

APPENDIX B

COMMENTS RECEIVED ON NOTICE OF PREPARATION

- 1. COMMENTS RECEIVED AT JANUARY 9, 2003 SCOPING MEETING**
- 2. COMMENTS LETTER RECEIVED VIA MAIL AND EMAIL DURING NOP REVIEW PERIOD**
- 3. SCOPING SESSION TRANSCRIPT**

**1. COMMENTS RECEIVED AT JANUARY 9, 2003 SCOPING
MEETING**



MEMORANDUM

TO • Sagar Raksit

FROM • Leslie Moulton

DATE • January 14, 2003

SUBJECT • Lancaster WRP EIR Scoping Session. January 9, 2003

Following are summaries of the main issues raised during the scoping meeting held at the City of Lancaster City Hall on January 9, 2003 that could affect the project description:

- 1) There were numerous commentors and a large audience contingent including Senator Pete Knight, Assembly member Sharon Runner, and Mayor Frank Roberts opposing any encroachment onto EAFB.
- 2) There were numerous commentors and a large audience contingent supporting the creation of additional wetlands. Senator Pete Knight and Mayor Frank Roberts support maintaining Piute Ponds.
- 3) There was considerable support for increasing tertiary treatment capacity for reuse. The tertiary-treated water would improve agricultural operations and groundwater quality and generally support additional reclamation.
- 4) Numerous additional alternatives were offered including:
 - a) Constructed wetlands on or off base;
 - b) Increased tertiary treatment;
 - c) Groundwater recharge;
 - d) Armagosa Creek discharge;
 - e) Forest; and
 - f) EAFB reuse.

Attached is a copy of all the comments received during the meeting, for your review.

Oral Comments Received During Scoping Meeting:

January 9, 2003

- Avoid Edwards Air Force Base Encroachment
- Project costs would be too high, obtain Prop. 13 funds
- Recycle water as much as possible
- Overflows degrade dry lake
- Groundwater contamination could be caused by District
- Construct Best Available Technology to prevent groundwater contamination

- Conduct economic analysis of alternatives
- Propose a joint project to increase reclamation in the Valley
- Accelerate tertiary treatment
- Consider wetlands
- Consider trails and educational facility
- Allow overflows in winter

- Restore little Piute Ponds
- Wetlands have economic benefits
- Compare effects of each Alternative on sewerage rates
- On and off base alternatives have BASH impacts
- Eliminating overflows degrades lakebed surface
- Project jeopardizes EAFB mission

- Encroachment will close EAFB
- Project increases BASH
- Will NEPA process be necessary?
- First objective is to comply with RWQCB order
- Assess impacts to ground water

- Groundwater contamination is a RWQCB concern
- Assess other flushing methods
- Avoid Sundale Mutual property for Agriculture
- Agriculture will impact Sundale Mutual water wells and lots
- Provide tertiary treatment of agricultural water
- Provide cost comparison
- Project could pollute EAFB

- Do not build agriculture
- Develop parkland with trees
- City of Lancaster is opposed to encroachment
- Evaluate biological impacts including Mariposa lily
- Mitigation lands have costs that need to be evaluated
- City supports groundwater recharge potential

- Evaluate all alternatives
 - Use Piute Pond vicinity for wetlands
 - Assess air quality impact of overflows
 - Swamps breed disease, avoid stagnate water
 - Expand Piute Ponds
 - Allow for future expansion of treatment, not wetlands
-
- Evaluate effects of project with West Mojave Plan
 - Incorporate NEPA
 - Alternatives are too limited
 - Other areas could support wetlands
 - Tertiary-plus treatment should be considered
 - Consider alternatives with less impact to community

COMMENT CARD

County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, District 14
Environmental Impact Report CEQA Scoping Meeting
Lancaster WRP 2020 Facilities Plan
City of Lancaster City Hall
January 9, 2003

Name: SENATOR KNIGHT

Affiliation: STATE SENATE

Address: 1008 W AVE M-14 Suite G
PALMDALE CA 93551

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO ANY OPTION
THAT ENCRACHES ONTO E.A.F.S.

