

SALT CREEK/AREA 51 BLM PARCELS HISTORY OF BLM RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY NEED

BLM Handbook says exchange proposals should address needs of the community. Countless and diverse requests to BLM to preserve the Shasta Co. parcels for public use have gone unheeded.

During the public review process prior to adoption of the 1993 BLM Management Plan, BLM received many comments and letters requesting that BLM holdings in the 299/Swasey Drive/Lower Springs triangle be retained. At least one, if not more alternatives considered for adoption, identified the parcels for retention. The adopted plan identified the parcels for disposal. Francis Berg represented BLM in this process and is aware of the comments. *Attached June 6, 1991 letter from Richard Yoder to BLM; June 8, 1991 letter from Susan Weale to BLM; September 10, 1992 BLM Notice of Realty Action; October 9, 1992 letter on NORA to BLM from Susan Weale.*

In March of 2002, a letter from Shasta Community Services District (SCSD) to BLM Field Office Mgr., Charles Schultz requesting meeting to discuss preservation of these Shasta County federal parcels went unanswered. *Attached March 27, 2002 letter to BLM from SCSD.*

May 2003 R&PP application to BLM Field Mgr. went unanswered. *Attached*

In the summer of 2003, a large number of letters were received by BLM and SCSD attesting to the high public value of the Shasta parcels in terms of the trail system and salmon and steelhead habitat. All went unanswered. *A sample of those letters (21) are attached and I request they, as well as the rest of the letters in BLM's possession received in 2003 related to preservation of the federal parcels be entered into the record as comments to this proposed exchange.*

August or early September 2003, BLM Field Mgr. Schultz agreed to meet with community representatives of SCSD, Trails and Bikeways Council of Greater Redding, Calif. Department of Fish and Game, National Fish and Wildlife Services and area residents at BLM offices. May 2003 R&PP application was discussed. BLM gave no formal response to R&PP proposal following the meeting.

After the above 2003 meeting, I (Susan Weale) was informed by Susie Rodriguez, Realty Specialist, that because BLM had entered into discussions with Mr. Rice a short time before it received R&PP application from SCSD, BLM "had" to complete negotiations with Mr. Rice and only if trade did not go through could BLM consider SCSD application. While the SCSD/TBC R&PP application was not technically an exchange proposal, BLM's own land exchange handbook states in Chapter 6(C), "Where you receive two exchange proposals for the same Federal lands, consider the public interests served by each proposal in the environmental document. This consideration will allow BLM to determine the proposal with the greatest public interest".

A May 2004 SCSD letter to new Redding BLM Field Office Manager, Steve Anderson, requesting meeting to discuss BLM property went unanswered. *Attached letter to BLM from SCSD.*

June 29, 2004 Redding Field Manager attended Redding Trails and Bikeways Council meeting to discuss continued access to the public trail system on the Shasta Co. BLM parcels and protection of anadromous fish habitat. Steve Anderson said he “considered the Recreation and Public Purposes Act to be obsolete” and under no circumstances would he process an application under the act. *Attached June 29, 2004 TBC minutes.*

Sept. 2004 BLM letter from Francis Berg to U.S. Rep. Herger states Shasta parcel trails do not connect to any system of trails and parcel is “expected to contain little resource value”. *Attached September 16, 2002 letter to Mr. David Meurer from BLM.*

BLM has received sufficient documentation supporting the high resource and recreational value of these federal parcels.

Feb. 1, 2005 RAC Field Trip to Salt Creek and Area 51

BLM omitted a scheduled stop at Highway 299W Salt Creek; drove past waiting group of citizens interested in discussing fisheries and observing salmon and steelhead in the creek.

At Victoria Drive stop, BLM quickly escorted RAC along water line easement to waiting cars, saying it “didn’t have time” to observe the creek and the network of trails the public considers worthy of preserving.

Feb. 2, 2005 BLM RAC Meeting

RAC discussion encouraged BLM to include interested citizens in crafting an alternative to be included in the EA. RAC also discussed that NEPA requires a reasonable range of alternatives be considered. Per BLM Summary of Meeting Minutes, Feb.1-2, 2005, Redding, CA: “Don suggested that the RAC members receive the Victoria Drive exchange EA prior to the next meeting (Charlie said it will be in draft form by March), and comment at the next meeting” and “Philip encouraged Steve to keep the community input in mind and the possible tools that would be used to respect the community input received today. He would like to see the BLM respond to community concern and input” and “Ryan suggested that BLM create a citizens alternative for analysis in the EA” and “Michael suggested a resolution advising the BLM to consider the public issues raised, particularly the trails, fisheries and other issues” and “Don summarized that the RAC agrees that the BLM needs to listen to the community and the surrounding property owners. The BLM should listen to the issues raised and try to find ways to address them.”

March 9, 2005

In response to email from Lang Dayton representing the Trails and Bikeways Council requesting to meet (along with other community representatives) to discuss options for trails and watershed protections, BLM's email response was: "Thank you for your response Lang, After considering your email, Joe Rice has decided to withdraw from the meeting. Mr. Rice will determine if other meetings will be necessary and will schedule those meetings on his own. Susie Rodriguez, Realty Specialist, Redding Field Office"

March 16, 2005

Randy Hauser, representing Shasta Resources Council, delivered written proposed alternative to Rice trade to Redding BLM office at approximately 4:00 PM. He was told Steve Anderson was "off the clock" and would not come to the front counter to meet Randy.

March 25, 2005

In a phone conversation with Randy Hauser, Steve Anderson said he was not and would not be available in the coming weeks to meet with community representatives requesting meaningful conversation with BLM on proposed alternatives. Steve Anderson also stated he will be issuing a Record of Decision "next week" prior to leaving town.