

LAND CONVERSION EVALUATION

State of California

The Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE
July 29, 2025

1. PROPERTY NAME:

Putah Creek Fishing Access, Yolo County

2. JUSTIFICATION FOR CONVERSION:

CDFW is requesting to transfer ownership of Putah Creek Fishing Access (PCFA, Property), APNs 30-0081-0009, 30-0081-0011, 30-0081-0024, and 30-0300-0006 (Figures 1-3), to Yolo County (County). Acquired in two transactions (1963 and 1973) for angling access, outdoor recreation, environmental education and protection of Putah Creek. PCFA is approximately 82 acres. The County has managed the site for public access and recreational facilities via a cooperative agreement since 1963. The cooperative agreement was extended in 2007 and expires May 24, 2032.

The County's long-term operation and knowledge of the property make them the ideal partner to own and manage long-term. CDFW lacks staff and ability to manage the property in a way that is consistent with current management and the objectives of the acquisition. Mainly, CDFW does not have the availability to perform routine maintenance involving trash pickup, pumping of vault toilets, maintaining trails and educational displays.

Yolo County operates 13 parks covering 1,748 acres for various user groups within the County and has successfully managed other CDFW owned properties for public use including Knights Landing Fishing Access and the Clarksburg Boat Ramp.

No loss of habitat, recreation or public access will occur because of the proposed transfer. CDFW and the County are agreeable to a conversion of these lands and CDFW will transfer the property to Yolo County at no cost.

a. Listed species or species of special concern:

PCFA contains habitat for valley elderberry longhorn beetle (federal threatened) foothill yellow-legged frog north coast DPS (species of special concern), Keck's checkerboom (federal endangered), American bumble bee (state imperiled), American peregrine falcon (State vulnerable, California Department of Forestry sensitive).

b. Mitigation lands:

These parcels were not acquired for mitigation.

c. General wildlife/habitat lands:

Putah Creek Fishing Access is located in the Putah Creek Interdam Reach (IDR) below the Monticello Dam, which forms Lake Berryessa, and Lake Solano. The Heritage and Wild Trout Program of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife designated the IDR as a Wild Trout water in 2014. PCFA contains riverine, valley foothill riparian, and annual and perennial grassland habitats. Grassland and valley foothill riparian habitats have been improved and restored to enhance habitat values for users and wildlife.

d. Public access lands:

Yolo County manages PCFA under a long-term lease for angling access, outdoor education, and wildlife-oriented recreation. PCFA has been developed to include five separate access sites (four CDFW owned, and one Bureau of Reclamation owned) and amenities that provide parking areas, restrooms, informational kiosks, native plant restoration areas, walking trails and disabled angler access/wildlife viewing platforms. The Property is a popular fishing location for native rainbow trout as well as its verdant riparian habitat and established creek-side trail network.

e. Administrative or management problems:

The Property experiences occasional vandalism to signs and facilities. Mainly from graffiti and carving into benches. PCFA has several recent force-majeure incidents that damaged facilities.

- Summer 2018 – Wragg Fire: Damage to habitat and infrastructure.
- Winter 2019 – flooding: Fishing Access Site #3 parking lot damaged and closed due to erosion from flooding caused by a blocked culvert.
- Summer 2020 – Hennessey Fire: Damaged to habitat and infrastructure.
- Winter 2022 – flooding: Erosion from heavy winter rains caused closure of SR128 and revetment placement in stream channel.

The County is active in trying to remedy the above incidents, maintain and improve the PCFA, and has partnered with Yolo County Resource Conservation District for noxious weed removal projects. The County is well positioned to make grant requests and has a network of partnerships in the area that work to maintain the Property.

3. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION:

Yolo County, California
Latitude 38.516343, -122.061940
Township 8 North Range 2 West Section 26, 27 &28 Mount Diablo Meridian

The Property is between State Highway 128 and Putah Creek. All access is provided via State Route 128.

4. Primary Acquisition Purpose and Species/Habitat Values:

The primary acquisition purpose for both transactions (1963 and 1972) was to provide angling access to Putah Creek for rainbow and brown trout. Both of which were planted by CDFW at the time. Planting has subsided but a trophy native rainbow trout fishery remains.

The IDR maintains trout habitat by drawing from the coldwater pool and releases of Monticello Dam upstream. Putah Creek provides adequate spawning habitat and has many shaded woody debris used for escape and rearing habitat for young trout. The valley foothill riparian habitat is valuable for neotropical migrant birds, wading birds and some waterfowl. Putah Creek serves as a valuable habitat connectivity feature from the interior coast range to its terminus in the Yolo Bypass but is somewhat limited by the adjacent Highway 128 and narrow corridor as it meanders through farmland in the valley.

