

# Fall River Resource Conservation District, Pit River Tribe, Shasta Land Trust, California State Parks, and Technical Advisory Committee

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fall River Resource Conservation District, the Pit River Tribe, and Shasta Land Trust submit this plan as a collaborative proposal to the Stewardship Council for the McArthur Swamp Planning Unit. In this proposal, the Fall River RCD will hold fee title. The Pit River Tribe will be a partner through MOU or other appropriate legal means. Shasta Land Trust will hold the conservation easements for both the fee title lands and the PG&E retained lands.

The Proposal includes a Management Team made up of the Fall River RCD, Pit River Tribe and a Technical Advisory Committee. The composition of the team insures a balance between local, cultural and general public interests. The team will manage the McArthur Swamp relying on what has already been learned about the property, what we can teach each other about responsible management of important resources, an adaptive approach, and clear protections in the form of conservation easements.

The Pit River Tribe and the FRRCD will each have a seat on the three-seat Management Team, with the third seat of that team occupied by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Each seat on the Management Team shall have one vote in determining management for the McArthur Swamp, with majority ruling. The management team will be responsible for all management decisions and shall implement management strategies and initiatives to meet the goals and objectives of the management team, with an aim toward enhancement of the “Beneficial Public Values” identified for the McArthur Swamp.

Productive use of the McArthur Swamp would continue under this Proposal, balanced with offering recreational amenities to the public and protecting wildlife habitat. A main component of this Proposal is the unique and innovative Management Team which is planned for that part of the McArthur Swamp which will be donated through this process. The McArthur Swamp would benefit from the diverse viewpoints offered in this Management Team, acting in compliance with the terms and conditions of the conservation easement. By involving a spectrum of expertise across the community, but within a clear structure and leadership, this important property would offer many benefits to the people of this region and this state.

### *The Management Team*

The **Fall River Resource Conservation District** is a public entity responsible for resource conservation covering an area of 1,149,000 acres spread over 4 counties, with the majority of that acreage in Shasta County. The Fall River RCD manages resources by utilizing watershed management practices which incorporate the relationship between land use, soil loss and productivity, water quantity and quality, wildlife populations and habitat, as well as the social and economic factors within a certain drainage basin. The McArthur Swamp lies in the heart of the district.

The **Pit River Tribe** is a Federally-recognized Tribe consisting of the original eleven autonomous bands that comprise the “100-mile square” ancestral boundary of the Pit River Nation. The McArthur Swamp is wholly inclusive in this boundary, and was the ancestral home from time immemorial of the Ajumawi Band of Indians. The land has been utilized for many generations as an indigenous resource of medicinal and subsistence plants, winged, finned and four-legged hunting, and a location of settlements as well as spiritual and cultural gatherings.

The Tribe has a fully developed and managed Clean Water Act, Noxious Weed, Road Maintenance, Forestry Management, Prescribed Range and Meadow Grazing, and Tribal Youth Educational programs currently in place in its Environmental and Natural Resource and Roads Departments. The Tribe will be contributing its expertise for resource management and planning.

The **Technical Advisory Committee** shall be comprised of both voting members and non-voting members. Voting members of the TAC will include those organizations identified by the Stewardship Council as qualified Donees for the McArthur Swamp (California State Parks, California Waterfowl Assoc, Shasta County), pertinent state agencies and regulatory organizations, and a member of the public at large. Additionally, Shasta Land Trust (as the conservation easement holder) and PG&E (owner of the retained lands) will have positions on the TAC as non-voting liaisons. Organizations which have expressed an interest in participating as a member of the TAC include, Department of Fish & Game, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Regional Water Quality Control Board, UC Extension and Ducks Unlimited.

### ***Conservation Easement Holder***

For over ten years, **Shasta Land Trust** has worked to protect properties that contain important natural resources in Shasta County. Starting with its first conservation easement in 2002, SLT has focused on using the conservation easement tool to accomplish its land conservation objectives. Currently, SLT holds easements on properties totaling over 10,000 acres of privately owned land, and is in advanced negotiations on similar projects which would double this amount of land protected by conservation easements in this county. Entering its second decade of conserving land in Shasta County, SLT brings organizational knowledge of how to draft and maintain conservation easements over the long term, as well as a commitment to conscientious stewarding of its easements in perpetuity.

Shasta Land Trust will hold the two conservation easements, one protecting that portion of the Property to be donated and managed by the Management Team, and a second protecting the land retained under PG&E ownership. Both conservation easements will be drafted so that productive and recreational uses may continue, while the restrictions and prohibited uses in those documents shall ensure that the Swamp’s important resources are protected for future generations. By holding both easements, SLT will offer consistency in practice as well as a long local history holding easements on working landscapes that contain important resources of ecological and cultural history.

## *Details of the Plan*

The Beneficial Public Values of Agriculture Uses, Preservation of Historic Values, Outdoor Recreation by the General Public, Preservation of Open Space and Protection of the Natural Habitat of Fish, Wildlife and Plants shall guide the drafting of the conservation easements to ensure that the important resources of the Property are protected in perpetuity. They will also be used to guide individual management decisions and strategies implemented by the Management Team. The long-term protections of the conservation easements will be the structure within which the diverse Management Team carries out the individual management strategies.

Agricultural Uses consists of two parts, which are compatible with historic use of the swamp, grazing and farming. Strategically locating wells will allow crops to be grown in marginal grazing areas and enhance the better grazing areas. Crop areas will be limited in size and surrounded by wildlife buffer zones. Leases from crops and grazing will provide economic benefits to support operations and improvements.

Preservation of Open Space mandates open space throughout the McArthur swamp with the exception of a 5 acre building envelope adjacent to the Fair Grounds for a Visitor/Cultural Center and a 10 acre Youth Summer Camp, location to be determined.

The Preservation of Historic Values will be a major responsibility of the Pit River Tribe, as a partner of the Fall River Resource Conservation District and a full member of the management team of the McArthur Swamp planning unit. The Pit River Tribe will conduct or oversee all of the necessary cultural studies to identify and protect all cultural resources.

Outdoor Recreation for the General Public will feature hiking and birding trails, access to waterfowl hunting and fishing and access to the entrance of Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park. Kayaking and Canoeing can be conducted from the boat launch areas at the Tule River and the Rat Farm.

The PG&E retained lands, which are included within the boundaries of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), will continue to be owned and managed by PG&E. This portion of the McArthur Swamp also includes some of the areas which most directly affect the **California State Parks** property, Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park. Under this proposal, California State Parks would enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with PG&E which would grant certain rights to State Parks related to recreational and resource protection of those areas.

## *Youth Investment*

Youth Investment Program Synergies feature educational opportunity and actual outdoor experience. The McArthur Swamp has over 6,000 acres of natural laboratory space that lends itself to the study of both academic subjects and development of outdoor skills.

The Visitor/Cultural Center will provide office space, lecture hall/class room, conference room and museum space for cultural displays. The facility will provide a place to hold K thru 12

programs focusing on biology, conservation, stewardship, sustainable agriculture and Native American studies.

The summer camp facility will include dormitory facilities, dining facility and activity center. The summer camp facility will be an affordable place for youth organizations to hold multi day events, develop outdoor skills and experience the outdoors.

### *Epilogue*

The McArthur Swamp has long received responsible and productive use by the people of this region. This Proposal continues that tradition while insuring the protection of cultural resources, utilizing natural resources in a sustainable manner, and continuing public access and recreation activities. Equally important, this Proposal provides a unique opportunity to connect youth with the outdoors.