**Gavin Newsom, Governor**
NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 944209
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# Final Meeting Agenda

## WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

February 26, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Natural Resources Building, First Floor Auditorium
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Board meeting will also be available via Zoom. A recording will be posted after the meeting.

Please click the link below to join the webinar.

Join the webinar

Or Telephone: USA +1 216 706-7075 US Toll or USA +1 866 390-1828 Toll-free
Conference code: 664759

**Notice:** We no longer require Speaker Cards. If you wish to comment on an agenda item, you will be provided with the opportunity to do so during the meeting. In person speakers will be asked to line up at the podium during the specified item. Similarly, on-line speakers will be asked to raise hands to enter the queue.

The Board will break for a 30-minute lunch at approximately 12pm.

**Attachments**

Attachment A – Map of February 2025 Projects

Attachment B – WCB Acronyms

Attachment C – WCB Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

**PERSONS WITH DISABILITES**

Persons with disabilities needing reasonable accommodation to participate in public meetings or other CDFW activities are invited to contact the Department's EEO Office at EEO@wildlife.ca.gov. Please make any such requests at the earliest possible time to help ensure that accommodations can be in place at the time of the meeting. If a request for an accommodation has been submitted but is no longer needed, please contact the EEO Officer immediately.

## 1. Roll Call

Wildlife Conservation Board Members
- *Vacant*, Chair, Public Member
- Charlton H. Bonham, Vice Chair
  Director, Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Michele Perrault, Member
  Legislative Director, Department of Finance
- Damon Nagami, Public Member
- Fran Pavley, Public Member
- Karyn Gear, Public Member
- Erika Zavaleta Member
  President, Fish and Game Commission

Joint Legislative Advisory Committee
- Senator John Laird
- Senator Catherine Blakespear
- Senator Henry Stern
- Assemblymember Diane Papan
- Assemblymember Rick Zbur
- Assemblymember Steve Bennett

Executive Director
- Jennifer M. Norris, PhD

## 2. Approval of Agenda

## 3. Discussion and Election of Board Chair

## 4. Executive Director's Report

## 5. Board Member Updates and Reports

## 6. Funding Status - Informational

The following funding status depicts total Capital Outlay and Local Assistance appropriations by fund source and fund number:

| | |
|---|---|
| **GENERAL FUND (0001)** | **$51,539,408.70** |
| February 2025 Board Meeting Allocation: | (10,225,460.00) |
| Total Project Development: | (27,995,600.70) |
| Projected Unallocated Balance: | **$13,318,348.00** |
| **HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND (0262)** | **$62,579,865.07** |
| February 2025 Board Meeting Allocation: | (2,000,000.00) |
| Total Project Development: | (36,186,847.00) |
| Projected Unallocated Balance: | **$24,393,018.07** |
| **GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION FUND (3228)** | **$134,849,856.83** |
| February 2025 Board Meeting Allocation: | (18,919,216.00) |
| Total Project Development: | (111,595,552.09) |
| Projected Unallocated Balance: | **$4,335,088.74** |
| **CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND COASTAL PROTECTION BOND FUND (Proposition 40) (6029)** | **$172,000.00** |
| February 2025 Board Meeting Allocation: | (172,000.00) |
| Total Project Development: | (0.00) |
| Projected Unallocated Balance: | **$0.00** |
| **WATER SECURITY, CLEAN DRINKING WATER, COASTAL AND BEACH PROTECTION FUND OF 2002 (Proposition 50) (6031)** | **$14,930,173.50** |
| February 2025 Board Meeting Allocation: | (0.00) |
| Total Project Development: | (5,231,066.74) |
| Projected Unallocated Balance: | **$9,699,106.76** |

| | |
|---|---|
| **SAFE DRINKING WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND COASTAL PROTECTION FUND OF 2006 (Proposition 84) (6051)** | **$5,978,603.03** |
| February 2025 Board Meeting Allocation: | (0.00) |
| Total Project Development: | (2,054,748.00) |
| Projected Unallocated Balance: | **$3,923,855.03** |
| **WATER QUALITY, SUPPLY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND (Proposition 1) (6083)** | **$38,234,809.85** |
| February 2025 Board Meeting Allocation: | (1,890,000.00) |
| Total Project Development: | (0.00) |
| Projected Unallocated Balance: | **$36,344,809.85** |
| **THE CALIFORNIA DROUGHT, WATER, PARKS, CLIMATE, COASTAL PROTECTION, AND OUTDOOR ACCESS FOR ALL ACT OF 2018 (Proposition 68) (6088)** | **$51,604,363.41** |
| February 2025 Board Meeting Allocation: | (3,974,323.58) |
| Total Project Development: | (2,812,816.02) |
| Projected Unallocated Balance: | **$44,817,223.81** |
| **TOTAL – ALL FUNDS** | **$359,889,080.39** |
| Grand Total – February 2025 Board Meeting Allocation: | (37,181,000.00) |
| Grand Total - Project Development: | (185,876,630.55) |
| Grand Total Projected Unallocated Balance: | **$136,831,449.84** |

### 7. Project Updates

## Consent Items

Items 8-17 are part of the Consent Calendar

## 8. Recovery of Funds, Wednesday, February 26, 2025

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.

*Table 1 - Recoveries by Fund*

| **Fund Name** | **Amount** |
|---|---|
| General Fund | $166,759.00 |
| Habitat Conservation Fund | $5,157.20 |
| Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund | $24,528.44 |
| Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006 | $17,966.80 |
| Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014 | $34,066.01 |
| The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 | $246,368.74 |
| ***Total Recoveries for All Funds*** | ***$494,846.19*** |

*Table 2 - General Fund*

| **Project Name** | Allocated | Expended | Balance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Angeles Linkage | $15,000.00 | $0.00 | $15,000.00 |
| El Monte Valley (Digenan) | $830,000.00 | $821,252.00 | $8,748.00 |
| Happy Valley | $1,430,000.00 | $1,406,208.00 | $23,792.00 |
| Parks Creek Ranch | $9,330,000.00 | $9,306,596.00 | $23,404.00 |
| Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander Section 6 (La Selva Uplands) | $6,116,000.00 | $6,103,178.00 | $12,822.00 |
| Santa Rosa Hills | $20,000.00 | $11,058.00 | $8,942.00 |
| Simi Divide - Box Canyon Connector | $20,000.00 | $0.00 | $20,000.00 |
| Trinity Headwaters | $12,130,000.00 | $12,117,867.50 | $12,132.50 |
| Upper Carpenter Valley | $2,530,000.00 | $2,507,566.00 | $22,434.00 |
| Western Riverside MSHCP Johnson | $20,000.00 | $15,083.50 | $4,916.50 |
| Willow Creek Ranch Conservation Easement | $20,000.00 | $5,432.00 | $14,568.00 |
| ***Total Recoveries to General Fund*** | | | ***$166,759.00*** |

*Table 3 - Habitat Conservation Fund*

| **Project Name** | Allocated | Expended | Balance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Angeles Linkage | $824,000.00 | $824,000.00 | $0.00 |
| Gray Lodge Wildlife Area Auto Tour Route and Habitat Enhancement Project | $1,410,000.00 | $1,407,312.70 | $2,687.30 |

| **Project Name** | Allocated | Expended | Balance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Moss Landing Wildlife Area Enhancement, Planning, Design and Pilot | $480,000.00 | $477,530.10 | $2,469.90 |
| Santa Rosa Hills | $347,000.00 | $347,000.00 | $0.00 |
| Simi Divide - Box Canyon Connector | $850,000.00 | $850,000.00 | $0.00 |
| Western Riverside MSHCP Johnson | $371,000.00 | $371,000.00 | $0.00 |
| Willow Creek Ranch Conservation Easement | $775,000.00 | $775,000.00 | $0.00 |
| ***Total Recoveries to Habitat Conservation Fund*** | | | ***$5,157.20*** |

*Table 4- Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund*

| **Project Name** | Allocated | Expended | Balance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Building Climate Resiliency in Central Valley Wetlands, Phase 2 | $170,000.00 | $169,117.61 | $882.39 |
| Protecting Central Coast Habitat for Listed Plant Species | $120,000.00 | $119,999.98 | $0.02 |
| Resilient Estuaries: Aquatic Species Assessment Tool | $144,113.00 | $120,466.97 | $23,646.03 |
| ***Total Recoveries Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund*** | | | ***$24,528.44*** |

*Table 5 - Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006*

| **Project Name** | Allocated | Expended | Balance |
|---|---|---|---|
| San Joaquin River Parkway, Western Reaches Access, Planning | $1,519,000.00 | $1,519,000.00 | $0.00 |
| Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement | $30,000.00 | $12,522.00 | $17,478.00 |
| San Joaquin River Parkway, Ball Ranch Managed Aquifer Recharge Planning | $324,317.00 | $323,828.20 | 488.80 |
| ***Total Recoveries to Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Fund of 2006*** | | | ***$17,966.80*** |

*Table 6- Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014*

| **Project Name** | Allocated | Expended | Balance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sierra Meadow Hydrology Monitoring Project | $763,771.00 | $729,704.99 | $34,066.01 |
| ***Total Recoveries to Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014*** | | | ***$34,066.01*** |

*Table 7- The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018*

| **Project Name** | Allocated | Expended | Balance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bolsa Chica Tern Islands Restoration Project | $135,000.00 | $120,787.67 | $14,212.33 |
| Bushy Lake Conceptual Restoration Plan | $370,000.00 | $354,472.99 | $15,527.01 |
| Habitat Restoration at Anacapa Island | $343,000.00 | $342,992.12 | $7.88 |
| Kendall-Frost Field Station and Learning Center Enhancement | $988,111.00 | $988,111.00 | $0.00 |
| Lower Klamath NWR Water Conveyance Assessment | $206,000.00 | $156,857.37 | $49,142.63 |
| North Bay Baylands Regional Conservation Investment Strategy | $640,000.00 | $475,467.63 | $164,532.37 |
| Robinhood Ridge Vernal Pool Restoration | $394,000.00 | $391,053.49 | $2,946.51 |
| San Vicente Redwoods Public Access Trails | $1,000,000.00 | $1,000,000.00 | $0.00 |
| Watsonville Slough Farm Trails: Public Access to Nature | $300,000.00 | $299,999.99 | $0.01 |
| ***Total Recoveries to The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018*** | | | ***$246.368.74*** |

**9. Ross** **Acquisition Fee**

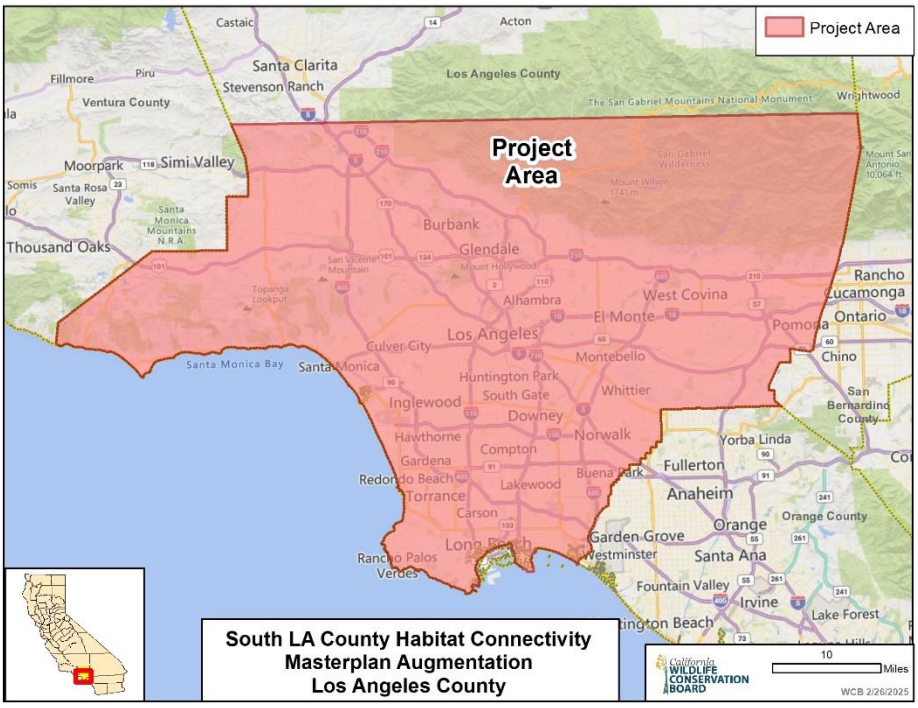
Withdrawn from consideration at this time.

**10. Silo Hills** **Acquisition**
Withdrawn from consideration at this time. **Fee**

**11. South LA County Habitat Connectivity Masterplan Augmentation** **Restoration – Planning**

WCB Grant: $787,000
Fund Source: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, Budget Act of 2024, Climate Change Resilience (SB 108, Sec. 107(1)(4))
Grantee: Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains
Location: The southern half of Los Angeles County
County: Los Angeles

## Project Highlights




- Los Angeles County is a biodiversity hotspot with more than 4,000 unique native plant and animal species.
- With over 10 million residents, Los Angeles County is the most densely inhabited county in the United States.
- High population density in the region resulted in concrete channelized rivers, housing developments, agricultural conversion, and multi-lane freeways that fragment landscapes and threaten native biodiversity.
- Project will create a Connectivity Master Plan for the region.

## Priority Metrics

- Justice Community Benefits: No
- Tribal Partnerships: Outreach to the Tongva, Gabreleño, Kizh, and Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians will offer opportunities for integration of tribal interests, cultural landscapes, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge into wildlife connectivity planning.
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
- WCB Strategic Plan Goal B.1 and Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3

## Project Description

The South LA County Habitat Connectivity Masterplan Augmentation (Project) will support the completion of the South LA County Habitat Connectivity Masterplan project funded by WCB in May 2024. This augmentation was requested by the Grantee when a source of matching funds for the original project withdrew its offer necessitating additional funding to complete the project's scope. Continued implementation of biodiversity restoration and connectivity initiatives in urban Los Angeles County are limited by the lack of an area-wide framework plan to link projects together, the low spatial resolution of existing connectivity datasets, and differing sociocultural context of existing analyses such as the California Essential Linkages Project which focuses mainly on large landscapes and excludes important finer-scale habitat areas within and adjacent to urban areas. The Project will create a Connectivity Master Plan that links and expands upon urban and wildland connectivity initiatives and plans that provide comprehensive statewide and regional strategies and priorities by developing the following:

- A set of high-resolution maps of existing conditions and priority connectivity locations for up to ten umbrella species/habitats, plus synthesis maps, to support outreach, planning, and design projects.
- A high-resolution physical plan covering up to six subregional planning units, including spatial prioritization and physical masterplan of application strategies.
- Best practices recommendations for zoning, infrastructure improvement, water quality projects, and housing development that protect and enhance wildlife connectivity.
- Conceptual designs for up to eight priority projects including key linkage infrastructure.
- Herbicide: No

## Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

| Project Task | Original WCB | WCB Augmentation | Non-WCB Funds | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Project Management | $260,000 | $167,000 | $55,000 | $482,000 |
| Technical Studies | $165,000 | $225,000 | $165,000 | $555,000 |
| Outreach | $100,000 | $275,000 | --- | $375,000 |
| Connectivity Planning | $375,000 | $120,000 | $155,000 | $650,000 |
| Policy Tools and Best Management Practices | $300,000 | --- | $570,000 | $870,000 |
| Total | $1,200,000 | $787,000 | $945,000 | $2,932,000 |

Non-WCB funders include:

- Wildlife Conservation Network - $500,000
- County of Los Angeles - $220,000
- City of Los Angeles - $225,000

## Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- None received

Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA

The Project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies, as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions. Subject to authorization by WCB, an NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

## State Government

- Senate:
  Senator Caroline Menjivar, District 20
  Senator Monique Limón, District 21
  Senator Susan Rubio, District 22
  Senator Suzette Martinez Valladares, District 23
  Senator Benjamin Allen, District 24
  Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, District 25
  Senator María Elena Durazo, District 26
  Senator Henry I. Stern, District 27
  Senator Lola Smallwood-Cuevas, District 28
  Senator Eloise Gómez Reyes, District 29
  Senator Bob Archuleta, District 30
  Senator Kelly Seyarto, District 32
  Senator Lena A. Gonzalez, District 33
  Senator Tom Umberg, District 34
  Senator Laura Richardson, District 35
  Senator Vacant Member, District 36
- Assembly:
  Assemblymember Pilar Schiavo, District 40
  Assemblymember John Harabedian, District 41
  Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, District 42
  Assemblymember Celeste Rodriguez, District 43
  Assemblymember Nick Schultz, District 44
  Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel, District 46
  Assemblymember Blanca E. Rubio, District 48

Assemblymember Mike Fong, District 49
Assemblymember Rick Chavez Zbur, District 51
Assemblymember Jessica Caloza, District 52
Assemblymember Michelle Rodriquez, District 53
Assemblymember Mark González, District 54
Assemblymember Issac G. Bryan, District 55
Assemblymember Lisa Calderon, District 56
Assemblymember Sade Elhawary, District 57
Assemblymember Phillip Chen, District 59
Assemblymember Tina S. McKinnor, District 61
Assemblymember José Luis Solache Jr., District 62
Assemblymember Blanca Pacheco, District 64
Assemblymember Mike Gipson, District 65
Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi, District 66
Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva, District 67
Assemblymember Josh Lowenthal, District 69
Assemblymember Tri Ta, District 70
Assemblymember Diane Dixon, District 72

## Staff Recommendation

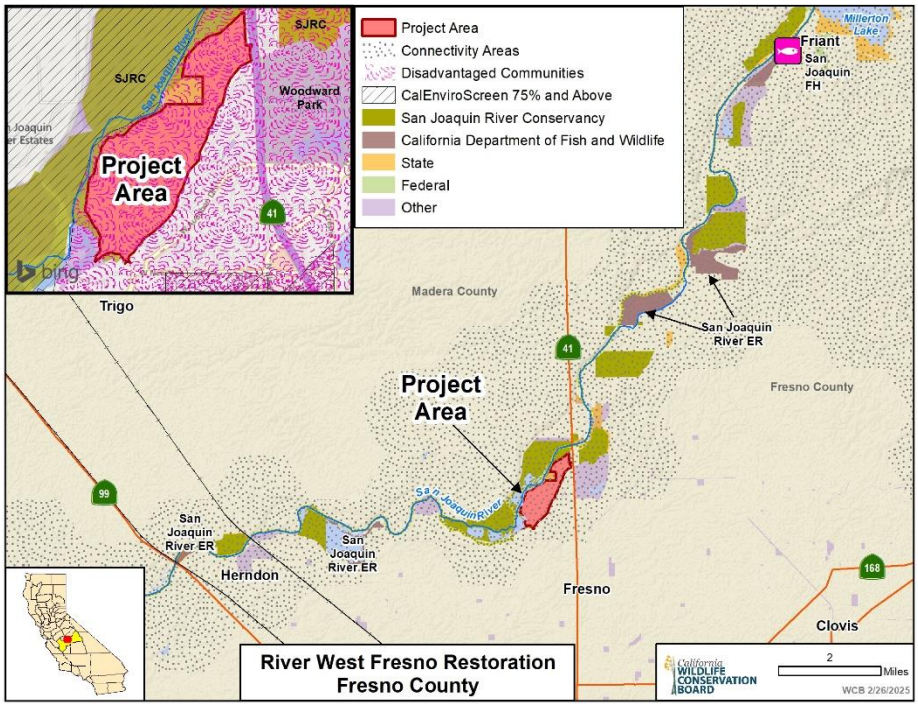
Staff recommends that WCB approve this Project as proposed, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this Project, and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

## 12. River West Fresno Restoration — Restoration – Implementation

WCB Grant: $172,000
Fund Source(s): California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Fund (Proposition 40), Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)(5)
Grantee: City of Fresno
Landowner: San Joaquin River Conservancy and Private Landowner
Location: Fresno
County: Fresno

### Project Highlights

- Restoration and revegetation for the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) River West Eaton Trail Extension Project (Trail Extension Project)
- The Trail Extension Project is a high priority for SJRC and will provide new trails and access points to the San Joaquin River
- Restores 5 acres of upland habitat in the San Joaquin River Parkway
- Key species: Valley elderberry longhorn beetle (VELB)




### Priority Metrics

- Justice Community Benefits: Yes. The project is adjacent to the Pinedale community, which has a CalEnviroScreen 4.0 overall score of 96.
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
- WCB Strategic Plan Goal B and Objective 1.3

### Project Description

The River West Fresno Restoration (Project) site (River West) has been degraded from various land uses, including agriculture, aggregate mining, and cattle ranching. The planned construction of the Trail Extension Project for River West will cause further

loss of habitat with earthmoving and tree removal. The City of Fresno will develop a Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Plan (HRRP) to mitigate the habitat loss and restore the area. The mitigation actions are funded through other sources. The Project will conduct HRRP restoration activities above and beyond mitigation by:

- Restoring and enhancing historically impacted areas within River West Fresno associated with the Trail Extension Project
- Restoration actions include decommissioning existing dirt roads and revegetating with native plants to benefit special status species (e.g., elderberry shrubs for VELB)
- Herbicide: No

## Long-Term Management

The City of Fresno has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the Project, including management of River West. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, Grantee does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

## Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

| Project Task | WCB | Non-WCB Funds | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|
| Project Management | $0 | $20,000 | $20,000 |
| Planting and Habitat Restoration | $160,000 | $1,560,000 | $1,720,000 |
| Establishment Period | $0 | $20,000 | $20,000 |
| Contingency | $12,000 | $0 | $12,000 |
| Total | $172,000 | $1,600,000 | $1,772,000 |

Non-WCB funders include:

- SJRC - $1,600,000

## Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- None received

Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA

The SJRC, as lead agency, prepared an EIR for the Project pursuant to the provisions of the CEQA. Staff considered the EIR and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate Notice of Determination (NOD) will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

## State Government

- Senate: Senator Shannon Grove, District 12
- Assembly: Assemblymember David J. Tangipa, District 8

## Staff Recommendation

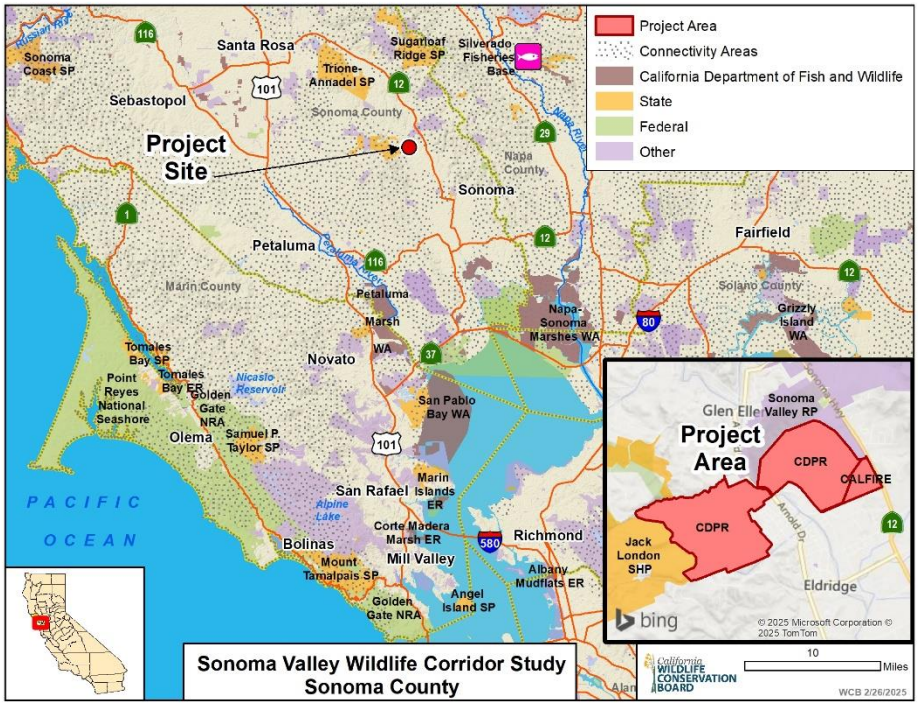
Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this Project as proposed, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this Project, and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

## 13. Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor Study — Restoration – Planning

WCB Grant: $200,000
Fund Source(s): General Fund, Budget Act of 2024, Sonoma County (SB 108, Sec. 106(1)(3))
Grantee: Sonoma Land Trust
Landowner: California State Parks, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, California Department of General Services
Location: Five miles northwest of Sonoma
County: Sonoma

### Project Highlights

- Located within the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor
- Key species: California red-legged frog, Northern spotted owl
- Regional Plans: Critical Linkages Bay Area and Beyond (2013), The Conservation Lands Network 2.0: A Regional Conservation Strategy for the San Francisco Bay Area (2019)




### Priority Metrics

- Justice Community Benefits: No
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
- WCB Strategic Plan Goal B and Objective 1.2

### Project Description

The Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor Study (Project) is located on the former 950-acre Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) property within the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor, which is an important east-west linkage for wildlife. Currently, there are multiple land use changes proposed on the SDC property including commercial and residential development projects within the 250-acre campus area, a new 40-acre CAL FIRE regional headquarters, and public parks on former SDC open space lands. These proposed changes in land use could disrupt connectivity for wildlife and degrade habitat. The Project will fill gaps in the understanding of how wildlife connectivity and

habitat will be individually or cumulatively impacted by the proposed projects and what suitable design, mitigation, and avoidance measures would be most effective to avoid or mitigate expected impacts. The Project will accomplish this by:

- Compiling a baseline of current habitat conditions and wildlife use of the property, including gathering missing information about habitat, wildlife use, and proposed developments within the project area.
- Using a variety of analytical tools and input from experts to determine areas most appropriate for limited development and public use to protect sensitive wildlife habitat.
- Compiling findings and recommendations into a study that includes design guidelines to avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential impacts of known development plans for the property.
- Herbicide: No

## Long-Term Management

Not applicable to this Project

## Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

| Project Task | WCB | Non-WCB Funds | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|
| Project Management | $12,913 | $14,250 | $27,163 |
| Baseline and Wildlife Connectivity Analysis | $90,000 | --- | $90,000 |
| Impact Analysis, Performance Criteria and Recommendations, and Study | $71,000 | $14,800 | $85,800 |
| Indirect Costs | $26,087 | --- | $26,087 |
| Total | $200,000 | $29,050 | $229,050 |

Non-WCB funders include:

- Sonoma Land Trust - $14,250
- Sonoma Ecology Center - $7,600
- Audubon Canyon Ranch - $7,200

## Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Matt Leffert, Executive Director, Jack London State Historic Park Partners
- Tom Gardali, CEO, Audubon Canyon Ranch

- Richard Dale, Executive Director, Sonoma Ecology Center

Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA

The Project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies, as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions.