5. MANAGEMENT HISTORY AND PUBLIC USE:

The County has maintained PCFA for 62 years with a proven track record of success. The Property now boasts a diversified user experience due to many infrastructure improvements and management upgrades spearheaded by Yolo County and funded in a large capacity by WCB. Early years of the PCFA were focused on a put-and-take trout fishery with annual stocks of the creek by CDFW and supported by Davis Fly Fishers and local Boy Scouts. The site has evolved into a native and wild trout fishery and a diversified user group focused not only fishing but other non-consumptive forms of wildlife-oriented recreation including hiking and bird watching. Yolo County's management supports both traditional and improved non-consumptive recreational access and experience by maintaining parking lots, clearing trails, cleaning restroom, removing trash, providing educational displays and improving habitat.

The current user days are unknown, but the property has fluctuated from a high of 115,000 in 1980 to 40,000 in 1996 (last recorded estimate). Since that time the population within an hour's drive has expanded and the cost to maintain the site have increased. In 2019, the management agreement was amended to allow Yolo County to collect daily use fees helping offset management costs. Annual revenue from these pay stations is unknown.

The County manages five visitor access sites described below (Figure 3):

- Putah Creek Park Site 1: This site includes a parking lot, native plant restoration area, a kiosk, numerous picnic tables, a restroom facility, a fishing/viewing platform, interpretive nature panels and rural hiking trails and river access.
- Putah Creek Park Site 2: This site is only accessible by primitive trails from Putah Creek Park Sites 1 and 3. There is no driveway access for vehicles. There are primitive trails, interpretive nature panels, rural river access and native plant restoration areas.

- Putah Creek Park Site 3: This West parking lot at Site 3 is currently closed to the public. A portion of the parking lot collapsed during the winter storms. The Parks Division is working with various agencies to access funding to make the necessary repairs. This site is split between the west and east side of the park. The west side of the park contains a parking area, restroom facility, picnic areas, a kiosk, native plant restoration areas, a fishing platform and primitive hiking trails. The east side of the park offers a parking area, interpretive nature panels, rural river access, picnic areas, and a universally accessible path to a creek overlook.
- Putah Creek Park Site 4: This site is the largest of all the sites and has the distinguishing characteristic of a relatively level plateau area with native upland grasses and similar restored native habitat. The site offers a parking area, paved universally accessible upland trails, picnic area, kiosk, interpretive nature panels, a fishing platform and two universally accessible nature overlook platforms and a restroom facility.
- Putah Creek Park Site 5: This site includes a rural parking area maintained by the County by most of the property is owned by the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR).

Putah Creek Fishing Access is separate and not to be confused with CDFW's Putah Creek Wildlife Area (Figure 1). Putah Creek Wildlife Area is in CDFW's Region 3 (Bay Delta Region) and is not subject to the PCFA management agreement with the County. The Wildlife Area will remain unchanged and unaffected.

6. DATE ACQUIRED AND FUNDING SOURCE:

PCFA was acquired in two transactions. 1. 12/13/1963, 58.52 acres totaling \$24,200, 2. 8/9/1972, 24.13 acres totaling \$60,000. Both purchases utilized Wildlife Restoration Fund dollars.

7. PRESENT ENCUMBRANCES:

A telephone line right of way easement for construction and maintenance of a buried line was recorded in 1968. Unknown if it was utilized or has been maintained. Has not been an issue for CDFW or County.

No other encumbrances are known for this property.

8. IMPROVEMENTS ON SITE:

There have been many improvements made to PCFA to better the user experience and improve the habitat. They are summarized below:

- 1963 – WCB funded restrooms, parking areas, water supply, trash containers, and fencing coinciding with initial purchase. Total Cost - \$28,700
- 1974 – WCB funded development of parking, access roads, water systems, fencing, and bathrooms associated with additional acreage. Yolo County provided barbeques, picnic tables and other day use facilities. Total cost - \$55,645

- 1989 – WCB funded the reconstruction and paving of existing access roads and parking areas. Total Cost - \$73,912
- 2007 – Cooperative project with Yolo County for extensive public access improvements including barrier free trails and fishing platforms, restrooms, informational signage, parking areas, access roads, and improvement of a park host area. Total Cost - \$727,460; WCB – \$532,290; Yolo County \$165,170

9. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:

There are no known hazardous materials at PCFA.

10. MINERAL AND WATER RIGHTS:

CDFW R2 staff do not see a need to retain mineral or water rights that may belong to this parcel.

11. DEED RESTRICTIONS, CONDITIONS OF SALE, OR REVERSIONARY INTERESTS:

A Right of Reversion will be placed in the Grant Deed that will ensure, if at any point in the future Yolo County fails to manage the Property for public access, public recreation, and habitat preservation, the State will have the ability to retake title to the Property.

12. ESTIMATED VALUE:

Currently unknown.

13. TYPE OF CONVERSION REQUESTED:

Transfer

CDFW will transfer fee title to Yolo County due to their increased capacity for management with no loss of value for recreation, or fish and wildlife habitat. The County has maintained PCFA for 62 years with a proven track record of success.

