MSCHP).

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property), known as Evandel-Wilson, is located in an unincorporated area of southwest Riverside County. Interstate 215 is located approximately one mile east of the Property. Bundy Canyon Road, a major east-west thoroughfare in the area, lies 1.5 ± miles to the north. The other major east-west connecting artery is Clinton Keith Road which is situated one mile to the south. A master planned gated community comprised of 700 units, known as Greer Ranch, is situated approximately 1/8 mile to the north of the Property.

The Property is approximately four miles southwest of Bear Creek Country Club. Lake Elsinore is seven miles west, the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve is located approximately five miles southeast, Canyon Lake is approximately six miles northwest, and the city limits of Wildomar is located approximately one-half mile to the south.

The immediate area of the Property is residential in nature with scattered single family dwellings and vacant land. The threat of residential development is a major concern, as the Property borders both Murrieta and Wildomar. The city of Wildomar was incorporated in 2008 with a population of 14,064, and by the 2002 census had increased its population to 33,192 (136% increase). The city of Murrieta also experienced major population growth and has become a commercialized center in the area.

Riverside County is the fourth largest county in California in terms of population and the eleventh largest county in the nation. Since 2000, Riverside's population has grown by approximately 44%, which represents the largest percentage of population growth in the state. Recently, the real estate market in Riverside County has experienced an increase in sales. Projections through 2035 estimate that there will be more than 1.2 million housing units (a rate of growth of 51% over the next 22 years) in Riverside County. The increase in population continues to degrade wildlife habitat resulting in the loss of essential wildlife linkage

areas/corridors and habitat areas needed to sustain fragile ecosystems necessary to support native plant and animal life.

The Murrieta area of Riverside County falls within the WRC MSHCP Plan Area, which encompasses approximately 1.2 million acres of land providing habitat for over 146 wildlife species, several of which are both state and federally listed as threatened or endangered. The WRC MSHCP was established under the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) program under the State's Natural Community Conservation Planning Act of 1991 (Fish and Game Code Section 2800, *et seq.*).

The NCCP program is a cooperative effort that includes both private and public partners and takes a broad-based ecosystem approach to planning for the protection and perpetuation of biological diversity. An NCCP identifies and provides for the regional or area wide protection of plants, animals and their habitats, while allowing compatible and appropriate economic activity. Under the WRC MSHCP the goal of the Authority is to assemble a reserve of 500,000 acres of conserved properties to sustain and protect important wildlife ecosystem processes and corridors throughout western Riverside County. To date, 48,700 acres have been added to the reserve.

The WRC MSHCP designates six distinct habitat areas for conservation: Western Core/Linkage, Alkali Playa/Vernal Pool Area, Temecula Creek Watershed, Santa Rosa Plateau, San Timoteo Canyon, and B Canyon Area. The Property is located in the Western Core/Linkage (WCL) habitat area, which extends from the City of Murrieta west across State Route 215 and angles northwest along both sides of Interstate 15 north to Lake Elsinore. Properties targeted for conservation in the WCL area are important because they help satisfy and complement the goals of the WRC MSHCP by building onto existing core areas and providing or enhancing connections throughout the region; including enhancing linkages that connect with Lake Mathews-Estelle Mountain Reserve to the northeast, the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve to the south, the Cleveland National Forest to the west, and the Southwestern Riverside Multiple Species Reserve to the east.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is situated north of Evandel Road and the northern terminus of Orchard Tree Avenue in Riverside County. The unimproved parcel is fairly rectangular in shape and its southern border abuts the city limits boundary of Murrieta. Access to the site is accessible from the north through Keller Road, which runs in an east-west direction $\frac{3}{4}$ miles to the north of the Property.

The Property is unimproved and rural in nature. It is covered with vegetation that includes coastal sage scrub, chaparral and grasses. The terrain is mountainous and rolling hills at an elevation ranging from 1,800 feet above sea level on the north to over 2,100 feet on the south. The Evandel –Wilson site is located in a RM (Rural Mountainous) zone, which permits a single family dwelling on 10 acre

homesites. As such, eight single family dwellings can be constructed on the Property.

The acquisition of the Property will preserve the existing habitat connections in the western portion of the WCL habitat area by expanding the network of protected linkages from existing California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) reserves such as the Estelle Mountain Ecological Reserve located to the northwest and the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve located to the south. Parcels in this area provide habitat for State and federally listed endangered least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher; the State threatened and federally endangered Stephens' kangaroo rat, and the federally threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, quino checkerspot butterfly, and the thread-leaved brodiaea. The connectivity provided by the WCL area is essential in maintaining the genetic viability for the listed and sensitive species being conserved, and provides ecosystem responses to climate change by incorporating elevation gradients that will allow species and vegetation communities to shift upward in elevation.

WCB PROGRAM

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

The Property has been 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.

The project meets WCB's Strategic Plan goal A.3 by supporting the implementation of Natural Community Conservation Plans, Habitat Conservation Plans and recovery of listed species. The WRC MSHCP complements WCB's Strategic Plan through its goal to acquire properties for purposes of wildlife habitat and landscape preservation. The Authority has successfully worked on the expansion of protected wildlife habitat linkages and corridors to ensure the success and recovery of threatened and endangered wildlife species and the protection of natural landscapes within the Plan Area.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Authority will manage the Property as part of the WRC MSHCP reserve system, which serves to provide permanent habitat protection for populations of federal and state-listed endangered and threatened species that occupy the reserve and to increase regional wildlife habitat cores and linkages that will connect existing habitat reserve areas throughout western Riverside County. As part of its obligation under the plan, the Authority retains a Reserve Manager to ensure that management actions are consistent with the plan. Management costs for parcels acquired under the WRC MSHCP will be provided by the Authority's operating funds.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$400,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services and USFWS. The Property owner has agreed to sell the Property for the approved appraised fair market value. The USFWS grant in the amount of \$258,800.00 requires a non-federal match in the amount of \$141,200.00 that is proposed to be provided by a grant from the WCB. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and subgrant of USFWS 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	\$ 141,200.00
WCB – subgrant of USFWS funds	<u>\$ 258,800.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$ 400,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$ 5,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$ 146,200.00

It is estimated that an additional \$5,000.00 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including the DGS appraisal review. The Authority, as project proponent, will fund all other project-related administrative costs for the acquisition, including but not limited to the environmental site assessment, appraisal, survey, escrow, and title insurance costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, the 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 project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$258,800.00 and approve the subgrant of these federal funds to the Authority; allocate \$146,200.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the WCB 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.

- *13. County of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan 2011(PWRG) \$227,090.00
San Diego 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 Endangered Habitats Conservancy (EHC), and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to EHC. Also for consideration, is the transfer of the Property from EHC to CDFW as a no-cost transaction. EHC will acquire and hold title to the Property until it can be transferred to CDFW. The funds will be used to acquire fee title to 79+/- acres of land to protect habitat and wildlife corridors that implement or assist in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans. This is a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), USFWS and WCB.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The proposed acquisition focuses on land that will greatly enhance the existing San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), a comprehensive, long-term habitat conservation plan addressing the needs of multiple species and the preservation of natural vegetation communities in San Diego County. It addresses the potential impacts of urban growth, natural habitat loss, and species endangerment, and creates a plan to mitigate for the potential loss of covered species and their habitat due to the direct impacts of future development of both public and private lands within the MSCP plan area.

This proposed acquisition focuses on land that will greatly enhance the existing MSCP by securing key regional wildlife linkages and preserving core resource areas of habitat. Core resource areas are defined as areas of high concentration of sensitive biological resources which, if lost, could not be replaced or mitigated elsewhere.

The subject property (Property) is generally located in the Sweetwater River watershed. It is also within a significant biological area near the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). The Property is situated in a key linkage area between the Refuge, the State-owned Crestridge Ecological Reserve, the Lakeside archipelago (a series of mountain top habitat areas protected primarily for the benefit of bird species, including the California gnatcatcher), and the El Monte Valley Area. Protection of the Lakeside archipelago was funded in part by WCB.

