I. General Information

Project Name: **Lakeview Farms Conservation Project**

Project Location: South and West of Sheridan
Placer County

Sponsoring Agency: Placer County Planning Department
11414 'B' Avenue
Auburn, California 95603

Project Manager: Loren Clark, Principal Planner
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Grant Request: $325,000

Loren Clark, Principal Planner _____ Date

Project Objectives:

Funding will support Placer County's efforts to acquire a conservation easement and improve the floodplain and wetland habitat resources on Lakeview Farms, a 138-acre property south and west of Sheridan along Coon Creek in western Placer County. The County's purchase of a conservation easement on this agricultural rice land is a part of a larger restoration effort at this site, through other funding sources, to restore the habitats that have been destroyed as a result of poor farm management. Wetlands habitat will be reconstructed to the primary benefit of the numerous waterfowl and migratory birds that are found in the area. Acquisition and restoration of Lakeview Farms will:

- Conserve 138 acres of agricultural land including 2,820 feet along Coon Creek
- Contribute to the permanent conservation of valley riparian and grasslands
- Create seasonal wetlands and meandering channels and year-round brood ponds
- Preserve open space, providing linkages with surrounding preserve areas
- Benefit migratory birds, fish and wildlife
- Preserve agricultural land in an area of increasing development pressure

Protection of on-site resources is a primary goals of the project. This conservation project is being proposed as a collaborative effort with two partners: Lakeview Farms Inc. and Ducks Unlimited. Lakeview Farms is the property owner, is a willing seller of a conservation easement, and supports the restoration activities anticipated for the property. An upland game and waterfowl-hunting club will utilize the site. Ducks Unlimited is designing the proposed habitat restoration on the 138-acre parcel. Ducks Unlimited has had a long interest in habitat improvements in the Central Valley because of its importance in the Pacific Flyway for waterfowl. Design engineers and biologists have worked closely with the landowner in developing a plan that will protect the existing valuable habitat found on this property and to restore the wetlands that have been lost.

The project will assist with the initiation of the agricultural conservation component of the Placer Legacy program. It is important to consider this project not as a single, stand-alone conservation and protection effort but instead as one component of a large, comprehensive open space and agricultural conservation program. Placer Legacy was recently recognized with the 2002 Governor's Environmental and Economic Leadership Award for its outstanding contribution in the area of Environmental Economic Partnerships.

III. Minimum Qualifications

The Project meets the following minimum qualifications:

A. ☐ The project proposes to use any granted funds for protection, creation, and enhancement of flood protection corridors *[Water Code Section 79037(b)]*.

B. ☐ A local public agency, a non-profit organization, or a joint venture of local public agencies, non-profit organizations, or both proposes the project *[Water Code Section 79037(a)]*.

C. ☐ The project will use the California Conservation Corps or a community conservation corps whenever feasible *[Water Code Section 79038(b)]*.

D. ☐ If it is proposed to acquire property in fee to protect or enhance flood protection corridors and floodplains while preserving or enhancing agricultural use, the proponent has considered and documented all practical alternatives to acquisition of fee interest *[Water Code Section 79039(a)]*.

E. ☐ Holders of property interests proposed to be acquired are willing to sell them *[Water Code Section 79040]*.

F. ☐ If it is proposed to acquire property interests, the proposal describes how a plan will be developed that evaluates and minimizes the impact on adjacent landowners prior to such acquisition and evaluates the impact on the following *[Water Code Section 79041]*:

- Floodwaters including water surface elevations and flow velocities
- The structural integrity of affected levees
- Diversion facilities
- Customary agricultural husbandry practices
- Timber extraction operations

The proposal must also describe maintenance required for a) the acquired property, b) any facilities that are to be constructed or altered.

G. ☐ The project site is located at least partially in one of the following:

1. A Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), or
2. An area that would be inundated if the project were completed and an adjacent FEMA SFHA were inundated, or
3. A FEMA SFHA, which is determined by using the detailed methods identified in FEMA Publication 37, published in January 1995, titled “Flood Insurance Study Guidelines and Specifications for Study Contractors”, or
4. A floodplain designated by The Reclamation Board under Water Code Section 8402(f) *[Title 23, California Code of Regulations, Division 2, Section 497.5(a)],* or a
5. Locally designated Flood Hazard Area, with credible hydrologic data to support designation of at lease one in 100 annual probability of flood risk. This is applicable to locations without levees, or where existing levees can be set back, breached, or removed. In the latter case, levee setbacks, removal, or breaching to allow inundation of the floodplain should be part of the project.

IV. Flood Protection Benefits

Coon Creek originates in the Placer County Sierra Nevada foothills near Applegate at an elevation of approximately 2,000 feet. The creek flows westerly through rolling, forested foothills to State Route 65, which is at an elevation of approximately 100 feet. From State Route 65 to its confluence with the Cross Canal, at an elevation of 40 feet, Coon Creek traverses nearly level agricultural lands. Lakeview Farms is amongst these agricultural lands. The Cross Canal empties into the Sacramento River.

A. Existing and Potential Urban Development in the Floodplain

Placer County is located 80 miles east of San Francisco, and Auburn, the government center of Placer County is located 120 miles southwest of Reno. The county encompasses 1,506.5 square miles (including 82.5 square miles of water) or 964,140 acres (including 52,780 acres of water) and is bounded by Nevada County to the north, the State of Nevada to the east, El Dorado and Sacramento Counties to the south, and Sutter and Yuba Counties to the west.

1. Existing and Potential Urban Development at Site/Nature of Flood Risk

Placer County includes some of the most attractive living and working environments in the United States. Rapid population growth and attendant development have put tremendous strain and demand on natural resources. Rapid economic development and the associated population growth in western Placer County have resulted in the conversion of large amounts of land from open space (or agricultural use) to residential, commercial and industrial development. The conversion of such open spaces impacts floodplains, agriculture, wetlands and woodlands.

The agricultural area where Lakeview Farms is located is threatened by urban development. Most of the area is in agricultural use, although dramatic urban development is happening to the east of the property. The site is within 1 ½ miles of the City of Lincoln, the fastest growing city in California. The Valley area of the county (Roseville, Rocklin, Lincoln, Loomis, Granite Bay and Sheridan) population has grown 35 percent from 1990-2000. A project location map has been provided in Attachment One.

Analysis estimates that between now and 2022, the four-county Sacramento region will need 344,666 more homes and apartments to handle population growth. In Placer County alone, 73,000 new homes are projected to be necessary. Clearly the size and scope of urbanization, and the type and frequency of flooding, is increasing. Under the County's general plan designations, the property could be subdivided into two homesites. Nearby annexations however are averaging 4 units/acre, thus the site has a theoretical potential of 400+ homes.

At the project site, the average annual precipitation is approximately 24 inches. All of the property is within the 100-year floodplain. Most of the precipitation is associated with general rainstorms, which occur from October through April. These storms originate over the Pacific Ocean and carry considerable moisture. Duration of rainfall is usually 1-4 days. Severe thunderstorm cells are often imbedded in the general rainstorms. These storms can produce floods of high peak flows and large volumes and cause extensive flooding, particularly when Sutter County's canals exceed capacity.

2. Flooding Occurrence at Site

Hydrologically, Coon Creek is a "flashy" stream, meaning that rainfall events can produce runoff that rapidly reaches flood flow for a short to long duration. During the wet season (October through April), runoff is generated by rainfall. During the summer, flows are generated mostly by springs and components of urban runoff, such as ponds, landscape watering, sewage effluent, and agricultural water delivery by the water agencies.