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
FAX: (562) 695-1974

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County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, District 14
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Name: ASSEMBLY MEMBER SHARON RUNNER

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: _____

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Name: FRANK ROBERTS
Affiliation: MAYOR, CITY OF LANCASTER
Address: LANCASTER

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: Member of the San Districts

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January 9, 2003

Name: REX MOEN
Affiliation: SENATOR KNIGHT
Address: 1008 W. AVE M-14 SW

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments:

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Name: Michael W. Husorek
Affiliation: Chapman University Soc Dept SOC 367 Public Interest Research
Address: 43424 Garfield Ave Apt 75
Lancaster CA 93534-1653

Do you wish to speak? Yes No
Comments: 1) About monitoring of current facilities at Arate ponds - MA
2) Monitoring of water quality
3) Monitoring of water quality at depth of ponds
4) Monitoring of water quality at depth of ponds
ALTERNATING TO PMS - Increase tertiary treatment

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January 9, 2003

Name: LEWIS TROUT
Affiliation: ~~ABC CRE~~ INDIVIDUAL
Address: 930 CRESCENT DRIVE
BARSTOW CALIF 92311

Do you wish to speak? Yes No
Comments: MORE ALTERNATIVES MAY NEED TO BE STUDIED

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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January 9, 2003

Name: MIKE/MIGUEL

Affiliation: CITIZENS FOR RITE WETLANDS

Address: 2122 HIGHLAND DALES DR. AZUSA

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: WRITTEN COMMENTS - WETLANDS

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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Name: Todd McGrath

Affiliation: _____

Address: 13910 Old Harbor Ln #107
Merim Del Rey CA 90292

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: _____

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January 9, 2003

Name: Kristie Grubb

Affiliation: Citizens for Piute Wetlands / educator

Address: PO Box 725
Tehachapi CA 93581

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: educational benefits of Piute

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Name: ALAU BROWLI

Affiliation: _____

Address: 224 HAWK LAKE PMD

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: _____

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Name: Daniel Van Holton
Affiliation: CPW / Calif Ducks Unlimited
Address: 44047 4th St East

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: _____

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Name: Ruth Crockett
Affiliation: Concerned A.V. Resident & Military
Address: 1433 W Dayton
Lancaster CA

*Daniel Van Holton
wife & in AM*

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: This is dear to me

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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January 9, 2003

Name: Rick Cook & Steve Markcott

Affiliation: Antelope Valley Chambers of Commerce

Address: 554 West Lancaster Blvd
Lancaster, CA 93534

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: _____

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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Name: HISAM BAGAI

Affiliation: Lahontsa RWQCB

Address: _____

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: Brief comment & email

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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Name: John Gait

Affiliation: Sundale Water - Farm Bureau

Address: 49913 80th St West Lancaster 93536

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: EAIR Should LOAN LAND for Holding ponds

The water used for farming should be sanitized
muck like the water sent to Appolo Pk. This
we lead to less opposition to farming with said water
on west side. Nebchaer ranch puts off a foul odor
that I don't want in my back yard.

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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Name: Mary Lou Priest

Affiliation: Field Rep. Assemblyman Bill Maze

Address: 426 Sherwood Place
Tracy, CA 95376

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: I will read a letter from Assemblyman
Maze.

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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Name: Frank Elling

Affiliation: _____

Address: Lancaster, CA

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: Polution + Energy costs
Flood areas
Historical wet lands
Estuary (Bird)

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Name: BRIAN LUDICKE

Affiliation: CITY OF LANCASTER

Address: 44933 FERN AVENUE
LANCASTER, CA 93534

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: Will send letter before Jan 16th
Community Dev + Dept

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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Name: Wanda Deal

Affiliation: Self/Community

Address: 1731 Hillside Ave
Lancaster

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: _____

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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Name: JAMES WELLING

Affiliation: PRESIDENT BOARD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Address: 26962 ZOMBLE TOWN RD.
BORON

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: _____

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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Name: Kendall Kahl

Affiliation: Graduate Student CSUB

Address: 43210 30th st, W #88
Lanc. Ca 93536

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: Base ecology, natural history
parasite problems

Rex Maen invitation

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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Name: GARRY GEORGE

Affiliation: LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

Address: 7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD
WEST HUNTINGTON, CA 90746

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: _____

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Name: JOHANNY ZAMAZA

Affiliation: RESIDENT / BUSINESSMAN

Address: 2224 E MAIN ST
PAMUNDT CO 93550

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments:

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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Name: Jim Dodson

Affiliation:

Address: 43904 N. Galien Ave.
Lancaster CA 93536

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: I support increased water reuse/recycling.
It is too valuable a resource to just spread & evaporate.

