



DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov>

North Central Region

1701 Nimbus Road, Suite A

Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

(916) 358-2900



December 13, 2007

Mr. Scott Mende, New Growth Manager
City of Sacramento
915 I Street, New City Hall, Third Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814-2604

Mr. Robert Sherry, Planning Director
Sacramento County
Planning and Community Development Department
827 7th Street, Room 230
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Messrs. Mende and Sherry:

The purpose of this letter is to provide the City and County of Sacramento with a clearer understanding of the Department of Fish and Game's (Department) current position regarding Swainson's hawk foraging habitat mitigation for the growing number of projects being proposed within the Natomas Basin. Over the past two or so years, as we have been engaged with the City and County in their Joint Vision process, along with the discussion of numerous specific projects within the Basin, including Greenbriar, Sacramento Airport expansion, SAFCA levee protection, etc., both the Department and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service have consistently and repeatedly identified the impact of additional development within the basin as a major concern as it potentially affects the baseline values that were the foundation for the Natomas Basin HCP (NBHCP).

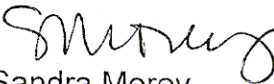
It has been and remains our position that the most effective mechanism for identifying how additional development can occur within the Basin while not negatively impacting (and in fact, hopefully enhancing) those original baseline values is through a process like Joint Vision. Without such a comprehensive assessment aimed at the entire area, it has become increasingly difficult to fully assess the long-term affects of currently proposed projects, especially as the number of those projects has increased. With respect to the Swainson's hawk, as you are aware, we have been repeatedly asked to support mitigation ratios that are less than current County policy and the policies of several permitting jurisdictions within the County and the region; policies that set the mitigation ratio for larger projects at one acre of mitigation for each acre of foraging habitat lost.

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After much discussion, both within the context of the Joint Vision meetings, meetings with Greenbriar, and internal meetings within the Department, we have come to the conclusion that until such time that the City and County can demonstrate through Joint Vision, or some other comprehensive process, that from a conservation perspective, the future of the Natomas Basin will likely be as good, or hopefully even better, than when the NBHCP was approved, that we cannot in good faith support mitigation at less than one acre for one acre for Swainson's hawk foraging habitat. While we understand the logic of considering mitigation that is focused on quality as much or more than quantity, there are simply too many uncertainties regarding the future condition and availability of the lands within the Basin to support anything less than an acre of mitigation for an acre of impact at this time.

If you have any questions regarding our concerns or position, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Kent Smith at (916) 358-2382 or ksmith@dfg.ca.gov, or Mr. Todd Gardner, Staff Environmental Scientist, at (209) 745-1968 or tgardner@dfg.ca.gov.

Sincerely,


Sandra Morey
Regional Manager

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