

MEMORANDUM

23 October 2000

TO : MSHCP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FROM : JUNE COLLINS, DUDEK

RE : ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION ON FOREST LANDS SPECIES

In conjunction with review of the *MSHCP Alternatives Development Document* (October 4, 2000), several reviewers have made inquiries regarding the number of species for which conservation in the MSHCP study area is dependent upon activities on Forest lands. This Memorandum is intended to provide clarification regarding questions that have been raised.

As noted in the *MSHCP Alternatives Development Document*, conservation needs for 69 species within the MSHCP study area are dependent upon activities on Forest Service lands as well as private inholdings within the forest. The 69 species include 31 animals and 38 plants. One of the questions that has been asked concerns those high-profile species dependent upon activities both on Forest lands (including private inholdings) and on areas outside the Forest lands within the MSHCP study area. High profile species are generally the *listed*, *proposed* and *strong candidate* species. These species have been characterized by some reviewers as "overlap" species. DUDEK has assembled a list of the species that might be characterized as Forest lands/MSHCP study area "overlap" species and that list is provided below.

HIGH-PROFILE SPECIES CONSIDERED TO BE FOREST LANDS / MSHCP STUDY AREA "OVERLAP" SPECIES

Coastal cactus wren	Nevin's barberry*
peregrine falcon*	Thread-leaved brodiaea*
golden eagle	Vail Lake ceanothus*
red-legged frog*	Slender-horned spineflower*
mountain yellow-legged frog*	southern rubber boa*

* Listed or proposed species.

Additional Clarification on Forest Lands Species

As described in the *Alternatives Development Document*, the Forest Service is currently in consultation with the Wildlife Agencies regarding effects of activities within Forest Service lands on the listed and proposed species. Forests in the Pacific Southwest include the Los Padres, Angeles, San Bernardino, and Cleveland National Forests. Portions of the San Bernardino and Cleveland National Forests are within the MSHCP study area. These forests are the subject of a Southern California Conservation Strategy that addresses ecosystem processes and conservation of forest species while allowing appropriate recreation and other activities on Forest Service lands. The goal of this program is to develop Forest Plans which “restore, recover, and maintain species and continue to provide for various uses of the forest.” (California Biodiversity News 2000). The Forest Plans will provide guidance for resource management and will establish goals, objectives and management requirements. The Forest Plans will be prepared in accordance with the National Forest Management Act and National Environmental Policy Act which require Environmental Assessments of proposed actions and public review. An Environmental Impact Statement for all four forests is scheduled for release for public review in January of 2002 (California Biodiversity News 2000).

It is anticipated that the Forest Plans will address the effects of activities within Forest Service lands on the listed and proposed species noted above. Activities affecting these species in other locations within the MSHCP study area, outside the Forest Service lands, would need to be addressed by the MSHCP.

The high-profile “overlap” species noted above represent 10 of the 69 species for which conservation in the MSHCP study area is dependent upon activities on Forest lands. The remaining 59 species include species for which conservation is almost exclusively dependent upon Forest lands activities, such as the San Bernardino flying squirrel and San Bernardino Mountains kingsnake, and species for which conservation is dependent upon activities both on Forest lands and in other locations within the MSHCP study area, such as Cooper’s hawk, yellow warbler, and large-blotched salamander. Species such as these currently are not listed or proposed for listing and are not currently part of the Wildlife Agencies consultation underway for the Forest Plans.

Based on this information, there are two actions that the MSHCP Advisory Committee may want to consider:

- a) Recommend that the County of Riverside draft a letter to the Forest Service requesting that effects of activities within Forest Service lands on currently unlisted species included on the MSHCP species list, and whose conservation depends on activities on Forest Service lands, be addressed in the Forest Plans and included in the Forest Service consultation with the Wildlife Agencies. To the extent that the schedules for the MSHCP and the Forest Plans differ, coverage of Forest lands

Additional Clarification on Forest Lands Species

species in the MSHCP may be dependent on the timing of the Forest Plans.

- b) Recommend that the MSHCP consultant address in the conservation analysis actions that would need to be considered by the County on private inholdings within the Forest lands to provide for conservation of species for which conservation is dependent upon activities within Forest lands. This information could be developed as part of the conservation analysis for consideration by the MSHCP Advisory Committee.

It should be noted that a decision whether or not to consider conservation of Forest lands species in the MSHCP would not substantially affect the total acreages of new conservation on private lands associated with the various alternatives, except for the high-profile "overlap" species summarized above. This is due to the fact that the remaining species are generally those that are almost exclusively confined to Forest lands, or are present on other MSHCP lands in locations that co-occur with other species being considered for conservation under the MSHCP.

JSC/tsf