

Briefing Statement

Date: October 7, 2003

Title: San Sebastian Marsh-San Felipe Creek Watershed Restoration

Background:

The San Sebastian Marsh San Felipe Creek Watershed (Watershed) is composed of about 700,000 acres in Imperial and San Diego Counties. El Centro Field Office (ECFO), Anza Borrego Desert State Park (ABDSP), Ocotillo Well State Vehicular Recreation Area (OWSVRA), and California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) primarily manage the lands within watershed. Private lands and military lands also exist within the Watershed. Eight listed species of wildlife reside in the Watershed, as do three special status plants.

Salt cedar chokes many of the drainages, marshes, and riparian zones within the Watershed. The goals of the Watershed restoration project are to control salt cedar and other invasive species and to acquire key parcels of land within the Watershed. Each agency is currently working towards these goals but there is no coordinate effort and no formalized agreement.

Update:

ECFO and ABDSP have been working with the DMG restoration coordinator to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that formalizes existing practices between the two agencies. The MOU also formalizes both short and long-term planning processes so that restoration can be better coordinated. The draft statement of work states:

1. To develop and update coordinated, interagency work plans and budgets (both long [5-year] and short [annual] term plans) for implementation activities prescribed through this agreement. The work plans will address the following goals that the parties hold in common:
 - a. Natural resources inventory, monitoring and assessment;
 - b. Ecological restoration of damaged habitats and the reintroduction of native species, where feasible, within the watershed;
 - c. Land acquisition of private lands within the watershed from willing sellers, where practical and economically feasible;
 - d. Public education and outreach regarding the conservation of biological diversity and protection of cultural resources within the watershed.
2. To share resources, to the extent possible and practical, to implement the work plans developed through this agreement.
3. To seek funding through agency budget processes and to cooperate in the development of grant requests to implement annual and long-range plans developed under this agreement.
4. To prepare an annual report of accomplishments of restoration work, grants obtained, or other activities resulting from work plans developed as a result of this

agreement. This annual report will be used to heighten the awareness of, and highlight accomplishments to partners, grantors, and the public.

The draft MOU was presented to DFG staff and management last week. DFG supports the concept and would like to join ABDSP and ECFO in the MOU's development,

Issues:

1. Because this MOU involves two state park units and two DFG regions, it has been suggest that the MOU should be signed at the director/deputy director level instead of the office manager level.
2. Should GS and/or U.C. Davis enter into the MOU to provide a monitoring and research?
3. Should Carlsbad FWS enter into the MOU due to the large number of listed species?

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