

Armand Gonzales
California Dep't of Fish and Wildlife
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1341-B
Sacramento, CA 95814

Richard & Susie Snedden
P.O. Box 129
Maricopa, CA 93252

December 4, 2013

Dear Mr. Gonzales,

The following are our comments in response to the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) proposal.

We are private property owners and long-time cattle ranchers. We attended the SWAP scoping meeting in San Luis Obispo on October 25, 2013, and expressed to you our primary concern that the SWAP plan should include no authorization to manage, attempt to manage, or regulate the private use of private property. We were glad to hear you respond that, "we have no authority to go onto private land or dictate how owners manage their land." The preliminary document's reference to managing at "ecosystem scale" should be clarified so that it applies only to that property where CDF&W has jurisdiction. We respectfully request that you make certain that is clearly expressed in a final document.

If the CDF&W receives the desired SWAP federal funding, we recommend that the money be spent towards:

Control of the mountain lion population – lion numbers have compounded – they have moved out of their natural ranges and are causing predation losses and threats to human safety

Increasing rancher permits to address the Tule elk/ feral pig encroachment and ensuing damage to ranch infrastructures and forage


Expose and work to cease illegal marijuana grows / drug manufacturing on public lands that endanger the public, pose a wildfire threat and contaminate resources

Establish economically viable livestock grazing programs on CDF&W land so that catastrophic events like the Mt. Diablo fire can be avoided.

Sell CDF&W lands that are not being managed back into private ownership and prioritize management for the remaining CDF&W land

We respectfully request that you recognize livestock grazing as an essential habitat tool and not a threat. Livestock grazing is key in mitigating the potential for wildfires that can cause harm to life, air and property. Experts have also recognized that herding animals play a beneficial role in brittle environment stability and productivity. Cattle hooves break up and loosen crusted soils and trample down old plant parts, thereby creating mulch and an ideal seed bed, allowing water to penetrate. Cattle also fertilize the soil through deposits of urine and manure. Cattle grazing encourages plant diversity when cattle graze down the taller aggressive plants, preventing them from shading out and overpowering more vulnerable plants – diversity which benefits the wildlife in the biological chain. The Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge in southwest Kern County is a prime example of how the removal of cattle grazing has led to the establishment of a monoculture of plant life. A BLM biologist referred to it, fittingly, as "a weedy mess." It is appropriate to reference in your plan that *no-grazing* and/or *undergrazing* can have adverse impacts on wildlife and their essential needs.

Sincerely,


Richard Snedden


Susie Snedden