

**Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act
Environmentally Sensitive Land Acquisition Nomination
Round 9**

**QUILICI RANCH CONSERVATION EASEMENT
OVER CARSON RIVER CORRIDOR**

1. NARRATIVE STATEMENT

- a. Executive Summary:** The Nature Conservancy presents this nomination for the Bureau of Land Management's acquisition of a conservation easement over the Carson River corridor of the Quilici Ranch. The Quilici Ranch consists of approximately 500 acres located in the rapidly expanding community of Dayton and the Dayton Valley located within Lyon County, Nevada. Lyon County is one of the fastest growing counties in the nation where critical habitat is being threatened by this incompatible development. The Nature Conservancy ranks the river corridor parcel of the Quilici Ranch as a top priority for protection along the Carson River. This parcel consists of approximately 67.1 acres, located on the northern boundary of the ranch. The river corridor provides open space, a scenic view shed, scientific research opportunities, and a vitally important expanse of riparian, wetland, and wet meadow habitat on the Carson River. Protection of this parcel of the Quilici Ranch will protect the river corridor from the threat of development and help keep the surrounding Quilici Ranch floodplain land in agriculture for the foreseeable future.

The Quilici family cares for their land, and their valuable stewardship is reflected in the biodiversity and condition of the river corridor of the ranch. The quality of the riparian forest in this reach is beyond compare. Further, seven specially-designated species are known to occur on this riverine section of the Quilici Ranch property including:

- white-faced ibis *Plagadis chihi*
- northern pintail *Anas acuta*
- cinnamon teal *Anas cyanoptera*
- canvasback *Aythya valiseneria*
- redhead *Aythya americana*
- bald eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*
- mule deer *Odocoileus hemionus*

Although a conservation easement will increase the chances that the Quilici family can continue agriculture and ranching operations on the adjacent ranch parcels, protection of the river corridor in perpetuity becomes even more vital should development of these bordering lands ever occur in the future. This proposed acquisition of critical and highly threatened Dayton Valley freshwater habitat will help to conserve the biological richness of the Carson River for future generations.

b. Name of Property: Quilici Ranch Conservation Easement

c. Nominating Entity: Duane Petite
Carson River Project Director
The Nature Conservancy
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Reno, NV 89501
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A statement authorizing Mr. Petite to represent the owners is included in the owner statement letter contained in this nomination package (See Section 5, *infra.*).

d. Property Owners: Quilici Ranch Corporation

e. Name, address, and phone number of owner's authorized agent if any:

Rita Selmi, Resident Agent
P.O. Box 186
Dayton, NV 89403
Phone: (775) 246-0466

f. Date on which the property was acquired by the current owners: The patent dates of the ranch are March 9, 1870 and February 10, 1897. The Quilici family acquired the property in 1872. The fee title to the ranch is held by the Quilici Ranch Corporation, which is comprised of the following Quilici family members: Sal Quilici, Rita Selmi, Ledo Quilici and Larry Quilici. The incorporation dates of the Quilici Ranch Corporation are 1971 (as a c-corporation) and 1998 (as an s-corporation). The ranch appears to have been conveyed to the corporation on or about April 2, 1971.

g. APN #: 16-341-04 Parcel 2D

h. Legal Description: Parcel 2D as set forth on the parcel map for the Quilici Ranch Corporation recorded in the office of the Lyon County Recorder on September 24, 1996 as document 197723, official records of Lyon County, State of Nevada.

i. GPS Coordinates: (From a GPS location at the southwest corner of Parcel 2D) N 23°41'29"W – 549.72'; N28°59'01"E – 880.35'; S52°06'09"E – 640.00'; N73°46'11"E – 720.94'; N47°37'21"E – 596.19'; N87°51'16"E – 275.05'; S62°24'56"E – 418.35'; N76°24'05"E – 484.88'; N02°38'23"W – 545.33'; N56°04'59"W – 395.85'; N31°41'51"E – 290.72'; N62°04'13"E – 843.84'; S89°43'43"E – 522.35'; S22°27'51"W – 314.90'
(From the same GPS location at the southwest corner of Parcel 2D) N56°49'30"E – 514.00'; N64°53'45"E – 477'; N75°58'15"E – 557'; N77°18'00"E – 706.00'; N77°21'15"E – 678.00';

N66 °19'45"E – 420.00'; N28 °53'55"E – 447.00'; N08 °04'43"E – 641.00'; N31 °38'05"E – 294.00'; N62 °22'30"E – 349.00'

j. County: Lyon County

k. Congressional District: NV-02

l. Size of the Property: The Quilici family would like to sell a conservation easement to the Bureau of Land Management over approximately 67.1 acres of river corridor within their 530.04 acre ranch. The Quilici family will work with BLM to determine the final acreage of the conservation easement.