Coon Creek's peak flows can range from several hundred cfs to more than 22,000 cfs in a hundred year event. Since the stream channel is generally shallowly incised and meandering, high flow events are not contained within the channel and extensive overland flow occurs. It is common for flood waters of one to two feet to occur on the Lakeview Farm property.

Any flooding in the project area in the future is likely to not threaten lives or property. Structures are neither located nor planned on the property. Conservation of Lakeview Farms will maintain the property's contributions to natural flood control. Protection of the property from development will ensure that additional runoff and/or sedimentation does not cause increased downstream flooding.

3. Importance of Flood Protection at Site/Impact of Flood Hazard

This is an opportunity to conduct a pro-active conservation and restoration effort. The population of Placer County is projected to double between now and 2022. Placer County's urbanizing landscape is resulting in a loss of sensitive habitat and less flood storage areas. As land development becomes more diffuse and indiscriminate, the need to protect open spaces becomes more imperative. The Coon Creek watershed is at the center of a significant portion of this population increase and consequently will experience significant changes to its existing condition.

Future upstream development will result in an increase in surface water runoff, resulting in an increase in stream flow. Increases in stream flow may cause alterations in stream channel dynamics. As a result, floodplain enhancement activities are planned onsite to accommodate increases in flow and flooding.

The primary impact to the flood hazard at this location is agricultural land. Generally, structures and people are not in danger when flooding occurs. When severe, there is an impact on Dowd and Wise Roads.

B. Flood Damage Reduction Benefits

Coon Creek includes 33.3 river miles of channel between the Cross Canal and Dry Creek Dam, the flood reduction benefits of the planned improvements are therefore difficult to quantify without hydrologic modeling. However, the recently completed Ecosystem Restoration Plan for the watershed found that stormwater runoff from developed areas is a major source of water quality degradation in Coon Creek. By protecting this property from future development, stormwater runoff from the site will not increase and will not be a future source of water quality degradation.

Overall, the project proposes to recontour banks of incised channels to remove sediment sources at excessively high eroding banks, increase the frequency of overbank flow, improve floodplain ecosystem function, improve native plant stands, reduce hydraulic force, increase sediment filtering, accelerate natural recovery and improve overall stream channel stability.

1. Transitory Floodwater Storage.

The project will increase floodwater storage on the property. Biologists and engineers with Ducks Unlimited have developed a plan that will restore the wetland habitat that has been lost over the years due to aggressive farming techniques (see Attachment Three). The loss of freshwater marsh habitat has a negative impact migrating waterfowl and other species. The restoration project includes the development of 116.6 acres of seasonal wetland, 7.4 acres of meandering channel, and protection of 14 acres of riparian habitat.

There are no plans to change the channel shape and size to accommodate longer-term changes in stream flow and/or sediment regimes. However, the improvements will expand the floodplain along the northern bank of Coon Creek, replanting graded areas and banks with native vegetation, removing non-native vegetation along the banks, and revegetation of the banks with native species. The improvements will result in the attenuation of flood peaks.

2. Structural and Non-Structural Flood Damage Reduction Elements.

In total, 124 acres of floodplain would be created or enhanced and 2,820 linear feet of streambank would be stabilized. The project would not place housing or structures within a 100-year flood hazard area that would impede or redirect flood flows, or expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss involving flooding. One purpose of the project is to increase the frequency of overbank flows of the creek onto restoration areas next to the creek to improve floodplain function and habitat quality. No increase in flood hazards would occur to homes, structures, or people as a result of the project. The project would have a positive impact by alleviating the effects of flooding events.

3. Methods and Reduction in Dollar Value of Flood Damages.

In the event of a flood, floodwaters would inundate the marsh area. Flood storage would be restored after a flood event as water drains off the property naturally. A dollar value has not been attached to average flood damage reductions.

4. Impact on Hydrologic and Hydraulic Conditions at the Project Site and Adjacent Properties.

a) Magnitude of Flood Flow Reduction

There would be no increase in velocity or stormwater surface elevations as a result of this project. Since Coon Creek drains into the Sacramento River via the Cross Canal in Sutter County, its water surface elevations are determined by the flood height of the Sacramento River. As the Sacramento River rises in elevation, backwatering occurs in the Cross Canal and eventually Coon Creek. The anticipated results from this project include reducing accelerated erosion and the frequency of flooding within this reach of Coon Creek by increasing the efficiency of the stream channel. The project also reduces flood flow by creating additional flood storage area.

Restoration actions include floodplain enhancement activities to accommodate increases in flow. The project is designed to create a more normally functioning floodplain by lowering banks and planting them with suitable native species. This is intended to benefit habitat values and stream function by stabilizing channel dimensions (vertically and horizontally), thereby preventing siltation of the creek and by creating a bank-full flooplain; slowing water velocity and decreasing erosional forces on the banks; filtering flood flows; and creating conditions more suitable to native flora.

b) Water Surface Elevation Impact

Protection of the property from new development activities will ensure that the watershed is not further impacted by additional erosion, runoff, and sedimentation, causing additional flooding downstream. Planned improvements are intended to increase the onsite area subject to flooding to restore a more natural stream hydrology. This is one of the purposes of the restoration project and implementation will reduce the water surface elevation in the area during flood events.

c) Flow Velocity Impact

Stream bank restoration includes regrading vertical and eroding banks and restoring the native riparian vegetation to achieve a continuous riparian corridor for the length of the project. Enhanced riparian will slow creek flow velocities. The proposed project also benefits water quality throughout the reach by reducing accelerated erosion problems and streambed scour.

C. Natural Process Restoration

1. Natural Channel Processes Restoration.

This proposal recognizes the importance of floodplains to the overall ecosystem. The site currently provides resting, breeding and foraging habitat for a variety of wildlife including adequate nesting and perching sites for a variety of birds. Presently, the Lakeview Farms property includes a 14 acre, 2,820' corridor of riparian habitat along Coon Creek, in addition to 124 acres of rice farming. The proposed easement will protect the property from future subdivision and development, and proposed restoration work will create 116.6 acres of new seasonal wetlands and 7.4 acres of meandering channels and brood ponds near high quality upland habitat.

On the property, there is evidence of long-term and continuous channel migration, including scattered short reaches of active and severe bank erosion. Bank erosion and undercutting of rooted alders along the channel margin create deeper scour holes and pools with high velocities and cover. These can range to 3-4 ft deep and lateral undercutting within the root masses of 1-2 ft.

The project will allow for the realization of important restoration goals on the property. The easement and restoration work (through other funding) will provide ecological benefits, including flood protection, erosion control, and water quality enhancements. Hunting activities will continue. The Lakeview Farms project utilizes several of the strategies recommended in the CALFED-funded Ecosystem Restoration Plan for the Coon Creek Watershed. The land, currently being used for mixed-use rice farming and hunting, will be converted to a freshwater marsh complex:

Perennial Marsh (PEM) and Swale (PEM) Creation – 116.6 acres. Wetland habitats are among the most threatened ecosystems nationwide. This proposal acknowledges that threat and will mitigate it by placing a conservation easement on the property and establishing seasonal wetlands in the restoration phase creating high quality migratory waterfowl habitat. A water delivery system will be constructed. Perennial or nearly perennial, slow-moving water will be utilized to create freshwater marsh habitat. In deeper water areas (swales 18-24" in depth) cattail and bulrush and floating mats of water primrose are expected. In shallower

water (3-10"), and on saturated banks, several species of rush, spikerush and sedge occur along with nutsedge, smartweed will be introduced. Willows (primarily sandbar and arroyo) will also be planted.

Meandering Channels (R2EM) and Brood Ponds (PEM) – 7.6 acres. Meandering channels 36-42" in depth will be created throughout the property. The Rosgen technique will be utilized as a guide and the channels will provide additional nesting, resting and feeding for a variety of waterfowl. The planting of native species will enhance the existing habitat and provide the necessary foliage in the newly created wetlands.