Most of the surrounding land uses include residential subdivisions, with larger estate developments and intermittent commercial development along the major thoroughfares. Protecting this strategically located Property will avoid further development and encroachment that would result in a fragmented landscape and preclude connectivity between already protected areas

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Like the nearby Reserve, the Property contains a variety of landscapes and habitats, including coastal sage scrub habitat for the Coastal California gnatcatcher, and habitat for other sensitive and protected species. MSCP target species found or expected on site include mountain lion, orange-throated whiptail, San Diego horned lizard, and Cooper's hawk.

The Property is unique, in that the naturally occurring ecological processes necessary to maintain a fully functioning ecosystem are still intact. Conservation of this Property will not only preserve this ecosystem but also improve the linkages among nearby public lands that are managed by local jurisdictions, including the County of San Diego, CDFW, USFWS and EHC.

EHC, CDFW and USFWS share a goal to have ownership of the Property eventually vest in CDFW. However, because the prior landowners wanted to sell the Property by the end of 2014, EHC arranged for a conservation buyer to step in and make the purchase. The conservation buyer is unwilling to hold title for the time required to complete a sale directly to CDFW. Instead, EHC is willing to purchase the Property from the conservation buyer using WCB grant and USFWS subgrant funds and then convey it to CDFW as a no cost transaction once all necessary approvals have been obtained.

WCB PROGRAM

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

Consistent with Goals A-1, A-3 and A-4 (projects that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species and are recommended by CDFW for acquisition as part of the MSCP) of WCB's Strategic Plan, the Property contains habitat and wildlife corridors which will be maintained between major core habitat areas to allow for migration of species to accommodate potential shifts in distribution that may result

from lack of habitat due to drought or wildfires and the acquisition implements or assists in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans in the San Diego area.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

For as long as it holds title to the Property, EHC will fund biological monitoring and adaptive management activities as an integral component of the Reserve management and monitoring annual work plan. If necessary, EHC's management team will conduct annual surveys and monitoring of MSCP plant and animal target species, invasive species, and rare plants. Monitoring data will be integrated into the regional NCCP management and monitoring program.

Once the Property is transferred to CDFW, possible future public use opportunities that may be considered include hiking, photography and bird watching.

CDFW will manage the property as a part of the Sycuan Peak Ecological Reserve. CDFW does not expect any additional expenses as a result of this acquisition.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$590,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the DGS and the USFWS. The owner has agreed to sell the Property for the approved appraised fair market value. The USFWS funds require a non-federal match that would be provided by the proposed WCB grant. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and subgrant of USFWS funds to EHC provide that 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. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, WCB can require the grantee to encumber the Property with a conservation easement in favor of WCB or another approved holder and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board grant	\$207,090.00
WCB – Subgrant of USFWS funds	<u>\$382,910.00</u>
TOTAL purchase price	\$590,000.00
Other Project Related Administrative costs	\$20,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$227,090.00

It is estimated that project-related administrative costs will include DGS appraisal, environmental and transaction review, escrow and title insurance costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purpose of this project is consistent with the proposed funding source, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c), 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 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.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WCB approve the project as proposed; allocate \$227,090.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c) to cover the grant amount and project-related expenses; accept the USFWS Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$382,910.00 and authorize the subgrant of these funds to the Endangered Habitats Conservancy; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

14. Independence Lake Forest Enhancement, \$410,000
Sierra County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for a cooperative project with the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Forest Foundation, Truckee Meadows Water Authority, and the Bella Vista Foundation to restore forest stand ecology and reduce fuel loads on 200± acres of forest owned by TNC, located approximately 15 miles north of the City of Truckee in Sierra County.

LOCATION

The proposed project is located on TNC's 2,325 acre Independence Lake Property, which was acquired by TNC in 2009 with assistance from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). It is located off Henness Pass Road approximately five miles west of Highway 89. The property is surrounded by the Tahoe National Forest. Nearby communities include Truckee, Sierraville, and Loyalton. There are also nearby recreational facilities such as campgrounds at Prosser Creek Reservoir, Boca Reservoir, Stampede Reservoir, and Jackson Meadows Reservoir.

The Independence Lake watershed supports pine forests, aspen forests, riparian habitat, montane meadow habitat, and nesting sites for the state endangered willow flycatcher and mountain yellow-legged frog. Independence Lake contains the last natural lake population of the federally threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout in California and supports a variety of native fish from the Truckee River watershed. In addition, the property is a critical fawning area for the Loyalton-Truckee deer herd. Much of the critical summer range for this herd has been affected by development as the City of Truckee expands. These deer are also pressured on their winter range and migration corridors as the city of Reno expands toward the California border.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The property is in a mostly natural condition consisting primarily of mixed conifer forest with scattered stands of quaking aspen and small pockets of wet meadow. The forests surrounding Independence Lake were harvested decades ago except for small pockets of old-growth Jeffrey pine. Fire suppression over the past 100 years has resulted in overly dense forests that are overgrown with lodgepole pine and white fir. These trees, while native to the area, were not dominant in the past. Jeffrey pines, once dominant, are still present but are currently greatly reduced in numbers. The forests around Independence Lake have also been affected by bark beetle infestations and disease, probably as a result of a mix of drought-stress and the overly dense conditions of these stands. Tree densities as much as 600 trees/acre are now commonplace, whereas historical stand densities would have been 20-60 trees/acre. Historically, natural low-intensity ground fires would have burned through these stands every 5-15 years to maintain an open forest condition.

Due to current conditions such as overly dense unhealthy conifer forests, drought conditions, and long-term suppression of natural fire on the landscape there is real and present risk of severe wildfire. Heavy precipitation events following wildfires can leach vast quantities of soil and debris into Independence Lake. This would impact water quality and have at least short-term negative effects on native Lahontan cutthroat trout and other native fish species that make this lake such a significant ecological resource. In addition, Independence Lake is a back-up drinking water supply for Reno and heavy sediment loading would affect water quality and reduce capacity in the lake.

TNC and other partners have begun to address these issues. To date, 400 acres have been mechanically thinned. This project will mechanically thin an additional 200 acres and develop and begin implementing a prescribed burning program to improve forest conditions over time on this property.

TNC's vision for this project is to apply innovative forest restoration techniques to reduce risk of high intensity wildfire, promote old forest conditions, and restore the health and vigor of aspen, riparian, and wet meadow areas around Independence Lake. This will be done in collaboration with similar efforts at the UC Davis's nearby Sagehen Basin Natural Reserve. TNC's and WCB's goal is to demonstrate innovative forest restoration actions and methods that can be used throughout the northern Sierra Nevada.

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, wildlife, and plants found on these lands.

The project is consistent with the priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan to fund projects that provide resilience in the face of climate change for native wildlife species, provide species strongholds or refugia, provide or enhance habitat connectivity and corridors, and improve habitat for threatened or endangered species.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Long-term maintenance of a healthy forest system is anticipated to involve prescribed burning in in forest units that have been mechanically-thinned. Mechanical thinning will occur where burning is not feasible or practical. It is likely that both burning and mechanical thinning will occur once every 10 years. TNC will provide ongoing forest maintenance and work closely with other entities to ensure there is a plan in place to implement future maintenance. If at any time

during the 25-year life of the project, TNC 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

TASK CATEGORY	TNC	BOR ¹	TRUCKEE RIVER FUND	USFWS ²	BELLA VISTA FOUNDATION	NAT'L FOREST FOUNDATION	WCB	PROJECT TOTAL
Project Management	\$0	\$115,230	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$117,230
Weed/Forest Control	\$61,000	\$0	\$418,410	\$32,025	\$35,000	\$176,000	\$371,000	\$1,093,435
Indirect costs @ 22.48%	\$13,713	\$25,904	\$94,059	\$7,199	\$7,868	\$39,565	\$0	\$188,308
Project Administration	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$37,000	\$37,000
Indirect costs on WCB Funds @ 12.48%, difference between cap and our NICRA	\$46,363	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$46,363
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS	\$121,076	\$141,134	\$512,469	\$39,224	\$42,868	\$215,565	\$410,000	\$1,482,336

¹BOR = US Bureau of Reclamation Desert Terminal Lakes grant funding

²USFWS = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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 (Proposition 84), 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 REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION (IF NEEDED)

The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, as lead agency, prepared a Timber Harvest Plan (THP) for the project under a certified regulatory program pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff considered the THP 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 \$410,000.00 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), authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project, and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

15. American River Headwaters \$3,500,000.00
Placer County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the American River Conservancy (ARC) for a cooperative project with the California Natural Resources Agency and private donors to acquire 9,955 ± acres of land to help preserve alpine forests and meadows, wildlife corridors, and habitat linkages, as well as to continue existing wildlife oriented public uses, on the headwaters of the Middle and North Forks of the American River.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located in a remote mountainous region at an elevation of between 5,000 and 8,000 feet above sea level. The Property is situated south of Interstate 80. Tahoe National Forest mostly surrounds the Property to the west, the Granite Chief Wilderness to the east, and further south is the El Dorado National Forest. The community of Foresthill is 50 miles northwest and Soda Springs is approximately 6.5 miles north of the Property.

