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July 12, 2022

Ms. Amy Dutschke
United States Department of Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs - Pacific Regional Office
2800 Cottage Way, Rm W-2820
Sacramento, CA 95825

RE: Robinson Rancheria
Notice of On-Reservation Land Acquisition Application (Non-Gaming)
(APN 004-016-41; 004-021-08; 004-021-15; 004-022-08; 201-111-02; 201-111-03;
201-121-01; 201-121-02; 201-131-01; 201-131-02; 201-141-03; 201-141-04; 201-
141-05; 201-141-06)

Dear Ms. Dutschke,

The County of Lake (County) would like to thank the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for the invitation to comment on the application filed by the Robinson Rancheria Pomo Indians of California (Tribe). The County values building strong relationships with its Tribal partners and welcomes being a part of this process. There are three parcels listed on the application that have raised concerns for the County (004-021-08; 004-021-15; 004-022-08) of potential unintended consequences involving the Middle Creek Flood Damage and Ecosystem Restoration Project. There has been significant State and Federal funding authorized and preparations are nearly complete, after over 20 years of work, for the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to move forward. USACE has indicated there is some uncertainty as to how this restoration project will move forward when parcels are taken into trust.

For the remaining eleven parcels, based on the Tribe's description of the property's intended use, the County does not foresee any significant impact beyond a loss of revenue. County staff has been working with the Tribe, BIA, and USACE staff to better understand and resolve potential impacts of this application on the Middle Creek Project, both in financial and operational terms.

The information requested by your agency is detailed below.

Requested Responses - Bureau of Indian Affairs

1) Property Tax Levied on the Properties

As of 2021-2022, the annual property tax levied on the application properties is \$25,824.56 that is distributed to local entities, including the County.

This figure will represent a loss of revenue to the County, but it should be noted that the Tribe is an active partner in our communities and works collaboratively with local government. The Tribe has provided financial support to organizations and has joined with nearby agencies and stakeholders in other efforts, such as the Lake County Tourism Improvement District which has helped promote and market the County as a whole.

2) Assessments on the Properties

The remainder of the aforementioned tax bills represent other charges. As of 2021-2022, these total \$9,085.76, including, but not limited to support for school bonds, fire districts, and other local government.

3) Governmental Services Currently Provided to the Properties

Presently, the Lake County Sheriff's Office remains the primary County agency providing law enforcement services to the Tribe, including the property included in this application. Many other County agencies are involved, whether directly or indirectly in the area, including the County Department of Public Works, which maintains the access roads in the area. There are other local districts, schools, and government entities that provide service as well.

4) Intended Use and Consistency with Zoning

The notice received indicates that the Tribe's intention is to retain the existing use of the property. Based on this assertion, the use described appears to be consistent with current zoning and land uses.

Potential Impact to the Middle Creek Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration Project

The Middle Creek Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration Project (Project) will eliminate flood risk to 18 residential structures, numerous outbuildings and approximately 1,650 acres of agricultural land and will restore damaged habitat and the water quality of the Clear Lake watershed. Reconnection of this large, previously reclaimed area, as a functional wetland is anticipated to have a significant effect on the watershed health and the water quality of Clear Lake. Improved water quality in Clear Lake will also reduce the cost of treating lake water to drinking water standards.

The Project area was "reclaimed" between 1900 and 1940 by constructing levees, creating a slough and reclaiming approximately 1,200 acres of lake bottom and shoreline wetlands for agricultural purposes. In 1958, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers added to the levee system, reclaiming an additional 200 acres of shoreline wetlands. These projects resulted in the physical isolation of over 1,650 acres of wetland and floodplain from the largest tributaries of Clear Lake.

The Lake County Watershed Protection District (District) successfully applied to the California Department of Water Resources (CDWR) for Flood Protection Corridor Program (FPCP) grant funds in February 2003 to begin purchasing property for the Middle Creek Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration Project.

The County requested USACE assist the County in evaluating the project to reduce flood risk and to improve water quality. USACE undertook the Project and it is authorized to provide up to sixty-five percent of the construction cost. The Project consists of reconnecting Scotts and Middle Creek to the historic wetland and floodplain areas by acquiring the reclaimed land, and breaching the existing levee system to create inlets that direct flows into the historically flooded area. The Project removes the flood risk from the properties behind the levee, provides significant water quality benefits and restores large areas of shoreline and riparian habitat that were lost over two-thirds of a century ago.

The County of Lake has no objection to this application but asks that all necessary steps are taken to ensure that approval of the application is accomplished without any negative impacts to the Middle Creek Flood Damage and Ecosystem Restoration Project.

Please feel free to contact Susan Parker, County Administrative Officer, at 707-263-2580 if we can be of any further assistance in your evaluation.

Respectfully submitted,

LAKE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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