Where possible, the California Conservation Corps will be a future partner for implementing ecological enhancements. A California Conservation Corps (CCC) facility is located in Auburn, in close proximity to the property, and it is likely that the CCC will be used for such tasks as riparian restoration, erosion control and fuel load reduction. For example, the Corps could be useful in the planting of native plants and to maintain the areas where blackberry has been removed. Other potential participants in these activities include the 4H groups in the City of Lincoln and in the unincorporated area of the County.

2. Upstream or Downstream Hydraulic or Other Effects.

It is not just for the sake of migrating birds that preservation of wetlands and floodplains is a priority, but they also offer an excellent means to control flooding and filter nonpoint source pollution. Natural systems may actually be more cost-effective than man's technologies over the long term. The project will increase the onsite area subject to flooding to restore a more natural stream hydrology. Implementation will reduce off-site flooding. Groundwater recharge would be increased as a result of a larger floodplain. Seasonal wetlands will also provide the benefit of additional water storage.

Reducing the slope of the stream banks and developing perennial marsh areas will increase the water holding capacity and transport greater quantities of water through the channel during periods of high flows. The stream restoration plan includes clearing the streambed of foreign debris and obstacles to fish migrations and installing instream habitat structures. Instream habitat structures will utilize native materials to diversify fishery habitat by scouring the streambed to promote a sinuous channel, enhance the ratio of pools, riffles and runs, create desirable cover, and maintain silt free habitat and spawning areas while not impeding flows.

3. Channel Modification or Bank Protection Work.

In spite of the variability of erosion and deposition processes in this section of Coon Creek, channel erosion, bank scour, and bank retreat predominate. This may be associated with increased flood flow energies resulting from development in the watershed, which causes more rapid runoff and thus more frequent periods of high flow. Bank stabilization measures and revegetation would reduce erosion and siltation.

Restoration activities will include removal of Himalayan blackberry and other nonnative understory plant species including Arundo donax, Sesbania punicea and Ailanthus altissima. Bank stabilization through the planting of willow stakes (cuttings) and the revegetation of the riparian corridor through the planting of native riparian plants is planned. Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*), an invasive nonnative plant, has dispersed throughout portions of the riparian corridor. This species displaces native plant species and typically dominates the riparian woodland understory where it occurs. A portion of the restoration activities will focus on removal of this species from the restoration sites. Regular monitoring of the removal areas will be necessary to ensure that this species does not recolonize.

No dredging is planned. The California Department of Fish and Game and US Army Corps of Engineers will be notified of any work consisting of diversion or obstruction of the natural flow or changes in the channel, bed or creek bank.

D. Local Community Effects

1. Impact on Future Flooding On and Off Site.

Improvements have been designed to increase flooding on the property that will be a benefit to off-site properties. Protection and enhancement of the riparian vegetation will reduce the direct impact of precipitation and the velocity high flows. Riparian root structures and organic matter also bind soil particles together. Vegetated areas are thus generally more stable than areas without vegetation and significantly more beneficial than areas that have been urbanized. The expected improvements to in-stream erosion and deposition of sediments will benefit many stream habitat features such as channel

depth, shape, substrate, flow patterns, dissolved oxygen concentrations, adjacent vegetation, and aquatic communities.

2. Effect on Evacuation Routes or Emergency Services.

There will be no effect on evacuation routes or emergency services in the project area.

3. Compliance with Local Community Floodplain Management Ordinance.

Riparian corridor restoration and the enhancement of fresh water marsh resources is consistent with flood management objectives of the Placer County Flood Control District. The purpose of this ordinance is to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare and to minimize public and private losses attributable to flood conditions. There will be no increased flooding attributable to floodplain encroachment associated with this project. In fact, the project will prevent potential encroachment by future development of the site.

E. Value of Improvements Protected

Decisions to move forward with the Lakeview Farms project were made on the basis of cost-effectiveness, long-term protection, and multiple benefits of land conservation. The benefits of an easement purchase is balanced with the cost of protecting the land and its corresponding flood reduction benefits with the loss of property tax revenue to the community (and related jobs) due to lack of development. In addition to protecting water quality, property conservation offers multiple benefits to the public, including recreation and the preservation of wetland and forest habitats. Less tangible are "quality of life" values.

Replacement value of the lower Coon Creek/Cross Canal levee system if compromised by a catastrophic flood has not been determined but would likely be in the millions rather than thousands of dollars. Estimates are not available for property loss prevention, though there are few structures downstream from the property; land is agriculture with large parcel sizes.

Lakeview Farms

V. Wildlife and Agricultural Land Conservation Benefits

A. Wildlife Benefits

A1. Important to Regional Ecology

The 138 acre Lakeview Farms property is located southwest of Sheridan west of S.R. 65, near the crossroads of Dowd Road and Waltz Road in Placer County. Coon Creek and its related valley foothill riparian habitat runs along the southern boundary of the property. Natural wildlife corridors to neighboring sites already under conservation easements makes this project an outstanding resource opportunity not represented elsewhere.

1. Adjacent Habitat Linkages, Corridors or Buffer Zones.

Coon Creek is likely to serve as a wildlife movement corridor for a variety of wildlife species. Implementation of the proposed project is not expected to interfere with movement of these species and would not impede their use of the site.

2. Adjacent Conservation Areas.

Lakeview Farms owns four adjacent parcels, two with existing conservation easements and two with pending conservation easements with funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board, that total 794 acres. Combined with the proposal outlined here, 932 contiguous acres would be conserved under easements.

There is an opportunity to create a network of protected habitat lands. Under separate ownership nearby are the Bull Marsh and Sheridan Mitigation Banks, both protected by conservation easements.

3. Aquatic Restoration with In-Stream Benefits.

Easement acquisition is viewed as a critical step in implementing the Placer Legacy Program and the CALFED-funded Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek Ecosystem Restoration Plan objectives of acquiring and protecting ecological resources. The easement and restoration work is also intended to serve as a model for future conservation efforts in Placer County. The proposed easement will protect important resources and allow for restoration activities including creation of new meandering channels, brood ponds, and seasonal wetlands.

The habitat restoration efforts will focus on: 1) providing and/or enhancing in-stream habitat for warm-water fish and aquatic invertebrates; and 2) enhancing the riparian for wildlife. Plans are to remove non-native species (i.e., blackberry) to enhance native plant species more beneficial to ecosystem function and erosion control along stream banks and to revegetate stream banks to enhance bank stability and riparian habitat.

Bank erosion is resulting in loss of riparian habitat that provides shade for the channel. Erosion is widening the channel. The channel therefore lacks habitat diversity, in particular areas of deep-water ponding, and this may create unfavorable conditions for adult anadromous fish spawning migration during periods of low flow. Because shade from riparian areas is reduced and the channel bottom is a relatively uniform sandy substrate, juvenile salmonids would also find only limited rearing habitat during emigration to the sea, and could be exposed to increased predation.

Bioengineering methods, most likely live willow staking and wattle installation, will be used to create stable, vegetated banks designed to encourage percolation of runoff and trap sediment from entering the stream system. Additionally, a mixture of fast and slow growing riparian canopy and understory plantings will be installed along bank restoration sites. In the early stages of restoration, the live stakes and wattles will aid in the erosion control of the banks; however, in the latter stages of restoration, the root systems developed by the plantings will also function to stabilize the banks and reduce the amount of sediment entering the stream system.

4. Natural Landscapes at Site.

The fairly level property contains several plant communities, including cottonwood-willow riparian forest, vegetated sand bars, ruderal vegetation and rice fields.

