

Per California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.5, the following information will be posted to CalHR's Career Executive Assignment Action Proposals website for 30 calendar days when departments propose new CEA concepts or major revisions to existing CEA concepts. Presence of the department-submitted CEA Action Proposal information on CalHR's website does not indicate CalHR support for the proposal.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date

2026-01-29

2. Department

Wildlife Conservation Board

3. Organizational Placement (Division/Branch/Office Name)

Executive Unit

4. CEA Position Title

Deputy Executive Director, Administration (Admin Deputy)

5. Summary of proposed position description and how it relates to the program's mission or purpose. (2-3 sentences)

The Wildlife Conservation Board's Admin Deputy is responsible for managing and supervising all staff who perform WCB's administrative functions including fiscal management, budgeting, bond coordination, procurement, human resources, among others. The Admin Deputy will be a member of WCB's Executive Team and provide advice on a continuous basis to top-level management both in and outside of WCB. The Admin Deputy will have broad responsibility for developing policies and reviewing policies developed by others to ensure they meet all of the State's administrative rules. All of WCB's administrative functions relate directly to WCB's mission as a major grant-funding entity with each of its 17 programs having critical administrative components.

6. Reports to: (Class Title/Level)

Executive Director

7. Relationship with Department Director (Select one)

- Member of department's Executive Management Team, and has frequent contact with director on a wide range of department-wide issues.
- Not a member of department's Executive Management Team but has frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on policy issues.

(Explain):

8. Organizational Level (Select one)

- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th
- 5th (mega departments only - 17,001+ allocated positions)

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

9. What are the duties and responsibilities of the CEA position? Be specific and provide examples.

The proposed Deputy Executive Director, Administration (Admin Deputy) will plan, oversee, and direct the activities of the Wildlife Conservation Board's (WCB or Board) administrative staff as well as set goals, objectives, policies, and procedures that will govern WCB's budget issues, fiscal forecasting, bond coordination, business services, and personnel and program management. The position will be responsible for oversight and direction (at both the first and lower levels of supervision) of all of WCB's administrative services, major functions that cover accounting, budgets, business services, contracts, and human resources. This includes responsibility for and supervision of staff responsible for fiscal analysis and policy, budget development and maintenance, employee wellness, labor relations, staff development, health and safety, and succession planning, among others.

Unique (but not exclusive) to WCB is the complexity of the funds it manages. This Admin Deputy will be responsible for maintaining the fiscal integrity for funding from around 50 different sources and this new Admin Deputy must ensure that different requirements for each one are met. For example, one fund source may have bond funds that are available for 20 or 30 years, yet the requirements of other fund sources change year to year. This position must ensure that appropriate fund sources are used to fund WCB projects, some of which run in perpetuity. Also, some grants limit administrative costs to 5 per cent, 7 per cent, or a set dollar amount (e.g. \$20,000,000), for example. WCB's administrative staff, overseen by this Admin Deputy, must track the allowed administrative costs per grant program. Finally, for example, as of December 2024, WCB was processing grant payments for 330 active grants, handling regular disbursement requests for them. The number of individual grants is constantly changing as new grants get awarded and other grants get closed out. This is an enormous workload that will be managed by the Admin Deputy.

WCB's budget this year is approximately \$242 million, with over \$1 billion of possible funding being added to that with the passage of Proposition 4 (Prop 4; Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Protection, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024) to be appropriated to WCB in future years by the Administration and Legislature. For the 24-25 fiscal year, WCB was appropriated over \$320 million from Prop 4 alone. The Admin Deputy will be responsible for all aspects of this massive budget. This budget includes significant funding from bond measures passed by the voters in multiple years. For example, the Admin Deputy will be responsible for forecasting funding needs, coordinating with bond fund managers, and requesting bond sales through the State Treasury to cover anticipated expenses.

The Admin Deputy will have broad responsibility to develop strategies and policies for WCB programs that are highly sensitive and have a direct impact on executive decisions, program effectiveness, program funds, and the quality and level of services provided to grantees and other stakeholders. It will provide ongoing, systematic evaluation of WCB's policies and activities, develop original policy proposals, on all areas involving administration, including providing input on Legislative and Administration proposals. The Admin Deputy will also review policies developed by other WCB programs to make sure they meet state requirements. For example, the Admin Deputy will be tasked with sole responsibility for developing WCB's succession plan. This policy will be a strategy to ensure a smooth transition when key positions become vacant that will protect program continuity and minimize program disruption. It will also have as a key component staff development and training to ensure that WCB has a "deep bench" ready to take over as staff changes occur. As an example of policy review, WCB's legal office will be developing WCB-specific conflict of interest policies but will need the Admin Deputy's assistance to meet labor relation and other personnel requirements.

