

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) would like to thank you for your continued support in this process of improving and managing the San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA). We believe that all three points in your letter are tied to one larger issue, certification of the SJWA Land Management Plan (LMP) PEIR, which we expect to complete prior to the Wildlife Conservation Board Meeting on August 26th. Once the SJWA LMP and PEIR are signed and certified, then the effort and processes to resolve the issues of Renewal of the 1987 Reclaimed Water Contract with Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) and public access to Potrero Unit of SJWA will immediately commence.

Our goal is to renew the SJWA long-term contract and continue our partnership with EMWD to provide the essential water which is the lifeline of the Wildlife Area. On August 18, 1987, CDFW and EMWD entered into an agreement to complete a cooperative project for the construction and operation of a recycled water conveyance system consisting of approximately 53,000 feet of pipeline and appurtenant facilities to provide a water source for both the wildlife habitat on the SJWA and areas adjacent to the pipeline (the San Jacinto Wildlife Area Recycled Water Supply Project Agreement, referred to as the "Agreement"). The 11-mile pipeline, originating at EMWD's Hemet/San Jacinto Regional Water Reclamation Facility, was completed in January 1990. In return for partially funding the pipeline, CDFW received, at a reduced cost, an initial amount of 1,500 acre-feet of recycled water each year, increasing to a maximum of 4,500 acre-feet per year in 1999–2000 and lasting the duration of the initial term of the Agreement (CDFG and EMWD 1987). Section F of the Agreement provided that while the term of the Agreement was 25 years, providing water for the SJWA was expected to be a long-term, mutually beneficial program for both EMWD and CDFW. The program was always expected to result in the production of valuable wildlife habitat that would support resident and migratory populations of wildlife and provide long-term benefits to the public. All parties understood that wildlife populations and public benefits would become dependent upon habitat supported by the recycled water delivery program. Consistent with these expectations, CDFW and EMWD will soon begin negotiating the terms for continued delivery of recycled water to the San Jacinto Wildlife Area into the future.

CDFW has prepared the LMP to help guide its future planning and management operations for the SJWA. The general purpose of the SJWA is to protect and enhance habitat for wildlife species and to provide the public with compatible, wildlife-related recreational uses. The existing operation of the SJWA includes public uses, which are incorporated into the draft LMP. Public uses that would continue to be permitted under the draft LMP include waterfowl and upland small game hunting, bird watching, hiking, hunting dog training, fishing, horseback riding, nature study, photography, and mountain biking.

Also, as our LMP comes to completion, we are excited to see public participation and utilization at the Potrero Unit. You have been fortunate enough to be part of the preliminary public opportunity involved with this near transition. Thank you again for your continued support and we look forward to seeing more public interaction as we proceed.