

# 2010 DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant Program

## Quarterly Report Form

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Grantee name and contact information: Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners

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Website: [www.tularebasinwildlifepartners.org](http://www.tularebasinwildlifepartners.org)

Grant number: 3010- 238

Watershed name(s) + HUC(s): **Tulare-Buena Vista Lakes 18030012**

and location(s) [counties]: **Fresno, Tulare, Kings and Kern Counties**

State Senate District number(s): **14, 16, 18**

Senators(s): **Berryhill, Rubio, Fuller**

State Assembly District number(s): **29, 30, 31, 32, 34**

Assembly Member(s): **Halderman, Valadao, Perea, Grove, Conway**

Preparer name and title: **Carole K. Combs, Executive Director/Board Secretary, Tulare Basin Watershed Initiative Grant/Project Manager**

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Quarterly Reporting Period (mm/dd/yy): 08/23/11 – 11/18/11 (adjusted per DOC grant contract dated September 30, 2011)

Report submission date (mm/dd/yy): 12/07/11

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Refer to the *DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant Program Quarterly Report Form Instructions* document for detailed directions on how to complete this form.

### 1. **Executive Summary:**

The goal of the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partner's (TBWP) Watershed Initiative is a healthy regional watershed with ecologically functional waterways, wetlands and uplands, providing abundant clean water for both people and wildlife. The Initiative will promote integrated natural resource management in the Tulare Basin Watershed. The Initiative's main objective is to ensure that water supply, water quality and flood control practices funded and carried out through the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) process consider and incorporate ecological, watershed and sustainability principles in project design. The Watershed Coordinator will lead outreach efforts to the seven Tulare Basin IRWM planning groups and will work closely with natural resources agencies and non-profit organizations operating in the Basin.

In order to meet the Initiative's three-year objectives, the Watershed Coordinator will utilize the TBWP's conservation planning documents, the Tulare Basin Conservation Plan Water Supply

Strategies Report, and appropriate state and federal land managing agency planning documents to determine overlap with the objectives and priorities in the various Tulare Basin IRWM plans. The overall goal of this effort is to add environmental value and enhance funding opportunities for IRWM and other water-related projects in the Basin.

Objectives for the Coordinator will also include improving overall public and stakeholder involvement for organizations not currently represented in IRWM groups. This includes the Natural Resources Conservation Service Resource Conservation Districts and other conservation or civic organizations active in the Basin. The Initiative will work to bring state, federal and private resources to facilitate the funding of these projects. The Initiative will also work to secure funding for the continuation and long-term sustainability of the Watershed Coordinator position after the end of this grant.

**Activities and Accomplishments Summary:** List major activities and accomplishments completed this quarter.

Priority Actions/Focus:

- Identify linkages between IRWM projects with conservation projects developed through the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners, Tulare Basin Working Group, Central Valley Joint Venture and WRP easements (Task 1.1) in preparation for submission by IRWMPs for Prop 84 implementation grants in 2012.
- Initiate development of the Watershed Initiative website and other strategic communication/outreach materials.
- Meet with regional organizations to discuss goals and objectives of the Watershed Initiative and determine opportunities for collaboration/areas of focus. (Objective 2, Tasks 2.1, 2.3, Objective 3, Tasks 3.1, 3.2, Objective 4, Tasks 4.1, 4.2) including:
  - USFS Watershed Assessment Project
  - NRCS Landscape Conservation Initiative (Bay Delta)
  - Tulare Basin Working Group
  - Central Valley Joint Venture
  - Tulare Basin Wetlands Association
  - California Water Institute (providing support to the Watershed Coordinator)
- The Watershed Coordinator and Core Team worked with several disadvantaged communities on grant opportunities, most notably Stratford in Kings County, which is not yet included in any IRWM planning effort. Assisted Stratford with inclusion into the Westside IRWMP, which will enable the community to more easily apply for Prop 84 implementation grant funding for improvement of their community water systems.

## **Benefits to the Watershed Accrued in Quarter 2 by Partners that help meet Watershed Initiative Goals**

1. Water was acquired for the Gragnani WRP lands (NRCS easement program) in the northwest Tulare Basin. A major goal of the watershed program is restoring vital wetlands. This WRP easement had been identified as a high priority by waterfowl interests and NRCS.
  2. Large land acquisition by The Nature Conservancy in Kern County enables a corridor from the Tehachapi Mountains into the Southern Sierra.
  3. Establishment of the Tulare Basin Wildlife Management Area by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (lands added to the Kern NWR)
2. **Completed performance measures (PMs) as listed in work plan.** Identify the completed PMs for this quarter.