Also, the land on Edwards has too high values in cultural resources to be used for this purpose

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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January 9, 2003

Name: Alis Clausen

Affiliation: Antelope Valley Board of Trade

Address: 548 West Lancaster Blvd Suite 103
Lancaster CA

Do you wish to speak? YES Yes No

Comments: Brief from organization on letter already sent.

Brief is resident.

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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Name: Jack Stewart - City Manager

Affiliation: City of California City

Address: 21000 Hacienda Blvd
Cal. City Ca 93501

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: _____

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Name: LARRY CROOMS

Affiliation: _____

Address: 42939 STAFFORDSHIRE DRIVE
LANCASTER

Do you wish to speak? YES Yes _____ No

Comments: ENCROACHMENT IS THE ISSUE I OPPOSE.
AS TO WETLANDS AND BIRD LIFE, THERE IS AMPLE ROOM
AND WILL BE AMPLE WATER TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT
OF NEW ECOLOGICAL AREAS WHICH WILL NOT CONFLICT
WITH THE VITA C MISSION OF EDWARDS.

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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January 9, 2003

Name: VIRGINIA STONE

Affiliation: Antelope Acres Town Council

Address: 8812 West Ave E-6
Antelope Acres, CA 92536

Do you wish to speak? ✓ Yes _____ No

Comments: _____

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Name: Bruce B. Neilston, PRESIDENT 2002/03
Affiliation: QUARTZ HILL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Address: 5008 WEST AVE L (QHCC) ←
QUARTZ HILL, CA 93531

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: REPRESENT OVER 200 BUSINESSES IN THE QHCC, WE WISH TO EXPRESS A STAUNCH OBJECTION TO ANY ENCROACHMENT ON EDWARDS AFB AND A CONCERN OF THE RISK OF CONTAMINATION OF THE GROUND WATER AQUIFER, WHERE THE WATER TABLE IS EXTREMELY SHALLOW AND VNERABLE. EVAPORATION IS SOCIALLY URGENT AND MORE ECONOMIC THAN IT IS INTELLIGENT. IMPLEMENTATION OF MORE SOPHISTICATED SYSTEM OF PURIFICATION SHOULD BE DONE.

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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Name: BOB PAGE
Affiliation: NO EXIT RECORDS
Address: 44200 TAHOE

Do you wish to speak? Yes No

Comments: _____

Mail to: LACSD, Planning and Property Management Section, Attn: Sagar Raksit, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601
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Celebrating 100 Years
Lancaster



ANTELOPE VALLEY Chambers of Commerce

STATEMENT FOR SCOPING MEETING

January 9, 2003

The Antelope Valley Chambers of Commerce, representing over 900 business members, is adamantly opposed to the leasing of 2,500 acres on the southwest portion of Edwards AFB for the management of wastewater generated by the Lancaster and Palmdale areas.

Our Chamber firmly believes the risk of allowing this project to go forward in its current form could seriously jeopardize the future of the Air Force Flight Test Center as we know it today. Encroachment of any type often leads to additional encroachment issues. Once that occurs, we may never regain what was lost.

In addition, there are significant safety issues we must consider. To allow 2,500 acres of wastewater would certainly add a significant increase of water fowl in this area. We don't believe we need to say much about how serious bird strike issues can be in terms of potential loss in life and equipment.

Our Chamber believes District 14 must seek alternative wastewater solutions that have long range solutions to wastewater use and reuse. We believe that water treatment and recycling is a prudent alternative to the proposal. It not only addresses the current problems but also offers long term management of this essential resource.

The City of Lancaster, through the Planning Commission and City Council have established long range plans to prepare for anticipated growth in our area. District 14 ought to follow that lead and plan for future use of wastewater rather than taking what appears to be cheapest route.

Indeed, what may appear to be economical today, may cost us dearly after we recognize the failure to invest in our future use of a valuable resource – water. Let us hope it isn't too late.

POTENTIAL PAIUTE POND PARASITES

My name is Kendall Kahl I am a graduate student of California State University Bakersfield and Antelope Valley College. My field of expertise is history and that field covers natural history as well.

In the old days swamps like Paiute Ponds were drained for a very good reason: disease. Malaria, Cholera, Polio and a host of other deadly plagues dwelt in stagnant swamps. We may think those days are over but they are not.

