

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

### Acquisition of Habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species at Pixley National Wildlife Refuge

FONSI 12-11-MP

Recommended by:

Douglas Kleinsmith  
Douglas Kleinsmith  
Natural Resource Specialist  
Mid-Pacific Regional Office

Date: 9/10/12

Concurred by:

Dan Strait  
Dan Strait  
Program Manager, Habitat  
Restoration Program  
Mid-Pacific Regional Office

Date: 9/12/12

Approved by:

Anastasia Leigh  
Anastasia Leigh  
Regional Environmental Officer  
Mid-Pacific Region

Date: 10/16/2012



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Mid-Pacific Region

September 2012

## Background

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) proposes to provide \$389,303 from the Central Valley Project Improvement Act Habitat Restoration Program (HRP) to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to acquire 197.5 acres of land from willing sellers for threatened and endangered species in Tulare County, California. The subject parcels are located within the current approved boundary of the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). These species and their habitats have been impacted by the Central Valley Project, and restoration or enhancement of their habitat is in keeping with the goals of the HRP.

Natural, uncultivated lands are rare in the San Joaquin Valley. Due largely to human disturbance, less than three percent of natural lands remain in the valley. Further, the natural lands that remain are scattered and isolated, hindering the colonization and dispersal of wildlife. As a result, wildlife that depend on such habitat have experienced devastating declines. Some of these species, including the Tipton kangaroo rat, San Joaquin kit fox, and blunt-nosed leopard lizard, are now listed as endangered on both the state and federal level. Moreover, since 1993 populations of Tipton kangaroo rats and San Joaquin kit foxes have declined sharply in the vicinity of the subject parcels.

This project would conserve some of these rare, natural habitats within the acquisition boundary of the Pixley NWR in Tulare County. The complicated land ownership pattern in and around the refuge consisting of numerous small parcels has contributed to the lack of past agricultural development. This same land use pattern threatens loss of habitat through conversion to residential home sites. This project would help ensure that healthy grassland habitats in and around Pixley NWR would be conserved and maintained to benefit listed and special status species, both those that are currently documented on the subject parcels, and those from nearby populations that could expand onto the parcels (and which have been found on the refuge in the past).

## Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

**No Action:** Reclamation would not provide \$389,303 from the HRP to the FWS to acquire 197.5 acres of San Joaquin Valley upland habitat in Tulare County, California adjacent to Pixley National Wildlife Refuge. FWS would be required to obtain the \$389,303 from other private and public sources. If alternative funding cannot be secured, FWS may not be able to acquire the habitat.

**Proposed Action:** Reclamation would provide \$389,303 from the HRP to the FWS to acquire 197.5 acres of San Joaquin Valley upland habitat in Tulare County, California adjacent to Pixley National Wildlife Refuge.

As part of the refuge, the properties would be monitored and managed over the long term by FWS resource managers, following the refuge management plan. The properties consist primarily of healthy grassland habitats and should require little restoration after being conveyed to the refuge. FWS resource managers would determine when and if appropriate management treatments would be applied in the future.

# Findings

Based on the attached environmental assessment (EA), Reclamation finds that the Proposed Action is not a major Federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The attached EA describes the existing environmental resources in the Proposed Action area and evaluates the effects of the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives on the resources. This EA was prepared in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Department of the Interior Regulations (43 CFR Part 46). Effects on several environmental resources were evaluated and found to be absent or minor. This analysis is provided in the attached EA, and the analysis in the EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

Following are the reasons why the impacts of the proposed action are not significant:

1. Acquisition of habitat will not change land use.
2. Acquisition will permanently protect 197.5 acres of healthy upland habitat for endangered species including the blunt-nosed leopard lizard, San Joaquin kit fox, and Tipton kangaroo rat, as well as other special status species.
3. The proposed action will not affect listed or proposed threatened or endangered species.
4. The proposed action has no potential to affect historic properties.
5. The proposed action will not affect any Indian Trust Assets.
6. Implementing the proposed action will not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities.
7. The proposed action will not have significant cumulative impacts.
8. There is no potential for the effects to be considered highly controversial.