14. REGIONAL CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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15. PERSON PREPARING LCE:

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Unit Wildlife Biologist - Colusa, Glenn, Lake and Yolo County
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(916) 240-6350

16. REGIONAL STAFF WHO HAVE REVIEWED PROPOSAL:

- 1) NCR Lands Program:
Joshua Bush
- 2) Wildlife Branch Lands Program:
Michelle Selmon, Kristi Cripe, Sharon Taylor
- 3) Region Supervisors and Program Managers:
Jason Holley and Caitlin Roddy
- 4) Regional Manager:
Morgan Kilgour

Figure 1. CDFW PCWA and PCFA Website Map

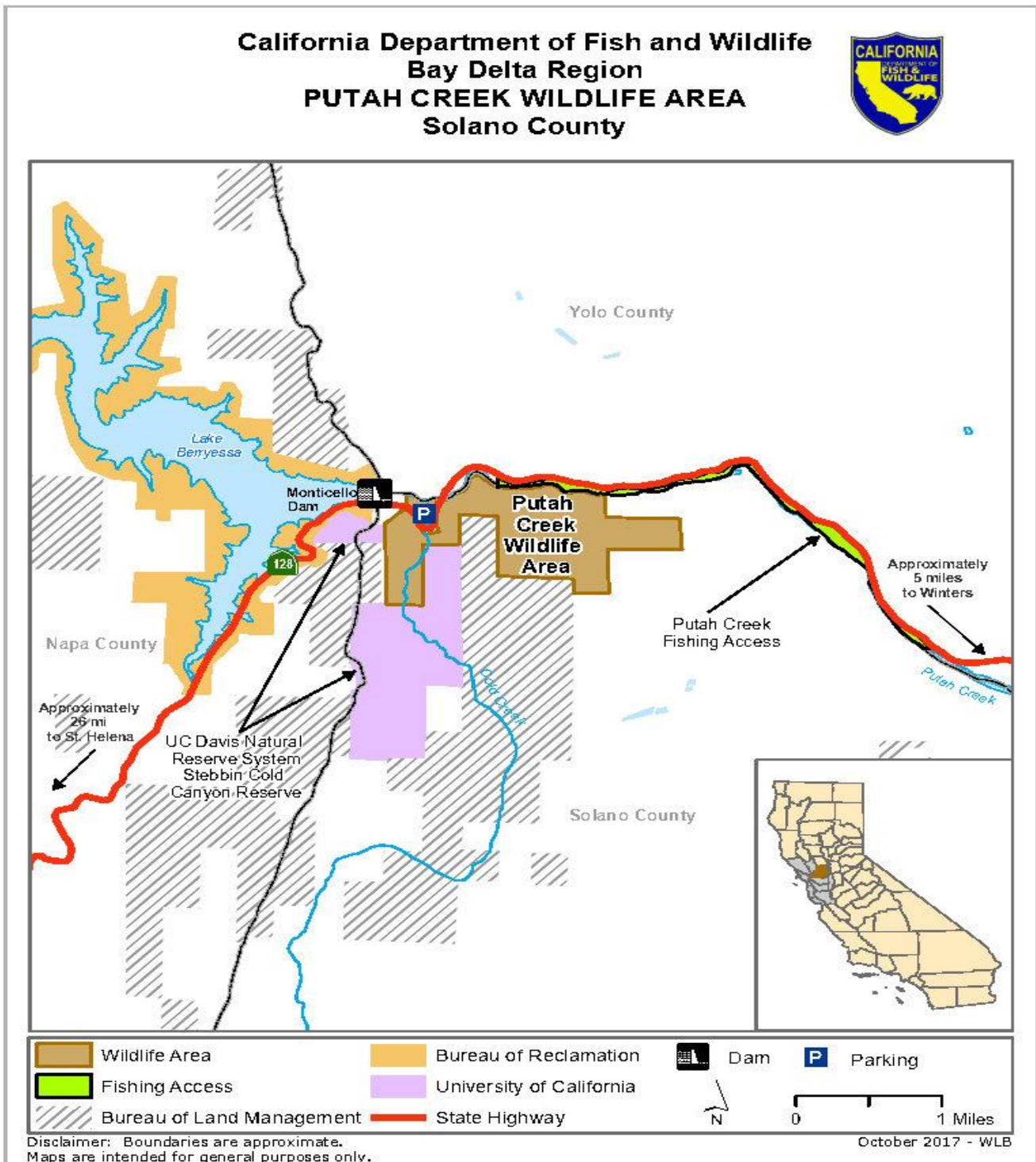


Figure 2. PCFA Vicinity Map



Figure 3: PCFA Access Site Map



Figure 4: PCFA Photos



Site 1: Restroom, Interpretive Displays, Walking Path and Disabled Angler Platform



Site 3 East: Trail, Interpretive Panels, Parking Lot, Picnic Tables



Site 3 West: Currently Closed due to erosion of parking lot; Restroom, Interpretive Panels, Trail



Site 4: Parking Area, Interpretive Panels, Restroom, Picnic Tables, Trails, and Birdwatching Platform