The area and its surroundings are predominantly rural forest lands and rural residential lands in both private and public ownership. Private owners use their lands in the vicinity of the Property for timber farming and/or recreational purposes.

The Property is positioned at the headwaters of the north and middle forks of the American River. This area has a vast expanse of water resources from the American River and various stream and watershed resources from Placer County and the northern Sierra Nevada. The combined water sources feed into the many streams, tributaries and creeks in the area including Wabena Creek, Talbot Creek, Rice Creek, Dolly Creek, Cottonwood Creek and Grayhorse Creek.

Currently, 37 miles of private logging roads cross the Property. If the land is not acquired, commercial logging of the high-elevation slow-growth forests will lead to the creation of more extensive logging roads and stream crossings that would cause soil erosion and the sedimentation of mountain meadows and native trout streams. Additionally, off-highway recreational vehicles will continue to trespass across the logging roads and increase erosion thereby impacting native fisheries, wildlife and contributes to the introduction of invasive weed species.

The Property is located in the Sierra Nevada Cascades region of California's State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). According to SWAP about 40% of the state's surface-water runoff flows originate from this region. Conservation International has also included the area of the proposed acquisition to be one of the world's 34 global diversity hotspots. These hotspots cover only 2.3% of the earth's land surface and support high concentrations of endemic species found nowhere else on the planet. Furthermore, The Nature Conservancy projects that this area has the potential to retain a greater diversity of native species than any other

ecoregion of California.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is comprised of 17 parcels situated in a north south direction. The parcels are primarily square or rectangular in shape and form a somewhat fractured checkerboard appearance when viewed on a map. With the exception of one parcel, the balance of the parcels lie either contiguous with or are adjacent to each other. A single non-contiguous parcel is located northwest of the other contiguous parcels. The only improvement on the Property is a small, old primitive cabin and shed located on the westerly portion of Section 29, in the northeastern portion of the subject ownership.

ARC's acquisition of the Property would preserve the ecological integrity of old growth forests, native fisheries and biodiversity in the area. The site and its surrounding landscape is primarily covered with mixed coniferous forest dominated by red and white fir and interspersed with Jeffrey pine at higher elevations and ponderosa pine and black oak at lower elevations. There are approximately 1,000 acres of stringer meadows with alder and willow, and the wet mountain meadows contain groves of quaking aspen, cottonwood and willow. The site is also threaded with little streams created by the snow, rain and runoff that drain into five "blue ribbon" trout streams on the Property. These streams collectively produce over 4,200 native young rainbow trout per mile.

The forested areas of the Property provide habitat connectivity to several sensitive species including the American marten, California spotted owl, northern goshawk and pine grosbeck. The meadow systems within the Property provide important wildlife habitat for summer deer herds and essential fawning habitat. Additionally, the - alder thickets support declining species such as the willow flycatcher. There are likely occurrences of rare plants like the *Lewisia longipetala*, *Veronica cusickii*, and *Erigeron miser* on the parcels since there have been known sightings in the general area.

The proposed acquisition will increase the ecological integrity of the Property and its surroundings with a comprehensive approach to forest and watershed management. Old forest values would be preserved and provide habitat connectivity, as well as, extends the linkage with other protected properties lying adjacent to the Property. The creation of this expanded protective corridor will also enlarge a protected area adjacent to the Wild and Scenic North Fork Corridor and the Granite Chief Wilderness that provides a safe haven for species to move in response to climate change.

Approximately eight lineal miles of existing trails used by the Western States running race and the Tevis Cup, a 100-mile horse ride, pass through the Property. Members of the public also currently use an additional 1.5 miles of the Picayune Valley Trail which runs from Talbot Creek Campground through the Property into the Granite Chief Wilderness. ARC expects to continue to allow these preexisting

public uses on the Property, but has no intent to expand the trail use or make improvements to the trails at this time.

The Project is consistent with WCB's Strategic Plan to acquire and invest in wildlife habitat and natural areas by working towards long-term, landscape level conservation, habitat quality and connectivity, and for the success of wildlife species and populations. More specifically, the Project will protect intact habitat linkages and corridors, protect and conserve wildlife habitat, and protect important streams and watersheds that support native fish populations. The project will also allow public access during specific times of the year for recreational activities without degrading environmental resources. Currently, there are no active plans for logging. And lastly, the project includes a stewardship component and includes a number of conservation partners engaged in the project.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under the WCB's Forest Conservation Program (Program). Grant proposals under the Program are evaluated and selected for funding by WCB staff based on established criteria approved by the Board on November 17, 2007, utilizing a peer review process involving biological and forestry expertise and including the 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 habitats 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 forest lands. Selected projects promote the restoration and/or 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

Following the acquisition of the Property, ARC will manage and monitor the activities on the Property to preserve and protect the mature strands of conifer and hardwood forests, and the natural habitat values of the montane riparian and wet meadow areas. The management and co-ordination of monitoring or any future restoration plans will be handled by the ARC's Executive Director and a stewardship coordinator. The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, California Department of Fish and Wildlife and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and others will co-ordinate their efforts and assist ARC's management and any future restoration plans.

ARC will embark on the creation and implementation of a Management Plan with the consultation and assistance of CDFW, CALFIRE (Department of Forestry and Fire Protection), as required under the WCB Grant Agreement. The Nature Conservancy and other partners have agreed to assist ARC with the management and monitoring of the Property.

Funding for the management and operation of the Property will be provided by private and public grant programs, charitable donations and from fund raising efforts.

There is a remote chance in the future that approximately 4,500 acres may be transferred to the United States for incorporation into the Tahoe National Forest. Should this transfer occur, it would be consistent with the requirements of the proposed fund source for the project, Proposition 84. As such, the Tahoe National Forest would be required to comply with the provisions of Proposition 84, 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. Any transfer to the United States would also require approval under the Grant Agreement and applicable law.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$10,167,000.00. 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 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.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$3,500,000.00
California Natural Resources Agency	\$1,500,000.00
Private Foundations & Donors	<u>\$5,167,000.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$10,167,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$3,500,000.00

The California Natural Resources Agency will cover the fees associated with the DGS appraisal review. All other project related administrative costs, including title insurance and escrow fees, will be paid by ARC.

WCB 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), Section 75055(a). This fund allows for forest conservation and protection projects 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.

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,500,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(a) to cover the grant amount; 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. Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, \$0.00
Lower Napa River Unit, Ponds 6, 6A, 7, 7A and 8
Napa County

This project is being withdrawn from consideration at this time.

17. East Sacramento County Blue Oak Legacy Area, \$ 810,000.00
Expansion 3
Sacramento County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Sacramento Valley Conservancy (SVC) to acquire 100± acres of land to protect oak woodlands, riparian habitat, and grassland; provide habitat linkages and corridors between existing protected lands that support several native species; and offer potential future wildlife oriented public use opportunities.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located near the unincorporated community of Sloughouse in Sacramento County, just east of Scott Road, approximately six miles south of the City of Folsom and three miles north of the community of Rancho Murieta. State Route 50 is six miles to the north of the Property and provides convenient regional access to Sacramento, Placerville and South Lake Tahoe. The Deer Creek Hills Preserve (Preserve) surrounds a majority of the Property and was originally established with grant funds provided by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) in 2002 and 2003, and most recently in 2012, to support a Preserve that protects over 4400± acres of land. The Preserve is also referred to as the East Sacramento County Blue Oak Legacy Area Project.