People are still sickened and hospitalized by arthropod^{borne} illness. Bubonic plague, Tularemia, Saint Louis encephalitis, Equine encephalitis, Babiosis, Erlichosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever and Hanta virus are just a few regional diseases. All of those diseases require moisture and warmth or have hosts that do. Only our beloved Valley Fever thrives in hot arid conditions my wife ^{has} the lung scars to prove it. Stagnant water creates optimum conditions to further infirmities of all sorts. The most horrific local organism is an amoebae that literally eats the brains of its victims. Without stale water it cannot survive. As well as indigenous parasites there is also the possibility of new ones from outside the area.

Among the disease that could head our way is malaria, the deadliest disease on the planet, and another disease that I am quite familiar with; Dengue fever. Dengue is also known as break bone fever. I can tell you first hand it lives up to its name. The second time a person gets Dengue fever it becomes hemorrhagic like Ebola. Dengue fever and Ebola are not the only hemorrhagic fevers. In the Mideast and North Africa are two examples known as Crimean Congo-Crimean Hemorrhagic Fever and Rift Valley fever. The first is spread by ticks that infect hares (Jack Rabbits remember are really hares not rabbits). The second, Rift Valley Fever, is spread by mosquitoes. These Ebola-like diseases could accidentally be brought over by aircraft or worse they could be spread by terrorists and the first place they would go locally would be Paiute Ponds for a moist livable habitat.

If you think the terrorist scenario is far fetched then you have not been reading the newspapers. The Anthrax attack in the East Coast, and the advancing West Nile Virus, are identical to samples from the University of Iraq.

If West Nile is an attack then it is one that is on its way. The Center for Disease Control and Environmental Protection Agency are predicting that West Nile will be in the Western Flyway this summer. The Western Flyway is the migration route used by birds to make their way down the Pacific Coast. These same birds are being infected with the West Nile Virus and through mosquitoes they can pass it on to people. Paiute Ponds is on the Western Flyway. I do not think anyone here wants to contribute to a oncoming health crises by not dealing with the creation of pestilence habitat.

Whatever mitigation measures that are proposed tonight we must consider several factors:

- 1) There should be every effort to avoid stagnant water that

could breed the Culex mosquitoes that carry the West Nile virus. Many species of Culex mosquitoes exist in California.

2) The health of Edwards Airforce Base must be paramount as National Security is our greatest concern.

3) Municipal leaders must take into account the fact that stagnant waste water threatens the whole Antelope Valley.

Stagnant water could be mitigated by one of only three general plans that are economically feasible.

A) The water could be used to irrigate vegetation.

B) The water could be put into sealed storage.

C) The water could be stored out in the open in deep water basins favorable to fish and other creatures that prey on insects parasites.

For health and safety reasons letting fetid polluted water meander over Edwards Air Force is not an option. Evaporation from shallow ponds likewise is an invitation to disaster.

Being a lover of wildlife and fishing my personal bias would be toward habitat improvement and treating the water enough so that it could be stored in deep lakes and ponds. From an economic standpoint irrigation and fishing are the only ways to put the water to work. The clock is ticking and next spring the mosquitoes will be breeding. By the end of next summer California will be counting the numbers of seniors and children who have died from West Nile Virus. There will also be HIV and Chemotherapy patients dead from swollen brains as well. The authorities here hold some of those lives in their hands. Action is needed at this point not more studies.

This paper does not deal with the option of deep injection. While that option would eliminate pest habitat it could also inject polluted water into the water table and chemical pollution problems are beyond my expertise. Common sense however would dictate that contaminated water should be cleaned up whether above or below ground.

I could also talk of the effects on livestock and native birds but I am not a biologist. My concern and focus is on the past, present and future interaction of disease on human history. Someday a future generation may ask why we didn't do the right thing. I hope we can prevent that question from being asked. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely Kendall Kahl B.A., A.A.

**PUBLIC SCOPING FOR THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS
PLANT EXPANSION PROJECT, LANCASTER TREATMENT FACILITY**

9 January 2003

I am Mike San Miguel and I represent Citizens for Piute Wetlands. More importantly I represent a large number of the citizens of Los Angeles County and your users who see and understand an opportunity for you to incorporate into your proposed facilities a number of features that will improve their quality of life and to provide for them economic, educational, and wildlife viewing opportunities. We urge the District to consider a number of features that would improve habitat quality, add amenities that will allow wild life viewing and to evaluate them in the Environmental Impact Report you are about to prepare. We also ask that you consider a few operational changes and management practices that would compliment these objectives. We believe that this can be done at little or no cost to the Districts and without compromising the mission of Edward's Air Force Base to maintain the Rosamond lakebed as an alternate emergency landing site. Furthermore, these features and operational changes could be incorporated into plans you are now developing for expansion of the Lancaster Water Reclamation facility.