## State Government

- Senate: Senator Christopher Cabaldon, District 3
- Assembly: Assemblymember Damon Connolly, District 12
- Assembly: Assemblymember Cecelia M. Aguiar-Curry, District 4

## Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that WCB approve this Project as proposed, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this Project, and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

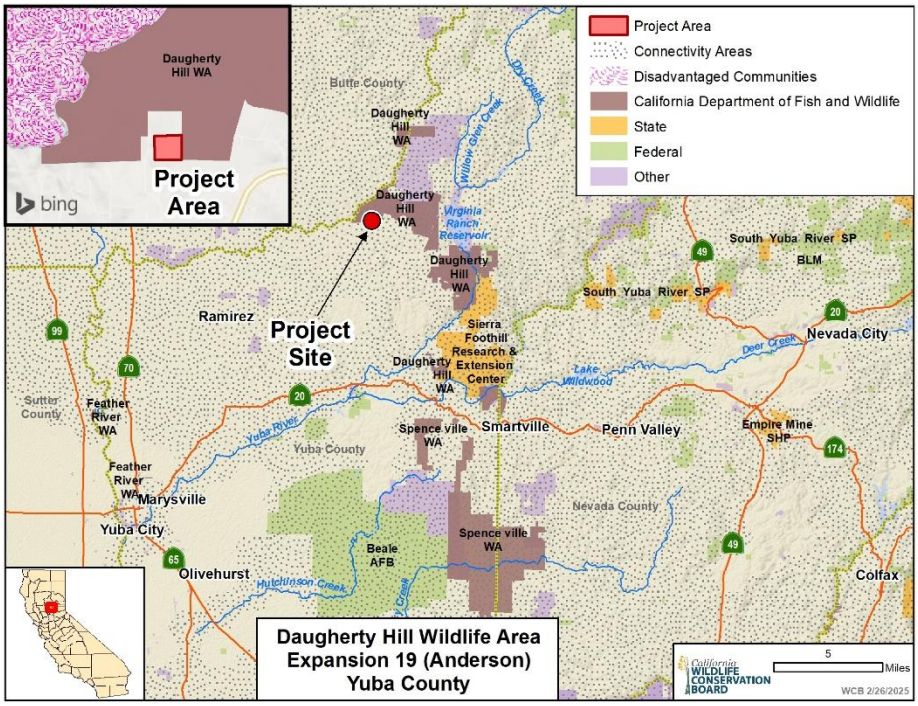
**14. Mourier West** **Acquisition**
Withdrawn from consideration at this time. **Fee**

**15. Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area, Expansion 19 (Anderson)** **Acquisition**
**CDFW Fee**

Purchase Price: $200,000
Fund Source(s): General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Nature Based Solutions, DAC Provision (AB102, Sec. 85(3)(a))
Location: Two miles northeast of Loma Rica
County: Yuba
Acres: 22± (Property)

## Property Highlights

- Expansion of CDFW's Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area.
- Habitats represented: blue oak-foothill pine, annual grasslands, and mixed chaparral.
- Is a critical winter range for the Mooretown deer herd. Protection of this range is imperative for the ongoing health of the herd.
- Contains two perennial ponds.
- Key species: California quail, wild turkey, black bear, fox, gray squirrel, mountain lion, and golden eagle.




## Priority Metrics

- Justice Community Benefits: No
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 2, Execute Strategic Acquisitions
- WCB Strategic Plan Goals A, C and Objectives 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 3.3, 3.4
- Public Access: Yes. Wildlife viewing, hiking, and hunting.

## Long-Term Management

CDFW will manage this Property as part of its Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area. Limited grazing will be implemented to enhance habitat quality and reduce fire risk.

## Project Funding

The DGS approved fair market value is $200,000. The proposed funding breakdown is as follows:

| Partners | Amount |
|---|---|
| WCB | $200,000 |
| TOTAL Purchase Price | $200,000 |

## Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- None received

Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA

The project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code 21080.28, Acquisition of an Interest in Land by a Public Agency, as an acquisition of an interest in land by a public agency for preservation of natural conditions existing at the time of transfer, including plant and animal habitats. Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file the appropriate NOE with the State Clearinghouse and the county clerk.

## State Government

- Senate: Senator Megan Dahle, District 1
- Assembly: Assemblymember James Gallagher, District 3

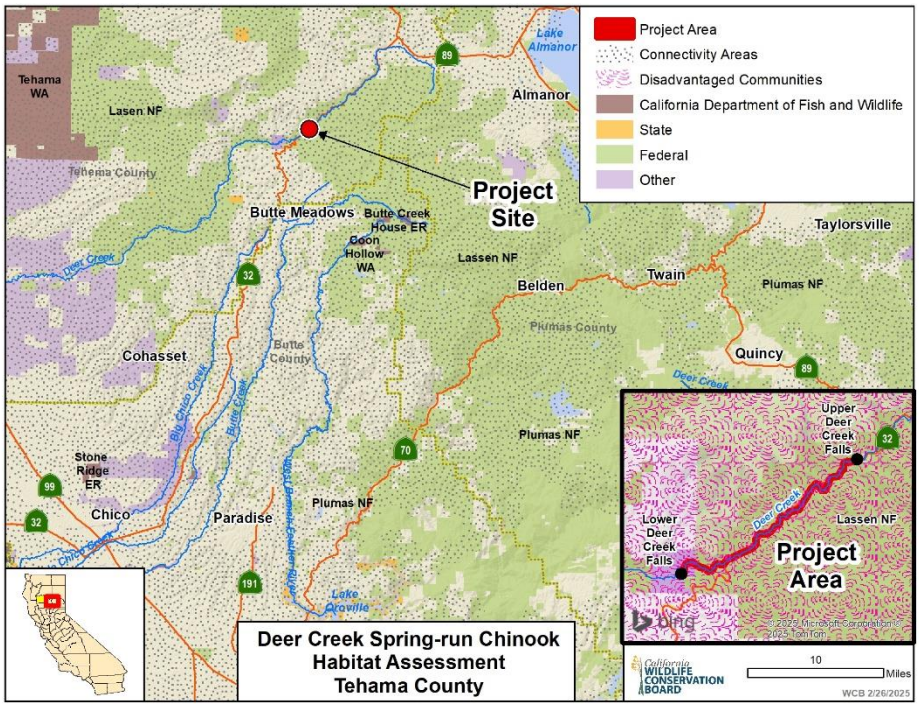
## Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project, and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**16. Deer Creek Spring-run Chinook Habitat Assessment** **Restoration – Planning**
WCB Grant: $998,000
Fund Source(s): General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Water Supply for Environmental Flows, Stream Flow Enhancement Program Provision (SB154)
Grantee: Resource Conservation District of Tehama County
Landowner: United States Forest Service
Location: Approximately 16 miles west of Chester
County: Tehama

## Project Highlights

- Located along ~5 miles of Deer Creek
- Spawning habitat will be assessed, and augmentation efforts will be designed and permitted for three suitable sites
- Key species: Spring-run Chinook Salmon (SRCS)
- Supports goals of the NOAA 2014 recovery plan for SRCS
- Includes close partnership with the Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians




## Priority Metrics

- Justice Community Benefits: Yes. The project area is within a DAC.
- Tribal Partnerships: Yes. The Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians will contribute Traditional Ecological Knowledge as partners on the planning and design phases of this project and will be employed during the future implementation project. The Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians is a federally recognized tribe.
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
- WCB Strategic Plan Goal B and Objective 1.3

## Project Description

Deer Creek is one of only three remaining self-sustaining populations of Central Valley spring-run Chinook salmon and is vital for the continued survival and recovery of the species. The project reach between Lower and Upper Deer Creek Falls provides suitable temperatures for spawning and rearing salmonids, but spawning has declined

over the last 20 years. This project will assess habitat conditions, focusing on spawning habitat availability and constraints by:

- Assessing status of the existing gravel spawning habitat supply dynamics associated with a five mile stretch of Deer Creek.
- Developing a coarse sediment budget based on sediment supply estimates, hydraulic and sediment transport modeling, and field surveys of existing channel bed morphology and bed material.
- Assessing whether the decrease in spawning habitat is related to a lack of gravel sediment supply and the extent to which any deficit in gravel supply is due to human caused factors.
- Advancing a gravel augmentation pilot project which involves the development of engineering designs and permits to restore salmon spawning habitat at up to three (3) suitable sites.
- Herbicide: No

## Long-Term Management

Not applicable to this project.

## Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

| Project Task | WCB | Non-WCB Funds | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|
| Project Management | $75,030 | --- | $75,030 |
| Existing Conditions Assessment | $184,675 | --- | $184,675 |
| Opportunity Identification and Restoration Plan | $75,412 | --- | $75,412 |
| Site Design | $239,240 | --- | $239,240 |
| Environmental Studies, Documentation, and Permitting | $243,310 | --- | $243,310 |
| TAC and Stakeholder Meetings | $50,173 | --- | $50,173 |
| Indirect | $130,160 | $63,952 | $194,112 |
| Total | $998,000 | $63,952 | $1,061,952 |

Non-WCB funders include:

- Applicant - $63,952

## Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Brandin Paya, Chairman, Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians
- James Gallagher, Assemblymember, District 3
- Russell Nickerson, District Ranger, Lasson National Forest
- Mathew Brown, Project Leader, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Red Bluff Office

Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA

The project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies, as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions. Subject to authorization by WCB, an NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

## State Government

- Senate: Senator Megan Dahle, District 1
- Assembly: Assemblymember James Gallagher, District 3

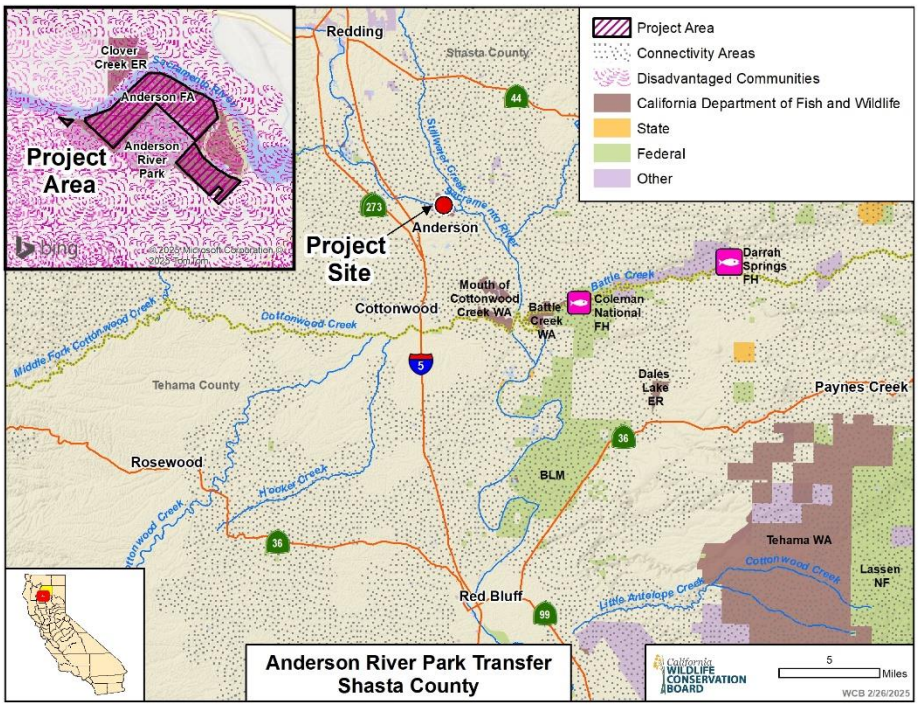
## Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project, and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

## 17. Anderson River Park Transfer — Acquisition / Transfer

WCB Grant: $0
Fund Source(s): No Fund Transfer
Transferee: City of Anderson
Location: City of Anderson
County: Shasta
Acres: 212± (Property)

### Property Highlights




- The Anderson Fishing Access (AFA) was established in 1958 by WCB and the construction of a boat ramp provided angler access to the river. The remainder of the park was purchased over time in increments by CDFW and City of Anderson (City) for public access and wildlife habitat preservation. The AFA has been operated and maintained by the City under the name Anderson River Park.
- Habitat on portions of the Property includes valley foothill riparian including valley elderberry longhorn beetle, California red-legged frog, bald eagle, Swainson's hawk, peregrine falcon, willow flycatcher, western yellow-billed cuckoo, as well as Chinook salmon and steelhead trout in the adjacent Sacramento River.
- Anderson River Park provides boating and fishing access to the river; recreational facilities for softball/soccer, fishing, tennis, basketball, picnic areas, wildlife viewing, disc golf, hiking, dog walking, and equestrian trails.
- Public confusion regarding management responsibility over the area has resulted in administrative concerns and difficulties in Property upkeep. To alleviate this confusion while maintaining the primary purpose of fishing access and wildlife habitat preservation, CDFW seeks to transfer ownership of the Property to the City.

### Priority Metrics

- Justice Community Benefits: Yes. The Property is located in a DAC.
- Tribal Partnerships: No

- Pathways to 30x30: NA (transfer project)
- WCB Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives: NA
- Public Access: Yes, Anderson Park will continue to provide boating and fishing access to the river; recreational facilities for softball/soccer, fishing, tennis, basketball, picnic areas, wildlife viewing, disc golf, hiking, dog walking, and equestrian trails.

## Long-Term Management

The City and CDFW developed the Anderson River Park Management Plan to address issues relating to incompatible public uses, such as off-road vehicle use destroying natural vegetation and wildlife disturbance, model airplane use, and mosquito abatement problems. After the transfer is completed, the City has agreed to continue to manage the property for public access and for the preservation of fish and wildlife habitat.

## Project Funding

This is a no cost transfer.

| Partners | Amount |
|---|---|
| WCB | $0 |
| TOTAL Purchase Price | $0 |

## Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- None received

Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA

The project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code 21080.28, Acquisition of an Interest in Land by a Public Agency, as an acquisition of an interest in land by a public agency for preservation of natural conditions existing at the time of transfer, including plant and animal habitats. Subject to Board approval of the project, staff will file the appropriate NOE with the State Clearinghouse and the county clerk.