Most of the areas to the immediate north and east of the Property include oak woodland and hilly areas comprised of large agricultural rural properties used mostly for livestock grazing. Further north, residential and commercial land use conversion is taking place, encroaching south from the City of Folsom toward the Preserve. To the west, the terrain levels out into grassland areas leading into the Sacramento metropolitan area with smaller ranchette type developments encroaching from the west.

This Property is located within a foothill oak woodland habitat corridor in eastern Sacramento County that runs north to south between the American River Parkway corridor and open space lands near Lake Natoma and Folsom Lake, south past the Property to the Cosumnes River corridor, and then further south to the Mokolumne River. The section of the corridor between the City of Folsom and the Cosumnes River that contains the Property is identified within the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Regional Operations Committee approved Sacramento County Blue Oak Woodland Legacy Area Plan as an essential habitat corridor in need of protection from encroaching development. This area provides benefits for migrating deer herds and other foothill species that utilize these foothill oak woodland areas. The corridor is also described within the SVC's 21st Century Land Use Vision Plan developed through a collaborative local conservation planning effort. In addition, it is being considered for preservation within the sphere of the proposed South Sacramento County Habitat Conservation Plan.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property consists of an irregularly shaped parcel totaling 100± acres with level to gently rolling terrain comprised primarily of oak woodland and grassland habitat. There are two spring-fed, year round reservoirs on the northeastern and southern portions of the Property lined with riparian vegetation. The perimeter of the Property is fenced off with a five foot high barbed wire fence and on the northernmost point there is a small barn. Access is provided by a private dirt road easement that runs through the Preserve.

The Property is adjacent to the center of the western edge of the Preserve, which almost completely bounds the Property except for a minor portion in the northeast corner that abuts private land. The proposed acquisition would eliminate this fragmentation and expand a Preserve that protects multiple habitat types including oak woodlands, savannah, grasslands, vernal pool wetlands and riparian habitat. The various habitat areas of the Preserve benefit up to 170 bird species, 100 mammal species and 58 species of amphibians and reptiles. Native species including black-tailed deer, California quail, mourning dove, gray squirrel, and the western pond turtle are frequently seen on the Property. The addition of this Property would expand the Preserve's transitional habitat for many of these species between the Central Valley and the Sierra Nevada foothills, providing the ability for these species to move between these habitats to nest, rest, and forage and potentially migrate and adapt to any climate change impacts.

The Property will also offer the potential to enhance and expand existing Preserve recreational opportunities that include docent-led and self-guided hiking tours, equestrian and mountain bike outings, and overnight backpacking and day trips with the Youth, Education, and Stewardship (YES) program sponsored by SVC.

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

This Project is guided by the WCB Strategic Plan and supports the following Strategic Plan goals:

Goal A.1 Fund Projects and Landscapes that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change.

The project creates a habitat linkage and expands an existing corridor that provides transitional habitat for several native species between the Central Valley and the Sierra Nevada foothills, providing the ability for these species to move between these habitats to nest, rest, and forage and potentially adapt to any climate change impacts.

Goal C.1 Support a wide range of recreational activities in conjunction with other land uses and without degrading environmental resources.

The Project offers the potential to expand existing recreational opportunities sponsored by SVC which include docent-led and self-guided hiking tours, equestrian and mountain bike outings. Future plans for the Preserve may include hunting, fishing and connection to other regional trails such as the American River Bike Trail.

Goal C.4 Place greater emphasis on projects that accommodate compatible wildlife-oriented public uses, while supporting urban areas and disadvantage communities.

The Project offers the potential to enhance and support the Youth, Education, and Stewardship (YES) program sponsored by SVC. The program targets urban youth and exposes them to outdoor recreation opportunities including overnight backpacking and day trips and also educates them about the importance of habitat conservation.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be managed by the SVC according to the Deer Creek Hills Management Plan. SVC, with the support of several institutional partners, has created an endowment to cover the cost of management.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$860,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services. The owner has agreed to sell the Property for a price of \$800,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant to SVC 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

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$800,000.00
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$800,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$10,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$810,000.00

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

WCB FUNDING SOURCE

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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATIONThe 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 WCB approve this project as proposed; allocate \$810,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117) Fish and Game Code Section 2786(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 to proceed substantially as planned.

18. San Joaquin River Parkway (Jenco Farms) \$911,400.00
Fresno County

This proposal is to consider approval of the proposed contribution of 23+/- acres of land at less-than the approved appraised value under the Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Program (Program) to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the eventual transfer of control and possession of the contributed property by CDFW to the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC), for the protection of riparian and oak woodlands habitat and for potential future wildlife-oriented public use opportunities. Also for consideration is the allocation of funds to SJRC to reimburse the General Fund for lost revenue resulting from the award of tax credits as required by Public Resources Code section 37022.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

A comprehensive plan for the San Joaquin River Parkway (Parkway) was authorized by statute in 1990. In 1992, the SJRC was created by the State Legislature to implement the Parkway plan. The SJRC is governed by a board of 12 state and local agencies that direct Parkway and SJRC plans, policies and actions. The CDFW and Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) are member agencies of the SJRC and actively cooperate to accomplish Parkway goals, objectives and programs.

The Parkway is a 22 mile regional greenspace and wildlife corridor along both sides of the river extending from Friant Dam to Highway 99. The Parkway is an important resource of regional and statewide significance with environmental, cultural, scientific, agricultural, educational, recreational, scenic, flood conveyance, and wildlife values.

The subject property (Property) lies between Friant Road and the San Joaquin River on Rice Road, south of Lanes Road and east of Highway 41 in the incorporated City of Fresno. The western boundary line of the Property is the San Joaquin River, where there is approximately 1,250 feet of frontage. The SJRC owns the adjacent Jensen River Ranch property.

The immediate neighborhood of the Property is rural in nature, with a few of the properties having been developed as residential home sites. The larger properties are typically used for agricultural pursuits and several orchards and vineyards have been developed.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is mostly level in topography and is located below the bluff line in the San Joaquin River bottom. The Property is largely above the 100-year base flood elevation. In recent years, the Property has been left fallow but previously it was irrigated pasture.

The Property contains woodland, riparian, riverine and grassland habitats.

Wildlife known to frequent and forage on the site includes deer, waterfowl, songbirds, coyotes and raptors. Acquisition of the Property will provide an additional buffer between public use at Jensen River Ranch and residences to the north.

Parkway trails and public use areas are well-developed on the SJRC's adjacent Jensen River Ranch property. The Property offers the potential to provide a future trail connection from Jensen River Ranch to the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust's Caglia property, a 20 acre property northeast of the Property, and to the adjacent Lewis S. Eaton Trail.

WCB PROGRAM

The purposes of the project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75050(f), that allows for river parkway projects identified by the SJRC.

To qualify for consideration under The Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Program, Public Resources Code Section 37015 requires projects to meet one or more of the following criteria: a) Statutory Plans; b) Corridors, Wetlands, Waterfowl, Rivers, Streams, Native Plants, Wildlife; c) Agricultural Land; d) Water Rights; e) Park, Open Space, Public Access.

As proposed in the Program application, the Property qualifies under: 1) Statutory Plans; 2) Corridors, Wetlands, Rivers Streams, Wildlife; 3) Agricultural Land; 4) Water and Water Rights; and 4) Parks, Open Space, Public Access.

Consistent with Goals A-1, A-2, A-4 and C-1 (projects that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species, protect or enhance water resources for fish and wildlife, invest in priority conservation projects recommended by CDFW and support a wide range of recreational activities) of WCB's Strategic Plan, the Property is a priority for the SJRC and CDFW, contains native habitat and wildlife corridors as well as potential future public access opportunities in Fresno County.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

After CDFW accepts the Property it proposes to transfer control and possession to the SJRC for future management.

The Property will be managed by SJRC for open space and conservation purposes within its existing budget and with minor incremental new costs. In addition to the main support budget, which provides for two staff and associated state operations, SJRC receives an appropriation for fundamental property management (maintaining signs and gates, cleaning up illegal dumping, etc.) from the San Joaquin River Conservancy Fund, funded by long term lease revenues.