Coon Creek at the project site can be characterized as a low-gradient, warm-water stream and riparian corridor located in an agricultural area. Given suitable habitat, the stream should support a

healthy warm-water fish and aquatic invertebrate community. Due to past and current disturbances to the creek channel and watershed, habitat values and stream function are lower than they potentially could be. Agriculture and urban development in the watershed have resulted in highly eroded banks and other conditions favorable to non-native plant species.

The riparian corridor provides a habitat for a number of vertebrate species, including birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. The freshwater marsh is dominated by cattail and bulrush. Thickets of willow (primarily sandbar and arroyo) occur within the marsh habitat. The balance of the property (roughly 116 acres) is presently rice field.

A2. Diversity of Species and Habitat Types

1. Unique Ecological or Biological Diversity.

The structural complexity of the habitat provides a variety of foraging, resting and nesting opportunities for many wildlife species, including a number of special status species. Therefore, an ecosystem management approach is being utilized, benefiting multiple species on a long-term basis. The completed project will benefit waterfowl by creating seasonal wetlands, meandering channels and brood ponds.

The project area supports several vegetation types. Seasonal instream wetlands occur within the ordinary high water mark within the channel and are dominated by herbaceous species such as stinging nettle, mugwort, Baltic rush and wild rye. Ruderal vegetation occurs at disturbed locations and is comprised of common non-native weeds such as yellow star-thistle and black mustard. Dense patches of Himalayan blackberry, an invasive non-native perennial, are present throughout the understories of the native plant communities.

The riparian forest is compromised of Fremont cottonwoods, white alders, arroyo willows, and red willows. Understory shrub species include sapling of the various tree species, Himalayan blackberry, California wild grape, button willow, California rose, and others. Herbaceous understory species include mugwort, creeping wild rye, Baltic rush, and a variety of nonnative weedy species including: Bermuda grass, velvet grass, brome grasses, dock, nutsedge, and others.

2. Habitat Components.

The property contains cottonwood-willow riparian forest, vegetated sand bars, ruderal vegetation and rice fields. Plans for the property include creation of perennial marshes and swales. Perennial, slow moving water will be utilized to create a fresh water marsh habitat. According to the design created by Ducks Unlimited, meandering channels and brood channels will also be created throughout the property.

3-5. Species and Habitat Type/Native Species.

The property provides valuable habitat for a variety of wildlife species, including amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Freshwater marsh and flooded rice fields in Western Placer provide habitat for thousands of migrating waterfowl during the winter. Some of the more common bird species observed on the property, or in Western Placer include: American widgeon, black-chinned hummingbird, black-crowned night heron, black-necked stilt, Canada goose, great blue heron, great egret, greater white-fronted goose, green-winged teal, herring gull, mallard, northern pintail, northern shoveler, ring-necked duck, snow goose, snowy egret, solitary sandpiper, tree swallow, tundra swan, white-faced widgeon, and wood duck. The project will also benefit various songbirds and other birds that may be endangered, threatened or of concern.

A3. Ecological Importance of Species and Habitat Types

1. Local/Regional/Statewide Significance of Habitat Types.

The land acquisition program has been guided by an abundance of scientific studies that have helped prioritize parcels for acquisition. Selection criteria includes, amongst other things: Size of parcel, natural resource value, quality of the land, presence of endangered species, ease of connection to public land, and manageability.

Riparian corridors remain one of the most important and productive habitats for wildlife. Not only do they provide fundamental habitat elements (food, water, cover, breeding areas) required by all wildlife, they also provide linkages between different habitat types and corridors for movement and

dispersal. Lakeview Farms is also a significant project because its marshes, floodplains, aquifer recharge areas, and agricultural land are finite natural resources that must be conserved.

2. Wintering/Breeding/Nesting Areas. Migratory Corridors.

By increasing wet acreage, this project will result in the improvement, restoration and enhancement of habitat utilized by waterfowl, non-game and other migratory birds. Freshwater marsh and flooded rice fields on the valley floor provide habitat for thousands of migrating waterfowl during the winter. The property's riparian forest provides numerous benefits to wildlife in the form of cover, nesting and perching areas for birds.

3. Sensitive Species and Critical Habitat.

Due to the diversity of the site's habitat types and because of the presence of the Coon Creek corridor, the site has the potential to contain a number of sensitive resident and migratory species. The following sensitive fish and wildlife species have the potential to be found on the property:

- Valley elderberry longhorn beetle (federal-threatened)
- Central Valley ESU steelhead (federal-candidate)
- Fall-run Chinook salmon (federal-candidate)
- Spring-run Chinook salmon (federal-threatened)
- California red-legged frog (federal-threatened)
- Foothill yellow-legged frog (state-species of concern)
- Bank swallow (state-threatened)
- Peregrine falcon (federal-threatened and state-endangered)

Three special status plant species may potentially occur on the subject property or in the area: Sanford's arrowhead, Red Bluff dwarf rush, and Rose mallow. Suitable habitat is present, but site visits and record searched show no presence of these plants.

4. Amount of Riparian Habitat.

This reach of Coon Creek supports some of the most extensive and best developed mixed riparian forest habitat in Western Placer County. The property includes 14 acres and 2,820 feet along Coon Creek. Riparian vegetation averages less than 50 feet in canopy width and canopy cover ranges from 50 to 75 percent.

A4. Public Benefits

1. Public Use and Access.

Because the subject property will be managed primarily as a sportsman's club, there will not be unfettered access to the site. The County will be purchasing a conservation easement, not a public trails easement or fee title to the property. However, there are valuable opportunities for the community to utilize the valuable resources present on the site. One of the key areas of public use will be associated with outdoor education opportunities. The following is a brief summary of the types of activities that will be provided. It should be noted that the conservation easement language will require that these activities be authorized on the site.

- This project will serve as an outdoor classroom for the local elementary/middle school (Sheridan School). School children will be directly involved in the restoration effort by planting willows and cottonwoods as well as installing and monitoring wood duck boxes. Beth McMurtrie (school principal) is working with biologists from the California Waterfowl Association in developing curriculum that will become an ongoing science/biology project handed down from one class to another.
- Once the owner has relocated his present operation to this site, Hunter Safety Classes will be offered on a regular basis to the general public.
- Tours are now given to local schools and other organizations (Boys Scouts, 4-H) and this will continue at the Coon Creek site.
- Access for community organizations (e.g., the Audubon Society) and public and private schools is provided by a reservation system throughout the year.
- Access is provided to the general hunting public on an annual membership or daily fee basis. Again, access is controlled by a reservation system.

2. Regional Conservation Plans.

Environmental enhancement and conservation at Lakeview Farms holds significant public value as well as environmental significance. The easement and subsequent restoration work will allow the County to implement the goals of its Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program. It presents a rare opportunity to protect, enhance and construct a wide range of environmental resources on a single site.

The Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek Ecosystem Restoration Plan (ERP), completed in April 2002 and funded by CALFED, identifies the need for a number of enhancements to be implemented throughout the Auburn Ravine and Coon Creek watersheds. This project is consistent and compatible with the objectives of the ERP. Moreover, the protection of this site improves the ability to meet some of the ERP objectives in an important part of the watershed. Objectives of the ERP include the following:

- Protect and restore riparian and aquatic habitats including habitat for anadromous and native resident species;
- Protect watershed integrity;
- Improve water quality by removing pollutants and other harmful constituents;
- Improve the ecological functioning of the watersheds including ecological factors such as connectivity with the mainstream Sacramento River;
- Remove or reduce the total number of primary stressors identified by CALFED in their Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan. These stressors include: 1) Alteration of flows and other effects of water management, 2) floodplain and marshplain changes, 3) channel form changes, 4) water quality, 5) water temperature, and 6) land use.