## State Government

- Senate: Senator Megan Dahle, District 01
- Assembly: Assemblymember Heather Hadwick, District 01

## Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project, and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

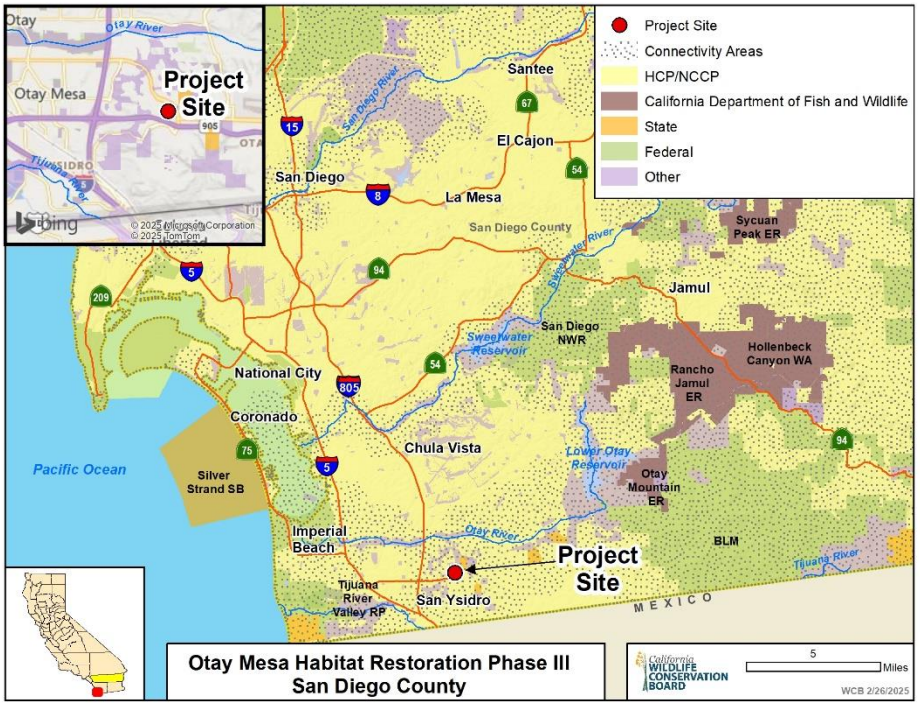
## Presentation Items

### 18. Otay Mesa Habitat Restoration, Phase III Restoration – Implementation

WCB Grant: $1,492,000
Fund Source(s): Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, Budget Act of 2024, Climate Change Resilience (SB 108, Sec. 107(1)(4))
Grantee: Chaparral Lands Conservancy
Landowner: City of San Diego
Location: San Diego
County: San Diego

#### Project Highlights

- Located in in the community of Otay Mesa near the international border with Mexico.
- Project site (Clayton Preserve) was acquired in 2011 with partial funding from WCB.
- Restores five acres of vernal pools and maritime succulent scrub habitat which are priority habitat for the San Diego County Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP).
- Project will include ADA-compliant educational signage in both English and Spanish.




#### Priority Metrics

- Justice Community Benefits: No
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship

WCB Strategic Plan Goal B and Objectives 1.3, 1.4

#### Project Description

The Otay Mesa Habitat Restoration, Phase III (Project) will restore critical habitat at the Clayton Preserve that has been damaged by past off-road vehicle activity, grazing, refuse dumping, and other disturbances. Historically, vernal pools at the site supported the endangered San Diego fairy shrimp and several other sensitive species, but past disturbances have significantly damaged pool hydrology with erosion and tire

trenching, introduced exotic invasive weeds, and eliminated most original native vegetation. The Project will restore vernal pools and surrounding maritime succulent scrub to higher functioning ecological conditions that more closely resemble original natural conditions found at the Project site by:

- Restoring and enhancing five acres of vernal pools and maritime succulent scrub including topography repair, weeding, plant propagation, planting and seeding, and vernal pool soil introduction.
- Installing populations of eight sensitive vernal pool animals and plants including Riverside fairy shrimp, San Diego fairy shrimp, little mousetail, Orcutt's grass, Otay Mesa mint, San Diego button-celery, toothed calico-flower, and vernal pool pincushion plant.
- Indirectly benefiting two sensitive vernal pool animals (two-striped garter snake and western spadefoot toad) and nine sensitive uplands animals with habitat restoration.
- Directly increasing populations of common vernal pool crustaceans and other invertebrate animals and plants.
- Directly increasing populations of eight sensitive upland plants.
- Installing perimeter fencing and closure signs.
- Preparing and conducting public outreach and education activities including nature walks, volunteer events, a dedicated Project web page, and social media.
- Herbicide: Glyphosate

## Long-Term Management

The City of San Diego has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the Project, including management of the property. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, Grantee does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

## Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

| Project Task | WCB | Totals |
|---|---|---|
| Project Management | $29,690 | $29,690 |
| Permitting | $45,000 | $45,000 |
| Restoration | $1,162,776 | $1,162,776 |
| Fencing | $60,000 | $60,000 |
| Indirect Costs | $194,534 | $194,534 |
| Total | $1,492,000 | $1,492,000 |

## Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- None received

Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA

The Project is proposed as exempt from the CEQA pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15333, Class 33, Small Habitat Restoration Projects. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

## State Government

- Senate: Senator Steve Padilla, District 18
- Assembly: Assemblymember David Alvarez, District 80

## Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that WCB approve this Project as proposed, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this Project, and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD**
**Herbicide Use Questionnaire**

# Otay Mesa Habitat Restoration Phase III

*WCB endorses an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to controlling invasive plants. IPM is an ecosystem-based strategy that focuses on long-term prevention and control of pests and their damage through a combination of techniques. WCB appreciates you describing your decision-making process regarding the invasive plant control methods planned for your proposed project.*

*1) Please describe current vegetation conditions and composition at the project site, including rare or sensitive species. Estimate the percent cover and distribution of invasive plant species and indicate if they occur in monocultures or mixed communities with natives. Please describe the role of invasive plant control in meeting the project goals.*

Original native maritime succulent scrub vegetation at the Otay Mesa Habitat Restoration Project III was damaged by decades of various harmful land uses including grazing and heavy off-road vehicle use prior to purchase and protection as a vernal pool preserve. As a result, current vegetation conditions are a mix of small remnant patches of maritime succulent scrub and predominant ruderal vegetation dominated by invasive non-native weeds such as slender wild oat and red brome grasses, filaree, mustard, stinkwort, tumbleweed, and many others with an estimated weed plant cover of 80%.

Invasive plant control using IPM is essential to ensure successful restoration of vernal pools, maritime succulent scrub, and dependent species on the Otay Mesa Project III. Vernal pool plants are small and can only be grown from seed. Upland native shrub seedlings and plantings are also small and require space for establishment. So, it’s important that competition with non-native invasive plant weeds for water, sunlight, and nutrients be significantly reduced with weed control to facilitate establishment of native vernal pool and maritime succulent scrub plants. Weed control will be conducted with a combination of methods:

- “Dethatching” physical collection and removal for disposal of the decades-old, accumulated weed thatch and seed bank;
- Spot spraying (not broadcast spraying) herbicide on small sprouting weeds around (but not inside) vernal pools and in uplands;
- Hand-pulling weeds inside vernal pools;
- Line trimming everywhere weeds reach sizes where control would require excessive herbicide or herbicide becomes ineffective.

Invasive non-native weeds will never be entirely eliminated, and this is not the goal of the Project. Rather, weed control for the duration of the Project and with maintenance following the Project will significantly reduce competition from non-native invasive plant weeds to facilitate effective and long-term establishment of native plants across the Project site.

*2) Outline the rationale for each invasive plant control method proposed for the project, list alternative methods considered, and explain why each method was chosen. If herbicides will be used, describe the rationale for each herbicide selected, including alternative herbicides considered. Where applicable, identify selective herbicides that will be used to target certain plant species or life forms (grasses, broadleaf, annual, perennial, etc.). List which herbicide formulations and adjuvants will be used, including tank mix concentrations, application rates, application methods, and timing of application. If adjuvant(s) will be used in this project, were safer products that are labeled for use over water and do not contain nonylphenol (often listed as "alkylphenol ethoxylate" on labels) selected to reduce the potential for non-target environmental impacts?*

a) *Will glyphosate be used? If so, explain the rationale and alternatives considered. List which formulations and adjuvants will be used.*
b) *Did you consider USDA approved organic herbicides? If not selected for use, explain why organic herbicides were not selected.*

Proposed invasive plant control methods for the Otay Mesa Project III include line trimming, hand pulling, and herbicide application depending on the primary target weed species at the time of control. Due to the size of the Project site and the diversity of existing weed species, numerous weed control methods were considered and will be required to meet Project and grant objectives. Line trimming will be used in the late spring months for large or flowering weeds where cutting plant stems will kill weed plants and reduce weed biomass. Hand pulling will be used inside vernal pool basins and within 10 feet of populations of sensitive plants to minimize accidental impacts to non-target species that could occur with herbicide application or line trimming. And herbicides will be used to control newly germinating weeds after adequate leaf areas for herbicide absorption have developed.

The rationale for each invasive species control method is as follows and follows methodology included in the City of San Diego's *Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Plan* which has been approved by the City of San Diego, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife:

- Dethatching is necessary to remove and dispose the decades-old, accumulated weed thatch and seed bank to create space for native plantings and seedlings and reduce future weed germination.
- Spot spraying herbicide on small sprouting weeds outside of vernal pools is necessary to reduce the number of weeds and extent of weed cover before they reach sizes where later season line trimming becomes more labor-intensive and costly.
- Hand weeding inside vernal pools is necessary to reduce the number of weeds in competition with common and sensitive vernal pool plant species and weed cover that would preclude growth of vernal pool plants and where herbicides could harm delicate vernal pool crustaceans, insects, and amphibians. Removing weeds from within the pools is crucial during the initial project years to reduce the weed seed bank and maximize development of a native seed bank.
- Line trimming outside vernal pools is necessary to control weeds that reach sizes where control would require excessive herbicide or herbicide becomes ineffective.

Alternative methods to use of herbicide for weed control have been considered and will be utilized on the Project integrated with herbicide use as described above. But no alternative method alone or in combination with other non-herbicide methods will achieve Project goals because the number and cover of weed species is and will remain too high.

Because the Project site contains intermixed non-native grasses and broadleaf weeds, a glyphosate-based aquatic formulated herbicide is proposed for use as the most efficient, effective, and safe herbicide option, particularly in the early winter months when non-native grasses are prone to germinate, and water may be present in vernal pools. Aquatic formulated glyphosate is a non-selective systemic herbicide that is applied directly to plant foliage in environments in or near surface water. Glyphosate will be applied as a low volume foliar treatment at a 2% concentration mixed per label recommendations with a colorant to identify treatment location and avoid over spray. Other systemic herbicides were considered; however, the aquatic formulation of glyphosate was determined to be the safest broad-spectrum product for applicators and the environment that has no soil residual, which allows for seeding or planting immediately after treatment. If an adjuvant is used, the project will work with CDFW's IPM Coordinator to determine the safest product appropriate for the formulation.

Organic herbicides were considered for the Project. However, it was determined that organic herbicides will not provide efficient, cost-effective, and the least harmful weed control given the size of the site, the density of the weed infestation, and the diversity of weeds present. Several problematic weeds on the Project site are annuals with deep tap roots. Organic herbicides are contact herbicides only, meaning they do not translocate to the root and only result in a burndown of the leaves. They do not control weeds with deep tap roots such as the mustard, stinkwort, and tumbleweed that are present and particularly problematic at the Project site. Many species of weed annuals will resprout after use of organic herbicides and superficial dieback of leaves, resulting in the need for repeat applications that make organic herbicide cost prohibitive. The application of organic herbicides typically requires twice as many site visits to re-treat regrowth compared to synthetic herbicides. Organic herbicides are also up to five times the cost of synthetic herbicides. When combined with the need for repeat weed control visits and increased cost, the use of organic herbicides can increase weed control costs ten times compared to synthetic herbicides. Organic herbicides are inappropriate for this Project because they are too costly and ineffective on many weed species.

*3) Would removal of invasive weeds within the project area be possible using only non-chemical methods (hand-pulling, mowing, grazing, burning, etc.)? If not, why? If so, please provide separate cost estimates for using chemical and non-chemical removal methods for the invasive species. Please estimate both the project cost and long-term management costs, including an estimate of any additional personnel or contracts required.*

Effective weed control to achieve Project goals will not be possible using only non-chemical methods. All non-chemical methods have been considered including hand-pulling and mowing (with line trimmers). Several non-chemical methods will be conducted in combination with herbicide use and these combined methods are reflected in the weed control budget. Other non-chemical methods have been rejected as ineffective or infeasible. Grazing would create significant additional soil

disturbance and introduce soil nutrients, both favoring invasive non-native weeds. Burning would also result in soil disturbance and increased nutrients favoring weeds, eliminate remnant patches of maritime succulent scrub, and is infeasible due to location of the Project in a dense residential neighborhood.

*4) Please describe the impacts that all proposed treatments (herbicide and non-chemical) might have on water quality, non-target plant species, pollinators, and other wildlife species. Describe the best management practices (BMPs) that the project will employ for all treatments and how these BMPs will avoid or minimize these impacts.*

Dethatching accumulated weed cover may result in limited disturbance to native animals and plants that use the thatch for cover, where reptiles are accidentally injured or killed during raking, and where common native plants are accidentally removed. Dethatching is conducted during the hot season and is unlikely to affect amphibians that are mostly underground or sheltering in patches of native shrubs. And the Project site does not currently support any sensitive plants that might be impacted by dethatching that will be conducted as one of the first Project activities before the site is seeded and planted with common and sensitive plant species. Dethatching will be beneficial overall because it will remove weed thatch favored by invasive non-native arthropods like Argentine ants and earwigs that prey on or otherwise displace native species and by benefitting pollinators and other native animals that will thrive on and in the native plants established in spaces previously covered with weed thatch.

Herbicide application may result in limited impacts to individual, common, non-target native plant species from accidental application or overspray. However, impacts will be minimized when herbicides are applied by skilled individuals trained to distinguish native species from non-native species during all phases of growth. Herbicide will not impact sensitive plant species because herbicide will not be used in vernal pools nor around sensitive uplands plants that will be clearly flagged for avoidance. Herbicide will not impact water quality because it will not be applied in vernal pools, will not be applied before predicted rainfall, because there are no other nearby bodies of water, because glyphosate has a limited soil persistence and is broken down by bacteria in the soil, and because it tightly binds with soil therefore limiting spread and contact with any groundwater. Herbicide use will be beneficial overall by reducing competition from weeds and favoring establishment of many more native plants than the relative few directly impacted by herbicide application and by benefitting pollinators and other native animals that will thrive on and in the native plants established through careful and strategic application of herbicide. Herbicide offers the least harmful and most efficient and effective option for controlling weeds and supporting the establishment of native plants.