Historically Rosamond Lake was a naturally occurring wetland that was utilized by migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. However, massive manmade changes have all but destroyed the natural ecosystem that was sustained by the natural seasonal flow from Amargosa Creek to the Lake. Treated overflow from Piute ponds now is the only source of water for Rosamond Lake and serves to replicate that natural system.

Piute Ponds is the only location in all of Los Angeles County where large numbers of ducks, wading birds such as Cattle Egret, White Faced Ibis, and other wildlife breed. Increasing wetlands habitat in conjunction with the proposed project would enhance what is already the most important location in the County for many wildlife species. Portions of the Lake, especially the delta of Amargosa Creek, remain a rich and important resource for thousands of shorebirds and waterfowl. However, those impressive numbers of birds are there only when sufficient water and mudflats are present. During spring migration tens-of -thousands of shorebirds utilize the mudflats at the lake for staging, feeding and resting during their long and arduous migration. Since 1978 when the first records of shorebirds occurring at Piute ponds were noted, an astonishing 39 species of shorebirds have been observed there. During a single morning on 16 April 2000 I was birding with Kimball Garrett, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, and we estimated in excess of 13,000 sandpipers alone feeding in the mudflats at Rosamond Lake. The overflow from Piute Ponds is critical to the maintenance of the habitat on the lakebed required by shorebirds and waterfowl

The most critical time for migrating shorebirds during spring is from early April to mid-May and in the fall from mid-July to mid-September. The amount of mudflats does not need to be extensive to create and maintain the desired effect. Based on the many years of observations by several capable observers only 100 acres of shallow water and exposed mud is required to achieve the desired affect. We ask that you consider and evaluate in the EIR the following:

HABITAT AND FACILITY ENHANCEMENTS

- Constructed wetlands are a proven low-cost and effective means for treating and greatly improving water quality. Instead of the traditional concrete evaporation and storage

ponds traditionally utilized we strongly encourage the use of ponds that are planted with vegetation suitable to and compatible with the desert environment.

- Incorporate trails and interpretive/educational amenities into a portion of the constructed wetlands that could be used for education and wildlife viewing. The 29-Palms Marine Base has an award winning nature trail that serves as a good example for how the proposed facilities could be designed and constructed. There are many other wetlands project in California and the west that would also apply to the environment and setting in Antelope Valley.

OPERATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- With the concurrence of Edward's Air Force Base we encourage the continued release of water into Rosamond Lake during winter. The Lake is an important area for wintering water fowl and shorebirds. That water and strong seasonal winds during the spring are vital to maintaining a smooth lakebed surface for the Base to use as an emergency landing site when waters evaporate.
- Release sufficient water from Piute Ponds to maintain at least 100 acres of shallow water and mudflats on Rosamond Lake at the delta of Amargosa Creek during spring and fall shorebird migration. The water flowing in the creek also provides habitat for breeding ducks including Gadwall, Mallard and Cinnamon Teal when enough water is available for their nesting requirements. Such a small area should not compromise the Base's need to maintain the lakebed as an emergency-landing site.
- Drop the water level in the pond on the north side of "C" Avenue dike at Piute Ponds from early April through early May and from mid-July to mid-September during shorebirds migration when available habitat for feeding shorebirds is most critical. Historically the water level at the pond was a few inches lower than in recent times. The lower water levels allowed for exposed mud and good habitat for shorebirds.
- Shorebirds also utilize the ponds built by Ducks Unlimited in 1988. However, when water is no longer released into the ponds at the end of duck hunting season they dry up, usually by late spring. We suggest that the Districts release enough flow to sustain shallow water from mid-July to mid-September. This would provide additional shorebird habitat during the critical fall migration period from July through September.
- We encourage the Districts to restore "Little Piute" to its original grade. Restoration of Little Piute would greatly increase the evaporative capacity of the Districts facilities thus improving their operational flexibility. In the past it was flooded with shallow water that was a rich resource for shorebirds and other wildlife. It is now dry, degraded and no longer functions as suitable habitat. Restoration and periodic regrading or discing a small amount of earth would restore this area to its original and intended purpose.

