

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**

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**NOTICE OF MEETING  
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**

May 21, 2015  
9:00 AM to 12:00 PM  
1/ Natural Resources Agency Auditorium  
1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sacramento, California 95814

**FINAL AGENDA ITEMS**

<b>ITEM NO.</b>		<b>PAGE NO.</b>
1.	Roll Call	1
2.	Funding Status - Informational	2
3.	Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4 - 16)	11
*4.	Approval of Minutes – November 20, 2014, February 25, 2015 and March 12, 2015	11
*5.	Recovery of Funds	12

\* Proposed Consent Calendar

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

<b>ITEM NO.</b>		<b>PAGE NO.</b>
*6.	Fund Shifts, Various Projects Sonoma and Colusa Counties	\$425,739.00 16
	<p>To consider fund shifts for previously approved projects funded through the Wildlife Conservation Board’s Ecosystem Restoration on Agricultural Lands Program. The projects are located in Sonoma and Colusa Counties and provide wildlife habitats that co-exist with ongoing agricultural operations. The proposed fund shifts are necessary to meet existing grant obligations and will use funding authorized for the same purpose from a subsequent enactment year appropriation. The purposes of the projects are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for projects to assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration and wildlife protection. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(4)]</p>	
*7.	Smithneck Creek Wildlife Area Land Exchange Sierra County	\$0.00 18
	<p>This project is being withdrawn from consideration.</p>	
*8.	Independence Lake Fisheries Restoration Nevada and Sierra Counties	\$132,000.00 19
	<p>To consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Truckee Meadows Water Authority, Trout Unlimited, and Bella Vista Foundation to restore Lahontan cutthroat trout populations at TNC's Independence Lake, located 15 miles north of the City of Truckee in Nevada and Sierra Counties. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat and aquatic habitat for salmonids and trout. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f)].</p>	
*9.	Placer County OEST Ranch Oak Woodlands Conservation Easement Placer County	\$189,000.00 24
	<p>To consider the allocation for a grant to the Placer Land Trust to acquire a conservation easement over 36± acres of land located west of Highway 49, north of the City of Auburn in Placer County for the protection of native oak woodland habitat and for the protection and preservation of sensitive biological resources. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the protection of native oak woodland habitat. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(2)]</p>	

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*10.	Carson River Enhancement Alpine County	\$360,000.00 29
	<p>To consider the allocation for a grant to American Rivers, Inc., for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), US Forest Service (USFS), Wildlife Conservation Society, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Alpine Watershed Group for ecological restoration of the West Fork Carson River in CDFW’s Hope Valley Wildlife Area and the USFS’s Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, located 12 miles south of South Lake Tahoe in Alpine County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat and aquatic habitat for salmonids and trout or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E)]</p>	
*11.	Maxwell Conservation Easement Transfer Fresno County	\$0.00 34
	<p>This project is being withdrawn from consideration.</p>	
*12.	Allensworth Ecological Reserve, Expansion 58 Tulare County	\$0.00 35
	<p>To consider the acquisition of three separate parcels of land totaling 4± acres of land on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the protection of habitat supporting the San Joaquin kit fox and other species found within the area of the CDFW Allensworth Ecological Reserve and to enhance habitat linkages and connectivity, located near the city of Earlimart in Tulare County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which is being provided by the California Department of Corrections Statewide Electric Fence Project mitigation fund assigned to CDFW.</p>	
*13.	Santiago Creek Riparian Restoration Kern County	\$162,000.00 38
	<p>To consider the allocation for a grant to The Wildlands Conservancy for a cooperative project with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to eradicate tamarisk from Santiago Creek on Wind Wolves Preserve, located 25 miles southwest of the city of Bakersfield in Kern County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat and aquatic habitat for salmonids and trout to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E)]</p>	

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*14.	Coal Oil Point Reserve Improvements Santa Barbara County	\$505,000.00 42

To consider the allocation for a grant to The Regents of the University of California for a cooperative project with University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) for renovations and upgrades, located at UCSB'S Coal Oil Point Reserve in the city of Goleta in Santa Barbara 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)]

*15.	Western Riverside MSHCP (2013) – Kaelin Riverside County	\$880,675.00 45
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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), as well as to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board grant to the Authority, to acquire 25± acres of land in western Riverside County located within the area of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species; and which allows for the acquisition of habitat on which unique species or natural communities naturally exist. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)]

*16.	Western Riverside MSHCP (2014) – Lloyd Riverside County	\$118,750.00 51
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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), as well as to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to the Authority, to acquire 162± acres of land in western Riverside County located within the area of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species; and which allows for the acquisition of habitat on which unique species or natural communities naturally exist. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section

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	2786(b/c)]	

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|-----|--|--------------|----|
| 17. | North Coast Non-native<br>Invasive Weed Eradication<br>Del Norte and Humboldt Counties | \$450,000.00 | 56 |
|-----|--|--------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Redwood Community Action Agency for a cooperative project with Humboldt and Del Norte County Agriculture Departments, California Department of Transportation, California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Yurok Tribe to eradicate nonnative knotweeds and other invasive species at more than 100 locations in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands outside the Central Valley. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley]

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|-----|---|----------------|----|
| 18. | Butte Creek Meadows Working Forest<br>Siskiyou County | \$1,679,500.00 | 61 |
|-----|---|----------------|----|

To consider the allocation for a grant to Pacific Forest Trust to acquire a conservation easement over 3,468± acres of land for the protection of a mixed conifer working forest habitat linkages located near the community of Montague in Siskiyou 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 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)]

- |     |   |                |    |
|-----|---|----------------|----|
| 19. | Spenceville Wildlife Area,<br>Conservation Easement (Robinson Ranch)<br>Nevada County | \$2,135,000.00 | 65 |
|-----|---|----------------|----|

To consider the acquisition of a conservation easement over 1,447± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for a cooperative project with The Trust for Public Land, for the protection of native oak woodlands habitat near Penn Valley in Nevada County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding sources that: allows for the acquisition of habitat, including native oak woodlands and to protect deer and mountain lions [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)] and; allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat that protects habitat corridors, significant natural landscapes and ecosystems that include oak woodlands [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River

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 and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)].

20. Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area, Expansion 14 \$2,630,000.00 70  
 Yuba County

To consider the acquisition in fee of 732± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the protection of blue oak woodland, riparian habitat along South Honcut Creek, winter range for the Mooretown deer herd, and to provide future wildlife oriented public use opportunities as an expansion to the CDFW's Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area located near Browns Valley, in Yuba County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source that allows for the acquisition of habitat, including native oak woodlands, necessary to protect deer and mountain lions. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)]

21. Long Gulch Ranch \$876,000.00 74  
 Tuolumne County

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Mother Lode Land Trust to acquire in fee 576± acres of land for the protection of habitat that supports threatened and endangered species, and to provide habitat linkages and corridors between existing protected lands that support native species and to offer potential future wildlife oriented public use opportunities, located approximately six miles northeast of the community of Groveland, in Tuolumne County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)]

22. Grasslands and Mendota \$853,000.00 79  
 Wildlife Areas Enhancement  
 Merced and Fresno Counties

To consider the allocation for a grant to the California Waterfowl Association for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to conduct a legal survey and to provide fencing, earthwork, and water supply infrastructure, which will enhance 70± acres and provide water more efficiently to 5500± acres of habitat on four wildlife areas managed by the CDFW, in Merced and Fresno Counties. The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands in the Central Valley. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program]

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23.	Santa Cruz Integrated Watershed Restoration, Phase II Santa Cruz County	\$465,000.00 83

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District for a cooperative project with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, California Conservation Corps, State Coastal Conservancy, State Water Resources Control Board, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County and a private landowner to restore riparian habitat in areas critical to special status amphibian and fish species, located on two coastal watersheds in Santa Cruz County. The purposes of this project is consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat and aquatic habitat for salmonids and trout to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass. [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E)]

24.	San Joaquin River Parkway Sycamore Island Pond Isolation Construction Project Fresno and Madera Counties	\$4,500,000.00 88
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To consider the allocation for a grant to the Department of Water Resources for a cooperative project with the San Joaquin River Conservancy (Conservancy) to improve an access road and a berm to isolate a gravel pit from the San Joaquin River and to restore riparian and floodplain habitat on Conservancy property, located two miles downstream of State Route 41 in Fresno and Madera Counties. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of land and water resources located within the boundaries of the San Joaquin River Conservancy. [California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2002 (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5)].

25.	Metcalf Bay – 2014 RLA Grant San Bernardino County	\$731,200.00 94
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To consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust (SBMLT), and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board grant to the SBMLT, to acquire in fee 17± acres of land to promote recovery of rare and endangered plant and wildlife species, located within the City of Big Bear in San Bernardino County. The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened and fully protected species [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c)]

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26.	Santa Cruz Island Argentine Ant Elimination Santa Barbara County	\$568,000.00 98

To consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy, for a cooperative project with the National Park Service to eliminate Argentine ants from Santa Cruz Island, 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 accomplishes one or more of the following objectives: promotes recovery of threatened and endangered species, protects habitat corridors, protects significant natural landscapes and ecosystems, or implements the recommendations of the California Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy. [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)]

27.	San Diego County Water Authority (Rancho Cielo) San Diego County	\$1,520,000.00 103
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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 Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board grant to TECC to assist with the acquisition of 251± acres of land in western San Diego County to protect key regional wildlife linkages, to increase regional wildlife habitat corridors, and preserve core areas of habitat that support threatened and endangered species within the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP). 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)].

28.	California Streamflow Enhancement Program	Informational/ Action 107
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Proposition 1 (Water Bond), approved by California voters on November 4, 2014, authorizes \$200,000,000 to the WCB (Water Codes Section 79733, subject to appropriation by the Legislature) for projects that result in enhanced stream flows. Final program guidelines and a draft of the project solicitation package will be discussed.



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**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](mailto: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 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.

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**

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**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**

May 21, 2015

**ITEM NO.**

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>
<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

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

Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-5,589,750.00</u>
<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$15,073,250.00</b>

May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-2,931,371.00
Total Project Development	<u>-6,273,919.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$5,867,960.00</b>

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

Non-budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-12,235,865.00</u>
<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$8,427,135.00</b>

May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-7,594,797.00
Total Project Development	<u>-832,338.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

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

Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-4,228,979.00</u>
<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$16,434,021.00</b>

May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-246,000.00
Total Project Development	<u>-2,032,283.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$14,155,738.00</b>

(e)	2011-12 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-11,391,923.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$9,271,077.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-39,897.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-2,169,274.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$7,061,906.00</b>
(f)	2010-11 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-15,553,467.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$5,114,533.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-137,904.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-3,502,927.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$1,473,702.00</b>
(g)	2009-10 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-20,325,064.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$342,936.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-44,123.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-298,813.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(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>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$3,982,604.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-1,072.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-3,970,123.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$11,409.00</b>

Final Agenda for May 21, 2015, WCB Board Meeting

(i)	2007-08 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2011-12 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,674,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-20,038,475.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$635,525.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-312,096.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-318,962.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$4,467.00</b>
(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>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$865,702.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-500,000.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$365,702.00</b>
(k)	2004-05 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,577,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,982,286.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$594,714.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>0.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$594,714.00</b>
(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>-31,350,000.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$4,750,000.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>0.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$4,750,000.00</b>

(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>-6,307,019.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$4,692,981.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-4,500,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$192,981.00</b>
(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>-249,153,324.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$23,846,676.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-10,119,000.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$13,727,676.00</b>
(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>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$10,595,557.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>0.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$10,595,557.00</b>
(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>-683,922,403.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$57,489,597.00</b>

	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-23,419,000.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$34,070,597.00</b>
(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>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$3,380,000.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-3,380,000.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(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>-3,447,280.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$1,352,720.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-1,352,720.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(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>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$7,110,918.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-7,110,918.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(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>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$3,425,988.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-1,107,574.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$2,318,414.00</b>
(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>-8,875,174.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$6,624,826.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-6,624,826.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
(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>-10,287,979.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$14,712,021.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-6,989,218.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$7,722,803.00</b>
(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(c))	\$25,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-23,404,568.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$1,595,432.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-1,595,432.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>



(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>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$180,194.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
	Total Project Development	<u>0.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$180,194.00</b>
(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>-988,682.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$511,318.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-182,000.00
	Total Project Development	<u>0.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$329,318.00</b>
(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>-1,487,236.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$880,764.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-468,639.00
	Total Project Development	<u>0.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$412,125.00</b>
(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>-126,228,644.00</u>
	<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$38,471,356.00</b>
	May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-5,149,500.00
	Total Project Development	<u>-20,262,000.00</u>
	<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$13,059,856.00</b>

Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055(b))	\$123,525,000.00
Previous Board Allocations	<u>-88,668,046.00</u>
<b>Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$34,856,954.00</b>
May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-1,079,368.00
Total Project Development	<u>-6,150,000.00</u>
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$27,627,586.00</b>

**RECAP OF FUND BALANCES**

<b>Wildlife Restoration Fund (a)</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

<b>Habitat Conservation Fund (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k)</b>	<b>\$60,741,497.00</b>
May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-11,307,257.00
Total Project Development	-19,898,642.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$29,535,598.00</b>

<b>Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (l)</b>	<b>\$4,750,000.00</b>
May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	0.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$4,750,000.00</b>

<b>California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (m), (n)</b>	<b>\$28,539,657.00</b>
May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-4,500,000.00
Total Project Development	-10,119,000.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$13,920,657.00</b>

<b>Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (o), (p)</b>	<b>\$68,085,154.00</b>
May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	0.00
Total Project Development	-23,419,000.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$44,666,154.00</b>

<b>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)</b>	<b>\$113,102,491.00</b>
May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-6,879,507.00
Total Project Development	-54,572,688.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$51,650,296.00</b>

<b>TOTAL – ALL FUNDS</b>	<b>\$275,218,799.00</b>
May 2015 Board Meeting Allocation	-22,696,764.00
Total Project Development	-161,488,346.00
<b>Projected Unallocated Balance</b>	<b>\$91,033,689.00</b>

**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
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Chapter 220, Statutes of 2009 (effective January 1, 2010) Tax credits awarded	\$55,000.00
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**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.

<b>Bond Fund</b>	<b>Authorized GO Bond Proceeds</b>	<b>Expenditures through 03/26/15</b>	<b>Encumbrances through 03/31/15</b>	<b>Cash Balances Includes Encumbrances</b>
Proposition 12	\$ 12,621,973.31	\$ 9,287,343.81	\$ 450,424.09	\$ 2,884,205.41
Proposition 40	\$ 89,995,073.78	\$ 85,976,398.48	\$ 14,369,640.24	\$ (10,350,964.94)
Proposition 50	\$ 164,694,303.12	\$ 83,785,114.91	\$ 28,331,476.72	\$ 52,577,711.49
Proposition 84	\$ 255,271,862.99	\$ 246,907,549.26	\$ 31,315,294.88	\$ (22,950,981.15)
Proposition 1E	\$ 65,725,202.07	\$ 50,421,449.50	\$ 8,196,038.13	\$ 7,107,714.44
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>\$ 588,308,415.27</b>	<b>\$ 476,377,855.96</b>	<b>\$ 82,662,874.06</b>	<b>\$ 29,267,685.25</b>

3. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4 - 16)
- \*4. Approval of Minutes – November 20, 2014, February 25, 2015 and March 12, 2015

\* 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.