Hand weeding vernal pools may result in limited impacts to individual common and sensitive native plant species from trampling or accidental pulling of native plants. Hand weeding will be beneficial overall by reducing competition from weeds and favoring establishment of many more native vernal pool plants than the relative few directly impacted by hand weeding and by benefitting pollinators that will thrive on the many flowering vernal pool plants established through careful hand weeding.

Line trimming may result in limited impacts where reptiles are accidentally injured or killed during trimming and where common native plants are accidentally removed. Line trimming will be beneficial overall by reducing competition from weeds and favoring establishment of many more native plants providing food and cover for prey of native reptiles when compared to the relatively few reptiles impacted by line trimming and by benefitting pollinators and other animals that will thrive on and in the native plants established through careful line trimming.

*5) Please describe the qualifications of anyone who has reviewed your proposed plan for invasive plant control for this project. What resources did you consult when evaluating and selecting control methods? Are there any permit-related requirements or restrictions?*

All Project plans for control of invasive plant weeds have been reviewed by experienced restoration practitioners, including licensed, qualified applicators and a Certified Ecological Restoration Professional (CERP) at RECON Environmental, Inc. RECON is based in southern California and has provided ecological restoration and invasive plant management services throughout California for over 20 years. RECON has extensive experience in weed control within a variety of habitats and using a variety of methods. RECON has successfully restored over 1,000 vernal pools and surrounding sensitive native upland shrublands in San Diego County, safely using herbicide on every project. These projects include phases I and II of this project, the award-winning Cal Terraces mitigation project. At Cal Terraces, 300 pools were restored in 1997, and the site now serves as a reference site for other restoration projects within Otay Mesa. Nearly all vernal pools at the Otay Mesa projects I and II and Cal Terraces support sensitive and listed vernal pool plant and animal species and the use of herbicide has supported, not prevented a significant diversity of native plants, insects, and wildlife.

Permit-related requirements and restrictions for Project invasive plant control are described in the City of San Diego's Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Plan and will be required conditions for the Project grading permit. Weed control restrictions only apply to hand-weeding vernal pools and application of herbicide and actually require application of herbicide in weed dethatching areas.

> "All weeding within and immediately adjacent to the enhanced/restored pools shall be performed by hand. All workers conducting weed removal activities shall be educated to distinguish between native and nonnative species so that local native plants are not inadvertently killed by weed removal activities."
>
> "All herbicide and pesticide use shall be under the direction of a licensed pest control advisor and shall be applied by a licensed applicator, under the supervision of a vernal pool restoration specialist. Glyphosate-based herbicides, such as RoundUp or Aquamaster, shall be applied on all areas that have been dethatched. Herbicide shall only be applied when wind speed is less than 5 miles per hour, and spray nozzles shall be of a design to maximize the size of droplets, to reduce the potential for drift of herbicide to non-target plants. A 10-foot buffer shall be maintained between concentrations of any sensitive plant species. Application of herbicide shall not occur if rain is projected within 24 hours of the scheduled application. When vernal pools are ponding or close to saturation, only hand herbicide application (i.e., saturated glove technique) shall be used in and around the edges of pools by specially

trained herbicide applicators under the direct supervision of the vernal pool restoration specialist. When vernal pools are not ponding or close to saturation, herbicide may be sprayed but applicators must stay at least 3 feet from the edge of the pools."

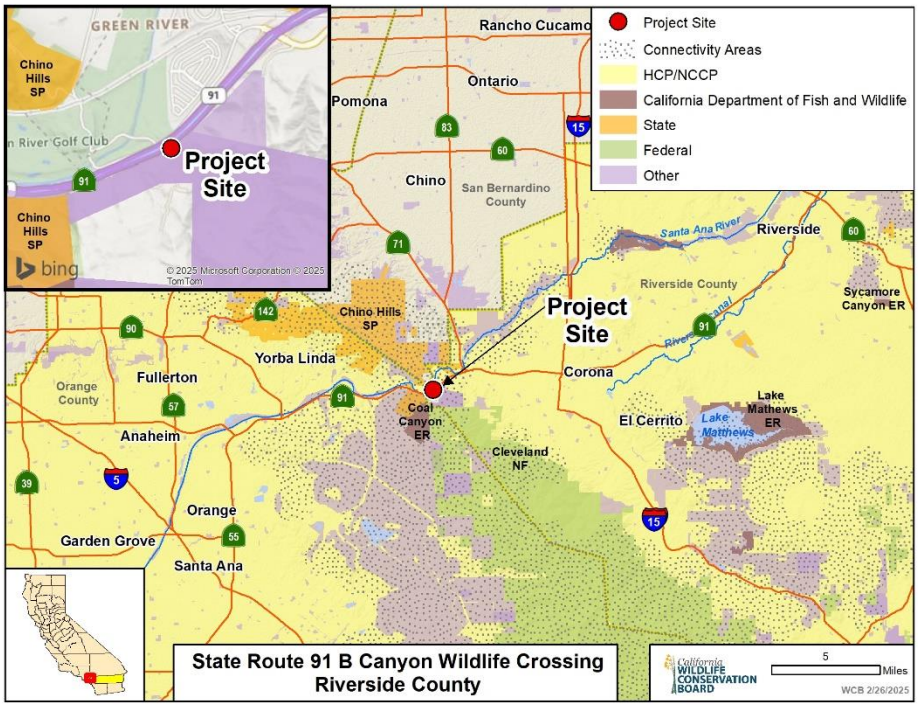
###

## 19. State Route 91 B Canyon Wildlife Crossing Restoration – Implementation

WCB Grant: $10,666,000
Fund Source(s): General Fund, Budget Act of 2022 Drought Package Provision (SB 154); California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), Public Resources Code Section 80132(e)(1); Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, Budget Act of 2024, Climate Change Resilience (SB 108, Sec. 107(1)(4))
Grantee: Caltrans
Landowner: Caltrans
Location: Corona
County: Riverside

### Project Highlights

- State Route 91 (SR-91) at the Riverside-Orange County border is a nearly impenetrable barrier for mountain lions and other wildlife.
- The 14 lanes of SR-91 bisect the historical migration corridor between the Chino Hills and the Santa Ana Mountains.
- Habitat fragmentation in the region has led to unsustainable declines in the genetic health of local mountain lion populations.




- Listed as a Priority Barrier in CDFW's 2022 Wildlife Movement Barriers Priority List.
- Project will include ADA-compliant educational signage in both English and Spanish.

### Priority Metrics

- Justice Community Benefits: No
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
- WCB Strategic Plan Goal B and Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3

## Project Description

The State Route 91 B Canyon Wildlife Crossing (Project) will upgrade an existing box culvert under State Route 91 (SR-91) in the area known as "B Canyon" (Property). The culvert's functionality as a wildlife corridor has been constrained due to a kink/bend in the culvert that developed due to incremental widening of the highway. The kink does not allow wildlife to see through to the other side of the freeway which prevents mountain lions and other risk adverse wildlife from using the culvert to migrate between the Chino Hills and the Santa Ana Mountains. The Project will remove the kink in the existing B Canyon culvert under SR-91 by replacing the south end inlet with a new structure segment that will straighten the culvert. The Project will regain the line of sight for wildlife usage and reconnect a linkage north and south of SR-91 by:

- Removing the southern portion of the culvert at B Canyon and replacing it with a new structure that removes the kink and restores the line of sight completely through the culvert.
- Installing a sound wall that will mitigate noise and light that deters human-averse species from approaching the culvert.
- Conducting public outreach necessary to coordinate SR-91 traffic that will be impacted by temporary lane closures during construction implementation.
- Collecting baseline data that will allow for long-term monitoring of the crossing’s effectiveness.
- Herbicide: No

## Long-Term Management

Caltrans has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the Project, including management of the Property. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, Caltrans does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

## Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

| Project Task | WCB | Totals |
|---|---|---|
| Project Management | $1,631,188 | $1,631,188 |
| Construction | $7,867,371 | $7,867,371 |
| Indirect Costs | $1,167,441 | $1,167,441 |
| Total | $10,666,000 | $10,666,000 |

## Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Congressman Ken Calvert, United States House of Representatives, 41st District
- Senator Kelly Seyarto, California State Senate, District 32
- Senator Richard Roth, California State Senate, District 31
- Kelly Elliott, District Superintendent, California State Parks
- Supervisor Karen Spiegel, County of Riverside, Second District
- Mayor Tom Richins, City of Corona
- Anne Mayer, Executive Director, Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority
- Andrea Gullo, Executive Director, Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority
- Cara Lacey, Wildlife Crossings Director, The Nature Conservancy
- Tiffany Yap, Senior Scientist, Center for Biological Diversity
- J.P. Rose, Policy Director, Center for Biological Diversity
- Dan Silver, Executive Director, Endangered Habitats League
- Claire Schlotterbeck, Executive Director, Hills for Everyone

Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA

The Project is proposed as exempt from the CEQA pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

## State Government

- Senate: Senator Kelly Seyarto, District 32
- Assembly: Assemblymember Bill Essayli, District 63

## Staff Recommendation

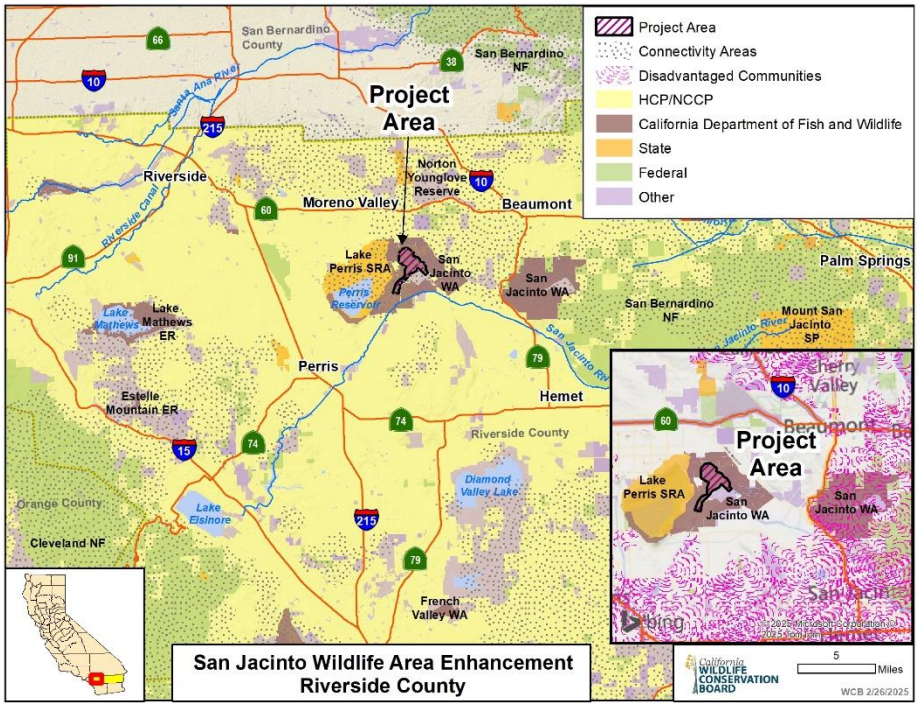
Staff recommends that WCB approve this Project as proposed, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this Project, and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

## 20. San Jacinto Wildlife Area Enhancement — Restoration - Implementation

WCB Grant: $5,777,000
Fund Source(s): Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, Budget Act of 2024, Climate Change Resilience (SB 108, Sec. 107(1)(4)); Habitat Conservation Fund (Proposition 117), Fish and Game Code Section 2786(d)(OW)
Grantee: California Waterfowl Association
Landowner: California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Location: Five miles north of Lakeview
County: Riverside

### Project Highlights

- Located at the CDFW owned San Jacinto Wildlife Area
- Project site offers public access opportunities to 30,000 visitors annually
- Habitats restored: 585 acres seasonal wetlands, 200 acres semi-permanent wetlands, 115 acres food plot fields
- Key species: Tricolored blackbird, various waterfowl, waterbirds, and shorebirds
- Within Sonoran Joint Venture's "Priority Wetland Areas"




### Priority Metrics

- Justice Community Benefits: No
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
- WCB Strategic Plan Goal B and Objective 1.3

### Project Description

The San Jacinto Wildlife Area Enhancement (Project) will construct water conveyance and water use efficiency upgrades to support habitat management for 785 acres of managed wetlands and 115 acres of food plot fields within the Project area. Water supply availability and cost is the most limiting factor to providing high quality wetland habitat for managed wetlands, especially in the more arid regions of southern

California. San Jacinto Wildlife Area wetlands are located within a designated Priority Wetland Area within the Sonoran Joint Venture's (SJV) implementation plan. The SJV's Waterfowl Management Supplement establishes that the reduction in habitat quality, availability, and a shortage of freshwater wetlands as the greatest limiting factors for waterfowl populations in the lower Colorado River, Salton Sea, and southern California regions. The Project improvements will address these limiting factors by providing high quality habitat for waterfowl, waterbirds and shorebirds, including summer brooding and molting habitat for waterfowl, and nesting habitat for tricolored blackbird.

