



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
News Release

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BLM REAFFIRMS LAND EXCHANGE FOR GRASS VALLEY CREEK AND “AREA 51”

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has reaffirmed that a land exchange involving acquisition of lands in Trinity County and transfer of public lands west of Redding into private ownership is in full compliance with federal laws and regulations and is in the public interest.

BLM State Director Mike Pool made these determinations in letters dismissing the 19 public protests received to the BLM’s decision approving the exchange. That decision, approved by BLM Redding Field Manager Steve Anderson in April 2006, involves the exchange of 215 acres of public land near Victoria Drive (commonly known as “Area 51”) for approximately 566 acres of private land along Grass Valley Creek, a tributary of the Trinity River. BLM’s decision is now subject to appeal.

“After careful consideration of the points raised in each of the protest letters submitted to us, I have determined that proceeding with the exchange is in the best public interest,” Pool said. “The exchange conforms to the BLM’s Redding Resource Management Plan by helping to consolidate public lands into larger blocks. It also enables us to better manage the Grass Valley Creek watershed to reduce sediment flow into the Trinity River, critically important from a regional and national perspective.”

As required by BLM regulations, Pool said he reviewed each of the issues raised by protesters. He also examined the environmental assessment and other pertinent documents. “Full consideration was given to the resource values of both properties and the overall needs of the public, both locally and statewide. After weighing all these factors, I concluded that the overall public needs and objectives for this region are better served through the exchange.”

BLM’s decision document and environmental assessment, which details all the alternatives considered, including a local proposal for sale rather than exchange, are accessible online at www.blm.gov/redding. Those who feel they are adversely affected by this decision can appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals. An appeal notice must be filed within 30 days. Details on the appeal process are available from BLM in Sacramento (916) 978-4600 or Redding (530) 224-2100.