

STATE OF CALIFORNIA-NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY

EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**

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

Minutes

September 4, 2013

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**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**

September 4, 2013

The Wildlife Conservation Board met on Wednesday, September 4, 2013, at the State Capitol, Room 112, in Sacramento, California. Mr. Michael Sutton, President of the California Fish and Game Commission, called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M. Mr. John Donnelly, Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board, performed the roll call. The following Board members/staff were present at this meeting: Ms. Karen Finn, Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance; Mr. Michael Sutton, President of the CA Fish and Game Commission; Mr. John Donnelly, Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board; Ms. Natalya Kulagina, Mr. Donnelly's Assistant; Ms. Rachelle Caouette, Senator Fuller's representative; and Ms. Diane Colborn, Assembly Member Rendon's representative.

1. Roll Call

**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS**

Ana Matosantos, Member  
Director, Department of Finance  
Vice, Karen Finn

Michael Sutton, Member  
President, Fish and Game Commission

**JOINT LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Senator Jean Fuller  
Vice, Rachelle Caouette

Assembly Member Anthony Rendon  
Vice, Diane Colborn

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

John P. Donnelly

September 4, 2013, WCB Board Meeting Minutes

**Wildlife Conservation Board staff present:**

**John P. Donnelly**, Executive Director  
**Dave Means**, Assistant Executive Director  
**Peter Perrine**, Assistant Executive Director  
**Ashley Lackey**, Staff Services Analyst  
**Bill Gallup**, Senior Land Agent (RA)  
**Brian Gibson**, Senior Land Agent  
**Candice Marg**, Associate Land Agent  
**Celestial Baumbach**, Staff Services Analyst  
**Chad Fien**, Public Land Management Specialist IV  
**Colin Mills**, Staff Counsel  
**Cynthia Alameda**, Budget and Fiscal Officer  
**Dawn Otiz-Drown**, Grant Coordinator

**Elizabeth Hubert**, Public Land Management Specialist IV  
**Erin Ingenthron**, Office Technician (Typing)  
**Jasen Yee**, Associate Land Agent  
**Kurt Weber**, Senior Land Agent  
**Liz Yokoyama**, Senior Land Agent  
**Lloyd Warble**, Staff Services Analyst  
**Nancy Templeton**, Chief Counsel  
**Natalya Kulagina**, Executive Assistant  
**Roxanne Woodward**, Budget and Fiscal Officer (RA)  
**Scott McFarlin**, Public Land Management Specialist IV  
**Teri Muzik**, Senior Land Agent  
**Terry Roscoe**, Public Land Management Specialist IV

**Others present:**

**Chris Hayes**, Department of Fish and Wildlife  
**Monica Schmalinberger**, Senator Pavley's Office  
**Katherine Kynett**, Delta Conservancy  
**Virginia Getz**, Ducks Unlimited, Inc.  
**Darla Guenzler**, CA Council of Land Trusts

**John Carlon**, River Partners  
**Julie Rentner**, River Partners  
**Michael Cook**, River Partners  
**David Neubert**, River Partners  
**Brian Beck**, Western Riverside County RCA

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Mr. Donnelly reported that agenda item #2, the funding status, provides the information to the Board and public on status of all of the Wildlife Conservation Board (Board/WCB) funds. Mr. Donnelly added that he would be happy to answer any questions on that item. Mr. Sutton commented that we have about \$350 million left in our coffers, not counting what we are going to approve today, and he keeps getting rumors that people are under the impression that all that money had been allocated ahead of time and there is no flexibility left. Mr. Sutton asked Mr. Donnelly to clarify that information. Mr. Donnelly responded that the recap of balances on page 5 of this agenda is a recap of all of WCB funding sources, and that money has been provided to the WCB to do projects; we do have some projects in the pipeline that would take up a portion of those funds, but they are not all committed. Mr. Donnelly went on to explain that we can't officially commit any funding until we get the Board's authorization to do so. Mr. Sutton thanked Mr. Donnelly for his comments.

2. Funding Status — Informational

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

(a)	2013-14 Wildlife Restoration Fund, (0447)	
	Budget Act	\$1,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$1,000,000.00
(b)	2013-14 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$20,663,000.00
(c)	2012-13 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-35,000.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$20,628,000.00
(d)	2011-12 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,663,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-4,677,213.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$15,985,787.00

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(e)	2010-11 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-15,390,833.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$5,277,167.00
(f)	2009-10 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-18,293,750.82</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$2,374,249.18
(g)	2008-09 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2012-13 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,668,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-15,644,079.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$5,023,921.00
(h)	2007-08 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2011-12 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,674,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-16,775,217.05</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$3,898,782.95
(i)	2006-07 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act	\$20,699,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-19,437,125.30</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$1,261,874.70
(j)	2004-05 Habitat Conservation Fund, (0262)	
	Budget Act	\$646,714.11
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$646,714.11
(k)	1999-00 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund, (0005)	
	Continuously Appropriated [Sec. 5096.350 (a)(1), (2), (4) & (7)]	\$36,100,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-30,729,330.45</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$5,370,669.55

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(l)	2001-02 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund, (6029)	
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 5096.650)	\$273,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-237,299,160.58</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$35,700,839.42
(m)	2002-03 Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002, (6031)	
	Continuously Appropriated (Sections 79565 and 79572), including Chapter 81, Statutes of 2005	\$814,350,000.00
	2003-04 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-21,000,000.00
	2004-05 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-21,000,000.00
	2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79565	-4,000,000.00
	2005-06 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-3,100,000.00
	2006-07 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-17,688,000.00
	2007-08 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-5,150,000.00
	2008-09 Budget Act Transfer to HCF from Section 79572	-1,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-672,990,883.49</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$68,421,116.51
(n)	2009-10 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act (San Joaquin River Conservancy Projects)	\$4,800,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$4,800,000.00
(o)	2009-10 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2013-14 Reappropriation)	
	Chapter 2, Statutes of 2009 (SB 8)	\$15,500,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-0.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$15,500,000.00
(p)	2008-09 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2011-12 Reappropriation)	
	Budget Act (NCCP Section 75055(c))	\$25,000,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-7,898,798.50</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$17,101,201.50

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(q)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 , (6051) (2013-14 Appropriation)	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(1))	1,279,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-1,082,790.00</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$196,210.00
(r)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2013-14 Appropriation)	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(2))	\$1,500,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-927,437.48</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$572,562.52
(s)	2007-08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051) (2013-14 Appropriation)	
	Budget Act (Section 75055(d)(4))	\$2,368,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-247,874.48</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$2,120,125.52
(t)	2006-07 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006, (6051)	
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055a)	\$164,700,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-86,324,008.50</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$78,375,991.50
	Continuously Appropriated (Section 75055(b))	\$123,525,000.00
	Previous Board Allocations	<u>-96,340,919.03</u>
	Unallocated Balance	\$27,184,080.97

**RECAP OF FUND BALANCES**

Wildlife Restoration Fund (a)	\$1,000,000.00
Habitat Conservation Fund (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i) and (j)	\$75,759,495.94
Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (k)	\$5,370,669.55
California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (l)	\$35,700,839.42
Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (m)	\$68,421,116.51
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,	

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River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (n), (o), (p), (q),  
(r),(s) and (t) \$145,850,172.01

**TOTAL – ALL FUNDS \$332,102,293.43**

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

Chapter 113, Statutes of 2000 and Chapter 715, Statutes of 2004  
Tax credits awarded through June 30, 2008 \$48,598,734.00

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

**SUMMARY OF BOND CASH**

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

<b>Bond Fund</b>	<b>Authorized GO Bond Proceeds</b>	<b>Expenditures through 07/15/13</b>	<b>Encumbrances through 06/30/13</b>	<b>Cash Balances Includes Encumbrances</b>
Proposition 12	\$12,621,973.31	\$9,241,712.56	\$101,000.00	\$3,279,260.75
Proposition 40	\$91,808,942.78	\$64,290,116.71	\$20,883,563.45	\$6,635,262.62
Proposition 50	\$127,970,436.60	\$58,127,692.31	\$42,272,121.07	\$27,570,623.22
Proposition 84	\$293,413,688.65	\$201,420,073.39	\$33,345,842.03	\$58,647,773.23
Proposition 1E	\$65,710,238.22	\$38,360,556.14	\$9,551,688.43	\$17,797,993.65
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>\$591,525,279.56</b>	<b>\$371,440,151.11</b>	<b>\$106,154,214.98</b>	<b>\$113,930,913.47</b>



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3. Special Project Planning Account — Informational

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

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

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

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

Habitat Conservation Fund .....	\$250,000.00
Wildlife Restoration Fund.....	\$10,000.00
Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund .....	\$100,000.00
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 .....	\$150,000.00

Mr. Donnelly pointed out that the balances represented here are larger than the Board is accustomed to see and commented that costs have gone up. Mr. Donnelly explained that these funds are to provide funding for pre-project costs, such as appraisal cost, appraisal review cost, phase one site assessment cost, survey cost, etc. Mr. Donnelly said that over the last year and a half appraisal costs have gone up considerably, and appraisal cost can be broken down into three categories: actual appraisal itself; appraisal review costs charged by the Department of General Services; the independent appraisal reviews for projects contemplating a contribution of \$5,000,000 or greater by WCB.

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Mr. Donnelly pointed out that we are clearly underneath the 1% total of all the funds that we have had, so we have not reached the 1% even with these amounts reflected in this agenda item.

Ms. Finn asked if the 1% is total appropriation or annual. Mr. Donnelly responded that the 1% is total of the annual appropriation. Ms. Finn asked if most of the Board's funds are continuously appropriated. Mr. Donnelly confirmed that they are and clarified that we have only taken a very small percentage of that amount over time – typically, it was 30 to 50 thousand dollars, and the biggest amount taken was \$150,000.00. Ms. Finn asked to confirm if we have ever taken more than 1%. Mr. Donnelly responded that we have never exceeded 1%.

Mr. Sutton asked if we are paying more for appraisals than other parties. Mr. Donnelly replied that we are not paying more for appraisals than anyone else, and added that it just the costs of doing them have gone up.