# RECLAMATION

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## **Environmental Assessment**

### **Acquisition of Habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species at Pixley National Wildlife Refuge**

**September 2012**



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Mid-Pacific Region

September 2012

### **Mission Statements**

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our Nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to Indian Tribes and our commitment to island communities.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

# Section 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

In conformance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has prepared this Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate and disclose any potential environmental impacts associated with providing \$389,303 from the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) Habitat Restoration Program (HRP) to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to acquire 197.5 acres of land from willing sellers for threatened and endangered species in Tulare County, California. The subject parcels are located within the current approved boundary of the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) (Figures 1, 2, and 3).

The HRP was developed during the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultation process to ensure that the existing operation of the Central Valley Project (CVP), implementation of the CVPIA, and renewal of CVP water service contracts would not jeopardize listed or proposed species or adversely affect designated or proposed critical habitat. Accordingly, the HRP implements actions that would protect, restore, and enhance special-status species and their habitats affected by the CVP.

This EA was prepared in accordance with NEPA, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and DOI Regulations (43 CFR Part 46).

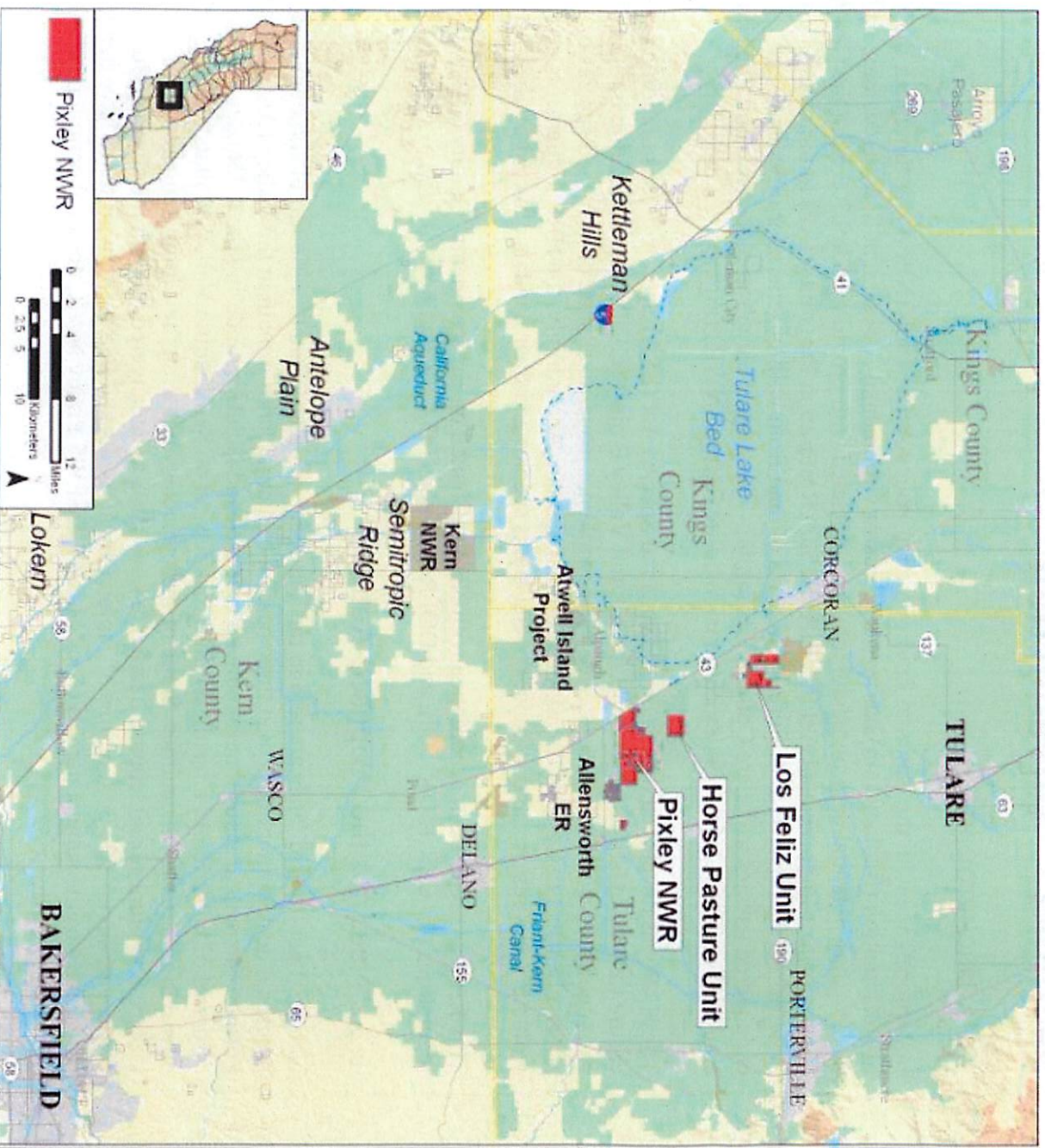
## 1.2 Need for the Proposed Action

Natural, uncultivated lands are rare in the San Joaquin Valley. Due to agricultural and municipal and industrial development, less than three percent of natural lands remain in the Valley (Anderson 1991). Further, the natural lands that remain are scattered and isolated, hindering the colonization and dispersal of wildlife. As a result, wildlife that depend on San Joaquin Valley habitats have experienced devastating population declines. Some of these species, including the Tipton kangaroo rat, San Joaquin kit fox, and blunt-nosed leopard lizard, are now listed as endangered on both the state and federal level. Moreover, since 1993 populations of Tipton kangaroo rats and San Joaquin kit foxes have declined in the vicinity of the subject parcels (Nick Stanley, USFWS Pixley NWR, personal communication, February 2011).

The proposed action would conserve some of these rare, natural habitats within the acquisition boundary of the Pixley NWR in Tulare County. The complicated land ownership pattern in and around the refuge, consisting of numerous small parcels, has contributed to the lack of past agricultural development. This same land use pattern threatens loss of habitat through conversion to residential home sites. The action would help ensure that healthy grassland habitats in and around Pixley NWR would be conserved and maintained to benefit listed and special status species, both those that are currently documented on the subject parcels, and those from nearby populations that could expand onto the parcels (and which have been found on the refuge in the past).



Figure 1. Pixley National Wildlife Refuge.





