



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

California/Nevada Operations Office
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2606
Sacramento, California 95825-0509

JUN 27 2003

Mr. Dan Ray
California Bay-Delta Authority
650 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, California 95616

Re: CALFED ERP Project # 171DA – Chico Landing Sub-Reach

Dear Mr. Ray:

We strongly urge you to reconsider the decision to not fund the restoration component of the Sacramento River Restoration – Chico Landing Sub-Reach project. The implementation of this project will greatly improve public trust resources along the Sacramento River and have system-wide ecosystem benefits. Accordingly, timely funding is vital to both the restoration of these units and to meeting the objectives outlined in the CALFED Record of Decision.

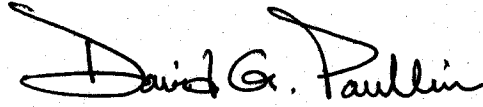
For informational purposes, please note that three of these properties, Capay (aka Kaiser), Dead Man's Reach (aka Koehnen), and RX Ranch, were purchased for conservation purposes using CALFED funding (CALFED 97-NO-2). In addition, two of the units, the Capay Unit (550 acres purchased on 2/26/99) and the Dead Man's Reach Unit (238 acres purchased on 8/12/99) are Federal property included within the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge. These units will be managed in perpetuity for wildlife conservation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Accordingly, further delays in funding the restoration also impact potential public access opportunities on the Refuge.

Regarding the issue of environmental compliance, please note that the restoration and enhancement of these units (except the RX Ranch) was evaluated via the NEPA process. An environmental assessment was developed and circulated for public review on May 17, 2001. The document was sent to the State Clearinghouse for distribution to State agencies. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service received only five comment letters from other agencies and non-profit groups. All comments were reviewed and the documents were modified to address the concerns. The issue of farmland conversion was discussed and evaluated in the documents. Based on the analysis in the environmental assessment and associated documents, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was determined and approved.

In summary, The Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have a proven track record of producing high quality riparian restoration projects along the Sacramento River. As an implementing agency for CALFED, we strongly encourage you to support the funding of habitat restoration on properties that are already within conservation ownership.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please call Kevin Foerster at (530) 934-2801.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David G. Paulin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D".

Acting Manager

cc:

Manager, Sacramento NWRC, Willows, CA