In accordance with the San Joaquin River Conservancy Act, properties acquired

by and under the jurisdiction of SJRC must remain closed to the public until and unless adequate funds are available to provide for proper operations, management, and maintenance to protect resources and public health and safety. Since the Property is adjacent to a City of Fresno regional park, and the Jensen River Ranch and the Lewis S. Eaton Trail, both of which are operated by the City of Fresno, SJRC anticipates that the site could eventually be developed for public access and recreation through an enhanced partnership with the City or other entities.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$926,400.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner and CDFW have filed an application under the Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Program under which the property owner is seeking a 55% tax credit in the amount of \$55,000.00 on the \$100,000.00 donated land value under the Program. The Program application has been reviewed and approved by WCB staff. As required under the Program, the project was presented at a public hearing during a regularly scheduled board meeting of the SJRC in Fresno. . If the project is approved, additional funds will be allocated to SJRC to reimburse the General Fund for any tax credits claimed by the landowner. All required notifications under the Program will be made once the Property has been transferred to CDFW.

Once approved by the WCB, the transaction will be reviewed by DGS. After approval by DGS, WCB will disburse funds into escrow for completion of the project.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	<u>\$826,400.00</u>
TOTAL PURCHASE PRICE	<u>\$826,400.00</u>
Project related administrative costs	\$30,000.00
Allocation to SJRC to reimburse the Gen. Fund	\$55,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$911,400.00

It is estimated that an additional \$30,000.00 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including environmental assessment, appraisal costs, DGS appraisal and transaction review, 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 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), Public Resources Code Section 75050(f)].

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 project has been reviewed under the WCB's Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Program and has been recommended for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$856,400.00 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) for the acquisition and to cover internal project-related expenses; allocate \$55,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75050(f) to the San Joaquin River Conservancy to reimburse the General Fund as required by Public Resources Code section 37022; 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. East Contra Costa County HCP/NCCP (Viera/Perley) \$882,500.00
Contra Costa County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy (ECCCHC) as well as the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant and the approval to sub-grant these federal funds to the ECCCHC, for a cooperative project with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) to acquire 260± acres of land for the protection and preservation of existing regional wildlife linkages, including grassland, oak woodland and oak savanna habitat areas, within the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (ECCC HCP/NCCP) plan area.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property), known as the Viera/Perley property, is located at the base of the Diablo Mountain range in an unincorporated area of Contra Costa County, approximately six miles southeast of the City of Clayton and bisected by Morgan Territory Road. The Property is bordered by Mount Diablo State Park to the south and Morgan Territory Regional Preserve in the southeast corner. This acquisition is a priority acquisition within the ECCC HCP/NCCP and links with three recently-acquired properties conserved in partnership with EBRPD, Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), USFWS, and ECCCHC. Surrounding land uses include existing natural park lands, wildlife mitigation lands, and private cattle ranching.

The ECCC HCP/NCCP designates the Property as a high priority for acquisition and protection due to its location within a critical linkage between previously conserved areas within the ECCC HCP/NCCP plan area. Over the past several years the WCB, USFWS, ECCCHC and EBRPD have partnered to acquire just over 12,000+/- acres of habitat within the ECCC HCP/NCCP plan area, helping protect essential habitat and connectivity for multiple wildlife species. The project is also consistent with action proposed under the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) California Wildlife Action Plan (Plan) and is located within the Central Valley and Bay Delta region within the Plan. One of the recommended conservation actions called out for this region is protecting upland linkages and reducing the risk of habitat isolation in the eastern San Francisco Bay area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is 260± acres in size and is currently used as rural agricultural grazing land. It consists of two parcels, 258± acres and 2± acres. The larger parcel is "L" shaped. The smaller parcel is a hexagonally-shaped in-fill parcel located within the larger parcel. The terrain of the Property is moderate to steep upslope from either side of Morgan Territory Road. Elevations range from a minimum of about 900 feet along the east side of Morgan Territory Road to a maximum of 1,330 feet in the central area of the western half of the Property. Habitat types found on the Property include annual grassland, oak savanna, and

oak woodland. The larger parcel has two seasonal creeks located in the southern portion of the Property roughly paralleling the Property's south boundary. These creeks flow into Marsh Creek just east of Morgan Territory Road.

The Property provides major ecosystem benefits to species both on and off the Property by linking with other protected lands within the ECCC HCP/NCCP and preserving habitat corridors. Acquisition of the Property will protect suitable habitat for the conservation of a variety of rare and important wildlife species including California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, golden eagle, western burrowing owl, Alameda whipsnake, and western pond turtle. The Property also offers benefits to wildlife in terms of future climate change resiliency by providing and connecting with varied terrains and elevations for species movement.

WCB PROGRAM

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

Consistent with Goals A-1, A-3 and A-4 (environmental protection and conservation) of WCB's Strategic Plan, the acquisition would continue to allow migration and movement of species and provide for habitat connectivity between identified habitat areas; support the implementation of Natural Community Conservation Plans, Habitat Conservation Plans and recovery of listed species.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

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

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$1,950,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and USFWS. The owner has agreed to sell the Property for the approved appraised fair market value. The USFWS

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

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

WCB Grant	\$ 877,500.00
USFWS subgrant funds	\$ 877,500.00
East Bay Regional Park District	<u>\$ 195,000.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$1,950,000.00
Other Project Related Costs:	\$ 5,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$ 882,500.00

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

FUNDING SOURCE

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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; approve the acceptance of Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition

grant funds from USFWS in the amount of \$877,500.00 and the subgrant of these federal funds to the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy; allocate \$882,500.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Section 75055(c) (SSJD-NCCP) for the grant to East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy and to cover the project-related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

20. Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands Habitat Enhancement \$841,000.00
Santa Barbara County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for a cooperative project with the National Park Service to eradicate invasive weed species and to map vegetation on Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands, located approximately 20 miles west of Ventura Harbor in Santa Barbara County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands (Islands) are the largest of the Channel Islands and are located approximately 25 miles south of the mainland of Santa Barbara County. Santa Cruz Island (SCI) is 96 square miles in size and has 77 miles of coastline. Santa Rosa Island (SRI) is 83 square miles with a total 55 miles of coastline. On SCI, two parallel mountain ranges with rugged peaks over 2,000 feet high create a major central valley. SRI is composed of rolling hills with deep canyons radiating out from a central peak.

Five of the eight Channel Islands are included within Channel Islands National Park (CINP). The National Park Service (NPS) owns and manages the eastern one-quarter of SCI as part of the CINP, the remainder is owned and managed by TNC as a preserve. TNC and NPS collaboratively manage SCI using active conservation and applied science to preserve the unique island flora and fauna. NPS owns and is fully responsible for SRI, but collaborates closely with TNC on resource management activities. The eastern portion of SCI and all of SRI are open to the public for carefully managed recreational use.

The Islands are the most biologically diverse of the eight Channel Islands, which as a whole are known as "California's Galapagos." The Channel Islands are recognized as a Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations' Man and the Biosphere program and are designated a State of California Area of Special Biological Significance.

Because of their topography, isolation, and size, the Islands host diverse vegetation communities, including Bishop pine forest, oak woodland, riparian woodland, island woodland, island chaparral, coastal sage scrub, valley and foothill grassland, coastal bluff, coastal marsh, and beach and dune systems. The Islands have more than 600 plant species, mostly natives, in nine different plant communities. The Islands also are home to important endemic flora and fauna, with more than 40 endemic plant species and four endemic vertebrates. A subspecies of Torrey Pine, one of the rarest in the world, is found on SRI.

Eight plants are endemic to SCI alone, and nine plants found there are federally listed as endangered or threatened. Four terrestrial vertebrates are endemic only to SCI: the Santa Cruz Island fox, the Santa Cruz Island harvest mouse, the

Santa Cruz Island deer mouse, and the Santa Cruz Island scrub-jay, which was also formerly present on SRI before being extirpated there over 100 years ago. The endemic flora and fauna are at risk from major disturbances to habitat, including historical conversion from shrublands to grasslands, and competition from invasive weeds.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The habitat for native species on the island was altered by historical land uses and ranching operations. Before the Islands were protected as a preserve and National Park, non-native plants were introduced to the island for agriculture and timber. Non-native animals were also introduced to the Islands as livestock or for sport. The non-native animals caused extensive damage to the Islands' biological and cultural resources. Populations of feral sheep grew to number in the tens of thousands and de-vegetated the Islands extensively.