**Watershed Goal:** The goal of the Tulare-Buena Vista Lakes Watershed Coordinator is to create a healthy regional watershed with ecologically functional waterways, wetlands and uplands, providing abundant clean water for both people and wildlife. The Watershed Coordinator will cooperate with the seven Tulare Basin Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) groups and with the Tulare Basin Working Group (TBWG) to promote integrated natural resource management in the Tulare Basin Watershed (in Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Kern Counties).

**Work Plan Objective #1: Identify environmental benefits that can be added to specific IRWM water projects, adding environmental value and enhancing funding opportunities for these projects, as well as providing the following end result benefit to the watershed: conceptualization and implementation of projects emanating from relevant conservation plans that provide strategically located wetland, riparian and upland wildlife habitat.**

*Performance Measurement:* Facilitate the development and implementation of up to 14 environmental projects from TBWP and public agency planning documents that can add environmental value to IRWM projects.

Completed measures and outcomes addressed:

- The Watershed Coordinator (WC) attended meetings of the seven Tulare Basin IRWM groups and monthly meetings of the Tulare Basin IRWM coordinating group and began the process of providing input to up to six of the seven Tulare Basin IRWM groups for the next implementation grant cycle (due date mid-2012). (Task 1.2)
- The WC participated in the Southern Sierra IRWMP planning grant application review. (Task 1.2)
- The WC and Tulare Basin Watershed Initiative Core Management Team (TBWI Core Team – consisting of the WC, Assistant WC, Communications/Outreach Specialist, two biologists, Project Director/water engineer, Project/Grant Manager, NRCS Team Leader, and two Conservation Strategy Group consultants) reviewed and provided comments related to watershed benefits on the draft Kern IRWMP. Final Plan to be adopted 12/2011.

- The WC and TBWI Core Team completed initial review of TBWP conservation plans and other agency planning documents and linked potential conservation/restoration projects or project concepts with specific IRWMPs. (Task 1.1)

**Work Plan Objective #2: Match IRWM and other projects that have environmental benefits to grant opportunities and work to bring state, federal, and private resources to facilitate the funding of these projects, with the end result benefit to the watershed of increased fundability of IRWM water projects as well as providing additional valuable habitat for wetland, riparian, and upland wildlife species through these integrated projects.**

*Performance Measurement:* Facilitate the preparation by IRWM cooperators of 12-36 funding proposals that add environmental benefits to IRWM projects.

Completed measures and outcomes addressed:

- The WC participated in BOR Rural Water Supply outreach with the California Water Institute and set up an agreement for mutual support with the California Water Institute at CSU Fresno.
- The Communications/Outreach specialist drafted a database of potential grant funding opportunities for IRWMs that underscore the importance and value of incorporating environmental benefits/ecosystem services to projects for inclusion in a proposed Tulare Basin Watershed Initiative Web site.
- The Communications/Outreach specialist drafted a PowerPoint presentation and other outreach materials that emphasize the importance and value of multi-benefit projects that embrace IRWM objectives, while also providing additional ecosystem services and/or benefits to disadvantaged communities.

**Work Plan Objective #3: Coordinate with Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) and the San Joaquin Valley Resource Conservation & Development (RC & D) Council as well as with other conservation and civic organizations not currently represented in IRWM groups to promote consideration of resources other than water (e.g. soil, air, open space, recreation, and wildlife) in IRWM projects; the end result benefit of this objective will be increased public involvement that will lead in turn to increased benefits from the IRWM water projects for a wider array of the public, enhancing the regional agricultural heritage, economy, and quality of life.**

*Performance Measurement.* Facilitate development and implementation of up to 12 IRWM projects that integrate benefits to soil, air, open space, recreation, wildlife and other resources.

Completed measures and outcomes addressed:

- The WC participated in prioritization of water supply, water quality and habitat conservation projects with Northwest Kern RCD and NRCS for the Bay Delta Landscape Conservation Initiative.