**\$1,547.00** to the **Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund**

**\$104,960.50** to the **Habitat Conservation Fund**

**\$5,875.00** to the **California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund**

**\$25,010.11** to the **Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002**

**\$17,341.00** to the **Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006**

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

Santa Cruz Sandhills, Zayante (Zolezzi), Santa Cruz County

Allocated	\$87,921.00
Expended	<u>-86,374.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$1,547.00

**Total Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund \$1,547.00**

**HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND**

Amargosa - Tecopa Hot Springs, Expansions 1 - 3, Inyo County

Allocated	\$29,550.00
Expended	<u>-20,300.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$9,250.00

Dry Creek Ranch Conservation Easement, Recovery Land Acquisition Grant (2010), Merced County

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

Gateway Ranch, Los Angeles County

Allocated	\$1,660,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,650,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$10,000.00

Little Shasta Valley Conservation Easement, Fogg Gulch, Siskiyou County

Allocated	\$53,000.00
Expended	<u>-47,940.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$5,060.00

San Felipe Valley Wildlife Area, Expansion 5 (Thompson), San Diego County

Allocated	\$230,000.00
Expended	<u>-218,451.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$11,549.00

Santa Cruz Sandhills, Zayante (Dowd and Dumas), Santa Cruz County

Allocated	\$772,600.00
Expended	<u>-714,159.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$58,441.00

Swiss Ranch Conservation Easement, Expansion 5, Calaveras County

Allocated	\$500,000.00
Expended	<u>-495,114.50</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$4,885.50

Western Riverside Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (2012) - Monte Cristo, Riverside County

Allocated	\$60,800.00
Expended	<u>-57,880.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$2,920.00

Western Riverside Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (2012) - Oldar, Riverside County

Allocated	\$95,000.00
Expended	<u>-92,145.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$2,855.00

**Total Habitat Conservation Fund \$104,960.50**

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

Dry Creek Ranch Conservation Easement, Recovery Land Acquisition Grant (2010), Merced County

Allocated	\$1,568,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,568,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

Marks Ranch Phase II, Monterey County

Allocated	\$552,076.00
Expended	<u>-546,526.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$5,550.00

San Joaquin Fish Hatchery (Hovannisian Property), Fresno County

Allocated	\$28,500.00
Expended	<u>-28,175.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$325.00

**Total California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund \$5,875.00**

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

San Francisco Bay Community-based Salt Pond Transition Zone Restoration, San Mateo/Alameda County

Allocated	\$415,000.00
Expended	<u>-389,989.89</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$25,010.11

**Total Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 \$25,010.11**

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

Carlsbad/Northwest San Diego County MHCP HCPLA/NCCP 2009 (Cielo del Norte), San Diego County

Allocated	\$4,629,750.00
Expended	<u>-4,619,750.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$10,000.00

Lost Coast Redwood and Salmon Initiative, Mendocino County

Allocated	\$3,210,000.00
Expended	<u>-3,202,659.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$7,341.00

San Vicente Redwoods (Cemex) Forest Conservation Easement, Santa Cruz County

Final Agenda for May 21, 2015, WCB Board Meeting

Allocated	\$10,060,000.00
Expended	<u>-10,060,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

**Total Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006** **\$17,341.00**



- \*6. Fund Shifts, Various Projects \$425,739.00  
 Sonoma and Colusa Counties

This proposal is to consider fund shifts for previously approved projects funded through the Wildlife Conservation Board’s Ecosystem Restoration on Agricultural Lands Program. The projects are located in Sonoma and Colusa Counties and provide for wildlife habitats that co-exist with ongoing agricultural operations. The proposed fund shifts are necessary to meet existing grant obligations and will use funding authorized for the same purpose from a subsequent enactment year appropriation.

The cooperative projects involve two projects to enhance or restore habitat on privately-owned agricultural lands and are implemented through grants to The Center for Social & Environmental Stewardship and the National Audubon Society.

The table below outlines the fund shifts for the two previously approved projects.

Grant Agreement No.	Grantee	Previously Approved Board Date	Project Name	County	Proposed Fund Shift Amount
WC-1214SM	The Center for Social & Environmental Stewardship	11/29/12	Clos du Bois Vineyard Habitat Enhancement	Sonoma	\$278,941.00
WC-1260EH	National Audubon Society	06/04/13	Davis Ranch Riparian and Hedgerow Restoration	Colusa	\$146,798.00

\* The project descriptions for the previously approved items may be viewed at [www.wcb.ca.gov](http://www.wcb.ca.gov) in the WCB Meeting Minutes for the respective Board meeting.

The fund shift for the Clos du Bois Vineyard Habitat Enhancement project involves the planting of insectary hedgerows. Hedgerows increase the habitat for beneficial insects, native California bees, European honey bees, and wildlife by providing canopy cover for migratory wildlife and foraging habitat for honeybees and other pollinator species. In response to the current drought conditions, the grantee planted fewer plants at the initial planting phase, limiting water use needs. The grantee has requested a no cost time extension to allow the Grantee and partnering landowner to plant additional plants to fill in gaps in the hedgerows and to monitor their success. This process, while longer, reduces overall water consumption for the project during installation. Once installed, the plants will be self-sustaining without irrigation.

The fund shift for the Davis Ranch Riparian and Hedgerow Restoration project is designed to restore an uninterrupted wildlife corridor from the Sacramento River to the Colusa National Wildlife Refuge. In addition, the on-going drought has

delayed the installation of plants within the wildlife corridor, allowing for the full complement of plants and a variety of canopy types to be installed over several years.

The above table outlines the maximum amount proposed for the fund shifts. The actual amount shifted will be based on the unliquidated Grant Agreement balance at the time of the shift. A revised funding certification will be prepared for each Grant Agreement and submitted to the State Controller's Office. The remaining balances from the previous WCB allocations will be recovered and returned to their respective fund sources; therefore, the net effect of the fund shifts on the WCB allocations for these projects is zero.

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve these fund shifts as proposed; allocate up to \$425,739.00 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(d)(4); and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

- \*7. Smithneck Creek Wildlife Area Land Exchange \$0.00  
Sierra County

This project is being withdrawn from consideration.

- \*8. Independence Lake Fisheries Restoration \$132,000.00  
Nevada and Sierra Counties

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Truckee Meadows Water Authority, Trout Unlimited, and the Bella Vista Foundation to restore Lahontan cutthroat trout populations at TNC's Independence Lake property. The project site is located generally 15 miles north of the City of Truckee in Nevada and Sierra Counties.

#### LOCATION

The proposed project is located on TNC's 2,325 acre Independence Lake property, which TNC acquired 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 (LCT) in California and supports a variety of native fish from the Truckee River watershed.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

TNC and several agency partners, including the CDFW, are working closely on 5-year plan to recover the LCT population in Independence Lake to sustainable levels. The desired outcome of restoring and sustaining an average annual spawning LCT population of 500 individuals can be achieved by removing non-native fish species – brook trout and kokanee salmon - that compete with or prey on LCT.

In 1997, the Western Fisheries Research Center of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) began researching and monitoring the population of LCT in Independence Lake. When the project began fewer than 50 adult LCT were migrating up Upper Independence Creek to spawn, and fewer than 3,000 fry were returning to the lake in the fall. The major culprit in the decline of this LCT population was hypothesized to be non-native salmonids, and of the three species present in the lake, brook trout were common and resident in Upper Independence Creek. In 2005, USGS staff began an annual brook trout removal program to eliminate all brook trout from Upper Independence Creek and ultimately from the lake. The results have been dramatic. Between 2005 and

2009, more than 6,600 brook trout were removed from the creek and the number of brook trout has declined significantly since then. Numbers of adult LCT migrating into the spawning stream each spring has gone from a low of 50 in 1997 to more than 230 individuals in 2010. Numbers of surviving fry have increased more than 6-fold since 1997 from less than 3,000 to more than 42,000 fry in 2010. Besides the increase in surviving LCT fry, other native fish species are showing up in Independence Creek where they had not been seen since 1997.

Each spring, USGS staff conduct annual spring counts of spawning LCT and late summer emigration of LCT fry in upper Independence Creek to assess the success of brook trout and kokanee removal efforts. In May or June, depending on snow and temperature conditions, a weir is set up across upper Independence Creek near the mouth of the creek to capture all adult LCT migrating upstream from the lake to spawn. After spawners have left the creek and returned to the lake, a different weir with a fry box is erected to temporarily capture and count all out-migrating LCT fry. Tracking fry emigration is essential to determine the effects of brook trout removal on LCT spawner reproductive success. Also assess emigration patterns and fry growth rate pre and post brook trout removal.

On selected dates in the spring and fall, experienced anglers gather to fish Independence Lake with the intent of catching juvenile LCT. All juveniles caught by anglers are tagged by USGS staff if the fish are not already tagged. This effort is designed to track juvenile LCT survival. The purpose of annual spring spawning and summer fry counts in tandem with Brook Trout and Kokanee control efforts is to monitor the effects of these control efforts on LCT population recovery.

Beginning in September of 2014, CDFW began a program to remove brook trout from shoals and the mouths of creeks at the west end of the lake by using two electrofishing boats working in tandem.

WCB funding will assist in the continuing efforts to remove brook trout from the lake. Methods will include the continuing removal efforts by electroshocking and netting in the shoals of Independence Lake and at mouths of tributaries to the lake.

Kokanee are abundant in Independence Lake. Kokanee compete with LCT for food resources and potentially prey on LCT fry entering the lake from the spawning stream. Research by USGS at Independence Lake has shown that kokanee use the shallow edges of the lake for spawning and spawning is concentrated in the late fall/early winter. The planned management option for kokanee removal is to artificially lower the lake level between December 1 and 31 after most redds are established but the eggs have not yet hatched. This would expose and dry-out the kokanee eggs. In addition, other methods for controlling kokanee in lake environments will be investigated for both effectiveness and cost.

Other options would be used in addition to drawdowns, and may include netting or trapping kokanee. While drawdowns in water levels occur regularly, as Independence Lake is a supply of water for Truckee Meadows Water Authority, this project will provide new direction for those actions to assist with the removal of kokanee, while continuing to allow the reservoir to provide water downstream.

Earlier efforts to reduce the number of brook trout and kokanee in Independence Lake have shown that LCT will respond when these non-native predators and competitors are removed. The goal of this project is the total elimination of brook trout and kokanee salmon from Independence Lake within five years. WCB funding will help with brook trout removal and monitoring of success in removing both kokanee and brook trout.

### WCB PROGRAM

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

The project is consistent with the goals outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan:

Goal B.1 – Invest in projects and landscape areas that help provide resilience in the face of climate change, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife and enhance habitats on working lands:

- LCT habitat will be improved by removing predatory non- native brook trout, assuring the long-term survival of the only remaining naturally occurring lake population of LCT.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The proposed project will result in the following, which TNC will utilize for long term management:

1. An evaluation of brook trout removal in Upper Independence Creek and the lake based on number of surviving brook trout remaining in the creek on an annual basis, numbers of LCT spawners each spring, and annual fry recruitment. Needs/options for future strategies will be included.
2. An evaluation of the effect of kokanee removal efforts on numbers of kokanee and native fish in Independence Lake, and on numbers of LCT spawners and fry recruitment in Upper Independence Creek. Needs/options for future strategies will be included.
3. Development of a long-term maintenance strategy for control of brook trout and/or kokanee from Independence Lake if total elimination of brook trout and kokanee has not been achieved within the 5-year timeframe of this work plan.

If at any time during the 25-year life of the project, The Nature Conservancy does not continue to coordinate with CDFW and USGS to assure brook trout and kokanee have been controlled, 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**

<b>FUNDER</b>	<b>Project Management</b>	<b>Monitoring and fish removal</b>	<b>Lake drawdown</b>	<b>Project Admin</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
TNC/BOR <sup>1</sup>	\$75,000	\$132,000		\$46,534	\$253,534
USFWS <sup>2</sup>		\$86,000			\$86,000
CDFW <sup>3</sup>		\$110,000			\$110,000
NFWF-DTL <sup>4</sup>		\$153,000		\$22,950	\$175,950
NFWF -Keystone <sup>5</sup>		\$34,000			\$34,000
Trout Unlimited		\$12,750		\$2,250	\$15,000
TMWA <sup>6</sup>			\$18,900		\$18,900
BVF <sup>7</sup>		\$8,500		\$1,500	\$10,000
WCB	\$2,000	\$118,000		\$12,000	\$132,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$77,000</b>	<b>\$654,250</b>	<b>\$18,900</b>	<b>\$85,234</b>	<b>\$835,384</b>

<sup>1</sup>TNC/BOR = The Nature Conservancy/US Bureau of Reclamation Desert Terminal Lakes grant funding

<sup>2</sup>USFWS = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

<sup>3</sup>CDFW = California Department of Fish and Wildlife

<sup>4</sup>National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - Desert Terminal Lakes Program

<sup>5</sup>National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - Keystone Initiative - Lahontan cutthroat trout

<sup>6</sup>Truckee Meadows Water Authority

<sup>7</sup>Bella Vista Foundation

Project costs will be for LCT population monitoring, brook trout removal, hydro-acoustic monitoring, project administration and management.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

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

**CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/RECOMMENDATION**

The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land). Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file the appropriate Notice of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$132,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f), authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project, and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.



- \*9. Placer County OEST Ranch Oak Woodlands Conservation Easement Placer County \$189,000.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Placer Land Trust to acquire a conservation easement over 36± acres of land located west of Highway 49, north of the City of Auburn in Placer County for the protection of native oak woodland habitat and for the protection and preservation of sensitive biological resources.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is a 36± acre disjunct portion of a larger 947± acre ranch complex known as the Oest Ranch (Ranch). The Property is located in the northwest portion of the Ranch approximately seven miles northwest of the city of Auburn in the western portion of Placer County. More specifically, the Property is located on the north side of Lone Star Road, approximately 400 feet west of State Route 49.

The neighborhood surrounding the Property is defined as the land areas along State Route 49 from Dry Creek Road to the Nevada County line and Bear River. The neighborhood is further defined by Garden Bar Road to the west and the communities of Meadow Vista and Christian Valley to the east. The immediate neighborhood is comprised primarily of farms and ranches of various acreages used primarily for grazing cattle. The Auburn Valley Golf and Country Club and a residential development are also located within the boundaries of the neighborhood.

The Property is located within the Spenceville Conservation Area Protection Plan (CAPP). Properties situated within the CAPP include acres of oak woodlands, riparian areas and grassland pastures that are located adjacent to, or in the vicinity of the Spenceville Wildlife Area (SWA). The large properties, such as the Ranch, are an integral extension of the SWA into Nevada County and Placer County. The Property also serves as a link that connects a corridor of protected properties from the east towards Penn Valley. Maintaining this linkage provides quality habitat for species including the California black rail, mule deer, elderberry longhorn beetle, various small mammals, and birds and snakes.

Placer County has become one of the leading industrial/manufacturing high-tech areas in the Sacramento region. The population has grown 26% from 2003 to 2013. It is anticipated that between 2013 and 2023 the projected population growth in the County will be approximately 18%. As such, several agricultural properties in Placer County have been developed to meet the population demand. The Ranch's scenic view, together with its close proximity to commercialized areas in Auburn, makes it very appealing to developers for subdivision into smaller parcels for residential construction.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is comprised of three contiguous parcels that, when combined, form a shape that resembles a long thin triangle. The Property is zoned F-B-X 20 AC MIN (Farm use with a minimum parcel size of 20 acres). This zoning designation permits commercial agricultural operations together with low density residential land use, manufacturing and recreation. The southern portion of the Property is bisected by the Lone Star Canal (Canal) and other open water canals and smaller irrigation ditches. The Canal and ditches provide untreated water for flood irrigation and irrigated pasture for grazing. Access to the property is via Lone Star Road, which is located adjacent to and south of the site.

The Property includes lower elevation foothill terrain with a ridgetop area that extends along most of the eastern portion of the site. The ridgetop contains scattered woodlands and generally slopes downward into a large irrigated pasture. The Property is used as a working landscape for livestock farming operations. It is vacant and unimproved, except for fence lines used to segregate cattle grazing.

The project would conserve approximately 20 acres of oak woodlands, which represents approximately 55% of the Conservation Easement area. The predominant plant species found on the Property are live oak, blue oak, black oak, ponderosa pine, and foothill pine. The Property also supports a number of shrubs, grasses and flowers. The wildlife confirmed on the site by PLT includes Canada geese, acorn woodpecker, red tailed hawk, coyote, deer, and western gray squirrel. The Property is also likely to support mountain lion, bobcat, gray fox, feral pig, western fence lizard, southern alligator lizard, red shouldered hawk and various other wildlife species.

The Conservation Easement will require the landowner to implement stewardship practices that recognize and incorporate the ecological requirements of oak woodlands and associated habitats. These practices utilize grazing management that benefits valley oak regeneration and control of invasive plants. The terms of the Conservation Easement have been reviewed and approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). CDFW supports the project because it includes multiple benefits for the landscape, as well as connectivity for wildlife along the Coon Creek and Bear River watersheds.

The project also meets and complements multiple natural resource conservation objectives that: (1) are consistent with the open space goals of the Placer County General Plan (1994); (2) contributes to the objectives of the Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program (2000); and (3) complies with Placer County's Conservation Plan in western Placer County. The proposed Conservation Easement will advance the goals of the Placer County Conservation Plan by protecting oak woodlands, working landscapes & scenic open space.

### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under the WCB's Oak Woodlands Conservation Program (Program). Grant proposals for the Program are evaluated and selected for funding by WCB staff based on established criteria. In order to be eligible for funding under the Program, a project must be located within a county that has adopted an Oak Woodlands countywide conservation plan. The Program is designed to help local efforts achieve oak woodland protection. More importantly, this Program provides a mechanism to bring ranchers and conservationists together in a manner that allows both to achieve sustainable ranch and farming operations and healthy oak woodlands.

### STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The project meets WCB's Strategic Plan goals:

A.1 - Fund projects and landscapes that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change.

The Easement will extend the corridor of protected properties eastward from the SWLA into Nevada County. Several wildlife species (ie: mule deer, wild turkeys, quail, and willow flycatcher) would be allowed to move between the Central Valley and into the Sierra Foothills that provide varying landscapes and habitat (open grasslands, oak woodlands and riparian areas) necessary for the survival of wildlife species in the face of climate change.

A.2 – Fund projects and landscape areas that conserve, protect, or enhance water resources for fish and wildlife.

