

Shasta Resources Council

Securing Old Shasta's Future

Senator Dianne Feinstein
One Post Street, Suite 2450
San Francisco, CA 94104

August 9, 2006

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein:

Subject: Area 51 Status
Renewed Request for Support and Intervention

Randall Hauser, *Chair*
Council Members

Lynn Aase
Doug Craig
Bruce Crom
Lang Dayton
Rick Lemler
Eric Ohde
Marc Pfister
Steve Schroth
Bill Siemer
Gloria Speigle
Jim Underwood
Susan Weale
Bryan Zollner

The BLM has again rebuffed our offer to purchase Area 51 for public use and preservation. It still stands and is both binding and funded. Instead, the BLM still appears determined to pass the land into the hands of a private speculator for no justifiable reason, destroying forever the possibility of keeping Area 51 in public ownership to be enjoyed for generations to come. We still feel there is hope that BLM State Director Mike Pool will change his position in the community's favor. However, in order for this to happen, we now need your help more than ever.

Our community, Old Shasta, is in Shasta County jurisdiction. The County has no funding or plan for the preservation of public natural park space in Old Shasta. Area 51 is at the heart of our community. Please see the accompanying map. Through acquisition of Area 51, the Shasta community is attempting to provide for its natural park, recreation, ecological protection, and heritage preservation needs on its own. Acquisition will make possible:

- Retention of an amazing 5.2-mile trail system built by the community. These trails are not only used for recreation, but provide an essential nexus for residents to bicycle to work and shopping/services.
- Protection of the Salt Creek watershed, the only yet-unspoiled anadromous fish habitat above Redding tributary to the Sacramento River. Salt Creek has been designated *critical habitat* by NOAA Fisheries.
- Protection of unique Gold Rush era historic resources.
- Reduced wildfire hazard through coordinated fuels management.
- Greater assurance of water availability to the community during droughts and wildfire.

Unless special permission is obtained, federal law requires that BLM share proceeds from direct sale with other federal agencies. Satisfying BLM stated policy as an agency to avoid such sharing by disposing of land only through trade effectively precludes direct purchase by any community seeking to reserve land for future public use. Also, denying the community the opportunity to preserve natural area it

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cherishes on the grounds that no other means are available to acquire particular lands that the agency wishes to obtain, such as the present Grass Valley Creek trade parcel, is completely unjust. Many means to achieve such acquisition are available to BLM that are not linked to Area 51 disposal.

We again implore you to support our cause and effort by requesting the BLM to work with us to develop a community acquisition alternative that is acceptable. We are prepared to pay full market value as reflected in the bona fide offer we submitted.

Please see our website at www.shastaresources.org for more background.

Sincerely,

Randall Hauser, Chair

cc: Shasta County Board of Supervisors
Record Searchlight