

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

2026-02-09

2. Department

Wildlife Conservation Board

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

Executive Unit

4. CEA Position Title

Deputy Executive Director, Restoration and Development

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

The Wildlife Conservation Board (Board) is revising the duties of the existing CEA referenced above to align the duties of that position with other organizational changes being made at WCB. Namely, with the proposed creation of an additional CEA (two are proposed for creation at this time but only one affects the duties of the CEA being revised), WCB's administrative duties will be split off leaving the CEA being revised with the most senior policy and management responsibilities over WCB's restoration, development, and planning grant making.

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 CEA now titled Deputy Executive Director, Restoration and Development (R/D Deputy), that is the subject of this revision request, was the first CEA established within WCB back in 2019 (then titled Assistant Director) and was assigned to oversee three of WCB's four organizational units: restoration, acquisition, and administration. (WCB has a fourth unit, Executive, that is overseen by WCB's Executive Director that is unaffected by this proposal.) A few years ago, a second CEA, titled Deputy Executive Director, Land Acquisition, was established to divide responsibility for the the two primary, science-based technical WCB units: restoration and acquisition. This meant the R/D Deputy still oversaw WCB's restoration and administrative functions. Concurrent with this revision proposal, WCB is seeking to establish a new CEA titled, Deputy Executive Director, Administration. If this new position is established, the R/D Deputy will continue handling WCB's growing programs and budget for restoration, development and planning, in addition to supervising two service-wide staff: WCB's public information officer and its Information Technology Specialist. The oversight of the Administrative Unit will be moved to the new CEA. (WCB also has a proposal to establish a General Counsel position as a CEA, but that proposal does not affect the position that is the subject of this request.)

The duties of this revised CEA will be to continue to serve as the highest level policy maker for WCB's multi-million dollar restoration function for policies such as WCB's new insurance requirement, how climate change disasters will be addressed on WCB-funded restored land, and legal changes to things like advance payments and indirect costs which are both parts of restoration grants. (Further discussion of key policies in section 26.) The revised CEA will continue to provide direct and continuous interaction with WCB's Executive Director and the Board (made up of appointees) and will continue to play a pivotal role in WCB's overall management. These duties will not be reduced, despite the addition of the new Admin Deputy, because WCB's restoration programs have increased in number, complexity, and funding. (Further discussion of key changes in section 23.)

The R/D Deputy has responsibilities both as WCB's highest level scientific staff member focusing on restoration of California's land and water, but also is key to WCB's main activity which is awarding grants. Restoration grants, which typically make up half of WCB's annual awards, are more complex than acquisition grants. They are more complex because, unlike an acquisition which is a one-time event, restoration grants require ongoing regular work by grantees, which must be monitored by the R/D Deputy's staff. They also are long-term: they have a multi-year work period, then typically a 25-year management period. The R/D Deputy oversees the staff that directly manage these long-term grants. Finally, unlike acquisition grants that take only two forms, restoration grants are very diverse in terms of the types of work they fund.

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: This proposal relates to a revision in duties for the R/D Deputy. The restoration and development function in WCB is critical to its mission. In addition to authorizing WCB to fund land acquisition and to act as CDFW's real estate arm, the Legislature authorized the following: "The board may award grants...for the purposes of fish and wildlife habitat restoration, enhancement, management, protection and improvement of riparian resources, and for the development of compatible public access...." Fish and Game Code section 1350(c). This co-equal function, along with land and water acquisition, is how WCB accomplishes its objectives, along with the objectives of the Administration as articulated through various plans and directives, including Executive Orders. Restoration and development is a key part of virtually all of WCB's 17 programs. It is also where WCB historically spends around half of its grant funding, which last year totalled \$330 million.

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.

The change that has made this request necessary is that WCB is proposing to add a Deputy Director CEA over its Administrative Unit, thereby removing those duties from the R/D Deputy. The changes that justify this new CEA are in a separate, but concurrent, CalHR 881 form.

Three main changes have occurred that affect the R/D Deputy: funding increases, program increases, and a focus on WCB to accomplish Administration priorities.

In 1947, WCB was funded from one fund source, and its work was launched with \$10 million. Over the years, WCB has had numerous fund sources added, currently numbering over 50. For example, they range from General Fund (which at one time totaled \$800 million), to Cap and Trade climate change revenue, to multiple bond funds enacted by the people through the initiative process. Currently, WCB's budget is around \$470 million. Proposition 4 (Prop 4) adopted by the voters in 2014, specifies that just over \$1 billion will go to WCB's work which will be appropriated annually throughout the budget process. This year's appropriation from Prop 4 is \$320 million (of that \$470 million). This large funding infusion drastically increases the amount of restoration, planning, and public access grants the R/D Deputy will be responsible for overseeing.

