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California Environmental Protection Agency

NEWS RELEASE

State Water Resources Control Board

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State Water Resources Control Board loan to help buy vernal pool land as part of wetlands restoration project

SACRAMENTO – The State Water Resources Control Board today approved a \$1.5 million loan to the Sacramento Valley Open Space Conservancy for use in purchasing two parcels of land as part of the Clean Water and Wetlands Protection Project – Sacramento Prairie Vernal Pool Acquisition.

The parcels – 160 acres and 184 acres – contain significant amounts of vernal pools and other associated wetlands. The purchases are part of a Conservancy plan to create a contiguous preserve of 2,000 to 3,000 acres in the Northern Laguna Creek watershed. The loan, from the State Revolving Fund, will bring the Conservancy's total protected area to more than 1,200 acres. The loan will pay for all of one parcel and half of the other. A grant from a private foundation will cover the remaining cost of the second parcel.

The Conservancy will enter into a Mitigation Bank Project Agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. When the land is placed in a perpetual conservation easement, the Conservancy can then sell land credits to developers and other groups needing to mitigate for destruction of wetlands within the Sacramento Urban Services Boundary. This selling of credits will be the repayment source for the loan.

The Project is a component of the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan, which involves area stakeholders including developers, environmentalists, agriculturists and government agencies.

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The State Water Resources Control Board is a member of the California Environmental Protection Agency.

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