**Work Plan Objective #4: Coordinate with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to assist implementation of Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) and other NRCS programs; the end result benefit of this objective to the watershed will be additional wetland and riparian projects funded by NRCS and increased acreage of these essential wildlife habitats.**

*Performance Measurement:* Identification and implementation of up to 12 WRP and other NRCS program projects in conjunction with IRWM projects.

Completed measures and outcomes addressed:

- The WC participated in Kern County priorities input meeting on Bay Delta Priorities under NRCS programs such as EQIP, WRP, WHIP and other programs.
- The NRCS Southern WRP Implementation Team Leader participated on the Watershed Core Team and routinely provided guidance on NRCS programs. (Tasks 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)
- The WC and TBWI Core Team began the task of identifying water sources for WRP lands in the Tulare Basin that do not currently have water.
- The NRCS Southern WRP Implementation Team leader gave a presentation on NRCS habitat programs to the Tulare Basin IRWM coordinating group, and two NRCS biologists gave a similar presentation to the Tulare Basin Working Group.

**Work Plan Objective #5: Coordinate with disadvantaged community interests to identify specific overlap between those interests and environmental interests and work to integrate both components into specific IRWM water projects; the end result benefit of this objective is that IRWM water projects will demonstrate increased synergy between wildlife needs and open space needs of people living in disadvantaged communities.**

*Performance Measurement:* Facilitate the integration of up to six projects that provide environmental benefits for disadvantaged communities in IRWM water projects.

Completed measures and outcomes addressed:

- The WC held discussions with the community of Stratford, which is not currently located in an IRWM planning area; met with community leaders and the Public Utilities District (SPUD) to explore Stratford's inclusion in an IRWM group and grant opportunities. SPUD and Kings County submitted a letter to Westside IRWMP requesting inclusion. Anticipated completion mid-December 2011. (Task 5.2)
- The WC held discussions with representatives of Self-Help Enterprises and Community Water Center. (Task 5.1)
- The Communications/Outreach Specialist explored potential collaboration with United Way of Tulare County, which is actively engaged in several disadvantaged communities in the region.
- A TBWI Core Team member participated in the initial Stakeholder meeting for the Disadvantaged Communities four-county assessment under the leadership of Denise Akins, Tulare County. The two year study will assess challenges, barriers and opportunities, with an overall goal of improving drinking water in small, unincorporated communities in the Tulare Basin. A pilot project and ranking criteria is under development.

**Work Plan Objective #6: Provide riparian and wildlife corridor concepts to assist IRWM groups with integration of climate change adaptation and sustainability strategies into specific IRWM water projects; the end result benefit to the watershed is that IRWM water projects will include climate change adaptation and sustainability benefits that will provide movement corridors for plants and animals and fewer species will be extirpated from portions of their ranges and listed as threatened or endangered.**

*Performance Measurement:* Integrate up to 12 TBWP corridor project concepts or project components with climate change adaptation and sustainability benefits into specific IRWM water projects.

Completed measures and outcomes addressed:

- The WC completed analysis of TBWP conceptual water and “incubator” conservation/restoration projects and reviewed with TBWI Core Team.
- The WC worked with the Southern Sierra Partnership and Conservation Biology Institute to identify a priority watershed for pilot project.
- The WC met with USFWS Endangered Species Program on priority recovery actions in the Tulare Basin (e.g., Giant Garter Snake, Kit Fox, Riparian Species – Cuckoo, Least-bell’s Vireo). The focus will be on corridors and riparian zones and not on implementation of actions for Giant Garter Snake due to lack of reliable summer water for snakes.
- The WC, Assistant WC, Communications/Outreach Specialist and Project/Grant Manager supported the development of the San Joaquin Valley Greenprint, working principally with the Fresno Council of Governments and the Southern Sierra Partnership.