The Project will provide high quality wetland and upland habitat by:

- Constructing a 200-acre semi-permanent wetland sanctuary to provide brooding and molting habitat for waterfowl, and nesting habitat for tricolored blackbird.
- Constructing a water recovery system to allow for the complete reuse of up to 1,000 acre-feet of water that is drained from seasonal wetland units each spring.
- Enhancing 585 acres of seasonal wetlands through wetland field recontouring, construction of swales and habitat features, and refurbishment of wetland unit levees.
- Leveling and installing a water efficient irrigation system on 115 acres of upland food plot units to provide forage for waterfowl.
- Herbicide: No

## Long-Term Management

CDFW has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the Project, including management of the Project area. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, CDFW does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

## Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

| Project Task | WCB | Non-WCB Funds | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|
| Project Management | $422,000 | --- | $422,000 |
| Construction | $4,877,000 | --- | $4,877,000 |
| Indirect Charges | $478,000 | --- | $478,000 |
| Total | $5,777,000 | --- | $5,777,000 |

## Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Jennifer Duberstein, PhD, Coordinator, Sonoran Joint Venture

Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA

The Project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, as a minor alteration in land, water and vegetation on existing officially designated wildlife management areas or fish production facilities which result in an improvement of habitat for fish and wildlife resources. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

## State Government

- Senate: Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh, District 19
- Assembly: Assemblymember Dr. Corey Jackson, District 60

## Staff Recommendation

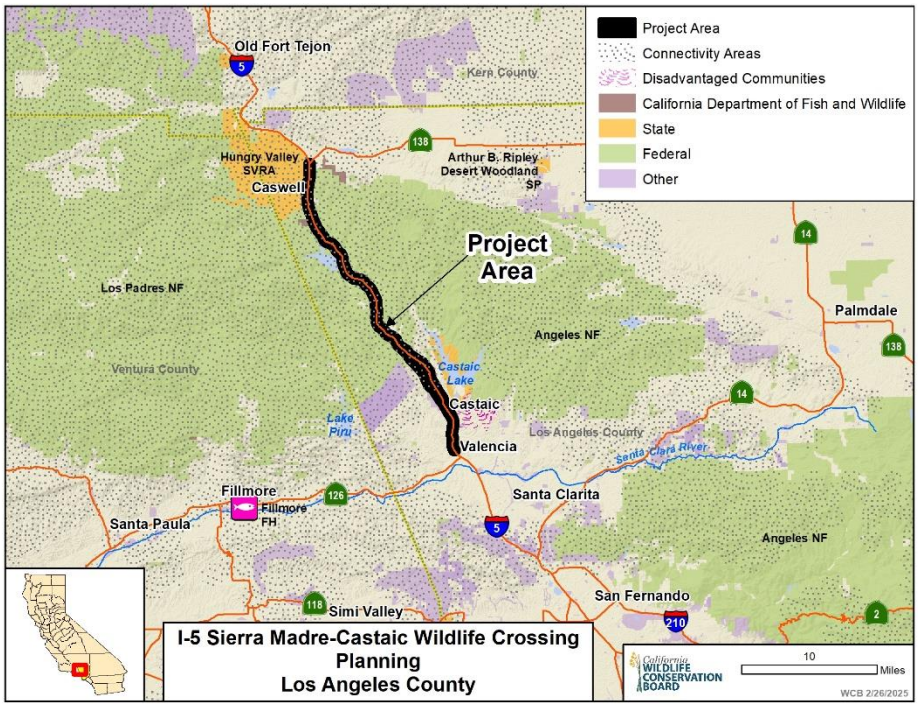
Staff recommends that WCB approve this Project as proposed, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this Project, and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

## 21. I-5 Sierra Madre-Castaic Wildlife Crossing Planning Restoration – Planning

WCB Grant: $4,921,000
Fund Source(s): Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, Budget Act of 2024, Climate Change Resilience (SB 108, Sec. 107(1)(4))
Grantee: Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
Location: Santa Clarita
County: Los Angeles

### Project Highlights

- Study area is a stretch of Interstate 5 (I-5) that begins at the northern border of the city of Santa Clarita and runs 26 miles northward.
- I-5 acts as an almost complete wildlife movement barrier between protected lands in the Sierra Madre and Castaic ranges.
- Lack of habitat connectivity impairs wildlife genetic health and hinders ecosystem adaptation to climate change.




- Focal species include mountain lion, mule deer, and black bear.

### Priority Metrics

- Justice Community Benefits: No
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
- WCB Strategic Plan Goal B and Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3

### Project Description

The I-5 Sierra Madre-Castaic Wildlife Crossing Planning (Project) will develop a wildlife crossing infrastructure improvement “master plan” to improve habitat connectivity for protected lands across I-5 to maintain viable wildlife populations, reduce dangerous wildlife vehicle collisions, allow species to shift their ranges in response to climate change, and ensure the ecological integrity of California’s existing conservation

investments. The Project will improve wildlife connectivity between the Sierra Madre and Castaic ranges by:

- Developing a wildlife crossing infrastructure improvement master plan that will lay out the locations for a system of wildlife crossings (and associated features such as wildlife exclusion fencing and jump-outs) for the entire 26-mile stretch of I-5.
- Conducting construction feasibility and constraints analyses for at least four priority wildlife crossing locations where there are protected lands on either side of the highway.
- Delivering 35% and 65% designs, Caltrans documentation, and cost estimates for a new crossing structure at the location deemed the highest priority by the feasibility study.
- Preparation of appropriate level CEQA and NEPA documents and acquisition of required permits necessary for the new structure.
- Conducting outreach to stakeholders and the I-5 Connectivity Working Group.
- Herbicide: No

## Long-Term Management

Not applicable to this Project.

## Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

| Project Task | WCB | Non-WCB Funds | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|
| Project Management | $291,696 | $108,000 | $399,696 |
| Implementation Plan | --- | $505,280 | $505,280 |
| Feasibility Analysis | $301,187 | --- | $301,187 |
| Designs and Caltrans Documentation | $4,299,778 | $476,912 | $4,776,690 |
| Indirect Costs | $28,339 | --- | $28,339 |
| Total | $4,921,000 | $1,090,192 | $6,011,192 |

Non-WCB funders include:

- Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority - $462,912
- Wildlife Conservation Network - $541,280
- The Nature Conservancy - $86,000

## Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Roman Torres, Forest Supervisor, United State Forest Service
- Kelly Ewing Toledo, Deputy District Director, Caltrans District 7
- Susan Curtis, Assistant Planning Director, County of Ventura
- Kristeen Penrod, Director, SC Wildlands
- Neal Sharma, Senior Manager, California Wildlife Program, Wildlife Conservation Network
- Shannon Mast, Santa Clarita Resident

Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA

The Project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies, as it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions.

## State Government

- Senate: Senator Scott Wilk, District 21
- Assembly: Assemblymember Tom Lackey, District 34
- Assembly: Assemblymember Pilar Schiavo, District 40

## Staff Recommendation

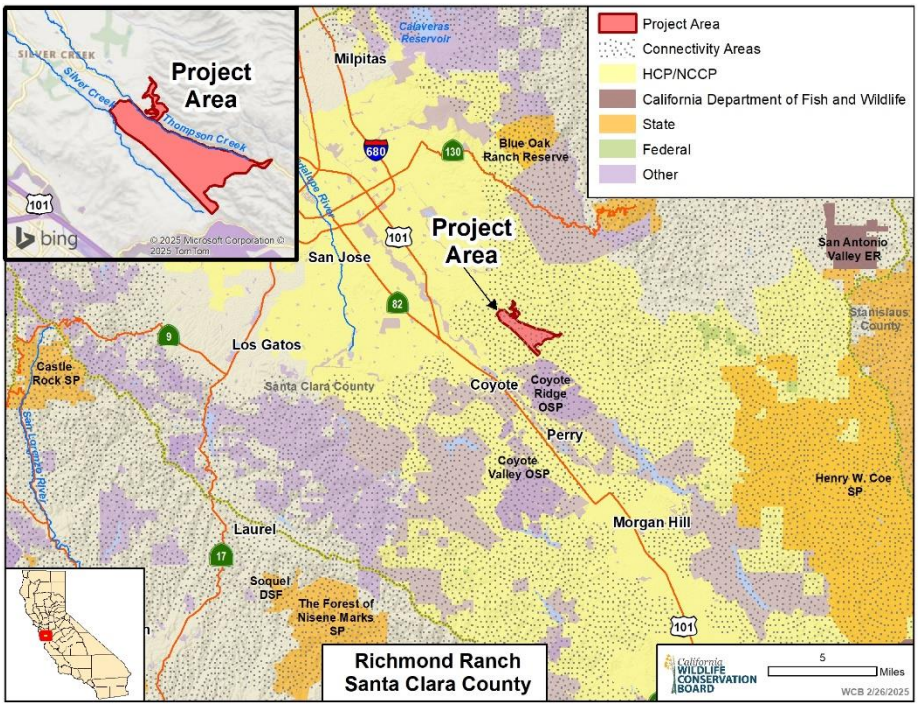
Staff recommends that WCB approve this Project as proposed, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this Project, and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

## 22. Richmond Ranch — Acquisition

**Fee**

WCB Grant: $4,000,000
Fund Source(s): General Fund, Budget Act of 2022, Nature Based Solutions Provision (AB179, Sec. 83(3)(a))
Grantee: Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency
Location: City of San Jose
County: Santa Clara
Acres: 1,218± (Property)

### Property Highlights




- The Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency will purchase a 1,218-acre portion of the larger 3,653-acre Richmond Ranch with future plans to transfer the entire protected ranch property to County Parks.
- Habitats represented: California annual grassland, coast live oak forest and woodland, blue oak woodland, mixed riparian forest, seasonal wetland, and rare serpentine bunchgrass grassland.
- Key species: California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, bay checkerspot butterfly, overwintering western burrowing owl, mountain lion, and golden eagle.
- Covered plant species: fragrant fritillary, Metcalf Canyon jewelflower, smooth lessingia, Mount Hamilton thistle, Santa Clara Valley dudleya, and Tiburon paintbrush.
- The Property borders thousands of acres of protected lands Joseph D. Grant County Park, Henry W. Coe State Park and Coyote Ridge to other existing open spaces such as Anderson Lake County Park, Silver Creek Hills, and the San Felipe Ranch Conservation Easement.
- Regional or Species Plan: Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (ICF, 2012)

## Priority Metrics

- Justice Community Benefits: No
- Tribal Partnerships: The Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency has held an initial meeting with the Tamien Nation to understand the cultural significance of the Property and identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 2, Execute Strategic Acquisitions
- WCB Strategic Plan Goal A and Objectives 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2
- Public Access: Yes. The Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency intends to eventually transfer its acreage to County Parks and will allow for access to multi use trail for hiking, bicycling, and equestrian uses.

## Long-Term Management

The Property will be managed by the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency. The Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan requires long-term monitoring and management designed to maintain and enhance natural communities, habitat for covered and other native species, native biological diversity, and ecosystem function. Currently, the site is grazed by cattle, and this would continue with the aim to maintain the sensitive serpentine habitat, while also reducing grassland fuel loads.

## Project Funding

The DGS approved fair market value is $11,815,000, and the landowner has agreed to sell at a reduced price of $6,500,000. The proposed funding breakdown is as follows:

| Partners | Amount |
|---|---|
| WCB | $4,000,000 |
| Coastal Conservancy | $1,500,000 |
| Metropolitan Transportation Commission via Priority Conservation Area Grant | $1,000,000 |
| TOTAL Purchase Price | $6,500,000 |

## Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- None received

Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA

The project has been reviewed for compliance with CEQA requirements and is proposed as exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, as an

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

## State Government

- Senate: Senator Dave Corese, District 15
- Assembly: Assemblymember Ash Kalra, District 25

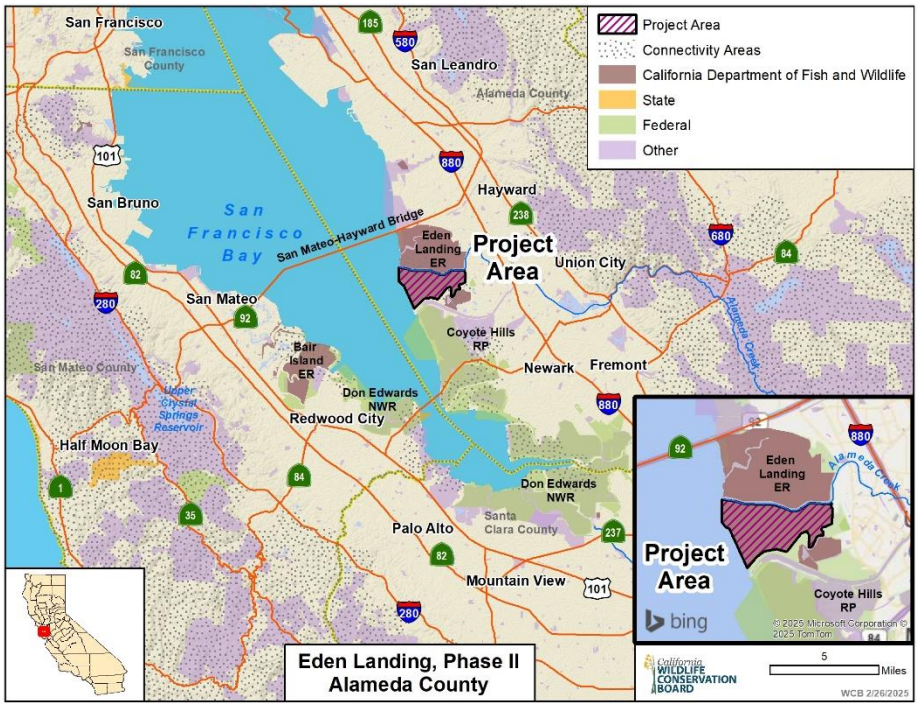
## Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project, and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

## 23. Eden Landing, Phase II — Restoration – Implementation

WCB Grant: $5,350,000
Fund Source(s): Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, Budget Act of 2024, Climate Change Resilience (SB 108, Sec. 107(1)(4))
Grantee: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Landowner: California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Location: Within the city of Hayward; adjacent to the west side of Union City
County: Alameda

### Project Highlights




- Project helps to implement the 15,100-acre South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project.
- Habitats restored: Approximately 1,300 acres of tidal marsh, and 800 acres of enhanced aquatic managed pond habitat.
- Over ten key species as identified in the SWAP stand to benefit from the project.
- The project supports implementation of eight key plans and conservation initiatives focusing on salt marsh habitat restoration.
- Design features would enhance long-term resilience to sea level rise.

