COUNTY of MARIPOSA
P.O. Box 784, Mariposa, CA 95338 (209) 966-3222

BOB PICKARD, CHAIR
GARRY R. PARKER, VICE-CHAIR
LEE STETSON
DOUG BALMAIN
JANET BIBBY

MARIPOSA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
MINUTE ORDER

TO: RESOLUTION FILE
FROM: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board
SUBJECT: US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE CRITICAL HABITAT DESIGNATION Resolution No. 03-84

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF MARIPOSA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA,

ADOPTED THIS Order on March 25, 2003

ACTION AND VOTE:

Resolution Authorizing the Chairman to Sign a Letter Opposing the Critical Habitat Designation for Mariposa County Proposed by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Chairman Pickard)

BOARD ACTION: Following discussion, (M)Balmain, (S)Bibby, Res. 03-84 was adopted/Ayes: Balmain, Bibby, Parker, Pickard; Noes: Stetson.

cc: File
March 25, 2003

Field Supervisor
Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office
2800 Cottage Way, W-2605
Sacramento, CA 95825

Re: Comments Opposing the Proposed Critical-Habitat and Economic Analysis

Dear Field Supervisor:

On behalf of the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors I would like to thank you for the extended opportunity to provide comments on the proposed Critical-Habitat designation under consideration by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has identified thirty-six of the 58 counties in California as having habitat that is designated critical-habitat under the Endangered Species Act. Under the current proposal approximately 1.7 million acres will be designated as the habitat for 15 wetland animals and plants. Mariposa County has approximately 450,000 acres or 51 percent of the county in public ownership. In addition, nearly 18,000 acres is being proposed as critical habitat affecting nearly 4 percent of the land that would be available for some measure of resource based economic development. Mariposa County is also home to Yosemite National Park, which has its own protections or restrictions when it comes to resource based economic development within its boundaries.

Mariposa County is currently in the process of completely updating our County General Plan. The Board of Supervisors believes very strongly that critical-habitats and similar issues should be left to local planning decisions. For example, your analysis points to the issue of land development activities affecting critical habitat in the Sierra Nevada Foothill region. Your analysis goes on to say that in this region the population is projected to increase by 38 percent, or 56,000 people, over the 20-year period ending in 2020. The region that you have identified consists of four counties, Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa, and Tuolumne, further attributing over 75 percent of the proposed growth in Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties. The County General Plan is best suited for identifying policies for controlled growth along with maintaining consistency with the other mandatory elements.
The nearly 18,000 acres of Critical-Habitat proposed in Mariposa County will have an adverse impact on economic future by restricting the public use on these public lands. Over half of the lands in Mariposa County are publicly protected from the impacts of growth combined with an additional 25 percent of the private land in the county currently under contract in the Williamson Act. We believe sound land use practices as approved in our General Plan are the best approach for protecting habitat and providing lands necessary for the future.

Mariposa County would also like to provide the Fish and Wildlife Service with maps outlining where public lands are in relation to privately owned lands. Also we would like the opportunity to denote the lands that are under the Williamson Act, which has certain restrictions tied to growth placed on them. Please contact our Planning Department at 209-966-5151 to arrange for viewing the above-mentioned maps.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these comments and if I can provide you with any further information on this matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

BOB PICKARD
Chairman

cc:  Congressman George Radanovich
     Mariposa County Board of Supervisors
     Merced County Board of Supervisors
     Regional Council of Rural Counties
     California State Association of Counties
     Wagarman & Associates
     Mariposa Farm Bureau

be: Planning