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4. Proposed Consent Calendar (Items 4—11)

Mr. Donnelly asked if there were any questions or public comments on the agenda items 4 through 11. There were none.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve Consent Calendar Items 4—11 as proposed in the individual agenda explanations.**

**Motion carried.**

\*5. Approval of Minutes — June 4, 2013

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the Minutes of the June 4, 2013, Board meeting.**

**Motion carried.**

\*6. Recovery of Funds

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

**\$8,746.00 to the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund**

**\$13,353.00 to the Habitat Conservation Fund**

**\$33,289.00 to the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund**

**\$38,964.26 to the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002**

**\$6,752,159.09 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**

Allensworth Ecological Reserve, Expansion 26, Tulare County

Allocated	\$2,900.00
Expended	<u>-2,900.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

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Joshua Tree North Linkage - Section 33, San Bernardino County

Allocated	\$695,000.00
Expended	<u>-686,254.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$8,746.00

**Total Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund \$8,746.00**

**HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND**

Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area, Expansion 13, Yuba County

Allocated	\$2,740,000.00
Expended	<u>-2,737,522.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$2,478.00

Habitat Restoration, Mill Creek Watershed, Del Norte County

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

Ocean Meadows, Santa Barbara County

Allocated	\$910,000.00
Expended	<u>-900,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$10,000.00

Santa Clara River Watershed, Teyton, Ventura County

Allocated	\$1,010,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,009,125.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$875.00

Swiss Ranch Conservation Easement, Expansion 4, Calaveras County

Allocated	\$555,000.00
Expended	<u>-555,000.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$0.00

**Total Habitat Conservation Fund \$13,353.00**

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

Black Mountain Preserve, Expansion 4 (Kimbler), Fresno County

Allocated	\$1,240,000.00
Expended	<u>-1,233,872.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$6,128.00

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Puma Canyon, and Expansions 1 and 2 (Swart, J. Cox, and M&B Cox),  
San Bernardino County

Allocated	\$488,000.00
Expended	<u>-471,175.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$16,825.00

## San Antonio Valley Ecological Reserve Expansion 1, Santa Clara County

Allocated	\$868,000.00
Expended	<u>-857,664.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$10,336.00

**Total California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe  
Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund                   \$33,289.00**

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

## Habitat Restoration, Mill Creek Watershed, Del Norte County

Allocated	\$3,020,000.00
Expended	<u>-2,981,035.74</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$38,964.26

**Total Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal  
and Beach Protection Fund of 2002                   \$38,964.26**

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

## Campstool Ranch, Calaveras County

Allocated	\$2,761,055.00
Expended	<u>-2,751,294.46</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$9,760.54

Laguna Mountain Skipper, Palomar Mountain (Mendenhall), San Diego  
County

Allocated	\$15,000.00
Expended	<u>-7,601.45</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$7,398.55

## Wild Cherry Canyon, San Luis Obispo County

Allocated	\$6,735,000.00
Expended	<u>-0.00</u>
Balance for Recovery	\$6,735,000.00

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**Total Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006** **\$6,752,159.09**

Mr. Donnelly reported that we typically do not have a recovery with this amount of dollars, and the \$6,735,000 is the result of the Wild Cherry Canyon project not going forward - the Board allocated \$6 million to that project, so we are recovering this funding, and it will go back into Proposition 84 and will be used for future projects.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the Recovery of Funds for the projects listed on pages 8 through 10 of the agenda and close the project accounts. Recovery totals include \$8,746.00 to the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund; \$13,353.00 to the Habitat Conservation Fund; \$33,289.00 to the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund; \$38,964.26 to the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002; and \$6,752,159.09 to the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006.**

**Motion carried.**

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- \*7. Leininger and C&R Ranches \$60,000.00  
Habitat Improvement, CEQA and Design  
Tehama County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Tehama County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD), for a cooperative project with the landowners and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to initiate planning, design, and environmental review for potential future habitat improvements on two ranches in Tehama County: the Leininger Ranch and the C&R Ranch, located approximately 10 miles east and 17 miles west of the City of Corning, respectively.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

Leininger Ranch. The 12,000-acre Leininger Ranch consists of three properties located 4.7 miles northeast of Vina off Leininger Road. Deer Creek passes within the northern and western boundaries of the ranch property. The Leininger Ranch is protected with a conservation easement held by The Nature Conservancy.

The Leininger Ranch was originally a part of Leland Stanford's 33,000-acre Vina Ranch. In addition to being currently managed as a cattle ranch, the Leininger Ranch is also used for upland game and waterfowl hunting. A hunting lodge is located on one of the ridge tops, and duck blinds are located adjacent to the large bermed ponds in the southwestern portion of the property.

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

C&R Ranch. The C&R Ranch is a 330-acre ranch located just east of Paskenta, in Tehama County, California, approximately 22 miles southwest of Red Bluff. The ranch lands are located in the Thomes Creek watershed and include a portion of Thomes Creek at the lower elevations and one unnamed intermittent creek and several ephemeral creeks that flow through the ranch.

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Much of the lower-elevation floodplain portion of the ranch was farmed historically which removed native oaks and other woody vegetation. The ranch has been extensively grazed for decades, which has suppressed the recruitment of riparian and other native vegetation.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will consist of environmental review, planning and design for habitat improvements on both ranches.

Leininger Ranch. This grant will include design, permitting, and CEQA documentation necessary to improve two existing stock ponds and five existing year round springs. The design of the stock pond repair will be completed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). TCRCD will be the lead agency for CEQA and permitting on the project.

C&R Ranch. Work includes planning, site assessments, soil analyses, design of habitat restoration, enhancement, and hedgerow planting projects for three phases of wildlife corridor improvements on the ranch. The three phases include three fenced subunits of the wildlife corridor which are associated with an intermittent stream flowing through the center of the property. Phase A would include the downstream reach of the stream and valley terraces; Phase B would include the middle reach of the stream and several ephemeral tributaries in the central portion of the ranch, including an approximately two-acre perennial pond; and Phase C would include the upstream reach of the creek and several ephemeral tributaries in the upstream portion of the ranch.

The project will include the design of approximately 1,600-feet of hedgerow plantings as habitat for wildlife and pollinators. Site assessments will include the excavation and analysis of soil pits to gain information about soil type and subsurface hydrologic conditions. Results of the site assessments will inform designs for woody vegetation, native grass restoration, emergent marsh plantings, waterfowl nesting platforms, pond turtle basking structures, and a bat roosting structure.

#### WCB PROGRAM

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

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

This project consists of environmental review and planning for future restoration activities on portions of the Leininger and C&R ranches. It is expected that recommended actions from this project on the two ranches may partially be funded through a future Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) proposal. At that time, management of the project will ultimately



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be incorporated into wildlife-friendly agricultural practices at each Ranch with TCRCD technical assistance to the landowners throughout the planned 25-year life of that project.

### PROJECT FUNDING

<u>Task Descriptions</u>	<u>Contributors</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>NRCS</u>	<u>Landowners</u>	<u>WCB</u>	
Project Administration			5,400	<b>\$5,400</b>
Project Design	6,408	1,980	31,000	<b>\$39,388</b>
Permitting and CEQA	4,000		13,700	<b>\$17,700</b>
Project Management			9,900	<b>\$9,900</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$10,408</b>	<b>\$1,980</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$72,388</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(d)(4). This funding allows for projects to assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration and wildlife protection, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE 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 15262, Planning and Feasibility Studies). Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$60,000.00 from Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(4); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$60,000.00 from Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal**

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**Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(d)(4); authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

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- \*8. CDFW Land Management Plan Knoxville Wildlife Area \$172,500.00  
Napa County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the California Wildlife Foundation for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to complete and deliver a land management plan for CDFW's Knoxville Wildlife Area located north of Lake Berryessa, in Napa County.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

Knoxville Wildlife Area (KWA) is located in the inner north coast range of California at the northeast end of Napa County about six miles north of Lake Berryessa along the Berryessa-Knoxville Road. KWA comprises over 20,000 acres of oak woodland, grassland, riparian, and chaparral habitat.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The scope of this project is to update the existing KWA land management plan (LMP) by including new land parcels, conducting basic inventories of biological resources on the new parcels, and adopting best management practices to conserve and enhance the wildlife area's natural resources. These wildlife area lands are large and have a diverse assemblage of habitat types and wildlife species. The complexity and length of the LMP will be determined by the property's management requirements.

The LMP is to be prepared according to CDFW guidelines, A Guide and Annotated Outline for Writing Land Management Plans, and other local or federal agency requirements as necessary. The LMP is to be written to fulfill CEQA and CESA requirements. The product will be suitable for CEQA review and approval.

An important part of the planning process for a LMP is inviting public input. This wildlife area is becoming more important to nearby residents as a general recreation and hunting area. The LMP must present to the public CDFW's objectives for managing the wildlife area lands and describe in some detail any potential conflicts with wildlife inherent in allowing free and uncontrolled access to the area.

The scope of work with this agreement will include delivery of a draft approved LMP and related environmental documents no later than two fiscal years from the contract start date.

#### WCB PROGRAM

Under Proposition 40, Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) specifically received funding to prepare management plans for properties acquired in fee by the WCB.

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**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

Cost estimate for the project:	
Plan Update Contracts	\$150,000.00
Grant Administration	22,500.00
<b>Total Amount Requested:</b>	<b>\$172,500.00</b>

WCB is the sole source of funding for the project. Project costs of \$172,500.00 will be for the preparation of the KWA LMP and for the circulation and finalization of the appropriate CEQA documentation for that plan.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding source for this project is the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a), which provides funding to prepare management plans for properties acquired in fee by the WCB and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION**

The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15262, Planning and Feasibility Studies). Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed the proposal and recommends it for funding by the Board.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$172,500.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a); authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$172,500.00 from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(a); authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

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- \*9. Puma Canyon, Expansions 3 and 4 \$558,000.00  
San Bernardino County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the Transition Habitat Conservancy (THC) for a cooperative project with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR), to acquire fee title to two separate properties totaling 137± acres, to conserve and protect lower montane chaparral and woodland habitat for the benefit of deer and other wildlife species that are located in the western upper Mojave Desert ecoregion.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject properties (Properties), known as Saylor (±72 ac.) and Tidwell (±65 ac.), are located within Puma Canyon, located approximately five miles south of the community of Pinon Hills, south of State Route 138. At the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB) March 2013 meeting, the Board approved the Puma Canyon acquisition and expansions 1 and 2 totaling 124± acres. These properties are located next to and adjoin the Saylor property. The Tidwell property is located approximately 1/8 mile east of this block of properties.

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

The Properties fall within the CDFW's Puma Canyon Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). Puma Canyon plays an important role in maintaining regional landscape connectivity. The main objectives of this CAPP are to conserve and enhance biodiversity, protect threatened vegetative communities along with other rare and important plants and animals and maintain habitat linkages that help protect elevation gradients that allow species to adapt to climate change. This project and CAPP also seek to protect the upper Sheep Creek Wash watershed, infiltration area, and drainage tributary, located east of the Properties. These conserved areas help protect one of the only open space habitat linkages and corridors between the Mojave Desert and San Gabriel Mountains, also providing climate change adaption benefits to wildlife by protecting an elevation gradient between the two habitat areas.

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### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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

### WCB PROGRAM

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

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

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

### PROJECT FUNDING

The Properties have been appraised as having a combined fair market value of \$553,000.00 and are broken out as follows: Saylor \$310,000.00 (72± ac) and Tidwell \$243,000.00 (65± ac). The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The terms and conditions of the grants between WCB and THC provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all

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title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB can require the grantee to encumber the Properties with a conservation easement in favor of the State or another entity approved by the State and seek reimbursement of funds.

#### FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$538,000.00</b>
CDFW-OSPR	15,000.00
Total Purchase Price	\$553,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	\$20,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$558,000.00</b>

The funds from CDFW Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) were received from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). These funds come from legal settlements arising from small hazardous waste spills. NFWF administers the funds through OSPR, and both NFWF and OSPR have reviewed and determined the project is eligible for this funding. There are no mitigation related requirements or conditions placed on the property as a result of these funds.