**Figure 2.**  
**Location of Parcels within Pixley National Wildlife Refuge**

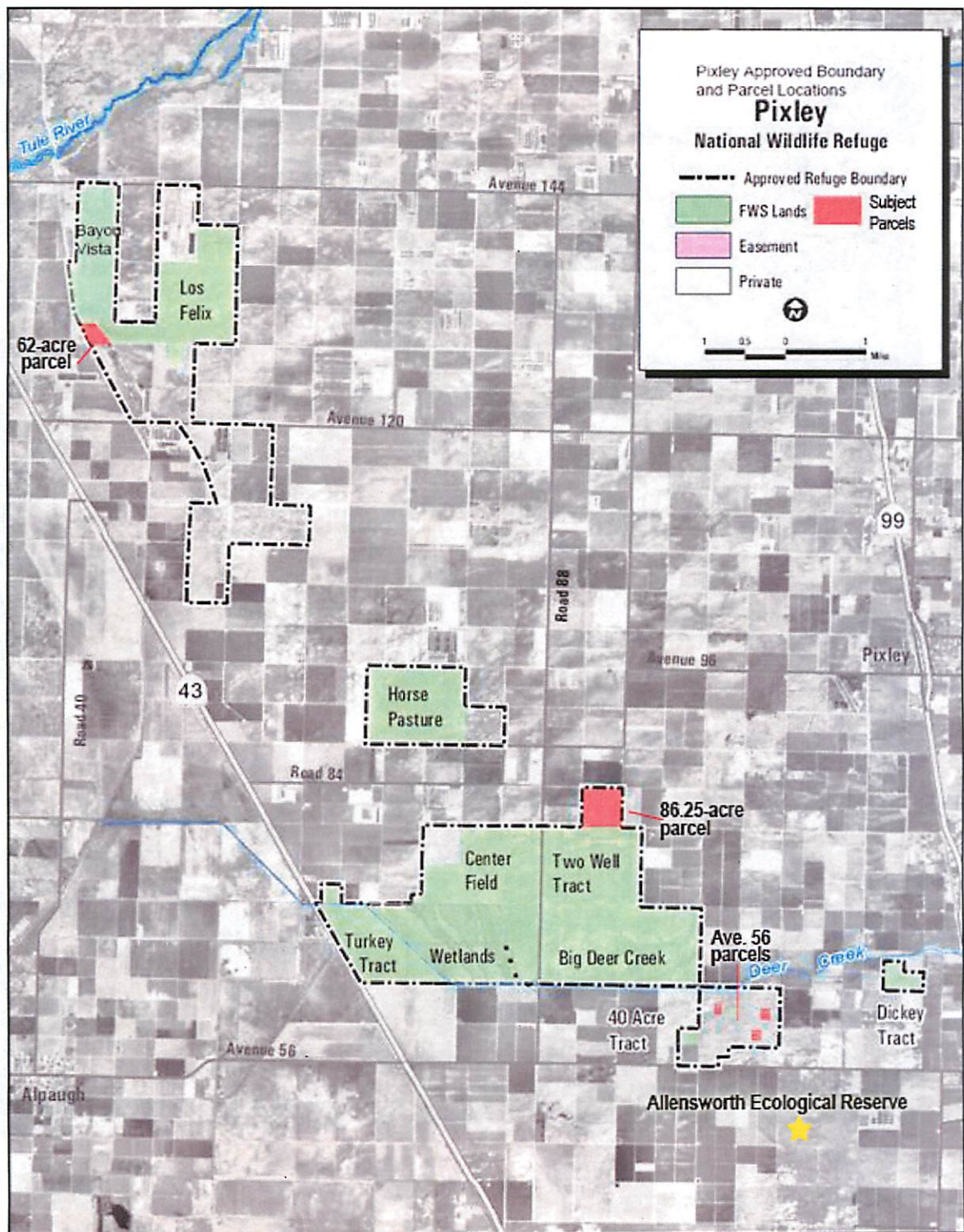
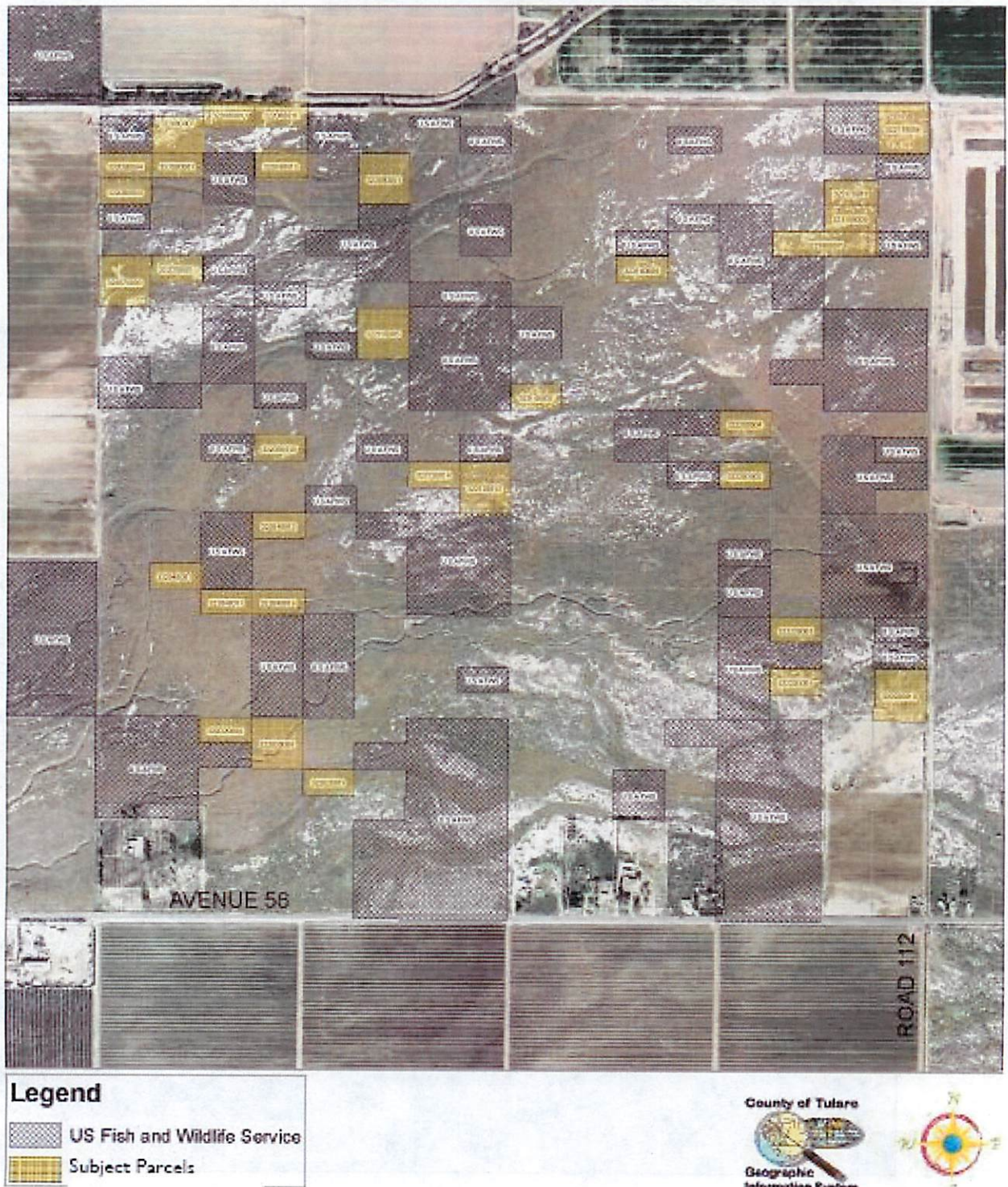