The Admin Deputy will be a member of WCB's Executive Team, rendering advice and working directly with appointees, Board members (also appointees), members of the Legislature and their staff, the highest levels of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), with which WCB works hand-in-hand. This includes having continuous and direct interface with CDFW's Director, Chief Deputy, and Deputy Directors. The Admin Deputy will also be the liaison for high-level contacts with control agencies like the Department of Finance, Legislative Analyst's Office, State Controller, State Treasurer, and the State Auditor. This work on the Executive Team will include providing advice on subjects like the strategic direction of WCB's administrative programs and projects.

Finally, the Admin Deputy will be responsible for managing federal funds. For example, each year there is an allocation in the Governor's Budget for federal funds (historically around \$20-50 million). The Admin Deputy requests this allocation. As federal grants (these are actually subgrants of grant awards made to CDFW) are approved by the Board and grant agreements are executed by WCB, escrow accounts are opened and disbursement requests come in to administrative staff. That staff, under the supervision of the Admin Deputy, ensure that the disbursement requests meet all funding and processing requirements. Administrative staff then log into the federal funding system, part of the federal treasury, to request that funding be released. Information is then submitted to the State Controller that cuts a check and the payment is transferred into escrow and, thereby makes its way into the hands of the grantee/subgrantee. This complex process will be the responsibility of the Admin Deputy.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

10. How critical is the program's mission or purpose to the department's mission as a whole? Include a description of the degree to which the program is critical to the department's mission.

- Program is directly related to department's primary mission and is critical to achieving the department's goals.
- Program is indirectly related to department's primary mission.
- Program plays a supporting role in achieving department's mission (i.e., budget, personnel, other admin functions).

Description: The new Admin Deputy position is directly related to the WCB's primary mission and is critical to achieving the Board's goals.

WCB's administrative program is the hub of the organization. WCB has other experts that handle much of its scientific and real estate work, but all of their work goes through or touches the administrative program. It is the administrative program that keeps track of dozens of fund sources and fund balances that change almost daily so program staff know how much money is available for new grants. For example, when the Legislature enacted the Oak Woodland Conservation Act adding it to WCB's 17 programs, laws were added to specify who could get the funding authorized by the Act, where funding would come from, authorized purposes of the spending, limitations on spending, among others. Similar laws are part of WCB's enabling legislation for most of its funds. Properly administering these funds which is the role of the Administrative program is literally built into the laws that establish WCB's mission.

It is the administrative program that asks the bond control agencies to sell bonds to the public to fund approved projects, anticipating how much will be needed at any one time. These bonds are released into the commercial bond markets for both large and small investors to purchase. Having funding on hand through these bond sales is critical to WCB's mission of awarding grants (see below.)

The Wildlife Conservation Law of 1947 that created WCB, provides that "The board may award grants and loans..." to multiple types of entities for enumerated purposes. (Fish and Game Code section 1350 (c)) It is the administrative program that processes payments for the hundreds of "live" grants that WCB has at any one time, ensuring the payment of hundreds of monthly invoices. It is the administrative program that conducts audits or assists with mandatory audits conducted by others to ensure state funds are being used properly. This new Admin Deputy will oversee all this critical administrative work.

WCB's administrative team is also the hub of the organization because it oversees everything personnel-related. From ensuring that TECs are paid, to buying supplies for the office, overseeing WCB training, health and safety, and getting paychecks issued...all are functions of the administrative staff. What could be more critical to an organization than ensuring that its personnel operations run smoothly so technical staff can get their work done?

Finally, the Admin Deputy will provide advice and guidance to the Board, Executive Director, and other senior managers on administrative functions and activities. This will ensure that the highest-level management is up-to-date on current fiscal and personnel requirements. In this way, the Admin Deputy will have a direct impact on executive decisions, program effectiveness, project funding, and the quality and level of service provided to stakeholders and employees. Helping to ensure sound decision-making is critical to WCB's mission.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

11. Describe what has changed that makes this request necessary. Explain how the change justifies the current request. Be specific and provide examples.

