

2010 DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant Program

Quarterly Report Form

Grantee name and contact information: Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP)

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Website: 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**

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Quarterly Reporting Period (mm/dd/yy): 11/19/11 – 2/18/12

Report submission date (mm/dd/yy): 2/24/12

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 Watershed Initiative (TBWI) 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 (WC) 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 WC 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 WC will also include improving overall public and stakeholder involvement for organizations not currently represented in IRWM groups. This includes the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Resource Conservation Districts (RCD) 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 WC position after the end of this grant.

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

Priority Actions/Focus:

The three priorities for this quarter were:

Southern Sierra IRWM planning grant application. The water management strategies and development of Best Management Practices (BMPs) in the upper watershed of the Tulare Basin is critical to overall watershed health, as well as in the development of climate change strategies and impacts to downstream users. The WC participated in the Coordinating Committee meetings and development of the grant application, as well as joined the Sierra Water Work Group (SWWG) on behalf of the SSIRWMP to collaborate with established IRWMPs that encompass the Sierra.

Development and integration of conservation, habitat and climate change project elements into the 7 Tulare Basin IRWMP/Regional Water Management Groups (RWMG) planning/implementation grant applications to DWR. With the update of various IRWMPs over the next 6 months, this is a critical time to integrate landscape level conservation with water management strategies. During this reporting period, the TBWI Core Group and the TBWP updated their conservation strategies and projects lists from 2010. Members of the TBWI Core Team and the WC provided project information for inclusion in the various IRWMP project databases for the upcoming round of Implementation Grants.

Communication and Outreach – to serve as a catalyst in the Tulare Basin for the integration of landscape level conservation with water management strategies to provide water supply reliability for agriculture, communities and habitat. Significant activities are underway with the development of the TBWI website as the center piece. The website will serve as tool for project managers by providing linkages to the myriad of projects and initiatives in the basin. The website will also link to the GIS mapping tool under development by the California Water Institute at CSU Fresno and the Watershed Slide show by the Water Education Foundation. The Communication/Outreach Coordinator participated in the development of the Water Education Foundation (WEF) Watershed slide show by submitting a slide series on the Atwell Island

project near community of Alpaugh. Alpaugh has been identified as a “severely disadvantaged community” and the Atwell Island site provides opportunities for local school children to experience wetlands and wildlife. The WC was invited to present the TBWI at several agriculture and community leadership forums addressing critical resource issues in the Tulare Basin.

Benefits to the Watershed Accrued in Quarter 3 by Partners that help meet Watershed Initiative Goals

TBWP updated their conservation strategies and projects for use by the WC and for potential High Speed Rail mitigation in the Central Valley. The recognition that these conservation strategies can and will be applied to multiple projects in the Tulare Basin provides consistency and landscape scale conservation/restoration in the Tulare Basin.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) have initiated their Foothill Legacy Program with one of their two high priority areas in the Tulare Basin.

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 IRWMP 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 WC and TBWI Core Group members attended meetings of the seven Tulare Basin IRWM groups and monthly meetings of the Tulare Basin IRWMP 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 and rewrite for submission March 8, 2012. (Task 1.2)
- The WC joined the Upper Kings IRWMP planning team 2/8/12 (ongoing through June 2012) to participate on their IRWMP update and to assist with the development of environmental/habitat projects. (Task 1.2)
- The WC submitted conceptual projects (4) for inclusion in the Kern IRWMP database 1/31/12 (Task 1.1, 1.2)
- In late fall, 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. As a result, the TBWP conservation plans were updated in February 2012 by a sub-committee of the TBWI Core Group to provide the best and most current possible project concept information to the WC for use in upcoming IRWM project planning discussions. (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 provided information on the 5 Star Grant Program, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) WaterSMART Watershed grants to IRWM groups. (Task 2.1)
- The WC met with BOR on the WaterSMART Watershed Grant and process for application. (Task 2.1, 2.3)
- The WC discussed grant opportunities with BOR CVP Conservation Program on conservation easements to meet Reclamation's mitigation obligation (native alkali scrub and valley grasslands) under the State Water Resources Control Board, Decision 1641.

