

Appendix K

Examples of BRBNA Collaborative Efforts

PROTECTION AND STEWARDSHIP OF THE 34,500-ACRE KNOXVILLE/ETICUERA WATERSHED

Background: The State Department of Fish and Game's 6,800-acre Knoxville Wildlife was established, through the efforts of BRBNA partners in 2000. At the same time, partner Homestake Mining Company donated a conservation easement on its adjacent 7,600-acre McLaughlin Mine Property to the Land Trust of Napa County. The reclaimed mining property is now used by the University of California as an important element of its statewide Natural Reserve System attracting millions of dollars of research funding annually. Both the McLaughlin Reserve and the Knoxville Wildlife Area border portions of the 70,000-acre Cache Creek Natural Area managed by the Bureau of Land Management as well as their Knoxville Public Lands.

The Napa Ranch: The 13,500 acre Napa Ranch, on the market for years, lies between the Knoxville Wildlife Area on the east and BLM lands to the west and includes over eight miles of Eticuera Creek. The addition of the Napa Ranch to the Knoxville Wildlife Area was identified as a top priority by the Department of Fish and Game and the entire BRBNA partnership in 2002.

The State Wildlife Conservation Board has taken the lead on the expansion of the Knoxville Wildlife Area and authorized more than half of the needed funds. The State Coastal Conservancy, the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation, The Land Trust of Napa County, The Nature Conservancy and the Gamble Ranch have joined WCB to support the project. Collectively these organizations have provided the remaining funds needed along with important logistical support. In addition, a rangeland easement, now under discussion, would protect the last remaining link between the headwaters of Knoxville and Eticuera Creeks and Lake Berryessa.

Knoxville/Eticuera Watershed Vegetation Management: All of the private property owners and public land managers within the Knoxville/Eticuera Watershed have acknowledged the benefits of watershed wide, collaborative stewardship, particularly to control the non-native species invading the grasslands and riparian corridors of the area. The U.C. Reserve and the Fish and Game Wildlife Area are in the third year of a joint program to control Tamarisk in the upper half of the watershed and plan to extend the effort south with the expansion of the Wildlife Area. The Department of Fish and Game has also contracted with Reserve scientists to prepare the required management plan for the Wildlife Area.

Grassland invasive species are more difficult to control and proposed control strategies have not been fully field tested in large-scale applications. The Gamble Ranch has

embarked on a program to develop appropriately timed, short-duration, intensive grazing practices that both optimize grass fed livestock production and control grassland invasive species. The Napa office of the NRCS is assisting the Gambles in their vegetation management. The NRCS and the U.C. Extension office for Napa County have initiated a collaborative effort to develop and implement a vegetation management and stewardship program for the entire Knoxville/Eticuera Watershed. Additional partners in the effort include the California Department of Forestry, Napa County Conservation Development and Planning, the Napa County Watershed Information Center, Homestake Mining Company, the McLaughlin Reserve, the Bureau of Land Management, the Department of Fish and Game, the Gamble Ranch, the Land Trust of Napa County and The Nature Conservancy and Audubon California. The BRBNA GIS Environmental Data Base and in particular its detailed mapping of existing vegetation developed by the U.C. Davis Information Center for the Environment, provide the basis for the group's vegetation management planning. Evaluation of prospective management strategies will be based in part on recent research on post fire ecology conducted by a team of U.C. scientists based at the McLaughlin Reserve. Successful grazing strategies developed at the Gamble Ranch can be applied elsewhere as appropriate throughout the watershed.

Integrating Recreation: The Knoxville/Eticuera BRBNA partners are additionally working to coordinate the trails and other recreational opportunities on the public lands in the watershed and to integrate these with those planned for the rest of the BRBNA, particularly the camping and other visitor services that will be provided under the updated Bureau of Reclamation Visitor Services Plan now pending for Lake Berryessa.

Management Feedback and Adjustments: In the long-term, successful stewardship of the Knoxville/Eticuera Watershed depends on the partners' collective ability to monitor the consequences of the implementation of their joint management strategies and to adjust stewardship practices in response to that feed back. The partners have begun discussions about the need and prospects for a collaborative monitoring and feedback effort, relying in part on the technical and scientific support available through the McLaughlin Reserve.

PROTECTION AND STEWARDSHIP OF PRIVATELY OWNED RANCHES

Grass Fed Livestock Business and Stewardship Model.

The partners believe that a prosperous working ranch is best able to employ beneficial stewardship practices. Therefore, in addition to promoting opportunities for the owners of private, working ranches in the BRBNA to protect their lands from subdivision and future development, the partners are collaborating on the development of a business model or strategy for the production of grass fed livestock that both optimizes profitability AND stewardship. Model development will be integrated with the Knoxville/Eticuera Watershed Vegetation Management effort to ensure consistency of management practices and the tool, once developed, made available to the other ranchers in the area. There are discussions among the ranchers about the need for some irrigated

pasture in the immediate area and collaborating on the establishment of a regional slaughterhouse for locally produced animals. These new developments in ranching strategies coincide with a generational change in ranch managers, as many of the current practitioners are now elderly and retiring.

Bear Creek Watershed Restoration.

Bear Valley and the 15,000-acre Bear Valley Ranch, which occupy the northern portion of the watershed, have been protected by a rangeland easement developed by the American Land Conservancy and held by the California Rangeland Trust. The valley is visited by thousands of people each year to view what has been described as “one of the grandest displays of lowland field wildflowers remaining in northern California.” Remnant native prairie also occurs in Bear Valley, providing some of the only remaining examples of this type in the state. The wild flowers and other native plants are in danger of being displaced by invasive non-native species such as yellow starthistle, tamarisk, perennial pepperweed, medusahead, barb goatgrass, jointed goatgrass, giant reed, and tree-of-heaven. The ecological, agricultural, and recreational damage caused by these weeds is enormous and there is a critical need to reduce populations and halt their spread

The Bear Creek Watershed Restoration Partners have been working collaboratively to protect biological diversity, sustain ranching, educate people about invasive plant management and ecosystem restoration methods, and to enhance recreation in the 65,000 acre Bear Creek Watershed for over five years. Led by Craig Thompsen of the U.C. Agricultural Extension Service and funded in part by the National Fish and Wildlife and Packard Foundations, the Bureau of Land Management and the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Bear Creek Partners include:

- American Land Conservancy
- Ashley Payne Ranch
- Blue Ridge-Berryessa Natural Area Conservation Partnership
- Bureau of Land Management
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
- California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS)
- California Native Plant Society (Sacramento Section)
- California Natural Diversity Data Base
- California Rangeland Trust
- Colusa County Agricultural Commissioner
- Colusa County Cooperative Extension Farm Advisor
- Colusa County Public Works
- Dow AgroSciences
- Fout Springs Youth Facility
- Integrated Environmental Restoration Services, Inc.
- Keegan Ranch
- Monsanto
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Natural Resources Conservation District, Colusa County

- Packard Foundation
- Pestmaster Services
- Private Donors
- Sparrowk Livestock
- UC Davis Watershed Management Program
- Volunteers
- Weed Management Area (Colusa, Glenn, and Tehama counties)
- Wilbur Hot Springs Resort
- Wildlife Conservation Board

The Bear Creek Watershed partners have launched a multi-year, cooperative, watershed-level weed control program that includes a combination of detection, eradication, containment, and management measures, using an integrated approach of mowing, cutting, controlled livestock grazing, prescribed burning, herbicide applications, and manual control. In concert with this program, the group is taking steps to improve the functioning of the Bear Creek drainage through grazing management, erosion control, and habitat improvement measures.