State/Federal Agencies. Conservation at Lakeview Farms is consistent with the goals and mandates of numerous state and federal agencies and their programs. This project meets the objectives of the following agencies including:

- CALFED – Improvement of water quality in the Sacramento Bay-Delta;
- National Marine Fisheries Service – Recovery of salmon and steelhead populations in an area designated as critical habitat for two listed anadromous fish;
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – conservation of fish and wildlife including federally-listed endangered species;
- California Department of Fish and Game – conservation of fish and wildlife, management of game species and protection of state-listed endangered species.

3. Surrounding Area.

The dominant land use in the area is rice farming on 80 acre-minimum parcel sizes.

4. Compatibility with Adjacent Land Uses.

Lakeview farms owns property north and east of the site. This project is compatible with surrounding uses and will not impact their existing farming operations. In fact, the Placer County Ag Commissioner has ruled that the game farm operation is 'agriculture' thereby making the property eligible for the Williamson Act.

A5. Viability/Sustainability of Habitat Improvements

1. Planned Future Operation, Maintenance and Monitoring Activities.

Acquisition and enhancement of Lakeview Farms will provide long-term conservation benefits. Operated as a hunting club, the site contains multiple objectives for the Placer Legacy program including protection of biodiversity, protection of sensitive species (riparian and grasslands), agricultural conservation, scenic, passive recreation (hunting and fishing) and public safety (Coon Creek floodplain). Acquisition of an easement will protect the land from development and its critical resources in perpetuity. The property owner will also enter into a 30-year management commitment that will be monitored by the Department of Fish and Game.

Although this stream restoration project is designed to be relatively self-sustaining, an initial short-term maintenance requirement is necessary. The Department of Fish & Game will be responsible for monitoring of the habitat management program. Adaptive management will be utilized to modify

the program as needed. Property owners will meet twice each year with biologists from the Department of Fish and Game to review and enhance management techniques in an ongoing effort to continually improve the property with respect to conservation and wildlife propagation.

In addition to mandatory maintenance and monitoring activities, there are opportunities to work with citizen volunteer groups including the Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek Planning Group to conduct monitoring activities for educational purposes and to increase community awareness of the value of these resources.

2. Natural Vegetation or Natural Landscapes on Site or Adjacent.

The only relatively undisturbed area on the property is the riparian corridor. Upland habitat has been altered by years of farming, and it is presently in rice production. Adjacent to the site are parcels currently owned and operated by Lakeview Farms as part of their hunting club operations. The parcels offer a combination of rice stubble, sudan grass and natural occurring marsh habitats. For example, the Bass Lake Preserve features hundreds of acres of pasture grass and is home to the 100 acre Bass Lake, a favorite destination for waterfowl hunters and fishermen.

3. Upstream Watershed Conditions.

The Coon Creek watershed will experience significant changes to its existing condition. According to the Ecosystem Restoration Plan, the primary ecological and land use concern in the upper Coon Creek watershed is the conversion of existing land uses from agriculture to urban and suburban development. The watershed upstream of the site will be affected by the cumulative impact of smaller projects (i.e., less than 100 acres of disturbance), including the ongoing fragmentation of agricultural lands into rural residential land uses and the infill urban growth in the City of Auburn and unincorporated north Auburn.

Based upon General Plan build-out, the number of dwelling units in the watershed will increase from 11,181 to 27,952, and increase of almost 150 percent. Therefore, the stream and riparian zone areas face ecological stress and water quality is anticipated to decline if development is not well planned.

4. Native Species, Populations or Habitats.

The project area supports several vegetation types, including cottonwood-willow riparian forest, vegetated sandbar, and ruderal vegetation. Seasonal instream wetlands occur within the ordinary high water mark within the channel and are dominated by herbaceous species such as stinging nettle, mugwort, Baltic rush and wild rye. Ruderal vegetation occurs at disturbed locations and is comprised of common non-native weeds such as yellow star-thistle and black mustard. Dense patches of Himalayan blackberry, an invasive non-native perennial, are present throughout the understories of the native plant communities. The upland habitat is currently in rice production.

B. Agricultural Land Conservation Benefits

In June of 1999, Placer County was awarded a $54,090 grant from the Department of Conservation. The purpose of the grant was to prepare a Western Placer County Agricultural Land Assessment and Conservation Program Plan to conduct a comprehensive assessment, develop a program to protect valuable agricultural resources and avoid premature conversion of agricultural lands in the unincorporated area of Placer County.

A ranking system was also developed that establishes the priorities for future agricultural conservation efforts. Lakeview Farms ranks high due to its location, agricultural use and habitat values.

B1. Potential Productivity of the Site as Farmland

1. Quality of Agricultural Land.

The property contains Class II and III soils and the area bordering Coon Creek has been designated by the Department of Conservation as being Unique Farmland. The balance of the property has been designated as being Farmland of Statewide Importance.

Currently, the property is leased to a rice farmer. This practice will end once the restoration project is implemented. Pheasant hunting in the created marsh areas is considered an agriculture use by the Placer County Agriculture Commissioner and the property was deemed as eligible for the Williamson Act.

2. Water Availability.

Water is available from Coon Creek. Most of the stream flow water is imported from the Yuba, Bear and American River watersheds through various means to meet domestic and agricultural needs in western Placer County and southeastern Sutter County. While winter stream flows are dominated by discharges from wastewater treatment facilities and runoff from rainfall events, summer flows are dominated by irrigation water deliveries to farms, golf courses and ranches on the valley floor. This is a unique situation for small foothill streams where the normal situation is for stream flows to gradually decline over the spring, summer and early fall until the first rainstorms occur.

3. Riparian, Mineral, or Other Development Rights.

Irrigation water is provided to the site by the Nevada Irrigation District. NID water is conveyed to the site by Coon Creek, from which it is diverted to flood fields near the creek.

4. Sustainability of Future Agriculture.

The site is large enough to sustain future commercial agricultural operations.

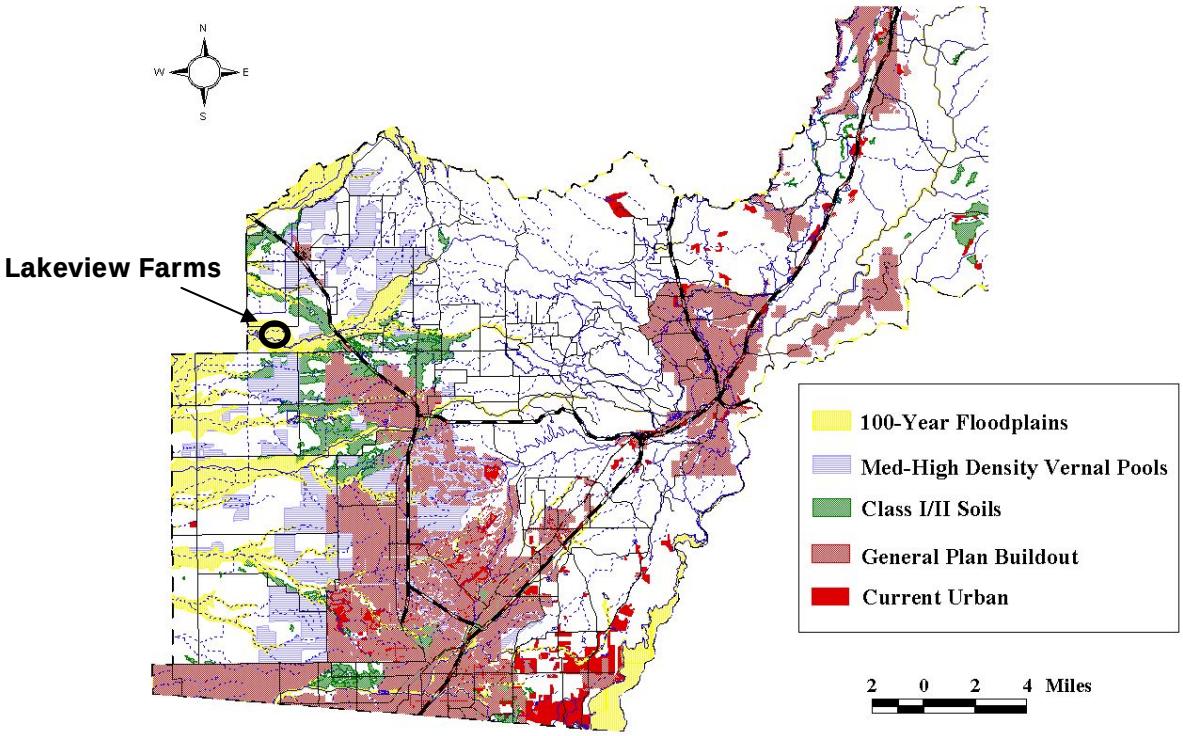
5. Adverse or Beneficial Deed Restrictions.