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

#### FUNDING SOURCE

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

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

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

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$558,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) for the grant funding and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$558,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) for the grant funding and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**



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- \*10. Burcham and Wheeler Flat, \$225,000.00  
Expansion 1 (Winter)  
Mono County

This proposal was to consider the fee title acquisition of 75± acres of land as an expansion to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) proposed Burcham and Wheeler Flat Wildlife Area, for the protection of eastern Sierra mountain sagebrush scrub areas that provide important habitat for mule deer and the greater sage grouse.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located approximately 15 miles northwest of Bridgeport, near the intersection of U.S. 395 and S.R. 108, commonly referred to as Sonora Junction. This area falls within the lower western slopes of the Sweetwater Mountain range that straddles the Nevada and California border. To west is the main stem of the Walker River. The Property lies within an approved CDFW Land Acquisition Evaluation (LAE). The LAE identifies a number of priority properties within the proposed Burcham and Wheeler Flat Wildlife Area, for protection and conservation of habitat important to the greater sage-grouse, a California Species of Special Concern. The primary habitat is Sierra mountain sagebrush and scrub, which also support deer herds that range and forage in the Sweetwater Mountains and the Walker River watershed.

On March 23, 2010 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) published its 12-month finding(s) for multiple petitions to list the greater sage grouse under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). In these findings, the Service designated greater sage grouse in the Bi-State area of California and Nevada as a distinct population segment (DPS). The Service also found that listing the greater sage grouse Bi-State DPS as threatened or endangered was warranted, but precluded by higher priority listing actions. As a result of these findings, the greater sage grouse Bi-State DPS was identified as both a distinct listing entity separate from greater sage grouse range-wide and a candidate for listing under the ESA. The greater sage grouse Bi-State DPS currently has a listing priority number of 3 (a relatively high priority). A proposed rule regarding listing of the DPS is anticipated in September 2013.

Since 2002, the greater sage grouse Bi-State Local Area Working Group (LAWG) has provided the forum and the catalyst for cooperative sage grouse conservation efforts in the Bi-State area. The LAWG was extremely active during development of the Nevada Governor's 2004 Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Plan for Nevada and Eastern California, and the LAWG continues to be a model for cooperative sage grouse conservation efforts today. The 2004 plan provided the focus for the implementation of multi-jurisdictional sage grouse conservation actions in the Bi-State area until 2012, when the plan was updated and replaced

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with the Bi-State Action Plan for Conservation of the Greater Sage-grouse Bi-State Distinct Population Segment.

Other protected lands in close proximity to the Property include the 1,160±-acre CDFW managed original Burcham Flat and Wheeler Flat acquisition, funded and approved by the WCB in 2007. The Burcham Flat and Wheeler Flat managed area is surrounded by Toiyabe National Forest Land. Other CDFW protected lands in close proximity include the West Walker River, Pickel Meadow, and Slinkard-Little Antelope Wildlife Area.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is covered with native vegetation consisting of high Sierra sagebrush and scrub rangeland areas, with wet meadow inclusions that provide year-round habitat for a small population of greater sage grouse. This population of greater sage grouse has declined dramatically over the last 20 years due to habitat problems associated with overgrazing, fire suppression, and pinyon juniper encroachment on sagebrush rangelands. The Property also provides migration, holdover, summer range and fawning habitat for the Walker River, Sweetwater Mountains and Mono Lake mule deer herds. Other species likely to benefit from the protection of the Property include the Sierra Nevada red fox, bank swallow, willow flycatcher, western white-tailed hare, American badger, black bear, mountain lion, Townsend's big-eared bat, spotted bat, northern goshawk, bald eagle, blue grouse, and mountain quail.

#### WCB PROGRAM

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

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**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS**

The CDFW estimates that operation and management costs for the Property will be minimal, not exceeding \$5,000.00 per fiscal year, with said costs to be allocated from existing lands and facility management budgets for the northern area of the Inland Deserts Region (Region 6). The primary management objective will be to conserve, protect, and enhance habitat for greater sage grouse and mule deer. Management may include activities such as meadow irrigation, stream bank stabilization, and aspen stand reforestation. The Property has been, and will remain, open to public uses (hunting, nature viewing, hiking, etc.) but camping will be prohibited. Other potential habitat enhancement projects could be undertaken through support and in partnership with other non-profit organizations, such as the California Deer Association and Quail Unlimited.

**TERMS**

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$210,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). As part of its due diligence, WCB staff will review and approve all title documents, appraisals, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds into the escrow account established for the acquisition. This project will also undergo transaction review and approval by DGS, prior to transmitting funding and documents to escrow.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$210,000.00</b>
Total Purchase Price	\$210,000.00
Other Project-Related Costs	\$15,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$225,000.00</b>

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

**FUNDING SOURCE**

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

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION**

The project has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as

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exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and habitat. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$225,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) for the acquisition funding and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$225,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(a) for the acquisition funding and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

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- \*11 Western Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) (2012) - Nelson Riverside County \$88,000.00

This proposal was to consider the acceptance of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant (Section 6 Grant) and the approval to subgrant these federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (Authority); and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to the Authority to acquire in fee 119± acres of land near the City of Wildomar in southwestern Riverside County for the protection of habitat that supports threatened and endangered species; and to increase regional wildlife habitat corridors and linkages located within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan area (Western Riverside County MSHCP).

#### WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MSHCP

The Western Riverside County MSCHP represents a combined and approved federal Habitat Conservation Plan and California Natural Community Conservation Plan. On August 20, 2012, Authority received a Federal Financial award in the amount of \$4,000,000.00 from the United States Department of Interior – USFWS, Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund – 2012 HCPLA (aka U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant) for the conservation and recovery of both listed and unlisted species within the Western Riverside County MSHCP. The Western Riverside County MSCHP is in its seventh year of implementation with an approved plan to assemble a 500,000-acre reserve area. Within the 500,000 acre reserve, the Authority's goal is to protect 153,000 acres. As of December 6, 2011, with the assistance of WCB, a total of 44,714 acres of habitat have been acquired by Authority using a combination of local, State and federal funding. These projects also assist in fulfilling the California and federal governments' funding and conservation commitments as they relate to this regional planning effort.

Western Riverside County is considered one of the most ecologically important areas in the United States, containing a diversity and abundance of wildlife and plant species and contains the most listed species of any region in California. The Western Riverside County MSHCP represents one of the largest, most complex regional habitat conservation plans in the U.S., covering a total area of 1.2 million acres and 146 species, 29 of which are State or federally listed. Within the plan it identifies six major target acquisition areas that include the Western Core/Linkage, Alkali Playa/Vernal Pool Area, Temecula Creek Watershed, Santa Rosa Plateau, San Timoteo Canyon and B Canyon Area. The proposed federal award will be used to acquire lands identified in the Western Riverside MSCHP that have important benefits for listed species,

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and will sustain ecosystem processes that support their habitats. The Authority's property acquisition selection criteria include consideration of the property's biological value, vulnerability to development, and proximity to existing conservation lands.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located one mile east of the I-15 freeway in the northern portion of the City of Wildomar and is more specifically situated on the westerly terminus of Linny Court and Lost Road, which extends north to south about 1,000 feet easterly of the Property. The Property is in an area that has rolling hills to steeper terrain, and is in close proximity to freeways, major surface streets, and suburban and rural development. The immediate area is mostly undeveloped with the exception of a few rural residences located to the east of the Property in low lying areas. The Property is bordered on the west and south by lands currently under the ownership of the Authority and represents the first proposed land acquisition under the approved 2012 USFWS Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant.

The Property is situated in one of the Western Riverside County MSCHP target areas, known as the Western Core/Linkage. This habitat linkage is necessary for maintaining ecological processes in a rapidly developing landscape. The acquisition of the Property will improve the habitat connections in the western portion of the Western Core/Linkage by enhancing the linkage from existing California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) reserves such as the Estell Mountain Ecological Reserve located to the northwest and the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve located to the south. Parcels in this area provide habitat for State and federally listed endangered least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, the State threatened and federally endangered Stephens' kangaroo rat, and the federally threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, quino checkerspot butterfly, and the thread-leaved brodiaea. The connectivity provided by the Western Core/Linkage area is essential in maintaining the genetic viability for the listed and sensitive species being conserved, and provides ecosystem responses to climate change by incorporating elevation gradients that will allow species and vegetation communities to shift upward in elevation.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is an L-shaped parcel zoned by the City of Wildomar as Rural Residential and is designated under the local General Plan as Rural Mountainous. The site is characterized by rolling to steep terrain with elevated hillsides split by a narrow valley that extends from the northeast corner to the center of Property. Vegetation is moderate to heavy over most of the site with numerous boulders and rock out-croppings. The only visible improvements on site are dirt roads and old abandoned water well. Protection of the Property will help support and provide habitat for the

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State and federally listed southwestern willow flycatcher and the federally threatened quino checkerspot butterfly and the thread-leaved brodiaea.

### 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 acquisitions of properties. Under the Program, the WCB provides funds to facilitate the acquisition of lands and interests in land that can successfully sustain or be restored to support wildlife and, when practicable, provide for suitable wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities. The Property has been reviewed and approved by CDFW under its Natural Community Conservation Plan program, substantiating the biological values of the Property and recommending it for funding. The USFWS grant proposed and accepted for this project has also been reviewed and approved by CDFW as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition grant selection and review process.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be managed by the Authority as part of the Western Riverside County MSHCP reserve system, which serves to provide permanent habit 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 through 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. The plan provides for the financing and implementation of an endowment for the monitoring and management of the Property in perpetuity. Management costs for parcels acquired under the Western Riverside County MSHCP will be provided by the Authority's operating funds.

### TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$270,000.00. 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 of \$270,000.00. The USFWS funds in the amount of \$189,000.00 require a non-federal match in the amount of \$81,000.00 that is being provided by a grant from the WCB. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and USFWS subgrant to the Authority provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title

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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 subgrantee 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:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$ 81,000.00</b>
WCB – subgrant of USFWS funds	189,000.00
<b>TOTAL Purchase Price</b>	<b>\$270,000.00</b>
Other Project-Related Costs	\$ 7,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$ 88,000.00</b>

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 authorized uses of the proposed funding source, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c) that provides funding for grants to implement or assist in the establishment of Natural Community Conservation Plans.

### 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 recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this acquisition project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$189,000.00 and approve the Agreement to Subgrant these



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federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority; allocate \$88,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c) for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

**As one of the consent items heard at the beginning of the meeting, it was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this acquisition project as proposed; accept the Habitat Conservation Planning Land Acquisition grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$189,000.00 and approve the Agreement to Subgrant these federal funds to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority; allocate \$88,000.00 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 (Proposition 84), Public Resources Code Section 75055(c) for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

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12. Gray Lodge Wetland Enhancement and Pump Restoration  
Butte County \$1,038,000.00

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. for a cooperative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to enhance 560± acres of wetland habitat and install a pump that will help supply water to all of CDFW's 9,168-acre Gray Lodge Wildlife Area (Wildlife Area), located approximately six miles west of the City of Gridley in Butte County. Mr. Chad Fien of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The project lies within the CDFW's Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, located approximately six miles west of the City of Gridley in Butte County. The Wildlife Area is a mosaic of wetlands, riparian habitat and uplands, supporting many species of wildlife, especially the hundreds of thousands of wintering waterfowl and shorebirds that depend on this site every year. Over the last few years, Gray Lodge Wildlife Area staff worked diligently with many partners, including the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), to successfully complete the construction of a master water delivery system. The new infrastructure has dramatically increased the capability to deliver water supplies with increased efficiency and control to the entire wildlife area.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will enhance 560± acres of wetland habitat at Fields 46, 48, 55, 56, 57, and 59 at the Wildlife Area. These ponds have substantial topographic variation and do not have proper drain and fill capabilities. These fields cannot be irrigated efficiently or effectively during the summer to promote moist soil vegetation. The project will improve wetland topography to provide wetland diversity and improve water management, install water control structures, and restore nesting cover. This project will also install a pump in an existing well that was drilled as part of a previous project and will help supply water to the entire 9,200± Wildlife Area. The pump will be located at the upper end of the water distribution system, and water from the well can then be pumped directly into the distribution system and used throughout the entire Wildlife Area. The project will benefit waterfowl and other wetland dependent wildlife by providing wintering and migratory wetland habitat.

