**Position Title:** CE Specialist in Wildlife-Human Interactions

**Position Description:** Statewide leadership is needed to research and extend strategies to reduce conflicts and promote synergies that support wildlife and residents in California. The vision for this position is to contribute to a more positive, sustainable relationship between wildlife and state residents. The Specialist will work with ANR, NGO, private, and public groups coping with wildlife management controversies in an increasingly fragmented landscape.

A Ph.D. in wildlife ecology, human dimensions of natural resource management, natural resource economics, natural resource ecology, social science, or related disciplines is required. The successful candidate will work closely with existing AES Faculty and CE Specialists in wildlife, range, forestry, fisheries, urban forestry, integrated pest management, watershed, and/or spatial sciences, including the statewide IGIS program among others. Research support is needed for Advisors in developing and extending information that leads to adoption of practices that reduce conflicts between people and wildlife.

**Justification:** How should Californians live with wildlife, given changes in land use, public priorities, climate change, and wildlife and human populations? Resurgences of carnivores, endangered species listings, expansion of wild and feral herbivore populations, and urban and suburban expansion have created conflicts and opportunities in working landscapes as well as urban and suburban communities throughout California. Widely different concepts of what is acceptable management coupled with diverse visions for wildlife-human co-existence make finding workable solutions complex and challenging. The position will support ANR Strategic Initiatives in Sustainable Food Systems and Sustainable Natural Ecosystems.

Deer populations are in decline on wildlands as habitat loss continues and traditional migration routes are increasingly blocked, as they flourish in suburban gardens. Growing numbers of Tule Elk, welcomed by some public groups, have been costly to the traditional organic dairies of the Pt. Reyes National Seashore. Coyote and mountain lion predation on livestock and pets, and risks to people, call for creative solutions, especially as wolf populations expand into the state. Endangered species designations provide a last line of defense for some species, yet create perverse incentives for landowners to eliminate habitat prior to listing to avoid regulation. Identifying, mapping, and conserving wildlife corridors, particularly for migratory ungulates like elk, deer, and pronghorn, is a major new focus of the federal government throughout the West, yet corridors, by their nature, create borders between human communities and wildlife populations that can increase proximal conflicts. Strategies for reducing and mitigating conflicts would not only contribute to range and forest livelihoods, and land and habitat conservation, but to the efforts of public land managers and NGOs to promote wildlife conservation and manage wildlife in the state. There is no better organization than UCCE to work on these complex issues, as it is widely trusted by stakeholders and occupies a neutral position in these controversies.

**Extension:** This position would provide research and outreach support for advisors statewide in addressing wildlife and human inter-relationships. Of particular concern is the need for a landscape level, cross-boundary approach. The Specialist will work to develop networks of producers, agency managers, and other stakeholders and bring them together to develop sustainable solutions.

**Research:** The position would ideally be filled by a candidate who could develop a transdisciplinary research program. This could include could be in social or ecological sciences, in rural and/or urban areas. Predator/prey dynamics, reintroduction, migration, and population dynamics are among the topics in wildlife ecology relevant to this position. Social science research on collaboration processes, conflict resolution, and communications are also relevant. Spatial analysis and large datasets could be used to assess needs and opportunities, and to understand patterns of migration and interaction between wildlife and human activities. Research should emphasize collaboration with CE Advisors, lead to peer-reviewed publications and grants, and contribute to Advisor outreach needs.

**Location & ANR Network:** This position would augment ANR's capacity in wildlife-related work by augmenting a gap in current capacity. Current Advisor/Specialist capacity in wildlife-human interactions includes Dr. Baldwin (Davis), and Advisor Quinn (Orange Co.). Their research and extension focuses towards integrated pest management approaches. This position will focus on addressing contentious public issues related to management and ecology of wildlife populations especially in cases where pest control efforts are generally not a feasible option (wolves, horses, elk, mountain lions), yet lead to significant public outcry and involvement.

The candidate would develop a statewide program that includes working with Advisors that have identified wildlife issues of interest such as Dr. Larson (Sonoma), Advisor Snell (Modoc), Advisor Barry (Santa Clara), Advisor Lile (Lassen), Advisor Stackhouse (Humboldt), and likely many others. The position would augment and integrate with research by faculty across UC that is in need of extension including: wildlife ecology (Drs. Brashares, Middleton, Sollman & Beissinger), rangeland ecology & management (Drs. Macaulay, Roche, Tate & Huntsinger), watershed and fisheries (Drs. Grantham & Carlson), forestry (Drs. Axelson, Battles, & Stewart), spatial analysis and ecology (Drs. Kelly and Butsic). The candidate would engage with Research & Extension Centers such as Hopland and Sierra Foothills.

**Network External to ANR:** The Specialist would interact with state agencies and institutions (e.g., California Department of Food and Agriculture [CDFA], California Department of Fish and Wildlife [CDFW], California Department of Pesticide Regulation [CDPR], California Department of Public Health [CDPH], California State University [CSU]). Land Trusts like The Nature Conservancy, California Rangeland Trust, Tejon Ranch Conservancy, and Catalina Island Conservancy all experience wildlife management issues and seek expertise and research-based information. Producer groups like the California Cattlemen's Association, wildlife conservation groups, and landowners will connect with this position.

**Support:** UC Berkeley’s Department of ESPM will provide standard support for the position.

**Other support:** There is potential for cost-share funding by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife. Competitive funding opportunities are available through the federal agencies such as the National Science Foundation, Federal and Regional IPM grants, CDFA grants, NSF, NIFA, the CDFA Vertebrate Pest Control Research Advisory Committee, and non-profits such as the American Museum of Natural History, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Animal Welfare Institute, and the Summerlee Foundation.

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