None noted.

6. Present Agricultural Use. Condition of Existing Infrastructure Supporting Use.

Exact yields have not been recorded by the grower for rice fields on the property; however, yields have been reported to be relatively constant in recent years. Agricultural uses make up the predominant surrounding use including cultivated farmland, idle farmland, pasture and semi-agricultural uses. Rice is the predominant commodity grown in the area, though the soils could support other crops.

Vernal Pools, Floodplains and Prime Soils



B2. Farming Practices and Commercial Viability

1. Market Infrastructure and Agricultural Support Services.

Agriculture has historically played an important role in the economy and land use patterns in Placer County. Though shrinking, Placer County has a critical mass of agriculture, where the agricultural economy is still intact and where farmers are still a real presence in the community. The support services, including supply companies, equipment dealers, transportation providers, pesticide applicators, as well as processor and marketers is available locally. In turn, these support services require a critical mass of agricultural producers to remain viable.

According to the Agricultural Crop Production Report for Placer County, the 2000 total gross value for ag production was $68,933,500. The total gross value for 2001 was $75,036,970, representing an increase of $6,103,470. This report reflects the gross value of agricultural products. Rice was the leading industry in 2001 with a gross value of $13,884,800. Following rice in total value were cattle and calf operations, timber production, nursery products, and chickens.

2. Surrounding Compatibility with Agriculture.

Placer's *Agricultural Valley* where Lakeview Farms is located is bounded by Highway 65 to the west and north, Sutter County to the west, and Baseline Rd. to the south, is characterized by flat (0-100 feet) terrain, poorly drained clay-dominated soils, and broad floodplains.

The agricultural character of this part of Placer County historically has been linked to livestock production on irrigated and non-irrigated pastures, rice and feed grain production, and poultry production. A number of commercial farm operations are adjacent to the Lakeview Farms property.

3. Local Government Economic Support for Agriculture.

As population increases, so does the struggle to protect and restore natural resources. Protecting farmland is a way for the public to maintain open space, retain natural systems and processes, control public infrastructure costs, preserve the local economic base and local self-sufficiency,

promote rural lifestyles, maintain local specialty crops and conserve energy. It has also been found to benefit groundwater recharge and flood storage to wildlife habitats. Local residents and groups, from farm organizations to elected officials, land trusts, and environmental advocates, are working together to protect Placer's agricultural heritage, while still accommodating growth and change. Agriculture, one of the major economic generators in Placer County, requires protection.

Placer County has demonstrated its commitment to agricultural preservation by adopting agricultural protection policies in its General Plan, adopting a Right-to-Farm Ordinance, and initiating the Placer Legacy program, amongst others. Open space conservation programs like Placer Legacy cannot replace good urban planning and land use decisions. The County has adopted policies that ensure future land use planning decisions are sensitive to the needs of growers in the county. Key principles include: Protecting farmlands and farm soils through conservation development techniques; coordinating efforts to support agricultural operations; maintaining the open, rural character of western Placer; protecting critical environmental areas; and, preventing strip commercial or residential development that encroaches into ag areas.

Small and medium-sized operations are likely to be in the best position to benefit from population growth. Placer County has recently funded an agricultural marketing specialist to assist producers in expanding local markets. Promotion of 'ag tourism' is in the planning stages. The combination of increased population and high disposable income provide unique opportunities for niche and direct marketing. Farmers markets, restaurants featuring locally produced foods, and retail produce outlets with a local focus are increasing.

4. Present or Planned Future Environmentally Friendly Farm Practices.

Lakeview Farms has demonstrated their commitment conservation and habitat restoration throughout their hunting and fishing preserves. When they purchased what has become known as the Coon Creek Preserve in 1996, the wildlife habitat had been completely destroyed by years of overgrazing and aggressive farming techniques. In 1998, Lakeview Farms entered into a unique partnership with the Depart of Fish & Game, the Wildlife Conservation Board, Natural Resources Conservation Services, and the California Waterfowl Association and developed a plan to restore the habitats that had been destroyed as a result of poor farm management. Working with biologists and design engineers employed by California Waterfowl Association, a site-specific restoration and management plan was designed to enhance local waterfowl and pheasant reproduction by providing nesting habitat, food, and summer water. All restoration work planned on the 138 acre parcel will be done in a similar manner.

B3. Need and Urgency for Farmland Preservation Measures

A 1999 survey of Placer County farmers indicated that more than half of the farmers were 55 or older. The aging farm population has serious implications for the future of agriculture in Placer County. Nearly half of those responding has no family members interested in continuing to farm on their property. Many farmers view their landholdings either as a retirement fund or as an inheritance for heirs. Consequently, the combination of an aging farm population and a lack of interest in farming by heirs will likely result in the sale of a large number of agricultural properties in the county during the next 20 years. Alternatively, heirs may split agricultural properties to facilitate individual, undivided ownership, further fragmenting agricultural land.

Land speculation in this area is quite intense and non-renewal and expiration of Williamson Act contracts are particularly high. This trend is indicative of an interest in rural residential subdivisions, some expectation about future development opportunities, a lack of confidence in the viability of the agricultural land over time, or a desire to retire on the market value earned on the land which in most cases is higher than agricultural uses.

1. Williamson Act Contracts.

Placer County is the fastest growing county in California for the second consecutive year, according to Department of Finance population estimates. Between 1991 and 2000, 32,262 acres of land, or 73 percent of the previous decade's land, was removed from the Williamson Act through expired contracts, annexation or public acquisition.

On January 1, 2003, Lakeview Farms was placed under a Super Williamson Act contract for a term of 20 years. The property owner currently raises approximately 44,000 pheasant on the property for use at the hunting club, which is also located on the subject parcels.

The minimum criteria to enter into a Farmland Security Zone contract is that the property meets the County's minimum criteria to enter into a Williamson Act Contract and that property is considered one of the following: Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of State Importance, or Farmland of Local Importance on the Important Farmland Maps prepared by the Department of Conservation. The subject property meets the minimum criteria to enter into the Williamson Act as Non-prime agricultural land which has a minimum area requirement of 20 acres and a requirement to produce $4,500 during the year prior to the filing. The subject property meets the minimum criteria to enter into a Farmland Security Zone Contract as it is used to raise 44,000 pheasants for use at the associated hunting club and is designated as Farmland of Local Importance. The operation of the hunting club on the property was considered to be a compatible use under Administrative Rule 6.52.

