

Planning Update 2

Proposed El Toro National Wildlife Refuge

GREETINGS!

This is the second in a series of updates from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) designed to keep you informed and involved in planning for the proposed El Toro National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge).

The proposed El Toro Refuge is located in Orange County on open space that has been part of the Marine Corps Air Station El Toro (see map). Encompassing approximately 975 acres, the proposed El Toro Refuge would protect rare Southern California habitats, including coastal sage scrub, riparian woodlands, and stands of native grasses. These habitats are home to federally listed endangered and threatened species as well as a number of other species of conservation concern.

These planning updates will inform you of our progress on wildlife habitat protection plans for the proposed Refuge.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

We would like to thank everyone who has commented on the proposed El Toro Refuge, whether by mail, e-mail, phone, fax, or during the public meeting held in September. Approximately 75 interested individuals attended the meeting. Based on the comments you submitted, the Service has identified the biological and social issues and concerns listed below. The Service will analyze major issues in an environmental document in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Habitat and wildlife management. A few individuals expressed concern that the proposed Refuge would be divided up and used for purposes other than wildlife. Creating corridors linking the proposed Refuge to other habitat areas and creating burrowing owl habitat were suggested.

Public use opportunities. Many of you expressed an interest in public access and the types of public uses allowed. Suggested public uses included continuing the archery range; creating equestrian, hiking, and biking trails; initiating a bow hunting program; and introducing wildlife tours.

Contaminant cleanup. A few people said they would like all contaminants cleaned up at the proposed Refuge.

Non-wildlife related uses. Concern was expressed about management activities at the proposed Refuge, and whether the activities would impact existing or future water and waste water facilities.

AIRPORT AND ALTON PARKWAY

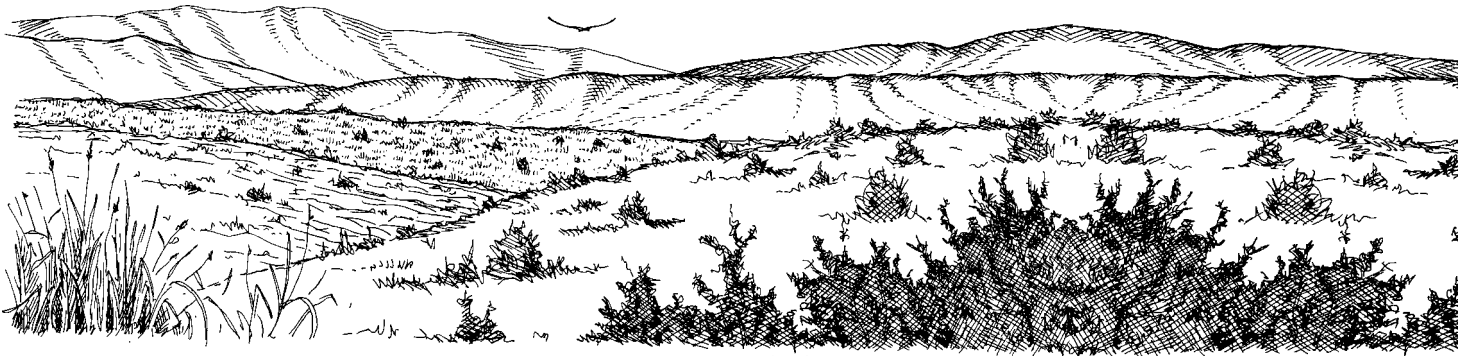
Some people expressed concern about the proposed airport and extension of Alton Parkway. These activities are independent of Refuge establishment.

ORDNANCE RANGE

The Federal Bureau of Investigations has requested acquisition of the ordnance range. If this request is granted, this area would be excluded from the proposed Refuge.



California Gnatcatcher, Kendal Morris, USFWS



Coastal sage scrub © Shari Erickson

WHAT ' S NEXT

The environmental assessment and conceptual management plan will be distributed in April. The environmental assessment will analyze alternative proposals for protection of wildlife and habitat in the proposed Refuge and the potential effects of those alternatives.

The plan will provide an overview of the Service’s proposed management of wildlife and habitats, wildlife dependent recreational activities and other public uses, Refuge facilities, and public outreach.

If you are on our mailing list, we will send you copies of the documents when they are available. Please call us at (800) 662-8933, if you would like to add, delete, or change your address on our mailing list. Unless we hear from you, your name will remain on the mailing list for all future planning updates and documents.

PLANNING INFORMATION ON-LINE

Check out the planning home page. We will offer electronic versions of some of our planning documents, as well as a glossary and some useful links.

Website address:
www.r1.fws.gov/planning/plnhome.html

E-mail address:
r1planning_guest@fws.gov

(For e-mail messages, please type “El Toro NWR” in the subject line. If you send a message as an attached file, submit as an ASCII file, avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption.)



WHO TO CONTACT

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For information on Refuge planning and compliance:
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 (Please type “El Toro” in the subject line)

PLANNING SCHEDULE	
Planning Update #1 Issued	9/16/98
Public Open House	9/30/98
Issue Identification Period Ended	10/30/98
Planning Update #2 Issued	2/99
Environmental Assessment and Conceptual Management Plan Released	4/99
Public Comment Period Ends	5/99
Notice of Decision	6/99
Property Transfer from U.S. Marine Corps to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	7/99

