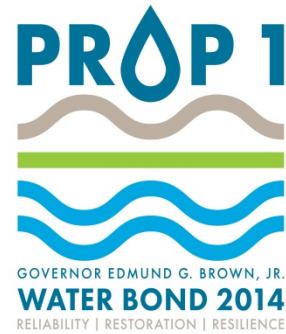




SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN  
**DELTA CONSERVANCY**  
 A California State Agency



***Ecosystem Restoration and Water Quality Grant Program***

**2016-17 Concept Proposal Staff Recommendation**

<b>Project Title</b>	Elliot Ranch Conservation Easement Project		
<b>Applicant</b>	Yolo County Habitat/Natural Community Conservation Plan Joint Powers Agency (Yolo Habitat Conservancy)		
<b>Project Number</b>	Prop 1-1609	<b>Category</b>	2
<b>County</b>	Yolo	<b>Funding Request</b>	\$ 3,000,000.00
<b>Score</b>	85.0	<b>Total Project Cost</b>	\$ 4,260,000.00

**Staff Recommendation:**

Delta Conservancy staff recommends that the Board request a full application from Yolo County Habitat/Natural Community Conservation Plan Joint Powers Agency (Yolo Habitat Conservancy) for the Elliot Ranch Conservation Easement (Prop 1-1609) project.

**Project Description:**

The Yolo Habitat Conservancy is requesting funding from the Delta Conservancy to amend the existing agricultural land conservation easement on the 826.5-acre Elliott Ranch to include additional habitat conservation restrictions. The Elliott Ranch is an ideal candidate for the Yolo Habitat Conservancy reserve system because it provides habitat for at least six of the 12 species covered by the Yolo Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan, including Swainson’s hawk, white-tailed kite, giant garter snake, tricolored blackbird, western burrowing owl, and western pond turtle. Further, the ranch is threatened by orchard and vineyard conversion, crops with low habitat value for covered species. The project proposes to amend the easement, create a multi-species management plan for the property, maintain or increase the population of Swainson’s hawks on the property, and to protect the ranch’s riparian corridors, including Swainson’s hawk nesting sites. The applicant is seeking funding to conduct public outreach, commission an appraisal, develop a management plan, and close and record the easement, for which a bargain sale is being negotiated, by October 2019.

**Consistency with Proposition 1 and State Priorities:**

This project is consistent with Proposition 1 and the other priorities of the State as noted in the Grant Guidelines. The project protects the habitat value of the Delta’s working landscape while

keeping land in production, consistent with the purposes outlined in chapter 6 of Proposition 1. The project's objectives implement the California Water Action Plan's Action 3: Achieve the Co-Equal Goals for the Delta and Action 4: Protect and Restore Important Ecosystems. The project is consistent with the Delta Plan's recommendation DP R10, which encourages wildlife friendly farming, and it aligns with the Delta Conservancy's strategic plan's goal of leading efforts to protect Delta ecosystems and with several of the areas of authority from the Conservancy's enabling legislation that underpin this goal. The project proposes to enhance the protection of habitat values on working land and to incorporate the land into a reserve system while preserving the ability of landowners to continue farming and grazing the land.