Figure 3.  
Map of "Avenue 56 Parcels" – Detail of Parcels



## 1.3 Potential Resource Issues

This EA analyzes the affected environment of the Proposed Action and No Action Alternatives in order to determine potential impacts and cumulative effects to Biological Resources.

## 1.4 Resources Not Analyzed in Detail

Effects on several environmental resources were examined and found to be minor. Because of this, the following resources were eliminated from further discussion in this EA: Air Quality; Groundwater; Water Quality; Aesthetic Resources; Geology; Global Climate Change; Soils; Seismicity; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Land Use and Agriculture; Noise; Socioeconomics, Population and Housing; Recreation; Transportation and Circulation; and Utilities and Public Services.

The following resources have minor or no impacts but are being described here due to Department of the Interior and Reclamation concerns:

### 1.4.1 Cultural Resources

Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic districts, sites, buildings, structures, objects, cultural landscapes, sacred sites, and traditional cultural properties. Within the broad range of cultural resources are those that have recognized significance, which are called “historic properties.” Historic properties are cultural resources that have been determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.) requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. The regulations implementing Section 106 of the NHPA are found at 36 CFR Part 800. Pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1), the current Proposed Action, which is limited to providing funding to the FWS, involves the type of activity that does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties. The proposed action will have no impacts on cultural resources. (See attached memo.)

### 1.4.2 Indian Trust Assets

Indian Trust Assets (ITAs) are legal interests in property or rights held in trust by the United States for Indian Tribes or individual Indians. Indian reservations, Rancherias, and Public Domain Allotments are common ITAs in California. The proposed action does not have a potential to affect ITAs. (See attached memo.)

### 1.4.3 Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898 requires each Federal agency to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, including social and economic effects of its program, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. Since there would be no impact to any populations, there would be no adverse human health or environmental effects to minority or low-income populations.

## Section 2 Alternatives Including Proposed Action

### 2.1 No Action Alternative

Reclamation would not provide \$389,303 from the HRP to the FWS to acquire 197.5 acres of San Joaquin Valley upland habitat in Tulare County, California adjacent to Pixley National Wildlife Refuge. FWS would be required to obtain the \$389,303 from other private and public sources. If alternative funding cannot be secured, FWS may not be able to acquire the habitat.

### 2.2 Proposed Action

Reclamation would provide \$389,303 from the HRP to the FWS to acquire 197.5 acres of San Joaquin Valley upland habitat in Tulare County, California, adjacent to Pixley NWR. The parcels are shown in Figures 2 and 3, and are described below:

1. 62-acre parcel: Latitude: 36.021544, Longitude: -119.479065, Township 22 S, Range 23 E, section 10 of the Mount Diablo Base and Meridian. Located on the west edge of the Los Feliz tract of the refuge, and just south of the Bayou Vista tract which was purchased through Reclamation's Central Valley Project Conservation Program (CVPCP) in 2004. The parcel is located within the south half of the southwest quarter of Section 10.
2. 86.25-acre parcel: Latitude: 35.939031, Longitude: -119.36285, Township 23 S, Range 24 E, section 10 of the Mount Diablo Base and Meridian. Made up of parcels 1-11, adjacent to the northern edge of the Two Well tract of the refuge, and southeast of the Horse Pasture tract within the southeast quarter of Section 10.
3. "Avenue 56" parcels (various small parcels totaling 49.25 acres): Latitude 35.896421, Longitude -119.333324, Township 23 S, Range 24 E, Section 25 of the Mount Diablo Base and Meridian. Located north of Avenue 56 and south of Deer Creek, approximately 3.5 miles east of State Route 43. The parcels are interspersed with lands owned by the refuge in the Ledezma unit, creating a rough checkerboard pattern.