The Property has a network of canals that serve the water needs of agricultural livestock grazing, plant life and for wildlife species in the area. The available water provides a source of much needed water during California's current drought, and for the future needs of plant and wildlife species that rely on the accessibility of this water source.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Conservation Easement will be held and managed by the Placer Land Trust according to the terms of the Conservation Easement Deed and WCB Grant Agreement. PLT will monitor the Easement annually with the use of a Baseline Conditions Report. Initially PLT will utilize a \$50,000.00 endowment towards the perpetual stewardship of the Property, which will be funded by the landowner. PLT also plans to raise another \$50,000.00 from various private funders for the perpetual stewardship of the Conservation Easement.

### TERMS

The conservation easement has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$214,000.00. The appraisal was reviewed by WCB staff, and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner

has agreed to sell the Conservation Easement for its approved appraised fair market value. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding for the conservation easement is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$182,000.00
Placer County	<u>\$32,000.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$214,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$7,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$189,000.00</b>

It is estimated that an additional \$7,000.00 will be needed to cover WCB project related administrative costs and DGS appraisal review fees.

The Placer Land Trust has contributed \$8,300.00 to cover the costs of the land survey and appraisal, and will split the costs of the title and escrow fees with the property owner.

**WCB FUNDING SOURCE**

The purposes of this grant are consistent with the proposed funding source, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(2), which allows for the preservation of native oak woodland habitat pursuant to the Oak Woodlands Conservation Act (Fish and Game Code Section 1360, *et seq.*).

**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 including preservation of fish and wildlife habitat, 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. The project has been reviewed under the Oak Woodlands Protection Program and has been recommended for approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$189,000.00 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(d)(2), which allows for the preservation of native oak woodland habitat pursuant to the Oak Woodlands Conservation Act (Fish and Game Code Section 1360 *et seq.*); and authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project and proceed substantially as planned.

- \*10. Carson River Enhancement \$360,000.00  
Alpine County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to American Rivers, Inc., for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), US Forest Service (USFS), Wildlife Conservation Society, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Alpine Watershed Group for ecological restoration of the West Fork Carson River in CDFW's Hope Valley Wildlife Area and the USFS's Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. The project site is located 12 miles south of South Lake Tahoe in Alpine County.

#### LOCATION

The West Fork of the Carson River flows from its headwaters near Carson Pass down through the 1,600-acre Hope Valley Meadow, one of the largest meadow complexes in the Sierra. The Hope Valley is made up of two linked meadow segments, with the upper segment located on USFS land and the lower segment located on CDFW land. The Carson River Enhancement Project encompasses approximately 400 acres of meadow on USFS land in the upper meadow segment, and a small bank stabilization site on CDFW's Hope Valley Wildlife Area.

The project area is located near the intersection of California Scenic Highways 88 and 89 in Alpine County, approximately 15 miles northwest of Markleeville, California, at approximately 7,100 feet above sea level.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Hope Valley Meadow displays many of the characteristics of a meadow that has been significantly impacted by historic land use, including grazing, mining, road construction, and logging. The hydrologic function of the meadow has been impaired, limiting its ability to provide the natural benefits healthy meadows provide, such as groundwater storage, flood protection, enhanced water quality and habitat for fish and wildlife. Historic disturbance has caused the channel through the meadow to downcut and incise, lowering the water table throughout much of the project area. This condition has caused a reduction in the quantity and quality of wet meadow and riparian habitat throughout the project area. The channel banks are too high above the water table for wet meadow vegetation to establish, and thus the banks are unstable and eroding. Eroding banks do not provide refugia for fish, and the resulting sediment covers and eliminates spawning habitat downstream. Plant communities have shifted from dominance by wet meadow and riparian plants to plants commonly found in mesic or dry meadows, and sagebrush is encroaching into the meadow. Riparian canopy is present only intermittently and mature stands are lacking.

In addition, a large channel meander is at high risk of cutting off. If this cutoff were to occur the channel would be shortened by up to 1,500 feet. The shorter, steeper stream section would create a chain reaction of incision and bank

instability upstream in what is now one of the most stable sections of channel in the meadow.

Beaver have been helping to improve localized meadow conditions throughout the site by building dams that effectively raise the elevation of the water in the stream. However, the extent of recovery achieved by beaver has been limited by current site conditions such as the incised channel, insufficient riparian woody species, and seasonal high-flow events that often prohibit dams from persisting for more than a season or two.

This project's goal is to restore the hydrologic function of Hope Valley Meadow, while minimizing disturbance to a system that has already made some progress toward recovery. The project will repair and enhance approximately 9,200 linear feet of streambank, increasing the width of wet meadow and riparian habitat on either side of the channel by approximately 30 feet. This expansion will result in the creation and enhancement of approximately five acres of streamside habitat, consisting of approximately one acre of wet meadow habitat (largely a result of the excavation of floodplain benches) and approximately four acres of riparian habitat (a combination of revegetation at the bank stabilization site and revegetation of banks throughout the project site).

Specific restoration methods and activities will include: 1) stabilizing streambanks by planting woody riparian vegetation, primarily willows; 2) stabilizing streambank toes by excavating the sod from the meadow surface and anchoring it near the toe of an eroding bank; 3) reducing the elevation of high, hydrologically disconnected streambanks in a pilot location by removing the vegetation or sod layer, excavating underlying soils, and replacing the vegetation or sod layer on the surface of the lowered area; 4) preventing an impending meander bend cutoff with vegetated rock slope protection and rock/log barbs; and 5) creating standing water depressions for improved fish and bird habitat and increased vegetative diversity.

#### WCB PROGRAM

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

The project is consistent with the following priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan:

Goal B.1 – Invest in projects and landscape areas that help provide resilience in the face of climate change, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife and enhance habitats on working lands:

- Ecologically functioning meadows act as natural reservoirs, regulating streamflow by soaking up and then slowly releasing snowmelt and rainfall

runoff that passes over and through these fine-grained, sod-covered areas. Thus, while meadow restoration will not create “new” water, it has been shown to alter the temporal distribution of streamflow so that less water flows downstream during peak runoff periods in the winter and spring, when water is not in high demand and more is released during the summer low-flow season.

- Studies show increased groundwater storage in meadows can also enhance summertime instream flows, a function that will become increasingly important under climate change. Meadow restoration throughout the Sierra Nevada could increase the amount of groundwater stored in meadows by as much as 500,000 acre-feet annually.
- Improving riparian and wet meadow habitat will allow the expansion of riparian species, such as the willow flycatcher, from meadow sites with higher quality habitat immediately upstream.
- Increasing and enhancing riparian vegetation will benefit birds associated with high shrub cover, like the yellow warbler (California Species of Special Interest).
- Creating lower, more stable banks will ultimately foster the development of undercut banks used as cover by fish including Lahontan cutthroat trout (a federally listed threatened species).
- Increasing riparian cover will result in increased shading and cover for fish, including Lahontan cutthroat trout.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The project will occur on public lands managed by the USFS and the CDFW.

The USFS will perform long-term management and maintenance of the portion of the project site under its management. Long-term management for the portion of the project that will occur on USFS-managed lands will be directed by the Toiyabe Land and Resource Management Plan and the 2004 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment, which direct long-term management of public lands on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. The USFS has interdisciplinary teams of hydrologists, fisheries biologists, wildlife biologists and range management specialists who will continue to monitor and recommend resource protection measures for any activities that occur in the area. Long-term management goals for the Hope Valley area on USFS lands would be to maintain recreation opportunities, water quality and wildlife and fisheries habitat.

Long-term management for the portion of the project that will occur on CDFW-managed lands will be directed by the Hope Valley Wildlife Area Management Plan. The long-term objectives of land management of the Hope Valley Wildlife Area are to protect and enhance the fish and wildlife habitat on the area and to direct recreational uses to low-impact, non-motorized use that is compatible with maintaining and enhancing fish and wildlife habitats and retaining the current aesthetic and scenic values of the area.



All land management activities within the project area located on USFS lands, are subject to specific Best Management Practices and Management Requirements detailed in the Toiyabe Land and Resource Management Plan as well as additional resource protection measures. The project must implement all requirements of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (LRWQCB) and be permitted through the LRWQCB, as well as the Army Corps of Engineers, CDFW, Environmental Protection Agency, and Alpine County as required.

The past experience with this type of restoration has shown that significant maintenance is often not needed because natural hydrologic and geomorphic processes are restored. If needed, some minor maintenance and additional planting will be accomplished by volunteers. This work would occur in coordination with the USFS, CDFW, the Alpine Watershed Group and Friends of Hope Valley. For decades, the Friends of Hope Valley and Alpine Watershed Group have planted willows to stabilize banks and provide fish and wildlife habitat. These efforts are incorporated into the project designs and will continue to benefit the project site and adjacent reaches in the future.

If at any time during the 25-year life of the project, American Rivers, Inc. does not assure the project improvements are maintained, 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 Cost Per Task	WCB Funding Request	Wildlife Conservation Society	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	Alpine Watershed Group
Project Management	\$130,200	\$65,000	\$18,000	\$47,200	\$10,000
Construction USFS Site	\$637,600	\$197,100	\$69,500	\$371,000	\$0
Construction CDFW Site	\$50,700	\$50,700	\$0	\$0	\$0
Signs	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Project Administration	\$39,650	\$19,440	\$8,750	\$11,460	\$0
10% Construction Contingency	\$24,760	\$24,760	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$885,910</b>	<b>\$360,000</b>	<b>\$96,250</b>	<b>\$429,660</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>

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

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding source for this project is the WCB’s Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E), which provides funds for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian

habitat and aquatic habitat for salmonids and trout and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

CEQA AND CDFW RECOMMENDATION

The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land). Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file the appropriate Notice of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$360,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E); authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

- \*11. Maxwell Conservation Easement Transfer \$0.00  
Fresno County

This project is being withdrawn from consideration.

- \*12. Allensworth Ecological Reserve, Expansion 58 \$0.00  
Tulare County

This proposal is to consider the acquisition of three separate parcels of land totaling 4± acres of land on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the protection of habitat supporting the San Joaquin kit fox and other species found within the area of the CDFW Allensworth Ecological Reserve and to enhance habitat linkages and connectivity, located near the city of Earlimart in Tulare County.

#### 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 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 total 4± acres and are being proposed for acquisition as Expansion 58 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.

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 sensitive wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change.

The project provides habitat for threatened and endangered species as listed above and will help provide resilience to the impacts of climate change for native species by providing habitat linkages and corridors for increased movement

Goal A-4 Invest in priority conservation projects recommended under CDFW's land acquisition evaluation process or within other conservation plans supported by CDFW.

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. CDFW and 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 Properties 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	\$15,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	<u>\$3,000.00</u>
Total Project Costs	\$18,000.00

**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 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, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project, and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

- \*13. Santiago Creek Riparian Restoration \$162,000.00  
Kern County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to The Wildlands Conservancy (TWC) for a cooperative project with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to eradicate tamarisk from Santiago Creek on Wind Wolves Preserve (Preserve). The Preserve is located 25 miles southwest of the city of Bakersfield in Kern County.

LOCATION

The proposed project is located in Santiago Creek within TWC's Preserve property. The area is primarily surrounded by Los Padres National Forest to the south, Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge to the west, Tejon Ranch to the east and agricultural land to the north. Nearby communities include Bakersfield, Mettler, and Taft.

The Preserve is in an ecologically unique region where the Transverse Ranges, Coast Ranges, Sierra Nevada, western Mojave Desert and San Joaquin Valley converge. Due to elevation ranges from 640 to 6,005 feet, the Preserve has an impressive array of landforms and habitats that serve as a critical landscape linkage and wildlife corridor between the Coast Ranges and Sierra Nevada. At 90,000 acres, the Preserve is one of the largest nonprofit preserves in the western United States.

On the San Joaquin Valley floor, the Preserve is a 30-square-mile area of grasslands with remnant stands of saltbush. These grasslands are home to the endangered San Joaquin kit fox and blunt-nosed leopard lizard, as well as one of the largest stands of the endangered Bakersfield cactus. The Preserve's main wetland is home to the Buena Vista Lake ornate shrew. Rolling grasslands rise from the valley floor transitioning into California blue oak and valley oak savanna with extensive riparian wetlands. The oak savanna ascends into juniper and pinyon forests transitioning to stands of ponderosa pine and big cone spruce at the highest elevations.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The intrusion of the non-native tamarisk trees into the Santiago Creek drainage has degraded the habitat there, pushing out native plants, insects, birds, and other wildlife species. A major objective of TWC is to preserve and enhance the native diversity and ecological integrity of the lands that it manages. Riparian habitats support a disproportionate diversity of plants and animals that occur on the Preserve landscape, and so TWC has given the health of these areas high priority for Preserve management. The proposed project includes removing tamarisk along 4.20 miles of streambed. The tamarisk in Santiago Creek occurs in varying densities, including one very dense eight-acre stand.

The project is divided into four phases including control, re-vegetation,

maintenance, and monitoring as described below.

*Control:* All tamarisk plants will be manually removed using methods successfully applied in similar projects on the Preserve. Crews of volunteers led by staff will cut trees at the stump even with ground level and an herbicide will be sprayed directly onto the stump. Crews will then pile pulled plants into spaced out piles on the bank out of the main drainage to provide some habitat cover for wildlife.

*Re-vegetation:* Native plants will be nursery propagated at the Preserve nursery and planted during and just before the rainy season. Plants will include pole cuttings of native willows and cottonwoods and potted plants of various native shrubs and forbs.

*Maintenance:* Removal of tamarisk re-sprouts will be done on an annual basis for ten years. For native plant establishment in certain locations gravity irrigation systems will be installed to supply reliable water for the first two dry seasons. Additional maintenance will include weeding, watering, and maintenance of irrigation systems. Water will be provided from the overflow of an existing livestock/wildlife tank and trough.

*Monitoring:* Staff biologists will conduct bi-annual monitoring focused on tamarisk re-sprouts, native vegetation success, irrigation line function, and photo documentation.

Tamarisk has deep roots that can reach ground water well below the surface and pump salt up and out through specialized glands in its leaves. This action increases surface soil salinity. The diversity of plants from the restoration project will help improve soil composition and health as well as help to filter ground and above ground water and prevent excessive erosion and loss of soil.

This project is expected to significantly benefit wildlife and increase species richness and diversity of both plant and animal species within two years following initial tamarisk control and re-vegetation of native plant species. Greater diversity of native plant species provides complexity of structure in riparian areas, which will help enhance cover and food sources for important pollinators and many other animal species. Native plants will also provide habitat for the large number of migrating and resident bird species.

#### WCB PROGRAM

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

The project is consistent with the following goals outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan:



Goal B.1 – Invest in projects and landscape areas that help provide resilience in the face of climate change, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife and enhance habitats on working lands:

- The project will provide additional nesting habitat for Southwest willow flycatcher and least Bell’s vireo, which occupy other portions of the Preserve.
- Over time, the diversity of species selected for restoration will allow for the full range of native plants to successfully adapt during gradually changing climate conditions. Ideally, if dominant habitat components are impacted from climate change (for example, fewer cottonwoods), the additional species provided via this project will ensure that the natural shift is towards other native riparian species.
- The habitat provided here will be integrated into the operations of the Preserve, which includes cattle grazing.

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS**

As with any weed eradication project, follow-up weed removal is required for several years. Removal of tamarisk re-sprouts will be done on an annual basis by TWC ranger staff and volunteers. It is expected that complete eradication will occur within ten years. Beyond the initial ten years of the project, TWC will monitor for re-sprouts for the remaining 15 years of the project life.

In addition, for native plant establishment in certain locations gravity irrigation systems will be installed to supply reliable water for the first two dry seasons. Once the native vegetation is established, TWC will continue maintenance of the area, which could include weeding or additional plantings, as necessary or desired.

If at any time during the 25-year life of the project, TWC does not assure the project improvements are maintained, the Grant Agreement requires the Grantee to refund to the State of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Task</b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>NRCS</b>	<b>TWC</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Tamarisk Removal and Revegetation</b>	\$120,000	\$95,260	\$43,422	\$258,682
<b>Monitoring</b>	\$24,000	\$0	\$42,000	\$66,000
<b>Project Management</b>	\$18,000	\$0	\$10,000	\$28,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$162,000</b>	<b>\$95,260</b>	<b>\$95,422</b>	<b>\$352,682</b>

Project costs will be for salaries and wages, supplies/equipment, restoration contracts, monitoring, and project management.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding source for this project is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E), which provides funding for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat and aquatic habitat and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

**CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW**

The project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land). Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file the appropriate Notice of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$162,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

- \*14. Coal Oil Point Reserve Improvements \$505,000.00  
Santa Barbara County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to The Regents of the University of California for a cooperative project with University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) for renovations and upgrades, located at UCSB'S Coal Oil Point Reserve in the city of Goleta in Santa Barbara County.