**Work Plan Objective #7: Ensure stakeholder support of the Watershed Coordinator’s efforts through twelve-month reports by the Watershed Coordinator to the Tulare Basin IRWM Coordination Group (TB IRWGM, composed of lead representatives of the seven Tulare Basin IRWM groups) and to the Tulare Lake Basin Working Group (TLBWG), soliciting evaluation and consensus recommendations concerning the optimal organizational and funding basis for continuing the position beyond March 2014; the end result benefit to the watershed of this objective will be achievement of stakeholder consensus on the value of continuing the position, with post-grant optimal organizational platform agreed upon, and the need for funding continuity and long-term sustainability agreed upon.**

*Performance Measurement:* Completed twelve-month reports by the Watershed Coordinator and performance evaluations by the TB IRWGM and TBWG, with summary reports (including summaries of reports to the Department of Conservation) posted on the TBWP Web site

Completed measures and outcomes addressed:

- The WC shared monthly reports and work plans with partners.
- The WC and Communications/Outreach specialist presented a draft version of TBWI website at the semi-annual Tulare Basin Working Group meeting and received feedback from meeting participants.
- The WC participated in two Southern Sierra IRWMP (SSIRWMP) upper Tulare Basin watershed stakeholders meetings. The SSIRWMP is in the process of re-writing and re-submitting the SSIRWMP planning grant application to DWR, scheduled for early 2012. WC participation in this group will be ongoing. The SSIRWMP planning grant will be re-written by a Conservation Strategy Group (CSG) consultant, through the TBWP annual consulting contract with CSG funded by the FWS Central Valley Joint Venture.

**Work Plan Objective #8: Coordinate with the TBWP, TB IRWGM, TBWG participants and other interested parties to secure funding for the continuation and sustainability of the position after the end of the grant; the end result benefit to the watershed will be continued**

**integration of environmental components in water and flood control projects in the Tulare Basin.**

*Performance Measurement:* Secure a minimum commitment of funds for two additional years, with a long-term funding strategy for ten years or more.

Completed measures and outcomes addressed:

- .None to report.

**3. New funding obtained from the Grant Start Date through this reporting period.**

a) Grant proposals submitted to date.

Table 1: Grant proposals submitted throughout the grant							
Program Name	Funding Entity & Type	Funding Source	Purpose	Requested Amount	Status	Award Amount	Award Date
Lawrence Foundation	P	N/A	Cash match support for WC operating costs	\$10,000	N	N/A	N/A
NRCS	F	WRP	Cash match support, funds Assistant WC functions in 2012	\$27,500	F	\$27,500	8/12/11
FWS Central Valley Joint Venture (CVJV)	F	Migratory Bird Program	Cash match support, operating costs, TBWI updated brochure	\$1,189.08	F	\$1,189.08	8/16/11
Heller Charitable Foundation	P	P	Cash match support, WC operating expenses	\$12,870	P	N/A	N/A
BLM-Bakersfield Regional Office	F	Healthy Lands Initiative	Cash match support, TBWI Web site, communications/outreach	\$27,000	F	\$27,000	8/17/11
Pacific Gas and Electric Company	P	Fresno Office Gov't Rel.s	Cash match support, WC operating expenses	\$3,000	F	\$3,000	7/21/11
Fresno Regional Foundation	P	P	Cash match support, TBWI Web site, communications/outreach	\$7,700	P	N/A	N/A
Wick Kenny Foundation	P	P	Cash match support, WC operating expenses	\$5,000	P	N/A	N/A
<b>Cumulative Total</b>				<b>\$94,259.08</b>		<b>\$58,,689.08</b>	

b) New non-grant funding obtained to date.

Table 2: New non-grant funding obtained throughout the grant

Program Name	Funding Entity & Type	Funding Source	Purpose	Amount Received	Date Received
FWS CVJV	Grant Agr'mnt Mod.	Migratory Bird Program	Funds Conservation Strategy Group Consulting September 2011- August 2012, to assist WC and Core Team with funding and project implementation strategies	\$36,000	8/11/11
Cumulative Total				\$36,000	

4. **Include final copies of outreach materials and other products created during the reporting period. Submit photos in digital format on CD.**

Attached please find the TBWP September 2011 Project Update, which was added to the TBWP website and was sent to FWS Central Valley Joint Venture for posting on its Web site. Updates such as this will be prepared and posted quarterly throughout the grant period.

Other outreach “materials”/efforts include regular updates to the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Tulare-Basin-Wildlife-Partners/172535542790036>. TBWP is making a push to expand the fan base of its Facebook page in order to serve as a hub for information exchange that can benefit the TBWI and general project collaboration in the region.

5. **If applicable, describe any problems or setbacks related to the implementation of the grant or the work plan.** None to report.
6. **Within 30 days of the end of the quarter, submit one hard copy and one electronic copy (in MS Word; no PDF files) of this completed quarterly report to your assigned grant administrator.**