

Shasta County and California Waterfowl Association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The property known as McArthur Swamp has been an important part of the history, culture, and economy of the Fall River Valley and eastern Shasta County since the beginning of the 1900's. The natural resources of the Swamp provide essential summer pastures for local ranchers as well as habitat for many species of wildlife that depend on the juxtaposition of wetland and upland habitats for food and cover. The diversity of habitat supports a large number of species and provides opportunities to demonstrate that through careful and conscientious management practices, agricultural activities such as livestock grazing can maintain and improve wildlife habitats. It is in the interest of Shasta County and California Waterfowl Association to protect and maintain the unique character of McArthur Swamp and its many uses.

An essential element of this proposal is to maintain the use of the property for summer pasture supporting the rural agricultural economy of the region. The distribution of wealth in the region is dependent the ability of the local ranching families to continue ranching and avoid selling or converting home ranches to other uses.

McArthur Swamp is a unique for the natural resource values it provides. The existence and juxtaposition of wetland and upland habitats make this property important to many species of wildlife. The remnant wetland areas within what used to be flooded bulrush marsh are adjacent to some of the only remaining upland areas resembling native uplands before conversion to agriculture. These upland areas contain many vernal pools, a sensitive habitat type that often contains threatened and endangered species. Preservation and enhancement of the natural values of McArthur Swamp are consistent with the public values identified in the Stewardship Council's Land Conservation Plan.

The public utilizes McArthur Swamp's many recreation opportunities for hunting, hiking, wildlife viewing, and access to the Ahjumawi Lave Springs State Park. Historically these uses have been relatively unmanaged. The public's recreation experience can be enhanced through hands on management and development and implementation of an interpretive program explaining the natural, cultural and historic importance of McArthur Swamp.

McArthur Swamp has been utilized by generations of Native Americans. Many still practice the traditions of their ancestors by gathering plants for food, medicinal, and artistic purposes. Many are connected to the property by their culture and spiritual beliefs. It is important that these values be preserved and that the confidentiality regarding the locations of these important resources is preserved. This will require working closely with representatives of the sovereign Pit River Nation and the autonomous Ahjumawi Band to insure the remaining cultural resources located on the McArthur Swamp property are not damaged by management activities.

McArthur Swamp offers great opportunities for youth education and connecting young people with outdoor experiences. With the County's facilities at the Intermountain Fair Grounds in combination with California Waterfowl's youth education programs it is foreseeable that the property can be a natural laboratory for local schools and for youth education programs from more distant population centers.

The many programs benefiting from McArthur Swamp will be managed by either a staff position or by contractor retained specifically to manage and coordinate the activities taking place on the property. This position will be responsible for managing the grazing licenses and stocking levels to insure the desired habitat conditions are achieved and maintained. The position will also coordinate

recreation and youth education programs. Monitoring resource conditions and reporting results will also be a requirement of this position.

To properly manage McArthur Swamp and to implement youth education programs will require an annual operating budget of approximately \$400,000. It is our hope that a sufficient endowment from the Stewardship Council will provide the necessary funding for the routine program operation and maintenance. California Waterfowl has a long history of successful acquiring grants for implementation of capital improvements. Combining our matching financial and in-kind contributions should contribute to our ability to acquire the necessary grant funding to implement necessary property improvements that will optimize the resource capabilities and preserve the natural values of McArthur Swamp.

Shasta County possesses the capabilities to manage and administer programs benefitting from maintaining and enhancing the values provided at McArthur Swamp. California Waterfowl has the experience to manage compliance with the terms and conditions of the conservation easement. Together we propose to apply an adaptive management approach to achieve and maintain management goals and objectives. Working collaboratively with resource agencies and the community we hope to preserve the many public values McArthur Swamp offers for future generations.