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 toured Sierra RCD project in the Dry Creek Watershed of the San Joaquin River Watershed adjacent to the Tulare Basin Region. (Task 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)
- The WC provided information on the BOR's Water SMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Grants to the Sierra RCD (Steve Haze). (Task 3.3)
- The WC continued coordination with Westside RCD on development of west side watershed projects on several small tributaries to the valley floor. (Sarge Green).(Task 3.1)

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 and TBWI Core Group met with NRCS on application of Bay Delta Priorities under NRCS programs such as EQIP, WRP, WHIP and other programs.(Task 4.2, 4.3)
- The NRCS Southern WRP Implementation Team Leader participated on the TBWI Core Group and routinely provided guidance on NRCS programs. (Tasks 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)
- The WC and TBWI Core Group began the task of identifying water sources for WRP lands in the Tulare Basin that do not currently have water.(Task 4.2)
- The WC and TBWI Core Group is working with FWS, NRCS, Sustainable Conservation and other partners in development of consolidated permitting for restoration activities. (Task 4.1)

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:

- With the guidance of the WC, the small community of Stratford became a member of the Westside Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) and IRWMP and will be included in their plan update and eligible for Round 2 Implementation Grants under the DWR IRWM program. (Task 5.2)
- A TBWI Core Group member continued participation in the Stakeholder meetings for the Disadvantaged Communities four-county assessment under the leadership of Denise Akins, Tulare County. The two year study assesses 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 still under development with anticipated adoption in early April. (Task 5.1)
- A TBWI Core Group member attended the forum and presentation of a case study with DACs in rural New Mexico on February 6 in Visalia. (Task 5.1, 5.2)

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 met with Deer Creek Lower Tule Authority on the Deer Creek Corridor restoration and potential safe harbor agreements with landowners. There is considerable work ahead in building landowner trust with the regulatory agencies to move the project forward. (Task 6.1)
- The WC worked with the Southern Sierra Partnership and Conservation Biology Institute to identify a priority watershed for pilot project. (ongoing).
- The WC met with USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife (Rick Kuyper) on the development of Safe Harbor agreements within the Tulare Basin. Discussions are underway with DFG for an interagency planning meeting to determine how to move forward, build landowner trust and initiate a small scale safe harbor agreement. (Task 2.1, 2.2)
- The WC coordinator joined the Sierra Water Work Group, participated in the development of the work plan for the upcoming year and planning for a spring workshop on water planning and climate change in conjunction with the IRWM effort. (Task 6.2)

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 IRWMP, 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 IRWVG 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 reports and work plans with partners.
- The Communications/Outreach specialist and TBWI Core team members presented a draft version of TBWI website at several IRWVG group meetings, and received feedback from meeting participants.
- TBWI Core Group members are participating in the GIS team of the Tulare Basin IRWVG and providing input the California Water Institute/CSU Fresno effort.
- The WC and TBWI Core Group are participated regularly on RWVG/IRWVG meetings and sub teams.

Work Plan Objective #8: Coordinate with the TBWP, TB IRWVG, 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:

- The Assistant WC solicited and received the Letter of Inquiry Application Form from the California Water Foundation, a new initiative of the Resources Legacy Fund. The TBWI initial goal is to fund two or more private match grants for IRWVG projects, followed by a six-figure, three year Phase 2 TBWI continuation request May 2014 – May 2017.

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	N	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	N	N/A	N/A
Wick Kenny Foundation	P	P	Cash match support, WC operating expenses	\$5,000	F	\$5,000	1/5/12
Southern Cal Edison (SCE)	P	SCE	Cash match support WC operating expenses	\$2,500	F	\$2,500	1/12/12
Heller Charitable Foundation	P	P	Cash match TBWI website	\$23,100	P	N/A	N/A
Cumulative Total				\$117,359.08		\$66,189.08	

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	

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 January 2012 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.

4. **If applicable, describe any problems or setbacks related to the implementation of the grant or the work plan.** None to report.

5. **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.**