As part of the refuge, the properties would be monitored and managed over the long term by FWS resource managers, following the refuge management plan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2005). The properties consist primarily of healthy grassland habitats that should require little restoration after being conveyed to the refuge. FWS resource managers would determine when and if appropriate management treatments would be applied in the future.



## Section 3      **Affected Environment & Environmental Consequences**

This section identifies the potentially affected environmental resources and the environmental consequences that could result from the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternatives.

### 3.1      **Biological Resources**

#### 3.1.1      **Affected Environment**

Pixley NWR consists of some 5,350 acres of protected upland habitat that includes grassland, alkali playa, and scattered vernal pool habitats. The primary plant community on the proposed acquisitions is a mix of native and non-native grasses, characteristic of Annual Grassland described in the California Department of Fish and Game's California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System. Cattle grazing is used by the refuge to control non-native invasive grasses, promote native vegetation, provide open habitat suitable for target species, and reduce risk of fire. Some depressions and remnant channels may reflect past flooding from Deer Creek, which runs along the south and southwest sides of the refuge, and is near the Avenue 56 parcels. Deer Creek is the only riparian habitat on the refuge, and has been channelized and constrained by flood control levees to keep adjacent lands dry. The primary vegetation type on the parcels is a combination of native and non-native grasslands that include red brome and red-stem filaree (non-natives) mixed with alkali heath and common spikeweed (native). Alkali goldenbush is sparsely distributed in some areas.

The refuge and the site of the proposed action are within the range of, and provides suitable habitat for, three federal and state-listed endangered species: the blunt-nosed leopard lizard, the Tipton kangaroo rat, and San Joaquin kit fox. Surveys of refuge lands in 2007 and 2011 (Van Horn Job et al. 2011) documented a healthy population of endangered blunt-nosed leopard lizards, including observations and evidence of the species at sites adjacent to two of the subject parcels (the 86.25-acre parcel and the Avenue 56 parcels). The 2011 study did not include the Los Feliz unit, which is near the 62-acre parcel, though suitable habitat for the lizard is likely to exist there as well. The study also showed a "robust and widespread" population of coast horned lizards, a special status species whose conservation is of concern due to range-wide population declines (Van Horn Job et al. 2011).

Endangered Tipton kangaroo rats and San Joaquin kit foxes have been documented in the past on Pixley NWR and portions of the nearby Allensworth Ecological Reserve, though populations of both species have declined since 1993. Nevertheless, the subject parcels still contain highly suitable habitat for these species. The *Recovery plan for Upland Species of the San Joaquin Valley, California* (FWS 1998) describes the area as among the best available for Tipton kangaroo rats.

Refuge grasslands provide breeding habitats for western meadowlark, killdeer, and burrowing owl (a California species of special concern). Abundant California ground squirrels support a variety of raptor species including Swainson's hawk (California threatened) and golden eagle (a California fully protected species). The riparian area along Deer Creek supports native willow and cottonwood trees and shrubs that provide habitat for migratory birds, including the yellow warbler. Wet meadow areas



support long-billed curlews and other grassland-associated shorebird species. Areas with sparse ground cover support mountain plovers, a species proposed for federal listing.

### 3.1.2 Environmental Consequences

#### No Action

If Reclamation does not provide funding to FWS to purchase the parcels, FWS would have to find additional funds from potential funding sources. The effects of no action would be the same as for the proposed action if the funds were obtained from another source. If not, FWS would not be able to purchase the parcels. Unprotected, the parcels could be converted to residential or agricultural uses, or may degrade through lack of management. Without management (such as through livestock grazing to keep grass densities low), conditions on the parcels could deteriorate to the point that they no longer provide suitable habitats for listed species. This could reduce the likelihood of recovery for listed species in the area.