Over the last 20 years, successful restoration efforts on the Islands have included the eradication of feral sheep, pigs, cats, horses, and cattle, the removal of non-native deer and elk from SRI, the eradication of the European honey bee from SCI, the reintroduction of the bald eagle to the Islands, the capture and successful relocation of golden eagles from the Islands, and the halt of a precipitous decline in both subspecies of island fox populations through successful captive breeding and wild fox monitoring programs. The success of these efforts also resulted in the notable return of native plant cover. On SCI, where feral sheep were eradicated from most of the Island nearly three decades ago, the recovery process has resulted in significant recovery of native shrublands.

The proposed project will build a strong foundation for vegetation management on the Islands through vegetation and weed mapping. The project will conduct invasive and rare/listed plant surveys, including a baseline weed survey on SRI, update an existing weed map for SCI, and map rare/listed plants on both Islands. Certain populations of weeds will be eradicated immediately as they are located on both Islands to protect listed species and ecosystem function from the impacts of invasive plants. Finally, the project will provide education and outreach to prevent further infestations of invasive species resulting from visitor use, as the risks of introducing alien species to the Islands are still high.

The components to this project have been thoroughly proven, and are generally the most cost-effective methods available. Aerial invasive and rare plant surveys by a low flying helicopter were first tried on SCI in 2007. This method proved to be about half the cost of ground based surveys and more accurate than either ground-based or remote sensing methodologies. Invasive plant treatment methods employed over the last six years on these Islands showed a 100% mortality of targeted plants.

Invasive and Rare/Listed Plant Surveys: SCI and SRI will be systematically

surveyed for 60 invasive plant species and 10 rare native plant species. An estimated 7,000 infestations will be mapped on both Islands. The mapping efforts are key tools for long-term management of the endemic flora and fauna.

Invasive Plant Rapid Response Eradication: After a species infestation is targeted for eradication during the invasive plant survey, it will be treated by trained professional applicators. Isolated weed infestations are considered to be the highest priority to eradicate, since they precede uncontrollable weed invasions. This project will focus on outlying infestations, which should result in the eradication of an estimated 24 non-native species from SCI, and the targeted eradication of ten non-native species on SRI. Application methods will include chemical and physical removal, or a combination of the two. Once an infestation is treated, the treatment will be recorded with a GPS to track treatment method and/or amount of herbicide used. Each island will receive two treatments, one in 2015 and re-treatment in 2016.

Vegetation Mapping: Rapid vegetation assessments will be conducted simultaneously with the weed survey of SCI. Approximately 500 vegetation plots will be monitored and recorded on SCI using the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California Native Plant Society's vegetation survey and mapping protocols. The 2015 vegetation mapping data will be compared with the 2005 vegetation mapping data to analyze the changes in vegetation communities and extent. Aerial imagery for SCI will be prepared as part of the project. In the second year map classifications will be updated for accuracy.

Biosecurity: The risk of invasive species on the Islands remains high, and visitor use and boat arrivals provide ongoing avenues of invasion. TNC, NPS, and the Island Packer Company (IPCO), the primary transportation company to the Islands, have agreed to strengthen biosecurity protocols to reduce the likelihood of non-native species entering and establishing populations on the Islands. In cooperation with partners at the NPS and IPCO, the project will initiate a biosecurity education program. The program will inform visitors about the threats of invasive species, the damage these species have done to all of the Channel Islands, and how visitors can prevent their spread. This program will be taught to over 8,000 school children visiting the Islands each year on IPCO. The educational component of the program will be presented to all IPCO passengers, which total over 70,000 people each year.

The project is consistent with the Primary Restoration Plan for Santa Cruz Island (2002), the Northern Channel Islands Recovery Plan (2000), and the Draft Island Fox Recovery Plan (2012).

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program and meets the program's goal of providing for restoration of coastal scrub, grasslands, and threatened and endangered species habitats.

The project is consistent with the priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan to fund projects that provide resilience in the face of climate change for native wildlife species, enhance resources for fish and wildlife, and enhance habitats on conserved lands.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

TNC and the NPS have a long history of successfully completing and managing complex scientifically-based conservation projects. Santa Cruz Island is collaboratively managed as a whole unit by TNC and NPS, with matching long-term ecological goals for both island managing partners. This ensures that activities on either side of the land ownership boundary are complimentary and avoid conflicting objectives. Park visitor activities are restricted to hiking and camping, which limits negative impacts on NPS and TNC preserve land. SRI is owned and managed entirely by the NPS which collaborates with TNC on conservation and management activities.

TNC is responsible for maintaining the project areas once weeds have been eradicated, and maintenance methods will include follow-up visits to treated sites. TNC will fund personnel to conduct follow up visits and treatment, as needed. Biosecurity efforts across the Channel Islands will ensure that once these weeds have been eradicated there will be a low likelihood that new invasive species will take their place.

TNC will conduct ongoing adaptive management throughout the project on two levels. Monitoring will be conducted for all eradicated non-native plant infestations to evaluate possible seed germination. TNC will continue to assess changes in vegetation communities and non-native species occurrence by re-mapping the vegetation island-wide using aerial imagery for ten years after project completion. TNC will conduct biological monitoring throughout the project and for the 25-year life of the project to assess short-term and long-term project effectiveness. If at any time during the life of the project, TNC 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 for the project is as follows:

Description	NPS	TNC	WCB	TOTAL
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT				
Project management	0	2,000	37,000	39,000
Vegetation mapping	20,000	0	150,000	170,000
Weed treatment	170,000	0	384,000	554,000
Weed mapping	0	100,000	270,000	370,000
BIOSECURITY OUTREACH				
Project management	12,000	0	0	12,000
Interpretive materials	0	10,000	0	10,000
Grand Total	\$202,000	\$112,000	\$841,000	\$1,155,000

FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding source for this project is the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b), which allows for the development, rehabilitation, restoration, acquisition and protection of habitat that promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species and protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems 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 project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 4 of the Categorical Exemptions, California Code of Regulations, Title 4, Section 15304, as a minor alteration to land and vegetation that does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$841,000 from Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b); 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.

21. County of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan \$1,625,295.00
2011(multiple parcels)
San Diego 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 for three subgrants of these federal funds to the Endangered Habitats Conservancy (EHC), as well as to consider three Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grants to EHC. The funds will be used to acquire fee title to a total of 634+/- acres of land from three individual landowners to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species as well as wildlife corridors and habitat. This is a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), USFWS and WCB.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The proposed acquisitions focus on land that will greatly enhance the existing San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), a comprehensive, long-term habitat conservation plan addressing the needs of multiple species and the preservation of natural vegetation communities in San Diego County. It addresses the potential impacts of urban growth, natural habitat loss, and species endangerment, and creates a plan to mitigate for the potential loss of covered species and their habitat due to the direct impacts of future development of both public and private lands within the MSCP plan area.

These potential acquisitions focus on land that will greatly enhance the existing MSCP by securing key regional wildlife linkages and preserving core resource areas of habitat. Core resource areas are defined as areas of high concentration of sensitive biological resources which, if lost, could not be replaced or mitigated elsewhere.

The subject properties (Properties) are generally located in the Sweetwater River watershed. They are also within a significant biological area near the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). The Properties are situated in a key linkage area between the Refuge, the State-owned Crestridge Ecological Reserve (Reserve), which is managed on behalf of CDFW by EHC, the Lakeside archipelago (a series of mountain top habitat areas protected primarily for the benefit of bird species, including the California gnatcatcher), and the El Monte Valley Area. Protection of the Lakeside archipelago was funded in part by WCB.

Most of the surrounding land uses include residential subdivisions, with larger estate developments and intermittent commercial development along the major thoroughfares. Protecting these strategically located Properties will avoid further development and encroachment that would result in a fragmented landscape and preclude connectivity between already protected areas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Like the nearby Reserve, the Properties contain a variety of landscapes and habitats, including coastal sage scrub habitat for the Coastal California gnatcatcher, and habitat for other sensitive and protected species. MSCP target species found or expected on sites include mountain lion, orange-throated whiptail, San Diego horned lizard, and Cooper's hawk.