The project is located in the Butte Basin, one of nine basins in the Central Valley. The project is consistent with the Central Valley Joint Venture's Implementation Plan (CVJVIP), which identifies annual wetland habitat enhancement goals for each of the nine basins. The CVJVIP calls for 3,362 acres of wetland enhancement per year within the Butte Basin.

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**WCB PROGRAM**

The proposed project will be funded through the Inland Wetland Conservation Program and meets the program's goal of assisting the Central Valley Joint Venture's mission to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands and associated habitats.

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS**

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

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

	<b><u>Cost</u></b>	<b><u>DU</u></b>	<b><u>CDFW</u></b>	<b><u>NAWCA</u></b>	<b><u>WCB</u></b>
Earthwork, Site Prep	\$479,298		\$42,040	\$72,833	\$364,425
Water Control Structures, Pump	\$433,985		\$4,814	\$15,300	\$413,871
Plant Establishment	\$16,405		\$3,525		\$12,880
Survey, Design, Project Mgmt & Project Admin	\$256,776	\$36,245	\$21,561	\$20,852	\$178,118
Contingency	\$68,706				\$68,706
<b>Total Project Costs</b>	<b>\$1,255,170</b>	<b>\$36,245</b>	<b>\$71,940</b>	<b>\$108,985</b>	<b>\$1,038,000</b>

Project costs will be for surveys, design, earthwork, water control infrastructure, plant establishment, and project management and administration.

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The proposed funding sources for this project are the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d)(Proposition 1E), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program; and the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Proposition 12), Public Resources Code Section 5096.350(a)(1)(A). These funding sources allow for the acquisition, enhancement or restoration of wetland habitat in the Central Valley and wetland habitats within a floodplain or flood corridor, and are consistent with the objectives of this project.

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**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION**

This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 4 of Categorical Exemptions, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15303 as the installation of small new equipment and Section 15304 as a minor alteration to land. Subject to approval by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse. The DFW has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$543,116.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d)(Proposition 1E), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program and \$494,884.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Proposition 12), Public Resources Code Section 5096.350(a)(1)(A); authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

Mr. Fien said that few years ago we took a project to the Board for a new well and pump, and, unfortunately, due to the market prices going up, WCB only had enough to put the well in, so with this project we would install the pump. Mr. Fien went on to explain that all the pumps at the Wildlife Area are able to flood the field adjacent to them, as well as have the ability to put water into the water distribution system, so the water can be used throughout the Wildlife Area. Ms. Finn asked about how long the well has been without the pump. Mr. Fien responded that it has been about four years.

Mr. Sutton commented that some of the groups like California Waterfowl Association (CWA) and Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU) have begun to install solar power pumps at duck clubs, and asked if the CDFW is paying the electrical bills on the pumps at the Wildlife Area. Mr. Fien confirmed that the CDFW pays all these bills, and about two years ago WCB paid for solar arrays to go in at the Los Banos Wildlife Area, so it is kind of our trial to see how that holds up. Mr. Fien went on to explain that our grantees that we commonly deal with, like CWA and DU, have already approached us about possible solar arrays on other wildlife areas.

Mr. Perrine commented that this particular well may be operated using the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) funds, as the CDFW and BOR are working on agreements to have joint electrical power costs paid directly by the federal government. Mr. Fien added that the BOR just installed another well on the Wildlife Area and BOR is operating it as well.

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

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$543,116.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d)(Proposition 1E), Inland Wetlands Conservation Program and \$494,884.00 from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Fund (Proposition 12), Public Resources Code Section 5096.350(a)(1)(A); authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

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13. Dos Rios Riparian Restoration \$1,392,000.00  
Stanislaus County

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to the River Partners for a cooperative project with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Department of Water Resources and others to restore 599± acres of riparian habitat, located at the confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin rivers in Stanislaus County. Ms. Terry Roscoe of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The project site is located in the floodplain at the confluence of two major Central Valley rivers, the Tuolumne and the San Joaquin. Historically, the project area contained a mosaic of floodplain sloughs, oxbow wetlands, oak groves and diverse shrublands and woodlands. Based on historic images, the project area was almost completely cleared and leveled for farming between 1937 and 1945, although the project area had been grazed and partially cleared even prior to 1937. In 1959, the US Army Corps of Engineers completed construction or improvements of the historic levee to meet the standards set in the San Joaquin River Flood Control Project. Since that time, flood flows have never breached the flood control levees, thus the project area has been disconnected from the rivers for over 50 years. All that remains today at Dos Rios Ranch are small remnant patches of the native herbaceous communities including mugwort, gumplant, creeping wildrye and basket sedge, and few areas containing gallery valley oak woodlands and willow scrub. Dos Rios Ranch is immediately adjacent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) 7,000-acre San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge (SJRNR).

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Almost all of the project area has been converted to agricultural uses. Currently, the project area within the Dos Rios Ranch contains no remnant native vegetation. Steenstrup Slough flows from south to north along the eastern edge of the project area. This slough follows its historic alignment, but is completely disconnected from the rivers and has been used as an irrigation supply and drain feature for decades. For this reason, it has almost entirely lost its native marsh vegetation due to its banks being cleared of vegetation, and its bed having been dredged to maintain conveyance. When the levee was constructed, the Steenstrup Slough of today is only influenced by river conditions through groundwater seepage during high water years. Currently, lands within the project area are farmed in corn-winter wheat rotation, or alfalfa. On the far eastern edge of the project area, lands naturally slope upwards at the edge of the historic floodplain, providing the potential for flood refugia for riparian-obligate mammals.

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This project would restore and enhance native habitats to 599± acres of riparian habitat, ranging from 4,550 to 6,220 feet wide behind the levees of the rivers and including the banks of Steenstrup Slough. Restored habitats will provide a suitable reintroduction site for riparian brush rabbit, as well as expanded habitat areas for riparian woodrat, least Bell's vireo, and valley elderberry longhorn beetle.

#### WCB PROGRAM

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

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

During the restoration phase, Dos Rios Ranch will be held in fee title by River Partners, and maintenance will be the sole responsibility of River Partners. Anticipated maintenance during the 4-year restoration phase includes weed control, irrigation, road and levee maintenance, and access control. River Partners will maintain the property, pursuant to the grant agreement between River Partners and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), until all phases are completed and the property is transferred to an appropriate resource management agency.

Following completion of the restoration for the entire Dos Rios Ranch project (Phases 1-4), River Partners will give the property (full fee title with encumbrances) to a resource management agency for perpetual management as a wildlife preserve. While the ultimate agency is still undetermined, it is anticipated that the FWS will take ownership of a majority of the property for inclusion in the SJRNWR. The San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which includes the SJRNWR, has recently received approval from the Director of the FWS to plan and permit a Refuge Boundary Expansion that would include the entirety of Dos Rios Ranch. This expansion is expected to be approved by Congress prior to the conclusion of the restoration of this project. Additional potential agency managers include California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and/or the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The DPR has identified Dos Rios Ranch in its long-range visioning documents for the Central Valley, foreseeing campgrounds and hiking trails across the restored ranch. River Partners has begun preliminary planning in support of the potential use of a portion of the high-ground at Dos Rios Ranch as a public recreation facility; however, plans will be finalized in the coming years, and likely only within Field 20, which is not included in this phase.

Upon transfer of the restored Dos Rios Ranch to the agency or agencies listed above, long term maintenance will be the responsibility of the landowner agency (or agencies). During the restoration phase, River

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Partners will work with these agencies and project partners to ensure minimal maintenance will be required to promote floodplain reconnection, maintain flood structures (such as flap gates or breaches), and maintain the habitat values targeted by this project once ownership is transferred. As over 2,500 acres of similar restoration work is underway or completed across the river at the SJRNWR, long-term maintenance needs can be readily predicted and planned for similar and adjacent future projects.

### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Dos Rios Restoration Phase 1</b>	<b>NRCS</b>	<b>DWR</b>	<b>CVPIA</b>	<b>WCB</b>	<b>River Partners</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Project Planning and Monitoring</b>	-	\$312,495	\$207,388	\$109,000	-	\$628,926
<b>Project Establishment</b>	\$1,760,504	\$300,000	\$315,577	\$1,157,000	-	\$3,532,543
<b>Project Administration</b>	-	\$62,417	\$52,491	126,000	\$362,457	\$603,916
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$1,760,504</b>	<b>\$674,912</b>	<b>\$575,456</b>	<b>\$1,392,000</b>	<b>\$362,457</b>	<b>\$4,765,386</b>

WCB funding will provide for:

- earthwork to construct elevated refugia and wetland swales
- installation of drip irrigation to service the elevated refugia
- planting native vegetation on elevated refugia
- project monitoring and management
- weed control and irrigation
- education and community outreach

### 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 allows for the acquisition, restoration or enhancement of riparian habitat to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass, and are consistent with the objectives of this project.

### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The CDFW has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15304, Class 4, as a minor alteration to land, water and/or vegetation which does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.



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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,392,000.00 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.

Ms. Roscoe introduced Mr. John Carlon, President, and Ms. Julie Rentner, Central Valley Regional Director from the River Partners who were in the audience and available to answer questions.

Ms. Finn commented that this agenda item says that the Dos Rios Ranch will be held in fee title by River Partners only until the restoration is done, and then it is their intent to transfer the property to another agency. Ms. Finn asked who will be responsible if there is no management agency to accept the property after the restoration is done? Ms. Roscoe responded that it will continue River Partner's responsibility. Ms. Finn said that she also noted that there is reference in this agenda write-up identifying that the Dos Rios project has been mentioned in DPR's long-range vision documents. Ms. Finn asked to clarify if that is under the current administration or was that a document from previous administration. Ms. Finn commented that she is a little bit nervous about putting DPR out there not knowing whether the current director has been briefed.

Mr. John Calron from River Partners responded that several years ago, DPR did a strategic plan study document, and they looked at where the need is for state parks in the State of California. The study confirmed that the Central Valley is significantly underserved with regards to DPR lands and pointed out that people like to recreate next to water. The subsequent area turned out to be one of the top priorities as it has six miles of river frontage in the Central Valley. Mr. Carlon added that there was never any commitment by DPR; when River Partners acquired this property, they kept about 250 acres out of any kind of easement with the idea that if things change and improve, and if the people of California decide that they want to pay for state parks in the future, this will be ideally suited for a future state park - it would be up and out of the floodplain, close to a paved road and urban center with a lot of river frontage in a very underserved area. Mr. Carlon went on to explain that other public lands in the area could complement DPR's vision as well.