2. Surrounding Vicinity.

Facing rapid population growth, Placer County has a strong commitment to open space conservation. The County had a 2000 population of 248,399, an increase of 43.8 percent over the 1990 population, and more than double the 117,247 residents in 1980. By 2020, the population is projected to grow by an additional 182,000. The rate of growth in Placer County continues to exceed that of the state and the Sacramento area.

The Sacramento region lost 31 square miles of agriculture land between 1996 and 1998 according to the state Department of Conservation. The converted land included 2,697 acres of prime farmland in Sacramento County and 736 acres in Yolo County. It also included 6,162 acres of grazing land in Sacramento, Yolo, Placer and El Dorado counties.

The vast majority of land near Lakeview Farms is privately owned without any form of long-term protection. Although the agricultural designations in the County's general plan generally restricts the subdivision of parcels less than 80 acres in size, future annexations by the Cities of Roseville and Lincoln could quickly remove this barrier. Placer County has the second highest rate of non-renewed Williamson Act contracts in the State, with many of the expired contract lands being converted to urban/suburban residential subdivisions.

Implementation of this project will not adversely affect neighboring properties relating to water resources, noise levels, wildlife foraging, air quality, and traffic levels.

3. Conversion or Development of Neighboring Parcels.

Commercial agriculture is in a precarious position, as urban development gradually encroaches upon Placer County's most productive farmlands and speculation drives up land values, making it more difficult for landowners to pass their farms on to the next generation. There has been no development of adjacent properties, in fact, Lakeview Farms owns property to the north and east that have, or will soon have, conservation easements preventing development. The County's policy is to steer urban growth into existing cities, not the unincorporated areas. This does not preclude nearby annexations in the future such as what is underway near Lincoln and Roseville.

4. Nearby Spheres of Influence.

The City of Lincoln's sphere of influence is approximately 1 ½ miles from the site. Lincoln is reviewing its general plan and is focusing on growth towards Lakeview Farms.

The push to develop thousands of acres west of Roseville and Lincoln is heating up. Speculators area sitting on large tracts in the still rural area, hoping they eventually will be allowed to build. Some 10,720 acres west of Roseville and Lincoln are owned by developers or other landowners who have shown an interest in development. Several obstacles (e.g., a lack of adequate infrastructure including treated surface water) could impede one or more of the developments. But clearly, the property is in the path of development for one of the Sacramento region's fastest-growing areas. It is critically important to protect property now.

5. Consistency with County General Plan.

Lakeview Farms would maintain its present agricultural 80-acre minimum zoning. In addition to the land use designation, the General Plan contains dozens of policies relating to the conservation of

natural resources and agricultural lands, the protection of biodiversity, and the protection of sensitive or important habitat types.

B4. Compatibility of Project with Local Government Planning

1. General Plan's Commitment to Long-Term Agricultural Conservation.

Adopted in June 2000, the Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program is a program of the County of Placer to protect and conserve open space and agricultural lands. The program has been developed to implement the goals, policies and programs of the 1994 Placer County General Plan. One of the key objectives of the program is to "maintain a viable agricultural segment of the economy." Placer Legacy is a critical step toward protection, preservation, and restoration of the integrity, productivity, and biodiversity of the County's natural resources for this and future generations.

An easement and restoration at Lakeview Farms represents an important step in implementing the objectives of the Placer Legacy Program. Placer Legacy is intended to be proactive in that it seeks out conservation opportunities from willing sellers through the acquisition of conservation easements and fee title on properties, which have open space, and/or agricultural resources that meet program objectives. These objectives include the following:

- ***Maintain*** a viable agricultural segment of the economy;
- ***Conserve*** natural features necessary for access to a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities;
- ***Retain*** important scenic and historic areas;
- ***Preserve*** the diversity of plant and animal communities;
- ***Protect*** endangered and other special status plant and animal species;
- ***Separate*** urban areas into distinct communities;
- ***Ensure*** public safety.

Lakeview Farms contains multiple objectives for the Placer Legacy program including protection of biodiversity, protection of sensitive species (riparian, vernal pool, salmon/steelhead habitat, grasslands), agricultural conservation, scenic, passive recreation (hunting and fishing) and public safety (Coon Creek floodplain).

2. Present Zoning.

The owner's uses of the land are restricted only by applicable zoning. The proposed easement acquisition and restoration of Lakeview Farms is consistent with the land use provisions of the Placer County General Plan. In the General Plan, the property is designated as Agriculture – 80-acre minimum with the accompanying zoning of "Farm."

3. County Right-to-Farm Ordinance.

Placer County has declared its intention to preserve, protect and encourage the development and improvement of its agricultural land for the raising of livestock and the production of food and other agricultural products through the passing of a Right-to-Farm ordinance. Each prospective buyer of property in unincorporated Placer County is informed by the seller or his/her authorized agent of the ordinance.

4. Consistency with LAFCO Policies.

The project is consistent with LAFCO policies and will not need the agency's approval.

5. Impact on Tax Base.

Implementation of this project will result in a very minor decrease in property tax revenue to the County. The property has already been placed under the Super Williamson Act.

B5. Quality of Agricultural Conservation Measures

1. Resources Conserved On Site.

The proposed easement and restoration project at Lakeview Farms will achieve many benefits. The first and most immediate benefit of this project is the conservation of 138 acres of open space, including 2,820 feet along Coon Creek. Protection of this property and its resources from future subdivision and development will help to maintain the natural aesthetic of western Placer County.

Lakeview Farms meets a number of Placer Legacy objectives, giving the property a high priority ranking for acquisition. The subject acquisition meets a number of implementation measures identified in the Placer Legacy program including the following:

- Work with farmers and ranchers to protect agricultural lands outside of designated development areas through the use of conservation easements;
- Prioritize the acquisition of agricultural property that contains multiple conservation values;
- Restore habitat for salmon, steelhead and amphibians in Auburn Ravine and Coon Creek;
- Preserve high quality riparian habitat along Coon Creek and the Bear River;
- Improve riparian connectivity along lower Coon Creek;
- Work with landowners to ensure that private recreation facilities continue to be a viable land use;
- Work with property owners to restore flood plains and reduce encroachment of incompatible uses by increasing retention capacity and allowing streams to reclaim their natural course.

2. Wildlife Biological/Ecological Benefits.

Freshwater marsh and flooded rice fields on the valley floor provide habitat for thousands of migrating waterfowl during the winter. The property's riparian forest provides numerous benefits to wildlife in the form of cover, nesting and perching areas for birds. The value of the property to wildlife will increase with the completion of the planned restoration work.

3. Involvement of Ag Conservancies or Trusts.

Placer County is not working any conservancies or trusts on this project.

4. Support for Long-Term Private Stewardship of Ag Land.

Two strategies are being pursued by the County: Creating large contiguous blocks of preserved farmland which helps to keep development away and to maintain a "critical mass" of farms that enables the farm support business to thrive, and preserving farms just outside of designated urban areas to protect high-quality farming areas. Conservation of this property adds to the critical mass of undeveloped properties in western Placer County. This project is innovative in that it places a conservation easement on property that will continue its agricultural use yet in a non-typical function: Pheasant raising/wildlife preserve rather than traditional farming operations.

5. Potential for Near-Term Conversion to Non-Ag Use.

The property is in an area of increasing development pressure. Proposed annexations into the City of Lincoln would bring urbanization closer. The property owner is a willing seller of an easement that would protect the property from development in perpetuity and is under the provisions and restrictions of the Super Williamson Act program.

