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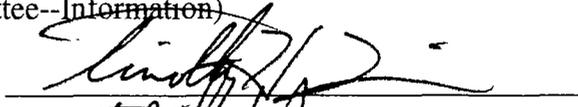
MWD

METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Don Chin
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
for

February 22, 1996

To: Board of Directors (Land Committee--Information)

From: General Manager 

Submitted by: F. Wiley Horne
Deputy General Manager 

Subject: Acquisition of Sylvan Meadows Property for Addition to the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve.

RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In connection with its mitigation for environmental impacts caused by construction of projects in Riverside County, Metropolitan participated in the acquisition of land and establishment of the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve, the Roy E. Shipley Reserve and the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). Metropolitan continues to participate in the committees which manage these reserves to protect and enhance its mitigation credits. The Nature Conservancy, which owns part of the Santa Rosa Plateau, acquired options to purchase approximately 1,000 acres known as Sylvan Meadows located adjacent to the Plateau. The management committees of the two reserves agreed to assist the Conservancy in financing the acquisition, and in establishing a wetlands mitigation bank on the property. The Reserve Management Committee for the MSHCP has agreed to contribute \$1,000,000 to the acquisition, which will be reimbursed through the sale of wetlands mitigation credits, and potentially the sale of non-ecologically significant lands which are part of the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve.

DETAILED REPORT

In 1991, Metropolitan participated in the acquisition of land which added 3,825 acres of land to the 3,000 acre Santa Rosa Plateau lands owned by the Nature Conservancy. All of the lands were combined into the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve. At the same time Metropolitan also acquired approximately 1,600 acres north of Lake Skinner, known as the Shipley Ranch, and entered into agreements to use the property to mitigate against project impacts. The Shipley Ranch was later incorporated into the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan. In exchange for its acquisition and protection of these properties Metropolitan obtained credits against the environmental impacts of its proposed projects in Riverside County, including the Eastside Reservoir.

Metropolitan has continued to have an active role in the protection of the Santa Rosa Plateau and Shipley Reserve lands through its participation in the committees which manage these lands. Metropolitan is represented on both the Plateau Management Committee which governs the Santa Rosa Plateau, and the Reserve Management Committee, which controls the lands protected by the Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP).

The Nature Conservancy recently obtained options to acquire the Sylvan Meadows property consisting of approximately 1,000 acres adjacent to the Santa Rosa Plateau. Sylvan Meadows has been a part of the Santa Rosa Plateau master plan, but had remained in private ownership. The options allow the property to be purchased in two parts with the first transaction involving 740 acres at a price of \$3,000,000. The purchase price is being contributed by several sources: 1) The Nature Conservancy is providing \$1 million including funds from the California Transportation Commission's environmental mitigation program; 2) A \$1 million contribution from the Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District, which will take title to the Sylvan Meadows property and use it for park purposes; and 3) A \$1 million contribution from the MSHCP Reserve Management Committee, which will work with the Nature Conservancy to jointly establish wetlands mitigation banks on the property.

Metropolitan is not contributing funds to the purchase, but will participate in the creation of the mitigation bank on behalf of the Reserve Management Committee. The sale of the mitigation credits from the bank will generate funds to reimburse the contribution from the MSHCP and to help restore the riparian habitat on the Sylvan Meadows property. The Nature Conservancy has also agreed to a three-way exchange of lands with the California Wildlife Conservation Board that will return to Metropolitan 100 acres of non-ecologically significant lands which Metropolitan had originally contributed to the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve. These lands may be sold if the mitigation credit sales do not result in full reimbursement of the Reserve Management Committee's contribution. Metropolitan's costs incurred in any sale of the property will be reimbursed from the sale proceeds.