



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge
7715 Lakeville Highway
Petaluma, California 94954

July 18, 2019

Mr. John P. Donnelly
Executive Director
Wildlife Conservation Board
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Dear Mr. Donnelly,

On behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge), please allow this letter to represent our support and partnership commitment for the *San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Shade Structure Project*.

The Refuge consists of approximately 20,000 acres along the northern shoreline of San Pablo Bay in Sonoma, Napa, and Solano Counties. The refuge was established to provide habitat for migratory birds and endangered species. Another important goal is to provide environmental education and interpretation to schools. Our office is located off Highway 37 in Sonoma County. We have an undeveloped picnic area adjacent to our office that consists of six picnic tables located on the grass with no shade or protection from the sun. Therefore, we have a need for a shade structure for this area to provide an opportunity to comfortably host school groups at the Refuge. School groups usually consist of approximately 30-60 students, not including teachers and chaperones. We are reliant on hosting groups outside exposed to the sun for several hours, which has been challenging for groups.

One of the priority goals of the Refuge is to establish consistent relationships with local schools to be able to bring classrooms to the refuge to provide students (K-12) with outdoor experiences to enhance classroom education. While on the Refuge, students gain environmental education in a tidal wetland on the northern end of San Pablo Bay. Students have the opportunity to learn about native and non-native plants in tidal marsh habitats while having hands-on experience with controlling weeds and planting natives. This experience has benefited wildlife through establishment of wetland-upland transition zone habitat on the Refuge. We particularly support educational experiences grounded in the latest conservation science to address habitat loss, climate change, and sea level rise.

We thank the Wildlife Conservation Board for this funding opportunity as the Friends of San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge work to support the Refuge's goal of providing environmental education to local school groups. Our programs not only accomplish habitat restoration for species, but also simultaneously introduces the Refuge as a place to achieve environmental education and interpretation.

We look forward to supporting and participating in the project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (707) 769-4200 or at don_brubaker@fws.gov. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Don Brubaker
Refuge Manager,
San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge