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For Your Information

From

KIM MUELLER
Councilmember, District 6

1244 NINETEENTH STREET, N.W. WASHINGTON, DC 20036 (202) 696-9310 FAX (202) 613-3349

There is no justification for this requested delay. ART indicates that this substantial delay should not harm this refuge. In fact, a substantial further delay of this nature could do great damage to this refuge, particularly with respect to persuading congress to appropriate the \$1,749,000 in the Bush Administration's FY 1993 budget for an Interior Appropriation from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to initiate acquisitions for this refuge. Congress is understandably reluctant to provide funds for any refuges which are not finished with National Environmental Policy Act review and legally established. This reluctance may be amplified this year because of the extreme level of competition for funds among many worthwhile and available refuge acquisitions around the nation. Thus, granting this delay could signal congress that there is no compelling need for these funds which, of course, is not the case.

Please reject the American Farmland Trust's (AFT) June 1st request that you grant a 90-day extension in the minimum waiting period before the Record of Decision can be signed which legally establishes the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in southern Sacramento County, California.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

RE: Opposition to the American Farmland Trust's request for a 90-day delay in establishing the proposed Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge.

The Honorable Manuel Lujan, Jr.
 Secretary of the Interior
 U.S. Department of the Interior
 1849 C Street, NW
 Washington, DC 20240

June 10, 1992

Rodger Schellman
President



COPY

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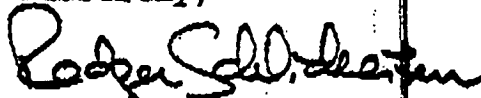
In addition, it is alleged that the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) which was recently released is not adequate vis-a-vis an analysis of the potential role of an AFT/North Delta Conservancy partnership to protect both agricultural and habitat lands within the proposed refuge boundaries. We disagree, and we believe that the FEIS is very comprehensive and adequate in this and all other relevant respects. The North Delta Conservancy has been promising for about a year to provide information on its resources and specific objectives. To the best of our knowledge, this has not yet been done with any level of detail or certainty. FWS could not provide any more detailed analysis of the North Delta Conservancy in the FEIS given the absence of available information to do so. However, FWS has provided enough flexibility in the FEIS to accommodate working with the North Delta Conservancy if and when this becomes possible. Even if this requested delay is granted, there is no guarantee that FWS could do more than it has already done in addressing this subject.

Finally, FWS has a long history of granting both procedural and substantive concessions to opponents of this proposed refuge. Last year during the comment period on the Draft EIS, FWS granted two extensions to give more time for comments, and also scheduled additional public hearings. Moreover, FWS announced major concessions last December which significantly reduced the size of this proposed refuge, and addressed myriad concerns such as recreational boating, agricultural lands, condemnation, and mosquito abatement. In light of this record of concessions and compromise by FWS, we hope that you share our position that granting yet another delay would serve no tangible purpose while jeopardizing this refuge's prospects for FY 1993 funding.

Please reject the AFT request for a 90-day delay in establishing the Stone Lakes Refuge.

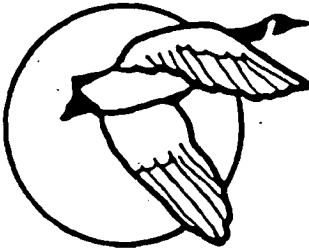
Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rodger Schlickeisen
President

cc: John Turner
Ralph Grossi
Douglas Wheeler
Interested Parties



STONE LAKES REFUGE ALLIANCE

1823 11th STREET, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

June 17, 1992

*agenda
item
(last Wed.)*

Sacramento Audubon
ECOS
Sierra Club
Friends of the River
Sacramento River Preservation Trust
Central Valley Waterfowl Committee
Stockton Audubon
Davis Audubon
Urban Creeks Council
Sacramento Valley Institute
Defenders of Wildlife

Illa Collin
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors

Dear Supervisor Collin:

Our community has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to foster a unique wildlife refuge in our backyard.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has identified the Stone Lakes area as having some of the highest wildlife values in the country. The final environmental impact statement for the proposed Refuge has just been completed. While its proposals are not perfect, they do protect the very special wildlife values in the area. And, as part of the compromise language in the final impact statement, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service increased by 2000 acres the area to be cooperatively managed under easements with local farmers.

The final EIS is a win-win for environmentalists and farmers. Those farmers who want to continue to farm can do so. At the same time the community gains the protection of valuable open space and prime wildlife habitat in an area which otherwise would face development pressures.

Unfortunately, some local landowners have been lobbying hard to gut the refuge. Their proposal for a 90 day delay, which is before you today, is only the last in a long line of threatening and delaying tactics. Tactics which cloak the search for maximum real estate profits in a farming argument.

There are thousands of acres of farmland, thousands of acres of housing in our community. But there are no wildlife refuges. We believe it is important the Sacramento Board of Supervisors come out strongly for this Refuge now and not consider any further delays.

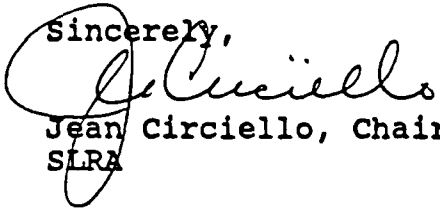
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Public comments are an integral part of the environmental impact statement process. In fact the comment period on the draft EIS on this project was extended twice to allow full opportunity for comments. Any comments or suggestions should have been made during the 150-day comment period. In fact, the American Farmland Trust (AFT) offered no written comments on the draft EIS.

Farmland is being developed for housing every day in Sacramento. If local landowners feel so strongly about the conversion of farmland, why are they not requesting 90-day delays on any other proposed new developments?

There has been much in the press recently about the need for each generation to add to the legacy it receives from its ancestors. We were given a wonderful gift in the American River Parkway. Let us make the Stone Lakes Wildlife Refuge our contribution. We urge you to oppose this proposal.

Sincerely,


Jean Circiello, Chair,
SLRA



Mike Eaton,
SLRA



American Farmland Trust

Resolution No. 92-11

North Delta Conservancy Alternative Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

Whereas, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is seeking to preserve and restore a portion of the wetland-grassland communities of the Central Valley of California through the establishment of the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in south Sacramento County; and,

Whereas, the North Delta Conservancy (NDC) with the assistance of the American Farmland Trust (AFT) has offered an innovative public/private partnership alternative utilizing permanent conservation easements and conservation management plans emphasizing sustainable agricultural practices, and wildlife habitat management and enhancement; and,

Whereas, the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) issued by USFWS May 15, 1992 does not adequately address the viability of the NDC alternative nor the substantial fiscal advantages of land south of Hood-Franklin Road being protected under terms of conservation easements and wildlife management programs carried out by NDC in cooperation with USFWS; and,

Whereas, the EIS does not adequately address the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) and the NDC alternative provides the opportunity to demonstrate the intent of FPPA, i.e., accomplishing important public objectives while minimizing costs and agricultural impacts; and,

Whereas, AFT seeks the opportunity to work with NDC, USFWS, and State and County agencies to achieve wildlife habitat preservation and enhancement, while also protecting the productivity of unique and prime farmland, as well as the economic viability and cultural heritage of the Sacramento River Delta; and,

Whereas, USFWS acquisition funds are part of the proposed FY 1993 federal budget and not available in any event prior to October 1, 1992;

Now, Therefore Be it Resolved, that the Board of Directors of the American Farmland Trust urges the Honorable Manuel Lujan, Jr., Secretary of the Interior, to grant a 90-day extension in the minimum waiting period prior to a final decision regarding establishment of the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and that said final decision not be made prior to September 18, 1992.

Adopted this 1st day of June, 1992, at Washington, D.C.

Attest

Assistant Secretary

NATIONAL OFFICE
1920 N Street, NW Suite 400 Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel: (202) 659-5170 Fax: (202) 659-8339





American Farmland Trust

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APRIL 1992

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John Winthrop
Charleston, South Carolina

NATIONAL OFFICE

1920 N Street, NW Suite 400 Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel: (202) 659-5170 Fax: (202) 659-8339



SCDPR-owned land in the refuge includes over 2,000 acres surrounding North Stone Lake. The DPR owns the 500-acre parcel that comprises the lake and shore areas. The DPR parcel is managed by the SCDPR under an MOU.

