



News for Immediate Release

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Hidden Valley Ranch Purchase Strengthens Region's Floodwater Overflow, Wildlife Enhancement Goals

SACRAMENTO – Two State agencies have collaborated on grants totaling \$9.3 million to purchase 497-acre Hidden Valley Ranch on the San Joaquin River near its confluence with the Tuolumne River in Stanislaus County.

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) contributed \$6.3 million and \$3 million respectively toward the purchase, which was finalized today (11/6/13).

The acquisition of Hidden Valley Ranch supports state and federal flood protection and conservation initiatives implemented through the Department of Water Resources' Flood Corridor Protection Program and the FloodSAFE Environmental Stewardship and Statewide Resources Office (FESSRO).

The original Flood Corridor Program (FCP) grant awarded \$2,249,431 to restore riparian habitat on the previously acquired Dos Rios Ranch, provide 3,000 acre-feet of transient floodwater storage and complete a study to determine location and design for installation of a water control structure that will allow for optimization of floodwater storage on the lands within Reclamation District 2092. The FCP grant was amended to add \$2,400,000 in new grant money to pay for a portion of the acquisition costs of the Hidden Valley Ranch property.

DWR's FESSRO provided \$3,900,000 to acquire Hidden Valley Ranch. This is the first project funded under the Proposition 1E bond funding that meets the intent of the Central Valley Flood System Conservation Framework and Strategy Funding Guidelines. FESSRO worked closely with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) in acquiring these lands to serve both flood protection and ecosystem restoration purposes.

SB5 (2007), the legislation that mandated preparation of the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, states that the Plan should strive to meet multiple objectives, including promoting natural dynamic hydrologic and geomorphic processes; increasing and improving the quantity, quality and connectivity of riparian and floodplain lands, and promoting recovery and stability of native species and ecosystems.

WCB provided \$3,000,000 from its Habitat Conservation Fund to acquire Hidden Valley Ranch.

At close of escrow, grantee River Partners acquired fee title to the Hidden Valley Ranch property while The Tuolumne River Preservation Trust was granted a conservation easement over the property. River Partners is a non-profit group that has been engaged in restoration work on the nearby San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge since 2002.

Hidden Valley Ranch is adjacent to Dos Rios Ranch, which was purchased in April 2012 to fulfill similar goals of preserving an important wildlife habitat and providing non-structural flood management. Combined with the adjacent San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge, these properties will protect rural and urban communities and agricultural lands and will create one of the largest contiguous riparian and floodplain habitat conservation areas in the Central Valley, preserving fish and wildlife habitat and providing connectivity for species.

DWR Director Mark Cowin said this transaction was an opportunity in California for public and private entities to work cooperatively to maximize multiple benefits. The properties are near the confluence of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin rivers, upstream from the flood prone areas of Tracy, Manteca, Lathrop and Stockton.

Cowin said Hidden Valley Ranch, along with the 1,600-acre Dos Rios Ranch, has the potential to provide river-floodplain connectivity to more than 1000 acres and provide approximately 10,000 acre-feet of transitory floodwater storage that will protect downstream communities.

WCB Director John Donnelly said, "We are very appreciative of the effort of River Partners and DWR to help complete this collaborative project, helping to leverage various state funding sources in order to maximize both habitat protection and flood protection benefits."

CDFW Director Charlton H. Bonham said, "This is another example of private organizations and state and federal agencies all working together to achieve public trust goals of fish and wildlife conservation, restoration of floodplain and wetland habitats and flood risk reduction in California."

The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.