LOCATION

The Coal Oil Point Reserve (COPR), located in Goleta near the UCSB campus, encompasses 170 acres of rare coastal habitats preserved for research and education. COPR is broadly recognized for its conservation value. It is home to at least five endangered and threatened species. COPR has been designated an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA) by the California Coastal Commission, an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society, and a Tier 1 Priority in the Wetlands Recovery Project for restoration and improvements. COPR has over 1,000 species cataloged and has been used for research since 1920.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The current rarity of native coastal dune ecosystems in California makes COPR an important site for research and university-level instruction. COPR's coastal dunes are accessible and have been used for experiments in restoration, evolution of mating systems in dune plants, collection of rare species, ecological studies, and many other topics. COPR's wetlands, including the estuary and a number of vernal pools, are other examples of rare California habitats that are often difficult for researchers to access for field studies. The Devereux Slough is a seasonally open estuary that is part of a small watershed.

COPR lacks the facilities to effectively support its research, teaching, and public outreach programs. COPR has been successful in securing funds for restoration, conservation, and new staff. However, existing infrastructure and buildings cannot adequately sustain current Reserve use and will hamper future expansion of research and education programs. For example, storage and maintenance facilities are housed in dilapidated sheds left over from a 1960's summer camp, and offices for the staff and users are located in a small rundown building without insulation, heat, or restrooms.

The entire infrastructure and facilities project will be completed in two phases. Phase 1 has just been completed and will provide the match requirement for the funding requested from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). The infrastructure improvements in Phase 1 included the reconstruction of the entrance road to the COPR field station, installation of an electronic entrance gate, parking lot resurfacing and expansion, Devereux Creek bridge installation, shed replacement, and electrical upgrades.

Phase 2 will complete the renovation of a 5,390 square ft. building adjacent to

COPR that will serve as the new Reserve headquarters. When completed, the headquarters will meet all of COPR’s program needs for office, meeting and classroom space, and will include a small wet/dry laboratory and kitchen.

**WCB PROGRAM**

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

**PROJECT FUNDING**

Project Task	Total Cost Per Task	UCSB Matching Funds	WCB
Reserve Entrance Road, Gate and Parking	\$110,889	\$110,089	-
Culvert Replacement	\$200,000	\$200,000	-
Storage Buildings, Workshop, Electrical Upgrades	\$54,900	\$54,900	-
Headquarters Renovation	\$628,300	\$123,300	\$505,000
Project Specific Administration	\$44,000	\$44,000	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,037,289</b>	<b>\$532,289</b>	<b>\$505,000</b>

Project costs will cover completion of the upgrades needed to comply with current building codes and allow COPR to occupy and use the proposed headquarters building. The upgrades will include: (1) substantial structural upgrades to meet current building codes for earthquake safety, (2) abatement of hazardous materials such as asbestos tiles and lead paint throughout the building, (3) installation of new restrooms to meet standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), (4) modifications to entrance and some interior doors to meet ADA standards and removal of a wall between two adjacent rooms to create a

classroom, and (5) electrical upgrades, new interior paint, flooring and light fixtures in approximately 1/3 of the rooms in the building.

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)(3); 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 and are consistent with the objectives of this project.

CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION (IF NEEDED)

The project was vetted through the University of California Natural Reserve System's Ad Hoc Subcommittee and recommended for funding.

The project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15301, Class 1, as the repair or minor alteration of existing facilities involving negligible or no expansion of use. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$505,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84) Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)(3); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

- \*15. Western Riverside MSHCP (2013) – Kaelin \$880,675.00  
Riverside County

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority), as well as to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board grant to the Authority, to acquire 25± acres of land in western Riverside County located within the area of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property), known as the Kaelin Property, is located in the city of Hemet in western Riverside County. Hemet is located in a large valley within the western portion of Riverside County, approximately 35 miles southeast of the city of Riverside. Interstate 215 lies approximately 12 miles southwest of the Property and State Highway 79 (aka Florida Avenue) is located on the west. More specifically, the Property is located south of the intersection of Florida Avenue and South Warren Road, near the westernmost side of Hemet's corporate limits. Florida Avenue is the primary east-west artery running through Hemet, and the location of some of the city's most intense commercial development.

The surrounding neighborhood is a mixture of vacant unimproved properties mixed with commercial development. The Hemet Auto Mall is located just east of the Property along Warren Road.

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. The population of the city of Hemet as of January 2014 was 81,537, which represents a 0.9% increase over the reported city population of 80,899 one year earlier. Hemet has no direct freeway access at this time; however, there is a planned proposal to realign State Highway 79 to be directed through Hemet. As such, more intense commercial development in the area is anticipated. The growing 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 Hemet area 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 region 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, 48,952 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 Alkali Playa/Vernal Pool Area (AP/VPA) habitat area, which includes lands that are located along the San Jacinto River, east of the City of Perris, northwest of the City of San Jacinto, and lands within the Old Salt Creek drainage (also known as the Hemet vernal pools complex), which is located west of the City of Hemet.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is vacant and unimproved; however, all public utilities are at or within close proximity to the site. The shape of the Property is best described as trapezoidal in appearance. The western border of the Property abuts to the San Diego Aqueduct Canal that has a natural north to south drainage. There is also frontage along the south side of West Florida Avenue, which is an asphalt paved street with traffic lanes in each direction. The Property is situated in an A-2-C-10, Heavy Agriculture with a mixed use designation under Hemet's General Plan. This designation allows for a mix of residential and compatible office and retail/service uses integrated as a cohesive development that encourages a mixture of both residential and business structures in a side-by-side manner.

Situated in the AP/VPA habitat area, the Property provides essential habitat for several federally listed species that include the federal/state endangered thread-leaved brodiaea and California Ornut grass; federal endangered and state threatened Stephens' kangaroo rat; and federally threatened vernal pool fairy shrimp, spreading navarretia, Riverside fairy shrimp and San Jacinto Valley crowscale. The Property also supports numerous other unlisted sensitive species including Coulter's goldfields, Davidson's saltscallion, Parish's brittlescale, vernal barley and smooth tarplant. All of these plants are dependent upon the unique hydrology and soils found in the alkali playa and vernal pool habitat of the Area. This hydrology provides habitat for specific plant species found only in the western Riverside region. The AP/VAP also contains some of the most significant vernal pools in California. The proposed acquisition of the Property will support and sustain an ephemeral habitat that is extremely limited, and that is

highly susceptible to complete destruction with the ongoing rapid population growth and urbanization.

### 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.

### STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The project meets WCB's Strategic Plan goals:

A.1 - Fund projects and landscapes that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change.

One of the goals of the WRC MSHCP is to preserve existing habitat connections by expanding a network of protected linkages. Connectivity in the AP/VPA habitat area is essential to maintaining the genetic viability of listed/sensitive species being conserved under the plan. Wildlife linkages also provide ecosystem responses to climate change by incorporating elevation gradients that allow species and vegetation communities to shift upward in elevation.

A.2 - Fund projects and landscape areas that conserve, protect, or enhance water resources for fish and wildlife.

The proposed project protects land within a habitat area that is comprised of a system of vernal pools. The threat of complete destruction of this habitat is imminent because of the rapid growth and urbanization in the area. The vernal pool complex provides habitat for several locally sensitive species (i.e.: vernal pool fairy shrimp and Riverside fairy shrimp).

A.3 – Fund projects that support the implementation of Natural Community Conservation Plans, Habitat Conservation Plans and recovery of listed species.



The project meets WCB's Strategic Plan 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.

A.4 – Invest in priority conservation projects recommended under CDFW's land acquisition evaluation process or within other conservation plans supported by CDFW.

CDFW, together with other public and private parties, were instrumental in the creation of the WRC MSHCP through its NCCP program. Under the NCCP program, all parties recognized the importance of western Riverside County's conservation values. The conservation values recognized by all include the mixture of habitats located across diverse landscapes with numerous ecosystems and wildlife species found nowhere else in the world. This fact, coupled with the extensive growth and urbanization of the area has resulted in the decline of these habitat communities. Since 2006, WCB and the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Section 6 grant program have supported and participated in funding several acquisitions in the WRC MSHCP 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 \$2,475,000.00. 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 in the amount of \$1,601,325.00 requires a non-federal match in the amount of \$873,675.00 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	\$873,675.00
WCB – subgrant of USFWS funds	<u>\$1,601,325.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$2,475,000.00

Other Project Related Admin. Costs        \$7,000.00

**TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION                        \$880,675.00**

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

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The purposes of this project are consistent with the 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 \$1,601,675.00 and approve the subgrant of these federal funds to the Authority; allocate \$880,675.00 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 CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

- \*16. Western Riverside MSHCP (2014) – Lloyd \$118,750.00  
Riverside County

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority), as well as to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to the Authority, to acquire 162± acres of land in western Riverside County located within the area of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan.

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 162± acres of land in western Riverside County. The grant will be used 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) is located between Interstate 215 and State Highway 74 and is situated on the outskirts of the city of Hemet in Riverside County. More specifically, the Property is located on the south side of Minto Way, east of Sage Road. The surrounding neighborhood is rural residential and comprised of interspersed ranchettes, traditional and mobile homes built on 5 to 20 acre lots. Residents use the additional acreage for light agriculture, equestrian or conservation purposes. The more urbanized outskirts of Hemet lie approximately six miles east of the Property. Topography of the overall Property is rolling to steep with numerous outcroppings covered with vegetation.

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. The city of Hemet as of January 2014 was 81,537, which represents a 0.9 increase over the reported city population of 80,899 one year earlier. The increase attributed to Hemet's population growth was stimulated by its affordable housing and proximity to employment centers such as Corona, Riverside and San Bernardino. Although Hemet has no direct freeway access at this time, there is a planned proposal to realign State Highway 79 to be directed through Hemet. As such, more intense commercial development is anticipated in the area. The continued population growth 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 WRC MSHCP Plan Area 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, 48,952 acres have been added to the reserve.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is vacant, unimproved and square in shape. According to the County, the Property is zoned as RR, Rural Residential. Owners of properties located within the RR zoning designation are allowed to construct single-family residences with a minimum lot size of five acres. This proposed acquisition site is identified as one of the target properties to be acquired within the Eastern Foothills Area. The Property is covered with shrubs, bushes and grasses, including chaparral and coastal sage scrub, as typical of the vegetation found in the Eastern Foothills Area.

The proposed Property acquisition will complement the goals of the WRC MSHCP by building onto existing conservation land and habitat linkages located in the Eastern Foothills Area that are in proximity to a number of reserves and conservation areas. Conserving these properties ensures the connectivity from the 13,000-acre Southwestern Riverside County MSHCP on the west, the San Bernardino National Forest on the east, and the San Jacinto watershed in the north to the Temecula Creek watershed in southern Riverside County. This connectivity is central to the genetic viability of many species that include the federal endangered Stephen's kangaroo rat, San Bernardino kangaroo rat, arroyo toad and the slender-horned spineflower as vegetation communities and rainfall and drainage patterns shift in response to climate change.

#### 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.

### STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The project meets WCB's Strategic Plan goals:

A.1 - Fund projects and landscapes that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change.

One of the goals of the WRC MSHCP is to preserve existing habitat connections by expanding a network of protecting linkages. Connectivity in this area is essential in maintaining the genetic viability of listed/sensitive species being conserved, and provides ecosystem responses to climate change by incorporating elevation gradients that allow species and vegetation communities to shift upward in elevation.

A.3 – Fund projects that support the implementation of Natural Community Conservation Plans, Habitat Conservation Plans and recovery of listed species.

The project meets WCB's Strategic Plan 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.

A.4 – Invest in priority conservation projects recommended under CDFW's land acquisition evaluation process or within other conservation plans supported by CDFW.

CDFW, together with other public and private parties, were instrumental in the creation of the WRC MSHCP through its NCCP program. Under the NCCP program, all parties recognized the importance of western Riverside County's conservation values. The conservation values recognized by all include the mixture of habitats located across diverse landscapes with numerous ecosystems

and wildlife species found nowhere else in the world. This fact, coupled with the extensive growth and urbanization of the area has resulted in the decline of these habitat communities. Since 2006, WCB and the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Section 6 grant program have supported and participated in funding several acquisitions in the WRC MSHCP 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 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 \$325,000.00. 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 in the amount of \$211,250.00 requires a non-federal match in the amount of \$113,750.00 that is proposed to be provided by a grant from 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, 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	\$113,750.00
WCB – subgrant of USFWS funds	<u>\$211,250.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$325,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$5,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$118,750.00</b>

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 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; authorize acceptance of the Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$211,250.00 and approve the subgrant of these federal funds to the Authority; allocate \$118,750.00 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 CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.



17. North Coast Non-native Invasive Weed Eradication \$450,000.00  
Del Norte and Humboldt Counties

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA) for a cooperative project with Humboldt and Del Norte County Agriculture Departments, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and the Yurok Tribe to control nonnative invasive knotweeds and other species at 110 locations in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The project proposes to remove significant populations of six species of noxious invasive plants at a variety of sites in and near wetland and riparian areas in Del Norte and Humboldt counties. Key watersheds to be enhanced include the Eel River, the Klamath River and the Smith River, which all support anadromous fish. The majority of the sites containing documented populations of noxious plants are in the western portion of each county. Many of the known populations are found in wetland and riparian sites adjacent to coastal roadsides, which are both county and state maintained. A smaller number of sites are on public lands owned by state and federal agencies, including DPR, the U.S. Forest Service, and National Park Service. Slightly more than 50% of the documented sites are on private property.

In June 2013, WCB provided a grant to the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) for a project designed to enhance habitats and ecosystem function by identifying, prioritizing and planning high-priority invasive plant eradication projects. These projects were to be cost-effective projects that prevent high-impact invasive plants from moving into new areas. Using new tools for prioritization and planning, the Cal-IPC worked with partners throughout the State to develop regional priority lists of eradication, control, and surveillance targets, and to provide shovel-ready project specifications for top projects. The proposed project was identified as the highest priority project within that effort.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is a strategic and cooperative regional effort aimed at eradicating all known populations of six regionally important non-native invasive species. Invasive plants can significantly impact vegetation and wildlife communities, and ecosystem processes, especially when the plants become widely distributed. The species targeted in this project are invasive to wetlands and riparian areas, creating impenetrable canopies that prevent the growth of native species, restrict streams and floodways creating flooding hazards, and provide little or no wildlife value. They are known to be capable of spreading widely and creating significant and lasting impacts to habitat and wildlife.

The locations of several extremely noxious knotweed species have been mapped and are moving south into California from Oregon. These species have been

identified as a serious threat by Cal-IPC and regional weed management agencies. Through this project, six targeted species can be prevented from extending their range in California. Cal-IPC identified these species as top priorities based on current distribution, potential for future spread, conservation impact, and feasibility of eradication. The most effective solution to full eradication of the targeted noxious species is to manage invasive plants while populations are still small and distribution is limited.

For each population, RCAA will implement fall treatments each year for five years to achieve 95% or greater reduction in cover of the target plants. This goal is consistent with similar eradication projects focusing on early eradication of small invasive plant populations. Control techniques for all species will be consistent with those recommended by the University of California Cooperative Extension. After each year's treatment, mortality rate will be gauged and treatment methods will be adapted as necessary. RCAA will track treatment sites regularly and keep detailed tracking records for each of the more than 100 project sites. These tracking records will help to assess necessary follow-up control activities during the project period. RCAA will continue treatment as necessary after the five-year project is complete if any remnant populations survive. Because weed populations are small, passive restoration through nearby native plant recruitment will generally be sufficient to revegetate areas where invasive plant populations are removed.

Treatment methods include spraying foliage or injecting stems with herbicide in the fall, and will follow guidelines developed by experts on noxious weed control. RCAA has consulted with noxious weed control experts in Washington State who have successfully controlled noxious knotweed populations. The proposed project and methods are also designed to reduce long-term use of herbicides by eliminating populations of targeted species. RCAA also discussed herbicide use and gained support from appropriate regional groups.

RCAA will coordinate post-treatment monitoring for five years with partner agencies and stakeholders participating in the Humboldt and Del Norte County Weed Management Areas to ensure that no seeds or plants remain viable. Additionally, RCAA will implement a public awareness campaign to encourage citizens to report sightings of any of these species.

The proposed project is consistent with the State Wildlife Action Plan, which identifies invasive species as one of the top threats to wildlife and recommends taking early action to keep high-priority species from spreading. The majority of targeted populations fall within high-quality areas of biological richness noted in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Areas of Conservation Emphasis. The project is also consistent with the commitments of California State Parks and the National Park Service to control invasive species that threaten natural resources, and with the mandate of the county agricultural commissioners to control noxious weeds. In addition, the project fulfills goals described in the

California Invasive Species Advisory Committee's 2012 invasive species guidelines ("Stop the Spread: Strategic Framework for Protecting California from Invasive Species"), including supporting regional collaborations and public-private partnerships, implementing prioritization models for managing invasive species, expanding invasive species surveillance efforts, and integrating new tools in risk assessment to set priorities.