In November 2024, the voters passed the previously-referenced Prop 4. This bond measure authorized the sale of \$10 billion in bonds for water, environmental protection, and other things. In this measure alone, WCB was awarded \$1.02 billion for projects within its program area. Adding this amount of funding over the life of the bond measure will create a serious burden on WCB's administrative services. While most of the bond measure adds money to existing programs and funds, administrative services will increase because there are now additional new fund sources created by the measure that must be monitored to ensure that expenditures are made appropriately. It also means there will be a large increase in the number of grants awarded, all of which involve administrative staff. Similarly, a few years ago WCB had an increase (along with some reductions) in its General Fund funding. At one point, the funding increased from \$100M to \$800M in one budget cycle. Even when there were General Fund reductions, those gaps were filled by other new fund sources, again, all of which require careful administrative oversight. These increases and the additional complexity that comes with them will all be overseen by the Admin Deputy.

Other examples of changes brought about by Prop 4 for the funding provided therein that will be the responsibility of the Admin Deputy are:

1. Expanded use of Advanced Payments. Current state law was more limited but Prop 4 expanded the funds that could be advanced to grantees, rather than paying them through reimbursements. Advance payments have different control requirements.
2. Different indirect cost requirements. Most fund sources have limits and controls on indirect costs. Prop 4 sets up new rates for indirect costs.
3. New program accountability requirements. These include Internet posting of projects, annual reporting, and audits.

Another example of the changed administrative needs started with Proposition 1 (2014) that initially gave WCB \$200 million for a new stream flow program to allow WCB to acquire water rights so that water will be maintained in streams to benefit aquatic species. In 2021 the Legislature added \$100 million for this purpose. Then, most recently, Proposition 4 added \$150 million for this program. These large funding changes will require careful oversight by the Admin Deputy.

Over the last 10 years or so, WCB has come to play a major role in the Administration's environmental initiatives. Most importantly, is the Governor's keystone initiative, Pathways to 30X30 with the goal of preserving 30 per cent of land and coastal waters in California by 2030, a mere 5 year away. This ambitious plan had three goals, all of which involve WCB: increasing biodiversity, expanding access to nature, and building resilience to climate change. As of September 2024, California had added 25.5 per cent of conserved land and 16.2 per cent of its coastal waters to meet the 30X30 goal. All of the remaining pathways to meet the Governor's goal involve WCB, including careful administration of the funding provided to get there, which will be the responsibility of the Admin Deputy. Other plans like Nature Based Solutions directed at addressing resilience to climate change and Outdoors for All directed at protecting the right of ALL Californians to the benefits of its outdoor places, all make WCB a key player. Each of these Administration priorities will also involve the oversight of the new Admin Deputy position.

Over the last decade, California has been changing how it interacts with its Native American tribes, including a formal apology issued by Governor Newsom. These initiatives include: required tribal consultations (Executive Order B-10-11); working with tribes on Nature Based Solutions to climate change (Executive Order N-82-20); California Environmental Quality Act tribal consultations on "projects" (Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1); and, the most recent Return of Ancestral Land initiative returning appropriate state property to tribes (Executive Order N-82-19). In addition, recently enacted Proposition 4 lists tribes as eligible entities for WCB's \$1 billion in grants (Public Resources Code section 90100(n) and 90110). Part of these tribal responsibilities include assisting tribes with how to be effective in the grant writing and management and the award process. The Admin Deputy will play a key role in providing this training and expertise in a culturally sensitive manner. It will assist with the administrative needs of staff who are facing the complex task of returning state property to tribes, and again, will assist with processing funding for new grants under Proposition 4.

Further, WCB added an Equity Subcommittee to its Board to help address disparities acknowledged in the State's Outdoors for All initiative. WCB has set up a program to increase public access that includes ensuring that outdoor areas include underserved communities. Proposition 4 has set aside 40% of its funding for such communities. This Admin Deputy will be responsible for working with staff to process grants to such groups consistent with the definitions in this new law, WCB's existing equity policies, and any additional policies in this area in the future.

Finally, WCB is changing how its accounting services will be provided. Accounting services is key to WCB's success because that is how the hundreds of invoices it processes pursuant to its grant agreements get paid. Over the years, WCB has had an Interagency Agreement (IA) with CDFW in which WCB paid for 7 positions at various levels in the accounting civil service series. The IA cost WCB just over \$1 million per year with \$200,000 of that being for administrative overhead at CDFW. WCB had received approval from CDFW and the Department of Finance to move these positions in-house rather than paying for them in. These new positions will report to the new Admin Deputy.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE

12. Provide 3-5 specific examples of policy areas over which the CEA position will be the principle policy maker. Each example should cite a policy that would have an identifiable impact. Include a description of the statewide impact of the assigned program.