m. Acquiring Agency: Bureau of Land Management, Carson City Field Office

n. Property Rights Offered for Acquisition:

- Fee Acquisition of Property
- Water Rights
- Surface Rights Only

- X Conservation Easement (e.g., Development Rights): See Section 2.
- Mineral Rights
- Access Easement
- Patented Mining Claims
- Other

o. Rights to be Reserved:

- X Access rights. As part of the conservation easement, the owner reserves the right to occupy and access all parts of the parcel for agricultural purposes and personal enjoyment of the property.
- X Water Rights: No water rights are being offered for acquisition with this conservation easement.
- Mineral interests: The Quilici Family has not found any documentation that the mineral rights were reserved from the property. They are willing, as part of the conservation easement, to prohibit future development of mineral interests in the land.
- Development Rights
- X Other: As part of the conservation easement, the owner reserves the right to continue using the property for agricultural use and for their own personal enjoyment.

p. Occupancy or Use Rights held by others:

None

- Are there caretakers living on the property? No
- Do any relatives, friends, associates, or other persons live on the property, with or without permission of the owner? No.
- Does anyone or any company use any part of the property for agricultural or other commercial purposes either full-time or part time? No.

- Does any person, company, or other entity regularly use any part of the property for any reason whatsoever (e.g., temporary storage of personal or business property, hold annual or periodic events of any kind, etc.)? No.
- Are there any structures on the property which are used by any party on a regular or intermittent basis other than the owner? No.
- Are there any leases or agreements, either verbal or written, whether or not recorded, that affect the use of the property? No.

q. Rights associated with the land held by others: The Minor family (neighbor to the east) has an access easement over the property to access their irrigation ditch referred to as the Gee ditch.

The Minor family's irrigation ditch runs through the Quilici Ranch. Their diversion box is also located on the property (access to the diversion box is through the access easement).

No other person, company or other entity owns any other rights in the land (e.g., mineral or water rights associated with the land; improvements on the land; access easement over the property).

No other person, company or other entity owns rights to surface water on the property, or has wells, piping or other works for diversion and distribution of ground water from the property.

r. Asking Price: \$ 2,749,400

Basis for asking price and calculations:

- The asking price is based on an average of the selling prices of three comparable properties multiplied by the average value of a conservation easement in the Carson Range. The identification of the three most comparable properties is based on proximity to the Quilici property, size, and date of sale. All three of the properties are zoned for a higher density than the Quilici property, they vary widely in per acre price, and they closed escrow in June of 2006, yet they still represent the best and most comparable properties available to estimate the value of the Quilici property at this time. The comparison properties are as follows:
 - APN 016-361-60. 48.55 acres, Zone NR1 (Non-rural residential, 6,000ft min.), sale price \$5,285,000 at \$108,856.84/acre, sale date 6/29/06. This property is approximately one mile due west of the Quilici property. Seller: Dayton Valley Investors, LLC. Buyer: Mira Vida Dayton LLC. Fee simple. No water rights or improvements.
 - APN 016-351-16. 22.16 acres, Zone NR1, sale price \$989,363.34 at \$44,646.34/acre, sale date 6/29/06. This property is approximately one-half mile west of the Quilici property. Seller: Minor Ranch LLC. Buyer: Mira Vida Dayton LLC. Fee simple. No water rights or improvements.
 - APN 016-321-12. 44.24 acres, Zone E1 (Estate Residential, \$12,00ft min.), sale price \$460,000 at \$10,397.83/acre, sale date 6/19/06. This property is approximately 400 feet

north of the Quilici property. Seller: Carson River Estates LLC. Buyer: Richard K Craig TR. Fee simple. No water rights or improvements.

- It can be assumed that the first two properties were purchased by Mira Vida Dayton LLC for residential development. The intended use of the third parcel is unknown.
- The average price per acre of the properties listed above is \$54,633/acre. This per acre price, multiplied by 67.1 acres, is \$3,665,874.30. The price of conservation easements on the Carson River ranges from 70 – 80% of the total fee title value. Therefore, $\$3,665,874.30 \times 0.75 = \$2,749,405.70$ and is rounded to \$2,749,400, the asking price for the Quilici property.
- The Quilici family recognizes: 1) that the asking price is based on assumed acreage to be placed under a conservation easement and 2) that the final purchase price will be based on an appraisal and will reflect final acreage affected by the conservation easement, agreeable to the family and BLM.

