



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
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Memorandum

To: Henri R. Bisson, District Manager, California Desert District,
Bureau of Land Management

From: Gail C. Kobetich
Field Supervisor

Subject: March AFB Lands - Conditions for Removing from Consideration in
Long-Term SKR HCP

For the past 5 years the Service has considered the open space on March AFB as critical to the establishment of a viable, long-term SKR reserve system in western Riverside County. If the 2,200 acres at March AFB are removed from the currently proposed long-term SKR HCP, then the Service no longer has assurance of the survival and recovery of the species in the plan area.

If 1,200 acres of conserved open space were to be traded off on March AFB, namely, the lands not in the SKR Management Area and not adjacent to the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park, the Service would require in compensation:

- * 7,200 to 9,600 acres of wildlife habitat of value to an SKR core reserve should be acquired or otherwise conserved. If the monetary value of land around March AFB is as high as the Service has been assured by the RCHCA and the Executive Director of the March AFB Reuse Committee, then the exchange or sale of 1,200 acres of already conserved land on March AFB will finance both the acquisition of Lockheed Corporation properties in the Potrero basin and the Badlands and an additional core reserve in western Riverside County (eg. in Steele Peak, Vail Lake, Anza Valley, Norco Hills areas).
- * The Weapons Storage Facility, an island within the SKR Management Area, should become a part of the SKR Management Area. Steps should be taken to have structural improvements removed and the area restored to wildlife habitat.

If the 2,200 acres on March AFB were removed from consideration in the long-term SKR HCP, that is, if both the 1,000-acre SKR Management Area and the 1,200-acre conserved open space were traded off, then the Service would require in compensation:

- * Another core reserve of 2,510 acres with at least 1,360 acres of SKR-occupied habitat. In addition, there would be protected at least 1,200 acres of open space buffer and connectivity to at least 20,000 acres of open space with native wildlife habitat resources. Areas around Steele Peak, Vail Lake, Anza Valley, or Norco Hills might fulfill these criteria. Biological assessments should be undertaken to verify the distribution of SKR and the general biological diversity of potential core reserves.
- * An amount of \$3.0 million be set up in a non-wasting endowment to provide management and restoration/enhancement of SKR habitat and biological diversity in the comparable core reserve replacement.
- * The amount of \$2.7 million will be expended to ensure the establishment of connectivity either within or between the core reserves.
- * The acquisition of the Lockheed Corporation properties in the Potrero basin and the "Badlands" for the establishment of an additional SKR/multiple species reserve and connecting corridor.

The attached summary is intended to provide the background and context for the Service's position regarding the possible relinquishment of SKR lands on March AFB.

Gail C. Kobetich