While we appreciate that the primary mission of the District is to maintain the efficient and economic functioning of your water treatment facilities, there should be enough flexibility in the system to plan for and to provide the habitat enhancements we have suggested. We also believe there is strong public support throughout the County and in Antelope Valley for our suggestions. One needs only to look at recent election results with approval of \$100 millions of bonds for purchase of open lands to appreciate how broad based is the support for open space, outdoor recreation and wildlife experience. The district has a golden opportunity to play to that support.

We wish to applaud General Pearson and the Edwards Air Force Base for its vision and spirit of cooperation to consider leasing portions of its lands to the Sanitation Districts. The benefits to Air Force Base personnel and to the public living in the Antelope Valley should be considerable if our suggestions are made an integral part of the proposed facilities expansion project. It is with this spirit of cooperation that we offer our ideas, which should benefit and enhance the Base's mission and provide benefits to the citizens of Los Angeles County. We would be happy to discuss how these suggestions could best be implemented. We look forward to continuing our discussions and involvement in your facilities expansion plan and to provide our input during preparation of the EIR/EA. We believe there is a strong case to include constructed wetlands and other habitat enhancements that should be integrated into your proposed project.

Mike San Miguel



los angeles audubon society

7377 santa monica boulevard • west hollywood, california 90046-6694 • 213 876-0202

January 9, 2003

*Los Angeles County Sanitation District
Lancaster Treatment Facility*

To Whom it May Concern:

The mission of Los Angeles Audubon Society is to promote education and conservation of birds and other wildlife.

Piute Ponds have long been of interest to members of the Society. The Society annually sponsors field trips for members and non-members to the Ponds, and individual members of the Society enjoy observing wildlife there throughout the year with the kind permission of Edwards Air Force Base.

The importance of the ponds for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds is historic and of great conservation importance for the Society.

We support, encourage and look forward to participating in the creation of public wetlands at Piute Ponds and an educational, interpretive center there that will benefit all citizens of Los Angeles in recreation, education and conservation.

Sincerely,

Los Angeles Audubon Society, Inc.

Educational Benefits Aspect of the Public Scoping For the Los Angeles County Sanitation District's Plant Expansion Project, Lancaster Treatment Facility

Kristie Grubb Educator Muroc Joint Unified School District Edwards AFB, CA

1.9.03

My name is Kristie Grubb and I represent the students throughout this region who profit from the rare and unique educational experience that Piute Wetlands represents. My colleagues and I have used Piute as a tremendous educational experience for the past 5 years and have conservatively exposed more than 500 students to this ecological jewel.

The Wetlands is a living laboratory where students of all ages conduct original science in the field and witness the beauty of nature firsthand. These children are the scientists and leaders of the future and we as a society we will profit immeasurably by the educational experience that Piute affords.

Through the use of Piute Wetlands, students have learned to conduct bird counts, monitor bird populations, record weather data, compare desert and wetland ecosystems, and conduct plant surveys. Without this unique habitat, many of these things would be impossible to learn firsthand.

The students have learned to be stewards of the environment as well. More than 50 trees have been planted at Piute by students and several interpretive projects are underway. Additionally, an interdisciplinary program to build, install and monitor wood duck nesting boxes is in the planning stage. This project will teach the students involved the value of planning, to work cooperatively, and to serve the needs of other animals that share our world. A rational decision to improve and expand this Wetland will also serve as a powerful object lesson to students. They have already witnessed the efforts of General Pearson and the Air Force to protect and preserve Piute Wetlands and now they will see the democratic process in action, hopefully to the mutual benefit of citizens and nature.

In closing, I would strongly urge you to consider the Citizens and Scientists of Tomorrow when you decide upon the future of Piute and the associated Wetlands. It is an invaluable educational resource that can be dramatically improved by your careful stewardship.

By expanding and enhancing Piute through state-of-the-art Wetlands management and cooperative relationships between the Sanitation District, the Air Force, Ducks Unlimited, the Audubon Society, and other interested parties, the educational opportunities provided by this jewel of the desert can be preserved and expanded to the benefit of all and especially to the benefit of the children who are our future.

**PUBLIC SCOPING FOR THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY SANITATION
DISTRICTS PLANT EXPANSION PROJECT, LANCASTER TREATMENT
FACILITY**

9 January 2003

Economic Benefits of Using a Constructed Wetland

Good Evening, my name is Todd McGrath, and I am here tonight to speak about the economic benefits of creating publicly accessible wetlands as part of your proposed expansion project. I will begin by providing some information about the popularity of wildlife watching, then move on to wildlife watching opportunities in the Lancaster area and end by citing two examples of constructed wetlands that have become major destinations for wildlife watchers

Popularity of wildlife Watching

Wildlife watching (particularly bird-watching) has rapidly become a major leisure activity for many people. The statistics from the 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation illustrates my point.