#### Proposed Action

Providing funding to FWS would permanently protect 197.5 acres of healthy upland habitats for endangered species including the blunt-nosed leopard lizard, San Joaquin kit fox, and Tipton kangaroo rat, as well as for other special status species. Endangered and other special status species expected to benefit from the project are listed in Table 1. Benefits to species would be achieved when the parcels are acquired from willing sellers to create larger contiguous protected areas within the Pixley NWR. That would allow refuge staff to improve management and habitat enhancement, reduce habitat fragmentation and reduce impacts to listed species by increasing protected lands within the refuge. In addition, the proposed action would:

- support species recovery goals of the FWS' *Recovery Plan for Upland Species of the San Joaquin Valley, California*.
- help fulfill the goals of the Kern and Pixley NWR's Comprehensive Conservation Plan.
- provide habitat linkages between Pixley NWR and the nearby Allensworth Ecological Reserve, which supports similar habitats and species.
- improve opportunities for potential reintroduction and recovery of San Joaquin kit foxes to the region that includes Kern NWR, Pixley NWR, Allensworth Ecological Preserve, and the Reclamation/BLM Atwell Island Demonstration Project.
- help fulfill the goals of the HRP to restore and protect species and habitats impacted by the CVP.

Conserving more habitat and creating larger contiguous protected areas and linkages among protected areas could aid in recovery of the species (Cypher et al. 2011). In addition, conservation of San Joaquin kit fox and Tipton kangaroo rat habitat at Pixley NWR would contribute to regional efforts to conserve habitats for these species at Kern NWR, Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Atwell Island Demonstration Project, and Allensworth Ecological Reserve (within one mile of Pixley NWR).

The proposed action would not affect any listed or proposed threatened or endangered species.

**Table 1**  
**Special Status Species benefiting from Pixley NWR Land Acquisition Project**

Species (Common Name)	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	Other
<b>MAMMALS</b>				
Tipton Kangaroo Rat	<i>Dipodomys nitratoide nitratoide</i>	Endangered	Endangered	
San Joaquin Kit Fox	<i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i>	Endangered	Endangered	
American Badger	<i>Taxida taxus</i>		Species of Special Concern	
San Joaquin Pocket Mouse	<i>Perognathus inornatus</i>	BLM Sensitive	Special Status Species	
<b>REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS</b>				
Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard	<i>Gambelia sila</i>	Endangered	Endangered	
Coast Horned Lizard	<i>Phrynosoma coronatum</i>	BLM Sensitive	Species of Special Concern	
<b>BIRDS</b>				
Swainson's Hawk	<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>	USFS Sensitive	Threatened	
Greater Sandhill Crane	<i>Grus canadensis tabida</i>	USFS Sensitive	Threatened	
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>		Fully Protected	
Mountain Plover	<i>Charadrius montanus</i>	Proposed Threatened	Species of Special Concern	
Burrowing Owl	<i>Athene cunicularia</i>	BLM Sensitive, Fed. Species of Mgmt. Concern	Species of Special Concern	
Long-billed Curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>		Watch List	
Lesser Sandhill Crane	<i>Grus canadensis canadensis</i>		Species of Special Concern	
<b>INVERTEBRATES</b>				
(None given)	<i>Stenomorpha spiculatus</i>			previously thought to be extinct
Oblique-lined Tiger Beetle	<i>Cicindela tranquebarica joaquinensis</i>			CNDDB list: G5T1S1 (for <i>Cicindela tranquebarica ssp.</i> )
Morrison's Blister Beetle	<i>Lytta morrisoni</i>			CNDDB list: G1G2 S1S2

### 3.2 Cumulative Effects

According to the CEQ regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA, a cumulative impact is defined as *the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the*

*action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.*

There are no adverse impacts associated with implementing the Proposed Action, and therefore there are no cumulative effects to consider.

## **Section 4      Consultation and Coordination**

- In December 2010, Pixley NWR staff submitted a proposal to the CVPIA HRP requesting funds for the proposed action.
- On February 25, 2011, CVPIA HRP program managers toured the site of the proposed action with refuge representative Nick Stanley, and consulted with Mr. Stanley regarding the intent and purposes of the action.
- On March 16, 2011, members of the CVPIA HRP Technical Team reviewed the proposal along with other proposals submitted for consideration. The proposal was not selected for funding at that time.
- In December 2011 the American Lands Conservancy (ALC), on behalf of the refuge, resubmitted the proposal for consideration for funding in Fiscal Year 2012.
- On March 29, 2012, Reclamation and FWS management approved ALC's proposal for funding. In April 2012, ALC was disbanded. The CVPIA HRP program managers then funded the acquisition with the FWS through an interagency agreement.