Second, in 1947 WCB was created with one purpose: to buy land for CDFW. Over the years, the Legislature and the public (through bond measures) have added program responsibilities to WCB. WCB currently operates 17 programs, with another to soon be added by Prop 4. While this growth has been gradual, many programs have been added since 2014. Proposition 1 that year shifted WCB's work from land to water, directing WCB to make grants to protect in-stream water for all aquatic species. In 2017, the Legislature added within WCB, the Lower American River Conservancy. The Monarch Butterfly and Pollinator Rescue Program was added to WCB by the Legislature in 2019. In 2022, the Legislature also established in WCB the California Desert Conservation Program. Also in 2022, just 3 years ago, the Legislature changed WCB's enabling legislation allowing it to make grants to certain Native American Tribes. And in 2024, Proposition 4 created a new program for WCB to fund the San Andreas Corridor Program to protect wildlife corridors in Southern California. All of the restoration, planning, and public access grant work associated with these programs is overseen by the R/D Deputy and as the programs have increased so has the workload.

Finally, WCB also plays a key role in accomplishing many of the Administration's goals. Since the legislative change in 2022, WCB must address the Administration's directives relating to tribes: mandatory tribal consultation (Executive Order, 2011), return of ancestral lands (Executive Order, 2019), and Tribal Nature Based Solutions (Executive Order, 2020), among others. WCB is key to accomplishing the Administration's directive to protect 30% of the state's coastal land and waters by 2030, laid out in Pathways to 30X30. This 30X30 plan as well as its Nature Based Solutions are attempts by the Administration to address climate change impacts. WCB is also key to advancing the Administration's Outdoors for All initiative that funds conservation work in disadvantaged communities in California. Prop 4 requires that 40% of its funds be spent in defined disadvantaged communities. Proposition 4 also added to WCB's workload because it requires that the efforts that it funds factor in various other Administration initiatives such as: Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy, 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality; California's Water Supply Adapting to a Hotter, Drier Future; California's Salmon Strategy for a Hotter, Drier Future; and, California's Climate Adaptation Strategy, depending on the type of project being funded. All of these new plans add to the work of the R/D Deputy because the incumbent must ensure consistency with the elements of the plans, but also work to accomplish their stated goals.

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.

This proposal is to revise the duties of the existing CEA R/D Deputy who already has a significant policy making function. The program and funding increases over the last several years, require additional policy making. Below are examples.

Each year, WCB makes program improvements, learning lessons from things that go well and things that don't. These lessons learned require on-going policy development to direct staff in how to address them. For example, WCB's insurance requirement for R/D projects was introduced last year. This requirement means that at the time they sign a grant agreement, grantees must provide an insurance policy that names WCB as an additionally insured party and protects the state for restoration work done pursuant to the grant. WCB needs to develop policy direction for staff on how to evaluate policies to ensure that the state obtains protection from liability should something go wrong with/during the work. Similarly, as climate change finds new ways to adversely impact California, WCB must address, from a policy perspective, what to do if restored land is destroyed by floods, fires, and other natural disasters and the state thereby loses its investment in the restored land. Also, as a final example, unlike for acquisitions, the law allows WCB to advance funds to entities doing restoration work rather than paying grantees in arrears. This advance funds authorization became effective 2 years ago, but Prop 4 will likely change the advance fund requirements for projects funded by that source. Staff need policy direction on how to process advance fund requests made pursuant to these new requirements. As a result, while WCB's R/D function is ongoing, program and legal changes require on-going policy development that is appropriate at the CEA level. The R/D Deputy will continue to be the primary policy maker over these and many other expanded programs.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

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

The R/D Deputy will continue to have broad authority to independently make decisions on behalf of the Board, 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 restoration, development, planning, and public access grants, among others. The R/D Deputy will serve as a high-level policy adviser and a technical and scientific expert on those listed matters that will impact WCB's multi-million (and growing) budget. The R/D Deputy will also continue to have direct and continuous interaction with WCB's Executive Director and Board of appointees, among others, on the subjects within their areas of responsibility.

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

The R/D Deputy will continue to 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 R/D Deputy will ensure that they meet technical and scientific requirements as well as meeting Administration goals, for example. They will be vetted through staff and appropriate control agencies. They will be adopted with appropriate stakeholder involvement in which the R/D Deputy will play a key role. Once adopted, the R/D 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 R/D Deputy will ensure that they remain up-to-date with current state requirements. As changes are needed, the R/D 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.