Mr. Donnelly commented that it was a part of the vision document the DPR put out in 2004-2005.

Ms. Finn thanked Mr. Carlon and Mr. Donnelly for their comments.

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Mr. Sutton commented that the majority of the property might become a part of the federal refuge and asked if that is still the case. Mr. Carlon responded that the federal government had expressed interest, and it would seem to make sense because the SJRNWR is right across the river.

Mr. Sutton commented that there are references to phases I to IV of the restoration and asked if the budget listed in this agenda item is for phase I only. Ms. Roscoe responded that this budget is for the phase I area which is located within the federal levee, and future restoration that is completed outside the federal levee will require additional permits.

Mr. Sutton asked if there are cost estimates for the entire project. Ms. Julie Rentner from River Partners responded that complete budgeting for all phases of restoration for Dos Rios Ranch is not 100% complete, and preliminary estimates are about \$10 million. Ms. Rentner went on to explain that phase I does include significant planning and permitting efforts.

Ms. Finn asked how many acres is this property in total. Ms. Roscoe responded that it is 1,600 acres, with almost 600 acres being restored in the first phase for \$4.7 million.

Mr. Sutton commented that it is nice to see that partnership among the federal and State agencies.

Mr. Sutton asked if there were any additional question or comments about this agenda item. There were none.

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,392,000.00 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.**

**Motion carried.**

Mr. Sutton welcomed Ms. Diane Colborn, Assembly Member Rendon's representative, who joined the meeting at this point.

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14. San Joaquin River, Hidden Valley Ranch \$3,010,000.00  
Stanislaus County

Mr. Donnelly acknowledged that letters of support for this project were received from the following people: Mr. John R. Cain, Conservation Director, Bay-Delta and Central Valley Flood Management, and Ms. Ellie Cohen, President and CEO, Point Blue Conservation Science.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant for a cooperative project with River Partners and the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to acquire in fee 466± acres of valley floodplain and riverine habitat. The proposed project will help expand on contiguous protected lands, providing important habitat for a number of listed species that reside and migrate along the San Joaquin and Tuolumne river corridors. Ms. Liz Yokoyama of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located along the east bank of the San Joaquin River, just upstream from the confluence with the Tuolumne River, west of Shiloh Road and approximately eight miles southwest of the City of Modesto. Surrounding land uses are primarily agricultural and rural residential. Much of the available open farmland in this area has been developed with permanent plantings, including almond, walnut and peach orchards and vineyards. There are also a number of farms growing row and field crops, such as corn, alfalfa, and wheat in many cases to provide livestock feed, as well as small to moderate sized dairies with irrigated pastures, and poultry farms.

Immediately adjacent and north of the Property is the 1,603-acre Dos Rios Ranch that was acquired and funded in part by a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), approved at its February 2012 meeting. A restoration grant for the Dos Rios property is also being proposed for consideration at this Board meeting. North of the Tuolumne River and west of the San Joaquin River, across from the Property, is the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge that encompasses approximately 7,000 acres of riparian woodlands, wetlands, and grasslands. This area combined with the Property and the Dos Rios property will create a large 8,500-acre protected habitat landscape hosting a diversity of wildlife native to California's Central Valley, as well as providing shaded river and floodplain refugia for fisheries in the San Joaquin and Tuolumne rivers. The location of this area is also in the middle of the Pacific Flyway and provides foraging and resting area for migrating waterfowl and other bird species.

Further upstream on the San Joaquin River is a large stretch of land targeted for restoration under a collaboration of federal, State and

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conservation groups. This project will entail a comprehensive long term effort to restore flows to the San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to the confluence of the Merced River and will restore a self-sustaining Chinook salmon fishery in the river while reducing or avoiding adverse water supply impacts from restoration flows.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is zoned "Exclusive Agriculture" – A-2-40 zoning. Current uses include a dairy farm along with irrigated field crops, including corn, winter wheat and alfalfa that provide feed supplies for the dairy operation. Improvements on the site include the related dairy infrastructure and facilities, two single family residences, a duplex unit, and other miscellaneous irrigation, road and site improvements.

The shape of the Property is irregular with its western border being the San Joaquin River. Its topography is fairly level with the majority falling within a historical Flood Zone. Central Valley Flood Protection managed and maintained levee runs through the western portion of the Property, providing flood protection for the lower farmed areas and infrastructure located in the lower areas of the historical floodplain east of the levee. However, even these lower areas have been prone to flooding during major flood events that have occurred in the past on the Tuolumne and San Joaquin rivers. As a result, there is a significant amount of flood plain and riparian habitat found on the Property, within and outside the levee.

Types of wildlife habitat found on the Property include riparian corridors, wetlands and riverine. The row and field crops also tend to support wildlife as well. Wildlife friendly crops such as alfalfa are utilized by Swainson's hawks, and harvested corn fields are frequented by large numbers of Aleutian snow geese. The presence of river and irrigation water also helps to support a diversity and abundance of native trees, shrubs and grasses, supporting populations of bird and other wildlife not otherwise seen on other nearby privately owned farmlands.

The Property hosts populations of a number of special-status species including the federally and State endangered least Bell's vireo, the State endangered willow flycatcher, greater sandhill crane and Swainson's hawk and the federally endangered valley elderberry longhorn beetle. Other important species include the northern harrier, American white pelican and yellow-breasted chat. Located on the other side of the San Joaquin River within the San Joaquin River National Refuge is a population of the federally and State endangered riparian brush rabbit, which from time to time have been known to occupy the Property. With the brush rabbit restoration improvements being planned for the Dos Rios property, there is high probability that reestablishment of a larger viable population of brush rabbits could occur shortly in the future on the combined protected areas of the Property and Dos Rios property.

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### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant is being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program. The Land Acquisition Program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.) authorizing the WCB to acquire real property or rights in real property on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (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 Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP). The CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and, if approved, later transmitted to the WCB with a recommendation to fund.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be managed by River Partners, a California nonprofit corporation established in May 1998. River Partners, after acquiring the property, intends to discontinue the dairy operations but will continue with farming the Property using wildlife friendly practices, until potential future long-term habitat and restoration activities can be fully planned and developed. These practices include coordinating planting, irrigation and harvesting timelines to coincide with the needs of migratory wildlife that frequent the Property. Revenues from the farming activities will be used to offset management and monitoring costs as required under the terms of the WCB Grant Agreement. River Partners also proposes to enhance the wildlife habitat on the Property by removing non-native plants along the non-farmed riverbanks and restoring the banks with native and/or compatible plants.

### TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$9,300,000.00. The appraisal has been reviewed by WCB staff and reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). The Property owner has agreed to sell the Property for the approved appraised fair market value, \$9,300,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant provide that staff of the WCB must review and approve all title documents, preliminary title reports, documents for purchase and sale, escrow instructions and instruments of conveyance prior to disbursement of funds directly into the escrow account established for the acquisition. In the event of a breach of the grant terms, the WCB

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can seek specific performance of the grant or require the grantee to transfer the conservation easement to WCB or another qualified holder.

The Property is subject to a Conservation Land Contract (Williamson Act). Following the transfer of title to River Partners, the Property will continue with historical agricultural field crop operations and comply with the terms of the Williamson Act Contract.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$3,000,000.00</b>
Dept. of Water Resources, FESSRO Program	\$3,900,000.00
Dept. of Water Resources, Flood Corridor Protection Program	<u>\$2,400,000.00</u>
<b>TOTAL Purchase Price</b>	<b>\$9,300,000.00</b>
Other Project-Related Costs	\$ 10,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$3,010,000.00</b>

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

#### FUNDING SOURCE

The purposes of this project are consistent with the proposed funding source, Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) (Proposition 1E), which allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species, to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass and allow continued agricultural use.

A portion of funding for this project will be contributed by the DRW through its FloodSAFE Environmental Stewardship and Statewide Resources Office (FESSRO) Program. The FESSRO Program contribution requires that a portion of the property be eligible for advanced mitigation towards the Central Valley Flood Control Project; whereas, WCB's Grant Agreement states that WCB's contribution to the project cannot be used for purposes of mitigation. To reconcile these two requirements, the WCB's grant describes a process where in the event the Property is used for mitigation, the amount of land eligible for mitigation would be based on a pro-rata share of the FESSRO contribution. Specifically, FESSRO funding accounts for approximately 42% of the total purchase price; therefore, FESSRO could designate up to 42% of the Property acreage, or approximately 196 acres, for acquisition-related mitigation purposes. The remaining 58%, or 270 acres, of the property would not be eligible for acquisition-related mitigation. The terms of the WCB grant also require

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that WCB must first review and approve any future plans to use, convey or designate any of the Property for mitigation purposes.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The acquisition has been reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an acquisition of land for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, and Section 15325, Class 25, as a transfer of an ownership interest in land to preserve open space and existing natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats, and Section 15304, Class 4, as a minor alteration in the condition of land, water and/or vegetation which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to authorization by the WCB, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,010,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) (Proposition 1E) for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.

Ms. Yokoyama introduced Mr. John Carlon, President, and Ms. Julie Rentner, Central Valley Regional Director from the River Partners who were in the audience and available to answer questions.

Ms. Finn asked to clarify if this property will be acquired in the name of the State or River Partners. Ms. Yokoyama responded that River Partners will acquire the property in fee.

Mr. Sutton commented that the property was in use as a dairy farm and mentioned that he did not see any references to tri-color blackbirds in the agenda item. Ms. Yokoyama responded that, historically, numerous tri-colored blackbirds resided on the property. Currently, the tri-colored blackbirds are no longer seen on the site. Mr. Sutton stated that the reason he asked that question was that what remains of the blackbirds' population in Central Valley tends to prefer dairy wheat fields. Mr. Sutton asked if in the long-term there is a plan for that species to move them off the dairy wheat fields back to their natural habitat. Mr. Carlon indicated there had been no observed populations of tri-colored blackbirds noted on the property.

Mr. Sutton commented that downstream of this location is Bob Gallo's ranch where extensive restoration work has been completed that was privately funded and asked to what extent River Partners worked with

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adjacent landowners. Mr. Sutton also commented that it bothers him to see us paying full market value for property. Mr. Sutton went on to explain that private purchasers seldom pay full fair market value, and it feels like we are being taken advantage of because we are a State agency. We have to be transparent about our appraisals and so forth, but it seems unjustified that we have to pay full market value for these properties when in many acquisitions on the private market this is not the case.

Ms. Finn commented that she does not know why we offer the appraised value and why we don't negotiate to willing parties in a transaction.

Mr. Sutton commented that this is kind of a sore subject because the public look at this and say "we never pay full market value, so why does the State do that?" and that just contributes to the impression that the State is wasting money on those projects.

Mr. Carlon responded that River Partners have a very long and successful history of working with neighbors, and the Gallos have hired River Partners to do habitat restoration work on their properties. Mr. Carlon added that part of River Partner's goal here is to work hard to integrate habitat restoration with agricultural practices. He indicated that if you allow people a little bit of time to understand what is going on and make arrangements - for example, if someone has been buying their silage there for many years, and then we walk in and say, "no more silage" - that puts a lot of people into stress, so a better way to do that is to tell these people that "in four-five years, this is what we are going to do, and you have that time to make arrangements". Mr. Carlon stated that they work with locals in the neighborhood and really try to leverage not only their dollars but also their local knowledge and networks by working together on collaborative projects.