The SCDPR recently completed a draft master plan for the county refuge that has targeted several hundred acres of annual grassland for conversion to wetlands, riparian forest, or perennial grassland. An environmental education and visitor complex and public access trails are planned for the northern portions of the refuge. Permitted public uses will most likely be passive recreation, nonmotorized boating, and wildlife viewing. Public access will be restricted as necessary to protect major wildlife breeding populations, particularly waterbird species.

The south arm of North Stone Lake supports an important heron, egret, and cormorant rookery. The giant garter snake, state listed as threatened and a federal candidate species, has been observed at the lake edge. Pelicans and cormorants forage in the lake and wintering waterfowl use the lake as a loafing area. Spring waterfowl may nest in the irrigated pasture west of the lake. In 1989, the SCDPR terminated the commercial grazing and pasture lease; this management decision is intended to promote natural regeneration of riparian forest and scrub along the shoreline of the lake and the SPRR canal on the western boundary.

This analysis assumes that the North Stone Lake Wildlife Refuge (approximately 2,747 acres) would be included in the Stone Lakes NWR under Alternatives B, C, C, D, E, and the Mitigated Preferred Alternative. The county refuge would be managed under an MOU between USFWS and the SCDPR. The SCDPR would retain ownership and primary management responsibility for the North Stone Lake Wildlife Refuge.

Other Areas of Interest to SCDPR. The SCDPR is interested in acquiring additional lands in the Stone Lakes study area. The SCDPR's objectives include promoting habitat protection and restoration, passive outdoor recreation, wildlife management, and nature education. Additional lands acquired by the SCDPR could also be included in the Stone Lakes NWR and managed cooperatively under an MOU.

The two areas of primary interest to the SCDPR within the study area are lands between the Buffer Lands and the North Stone Lake Wildlife Refuge and lands along the lower Cosumnes River corridor (Andal pers. comm.). Areas of interest north of the county wildlife refuge are the Camray and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) properties; these properties are described in following sections.

Most of these lands are privately owned, and they contain some of the most important remaining natural habitat and open space areas south of the city limits of Sacramento. Fee title acquisitions, easements, land exchanges, and mitigation site donations would all be employed to achieve the SRCSD's goals and objectives. Acquisition by the SCDPR of land in fee title would be from willing sellers only (Imai pers. comm.).



**CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO**

700 H STREET, SUITE 2450 • SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

C. TOBIAS (Toby) JOHNSON
SUPERVISOR, FIFTH DISTRICT
(916) 440-5465
FAX (916) 440-7593

June 17, 1992 :

The Honorable Manual Lujan, Jr.
Secretary, U. S. Department of Interior
18th & "C" Streets, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Secretary Lujan:

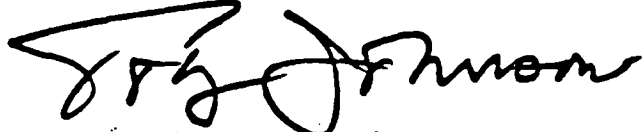
The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, requests a ninety day extension of the comment period on the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge located in South Sacramento County. We make this request for the following reasons:

1. On July 24, 1990, this Board granted the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) \$20,000.00 to conduct a study on Stone Lakes. At that time, the USFWS represented that they would be back before the Board for a final consideration of the proposal before a decision was made on the proposed refuge. To date this has not occurred. This ninety day extension would give the USFWS an opportunity to live up to their commitment.
2. The original thirty day time period is too short for all interested parties to fully review the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in a meaningful way. Due to mailing procedures, a number of people have stated they did not receive the FEIS until as late as ten days after it was released. The extension of the review period would give everyone adequate time to review the document.
3. The North Delta Conservancy organization is a program that merits careful examination. During the extension period, the Conservancy will be provided an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to address the USFWS with regard to the South Stone Lake proposal.