The Properties are unique, in that the naturally occurring ecological processes necessary to maintain a fully functioning ecosystem are still intact. Conservation of these Properties will not only preserve this ecosystem but also improve the linkages among nearby public lands that are managed by local jurisdictions, including the County of San Diego, CDFW, USFWS and EHC.

WCB PROGRAM

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

Consistent with Goals A-1, A-3 and A-4 (projects that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species and are recommended by CDFW for acquisition as part of the MSCP) of WCB's Strategic Plan, the Properties contain habitat and wildlife corridors which will be maintained between major core habitat areas to allow for migration of species to accommodate potential shifts in distribution that may result from lack of habitat due to drought or wildfires and the acquisitions implement or assist in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans in the San Diego area.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

EHC will fund biological monitoring and adaptive management activities on the Properties as an integral component of the Reserve management and monitoring annual work plan. EHC's management team will conduct annual surveys and monitoring of MSCP plant and animal target species, invasive species, and rare plants. Monitoring data will be integrated into the regional NCCP management

and monitoring program. EHC estimates that its annual cost to monitor and manage the Properties will be between \$5,000.00 and \$10,000.00. Possible future public use opportunities that may be considered for the properties include hiking, photography and bird watching.

TERMS

The Properties were individually appraised and each appraisal was reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The appraisals and appraised values have been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by DGS and USFWS.

Davison

The Davison property is 44+/- acres and has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$625,000.00. The owner has agreed to sell the Davison property for its approved appraised fair market value.

Odom

The Odom property is 77+/- acres and has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$150,000.00. The owner has agreed to sell the Odom property for its approved appraised fair market value.

Suncrest

The Suncrest property is 513+/- acres and has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$3,770,000.00. The owner has agreed to sell the Suncrest property for its approved appraised fair market value.

The three USFWS subgrants each require a non-federal match that is proposed to be provided by three WCB grants from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c). The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grants and subgrant of USFWS funds to EHC 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, WCB can require the grantee to encumber the property with a conservation easement in favor of WCB or another approved holder and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdowns for the project are as follows:

Davison

WCB – subgrant of USFWS funds	\$405,625.00
WCB – grant (non-federal match)	<u>\$219,375.00</u>
TOTAL purchase price	\$625,000.00

and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

22. Western Riverside MSHCP (2013), \$218,565.00
Evandel Bergstein
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), as well as to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to the Authority, to acquire 108± acres of land in western Riverside County to protect habitat that supports threatened and endangered species and increase regional wildlife habitat corridors and linkages located within the Plan Area of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (WRC MSHCP).

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property), known as Evandel - Bergstein, is located in an unincorporated area of southwest Riverside County. Interstate 215 is located 1.5± miles east of the subject property. Bundy Canyon Road (also known as Scott Road) lies 1.5± miles to the north and is a major east-west thoroughfare in the area. The other major east-west connecting artery is Clinton Keith Road, which is situated 1± mile to the south of the Property.

The overall topography in the area is rural and mountainous. The terrain is rolling and covered primarily with grasses, coastal sage scrub and chaparral. The immediate area of the Property is residential in nature with scattered single family dwellings and vacant land. A large master planned 700 unit gated community known as Greer Ranch is located immediately southwest of the Property.

The threat of residential development is a major concern, as the Property borders both Murrieta and Wildomar. The city of Wildomar was incorporated in 2008 with a population of 14,064, and by the 2002 census had increased its population to 33,192 (136% increase). The city of Murrieta also experienced major population growth and has become a commercialized center in the area.

Riverside County is the fourth largest county in California in terms of population and the eleventh largest county in the nation. Since 2000, Riverside's population has grown by approximately 44%, which represents the largest percentage of population growth in the state. Recently, the real estate market in Riverside County has experienced an increase in sales. Projections through 2035 estimate that there will be more than 1.2 million housing units (a rate of growth of 51% over the next 22 years) in Riverside County. The climb in population continues to degrade wildlife habitat resulting in the loss of essential wildlife linkage areas/corridors and habitat areas needed to sustain fragile ecosystems necessary to support native plant and animal life.

The Murrieta area of Riverside County falls within the WRC MSHCP Plan Area.

This area encompasses approximately 1.2 million acres of land and provides habitat for over 146 wildlife species, several of which are both state and federally listed as threatened or endangered. The WRC MSCHP was established under the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) program under the State's Natural Community Conservation Planning Act of 1991 (Fish and Game Code Section 2800, *et seq.*).

The NCCP program is a cooperative effort that includes both private and public partners and takes a broad-based ecosystem approach to planning for the protection and perpetuation of biological diversity. An NCCP identifies and provides for the regional or area wide protection of plants, animals and their habitats, while allowing compatible and appropriate economic activity. Under the WRC MSCHP the goal of the Authority is to assemble a reserve of 500,000 acres of conserved properties to sustain and protect important wildlife ecosystem processes and corridors throughout western Riverside County. To date, 48,700 acres have been added to the reserve.

The WRC MSHCP designates six distinct habitat areas for conservation: Western Core/Linkage, Alkali Playa/Vernal Pool Area, Temecula Creek Watershed, Santa Rosa Plateau, San Timoteo Canyon, and B Canyon Area. The Property is located in the Western Core/Linkage (WCL) habitat area, which extends from the City of Murrieta west across State Route 215 and angles northwest along both sides of Interstate 15 north to Lake Elsinore. Properties targeted for conservation in the WCL area are important because they help satisfy and complement the goals of the WRC MSHCP by building onto existing core areas and providing or enhancing connections throughout the region; including enhancing linkages that connect with Lake Mathews-Estelle Mountain Reserve to the northeast, the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve to the south, the Cleveland National Forest to the west, and the Southwestern Riverside Multiple Species Reserve to the east.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property consists of two contiguous rectangular parcels located adjacent the cities of Wildomar and Murrieta. More specifically, the Property is located north of Evandel Road with its southern boundary abutting the Murrieta city limits and its western boundary abutting the city of Wildomar. The site is accessible from Wright Road, an unpaved dirt road, located north of the site.

The Evandel – Bergstein property is situated in a RR (Rural Residential) zone with a minimum parcel size of one-half acre and allows the construction of a single family dwelling on minimum 10-acre homesites. Ten single family dwellings can be constructed on the Property.

As typical of the properties in this area, the topography is rural and mountainous at an elevation that ranges from 1,900 feet on the north to over 2,000 feet (above sea level) on the southeast. There are no improvements on the site.

The acquisition of the Property will preserve the existing habitat connections in the western portion of WCL habitat area by expanding the network of protected linkages from existing CDFW reserves such as the Estelle Mountain Ecological Reserve located to the northwest and the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve located to the south. Parcels in this area provide habitat for State and federally listed endangered least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, the State threatened and federally endangered Stephens' kangaroo rat, and the federally threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, quino checkerspot butterfly, and thread-leaved brodiaea. The connectivity provided by the WCL area is essential in maintaining the genetic viability for the listed and sensitive species being conserved, and provides ecosystem responses to climate change by incorporating elevation gradients that will allow species and vegetation communities to shift upward in elevation.

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.*), which authorizes 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, WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities.

The Property has been reviewed and approved by CDFW under its 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.

The project meets WCB's Strategic Plan goal A.3, by supporting the implementation of NCCPs, Habitat Conservation Plans and recovery of listed species.. The WRC MSHCP complements WCB's Strategic Plan through its goal to acquire properties for purposes of wildlife habitat and landscape preservation. The Authority has successfully worked on the expansion of protected wildlife habitat linkages and corridors to ensure the success and recovery of its threatened and endangered wildlife species and for the protection of its natural landscapes. .

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Authority will manage the Property as part of the WRC MSHCP reserve system, which serves to provide permanent habitat protection for populations of federal and state-listed endangered and threatened species that occupy the

reserve and to increase regional wildlife habitat cores and linkages that will connect existing habitat reserve areas throughout western Riverside County. As part of its obligation under the WRC MSHCP, the Authority retains a Reserve Manager to ensure that management actions are consistent with the plan. Management costs for parcels acquired under the WRC MSHCP will be provided by the Authority's operating funds.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$605,000.00. 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 grant requires a non-federal match in the amount of \$213,565.00 that is proposed to be provided by a grant from the WCB. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and subgrant of USFWS 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

The funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$213,565.00
WCB – subgrant of USFWS funds	<u>\$391,435.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$605,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$ 5,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$ 218,565.00

It is estimated that \$5,000.00 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, including the DGS appraisal review. The Authority, as project proponent, will fund all other project-related administrative costs for the acquisition, including but not limited to the environmental site assessment, appraisal, survey, escrow, and title insurance costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, the 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.