#### 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 wetlands that fall outside the jurisdiction of the Inland Wetland Conservation Program such as coastal or fresh water habitats.

The project is consistent with the following priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan:

Goal B.1 – Invest in projects and landscape areas that help provide resilience in the face of climate change, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife and enhance habitats on working lands:

- Early-eradication invasive species targets are designed to prevent significant widespread damage to native habitats in the future, and contribute to diverse native habitats and species.
- Disconnected native habitats will be connected through the removal of patches of non-native invasives, allowing for unrestricted movement of wildlife.
- Native vegetation creates structure, diversity and shade to streams, cooling the water and providing food for salmonids.
- Eradication of these invasive plants will primarily protect and restore north coast wetland and riparian areas.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

This project is the result of an extensive collaborative planning process implemented through the Humboldt and Del Norte County Weed Management Areas. Partners in the WMAs include county agricultural commissioners, DPR, the Yurok Tribe, Caltrans, RCAA and the Mattole Restoration Council. The project is strongly supported by a diverse coalition of regional partners, and is consistent with their mission and long-range plans.

This project targets six invasive plant species for region-wide eradication in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. The five years of [treatment funded by this project will achieve a minimum 95% control. The RCA will monitor the sites to identify what few plants might remain with the goal of eradication of all six species. Subsequent vigilant monitoring of project sites is essential for long-term conservation success, to ensure that no new plants emerge from the soil seed bank or rhizomes. Knotweed roots are capable of re-sprouting after several years

of inactivity, and any such re-growth will be detected and treated.

Local treatment partners, including the Humboldt and Del Norte County Agricultural Commissioners' Offices, Caltrans, DPR, the Yurok Tribe, the California Conservation Corps, and the Mattole Restoration Council, are committed to long-term maintenance of project sites. The WCB Grant Agreement requires RCAA to monitor the sites for the 25-year life of the project. Landowner right-of-entry agreements will ensure that follow-up monitoring and treatment can occur.

RCAA will develop public messaging aimed at conveying the urgency of controlling these noxious weed infestations and the community benefit to eliminating them, and will also be responsible to formalize a plan for ongoing follow-up and obtain commitments from all partners to fulfill their roles in ensuring long-term maintenance of the project. RCAA and Cal-IPC will remain engaged with the Counties' Weed Management Areas to monitor implementation of the long-term plan.

If at any time during the 25-year life of the project, the RCAA does not assure the treated sites remain weed-free, 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:

Task	WCB	RCAA	Caltrans	Co. Agriculture	State Parks	Other partners *	Total Cost
Project mgmt., access agreements	105,000	20,000		5,000		5,000	135,000
Public outreach	25,000	10,000			5,000	7,000	47,000
Implementation and monitoring	270,000	20,000	40,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	405,000
Mapping and technical support	50,000					10,000	60,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>450,000</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>47,000</b>	<b>647,000</b>

*\*Other partners: California Conservation Corps, Yurok Tribe, California Invasive Plants Council, Mattole Restoration Council*

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding sources for the project are the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d)(Proposition 1E), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley and the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley, which allow for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of

wetlands to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass outside the Central Valley, and for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetlands outside the Central Valley.

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 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 \$137,904.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d)(Proposition 1E) and \$312,096.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Wetlands Outside the Central Valley; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

18. Butte Creek Meadows Working Forest \$1,679,500.00  
Siskiyou County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to Pacific Forest Trust to acquire a conservation easement over 3,468± acres of land for the protection of a mixed conifer working forest habitat linkages located near the community of Montague in Siskiyou County.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The property (Property) proposed for protection by the Conservation Easement is located on the northeastern slope of Mt. Shasta. The Property lies about 25 miles east of the town of Weed and serves as a wildlife connector between the Shasta-Trinity and Klamath National Forests. The Property sits within the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Mount Shasta Headwaters Forest Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) boundaries and meets multiple goals in that plan, including: conservation of forest habitats within and across planning watersheds, protection of watersheds important to water supplies and salmonid recovery, protection of native species richness, and restoration and maintenance of rare and important habitat types.

Most of the area surrounding the Property can be described as rural, with forest and agricultural properties, interspersed with rural residential properties, including several large land holdings. The Conservation Easement will accomplish priority goals outlined in several state and federal conservation plans including sections of the WCB's Strategic Plan, the aforementioned CDFW's Mount Shasta Forest Headwaters CAPP, the California Water Action Plan, and CDFW's Essential Habitat Connectivity Project.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property consists of three legal parcels, owned by the Hart Family, who originally homesteaded the property in the mid-1800s. The family currently manages the Property for timber production, cattle grazing, and wildlife habitat. Between 2008 and 2012 the Hart family operated under a Timber Harvest Plan to restore and enhance the extensive wet meadow system known as Hart Meadow by cutting and removing encroaching conifers. The family has a long history of managing the unique ecological values found on the Property, and they are dedicated to continuing to enhance wildlife habitat on the property. The CDFW, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service all support the conservation and restoration efforts being made by the family.

The property is largely forested with a majority of true firs. There are eight Wildlife Habitat Relationship (WHR) types represented on the property: white fir, Shasta red fir, mixed fir, lodgepole pine, Sierra mixed conifer, montane hardwood, aspen, and wet meadow. The forest on the Property includes some stands with more mature late seral characteristics, and the Property as a whole has a high proportion (20%) of big trees with a diameter at breast height of 30 inches or

greater. Given the mosaic of vegetation types and water resources on the property, wildlife is abundant. The WHR modeling suggests that there are 63 aquatic and terrestrial species that depend on the habitats found on the Property for nesting, foraging, and other life functions. A unique feature of the Property is its large and intact alpine wet meadow system, estimated at 650 acres. As described in the CAPP, wet meadows are an important habitat type that supports a wide variety of species and performs watershed functions that are increasingly important with the changing climate.

The Conservation Easement will allow the Landowner to continue to operate the Property as an economically sustainable forest, as this is one of the objectives of the funding source, providing additional benefits to the regional economy.

### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant for this project is being considered under the WCB's Forest Conservation Program (Program). Grant proposals are evaluated and selected for funding by WCB staff based on established criteria approved by the Board at its November 17, 2007 meeting, utilizing a peer review process involving biological and forestry expertise from 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 forestlands, 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 forestlands. 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.

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

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

A-4 Invest in priority conservation projects recommended by CDFW.

A-5 Communicate and coordinate with CDFW in the selection and implementation of projects.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

If this proposal is approved, the Property will be protected according to the terms and conditions of the Conservation Easement. The Property will continue to be owned and managed by the Landowner for sustainable timber harvesting, seasonal grazing and enhancement of watershed, wildlife, fishery and plant resources, subject to the provisions of the Conservation Easement. PFT will be responsible for the long-term monitoring and enforcement of the Conservation

Easement according to the terms and conditions of the WCB grant agreement. Prior to closing, the PFT will be required to provide WCB with a baseline conditions report documenting the current conditions of the Property.

TERMS

The Conservation Easement has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$3,085,000.00. The timber valuation portion of the appraisal has been reviewed and approved by a registered professional forester. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The Property owner has agreed to sell the Conservation Easement for \$2,159,500.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant to the PFT provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can seek specific performance of the grant or require the grantee to transfer the Conservation Easement to WCB or another qualified holder.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$1,659,500.00
Caltrans/Resources EEMP grant funds	<u>\$500,000.00</u>
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$2,159,500.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$20,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$1,679,500.00</b>

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

WCB FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a), which provides funding for forest conservation and protection projects that promote the ecological integrity and economic stability of California's diverse native forests through conservation and preservation 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, plants found on these lands.



**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION**

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

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,679,500.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(a) for the conservation easement acquisition grant to Pacific Forest Trust and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

19. Spenceville Wildlife Area, Conservation Easement (Robinson Ranch) Nevada County \$2,135,000.00

This proposal is to consider the acquisition of a conservation easement over 1,447± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for a cooperative project with The Trust for Public Land, for the protection of native oak woodlands habitat near Penn Valley in Nevada County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property), known as Robinson Ranch, is located in western Nevada County less than one mile from the Yuba County border in Penn Valley. More specifically, the Property is situated in the southwest quadrant of Highway 20 and Indian Springs Road, and has a physical address on Hatchet Creek Road in Penn Valley. The neighboring cities include Marysville and Yuba City to the west, Smartsville to the north and Grass Valley to the east. The Property is in close proximity to CDFW's Spenceville Wildlife Area (SWA). Beale Air Force Base is located to the south and southwest of the site.

The Property is part of the northeastern portion of the greater Sacramento area. Penn Valley is readily accessible from Sacramento via major roadways that include State Route 99/70, State Route 65, State Route 49 via Interstate 80, and State Route 20. Western Nevada County has become a popular tourist destination. It also has homeowner appeal because of the area's scenic beauty and natural surroundings, combined with an abundance of quality schools in nearby Nevada City and Grass Valley. The cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City are also hubs for commerce, population growth, and development activity. A \$25.5 million freeway interchange project, known as Dorsey Drive at State Routes 20/49, is currently underway. This project will open up commercial land development in the area, including the construction of a 170,875 sq. ft. shopping center. The new development combined with the area's steadily growing high-tech sector has contributed to its increase in population.

Robinson Ranch and its immediate neighborhood are rural agricultural properties primarily used for livestock grazing. There is, however, a large rural residential subdivision known as the Canyon Creek Estates, located approximately 3.5 miles northeast of the Property. According to a Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE) prepared by CDFW, Robinson Ranch would be targeted for future development. The LAE points out that most of the properties currently used for grazing cattle have a high likelihood of subdivision into small parcels for residential construction. Robinson Ranch has long been considered by CDFW as a high priority property for protection and conservation.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed conservation easement (Conservation Easement) would cover 11

contiguous parcels that form an irregular shape. The Conservation Easement area is unimproved with the exception of perimeter fencing, access gates and a network of dirt roads. There are various zoning designations associated with the Property that include: Open Space, AG-30, AG-40 and AG-PD. The zoning designations range from rural residential agriculture to passive recreation land. Elevations on the Property range from 700± feet above mean sea level along the southwestern boundary to 1,500± feet around the northeast corner of the Property. A large portion of the Property is rolling and hilly and includes major canyons. The Conservation Easement area also includes a large pond feature located on the southern half of the Property as well as a portion of Little Dry Creek.

The conservation values on the Property include stands of blue oak woodland, Valley oak woodland, blue oak and Valley foothill riparian forest, as well as native grasslands and seasonal wetlands in the low lands. The Property has high quality habitat that includes open space grasslands and oak woodlands, and is part of an important wildlife migration and movement corridor. The proposed Conservation Easement will prevent the creation of islands of habitat due to future fragmentation and isolation. The area is utilized by several special status species including California black rail, the Nevada City deer herd, western pond turtle and foothill yellow frog. According to studies completed by CDFW, the oak woodland and grassland habitat on the Property supports numerous wildlife species. As many as 29 amphibian and reptile species, 57 bird species and 10 mammal species find this habitat suitable for optimum breeding. The resident wildlife species found on the Property include: acorn woodpeckers, blue birds, tree swallows, red-shouldered hawks, mourning doves, mountain lions, bobcats and deer. Oaks are also an important food source for many species of animals. Numerous wildlife species utilize the Property's annual grasslands for foraging purposes, including many birds of prey like the northern harrier, American Kestrel and black-shouldered kite. Loss of this habitat would be detrimental to the survival of birds of prey as it reduces the availability of the hunting grounds that support them.

Little Dry Creek bisects the Property before flowing southwest through the adjacent Ace Ranch, and then into the SWA where it joins Dry Creek. The CDFW currently purchases 35 miners inches of water annually from Tarr Canal to keep Little Dry Creek flowing through the summer and into fall. Little Dry Creek is an important source of water for several species of wildlife and supports numerous beaver dam ponds for fish and aquatic wildlife. Should Robinson Ranch be sold for development, the result would be the loss of irrigation and riparian habitat. The proposed Conservation Easement would permanently protect the upper reaches of Little Dry Creek, as well as support ongoing efforts of CDFW to improve habitat and protect state and federally listed fall chinook salmon and steelhead in Dry Creek, downstream from Little Dry Creek. Additionally, the Conservation Easement would provide long term protection of water quality in Hackett Creek and Little Dry Creek, as well as provide water to

blue oak woodland and valley riparian forest habitats present on the Property. Conservation of Robinson Ranch will build on WCB's and CDFW's prior investments in conservation efforts in the area and the oak woodland belt, including: Marysville Ranch Conservation Easement, Yuba Highlands Conservation Easements, Lower Yuba River – Excelsior and Black Swan acquisitions.

### WCB PROGRAM

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

### STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The project meets WCB's Strategic Plan goals:

A.1 - Fund projects and landscapes that provide resilience for native wildlife and plant species in the face of climate change.

The Property will expand the corridor of protected properties as part of an integral extension of the SWLA, and allow expansion to the east into Nevada County. This eastward expansion from the gently rolling hills of the of SWLA's lower Sierra foothills into properties located along the spawning waters of the Yuba River and Dry Creek into open grasslands and oak woodlands provides movement and essential habitat for native wildlife in light of the present changes in climate.

A.2 - Fund projects and landscape areas that conserve, protect, or enhance water resources for fish and wildlife.

A three quarter mile section of Little Dry Creek bisects the Property before ultimately emptying into Dry Creek on CDFW's SWA. The Conservation Easement will permanently protect the upper reaches of Little Dry Creek, which is essential for the protection of both state and federally listed fall chinook salmon

and steelhead, by avoiding disruptions of water flow by development. Water from Little Dry Creek is essential for providing quality habitat for both plants and wildlife.

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS**

According to the terms of the Conservation Easement, CDFW will monitor and enforce the terms of the Conservation Easement with the use of a Baseline Conditions Report. CDFW has determined that existing staff resources will be sufficient to monitor the Conservation Easement. Monitoring will be conducted by CDFW in conjunction with other activities at SWA. Since the Conservation Easement is on private land, public access will not be allowed absent landowner approval. Livestock grazing will be permitted to continue.

**TERMS**

The Conservation Easement has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$2,220,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The property owner has agreed to sell the Conservation Easement for \$2,120,000.00. WCB staff will review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. Once approved by the WCB the transaction must also be reviewed and approved by DGS.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$2,120,000.00
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$2,120,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$15,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$2,135,000.00</b>

It is estimated that an additional \$15,000.00 will be needed to cover project related administrative costs, DGS appraisal and transaction review and escrow and title insurance costs.

**WCB FUNDING SOURCE**

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding sources that: allows for the acquisition of habitat, including native oak woodlands and to protect deer and mountain lions [Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a)] and; allows for the acquisition and protection of habitat that protects habitat corridors, significant natural landscapes and ecosystems that include oak woodlands [Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b)].

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION**

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

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,128,632.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) and \$6,368.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b) for the acquisition and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

20. Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area, Expansion 14 \$2,630,000.00  
Yuba County

This proposal is to consider the acquisition in fee of 732± acres of land by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for the protection of blue oak woodland, riparian habitat along South Honcut Creek, winter range for the Mooretown deer herd, and to provide future wildlife oriented public use opportunities as an expansion to the CDFW's Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area located near Browns Valley, in Yuba County.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located in the Sierra Foothills, in northeastern Yuba County, near the community of Loma Rica. The Property is adjacent to the Wildlife Area and northeast of the University of California Foothill Research and Extension Center.

The northwestern Sierra Foothill region has been identified by CDFW and other conservation groups as one of the most impacted habitat areas in the state as a result of increased urban and residential development, which causes fragmentation of larger habitat areas into smaller acreage sites. Over the last 40 years, the northern Central Valley areas have undergone rapid residential and urban development. Some of this growth has extended into and impacted the adjoining foothills areas. As a result, what were once large tracts of undeveloped land and ranches have been subdivided into smaller holdings and ranchette-type developments. This fragmentation has especially impacted wildlife migration corridors that run between the valley floor up into the higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

The Property provides excellent and essential deer winter range. The Property is located along the migratory corridor for the Mooretown deer herd, comprising a portion of the herd's lower elevation wintering grounds and important foraging habitat. CDFW has recognized the need to protect this area through development of the CDFW Daugherty Hill Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The Property is listed in the CAPP as a priority acquisition because of the Property's habitat values and location within the migration corridor for the Mooretown deer herd.

In 2012, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approved the acquisition of fee title to 679+/- acres surrounding the Property. If approved, this acquisition will provide CDFW with 1,411+/- acres of contiguous ownership as an expansion of the Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property consists of rolling to steep ground with elevation ranges from approximately 500 – 800 feet above sea level. Blue oak woodlands dominate the site, which also contains annual grasslands, interior live oak, gray-pine

woodlands, and Central Valley oak riparian habitat. There are fresh emergent wetlands, wet meadows, seasonable wetlands, and seasonal swales throughout the Property. This habitat supports a wide variety of wildlife including foothill yellow-legged frogs, wild turkey, quail, mountain lion, bobcat, the valley elderberry longhorn beetle, and the northwestern pond turtle. Suitable nesting and foraging habitat for raptors is also found on the Property. The Property also has frontage on South Honcut Creek, a major foothill tributary of the Yuba River.

### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition is being considered 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.*) that 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.

### STRATEGIC PLAN

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 provides essential winter range and expands an existing migratory corridor for the Mooretown deer herd. The Property also provides habitat linkage for several native species between the Central Valley and the Sierra 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 A.2 Fund projects and landscape areas that conserve, protect or enhance water resources for fish and wildlife.

This project will provide several miles of frontage on South Honcut Creek, a major foothill tributary of the Yuba River. Protection of the creek's natural floodplain and riparian vegetation will allow for improved water quality and reduction of downstream flooding on the lower portions of the Yuba River.



Goal A.4 Invest in priority conservation projects recommended under CDFW's land acquisition evaluation process or within other conservation plans supported by CDFW.

The Property is listed in the CAPP as a priority acquisition by CDFW because of the habitat values and the location within the migration corridor for the wintering Mooretown deer herd.

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

Recreational opportunities in the Wildlife Area include hunting, hiking, bird watching, photography, bicycling and equestrian uses. The additional 732+/- acres will add even more outdoor opportunities.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CDFW will be the owner in fee simple and will add this Property to the adjacent Wildlife Area. CDFW regional staff anticipates that nominal management costs would be associated with some perimeter fencing and signage for the Property. Given the Property's location adjacent to the Wildlife Area, additional management funds for staffing will not be required. Public access to the Wildlife Area is currently provided for low-impact recreational activities, including hunting, fishing, hiking, bird watching, and photography. In addition, bicycling and equestrian use are allowed during summer months.

#### TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$2,600,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The Property owner has agreed to sell the property for the appraised fair market value of \$2,600,000.00.

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. Once approved by the Board, the transaction will also be subject to review and approval by DGS.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Wildlife Conservation Board	\$2,600,000.00
TOTAL Purchase Price	2,600,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	\$30,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$2,630,000.00</b>

It is estimated that \$30,000.00 will be needed to cover project-related expenses, including DGS review costs, escrow fees and closing costs, bringing the total proposed allocation for this project to \$2,630,000.00.

**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) that allows for the acquisition of habitat, including native oak woodlands, necessary to protect deer and mountain lions.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION**

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

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$2,630,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) for the acquisition and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

21. Long Gulch Ranch \$876,000.00  
Tuolumne County

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Mother Lode Land Trust to acquire in fee 576± acres of land for the protection of habitat that supports threatened and endangered species, and to provide habitat linkages and corridors between existing protected lands that support native species and to offer potential future wildlife oriented public use opportunities, located approximately six miles northeast of the community of Groveland, in Tuolumne County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject Property (Property) is located in western Tuolumne County, six miles northeast of the community of Groveland, and approximately 24 miles west of Yosemite National Park in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Tuolumne County stretches from the foothills bordering the Central San Joaquin Valley in the west and the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the east. State Route 120 is located just south of the Property and is one of the County's main transportation routes. Primary access to the Property is by way of Ferreti Road, which runs north off of State Route 120 from Groveland and bisects the Property in an east-west direction. Clinton road, a public paved road running south off of Ferreti Road, also offers access to the southwest boundary of the Property.

The Property is located in an area comprised primarily of open forested land with rural residential use being predominant. The threat of residential development is a major concern, as the western boundary of the Property is adjacent to the Pine Mountain Lake Development, a private gated community consisting of 3,500 residential lots that surround the shores of Pine Mountain lake. The development includes an 18-hole public golf course, airport, restaurant and lounge. Encroaching from the east and northeast are rural residential home sites and small ranches with cattle grazing operations. The southern boundary abuts the western edge of the Stanislaus National Forest.

The majority of protected lands in Tuolumne County are owned and managed by federal agencies that include the United States Forest Service, National Park Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. WCB has had limited participation in protecting lands in this area. If the proposed project is approved by WCB, the acquisition will be a recognizable accomplishment. The project location is identified in California's Wildlife Action Plan (CWAP) in the Sierra Nevada and Cascades Region. The specific CWAP action plan for this region recommends its support in areas where substantial development is projected. The action plan also recommends that state and federal land management agencies should identify and protect from development those properties that have critical wildlife migration or dispersal corridors that cross ownership boundaries and county jurisdictions, as in this project.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The property consists of five contiguous parcels that form an irregular "L" shape in a north to southeast direction totaling 576± acres. The topography varies from moderately sloping to steep rolling terrain with habitat that is transitional between annual grassland, oak woodland, mixed hardwood-pine, and conifer forest. Wet meadows are scattered throughout the Property, and a riparian corridor created by the seasonal, Long Gulch Creek, runs east to west along the southern boundary. Since the Property includes these important ecological features, it provides habitat for several wildlife species that are associated with the Sierra Nevada landscape. The most notable are a nesting pair of the California endangered great gray owls. One of these gray owls has been tracked by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) using radio-telemetry. Owl activities seem to follow the contours of Long Gulch Ranch, and its range extends into the adjacent Stanislaus National Forest. The Property also provides winter range for the migratory Yosemite and Tuolumne deer herds. Other wildlife species frequently seen on the Property include mule deer, black bear, wild turkey, and California quail.

Historically the Property has been used for cattle grazing; however, the Property is currently leased by several local equestrian clubs for equestrian and hiking activities. The trails have been developed in areas that limit the disturbance on resident wildlife, including the nesting pair of gray owls. The owls have persisted on the Property with these activities and without active management. MLLT will assess and monitor the impact of current allowable uses when considering the renewal of the leases.

Plans for a future golf course and master planned community subdivision have been proposed in various forms for years. Just recently in 2005, the Property was sold for the purpose of developing a major residential community. The required zoning was approved by the county planning division, but due to the economic downturn and the slowdown in the real estate market the development never occurred. The zoning has recently reverted from a broad range of residential and planned development to agriculture/rural residential use.

### WCB PROGRAM

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

property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation /Conceptual Area Protection Plan (LAE/CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

#### WCB STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

This project is guided by the WCB strategic Plan and supports the following Strategic Plan Goals:

Goal A.2 Fund Projects and landscape areas that conserve, protect, or enhance water resources for fish and wildlife.

The series of wet meadows distributed throughout the Property provide foraging habitat and cover for small mammals, mule deer, and for great gray owls. They also provide deer fawning sites and habitat for bird nesting. Various frogs and reptiles also frequent this habitat type.

Goal A.4 Invest in priority conservation projects recommended under CDFW's land acquisition evaluation process or within other conservation plans supported by CDFW.

CDFW Region 4 – Central Region along with the Regional Operations Committee have reviewed and approved a Land Acquisition Evaluation for this Property. The Property was evaluated for its biological, management, connectivity, public use, and recreational factors which led to the recommendation for WCB to fund this project.

C.1 Support a wide range of recreational activities (e.g. hunting, fishing, birding, hiking, camping, photography, etc.) in conjunction with other land uses and degrading environmental resources.

The Property currently supports a system of trails for equestrian and public hiking. Future management plans of MLLT include enhancement of existing trails with interpretive signage and the potential to add additional trails.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Mother Lode Land Trust staff and its volunteers will manage and protect the conservation values of the property that includes mule deer winter range, habitat for the great gray owl, and the meadows and other ecological features on the Property. Future plans may include the installation of fencing for managed grazing, and the enhancement of an existing equestrian and public hiking trail system with interpretive signage. The MLLT will manage and maintain the property and anticipates developing a citizen based monitoring program comprised of individuals who already recreate on the property. Revenue to manage the property will be funded by an endowment set up by the MLLT.

Established in 1990, the MLLT currently holds 19 conservation easements and owns over 2800± acres in the foothill landscape of the Central Sierra Nevada range. The conservation easements and owned property, including Long Gulch Ranch, contain similar habitat, such as oak woodland, chaparral, and mixed coniferous forests. Because of its experience in managing similar habitat and land in this area, MLLT is more than qualified to hold and manage the Property in perpetuity.

**TERMS**

The property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$1,070,000.00. 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 a discount price of \$856,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant to the Mother Lode Land Trust provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms the WCB can 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	\$856,000.00
Total Purchase Price	\$856,000.00
Other Project Related Admin. Costs	\$20,000.00
<b>WCB TOTAL ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$876,000.00</b>

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

**WCB FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding source for this project is Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c). This fund allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION**

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

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

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$876,000.000 from the Habitat Conservation (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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

22. Grasslands and Mendota Wildlife Areas Enhancement \$853,000.00  
Merced and Fresno Counties

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to California Waterfowl Association for a cooperative project with the Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to conduct a survey and provide fencing, earthwork, and water supply infrastructure to enhance ±70 acres of habitat on four wildlife areas managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, in Merced and Fresno Counties.

LOCATION

The project will occur on four CDFW Wildlife Areas (WA) including the North Grasslands WA located approximately six miles north of the town of Los Banos, Los Banos WA located approximately four miles north of the town of Los Banos, and Volta WA located approximately one mile north of the town of Volta on Ingomar Grade, all in Merced County. The fourth WA, Mendota WA, is located approximately three miles south of the town of Mendota in Fresno County.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The CDFW manages four WAs in Merced and Fresno Counties to provide habitat for waterfowl and many other species. These areas require intense water management. The current drought has magnified water supply issues of the Grasslands and Mendota Area WAs. This project is comprised of two different types of tasks. The first type will help improve water efficiency by completing pump rehabilitations, pump piping work, pump flow meters, water delivery ditch cleaning, well abandonment, and earthwork. The other tasks will complete legacy habitat restoration issues, including identifying property lines and providing fencing to allow for grazing for habitat management and to prevent trespass.

The project proposes the following;

Water Supply – The proposal includes well refurbishment of two deep wells on the China Island Unit of the North Grasslands WA. China Island is the only WA or unit within this proposal capable of flooding with subsurface water. This alternative water source allows for flexibility in the use of surface water supply, which can then be transferred to areas like Mendota WA as was done in 2014. Three lift pumps are also proposed to be rehabilitated on Mendota WA along with three more on the China Island Unit. Low lifts are used heavily on Mendota WA for both flood up and drainage. The proposal also calls for the removal of sediment and vegetation from water supply ditches. All of these activities will allow for water to be delivered with less waste and at a lower cost.

Water Measurement Meters – Eleven different flow meters are proposed to be installed on Los Banos WA. The flow and totalizer meters are required by the United States Bureau of Reclamation, which supplies water to the four areas. In addition, the meters will allow the CDFW to more accurately manage the water that is made available.



Pump Discharge Piping - Four different deep well and lift pump pipelines are proposed for replacement to improve water delivery efficiency on the Los Banos WA.

Well Abandonment – Up to ten different old and abandoned wells are scheduled for capping to maintain the quality of the groundwater. The wells are located on Los Banos, North Grasslands, and Volta WA's.

Earthwork – A 27-acre upland unit on the Los Banos WA will be graded to reduce water consumption during dry years, and a low levee will be constructed to allow the area to be flooded in normal years to provide managers with the ability to drown the invasive plant pepperweed.

Survey – A survey is proposed to identify the property boundary, and fencing will be constructed to prevent trespass.

Fencing - Old fence material will be removed and replaced with up to 25,250 feet of 5-strand barbed wire fencing. There will be up to eight 10' gates added to allow access. The fencing will delineate the WA boundary, stop trespassing, and provide for future management through grazing.

The project will benefit local and migrating waterfowl and shorebirds, as well as other wetland dependent species. The Grasslands and Mendota regions in the central San Joaquin Valley support more than one million waterfowl at peak times in winter, as well as thousands of shorebirds and other wetland associated wildlife. Shorebird numbers peak in spring at over 100,000, but are also common residents and fall migrants. The riparian areas support nesting Swainson's hawks. Volta WA also contains the last viable population of giant garter snakes in the entire Grasslands Ecological Area.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed project will be funded through the Inland Wetland Conservation Program (Fish and Game Code Section 1400, et seq.) and meets the program's goal of assisting the Central Valley Joint Venture's (CVJV) mission to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands and associated habitats within California's Central Valley. This project will contribute to meeting the CVJV's annual seasonal wetland enhancement goal of 6,752 acres, as identified in its Implementation Plan.

The project is consistent with the following goals outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan:

Goal B.1 – Invest in projects and landscape areas that help provide resilience in the face of climate change, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife and enhance habitats on working lands.

- Water supply versatility will enhance water resources for wildlife, in all years, wet or dry
- Pump discharge piping replacement will eliminate water waste and therefore enhance water resources for fish and wildlife
- Earthwork and levee construction will enhance management capabilities and habitat by providing WA manager efficient way to manage invasive species.

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS**

The restored habitats will be managed by CDFW staff pursuant to the relevant WA management plan. The upgraded infrastructure will allow CDFW to manage these properties with less effort and at a lower cost as well as utilize water more efficiently.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

Task	Total Cost	WCB	CDFW
Survey	\$32,000	\$32,000	-
Fencing	\$87,000	\$81,000	\$6,000
Earthwork	\$34,700	\$34,700	-
Water Efficiency	\$609,500	\$590,500	\$19,000
Project Management	\$114,800	\$114,800	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$878,000</b>	<b>\$853,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>

Specific Components of the proposal include: a survey; installation of up to 25,250 feet of five-strand barbed wire fencing, installation of up to eight, ten foot access gates; removal of up to 25,250 feet of old fence; construction of a levee; enhancement of 27 acres of managed upland; abandonment of up to 10 wells; replacement of above ground piping and manifolds of two low lift pumps and two deep wells; installation of 11 flow meters on pumps; rehabilitation of six low lift pumps and two deep wells; assistance in the purchase of a delivery ditch cleaning device.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

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

**CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION**

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA

Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15301, Class 1, as the repair or minor alteration of existing facilities, equipment or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use, and Section 15304, Class 4, as minor alterations in the condition of land, water and/or vegetation which do not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$853,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program; 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.

23. Santa Cruz Integrated Watershed Restoration, \$465,000.00  
Phase II  
Santa Cruz County

To consider the allocation for a grant to the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County (RCDSCC) for a cooperative project with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the California Conservation Corps (CCC), the Coastal Conservancy (SCC), State Water Resources Control Board, and a private landowner to restore riparian habitat in areas critical to special status amphibian and fish species, located on two coastal watersheds in Santa Cruz County.

#### LOCATION

The two project locations are in the San Vicente Creek and Soquel Creek watersheds in the Davenport and Aptos areas. The larger landscapes around the project sites are primarily agricultural, forest, or rural private properties within Santa Cruz County. The topography of western Santa Cruz County is variable, ranging from flat agricultural fields to steep slopes. Local elevations range from 100 feet to about 3,000 feet, with a wide range of vegetation community types including grasslands, sandhills, redwood forests, riparian woodland, coastal scrub, closed cone coniferous forest, mixed evergreen forest, chaparral, foothill woodlands, oak savannah grasslands, and agricultural crops. The county has seen a variety of high and low impact land-uses over the past 150 years including logging, selective timber harvesting, quarrying, mining, irrigated agriculture, ranching and urbanization. All of these land uses have had direct and indirect impacts on wildlife habitat, reducing habitat diversity and complexity.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Integrated Watershed Restoration Program (IWRP), established by staff from the RCDSCC, SCC, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Coastal Watershed Council, and the City and County of Santa Cruz, has become the planning group which identifies ways to carry out the recommendations of eight different watershed implementation plans developed in the late 1990s. The goal of the IWRP is to identify and prioritize restoration projects and streamline the government permitting process. Since 2002, the IWRP team has worked on numerous instream, floodplain, riparian, and wetland enhancement projects in the Santa Cruz watersheds. Located near the coast, the watersheds provide habitat for a number of federally and state listed threatened and endangered species, including the California red-legged frog, Santa Cruz long-toed salamander, California tiger salamander, San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat, steelhead, and coho salmon.

The IWRP focuses on identifying land management practices that are linked to degradation of aquatic habitats, and then works with landowners change those practices and to develop projects to restore the affected habitats. The IWRP provides a permitting mechanism for landowners to obtain approvals or agreements from all local, state, and federal agencies that have permitting

authority, restoration goals and species recovery requirements. The IWRP often works with multiple landowners simultaneously to develop small, environmentally beneficial projects such as stream bank protection, gully stabilization, culvert repair/replacement, erosion control structures, exotic vegetation removal, and fish stream habitat improvement projects within Santa Cruz County.

The two restoration projects proposed to be funded by this grant have been identified by the IWRP team as high priorities for conserving wetland dependent species in the county. The proposed projects are described in detail below.