Mr. Carlon added that there is a huge public safety flood benefit to this project, as this is the last piece of the puzzle in a big basin that is prone to historical flooding, requiring a federal project levee for protecting two properties - Dos Rios Ranch and this property. With this acquisition, that levee will no longer need to be maintained, and the ability to park 10,000 acre feet of flood water and take it off at the peak of the flood flows is a huge deal and one of the reasons why this project has received strong support from the DWR. Mr. Carlon said that this is a statewide model of how conservation is not only about species - it is about cost effectively protecting the public and its safety. Mr. Carlon went on to explain that they are really excited about all these different collaborative relationships and aspects of this project.

Mr. Carlon stated that no matter what State pays, the public is going to be disappointed: if State pays too much - it is wasting taxpayers' money, and if State pays too little - it is driving private property owners out of business



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because they can't compete in this case. Ms. Finn commented that is how real estate works – a small, depressed house gets purchased for less, and neighbors get upset as it drives down the values of their properties.

Mr. Sutton commented that we are a lot more concerned about paying too much than paying too little, as it is our job to steward the State's pot of money and paying too little is the least of our concerns, no matter what it does to the neighborhood. Mr. Sutton went on to explain that when State money is involved, it is all about current real estate market in the vicinity, and he has had a lot of complaints from the public that we consistently pay fair market value or appraised value, and we have to be transparent about these appraisals. Mr. Sutton added that he would like to see more negotiation on the part of our grantees and our staff.

Mr. Dave Means, Assistant Executive Director on Acquisition at the WCB, said that agrees with Mr. Sutton's comments. Mr. Means went on to explain that a lot of WCB deals are structured where we are looking for participating dollars, so we may say that we are only going to put in a certain amount towards funding a project; however, the project proponents may decide to raise the rest of funding, as was the case in this particular project where we are not funding the entire acquisition. Mr. Means added that we deal with a lot of situations where we are trying to get landowners to provide a discount and are successful in a number of cases, and will definitely continue to try and do so. Ms. Finn commented that in this project the State is paying \$3.9 million. Mr. Means said that this is correct and added the other funds were from DWR and how much they choose to fund was more of a DWR program decision and not something we would normally try and negotiate down after the fact. Mr. Means also added that sometimes the need to fund full fair market value is because we are using federal dollars and want to maximize these funds by maximizing the match amount. Also, there are cases where many of our project proponents do ask for discounted prices from the landowners, many times in response to our preference not to fund the entire purchase price. However, when a landowner is adamant about receiving full fair market value and project partners feel the property is important to protect, then in these cases paying full fair market value may be appropriate.

Mr. Sutton asked if WCB has ever walked away from a project.

Mr. Donnelly responded that we have, and he did that as a staff at the WCB when he worked as a Land Agent. Mr. Donnelly went on to explain that WCB was in a position "this is all we are going to pay for the property – you either take it or leave it," and they left it, and then they came back a year and a half later and we bought the property; we had to go through the appraisal process again and we ended up paying a little bit less.

Nonetheless, we walk away from projects, and we do tell grantees "no" when don't have the funding necessarily to put into a project.

Mr. Donnelly said that it is not evident that we say no because such projects don't make it before the Board. Mr. Sutton commented that it

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seems to him that this is a transparency issue that we have been talking about at the strategic planning workshops, and added that he would be very interested to hear about the deals that don't go through, maybe as a summary at the Board meetings, as that would really inform our understanding of the staff's work.

Mr. Donnelly said that he would like to make a comment about reducing property values in neighborhoods. Mr. Donnelly explained that we have to offer fair market value, and that fair market value is based on an appraisal that has been approved by the WCB and DGS staff, so the value of that particular property is set for transaction purposes. If the landowner chooses to sell the property below fair market value, he or she may take that difference as a tax write-off. Mr. Donnelly commented that by offering something less than an appraised value, we are not decreasing the value in the local market. Ms. Finn asked if we have statutory requirement to offer the fair market value. Mr. Donnelly responded that the statutory requirement is to let people know what the fair market value of their property is as established in an appraisal approved by the DGS.

Ms. Finn commented that this is a consistent issue throughout the California conservancies. Mr. Sutton commented that he can assure that private funders do not pay fair market values.

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

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve this project as proposed; allocate \$3,010,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) (Proposition 1E) for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

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15. Palo Verde Ecological Reserve, Expansion 3 \$420,000.00  
Riverside County

This proposal was to consider the acquisition of fee title to 36± acres of land adjacent to the Colorado River as an expansion of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Palo Verde Ecological Reserve (PVER) in Riverside County. This property contains native riparian habitat and the acreage will assist in implementation of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP). This acquisition will also protect a wildlife corridor for unique, rare, endangered, threatened or fully protected species within a floodplain area.

CDFW, along with other State, federal, tribal, and private entities is a primary stakeholder and participant in developing and implementing the LCR MSCP. The protection of designated properties within the LCR MSCP helps to provide long term species and habitat protection along the Lower Colorado River basin for 56 covered species. Prominent species that would benefit from the acquisition of targeted properties include the southwestern willow flycatcher, yellow-billed cuckoo, elf owl, gila woodpecker, razorback sucker, and desert tortoise. Ms. Teri Muzik of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) is located in the Palo Verde Valley just south of the city limits of Blythe in southeastern Riverside County. Since 2002, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB/Board) has approved the acquisition of approximately 1,600 acres of land in the Palo Verde Valley to establish the PVER. The eastern boundary of the reserve is adjacent to the Colorado River and the western boundary is adjacent to active agricultural fields. The Palo Verde Valley is part of the Colorado Desert physiographic province, commonly referred to as the "low desert." The Colorado River province is bounded on the east by the Colorado River, on the south by the Mexican border, and on the west and north by the Transverse Ranges.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is a vacant, irregularly shaped parcel that contours around what was, at one time, part of the channel of the Colorado River and is located in a primarily agricultural area. The Property is identified as a Tier 1 Property in the Palo Verde Valley-Colorado River Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) developed by CDFW. Certain criteria were used to establish acquisition priorities for properties in the CAPP. Tier 1 is the highest priority. Tier 1 properties consist of those properties directly adjacent to, or in close proximity to the current Colorado River channel. They were also chosen as the highest priority for protection based upon their level of development threat, location relative to the river, current or

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historical importance as riparian habitat, and potential for restoration when considering water rights and existing water delivery infrastructure.

The Property has historically been used for agricultural purposes. Approximately 5 acres of the Property is an existing natural wildlife corridor that is legally restricted to open space. Habitat found in the wildlife corridor may provide important breeding and migratory habitat for the southwest willow flycatcher, elf owls, and yellow billed cuckoos as well as a linkage between the desert and river for many wildlife species.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed acquisition is considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program. The acquisition program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.) to acquire areas that can successfully sustain wildlife and provide for suitable recreation opportunities. Under this program acquisition activities are carried out in conjunction with CDFW evaluating the biological values of property through development of a Land Acquisition Evaluation/Conceptual Area Protection Plan (LAE/CAPP). The LAE/CAPP is then submitted to CDFW's Regional Operations Committee (ROC) for review and approval and later transmitted to WCB with a recommendation to fund.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

CDFW will manage and maintain the Property in its current undeveloped condition consistent with the objectives of the LCR MSCP. Partnership funding available under the LCR MSCP will be used to pay all water tolls and management costs associated with the Property. Unless absolutely necessary for species and habitat protection or public safety, it is CDFW's policy that the PVER shall be open to the public for wildlife related use. Boating, swimming and picnicking are among the most popular outdoor activities in the general area. Where appropriate, game bird hunting is also allowed. To include this property in the PVER, appropriate action and environmental compliance will be undertaken by CDFW and the California Fish and Game Commission in the future.

#### TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$390,000.00. 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 fair market value of \$390,000.00. The terms and conditions of the proposed acquisition provide that staff of the WCB 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.

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Once approved by the Board, the transaction will also be reviewed and approved by DGS.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$390,000.00</b>
Other Project-Related Costs	\$30,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$420,000.00</b>

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

**FUNDING SOURCE**

The purposes of this project are consistent with the authorized uses of the proposed funding source, the Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 17), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) (Proposition 1E) that allows for the acquisition of habitat to protect natural communities and rare, endangered, threatened, or fully protected species.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION**

The proposed acquisition is 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 recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$420,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) (Proposition 1E) 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.

Ms. Muzik introduced Mr. Chris Hayes, Deputy Regional Manager, Region 6 with the CDFW, who was in the audience and available to answer questions.

Mr. Sutton commented that this is another example of paying fair market value and asked what DGS looks for when they review these acquisitions. Ms. Muzik responded that in a transaction review, DGS looks at the acquisition documents to make sure that all of them are in order, that there

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is a preliminary title report and proof that the landowner was notified about fair market value.

Mr. Sutton clarified that he was asking specifically about appraisal review. Ms. Muzik responded that DGS does not look at the projects for WCB the same way that they do, let's say, for California State Parks where they consider whether it is an appropriate expenditure or not - in our case that is the role of the WCB. Ms. Muzik added that this project is essential to the CDFW. Ms. Muzik went on to explain that this area could be developed, and a lot of WCB projects have development potential, and appraisals for those projects actually have development as the highest and best use. Ms. Muzik explained that we (WCB) are protecting the habitat as opposed to having this property developed.

Mr. Donnelly clarified that DGS function in this particular project would be two roles: first would be the appraisal review - we are required, pursuant to Fish and Game Code that for acquisition by the WCB for the CDFW, the appraisal that we use has to be reviewed and approved by the DGS; second, for an acquisition by CDFW, the Director of the DGS needs to review the documents and sign off. For projects with a value of less than \$150,000.00, WCB has an exemption from DGS and is not required to send such projects forward for transaction review. Mr. Donnelly went on to explain that this particular project is over \$150,000; therefore, we have to submit it for the DGS transaction review, and DGS reviews the transaction documents - they do not look for the reasons or rational behind the acquisition; they consider the real estate and the legal aspects of that particular transaction. Mr. Donnelly added that there are several documents in a standard State acquisition that you have to submit to the seller, and DGS ensures that the deed is a recordable document, the title is an insurable title, and compensation is appropriate. Once reviewed, the Director or staff who have delegation to sign off on those transactions, will approve the documents and send them back to WCB for recording and escrow closure.

Mr. Sutton thanked Mr. Donnelly for his comments. Mr. Sutton commented that the write up for this project says that this area may provide important breeding and migratory habitat for various bird species and one thing the Board looks at is if this is going to be true 50 years from now in the face of changing climate. Our job is not just to protect what is important now, it is what we need to protect a 100 years from now. Mr. Sutton commented that, for example, some of these areas may not be suitable anymore because it would become too hot or too dry. Mr. Sutton went on to explain that there is a lot of science going on right now that will be published soon about future bird and mammal ranges; California Fish and Game Commission is starting to see more endangered species petitions for alpine species that are going to disappear under projected climate change, so it is something we need to be considering.

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Mr. Chris Hayes from CDFW said that this property, once it is made available to the LCR MSCP will be protected in perpetuity, and the intent here is to fence and restore it back to original native conditions.