### Priority Metrics

- Justice Community Benefits: Yes. Eden Landing is adjacent to a DAC. The project will provide much-needed outdoor recreational access by completing up to a four-mile section of the Bay Trail through the project area and installing interpretive elements to provide learning opportunities to the members of these communities.
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
- WCB Strategic Plan Goal B and Objectives 1.4, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.4

## Project Description

The San Francisco Bay Estuary (SFBE) is the largest estuary on the Pacific coast of the Americas, recognized as a globally important ecosystem supporting waterbirds and a diverse array of plant and animal species. The SFBE has faced significant environmental challenges, including the loss of approximately 90 percent of its historic wetlands. The Eden Landing, Phase II (Project) aims to address several specific issues related to the ecological health of the SFBE by restoring tidal wetlands and enhancing open water pond habitat, improving flood protection and shoreline resiliency, and providing wildlife oriented public access.

The Project will implement tidal marsh restoration and increase resilience to sea level rise through:

- Completion of levee improvements needed to support transformation of approximately 1,300 acres of salt production ponds to tidal marsh.
- Enhancing 800 acres of existing aquatic habitat.
- Importing soils needed to accelerate sediment accretion necessary for tidal marsh habitat development to keep pace with projected sea level rise.
- Constructing and revegetating habitat transition zones to support biodiversity.
- Enhancing water flow within restored areas by upgrading water control structures.
- Collecting data on species movement and distribution throughout the variety of habitats created by the Project to inform restoration goals.
- Herbicide: No

## Long-Term Management

As one of many efforts organized under the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, the Project has an extensive science and adaptive management program designed to understand the outcomes of the restoration actions, address key scientific uncertainties, and provide insights for future phases of the Project. If at any time during the 25-year life of the Project, Ducks Unlimited does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the Project life.

## Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the Project is as follows:

| Project Task | WCB | Non-WCB Funds | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|
| Implementation | $4,953,704 | $21,780,187 | $26,733,891 |
| Indirect Costs | $396,296 | $1,742,415 | $2,138,711 |
| Total | $5,350,000 | $23,522,602 | $28,872,602 |

Non-WCB funders include:

- California State Coastal Conservancy: $12,605,000
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation: $6,976,691
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: $3,940,911

## Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- None received

Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA

CDFW, as lead agency, prepared an EIR for the Project pursuant to the provisions of the CEQA. Staff considered the EIR and has prepared proposed, written findings documenting WCB's compliance with CEQA. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOD will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

## State Government

- Senate: Senator Aisha Wahab, District 10
- Assembly: Assemblymember Liz Ortega, District 20

## Staff Recommendation

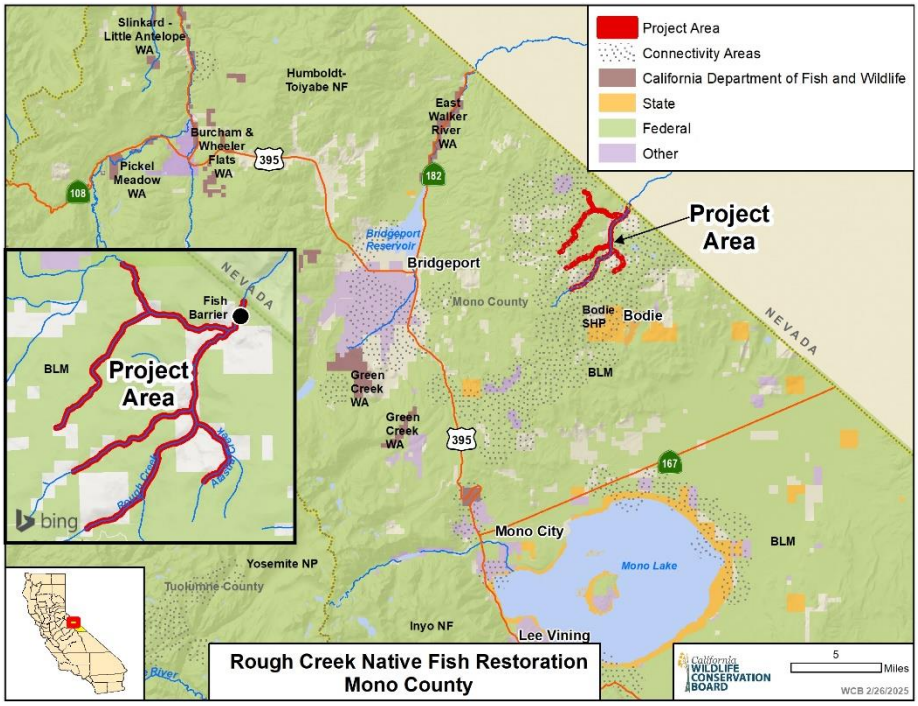
Staff recommends that WCB adopt the written findings and approve this Project as proposed, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this Project, and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

## 24. Rough Creek Native Fish Restoration — Restoration – Implementation

WCB Grant: $1,890,000
Fund Source(s): Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Fund of 2014 (Proposition 1), Water Code Section 79733
Grantee: California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Landowner: U.S. Bureau of Land Management and Private Landowner
Location: 10 miles southwest of Bridgeport
County: Mono

### Project Highlights

- Located on a tributary to the Walker River on the east side of Sierra Nevada mountains
- Remove all invasive trout from all 24 miles of the Rough Creek watershed
- Install a fish barrier to prevent additional invasive fish from entering the project area
- Allow for the restoration of an assemblage of native fish that has not existed in over a century




### Priority Metrics

- Justice Community Benefits: Yes. This project is located in a DAC. This project will expand recreational angling opportunities for the native Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, which will likely help to retain and expand ecotourism in the area and increase business revenue in the surrounding communities.
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 6, Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
- WCB Strategic Plan Goal B and Objectives 1.3, 1.6

### Project Description

Invasive trout were introduced to the Walker River for angling opportunities. The invasive trout consumed and/or excluded many native inland fish species throughout the Walker River system. These native fish species are now limited to fragmented reaches of isolated streams and lakes which are separated from one another. This project is focused on Rough Creek, one of the larger subbasins of the Walker River.

This project will remove the invasive trout using WCB funding to improve conditions for the future restoration of a native fish assemblage. These will be accomplished by:

- Installing a fish barrier at the confluence of Rough Creek and the Walker River
- Using electrofishing to remove the invasive trout from all 24 miles of the Rough Creek watershed from the fish barrier to the headwaters using WCB funds, including monitoring to confirm that total removal of invasive trout is successful using WCB funds
- Herbicide: No

## Long-Term Management

CDFW has adopted a Management Plan that guides management actions for the project, including management of the property as Designated Wild and Heritage Trout Waters which includes partnerships with federal and private landowners. If at any time during the 20-year life of the project, Grantee does not manage and maintain the project improvements, the Grant Agreement requires that it refund to the state of California an amortized amount of funds based on the number of years left on the project life.

## Project Funding

The proposed funding breakdown for the project is as follows:

| Project Task | WCB | Non-WCB Funds | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|
| Barrier Permitting and Installation | $286,000 | $185,000 | $471,000 |
| Invasive Fish Removal | $1,604,000 | $132,175 | $1,736,175 |
| Total | $1,890,000 | $317,175 | $2,207,175 |

Non-WCB funders include:

- Applicant - $302,175
- Walker Basin Conservancy - $15,000

## Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Jodie Mamuscia, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Peter Stanton, Executive Director, Walker Basin Foundation

Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA

The project is proposed as exempt from CEQA pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15333, Class 33, Small Habitat Restoration Projects. The activities of this project will be limited to within the narrow waterways in this watershed. Those waterways are comprised of the narrow bands of the streams themselves. This total area is less than five acres. Using electrofishing equipment and then removing invasive trout by hand from this waterway, habitat conditions will be enhanced to the point where native fish reintroduction will be feasible. Subject to approval of this proposal by WCB, the appropriate NOE will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

## State Government

- Senate: Senator Marie Alverado-Gil, District 4
- Assembly: Assemblymember David J. Tangipa, District 8

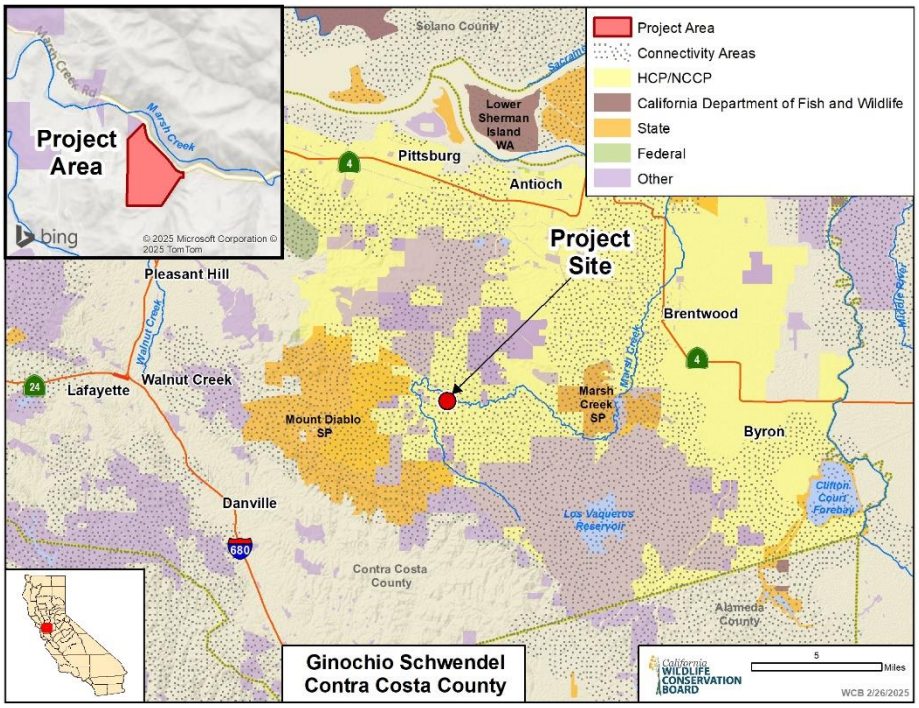
## Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project, and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

## 25. Ginochio Schwendel — Acquisition Fee

WCB Grant: $728,000
Fund Source(s): General Fund, Budget Act of 2023, Fish & Wildlife Resources – Climate Change Impacts on Wildlife Provision (AB102, Sec. 84(1))
Grantee: Save Mount Diablo
Location: Approximately 7.3 miles southeast of Clayton
County: Contra Costa
Acres: 98± (Property)

### Property Highlights




- Habitats represented: dacite volcanic habitat, oak woodland, and grasslands.
- Key species: Alameda whipsnake, California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, and golden eagle.
- Regional or Species Plan: East Contra Costa County HCP/NCCP.
- Property is adjacent to Save Mount Diablo's (SMD) Marsh Creek-5, the 60+ acre Stice scenic easement, and the Clayton Valley Farms scenic easement. Property is less than a quarter mile from SMD's Marsh Creek 2, 4, and 6 properties.
- Project will enable connectivity with existing protected lands on and near Mount Diablo as well as the adjacent Marsh Creek riparian corridor, benefiting wildlife and other species.

### Priority Metrics

- Justice Community Benefits: No
- Tribal Partnerships: No
- Pathways to 30x30: Pathway 2, Execute Strategic Acquisitions
- WCB Strategic Plan Goal A and Objectives 1.2, 1.3
- Public Access: The potential for limited public access will be evaluated during the development of the management plan.

## Long-Term Management

SMD will complete a full baseline documentation report. Based on the baseline report, SMD will develop and implement a comprehensive management plan for the Property.

## Project Funding

The DGS approved fair market value is $1,370,000. The proposed funding breakdown is as follows:

| Partners | Amount |
|---|---|
| WCB | $728,000 |
| Save Mount Diablo | $642,000 |
| TOTAL Purchase Price | $1,370,000 |

## Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Federal D. Glover, Board of Supervisors Chair, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
- Diane Burgis, District 3 Supervisor, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
- Abigail Fateman, Executive Director, East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy

Opposition:

- None received

## CEQA

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

## State Government

- Senate: Senator Tim Grayson, District 9
- Assembly: Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, District 16

## Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that WCB approve this project as proposed, authorize staff to enter into appropriate agreements necessary to accomplish this project, and authorize staff and CDFW to proceed substantially as planned.