**San Vicente Creek** – Located in the Santa Cruz Mountains, the San Vicente Creek is a coastal watershed that drains an 11 square mile area. Its headwaters are located at an elevation of approximately 2,600 feet at Camp Ben Lomond and its main stem flows for about nine miles before entering the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Pacific Ocean just south of the town of Davenport. San Vicente Creek is characterized by steep bedrock uplands leading to sequences of elevated marine terraces. The unique geology of the watershed allows for percolation of water deep into limestone formations to provide a perennial source of cool water to the stream.

In 2009, a project was successfully implemented to reconnect an existing backwater pond with the stream, create a series of pools, and restore riparian habitat. Post implementation monitoring by the National Marine Fisheries Service and RCDSCC showed that the restored creek provided critical refuge for amphibian and fish species during high stream flows. However, in 2010, a plug of sediment from an inactive shale quarry located upslope was deposited into the pond. The sediment source was determined to be a one-time event that decreased the capacity and functionality of the pond to such an extent that the goals of the earlier project are no longer being met.

The proposed project involves removing 120-150 cubic yards of material from the pond to clean it out and regain depth for species use. The removed material will be disposed on site in an appropriate location. Two small alders will be removed to increase sunlight to the pond and sedges and rushes will be planted near the cleared area to improve breeding conditions for the California red-leg frog.

**Soquel Creek** – This project will enhance in-stream, riparian, and floodplain habitat, stabilize an existing landslide, and improve stream flow along 1,250 feet of the East Branch of Soquel Creek while ensuring current levels of flood protection for two adjacent homes and a bridge.

The project includes the following project elements while ensuring existing flood protection levels are maintained:

Riparian Enhancement - The project reach currently has 5,500 cubic yards of large rock rip-rap, ranging from 2-6' in diameter, along the left bank (facing

downstream) of the stream channel. Approximately 1,500 to 2,000 cubic yards of rock will be removed along 600 feet of stream to create new flood terraces. In areas where rock will be removed, the banks will be sloped back gently, or benched, and planted using a combination of container plants, seeding and live tree stakes to improve riparian canopy. The remaining rock will be kept onsite for continued bank and flood protection. Voids in the remaining rock will be backfilled with native alluvial material and planted with riparian tree species.

**Landslide Protection** - The toe of the existing landslide has been identified as contributing more sediment to the stream than any other single location in the watershed. It will be reconstructed with vegetated rock slope protection to protect against further erosive forces from the stream and a bench will be constructed to contain and incorporate future material and allow for the slope above to stabilize. Large woody debris (LWD) will be installed at the toe of the slope to promote pool development and habitat complexity. Above the rock slope protection, a fabric wrapped soil lift will be installed to allow for planting and further protection of the slope. This will provide protection extending up to, or above, the 10- year water surface elevation, and will be capable of withstanding a 100-year flood event.

**Channel Complexity** - Large rocks and LWD will be installed throughout the project reach to create conditions that help restore natural geomorphic processes such as scour, deposition, and meander, resulting in a more defined and complex low-flow channel and improved habitat conditions for a suite of listed species.

**Floodplain Connectivity** - Flood terraces will be created in areas where rock rip-rap will be removed and at least one high flow secondary channel will be constructed to reconnect the channel with a portion of its floodplain.

### WCB PROGRAM

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

The project is consistent with the following priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan:

Goal B.1 – Invest in projects and landscape areas that help provide resilience in the face of climate change, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife and enhance habitats on working lands:

- Improving backwater habitat will benefit a variety of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species, restore geomorphic function and floodplain connectivity, and increase flood protection.
- Increasing sunlight exposure at San Vicente Creek through selective tree removal and planting emergent vegetation will improve breeding conditions

for the California red-leg Frog.

- Re-establishment of San Vicente Creek pools provide critical refuge for amphibian and fish species, such as Steehead, Coho, and California Red Legged Frogs, especially during high stream flows.
- Reducing the high levels of reflectivity within Soquel Creek from the exposed rock and low levels of canopy shade will improve water quality by lowering water temperatures from their current levels, benefiting fish and amphibians.
- Reconstructing the toe of the slide in Soquel Creek will reduce the fine sediment deposition downstream, promote pool development and increase habitat complexity.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

**San Vicente Creek** – The RCDSCC and CCC volunteers will conduct annual monitoring, including ongoing photo documentation, of the site for three to five years. It is anticipated that revegetation is the only project element that will require maintenance and management. This will occur for the first two to three years following project completion, or until plants are established, and have met the success criteria identified for the project. BLM, as the property owner, is committed to the long-term success of this project and will be responsible for plant maintenance.

**Soquel Creek** - The primary project element that will require ongoing maintenance is the revegetation component. The landowners are committed to the long-term plant maintenance, and the RCDSCC is obligated by the grant agreement to assure compliance. RCDSCC has worked with the design team on establishing the success criteria for revegetation. The lead landowner, in coordination with the RCDSCC and CCC volunteers, will monitor plant establishment at least annually each year for three to five years. In the first year following project implementation, it is expected that the landowners will irrigate plants weekly and then bi-weekly in the second year as needed to ensure successful establishment. The landowners will be responsible for weeding in/around the planted areas at least twice in the first year following implementation. RCDSCC will work in coordination with the landowners to replace plants, if needed, to meet the specified success criteria.

If at any time during the 25-year life of the project, RCDSCC does not assure the project improvements are maintained, 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**

<b>Line Item</b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Total</b>
Construction	\$378,500	\$83,094	\$461,594
Consultants	\$63,000	\$118,994	\$181,994
Personnel	\$9,700	\$8,075	\$17,775
Project Administration	\$13,800	\$3,414	\$17,214
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$465,000</b>	<b>\$213,577</b>	<b>\$678,577</b>

Match for the project comes from a variety of sources, including the BLM, CCC, SCC, and the State Water Resources Control Board. WCB funding will contribute to sediment removal, tree removal, revegetation, mobilization/demobilization, site preparation, dewatering, installation of irrigation, monitoring, and installation of erosion control measures.

The IWRP has a long history restoring wetland and riparian habitat in Santa Cruz County since 2002, the IWRP group has identified, prioritized and found funding from many different State, federal and local sources for restoration projects within the coastal watersheds of Santa Cruz County. To date, the group has received more than \$15,000,000 to implement their priority restoration work.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding source is the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E), which provides funding for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian and aquatic habitats, and is consistent with the purposes of this project.

**CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION**

As Lead Agency, the Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH 2004112063) pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration and prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Following the Board's approval of the project, staff will file a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$465,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(e/f) (Proposition 1E); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.



24. San Joaquin River Parkway \$4,500,000.00  
Sycamore Island Pond Isolation Construction Project  
Fresno and Madera Counties

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) for a cooperative project with the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) to improve an access road and a berm to isolate a gravel pit from the San Joaquin River and to restore riparian and floodplain habitat on SJRC property. The project site is located two± miles downstream of State Route (SR) 41 in Fresno and Madera Counties.

#### LOCATION

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

The proposed Sycamore Island Pond Isolation Construction Project includes work at the reclaimed Gravel Pit 46e and surrounding areas on SJRC property within the Parkway. The project is located at approximately River Mile 254± and two± miles downstream of the SR 41 bridge in Madera and Fresno counties. Portions of the project are within State Sovereign Lands under the jurisdiction of the State Lands Commission.

Prior to public acquisition by the SJRC in 2005, the Sycamore Island Fishing Access site supported a private public fishing and camping area. Since the early 1960's, six large ponds, former gravel mining pits on the site, have been used for a fee by anglers fishing for bass and other warm water fish. In 2006, the WCB and SJRC approved funding for improvements to protect environmental resources and public health and safety, necessitating temporarily closure of the site during construction. Once the improvements were completed, the SJRC re-opened the site, including fishing access, to the public. The SJRC continues to manage the site and collect user fees to cover a portion of the operational costs.

Currently, DWR is in final stages of completing a grant-funded planning and design project to isolate Gravel Pit 46e from the San Joaquin River. WCB and SJRC approved a grant, including amendments to fund the planning and design project in 2012 and 2014, respectively. DWR has prepared the preliminary designs, analysis and environmental review in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and permit documents required to implement the proposed construction project using the designs that were developed as part

of the previous grant.

The site of the proposed construction project is disturbed with little to no remaining natural topography, fragmented riparian vegetation bordering the river, and wetlands encircling the ponded water in Gravel Pit 46e. Typical of off-stream water bodies adjacent to riverine systems, Gravel Pit 46e harbors warm water fish species, predators of native cold water fish species, such as salmon that may be re-introduced to the river system in the future.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 2005, a berm separating the ponded water in Gravel Pit 46e from the San Joaquin River failed. The breach destroyed the gravel access road on the levee crown at that location and caused a direct, unimpeded connection between the gravel pit and river. Without the access road, the SJRC Sycamore Island Fishing Access site lacks secondary emergency egress from the site for the recreating public, and Parkway management, law enforcement, and emergency responders lack efficient access. The planned Parkway recreational trail between Sycamore Island and the adjacent Van Buren unit cannot be completed without replacing the failed berm. Furthermore, warm water fish living in Gravel Pit 46e will prey on reintroduced salmon.

The San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) has the stated goal of maintaining fish populations, including re-introduced salmon, in good condition in the main stem of the San Joaquin River below Friant Dam. The SJRRP identifies DWR as a party to its implementation and includes isolating or filling gravel pits as one of its highest priorities. Both SJRC and DWR have identified the need to reconstruct a stable berm and gravel road across the breach between Gravel Pit 46e and the river, and restore native vegetation and habitat along the reconstructed berm and floodplains to provide habitat for re-introduced native salmonids and other wildlife.

The proposed project is comprised of several major elements including:

- excavation for soil, sand, and gravel from borrow sites within the project area;
- reconstruction of the berm with an *equalization saddle* (described below) using excavated materials in the berm breach;
- improvement of the berm by leveling it and widening it to attain a 2:1 slope;
- reconstruction of the gravel access road on the berm crown and other access road improvements;
- floodplain construction using excavated materials;
- floodplain habitat revegetation.

The *equalization saddle* is a porous structure comprised of boulders and large cobbles that will allow the ponded water in Gravel Pit 46e to equalize its surface level with the fluctuating river level, while forming a physical barrier to fish moving in and out of the pit. Saddle porosity will allow water to pass through the boulders and cobbles more quickly than through denser berm materials such as soil.

Additionally, the saddle will have a low crown to allow water to move over the top during very high river flows. This design prevents the berm from being damaged by erosion that could otherwise occur during high flows.

Ultimately, the project will restore recreation and emergency access, improve the berm to sustain it during fluctuating river flows, facilitate the migration of re-introduced salmon and protect them from warm water predators, and create four± acres of new floodplain habitat along the river and at a water-side borrow site including riverine riparian and salmon rearing habitats. The newly isolated pond will provide additional public opportunities to fish for warm water species.

### WCB PROGRAM

WCB assists with the administration of project funding for the SJRC. The WCB, represented by its Executive Director, holds a position on the 15-member SJRC Board along with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), represented by the acting Central Region Manager. The SJRC Board reviews and approves projects to ensure they are viable and consistent with the goals of the current SJRC Parkway Master Plan (2000) (Parkway Master Plan), prior to consideration by the WCB. The SJRC Board approved this project on March 18, 2015.

The California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5), allocates funds to WCB for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration and protection of land and water resources located within the boundaries of the Parkway and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Repairing the breach and improving the berm between Gravel Pit 46e and the San Joaquin River are a critical component to restoring the river and reintroducing native salmonids to the river reach just downstream of Friant Dam. DWR has the engineering expertise and hydrogeologic data to construct the equalization saddle and floodplains, and to restore habitat to meet Parkway Master Plan and SJRRP objectives. Under the earlier planning and design project, DWR prepared the preliminary designs, analysis and environmental review in compliance with CEQA, and permit documents required to implement the proposed construction project. For the proposed project, DWR will complete the final design, bid the construction portion of the project, and provide contract management, construction oversight, and close-out. The SJRC will provide for the long-term operation and maintenance of the site.

The proposed project is consistent with the Parkway Master Plan and the River West Madera Plan, and will not conflict with county zoning or jurisdictions. The objectives of the project, to restore and enhance natural habitat for fish and wildlife within the Parkway, are consistent with the policies, goals, and objectives

in the Parkway Master Plan which summarized include:

Fundamental Goals

- Preserve and restore a riparian corridor of regional significance on the San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to the Highway 99 crossing.
- Protect wildlife species that depend on or prefer the river environment.
- Provide for conservation, education, and recreation, particularly a continuous trail.
- Protect irreplaceable natural resources in a way that will also meet recreational and educational needs.

Natural Resources Goals (NRG)

- NRG1. Promote the long-term preservation, enhancement, and public enjoyment of the aquatic, plant, and wildlife resources of the San Joaquin River and the riverbottom.

Natural Resources Objectives (NRO) and Natural Resources Policies (NP)

- NRO1. Protect the San Joaquin River as aquatic habitat and a water resource. Enhance and protect fisheries in the river and lakes in the Parkway.
- NP8.2. Preserve and incorporate natural features (e.g., wetlands, grasslands, woodlands, and other native vegetation) and supporting artificial features (e.g., lakes on reclaimed mined lands) into the development’s site design such that those features can...enhance the ecological values of the river, the wildlife corridor, a natural reserve, or the multiple purpose trail.

The proposed project is included among the highest priority projects recommended by the Interagency Project Development Committee (IPDC), whose role is to evaluate projects to be considered by the SJRC Board. The prioritization criteria relevant to the project include trail connectivity, public uses, and habitat; environmental benefits; project readiness; independent function; potential outside source of funding; achieves long-term benefits; and meets partner agency and SJRC needs.

PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Item	Description	Cost
1	Project Development and Management	\$720,000
2	Site preparation	\$125,000
3	Construct equalization saddle	\$1,170,000
4	Improve berm and access road	\$740,000
5	Floodplain Restoration	\$1,620,000

6	Construct and remove temporary river crossing	\$125,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$4,500,000</b>

Project costs will be for DWR to complete the final design, develop construction bid documents, advertise and select a bid, and provide contract management, construction oversight, and close-out.

DWR has applied to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) for \$2,000,000 for the project and USBR has indicated in a support letter to DWR that it is pursuing partial funding to contribute toward the total project cost. Formal approval by the USBR is anticipated in Fall 2015. If formal approval is given, the state funded portion of the project would be reduced by the approved amount of federal funding.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

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

**CEQA AND CDFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION**

The project ranked among the highest SJRC priorities during the most recent IPDC meeting. The project was approved for submittal to the WCB by the SJRC Board on March 18, 2015.

The SJRC, as lead agency, adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project pursuant to the provisions of 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 adopt the written findings and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$4,500,000.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

25. Metcalf Bay – 2014 RLA Grant \$731,200.00  
San Bernardino County

This proposal is to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition grant and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust (SBMLT), and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board grant to the SBMLT, to acquire in fee 17± acres of land to promote recovery of rare and endangered plant and wildlife species, located within the City of Big Bear in San Bernardino County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property), known as Metcalf Bay, is adjacent to Big Bear Lake. The Property is also adjacent to the Lake View Pines mobile home park and the City of Big Bear Civic Center. The Property is bisected by Highway 18 (aka Big Bear Blvd). The California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Baldwin Lake Ecological Reserve is located approximately nine miles to the northeast. Other uses in the area include two major ski resort facilities located several miles southeast of the Property.

The Property contains one of the largest intact remaining montane meadow habitats in the area, with a small amount of pebble plains habitat on the perimeter. Since inundation of the large Bear Valley meadow, meadow habitat in the San Bernardino Mountains has been reduced to small disconnected meadow remnants around Big Bear and Baldwin lakes, and small outlier meadows in the surrounding San Bernardino National Forest.

The Property is unimproved; however, some unauthorized grading occurred prior to 1991. On its eastern border the Property is bounded by Metcalf Creek. An unnamed creek with a significant riparian corridor flows through the western portion of the Property. The site is relatively level, sloping gently toward Big Bear Lake.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property provides important habitat for the recovery of meadow and pebble plain plant species including the federally endangered and state endangered pedate checker-mallow and the federally endangered California taraxacum (California dandelion). Urbanization is a primary threat to these species. Acquisition of the Property will help eliminate development threats, reduce habitat fragmentation and will ensure that this important area remains intact.

Species to benefit from the proposed acquisition include: the federally endangered and state endangered pedate checker-mallow, federally endangered California taraxacum (California dandelion), San Bernardino bluegrass, Bear Valley sandwort, and southwestern willow flycatcher.

Pedate checker-mallow occurs mostly on private property on the perimeter of Big Bear Lake and nearby Baldwin Lake. Acquisition of the Property would help to accomplish Recovery Task 1.11 identified in the USFWS Recovery Plan for this plant by protecting priority habitat and sites. In keeping with WCB's Strategic Plan guiding principles and primary objectives, this area was identified as a high priority site because it encompasses one of the last remaining intact meadows occupied by pedate checker-mallow on the south shore of Big Bear Lake.

### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant and subgrant 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.*), which authorizes the WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of CDFW, grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property, and accept federal grant funds to facilitate acquisitions or subgrant these federal funds to assist with acquisitions of properties. Under the Program WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities. The acquisition has been reviewed and approved by CDFW which has substantiated the biological values of the property and recommended 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, effectively leveraging WCB's funding as stipulated in our strategic plan under Goal E.1.

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.

Goal A-3 Fund projects that promote the recovery of listed species.

Acquisition of the Property will reduce major habitat fragmentation and help implement the recovery of the listed species found on or near the Property.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be owned and managed by SBMLT. The Property is natural open space, and will be maintained as such. There is an existing office structure and parking area on the adjacent Metcalf Meadow property which, in the future, might provide a location for public outreach. There is also the future potential for nature viewing, photography, and scientific study.

TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$1,803,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS) and the USFWS. The Property owners have agreed to sell the Property to the SBMLT for \$1,803,000.00. 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 grant funds each provide that WCB staff must review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary reports, agreements for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance, prior to disbursement of funds into the escrow account established for the purchase of the Property. 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	\$ 721,200.00
USFWS Subgrant Funds	<u>\$ 1,081,800.00</u>
TOTAL	\$ 1,803,000.00
Other Project-related Costs	\$ 10,000.00
<b>Total WCB Allocation</b>	<b>\$ 731,200.00</b>

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

FUNDING SOURCE

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

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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



STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; approve the acceptance of Recovery Land Acquisition grant funds from USFWS in the amount of \$1,081,800.00 and approve the subgrant of these federal funds to the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust; allocate \$731,200.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the grant to the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust and to cover the project-related costs; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

26. Santa Cruz Island Argentine Ant Elimination \$568,000.00  
Santa Barbara County

This project is to consider the allocation for a grant to The Nature Conservancy, for a cooperative project with the National Park Service to eliminate Argentine ants from Santa Cruz Island, located approximately 20 miles west of Ventura Harbor in Santa Barbara County.

LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

Santa Cruz Island (SCI) is the largest of the Channel Islands and is located approximately 25 miles south of the mainland of Santa Barbara County. Santa Cruz Island covers 96 square miles in size and has 77 miles of coastline. Two parallel mountain ranges create a major central valley and steep canyons that descend to the coastline off rugged peaks over 2,000 feet high. Twenty-four percent of SCI is owned and managed by the NPS and the remainder of the island is owned by TNC and managed as a preserve. SCI is the most biologically diverse of the eight California Channel Islands and is home to 13 endemic species including nine plants, three mammals, and one bird. Due to the extraordinary island biodiversity, the California Channel Islands are often called “The Galapagos Islands of North America.”

Native plant communities of SCI include oak woodland, chaparral, coastal sage scrub and grasslands. Historical over-grazing by sheep (removed by the early 1990s), and considerable soil and habitat disturbance by feral pigs (removed in the mid-2000s), led to severe habitat degradation and adverse effects on native species island-wide. Since the removal of sheep and feral pigs, native plant communities are recovering.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Objective 1: Argentine Ant Elimination.

Throughout the years of management by TNC and NPS, great progress has been made in reducing threats posed to native species, communities, and ecosystem processes by introduced species. However, some severe invasive species threats remain. One of these is a relatively small, but spreading infestation of invasive Argentine ants.

SCI has a fairly rich native ant fauna with 33 native species, which play important roles in the island’s natural communities. Argentine ants are particularly damaging to native ant populations. Ongoing studies on SCI and on the mainland have demonstrated that most other species of native ants disappear entirely from areas infested with Argentine ants. Significant direct and indirect impacts have been found on other insects and invertebrates, and even on native plants and vertebrate animals. Argentine ant invasions have been found to outcompete or predate on other invertebrates, interfere with the pollination and seed dispersal of plants, and impact vertebrates. For instance, studies on the mainland showed Argentine ants caused nest failures in Gnatcatchers and negatively impacted food

sources for coastal horned lizards. Research on SCI shows that Argentine ants reduce pollination of at least one endemic plant, the island morning glory, because they deter pollinating species from visiting the flowers while in turn the Argentine ants are unable to pollinate the flowers.

In general, island species are range-restricted and considered more vulnerable to competition and predation by introduced species. Therefore a chief concern stemming from the Argentine ant invasion on SCI is the potential for endemic species to become extinct. A secondary concern is the low potential risk of visitors to SCI accidentally carrying colonies to neighboring islands.

Argentine ant queens do not fly or undergo mating flights and new colonies disperse and move to new territories only on foot. This type of dispersal limits the rate of spread to about 100 meters/year. This dispersal limitation permits clear delineation of invaded areas and greatly facilitates control. The lack of flight virtually eliminates the chances of new infestations occurring at distant sites unless colonies are carried to new sites by human activities or by flood waters.

**Project sites:**

Four areas on SCI are infested with Argentine ants: the University of California research station in the central valley (Field Station), the riparian corridor downstream from the field station (Cañada del Puerto), the abandoned Navy antenna site (Navy Blue Site), and the coastal hills surrounding Valley Anchorage (Valley Anchorage). This grant would be used to completely treat and monitor each of these infestation areas using lab protocols and field tests developed between 2011 and 2014. The four areas consist of a variety of vegetation types including woodlands, scrublands and grasslands, and a few weedy areas dominated by fennel. One site includes rocky outcrops and cliffs mostly devoid of vegetation.

**Control methods:**

TNC and NPS, in partnership with universities and other federal agencies, used the most current integrated pest management science to construct the Argentine ant treatment protocol this project. TNC funded pilot tests and research to determine which traditional pesticide and concentration would achieve the highest mortality of Argentine ant queens with the least potential for impact to other species. Research indicated that a liquid insecticide, thiamethoxam, in low concentrations met this project's criteria of delayed kill of worker ants, and high queen mortality. These studies, reviewed by NPS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) staff, showed no negative effect on island fauna, including the Santa Cruz Island fox, due to ant baiting.

Bait, infused in marble-sized sugar water pellets, will be delivered by helicopter over most areas. Areas with sensitive habitat such as riparian streams will be treated by hand-delivering the bait. Sites will be treated 12 times per year, approximately every 1-4 weeks from June to October. Studies showed that it was

dramatically more cost-effective to deliver the bait via helicopter than via ground baiting.

**Monitoring:**

Treatment efficacy will be measured by monitoring Argentine ant activity in treated areas using counts of ants attracted to non-toxic baits and those seen along transects in the treated areas. Observations and data taken during 2012 and 2013 field trials demonstrated that once Argentine ants are eliminated, populations of native ants and other insects repopulate formerly infested areas from the surrounding edges. As a result, native plant pollination and seed production are expected to return to levels similar to areas outside of infested zones.

**Objective 2: Biosecurity Education and Outreach**

SCI's proximity to the mainland allows for increased visitation opportunities, but also increases the risk of invasive species introductions via visitors and boats. Over time, a number of non-native organisms have been introduced to the islands, some of which have threatened the survival of the endemic island species.

Biosecurity education is a continuing program at Santa Cruz Island. This project includes a Biosecurity Manager position, working collaboratively with NPS. This position will coordinate boat inspections, develop educational materials for kayakers and boaters, and implement the Island's Invasive Species Prevention Plan.

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

**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 following priorities outlined in the WCB Strategic Plan:

Goal B.1 – Invest in projects and landscape areas that help provide resilience in the face of climate change, enhance water resources for fish and wildlife and enhance habitats on working lands:

- Eliminating invasive Argentine ants will help maintain the diversity of native ant and other species on Santa Cruz Island.
- Enhancing populations of native ant species will contribute to the resilience and biodiversity of native species populations.
- Restoring native ant biodiversity is expected to contribute to increased

pollination and seed dispersal of native island plants, and may improve nesting success in certain avian species.

- Biosecurity programs will greatly reduce the possibility of future invasions of non-native species.

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS**

Santa Cruz Island is collaboratively managed as a whole unit by TNC and NPS, with equivalent long-term ecological goals for both partners. TNC and NPS have a successful history of implementing and managing complex scientifically-based conservation projects. Both organizations ensure that activities on either side of the land ownership boundary are complimentary and avoid conflicting land management objectives.

Preliminary data shows that pilot treatments on SCI are achieving significant treatment success. Following treatment in 2014, no ants have been found in treated areas within the past year. In contrast to invasive mammal species, when Argentine ant numbers are reduced after treatment, they disperse only locally, and will take years to expand their infestation to an area more than a dozen square meters.

Argentine ant elimination projects are challenging and follow-up monitoring will be conducted during the grant and maintenance period. The program will retain knowledgeable staff for the duration of the eradication. In 2014, TNC signed a five-year cooperative agreement with the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and their Principal Investigator has committed to long-term research on Argentine ants on the Channel Islands. A doctorate student will complete follow-up monitoring for four years after the 2015 Valley Anchorage treatment.

TNC staff will also continue monitoring treated areas for signs of Argentine ants. Staff will conduct biological monitoring throughout the project and for the 25-year life of the project. If at any time during the life of the project, TNC does not maintain the ant eradication, 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:

<b>Description</b>	<b>TNC</b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>ARGENTINE ANT ELIMINATION</b>			
Project management	\$41,000	\$108,000	\$149,000
Ant treatments and monitoring	\$210,000	\$460,000	\$670,000
<b>BIOSECURITY OUTREACH</b>			
Project management	\$35,000	0	\$35,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$286,000</b>	<b>\$568,000</b>	<b>\$854,000</b>

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.

CEQA AND DFW REVIEW/ RECOMMENDATION

The Wildlife Conservation Board, as lead agency, prepared a Negative Declaration written findings for the project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, a 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 consider the public comments received, the Negative Declaration, and adopt the Negative Declaration; approve this project as proposed; allocate \$568,000 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(b), authorize staff and the 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.

27. San Diego County Water Authority (Rancho Cielo) \$1,520,000.00  
San Diego County

The purpose 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 Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board grant to TECC to assist with the acquisition of 251± acres of land in western San Diego County to protect key regional wildlife linkages, to increase regional wildlife habitat corridors, and preserve core areas of habitat that support threatened and endangered species within the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP).

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located on Via Ambiente, within the Rancho Cielo Estates development of the unincorporated San Diego County community of Rancho Santa Fe, about 25 miles from downtown San Diego and just inland from the coastal cities of Del Mar, Solana Beach, and Encinitas. To the west of the Property is SDCWA's Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve (Reserve) and the Olivenhain Reservoir and Dam.

The Plan area encompasses approximately 992,000 acres of land within western San Diego County and southwestern Riverside County. The Plan was developed to function as an independent permitting process for SDCWA's projects and activities but one that is consistent with and complementary to the other Multiple Species Conservation and Multiple Habitat Conservation Programs in San Diego County.

The Reserve is one of the cornerstone properties in the area which is also referred to as the San Diego County coastal California gnatcatcher (gnatcatcher) core area, a key area for recovery of the gnatcatcher.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 2014, the Property was targeted for development; however, the Conservation Fund (TCF) was able to negotiate a bargain sale with the landowner provided that the closing took place by the end of the calendar year 2014. Using its own money, TCF closed the project with the intent of eventually transferring the property to TECC for management and protection in perpetuity.

The Property is listed in the USFWS Habitat Conservation Plan grant focused on properties within the Plan. The Plan covers 63 species, including 18 federally listed species and 45 unlisted species. Many of the covered species have very restricted ranges and only occur within San Diego County or other coastal areas in southern California. Within the Plan area, the direct and indirect impacts of urbanization threatens the remaining natural habitat areas which requires immediate protection and stewardship to ensure the continued viability of the

habitat and wildlife corridors found on those lands.

The Property is within the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Escondido Creek Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The properties listed in the CAPP support core gnatcatcher breeding areas and critical regional wildlife movement corridors, contain a large intact block of coastal sage scrub habitat, as well as some chaparral and riparian elements.

Acquisition of the Property will greatly benefit the gnatcatcher core area, reduce further fragmentation of the landscape and decrease impacts on an already constrained wildlife movement corridor through the gnatcatcher core area.

### WCB PROGRAM

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

### STRATEGIC PLAN

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 Property contains habitat and wildlife corridors for threatened and endangered species. In addition to the gnatcatcher, the property supports habitat for the following 6 federally listed species: thread-leaved brodiaea, southwestern willow flycatcher, least Bell's vireo, San Diego thorn-mind, San Diego ambrosia, and Encinitas baccharis. Linkages and corridors will be protected and maintained between major core habitat areas to allow for range shifts and migration of species to utilize suitable habitat as necessitated by climate change or temporary loss of habitat due to catastrophic fires or drought.

Goal A.3 Fund projects that support the implementation of Natural Community Conservation Plans, Habitat Conservation Plans and recovery of listed species.

The Plan is the most recently approved NCCP/HCP in southern California. The Plan covers 63 species, including 18 federally listed species (10 plants and 8



animals) and 45 unlisted species (16 plants and 29 animals). The Plan commits to an approximately 1,920 acres preserve area. The Property is within the Plan area and will help meet the goals of the Plan. Also, 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.

Goal A.4 Invest in priority conservation projects recommended under CDFW's land acquisition evaluation process or within other conservation plans supported by CDFW.

The Property is within the CDFW Escondido Creek Conceptual Area Protection Plan. The USFWS grant proposed for this project has also been reviewed and approved by CDFW as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition grant selection and review process.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

TECC has held and managed land for open space and wildlife values since 1998 and currently manages 950+/- acres in the vicinity of the Property. As part of this transaction, TCF will provide an endowment to TECC to assist with the management of the property.

Public benefits from this acquisition may include carbon sequestration, enhanced water quality, protection of viewsheds, and biodiversity conservation. There is the potential for possible future public access which could include docent led tours and nature walks.

#### TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$5,450,000.00. 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. TCF has agreed to sell the property for the reduced value of \$4,500,000.00. The USFWS grant funds require a non-federal match that will be provided by WCB.

The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and subgrant of USFWS funds to TECC provide that WCB staff 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/subgrant terms, WCB can require the Grantee/Subgrantee under the grants 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:

WCB – Subgrant of federal funds	\$3,000,000.00
WCB grant (non-federal match)	\$1,500,000.00
Other Project-related costs	\$20,000.00
<b>Total WCB allocation</b>	<b>\$1,520,000.00</b>

It is estimated that above project-related administrative costs will include DGS appraisal review. TCF and TECC will fund all escrow, title insurance costs and other related closing costs.

FUNDING SOURCE

The purpose of this project is consistent with 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 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 \$1,520,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) to cover the grant amount and project-related expenses; accept the USFWS Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$3,000,000.00 and authorize the subgrant of these funds to The Escondido Creek Conservancy; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

28. California Streamflow Enhancement Program Informational/Action

Staff will present the final program guidelines and an overview of the Proposal Solicitation Package for the California Streamflow Enhancement Program, a program created in the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) under Proposition 1 (Water Bond), approved by California voters on November 4, 2014. The Water Bond authorizes \$200,000,000.00 to be administered by the WCB (Water Code Section 79733, subject to appropriation by the Legislature) for projects that result in enhanced stream flows.

Grants by WCB will be made through a competitive process in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and other partners with the goal of providing, securing and protecting enhanced water flows in priority stream systems statewide to achieve a number of the conservation objectives outlined in the California Water Action Plan. These objectives may include, but are not limited to: restoring central valley tributary salmonid habitat, restoring coastal watersheds, contributing to 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, and could include water efficiency projects, conjunctive use, off stream storage, groundwater storage banks, habitat restoration, and water transactions (such as purchase of water rights, lease or seasonal exchange). For example, investments in the Klamath Basin could build on water transaction work under way 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. In desert streams of southern California, improved groundwater management could be critical to improving habitat for birds and fish.

In all instances, however, the importance of the subject stream reaches for fish and wildlife and the amount, timing, duration, and quality of water necessary to drive effective ecological outcomes must be clearly identified. Appropriate monitoring plans and measurement will also be critical to establishing appropriate flow targets and protecting restored water for the intended conservation outcomes and successes over time.

WCB prepared competitive grant program guidelines (Guidelines) and posted the draft on the WCB website, [www.wcb.ca.gov](http://www.wcb.ca.gov) ([Draft Prop. 1 Guidelines](#)). Public input was received from visitors to this site and at the three public meetings held jointly by WCB and CDFW in early April in northern, central and southern California consistent with Water Bond requirements. The Guidelines have been updated to address public comments received by WCB. The Guidelines now include specific selection criteria and additional information clarifying the

procedures for project development. In addition to the Guidelines, WCB is preparing a draft Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP). The PSP includes specific guidance to applicants, including how the selection criteria will be scored and a complete application form.

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the Guidelines and authorize staff to finalize and release the PSP to the public as soon as the 2015/16 State budget is passed.