s. General Description of property: The 67.1 acre riparian corridor of the Quilici property contains the following three ecological systems: desert riparian shrubland and woodland, freshwater marsh, and wet meadow. The desert riparian shrubland and woodland consists of a dense and vibrant corridor of cottonwood trees (*Populus fremontii*) and willow shrubs (*Salix* spp.) along the mainstem of the Carson River. This riparian corridor of cottonwood trees is tall and dense, in many places composed of multiple age-classes, revealing successful recruitment. The freshwater marsh can be found within the riparian corridor in backwaters, old sloughs and oxbows. The freshwater marsh is recognized by cattail (*Typha* spp), sedges (*Carex* spp.) and other aquatic plants. The wet meadow habitat consists of rushes (*Juncus* spp.), wildrye (*Leymus* spp.) and other herbaceous plants, and occurs on the property adjacent to wetland areas. There are no man-made structures in the riparian corridor; however, the parcel is partially fenced.

t. Resource Value(s): The resource values of the riparian corridor of the Quilici property, specifically the biological richness and productivity, are unusually high due to the fact that three major freshwater systems co-occur on the property, and to the high quality of the cottonwood riparian forest. Seven specially-designated species, defined as *Nevada Species of Conservation Priority* in the *Nevada Wildlife Action Plan*, are known to occur on the property including:

- white-faced ibis (*Plagadis chihi*)
- northern pintail (*Anas acuta*)
- cinnamon teal (*Anas cyanoptera*)
- canvasback (*Aythya valiseneria*)
- redhead (*Aythya americana*)
- bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)
- mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*)

Of these seven specially-designated species, two are special status species: bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), a federally “Threatened” species (USFWS) and “Special Status Species” (BLM); and white-faced ibis (*Plagadis chihi*), a “Species of Concern” (USFWS) and “proposed Sensitive” species (BLM). The Quilici property provides an undisturbed expanse of

habitat that may also contribute to the recovery of species with reduced population size, such as the bald eagle and redhead duck.

The riparian parcel captures some of the best examples of freshwater habitats along the Carson River. The *Assessment of the Middle Carson River and Recommendations for the Purpose of Recovering and Sustaining the Riverine Ecosystem* (Otis Bay Ecological Consultants, 2005) documents the biological value of the Dayton Valley stretch of the Carson River. There is a high recurrence interval of overbank flows (2-5 years) enhancing cottonwood and willow riparian habitat, and over 800 acres of riparian habitat exists in this reach, second only to the Lahontan Reservoir delta in total acreage of cottonwood riparian. The 800 acres of riparian habitat in the Dayton Valley is among the best examples of high quality cottonwood riparian forest on the Carson River. *Id.* The quality of the riparian forest in this reach is due to the presence of alluvial soils favorable to cottonwood trees, a high groundwater table, and the high recurrence interval of overbank flows mentioned above. The riparian parcel of the Quilici property also contains open space, a scenic view shed, opportunities for scientific research, and a vitally important expanse of riparian, wetland, and wet meadow habitat on the Carson River.

Notably, there are only three outstanding freshwater habitat areas on broad alluvial plains in the entire Carson River watershed: central Carson Valley between Genoa and Minden, the Dayton Valley, and the Lahontan Reservoir delta. The Quilici property is a critical piece of the Dayton Valley habitat area. Conservation of the biological diversity of the Carson River corridor should include representative examples of wetland, wet meadow and riparian habitat in each of the three alluvial valley reaches of the Carson River. Basic principles of conservation biology from the study of reserve design, meta-population dynamics, endangered species management, and other sub-disciplines, recognize the value of a distributed array of protected areas. By conserving and protecting lands in Carson Valley, Dayton Valley, and the Lahontan Reservoir delta, we will help ensure that the biological richness of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and plants persists long into the future along the Carson River.

Based on all of the above reasons, The Nature Conservancy ranks the Quilici Ranch as a top priority property to protect for conservation along the Carson River.

u. Federal Land Use Plan: Acquisition of a conservation easement over the property is consistent with the 2001 Bureau of Land Management Carson City Field Office's Consolidated Resource Management Plan, an approved Federal land-use plan in force for the area within which the property is located.

v. Federally Designated Area: None.

w. Hazardous Material, Safety or Liability Issues: There are no known hazardous materials, safety, health, or other liability issues associated with the acquisition of a conservation easement on the Quilici Ranch property which would limit the BLM's interest in the property. BLM will not be acquiring fee title interest in the site.

The Carson River Floodplain does include abandoned river oxbows and other areas of sediment deposition that possess low to moderate amounts of mercury. The Carson River is located within

a rare, but naturally occurring mercuriferous belt extending down the west coast of North America to South America. Australian Working Group, 1980. Consequently, background mercury levels in the Carson River are higher than average reported background mercury levels. In addition, during the Comstock era, large quantities of mercury were imported for use in the amalgamation process to separate gold and silver from ore. As a result of the Comstock Era ore extraction practices and subsequent downstream dispersal of sediments from the mill sites, additional mercury has entered the system. A portion of the property lies within the EPA's Carson River Superfund Site Study Area.

