

# Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Coalition

*Dedicated to the sustained conservation of native animal and plant species in the Southwest Bioregion.*

June 19, 2019

Attention: WCB Grant Reviewer  
Wildlife Conservation Board  
PO Box 944209  
Sacramento, CA



**Subject: Letter of support for The Nature Conservancy's WCB Grant Proposal Santa Ana to Palomar Mountains Linkage - Temecula Creek Wildlife Crossing Restoration and Protection Plan and Specifications**

Dear WCB Grant Reviewer:

The San Diego Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Coalition (Coalition) enthusiastically supports The Nature Conservancy's proposal entitled "*Temecula Creek Wildlife Crossing Restoration and Protection Plan*" submitted for funding under the Wildlife Conservation Board's Wildlife Corridor and Fish Passages Grant Program for 2019.

The Coalition is a group of 22 conservation-based organizations dedicated to the sustained conservation of native animal and plant species in the Southwest Bioregion. We work to protect native habitats so that our wildlife can move and adapt in the face of a changing climate. To this end, we have a keen interest in and commitment to, effective implementation of NCCPs including the San Diego County Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP), which is directly adjacent to the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Conservation Plan (WRC-MSHCP), where both NCCPs serve to protect vital habitat lands and linkages, especially those between the Palomar and Santa Ana Mountains.

As a dedicated group of conservation stakeholders and partners in the region, we are very concerned about recent research findings indicating severe inbreeding among the Santa Ana Mountains mountain lion populations and the associated potential for their extinction; restoration of the Santa Ana to Palomar Mountains Linkage would help prevent this and reduce collisions between lions and commuters on I-15. We applaud the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for prioritizing funding that allowed UC Davis and Cal Poly Pomona, with support from The Nature Conservancy, to develop wildlife crossing design concepts for I-15. We believe The Nature Conservancy's project proposal to proceed with the Temecula Creek Crossing restoration and protection planning is the critical first step in establishing a system of dedicated wildlife crossings for I-15.

The Coalition strongly supports The Nature Conservancy's proposal. We are confident that the plans developed, and collaborative efforts initiated under this grant, if awarded, will have a dramatic long-term impact on furthering habitat protection and wildlife movement in the Santa Ana to Palomar Mountains Linkage, and look forward to seeing this project move forward.

Sincerely,  
*Laura Hunter, Coordinator*  
Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Coalition