VI. Miscellaneous Proposal Benefits

A. Cost/Match/Benefits

Estimated Total Project Cost	$495,527
Amount of FPCP Grant Funds Requested	$325,000
Amount of Local Funds Contributed	$50,000
Amount of In-Kind Contributions	$120,527
Additional Funding Sources	none

Number of Persons Expected to Benefit:	11,705
FPCP Funds per Person Benefited:	$27.77

B. Water Supply/Quality Effects

The primary water quality benefit of the acquisition and management of the site will be the elimination of the potential impacts of development-related sediment loading common to this watershed. Upstream of the project site, almost all surface water contamination is derived from nonpoint source runoff from rangeland, irrigated agriculture, and rural/urban development. Road crossings, culverts, grazing and equestrian uses, residential construction and other activities common in the lower foothills of the Sierra Nevada are causing severe sedimentation problems in the lower gradient portions of the stream reaches. Additional benefits will accrue from the prevention of leach field construction associated with residential development. Lastly, the Lakeview Farms property will provide an important recharge area for groundwater in the region.

1. Benefits of Water Storage.

The project as proposed will have a positive benefit on water storage. The wetlands and marshes will increase the wet acreage on the property. Benefits include:

- Percolation and groundwater recharge is improved
- Sediment is reduced
- Excess nutrients as chemical pollutants are filtered
- Stream bank erosion is reduced
- Nutrients become available for desired plant growth
- Flooding is moderated
- Water temperatures are lowered for habitat improvement
- Better habitat and safe corridors for animals

2. Project Fencing for Cattle.

Not applicable to this project.

3. Fresh Water Marsh.

This project will significantly expand and protect the fresh water marsh habitats located on the property. Fresh water marsh is important habitat for many wildlife species, particularly waterfowl and shorebirds. The marsh areas also act as a nutrient sink using nutrients for growth and binding heavy metals from the water, thus improving overall water quality.

4. Sediment Trapping.

Sediment is a water quality and stream morphology issue. Sediment loading has increased significantly on Coon Creek causing downstream flooding and resulting in the loss of aquatic habitat for salmon and steelhead. Most of the sedimentation is attributed to rural residential property land management activities and the development of a road network to serve these properties. Conservation of Lakeview Farms will insure that natural conditions will remain in a critical portion of the Coon Creek watershed and will eliminate the likelihood of additional sediment loading in the creek. Acquiring the property now, while the owner is interested in selling an easement, will protect the land and its critical resources in perpetuity.

The expected improvements to instream erosion and deposition of sediments will benefit many stream habitat features such as channel depth, shape, substrate, flow patterns, dissolved oxygen concentrations, adjacent vegetation, and aquatic communities.

C. Impact on Under-Represented Populations or Historic/Cultural Resources

1. Benefits to Under-Represented Populations.

Under-represented populations will benefit in the sense that the club is open to the public on an annual membership or daily fee basis. Public access for hunter safety classes and other hunting related activities are also planned for the general public. Easement language will also include provisions for educational program access at the property.

2. Impacts to Historical or Cultural Resources.

There are no scenic highways or corridors located in the vicinity of the project. Implementation of the project would not impact cultural resources or affect historic buildings.

D. Technical and Fiscal Capability of Project Team

1. Need for Scientific or Technical Expertise.

The Placer County Planning Department and the Facility Services Department will provide the necessary technical expertise to purchase and monitor a conservation easement at Lakeview Farms. These County departments contain staff familiar with land acquisition, land use and conservation planning, property management, grants and contract management, and financial planning for acquisition and maintenance. Additional assistance will be obtained from other County departments and contract services (e.g., legal counsel, resource planning and management).

2. Monitoring and Reporting Plans.

Monitoring will follow the guidelines provided in the Ecosystem Restoration Plan. Guidelines are identified for each restoration activity including vegetation enhancement and establishment, and wildlife population enhancement.

The Department of Fish & Game will be responsible for monitoring of the habitat management program. Adaptive management will be utilized to modify the program as needed. Lakeview Farms' owners will meet twice each year with biologists from the Department of Fish and Game to review and enhance management techniques in an ongoing effort to continually improve the property with respect to conservation and wildlife propagation.

3. Management, Fiscal and Technical Capabilities of Project Team.

Placer County is the Project Lead. This conservation project is being proposed as a collaborative effort with two partners: Lakeview Farms Inc. and Ducks Unlimited. Lakeview Farms is the property owner, is a willing seller of a conservation easement, and supports the restoration activities anticipated for the property. Ducks Unlimited is designing the proposed habitat restoration on the 138-acre parcel. Ducks Unlimited has had a long interest in habitat improvements in the Central Valley because of its importance in the Pacific Flyway for waterfowl. Design engineers and biologists have worked closely with the landowner in developing a plan that will protect the existing valuable habitat found on this property and to restore the wetlands that have been lost.

Don Norris, owner of Lakeview Farms, is a willing, enthusiastic seller. The hunting club, with 500 members and open to the public, was established in 1989. In April 2002, the Placer County Board of Supervisors authorized County staff to begin negotiations to acquire a conservation easement and funding for this purpose. Lakeview Farms has a demonstrated commitment to conservation and habitat restoration.

Placer County has experience in the planning and implementation of large scale conservation activities. The County has completed numerous easement projects in the past and is currently working with several property owners that are contemplating selling easements to the County under the Legacy Program.

E. Coordination and Cooperation with Other Project/Partners/Affected Organizations and Individuals

1. Cost Sharing and In-Kind Contributions.

The property owner is contributing $90,000 towards the restoration work and has agreed to accept $31,000 less than the appraised value of the conservation easement. The value of the design work by Ducks Unlimited has not been quantified.

The County is an active participate in a number of watershed planning efforts, which involve professional and volunteers familiar with conservation efforts in this region. There are significant opportunities to engage the public and utilize non-governmental resources to develop and implement both the conservation and recreational goals for the property.

2. Coordination with CALFED and Regional/Watershed Plans.

The Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek Ecosystem Restoration Plan (ERP), completed in April 2002 and funded by CALFED, identifies the need for a number of enhancements to be implemented throughout the Auburn Ravine and Coon Creek watersheds. This project is consistent and compatible with the objectives of the ERP.

Conservation of the Lakeview Farms is consistent with the goals and mandates of numerous state and federal agencies and their programs. Easement acquisition on this site meets the objectives of the following agencies including:

- CALFED – Improvement of water quality in the Sacramento Bay-Delta;
- National Marine Fisheries Service – Recovery of salmon and steelhead populations in an area designated as critical habitat for two listed anadromous fish;
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – conservation of fish and wildlife including federally-listed endangered species;
- California Department of Fish and Game – conservation of fish and wildlife, management of game species and protection of state-listed endangered species;

3. Multiple Phases.

This is a two phase project. Funds are being sought for the conservation easement. The property owner and County have agreed to joint-fund the restoration project planned for the site. The County's interest in the site is the habitat value of the property and how it relates to the County's Habitat Conservation Plan currently under development. The Coon Creek corridor is a priority for protection due to its unfragmented nature.

4. Coordinated Approach With Landowners, Local Governments and Nonprofits.

Effective conservation of natural resources must involve partnerships, cooperation and collaboration of public and private interests. Partnering with other agencies will allow the County to multiply the benefits of the work possible on behalf of wildlife and natural communities. Sharing resources and creativity also creates positive synergy that ultimately better serves the public interest.

The County will hold title to the easement and Lakeview Farms will continue ownership and management of the property. The County's acquisition principles encourage the least amount of government intervention on private property in order to meet overall Placer Legacy objectives. By purchasing a conservation easement, the County meets its open space conservation objectives while allowing the property to be owned and managed by the private sector. However, easement language will require the opportunity to provide outdoor education and public education on the site.

Conservation organizations including the Placer Land Trust, the Placer Nature Center, and an existing partner – Ducks Unlimited will be encouraged to joint venture with the County on environmental education opportunities, restoration activities and development of recreational facilities.