

# SHASTA RESOURCES COUNCIL

*Securing Old Shasta's Future*

March 30, 2005

Steve Anderson, Manager  
Bureau of Land Management  
355 Hemsted Drive  
Redding, CA 96002

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Subject: Accommodation of Community Acquisition Proposal

This is to inform you that our proposal to acquire BLM land submitted March 14, 2005, was not intended to be complete as you have inferred. Your offer to provide a formalistic written rebuttal at this time would therefore be premature. We are working as diligently and rapidly as possible to refine it for the purpose of formal consideration.

The present state of our proposal is due fundamentally to the fact that the BLM has declined to contact community organizations or members in response to previous proposals, offers, or initiatives, including our present proposal, for the purpose of offering any guidance and support. Had there been any past outreach on your part, earlier community initiatives could have evolved into the eminently viable and responsible acquisition proposal now before you. We understand from your staff that you have not provided direction for them to work with the community toward developing local proposals, but have directed staff to treat land speculators, such as Mr. Rice, as clients, with whom constant communication and coordination is to be maintained. Your refusal to meaningfully communicate with community members, that is, the public your agency is mandated to serve, has been the principal cause of any lag in our proposal's maturity. It is difficult to conceive how the BLM can possibly make a land use decision that is in the best interests of the public, as required by law, when the BLM refuses to legitimately consider an alternative proposal from the community directly affected by the proposed exchange.

The purpose of our requested meeting (letter of 3/25/05) is not only to inform you of more details regarding our proposal, but to set forth a schedule of essential strategic meetings between your staff and key SRC committees responsible for specifics. These include:

- 1) **An accurate map and inventory of BLM parcels.** The map of holdings available for disposal in the Old Shasta area provided by your staff, at our request, is very inaccurate and out of date. The SRC mapping committee has been compelled to create its own map to properly identify and evaluate parcels for acquisition. In our preliminary March 15 proposal, we requested annotation of the map we provided, in order for the BLM to definitively show the parcels available for disposal. To date, your office has provided no such annotation.

- 2) **A definitive delineation of land areas wherein the BLM wishes to acquire parcels for conservation.** Thus far, the maps to which we have been directed on the Internet are very coarse and the target conservation areas are ill-defined. Further guidance and details from BLM staff will be necessary for our exchange parcel acquisition committee to progress.
- 3) **A full accounting of fire access easements and BLM fuels management efforts/funding committed with respect to Old Shasta disposal parcels.** This will be necessary in order to define a complete budget for CFD funding and to insure proper transfer of stewardship for the land. An initial meeting with your staff, arranged by our fire safe committee resulted in some progress. However, substantially more needs to be done.
- 4) **A clear picture of steps, costs, and pro forma documentation necessary to consummate the exchange or purchase, as may be appropriate.** This will be crucial to our budget committee responsible for assembling funds to facilitate activities prior to CFD formation. Close coordination of steps will be essential to ensure a smooth and timely process.
- 5) **Trust sale option.** We understand that sale through a trust fund is allowed under present BLM policy. This would allow our transaction to conclude far more rapidly. It is crucial that the SRC be informed of this option.

In closing, we reiterate that we, the affected community, should be given a fair opportunity, if not priority consideration, when it comes to the exchange of public lands. Conservation and continued public use as determined by the host community is the superior alternative by all measures for which America stands. This is particularly true when the host community is offering to pay for the land, and to do so consistent with monetary values already established by the BLM.

We are asking the BLM to agree to defer issuing a decision on the proposed Rice land exchange for six months, to allow the SRC reasonable time to develop specific funding and acquisition arrangements for our alternative proposal. The SRC's securing of funding must follow an agreement by the BLM to pause the exchange process, as there is certainly no use in seeking funding for a proposal that will not be considered.

It is our sincere hope that, from this point, we can move forward in a productive and cooperative relationship with the BLM, one in which unwarranted truncation and restriction of constructive dialogue with community members will not be the norm.

Sincerely,

Randall Hauser, AICP  
Chair

c. Congressman Wally Herger  
Senator Barbara Boxer  
Senator Dianne Feinstein  
Supervisor Mark Cibula  
Supervisor David Kehoe  
Mike Pool, State Director, BLM