## Section 5    References

Anderson, R.L. et al, 1991. *Southern San Joaquin Valley Ecosystems Protection Program: Natural Lands Inventory and Maps, Southern San Joaquin Valley Ecosystem Protection Program*. California Energy Commission, Sacramento.

Cypher, Bryan et al, 2011. *Suitability of Potential Reintroduction Sites for San Joaquin Kit Foxes*. California State University, Stanislaus Endangered Species Recovery Program, Turlock, CA.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2005, *Kern-Pixley Comprehensive Conservation Plan*. California/Nevada Refuge Planning Office, Sacramento, CA.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1998. *Recovery Plan for Upland Species of the San Joaquin Valley, California*. Region 1, Portland, OR.

Van Horn Job, Christine et al., 2011. *Blunt-Nosed Leopard Lizard Surveys at Pixley National Wildlife Refuge in 2011*. California State University, Stanislaus Endangered Species Recovery Program, Turlock, CA.

# Appendix A

## Cultural Resources Compliance

**From:** Goodsell, Joanne E  
**Sent:** Friday, August 24, 2012 9:11 AM  
**To:** Kleinsmith, Douglas H  
**Cc:** Strait, Daniel H; Barnes, Amy J; Bruce, Brandee E; Fogerty, John A; Nickels, Adam M; Perry, Laureen M; Soule, William E; Williams, Scott A  
**Subject:** Pixley NWR habitat acquisition - Section 106 compliance

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Project Tracking No. 12-SCAO-182

Project Name: Acquisition of Habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species at Pixley National Wildlife Refuge

Doug,

Reclamation's proposed action to provide \$389,303 from the Central Valley Project Conservation Program (CVPCP) to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to acquire 197.5 acres of San Joaquin Valley upland habitat in Tulare County, California, has no potential to cause effects to historic properties pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800.3(a)(1). The acquired land will be added to the FWS's Pixley National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). Acquisition of this land by FWS will help ensure that healthy grassland habitat in and around Pixley NWR will be conserved and maintained to benefit listed and special status species. As part of Pixley NWR, the lands will be monitored and managed over the long term by FWS resource managers and subject to the FWS refuge management plan.

As the proposed action has no potential to affect historic properties, Reclamation has no further obligations under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). This email concludes the Section 106 process for this undertaking. Please retain a copy of this correspondence with the administration record for this action.

Joanne Goodsell, M.A., Archaeologist  
Bureau of Reclamation, Mid-Pacific Regional Office  
2800 Cottage Way, MP-153  
Sacramento, CA 95825  
(916) 978-5499 [jgoodsell@usbr.gov](mailto:jgoodsell@usbr.gov)

## **Appendix B**

### **Indian Trust Assets Compliance**

**From:** Rivera, Patricia L  
**Sent:** Friday, August 10, 2012 3:28 PM  
**To:** Kleinsmith, Douglas H; Williams, Mary D (Diane); Robbins, Eleanor J (Ellie)  
**Subject:** RE: Two ITA requests for Stubblefield and for Pixley--DIANE AND ELLIE THIS IS ADMIN

Doug,

I reviewed the proposed actions to:

1. Provide \$574,567 from the Central Valley Project Conservation Program (CVPCP) to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to help purchase the 1,615-acre Stubblefield Ranch property. The property is the only private ownership between CPNM lands owned by BLM and Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), owned U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), and thus serves as a crucial link and wildlife movement corridor between currently protected lands within the Carrizo Plain, Cuyama Valley and the southern San Joaquin Valley. The purchase of the property by BLM is critical to ensure the protection of an unbroken habitat corridor for several San Joaquin Valley ecosystem threatened and endangered species, including San Joaquin kit fox, giant kangaroo rat, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, California condor, Kern primrose sphinx moth, San Joaquin antelope squirrel, and San Joaquin whipsnake.
2. Provide \$389,303 to help acquire 197.5 acres of San Joaquin Valley upland habitat adjacent to Pixley National Wildlife Refuge (Pixley) in Tulare County, California. The project will result in the protection of primarily undisturbed native and non-native grassland habitat needed by endangered species, including San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, and Tipton kangaroo rat, as well as habitat for special status species. The subject parcels are located within the current approved boundary of Pixley, and their conservation would continue efforts supported by the CVPCP over the last several years to connect isolated portions of the refuge.

The proposed actions do not have a potential to affect Indian Trust Assets.

Patricia