In 2001, the survey determined there were 34.1 million anglers, 13 million hunters, and 21.8 million people who traveled away from their home to view wildlife. These trips away from home resulted in expenditures of \$23.5 billion for the purchase of equipment, \$8.2 billion for food and lodging, and \$6.7 billion for other expenditures such as books and magazine subscriptions. Bird-watching is by far the most popular wildlife watching activity, representing 18 million of the 21.8 million wildlife watchers.

The numbers for the State of California are no less impressive. Wildlife watchers (again primarily birdwatchers) in 2001 spent \$.88 billion for travel and lodging, \$1.2 billion in equipment, and \$.46 billion on other items such as books and magazine subscriptions. Note that these were monies spent in CA, and that CA is the number one state for wildlife watching expenditures.

The same survey also analyzed the types of habitats that visitors tended to visit. Lake and stream sides were visited by 63% of those who took trips, while Marsh, wetland, and swamp habitats were visited by 42%. That means that the type of habitats that would be created by a constructed wetland would represent two of the top four favored wildlife viewing habitats.

Wildlife viewing Opportunities in the Lancaster Area

The Antelope Valley Area is already a wildlife watching destination (particularly bird-watchers). The agricultural fields and desert habitats are the winter home for a variety of hawks, falcons and eagles. Many Audubon groups from around Southern California schedule annual field trips in the region. Moreover, the Lancaster area is in close proximity to many other important wildlife viewing locations. The desert oasis of Eastern Kern County are also a major destination of birders during spring and fall migrations, and are less than an hour away (also note that Eastern Kern has limited accommodation and restaurant facilities). Finally, the important Montane habitat of the San Gabriel Mountains are also just a short trip away, and provide yet another habitat within a short drive of Lancaster.

The creation of publicly accessible wetlands and ponds combined with the other habitats I described above gives Lancaster the potential to offer multi-day opportunities to visiting wildlife watchers.

Finally, the presence of good facilities (hotels and restaurants), proximity to major travel centers, and less urban environments than Los Angeles should allow Lancaster to successfully compete for these travel dollars.

Successful Created Wetlands Projects: 2 examples of many

I have selected two facilities to illustrate my point regarding created wetlands. Both these facilities use wetlands associated with water treatment, and both have had tremendous success with their projects.

Arcata Marsh, Arcata California -

The Arcata marsh project first opened in 1981, and is now a 156 acre wetland/sanctuary. It is visited by roughly 200,000 people per year, and is considered one of the areas top tourist attractions.

The town successfully raised money from various groups to build an interpretive center. I have personally visited the marsh several times, and found it a wonderful place to bird-watch, while others chose to walk, jog, or merely enjoy the open space.

This location is a major destination for birders from around California, as well as around the country.

Wakodahatchee Wetlands, Palm Beach County, Fl

This project was completed in 1997 and has enjoyed tremendous support from the local community. Nearly 750 people a day visit the marsh during peak season, and 250 people per day visit during the Florida Summer. The marsh area is about 39 acres, and a mile long boardwalk winds through the marsh. It is a major breeding area for wading birds, and a number of endangered species are now resident. I rarely visit family in Florida without a visit to this wonderful place.

Even though this location is relatively new, it has rapidly become a major birding area, in a State that is loaded with marsh habitat (such as the Everglades, and Loxahatchee).

Both of these locations have been featured in national bird-watching magazines, and are widely visited by out of state tourists as well as local residents. I believe that a wetlands project in the Lancaster area could enjoy similar success. Many of the groups interested in promoting such a wetland are willing to support the development of interpretive facilities, as well as providing expertise to the local business community on how to promote the wildlife watching opportunities of the local area.

In addition to the economic opportunities provided by wildlife watching, both facilities are used extensively by local schools and universities, as well as providing an attractive open space for the enjoyment of local citizens. Both have enjoyed support of local community groups. I believe I have demonstrated that a constructed wetland can have a beneficial economic impact on the local community, as well as providing substantial "quality of life benefits" that other speakers will more fully describe. I thank you for your time and hope that you will give serious consideration to this wetlands creation project.