Mr. Hayes said that once it is in the program, the property will be protected forever. Mr. Sutton thanked Mr. Hayes for his comments and said that his question was that if any of these species will still be on the property 50 years from now because in changing climate, habitat suitability changes too, and we may lose a lot of species because they can no longer exist in the area.

Mr. Donnelly said that he assumes that the LCR MSCP took climate change in consideration. Mr. Hayes confirmed that this is correct and went on to explain that the part of the adaptive management of that program is to look at the impact of climate change. Mr. Hayes went on to explain that this project will go from agriculture to habitat, and it will be enhanced to the point where it will get species overflowing to other areas.

Mr. Donnelly commented that the evaluating processes we have in place require climate change adaptation considerations. Mr. Sutton thanked Mr. Donnelly for his comments and added that the fundamental issue here is that we don't want to acquire a house where nobody can live, and it would not make sense to acquire fabulous habitat that is important today that turns out not to be important tomorrow. Mr. Donnelly commented that, on occasion, we work with CDFW to identify projects that are no longer necessary for the CDFW's needs or meet the requirements they were originally acquired for. In those situations, the WCB has the authority to sell or transfer such properties. If we sell them, the money is returned to our budget and can be used for future projects. Mr. Donnelly stated that we will continue to use that process when necessary.

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

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$420,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) (Proposition 1E) for the acquisition and to cover internal project-related expenses; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

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16. San Diego River (Palmer) \$676,000.00  
San Diego County

This proposal was 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 Endangered Habitats League (EHL), and to consider a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to EHL to acquire in fee 9± acres of land for the protection of watershed function, wildlife linkages and habitat that will support the continued recovery of the State and federally endangered least Bell's vireo, the southwestern willow flycatcher, and the federally threatened California gnatcatcher.

Mr. Donnelly explained that Ms. Teri Muzik of WCB will briefly describe the project and its location, and then Mr. Michael Beck from the EHL will explain the overall context of this project.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

The subject property (Property) fronts upon Alpine Boulevard in the northwest portion of the unincorporated East County community of Alpine, just south of the Interstate 8 freeway near the Peutz Valley Road junction. The City of El Cajon is approximately 13 miles westerly and the central business district of San Diego is about 30 miles to the west. The Property is situated within the San Diego River watershed. The San Diego River and its tributaries are one of the few areas in the region still supporting the least Bell's vireo at the time of its listing in 1986.

The Property is identified for protection within a Multi-Species Conservation Plan (MSCP), a comprehensive federal, State, and local habitat conservation planning program that addresses multiple species habitat needs and the preservation of natural communities for an approximate 900 square mile area in southwestern San Diego County. The Property is one in a composite of properties that make up the "bottle neck", an important and narrow habitat corridor, identified in the MSCP Crestridge/Harbinson Canyon wildlife linkage. To date, there are over 4,000 acres of protected lands within the MSCP being managed for natural resource conservation purposes.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Property is at or near the grade of Alpine Boulevard and slopes gently downward westerly into an ephemeral blue-line stream identified as Chocolate Creek, located within the upper San Diego River watershed. The Property contains a split level detached single-family residence that was built in 1980 with 3,173 square feet of living area and an attached 594 square foot two-car garage. Potential future uses for the building include modifications so it could be utilized as a hub for resource land management and monitoring activities within the MSCP Crestridge/Harbinson Canyon area. Additionally, the facility could be



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made available to conservation partner organizations with minor retrofits to provide meeting and workshop space, work stations for part-time interns and volunteers, and storage for supplies, archived materials, and storage for management and monitoring equipment.

The biological resources onsite include oak woodland, riparian, and coastal sage scrub habitat. The Property also provides suitable foraging and dispersal habitat for the State and federally endangered least Bell's vireo and the southwestern willow flycatcher. The federally threatened coastal California gnatcatcher is known to occur in this area of San Diego County and the site provides suitable breeding and foraging habitat. The Property is also a vital wildlife linkage due to its proximity to the only undercrossing of Interstate 8 within this segment of the MSCP.

#### WCB PROGRAM

The proposed grant and subgrant for this project are being considered under the WCB's Land Acquisition Program. The acquisition program is administered pursuant to the Board's original enabling legislation, "The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947" (Fish and Game Section 1300, et seq.) and enables WCB to pursue acquisition on behalf of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (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 CDFW under its Natural Community Conservation Plan program, substantiating the biological values of the property and recommending it for funding. The USFWS grant proposed for this project has also been reviewed and approved by CDFW as a participant in the USFWS Land Acquisition grant selection and review process.

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

The Property will be cooperatively managed by ELC with the Endangered Habitats Conservancy (EHC). Currently EHC owns and/or manages approximately 4,000 acres of MSCP land within the Crestridge/Harbinson Canyon MSCP Management Unit. Additionally, State and federal wildlife agencies have asked EHC to consider accepting responsibility for additional 1,400± acres of conserved habitat lands over the next 18 months. The dwelling on the Property is centrally located to many of these lands and could be utilized to execute the many monitoring and management activities in the area. Partner conservation organizations and agencies that may utilize the building for conservation related activities include U.S. Geological Survey for monitoring, the Earth Discovery Institute for environmental education, CFWS, San Diego Management and Monitoring Program, Urban Corps of San Diego, Back Country Land Trust, and the Conservation Biology Institute for research. Given the small size of the parcel, the potential use of the building for storage of potentially expensive equipment for monitoring and management and the proximity to the highway, it is likely that any potential

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for future public access that might be provided would be through guided tours in conjunction with environmental studies.

### TERMS

The Property has been appraised as having a fair market value of \$810,000.00. 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 fair market value of \$810,000.00. The USFWS funds require a non-federal match that is proposed to be provided by the proposed WCB grant. The terms and conditions of the proposed WCB grant and the USFWS subgrant to EHL 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 landowner 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:

<b>Wildlife Conservation Board</b>	<b>\$666,000.00</b>
WCB – Subgrant of USFWS funds	144,000.00
TOTAL purchase price	\$810,000.00
Other project related costs	\$ 10,000.00
<b>TOTAL WCB ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$676,000.00</b>

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

### FUNDING SOURCE

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

### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The proposed acquisition has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303, Class 3, as a conversion of a small structure, 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

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

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$676,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(b/c) for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; accept the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$144,000.00 and the subgrant of these funds to the Endangered Habitats League; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.

Ms. Finn asked if the private landowner is the current owner. Mr. Michael Beck, San Diego Director of the EHL, and Executive Director of the EHC, responded that the property is the one that EHC acquired to prevent it from being developed as a horse ranch, which was unacceptable in EHC view, as this property is the only linkage across the Interstate 8 in the MSCP. To acquire the property, EHC had to take a loan with the hopes of obtaining other partnership funding in the future to help fully secure and protect this property.

Mr. Beck went on to explain that EHL has been a partner with the State in NCCP program since they started in 1991, and they have had the same Board for 22 years; they have a Director for each of the five southern California counties, and Mr. Beck is the San Diego Director. EHC was formed in 2005 because of a critical need to work in partnership with both federal and State wildlife agencies and local government to do strategic acquisitions, management and monitoring. Mr. Beck presented an image showing a map of the MSCP area - the conservation that was put in place by the many partners protecting critically important wildlife corridors and linkages in San Diego County.

Mr. Beck reported that EHC works closely with Conservation Biology Institute (CBI), the lead scientists in the development of the MSCP, before and after they acquire land to prioritize activities and expenditures of money, and which species to focus on.

Mr. Beck showed the last slide on his presentation which represented the funding that is necessary to manage the land. He went on to explain that EHL has a budget of approximately \$70,000 a year for the Crestridge Ecological Reserve endowment.

Mr. Sutton asked if EHC negotiated the purchase price for this property. Mr. Beck responded that the appraised value of the property was the

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determining factor in the purchase price. He indicated that appraisers consider many factors when determining the fair market value of the property. The highest and best use of the property and the comparable sales are two important considerations when appraising property.

Mr. Beck went on to explain that EHC does not work on a project unless it has been approved by a State agency. In this case, the property was appraised and the appraisal was approved by DGS. Ms. Muzik commented that anytime there is federal money involved, the appraisal has to be done to the Yellow Book standard, and it is reviewed and approved by the feds.

Ms. Colborn, Assembly Member Rendon's representative, commented that WCB not only acquires properties because of their conservation values, but also many times because the properties are targeted for potential development. Ms. Colborn commented that sometimes the State will pay the fair market value to acquire the property rather than lose it to a developer.

Ms. Finn commented that we probably missed our window in the last five years with housing and land prices going down – we could have gotten even better deals at that time.

Ms. Muzik commented that among her projects in San Diego County, there were some that had tentative development subdivision maps and were about to be developed. When the prices dropped so significantly, the WCB was able to acquire these properties for a much lower price. Mr. Sutton commented that he understands that we are competing in some cases with other buyers and added that he would like to see one of these projects where the fair market value is \$1 million and we are paying \$600,000 instead of \$1 million.

Mr. Donnelly commented that timing is the key in such negotiations, and there are also processes that we are legally mandated to follow, and sometimes the landowners are not willing to wait.

Mr. Beck said that when EHC first engage with property owner, they tell him or her that the process takes 12 to 18 months and there will be a hearing process to get an approval, and some landowners may not like that and decide to sell the property to someone else who can pay sooner.

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

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the project as proposed; allocate \$676,000.00 from the Habitat Conservation Fund, (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code**

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**Section 2786(b/c) for the grant and to cover internal project-related expenses; accept the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$144,000.00 and the subgrant of these funds to the Endangered Habitats League; authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project; and authorize staff and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to proceed substantially as planned.**

**Motion carried.**

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17. San Dieguito River Riparian Habitat Restoration \$1,005,000.00  
San Diego County

Mr. Donnelly reported that letters of support for this project were received from the following people: Senator Marty Block, CA State Senate, 39th District; Assembly Member Brian Mainschein, CA State Assembly, 77th District, and Councilman Mark Kersey, City of San Diego, 5th District.

This proposal was to consider the allocation for a grant to River Partners for a cooperative project with the City of San Diego to restore 100± acres of riparian and oak woodland habitat on City of San Diego property located just upstream of Lake Hodges, near Escondido in San Diego County. Ms. Terry Roscoe of the Wildlife Conservation Board briefly described the project and its location.

#### LOCATION AND SURROUNDING USES

Located approximately 24 miles north of downtown San Diego and east of the Interstate 15 freeway, the San Dieguito River Habitat Restoration project area starts at the east end of Lake Hodges Reservoir and continues up the San Pasqual Valley in an easterly direction about one mile. The project site includes approximately 100 acres of active and passive riparian habitat restoration.

The watershed extends through a diverse array of habitats from its eastern headwaters in the Volcan Mountain to its outlet at the San Dieguito Lagoon and the Pacific Ocean. There are several important natural areas within the watershed that sustain a number of threatened and endangered species. Among these are the 55-mile long, 80,000 acre San Dieguito River Park, the 150-acre San Dieguito Lagoon, and five water storage reservoirs, the largest of which are Lake Hodges, Lake Sutherland, and Lake Poway.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Historically, the habitat at the project site suffered from unauthorized recreational use (off-road vehicles), fires, and run-off from adjacent agricultural operations. Efforts by the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department to restrict unauthorized access to the site and work with adjacent landowners to reduce run-off have had a positive impact over the past 10+ years. However, the project site continues to be a flat, previously-leveled field that is dominated by non-native grasses and forbs.