The Honorable Manual Lujan, Jr.
June 17, 1992
Page 2

During a period of major budget concerns it is well for local, state and federal levels of government to consider opportunities to lessen the burden of fiscal expenditures if possible to the public. The concept of public/private solutions to issues such as Stone Lakes has wide support in Sacramento County. The Board of Supervisors is very supportive of the establishment of a wildlife refuge north of Hood-Franklin Road and is anxious to see the project go forward. It is our opinion a ninety day extension, to September 19, 1992, is both reasonable and appropriate given the concerns as expressed in this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Toby Johnson', written in a cursive style.

Toby Johnson, Chairman
Board of Supervisors

TJ:smf

cc: Marvin Plenart
John Turner

Super. St. Collins



**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**



**RECREATION & PARK
AND
FISH & GAME
COMMISSION**

GENE W. ANDAL
Director

RICK CARUNCHIO
Assistant Director

RON SUTER
Chief, Administration and
Leisure Services

ROY IMAI
Chief, Planning & Development

GEORGE DUPRAY
Chairman

June 12, 1992

ROBERT J. BASTIAN
ANN KOHL
ANN STEVENS
DR. A.C. UBALDE, JR.

Mr. Peter Jerome
Refuge Manager
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1133 Watt Avenue, Suite 365
Sacramento, CA 95825

**COUNTY SERVICE
AREAS**

#4B Wilton/Cosumnes
#4C Delta
#4D Herald

Dear Mr. Jerome:

**RE: COMMENTS TO FINAL EIS FOR
STONE LAKES NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

This letter is sent to clarify a statement in the Final EIS, page 3A-16, last sentence on the bottom of the page. The sentence reads....."Acquisition by the SCDPR of land in fee title would be from willing sellers only (Imai pers, comm.)".

While it is the general policy of the Department to deal with and acquire potential park and open space lands from willing sellers, the Department may at times be forced under dire circumstances to employ eminent domain proceeding to insure that vital public interests are protected.

In the case of the Sacramento County's North Stone Lake Wildlife Refuge, the presence of approximately eleven private inholdings within the designated boundary of our wildlife refuge is not acceptable. Many issues such as land use conflicts, incompatible activities impacting the refuge, protection of wildlife habitat, and control of public access will all be greatly affected if private inholdings are permitted within the boundary of the refuge. The County, therefore, has been negotiating in good faith with the various property owners to reach an acceptable purchase price for their property. Unfortunately, many property owners have unrealistically high expectations regarding the value of their property. Since the funds for these land purchases come from state grants, the County is, moreover, limited to paying no more than the appraised fair market value for these properties. In view of this impasse, even if the property owner is serious about selling, a third unbiased party is needed to arbitrate a settlement.

Manual Lujan
Secretary of Interior
[insert address]

Dear Secretary Lujan:

The City Council of the City of Sacramento recently learned that the Board of Supervisors for the County of Sacramento has written to you to request that the Fish and Wildlife Service delay for 90 days its planned adoption of a record of decision for the proposed Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. This request was made at the urging of refuge opponents, some or all of whom you may have heard from directly in the past. The City Council is disappointed by the County's request insofar as it implies that local support for a proposed refuge is "soft." Our overwhelming sense is that, except for a relative few vocal opponents, local support for the refuge is extremely strong.

The City Council therefore chose to write to you directly to state our belief that the Fish and Wildlife Service should not delay the adoption of the record of decision, and should proceed with the creation of a refuge as soon as is practicable. We understand that funding for a new refuge remains uncertain at this moment. The Department of Interior should have no doubt, however, that the vast majority of Sacramento area residents would welcome a refuge in southern Sacramento County. Such an amenity not only would be of great value for migratory waterfowl and other wildlife, but would also provide our children with an invaluable educational resource.

The opponents' request for a 90-day delay is simply another example of dilatory tactics. The American Farmland Trust, which requested the opportunity to "comment" on the project, has had more than ample time to express its views. If the organization chose not to participate in the NEPA process until now, it has only itself to blame.

Sincerely,