



COUNTY OF SISKIYOU

Board of Supervisors

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August 21, 2026

Jennifer M. Norris, PhD
Executive Director
Wildlife Conservation Board
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Subject: Board of Supervisors Oppose Funding for The Wildlands Conservancy Acquisition of Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve (AP Ranch)

Dear Dr. Norris,

The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors opposes the proposed allocation of \$11.5 million in Wildlife Conservation Board funding to The Wildlands Conservancy for its purchase of approximately 14,177 acres of privately owned land known as the AP Ranch unless the funding and acquisition agreements include provisions that protect County property tax revenue, maintain timber production and irrigated grazing lands, and preserve historic water uses.

The property includes approximately 1,389 acres of flood irrigated meadows supported by multiple water rights under the Scott River Decree. Flood irrigation has long been used on the ranch and contributes to groundwater recharge, which helps sustain subsurface cold water flows to nearby streams later in the season. Allowing these lands to go fallow will reduce that recharge, remove land from productive grazing use, and increase wildfire risk to the nearby community of Masterson Meadow as dry vegetation accumulates and creates greater fuel continuity.

Therefore, we will not support the funding allocation unless the following provisions are incorporated into the funding and acquisition agreements:

1. **Water rights and historic irrigation use are preserved.** Existing water rights should remain connected to the property and continue to support historic irrigation. They should not be sold, transferred, or otherwise changed in a way that permanently removes water from the property or prevents its continued use for irrigation. Any proposed instream flows must preserve both the water rights and the ability to continue historic irrigation on the property.
2. **Irrigated grazing lands remain in use.** The approximately 1,389 acres of existing flood irrigated meadows should continue to be irrigated and available for grazing. Allowing these lands to go fallow will reduce groundwater recharge and increase wildfire risk.
3. **Forested lands remain in timber production.** Forested portions of the property should remain available for active timber management and commercial harvest. Continued timber production supports watershed and forest health, reduces hazardous fuel accumulation and wildfire risk to nearby communities, and supports local jobs. The agreements should also protect the County

Jess Harris
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Ed Valenzuela
District 2

Michael N. Kobseff
District 3

Nancy Ogren
District 4

Ray Haupt
District 5

from the loss of timber yield tax revenue resulting from restrictions on commercial timber harvest.

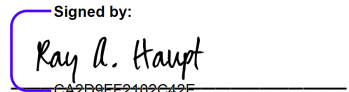
4. **County property tax revenue is protected.** The agreements should protect the County from any loss of property tax revenue resulting from a future change in the property's tax status or ownership. If such a change reduces property tax revenue to the County, the agreements should include a mechanism to offset that loss.

The Wildlife Conservation Board materials state that The Wildlands Conservancy intends to develop a separate water management plan after acquisition to determine what contributions to instream flow may be made. The materials also identify conservation grazing and forest management as part of the future management of the property. These issues are too important to leave solely to future management decisions and should be established in writing before public funding is committed.

More than sixty percent of land within Siskiyou County is already managed by federal and state agencies. We are concerned about additional large-scale acquisitions that could reduce County property tax revenue, remove land from agricultural use, and permanently alter water rights. These concerns are particularly significant for this property, given its substantial water rights and irrigated grazing lands.

For these reasons, we oppose Wildlife Conservation Board funding for the AP Ranch acquisition unless these protections are incorporated into the funding and acquisition agreements.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

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Ray A. Haupt, Chair
Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors

CC: Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange
Rural County Representatives of California
Assemblywoman Heather Hadwick
Senator Megan Dahle