River Partners will restore habitat along the north floodplain and bank of the San Dieguito River. The 100-acre site will be approximately 0.75 river miles long, by approximately 400 yards wide on the north side of the river. The project is situated along the main channel and secondary channels of the San Dieguito River and will greatly benefit from habitat restoration activities. The restored habitat types will include but not be limited to

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southern coast live oak riparian forest and southern riparian forest. The project considered in this proposal will become the first phase in developing this combined 1,050 acre habitat restoration corridor within the San Dieguito River Valley.

Twenty-one animal species covered by the San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) have been detected in the Lake Hodges/San Pasqual Valley Open Space area or in its immediate vicinity. These species include arroyo toad, San Diego horned lizard, orange-throated whiptail, Canada goose, bald eagle, peregrine falcon, northern harrier, tricolored blackbird, southwestern willow flycatcher, least Bell's vireo, rufous-crowned sparrow, California gnatcatcher, western bluebird, white-faced ibis, mountain lion, and mule deer. The National Audubon Society and American Bird Conservancy have recognized Lake Hodges and the upland habitat around it as a globally important bird area, the first site in California to receive this distinction.

#### WCB PROGRAM

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

#### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

During the four-year construction period, native seedlings will be installed in the field and operations and maintenance activities at the site will begin. River Partners' site work will include ongoing removal of invasive species, irrigation installation, vegetation mowing, herbicide applications, and replanting as necessary. Monitoring and reporting activities will continue through late June 2017 to assure that the plants are successfully established, four years after the start of the restoration. After project implementation is complete, long term management of the project area will be undertaken by the City of San Diego pursuant to the grant between the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and River Partners and consistent with the City of San Diego Subarea Plan of the San Diego MSCP.

#### PROJECT FUNDING

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

	WCB	River Partners	City of San Diego	Total
Project Development	\$913,605	\$17,621	\$477,000	\$1,408,226
Project Administration	\$91,395	\$2,379	\$40,200	\$133,974
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,005,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$517,200</b>	<b>\$1,542,200</b>

The project will be collaboration between the WCB, the City of San Diego, and River Partners. WCB's project partners will be responsible for the

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following components:

1. River Partners will plan and implement the project over a four year period and will remove invasive species, prepare the soil, install the irrigation system, purchase and install plants, provide for operation and management of the restored habitat, and undertake monitoring and reporting activities.
2. The City of San Diego, as landowner, will make the project site available to River Partners, acquire all necessary permits, and maintain the habitat over a 25 year period (as per the agreement with WCB). The City will also provide irrigation water at no cost from one of its wells located in or around the project area or directly from the aqueduct that passes through the property, which provides water to the City of San Diego.

#### 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 allows for the acquisition, restoration, or enhancement of riparian habitat to protect or enhance a flood protection corridor or bypass, and is consistent with the objectives of this project.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE RECOMMENDATION

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed this proposal and recommends it for funding by the WCB. The project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15304, Class 4, as a minor alteration to land, water and/or vegetation which does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Subject to approval of this proposal by the WCB, the appropriate Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommended that the Wildlife Conservation Board and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,005,000.00 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.

Ms. Roscoe introduced Mr. John Carlon, President, and Mr. David Neubert, Vice President from the River Partners, who were in the audience and available to answer questions.

Ms. Finn asked if the City of San Diego owns the property. Ms. Roscoe confirmed that this is correct. Ms. Finn asked if the City offered water at no cost for its own property. Ms. Roscoe responded that it is City's



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contribution to this restoration project. Mr. Sutton asked if \$517,200 City's contribution is not cash but "in-kind" water. Ms. Roscoe confirmed that this is correct. Ms. Sutton asked if the City is offering a 25-year agreement to manage the property. Ms. Roscoe responded that this is correct. Mr. Sutton commented that in cases like that one where there is an MOU in place, it would be useful to have that agreement in the agenda write up. Mr. Donnelly commented that it is not an MOU; it is a grant agreement that has standard grant agreement language saying that it is the City's commitment to manage the restoration for 25 years.

Mr. Perrine commented that a Notice of Grant Agreement was recorded by the County of San Diego, so the requirements of the grant agreement will run with the land for 25 years.

Mr. Sutton asked if the budget presented here covers the entire restoration. Ms. Roscoe responded that the budget covers the first four years, which is phase I.

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

**It was moved by Ms. Finn that the Wildlife Conservation Board and approve this project as proposed; allocate \$1,005,000.00 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.**

**Motion carried.**

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18. Strategic Plan Update

Informational

Mr. Donnelly reported that on July 23, 2013, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB/Board) held a workshop including all WCB staff and designated California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) staff to develop the strategic plan framework. On August 12, 2013, the WCB held a Strategic Planning Board Workshop that was open to the public where the contractor provided information and solicited the Board's comments and recommendations, as well as public engagement on the framework developed to date.

Mr. Donnelly provided an update and highlighted the work completed during the August 12<sup>th</sup> Strategic Planning Board Workshop and stated that the contractors are currently working on all comments received. Mr. Donnelly stated that the WCB project steering committee will be meeting again with the contractors on September 13, 2013 to complete the framework for both the second and third phases of the plan. Mr. Donnelly stated that following the September 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, the contractor will present the updated plan to the Board at a second Strategic Planning Board Workshop scheduled on October 22, 2013.

Mr. Donnelly said that we are making progress and staying within the time frames that we anticipated. Mr. Donnelly added that he is hopeful that we will complete the planning process on time and have a strategic plan we can all be proud from.

Mr. Sutton recalled that one of the topics discussed at the workshop was the need for the consultants to reach out further beyond the identified stakeholders and attendees at the planned workshops to engage additional interested parties. Mr. Sutton further encouraged anyone with opinions on how the Board can work better and what should be in its strategic plan to provide input to the consultants.

Mr. Donnelly went on to explain that in addition to the scheduled workshops, interested parties can attend scheduled quarterly Board meetings, as well as any of the three public meetings that will be held statewide – in northern, central, and southern California.

Mr. Donnelly said that once the draft plan is fully developed, it will be posted on the WCB webpage, and an on-line survey tool will be available to further engage the public and provide opportunities for comment.

Ms. Finn asked if the plan will eventually provide a road map of prioritization of habitat and land acquisitions, so when we approve an item, we can see where it fits in prioritization in the State of California. Mr. Donnelly commented that there will be goals, objectives and action plans associated with the programs that are currently administered by the

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WCB; however, as these programs are tied to specific funding sources, that will need to be taken into consideration. Mr. Donnelly further stated that the plan will provide the basis on which staff can identify projects to bring to the Board, and the Board will know that these are priority projects consistent with the agreed upon strategic plan.

Mr. Sutton commented that there were a number of calls for more transparency and a more strategic approach by the Board for acquisitions, easements, and restoration projects in the larger context because we do not really know the back story of how all these projects came to the Board in the first place and where they rank in priority – whether they address priority landscapes or are the priority of the CDFW. Mr. Sutton said that he would like to see the reasoning for project selection to be more obvious instead of being presented with projects that are essentially “done deals” and don’t demonstrate how we direct the work of the Board.

Ms. Finn commented that she does not want the WCB strategic plan to be driven by how much money we have – if, for instance, riparian habitat is the highest priority, and we only have \$5,000 for the riparian habitat restoration program but we have \$3 million for other programs, the highest prioritization should still reflect riparian habitat and should be transparent in the plan.

Mr. Donnelly responded that he would not want to lock the Board into just one kind of habitat as the highest priority because we may not have the funding for that particular program in the future.

Mr. Sutton commented that we recognize that the Board should be more deliberative and strategic in its approach, and issuing requests for proposals (RFP) could get us there. Mr. Sutton said that putting out an RFP when the Board wants to accomplish something specific, or implementing a competitive grant making process could be beneficial – the process we are using now is competitive in a sense, but it is not a formal competitive grant program. Mr. Sutton added that he had the impression from the last workshop that the contractors heard all the comments and would identify options that might depart from past practice for consideration.

Mr. Donnelly commented that he would not want to lock in a competitive grant process or RFPs but suggested that WCB could identify a percentage of its funding or a percentage of resources available for an aspect of that process, but we need to be able to act when the best product comes along, and if we are tied up to a once-a-year competitive process, we would not be able to act when such opportunity occurs.

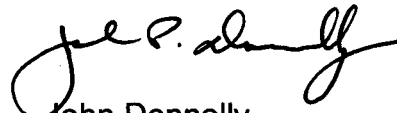
Mr. Sutton commented that finding the right balance there is the key – we don’t want to be completely prescriptive, but we should not be only opportunistic either.

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

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Donnelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

John Donnelly  
Executive Director

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**PROGRAM STATEMENT**

At the close of the meeting on September 4, 2013, the amount allocated to projects since the Wildlife Conservation Board's inception in 1947 totaled \$2,487,589,847.41. This total includes funds reimbursed by the Federal Government under the Accelerated Public Works Program completed in 1966, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program, the Anadromous Fish Act Program, the Sport Fish Restoration Act Program, the Pittman-Robertson Program, and the Estuarine Sanctuary Program.

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

A. Fish Hatchery and Stocking Projects .....	\$18,414,719.06
B. Fish Habitat Preservation, Development & Improvement.....	45,884,717.50
Reservoir Construction or Improvement .....	5,605,699.00
Stream Clearance and Improvement.....	32,108,906.86
Stream Flow Maintenance Dams.....	542,719.86
Marine Habitat .....	3,191,619.07
Fish Screens, Ladders and Weir Projects.....	4,435,772.71
C. Fishing Access Projects .....	58,584,786.38
Coastal and Bay .....	5,524,134.53
River and Aqueduct Access.....	21,244,175.38
Lake and Reservoir Access .....	10,813,623.43
Piers .....	21,002,853.04
D. Game Farm Projects.....	146,894.49
E. Wildlife Habitat Acquisition, Development and Improvement.....	2,284,050,438.98
Wildlife Areas (General).....	429,982,722.48

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Miscellaneous Wildlife Habitat Development .....	34,393,575.88
Wildlife Areas/Ecological Reserves, (Threatened, Endangered or Unique Habitat) .....	783,913,300.89
Land Conservation Area .....	14,361,940.18
Inland Wetlands Conser. Grants & Easements.....	27,052,966.69
Riparian Habitat Conser. Grants & Easements.....	86,533,351.27
Other Wildlife Habitat Grants .....	907,812,581.59
F. Hunting Access Projects .....	1,366,898.57
G. Miscellaneous Projects (including leases).....	37,152,374.61
H. Special Project Allocations.....	1,892,496.37
I. Miscellaneous Public Access Projects .....	39,561,463.38
State Owned .....	2,291,884.42
Grants .....	37,269,578.96
J. Sales and/or exchanges.....	535,058.07
K. Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act (tax credits awarded) ...	(48,598,734.00)
Statutory plans .....	(0.00)
Corridors, wetlands, wildlife habitat, streams and riparian habitat .....	(6,234,658.00)
Agricultural lands.....	(13,775,640.07)
Water and water rights .....	(0.00)
State and local parks, open space and archaeological resources .....	(28,588,435.93)
Total Allocated to Projects	\$2,487,589,847.41