



6412 Clear View Drive • Anderson, CA 96007 • www.reddingtrailsandbikeways.org

Mr. Steven W. Anderson, Field Manager
Redding Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
355 Hemsted Drive
Redding, CA 96002

March 31, 2005

RE: Proposed BLM Area 51 Land Exchange

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Trails and Bikeways Council (**TBC**) members have reviewed an alternative land exchange proposal regarding Area 51 from the Shasta Resources Council (**SRC**) that was recently delivered to your office. The TBC enthusiastically supports this proposal because it guarantees protection of Area 51 assets of great public worth including:

- The Upper Salt Creek watershed, a pristine spawning stream for trout and anadromous fish, bordered by a well-preserved greenbelt.
- An extensive Area 51 trail system constructed by volunteer labor that has enjoyed decades of implied public use and which has the potential to become an integral part of a much larger trail system located between Mary Lake, the Sacramento River Trail, and the Whiskeytown National Recreation Area.
- Historic artifacts, primarily miles of 1850-era water ditches once used for gold mining and which are currently being preserved by being incorporated into the Area 51 trail system. They would be a valuable addition to the community of Shasta which has had a longstanding and strong tradition of historic preservation.

The TBC has clearly stated to both the BLM Field Office and to Mr. Joe Rice, who intends to acquire and develop the Area 51 parcel, that these assets should be preserved and become an integral part of any future development of the parcel.

Please carefully review and strongly consider the SRC proposal. We believe that both the BLM and greater Redding area will be well served if the SRC acquires Area 51 in trade.

Over ten years ago the BLM was about to conclude a similar land trade with a developer on land west of Redding that is in walking distance of Area 51. It contained miles of Clear Creek Ditch and informal trails with spectacular views. Local citizens, including current

TBC members, concerned that the community was in danger of losing a great asset, appealed to the staff of BLM Redding Field Office. The visionary collaboration between BLM, local government agencies, and private citizens that followed led to the development of the Westside Trail, a crown jewel of a growing world-class community trail system. The entire area benefited immensely from this cooperative effort. In addition, by building a public trail system within a new residential subdivision, it created a new model of development that will soon be duplicated on Foxwood Estates a nearby planned subdivision on land also acquired from the BLM. The developer of Foxwood Estates, Signature Northwest, is willing to create a direct trail link between Area 51 and the Westside Trail. An Area 51 land exchange conducted in the spirit that existed ten years ago that takes meaningful public input into account can offer a similar opportunity to conserve and enhance those attributes that make this area a great place to live. There is an opportunity for a classic win-win scenario here. The TBC has also stated its willingness to work with all interested parties to achieve this worthwhile goal for the common good.

To date, despite our asking for it, we have received no assurances from either the BLM or from Mr. Rice that any protection of these Area 51 assets (necessary for TBC support of the exchange) is included as a condition of the proposed exchange. Mr. Rice's unwillingness to attend a meeting that Suzie Rodriguez tried to schedule with us to discuss these issues suggests that it is not. The TBC will vigorously support the proposed SRC exchange which we believe will greatly benefit both the citizens of Shasta County and the BLM. The TBC intends to join a broad and dedicated coalition of concerned citizens who will vigorously oppose the BLM proceeding with the Rice land exchange if this assurance that these Area 51 assets will be protected is not forthcoming.

Sincerely yours,

Lang M. Dayton, Board Member
Trails and Bikeways Council of Greater Redding

C: Suzie Rodriguez, Redding BLM Field Office
C: Francis Berg, Redding BLM Field Office
C: Shasta Resources Council
C: Paul Edgren, Signature-Northwest
C: Mark Cibula, Shasta County Supervisor
C: David Kehoe, Shasta County Supervisor
C: Bill Walker, Sr. Planner, Shasta County
C: Shasta Community Services District
C: Redding Record Searchlight.
C: Shasta Coalition for the Preservation of Public Land
C: Senator Barbara Boxer
C: Office of Senator Diane Feinstein, Jim Molinare, State
C: Mike Poole, State Director, BLM, California State Office
C: BLM Northwest Resource Advisory Council, c/o Jeff Fontana, Public Affairs Specialist