The Admin Deputy will be the principal policy maker for all of WCB's administrative functions including fiscal, budgeting, bond coordination, and all aspects of personnel, contracts, procurement, etc. Examples of some policies for which this position will have extensive participation include, but are not limited to:

Fiscal Integrity – This position is responsible for developing internal policies and procedures to establish effective financial controls to adhere to state and federal laws. For example, WCB may develop policies that include checklists for each fund source that administrative and program staff can use when looking at fund sources for various projects. These policies would address all of the elements of the dozens of WCB fund sources to ensure that only appropriate fund sources are tapped. Similarly, WCB is considering policies related to maintaining accurate and complete records by standardizing what is included in each project file. These project files are what WCB uses with its internal and external audits. Finally, assisting with revisions to WCB's conflict of interest policy will help ensure fiscal integrity and maintain public confidence in WCB's grant awards. These policies will have a statewide impact since WCB's funding is applied throughout the state.

Grant Administration – This position will be responsible for policies related to the administration of state funds by way of grants to other state agencies, local governments, non-profit organizations, and Native American tribes, among others. These policies will pertain to grant agreements, grant management and distribution, including the newly-authorized ability to make advanced payments. These policies will include requirements for audits, specifically called for in most bond measures, including of its own programs but also those of grantees to ensure that grant funds are being used properly. The Admin Deputy will also be responsible for communicating with grantees about audit requirements using "bulletins" to keep them apprised of changes. This policy will have statewide impact because WCB's grantees are spread throughout California.

Operations Manual – This Admin Deputy will take the lead in developing WCB's first Operations Manual. This operations manual will be made up of policies and procedures that will govern not only administrative functions (for which the Admin Deputy will be directly responsible) but will also coordinate policies and procedures for the Operations Manual drafted by other senior program managers. This manual will include policies about things like how personnel request and are granted time off, how office space limitations will be addressed, how personnel will safely conduct field visits to monitor grant awards, and expectations about stakeholder communications, including those with tribes. The new Operations Manual will have critical internal impact for all of WCB's employees.

State Leadership Accountability Act (SLAA) requirements – Biennially, WCB submits the report required by this act on its review of internal controls and monitoring systems. This report identifies not just what WCB is doing well, but also areas of operation that need improvement. The Admin Deputy position will not only prepare the SLAA report but will be responsible for drafting or overseeing the drafting of (depending on the subject area) policies needed for program improvements wherever risks have been identified. As just one example, a recent SLAA report discussed WCB's promotion of upward mobility. However, WCB does not have a succession plan in place. The Admin Deputy will be responsible for preparing such a plan, and other policies to ensure upward mobility. Depending on the types of program improvements over which new policies will be drafted, the impact could either be internal, affecting all of WCB's employees, or for external policies they would have statewide impact among all of WCB's grantees.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

13. What is the CEA position's scope and nature of decision-making authority?

The Admin Deputy will have broad authority to independently make decisions on behalf of the Executive Director and other members of the management team. This position has decision-making authority over, and extensive involvement in, the formulation, revision, and implementation of policies, procedures, and programs related to budgeting, accounting, bond coordination, grant administration, all aspects of human resources, procurement/contracting, among others. The Admin Deputy will serve as a high-level policy adviser and an expert on fiscal and budgetary matters that will impact WCB's multi-million (and growing) budget.

14. Will the CEA position be developing and implementing new policy, or interpreting and implementing existing policy? How?

The Admin Deputy will recommend, develop, review, and implement new policies, as well as interpret, modify and execute existing policies. For new policies, such as those outlined in response to question 26 above, the Admin Deputy will ensure that they meet all state requirements, including audit findings, State Administrative Manual, State Contract Manual, for example. They will be vetted through staff and appropriate control agencies. They will be adopted with appropriate stakeholder involvement in which the Admin Deputy will play an appropriate role. Once adopted, the Admin Deputy will ensure that appropriate steps are taken so that WCB staff and others are aware of the policies, such as conducting training, issuing internal bulletins, or updating on-line resources used by staff. For existing policies, the Admin Deputy will ensure that they remain up-to-date with current state requirements. As changes are needed, the Admin Deputy will be responsible for getting appropriate input, similar to that described above, as well as getting the word out using appropriate mechanisms, to notify staff of changes.