**26. Public Forum for Items not on the Agenda**

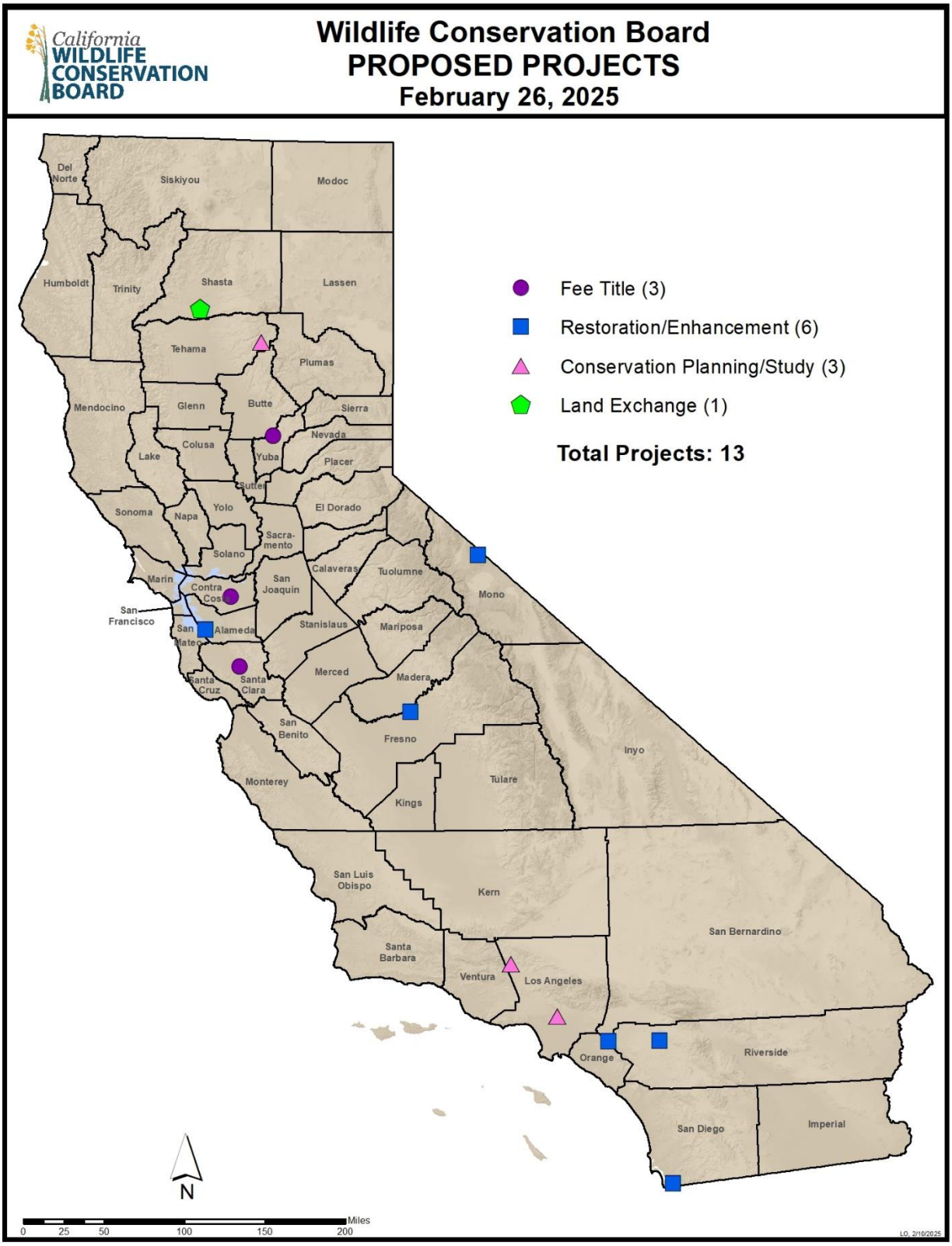
This item provides an opportunity for the general public to share comments or concerns on topics that are not included in this agenda. Speakers shall be limited to two minutes. The Board may not discuss or take action on any matter raised during this item, except to decide whether to place the matter on the agenda of a future meeting. (Sections 11125, 11125.7(a), Government Code)

**27. Executive Session (Not Open to the Public)**

The Board may meet in closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 11126(a)(1) to confer regarding pending litigation. After closed session, the Board will reconvene in public session, which may include announcements about actions taken during closed session.

## Adjourn

## ATTACHMENT A – MAP OF FEBRUARY 26, 2025, PROJECTS



## ATTACHMENT B – WCB DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

### DEFINITIONS

Disadvantaged Community – a community with a median household income less than 80 percent of the statewide average (PRC § 80002[e]).

Severely Disadvantaged Community – a community with a median household income less than 60 percent of the statewide average (PRC § 80002[n]).

Justice Community(ies) – a community within census tracts that have the top 25% of the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 overall score; a community within census tracts designated as severely disadvantaged communities (SDAC) according to the Department of Water Resources' Disadvantaged Communities Mapping tool; or are a California Native American tribe or Native American-led nonprofit organization.

### ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| Americans with Disabilities Act | ADA |
| Bureau of Land Management | BLM |
| California Department of Fish and Wildlife | CDFW |
| California Department of Finance | DOF |
| California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection | CAL FIRE |
| California Department of General Services | DGS |
| California Department of Transportation | Caltrans |
| California Department of Water Resources | DWR |
| California Endangered Species Act | CESA |
| California Environmental Quality Act | CEQA |
| California Fish and Game Commission | FGC |
| California Natural Resources Agency | CNRA |
| Conceptual Area Protection Plan | CAPP |
| Disadvantaged Community | DAC |
| Enactment Year | EY |
| Habitat Conservation Plan | HCP |
| Land Acquisition Evaluation | LAE |
| Mitigated Negative Declaration | MND |
| National Environmental Policy Act | NEPA |
| National Marine Fisheries Service | NMFS |
| National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | NOAA |
| Natural Community Conservation Plan | NCCP |
| Negative Declaration | ND |
| Notice of Determination | NOD |
| Notice of Exemption | NOE |
| Resource Conservation District | RCD |
| Resource Conservation Investment Strategy | RCIS |
| Severely Disadvantaged Community | SDAC |
| Sierra Nevada Conservancy | SNC |
| State Coastal Conservancy | SCC |

| | |
|---|---|
| Sustainable Groundwater Management Act | SGMA |
| Tahoe National Forest | TNF |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | USFWS |
| U.S. Forest Service | USFS |
| Wildlife Conservation Board | WCB |

## ATTACHMENT C – WCB STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL A. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

Acquire and invest in wildlife habitat and natural areas, and work towards long-term, landscape level conservation, habitat quality and connectivity, and the success of wildlife species and populations.

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

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

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

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

**A.5** Improve transparency and efficiency of WCB and CDFW project evaluation and recommendations to approve or deny applications

**A.6** Coordinate acquisition application processes to ensure that WCB project evaluation is unified across programs to the fullest possible extent.

### GOAL B. ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT

Work with partners to restore and enhance natural areas, create viable habitat on working lands, manage adaptively, and ensure long-term ecosystem health.

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

**B.2** Strengthen the grant application process to further highlight the importance of the following factors in project design and selection: robustness and resilience to extreme weather events, ecosystem services (e.g. groundwater recharge, flood reduction, fire prevention, etc.), water quality and quantity, and compatible public use and access.

**B.3** Improve transparency and efficiency of WCB and CDFW project evaluation and recommendations to approve or deny applications.

**B.4** Expand project monitoring and evaluation of restoration activities to assess long-term project success, moving beyond compliance monitoring.

**B.5** Provide opportunities for greater public involvement in restoration projects.

### GOAL C. PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION

Leverage WCB investments in programs and projects by expanding opportunities for outdoor wildlife-oriented recreational activities that are compatible with conservation goals.

**C.1** Support a wide range of recreational activities (e.g. hunting, fishing, birding, hiking, camping, photography, etc.) in conjunction with other land uses and without degrading environmental resources.

**C.2** Document and describe the current public access project evaluation and selection processes and explore the option of establishing a competitive grant making cycle for the Public Access Program.

**C.3** Standardize existing project monitoring protocols to facilitate consistent reporting and improved performance management.

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

**GOAL E. Fiscal and Organizational Effectiveness**

**E.1** Maximize expenditure of remaining bond funds and identify opportunities to leverage existing funds as effectively as possible.

**SI 1: CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION, RESILIENCY, AND MITIGATION (PLAN GOALS A, B, AND C)**

**OBJECTIVE SI 1.1** Invest in at least three wildlife under-or over-crossings each year for the next three years (2019 - 2021), in locations deemed high priority by both transportation and fish and wildlife agencies.

**OBJECTIVE SI 1.2** Invest in at least five projects that contribute to connectivity as highlighted in the California Terrestrial Connectivity Map, or linkages as mapped in regional assessments.

**OBJECTIVE SI 1.3** Ensure 40 percent of all acquisition and restoration projects are in areas identified as habitat for vulnerable species or as highly resilient to climate change.

**OBJECTIVE SI 1.4** Invest in at least five projects that provide long-term measurable carbon sequestration benefits.

**OBJECTIVE SI 1.5** Collaboratively develop and publish criteria for addressing catastrophic natural resource events like extreme fire and prolonged drought, for inclusion as priorities in future solicitations.

**OBJECTIVE SI 1.6** Collaboratively identify and fund five upper watershed improvement projects each year that have a primary or secondary purpose of providing resilience to climate change

**SI 2: BIODIVERSITY ACTIONS (PLAN GOALS A AND B)**

**OBJECTIVE SI 2.1** Increase habitat for sensitive species to support biodiversity through statewide protection or restoration of oak woodlands, riparian habitat, rangeland, grazing land, and grassland habitat by funding at least 10 projects in each of these WCB programs with at least 25 percent of restoration projects on conserved lands.

**OBJECTIVE SI 2.2** Each year, invest in at least three acquisitions and two restoration grants that advance habitat and natural community targets embodied in RCIS, NCCPs, or regional conservation plans.

**OBJECTIVE SI 2.3** Implement at least 10 projects each year that enhance stream flow, increase water resiliency and meet priorities in the California Water Action Plan.

**OBJECTIVE SI 2.4** Ensure 75 percent of all approved projects meet one or more conservation priorities expressed in the SWAP.

**OBJECTIVE SI 2.5** Protect or restore at least 1,000 acres each of riparian, wetlands, and grassland habitats in priority areas as defined in the SWAP.

**SI 3: PUBLIC ACCESS AND WILDLIFE-ORIENTED RECREATION (PLAN GOAL C)**

**OBJECTIVE SI 3.1** Invest in at least five projects providing public access for disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged communities.

**OBJECTIVE SI 3.2** Invest in at least five projects providing boating/fishing/hunting access to disadvantaged communities and providing additional facilities for mobility-impaired visitors and/or access compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**OBJECTIVE SI 3.3** Invest in at least 10 projects that provide hunting or fishing opportunities (at least five each).

**OBJECTIVE SI 3.4** Invest in at least 10 projects that have a primary or secondary purpose of non-consumptive wildlife recreation, such as bird watching or hiking.

**OBJECTIVE SI 3.5** Attend or conduct at least two meetings per year that provide outreach, workshops, and materials to increase visibility of the WCB Public Access Program. At least one should be in a disadvantaged community.

**SI 4: ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (PLAN GOAL A, B AND D)**

**OBJECTIVE SI 4.1** Each year, invest in at least five acquisition or restoration projects that have a demonstrated and measurable upper watershed ecosystem services benefit.

**OBJECTIVE SI 4.2** Each year, invest in at least three projects that have a primary purpose of conserving or restoring native pollinator habitat in locations that provide a measurable ecosystem services benefit.

**OBJECTIVE SI 4.3** Invest in at least five projects that provide tangible ecosystem services benefits to local lower watershed (urban or rural) communities, and document that benefit.

**SI 5: PARTNERSHIPS (PLAN GOALS A, B, C, AND D)**

**OBJECTIVE SI 5.1** Invest in at least three projects that support state or federal Safe Harbor programs.

**OBJECTIVE SI 5.2** Conduct outreach, including meetings or field visits to five new partners per year.

**OBJECTIVE SI 5.3** Implement at least three competitive grant solicitations over the next five years that have been coordinated among multiple organizations and are directed at a high priority habitat per WCB program priorities.

**OBJECTIVE SI 5.4** Per the USFWS Urban Wildlife Conservation Program, establish a new partnership with one urban community each year to support nature and wildlife connections consistent with WCB programs.

**SI 6: WCB ORGANIZATION AND TRANSPAREN-CY (PLAN GOALS D AND E)**

**OBJECTIVE SI 6.1** By the end of 2020, implement a system to make WCB meetings accessible online.

**OBJECTIVE SI 6.2** By the end of 2020, make substantial progress in standardizing solicitation content, criteria, and process, and develop an online application portal for competitive grants.

**OBJECTIVE SI 6.3** By the end of 2020, update the WCB website to include current goals, targets, metrics, and conservation priorities for each WCB Program.

**OBJECTIVE SI 6.4** By the end of 2020, develop and make mapped data that illustrates WCB projects and their relationship to program conservation objectives available to the public.

**OBJECTIVE SI 6.5** Each year, hold at least one conservation partner workshop in a different part of the state, to discuss competitive grant programs and receive feedback.

**OBJECTIVE SI 6.6** Sponsor at least five conferences or workshops each year throughout the state and distribute outreach materials about WCB programs.

**SI 7: NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP (PLAN GOALS D AND E)**

**OBJECTIVE SI 7.1** Take the lead to coordinate among the state conservancies and other agencies, regarding habitat-based priorities for upcoming competitive grant solicitations.

**OBJECTIVE SI 7.2** Participate in the development and implementation of the natural working lands elements of the State Safeguarding and Scoping Plans.

**OBJECTIVE SI 7.3** With CDFW, complete a unified, simplified process to identify CDFW’s acquisition investment priorities and obtain CDFW’s review and endorsement of WCB projects

**OBJECTIVE SI 7.4** Participate in statewide policy development efforts to improve fire resiliency and forest management through natural resource protection and restoration.

**OBJECTIVE SI 7.5** Refine priority conservation areas for each WCB program (consistent with overall WCB goals), and report progress toward program-specific goals annually or biannually

**SI 8: MONITORING AND PROGRAM EVALUATION (PLAN GOAL E)**

**OBJECTIVE SI 8.1** By 2021, define criteria for effectiveness monitoring by program, habitat or geography.

**OBJECTIVE SI 8.2** Through continued implementation of the annual monitoring program, by 2024, cumulatively monitor 20 percent of completed projects, summarize the project compliance results, and post on the WCB website.

**OBJECTIVE SI 8.3** By 2024, make the monitoring survey platform accessible on the WCB website for use by project partners.

**OBJECTIVE SI 8.4** Include monitoring data in each WCB annual report and list projects by county and by SWAP habitat type.

**OBJECTIVE SI 8.5** By 2022, update the WCB 60-year assessment—for WCB's 75th anniversary—to highlight program accomplishments, including the acreage of habitat type preserved and restored.