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 project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$391,435.00 and approve the subgrant of these federal funds to the Authority; allocate \$218,565.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the WCB 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.

23. Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition, \$10,000.00
City of Carlsbad (Cielo del Norte, Phase II)
San Diego County

(This project was added after the Preliminary Agenda was published.)

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) for a cooperative project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to acquire fee title to 242+/- acres of land for the protection of coastal California gnatcatcher habitat in San Diego County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located southeast of the City of Escondido between Interstate 5 and Interstate 15 in San Diego County. Most of the surrounding area includes residential and rural residential development. The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) has participated in projects in the vicinity of the Property that have protected nearly 1,500+/- acres of habitat throughout the years.

The Property and the surrounding area contain a variety of landscapes and wildlife corridors, including coastal sage scrub habitat for the federally listed as threatened coastal California gnatcatcher (gnatcatcher) and habitat for other sensitive and protected species. The gnatcatcher habitat area and the surrounding area serves as a broad landscape linkage that connects even larger core areas of coastal sage scrub to the north (Camp Pendleton) and to the south (Lake Hodges and San Pasqual Valley). Habitat loss due to development and catastrophic fires in 2007 make protection of the these areas even more critical to the long-term viability of the gnatcatcher population in San Diego County.

The Property is within the CDFW Escondido Creek Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The CAPP covers an area that includes the second largest population of gnatcatchers in northern San Diego County. Within the CAPP, the Property is identified as a priority acquisition for protection of gnatcatcher habitat. The project has also been reviewed and approved by the CDFW under its Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) program, substantiating the biological values of the Property.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property was originally part of a larger 482+/-acre parcel under a single ownership. In 2012, the landowner agreed to sell approximately one-half of the larger parcel to The Conservation Fund (TCF). At its August 30, 2012 meeting WCB approved the acceptance of two U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grants and authorized a subgrant of the federal funds to TCF along with a WCB matching grant, to facilitate the acquisition

of 240+/- acres of the larger parcel. TCF has since transferred the 240 acres to TECC for long term ownership and management. The landowner retained the remaining 242± acres.

Funding to acquire the remaining Property was unavailable until now. The entire parcel was fully entitled for development, making the Property very valuable. Acquisition of the Property will remove any possibility of development on the Property.

WCB PROGRAM

The proposed subgrant of federal funds to TECC 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 CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. Under the Program the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities. The project has been reviewed and approved by the CDFW under its Natural Community Conservation Plan (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.

Consistent with Goals A-1, A-3 and A-4 (projects that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species and are recommended by CDFW for acquisition as part of the NCCP) of WCB's Strategic Plan, the Property contains habitat and wildlife corridors which will be maintained between major core habitat areas to allow for migration of species to accommodate potential shifts in distribution that may result from lack of habitat due to drought or wildfires and the acquisition implements or assists in the establishment of NCCPs in the San Diego area.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

TECC owns and manages other properties in the area surrounding the Property, including the initial acquisition of 240+/- acres of land from this landowner. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), through their *TransNet* Environmental Mitigation Program will make a grant to TECC to assist with the acquisition and future management of the Property.

Possible future public use opportunities that may be considered for the Property include hiking, photography and bird watching.

TERMS

At the request of SANDAG, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

appraised the Property. The Property was appraised as having a fair market value of \$13,200,000.00. The appraisal was then reviewed and approved by Caltrans. WCB reviewed the appraisal and submitted it to the Department of General Services (DGS) and USFWS for review. DGS and USFWS both approved the appraisal. The landowner has agreed to sell the Property for \$13,000,000.00. The USFWS grant funds require a non-federal match that will be provided by funds from SANDAG. Additional funds to complete the acquisition will be provided by the San Diego Gas and Electric Company (SDG&E).

The terms and conditions of the proposed subgrant of USFWS funds to TECC provide that staff of WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the subgrant terms, WCB can require the Subgrantee to encumber the Property with a conservation easement in favor of WCB or another approved holder and seek reimbursement of funds.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is:

WCB – Subgrant of USFWS funds	\$2,000,000.00
SANDAG	\$4,850,623.00
SDG&E	<u>\$6,149,377.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$13,000,000.00
Administrative costs	\$10,000.00
TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION	\$10,000.00

The above project-related administrative costs will include the cost of DGS appraisal review.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purpose of this project is consistent with the proposed funding source, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c), that allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat that implements or assists in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

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.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; accept the USFWS Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$2,000,000.00 and authorize the subgrant of these funds to The Escondido Creek Conservancy; allocate \$10,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c) to cover 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.

24. State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) Informational

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has embarked on an important effort to prepare a state wildlife action plan (SWAP) for fish and wildlife conservation using a comprehensive, internally consistent, and digitally accessible framework for assembling scientific information and designing conservation strategies with a wide array of stakeholders. First prepared in 2005 and now being updated for 2015, the SWAP is a requirement mandated by Congress for a state to receive federal funding through the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants (SWG) Program. Using the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation as the planning framework, SWAP 2015 will identify the species of greatest conservation need for each target ecosystem, define their key ecological attributes, and prescribe measures to best protect the ecosystems from human-caused threats and environmental stresses, importantly including climate change. The SWAP update seeks to create a flexible but scientific process to respond to changing challenges, including population growth, the need for renewable energy, and global climate change. The SWAP will integrate and promote implementation of common goals and objectives from multiple sectors. CDFW seeks to make best use of limited resources while developing lasting partnerships and increasing public participation in the conservation and management of California's valued natural resources. The Board will be given a short briefing on the 2015 update to the SWAP.

25. California Streamflow Enhancement Program Informational/Action

Proposition 1 (Water Bond), approved by California voters on November 4, 2014, authorizes \$200,000,000 to the WCB (section 79733, subject to appropriation by the Legislature) for projects that result in enhanced stream flows.

Investments by WCB will be made through a competitive grant process in coordination with the CDFW, SWRCB and other partners with the goal of securing and protecting enhanced water flows in priority stream systems statewide to achieve a number of the conservation objectives outlined in the Water Action Plan. These may include, but not limited to: restoring central valley tributary salmonid habitat, restoring coastal watersheds, restoration efforts in the Klamath Basin, restoring key mountain meadow habitat and providing water for wetlands and riparian areas.

Strategies for enhancing stream flows will vary depending on local conditions and needs. Water efficiency projects, conjunctive use, off stream storage, groundwater storage banks, and water transactions (such as purchase of water rights, lease or seasonal exchange) are just some of the ideas that we are contemplating. For example, investments in the Klamath basin could build on water transaction work previously implemented in the Scott and Shasta sub-basins. In coastal California, changing seasonal water diversions by temporarily storing water in off-channel ponds or tanks could improve much needed summer

and fall flows for salmonids. In the Sierra Nevada, restoration projects could improve seasonal base flows, while in desert streams of southern California, improved groundwater management could be critical to improving habitat for birds and fish.

However, in all instances, there must be clear identification of priority stream reaches and amount of timing, duration, and quality of water necessary to drive effective ecological outcomes. In addition, appropriate monitoring plans and measurement will be critical to establishing appropriate flow targets and protecting restored water for the intended conservation outcomes and successes overtime.

Staff has drafted competitive grant guidelines ([Draft Prop. 1 Guidelines](#)) which will be used to solicit public input over the next few months. The draft guidelines have been submitted to the Natural Resources Agency for initial review. Subsequently, we will be joining with the DFW to hold public meetings during late March and April in northern, central and southern California consistent with Prop 1 requirements. We will use the public process over this period to inform changes and modifications to our guidelines and will be working to have final guidelines ready to be presented and adopted at WCB's meeting in May. This will position WCB to release its first PSP under the California Stream Flow Enhancement Program soon after the State budget is passed July 1st.

Staff is requesting initial comments from the Board on the draft guidelines and authorization to begin the public process as outlined above.