2. CONSERVATION EASEMENT SUMMARY

- **What are the natural resources the conservation easement will protect?**

A conservation easement over the riparian corridor portion of the Quilici Ranch will protect three major habitat types on the property and their associated plant and animal species:

- desert riparian shrub land and woodland
- freshwater marsh
- wet meadow

A conservation easement will protect the riparian corridor, marsh, and wet meadow from residential development detrimental to the watershed in terms of water quality and flood water attenuation. In addition, the proceeds from the conservation easement may help protect the historic agricultural use of the adjacent ranching portion of the Quilici Ranch property, as well as the scenic and open space values that the ranch provides.

The Quilici family will consider incorporating the “living river” concept into the conservation easement if possible, practical and legal. Incorporating this concept into the conservation easement will allow the river to move within a defined area, creating new habitats for riparian woodland systems. *Regional Floodplain Management, Carson River Watershed* (Carson River Coalition, 2007) recommends retaining critical floodplain lands in their natural state through conservation easements and states that a “living river” approach minimizes disruption and alteration of river habitat in the following ways:

- Conveys variable flows and restores habitat in floodplain.
- Balances sediment input with sediment transport.
- Provides natural fish and wildlife habitat.
- Enhances water quality and supply.
- Maintains aesthetic and recreational qualities.
- Generally enhances the human environment.

- **If threatened and endangered species (T&E species) use the land, how will the conservation easement impact their use of the land, either positively or negatively?**

The Quilici property contains habitat which supports two special status species:

- Bald eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, a “Threatened” species (USFWS) and “Special Status Species” (BLM)
- White-faced ibis *Plagadis chihi*, a “Species of Concern” (USFWS) and “proposed Sensitive” species (BLM).

Placing a conservation easement on the property will protect this habitat and its associated species in perpetuity by preventing its conversion to residential development. The riparian parcel is partially fenced. Proposed protective measures include fencing the most sensitive riparian areas and restricted or rotational grazing in wet meadows.

- **What are the primary rights to be acquired by the Federal agency?**

The primary rights to be acquired by the Federal agency are all commercial, industrial and residential development rights. The Federal agency will also acquire the right to access the property for scientific research.

- **What are the geographic boundaries of the proposed easement?**

The proposed boundary of the conservation easement includes approximately 67.1 acres of the northwestern portion of the 530-acre Quilici Ranch property, shown on the map titled Proposed Zone Change for Quilici Ranch Corporation as APN: 16-341-04 Parcel 2D (see Attachment 11). The Carson River is the northern boundary of the easement.

- **How does the size and configuration of the easement facilitate protection of the resources?**

This property may represent one of the last opportunities to protect scenic, scientific, and habitat values along the Carson River in Dayton Valley. Although the entire 530-acre Quilici Ranch contains important wet meadow habitat in the form of irrigated pastures, the 67.1 acre riparian corridor configuration makes an especially significant contribution to preserving critical habitat, open space, and scenic view shed as well as providing opportunities for scientific research in an alluvial river valley. This property supports a fantastic, multi-aged stand of riparian forest, and representative tracts of such habitat are worth conserving even for educational and comparative purposes.

There are other important benefits of conserving the riparian parcel, such as a small and narrow buffer along the river for a floodplain and meander corridor, and a visual and esthetic benefit for the public as they raft or float along the river in that section.

- **What protective actions to be granted to the Federal agency?**

Protective actions to be granted to the Federal agency include access for inspection, monitoring, and enforcement, and the right to require restoration of damage from prohibited activities.

- **What uses will the landowner be likely to want to continue?**

The landowner wishes to continue agricultural use and personal enjoyment of the property. The landowner wishes to retain the right to prevent the public from uncontrolled access. Any public groups that are allowed on the property will be at the landowner's discretion and with the landowner's permission.

- **Will the CE be likely to exclude a building footprint and the curtilage or area around the current improvements?**

No. There are no improvements on the parcel.

- **What restrictions are expected to be placed on how the property can be used?**

The restrictions to be placed on the landowner would include:

- No subdivision or buildings.
- No non-ranching or non-agricultural commercial uses.
- No use or transfer of development rights.
- No natural resource development (e.g., mining).
- No dumping of hazardous materials.
- No severance, conveyance, or encumbrance of water or water rights that are being tied to the Property, separately from the underlying title to the Property.
- No use of motorized vehicles for recreational purposes (e.g., no motocross tracks).
- No junk yards.

- **Will the conservation easement allow regular public use of the land or access to other public land?**

The Quilici family has a long history of permitting limited public access by groups such as local schools, the Boy Scouts of America and The Nature Conservancy for educational and interpretive purposes. In addition, the river itself is public property and fishermen, hunters and kayakers regularly recreate along the river corridor. The owners are willing to consider additional limited public access to the river across their property.

- **What are the benefits of acquiring a conservation easement over fee acquisition?**

Acquiring a conservation easement has many benefits for the acquiring agency including the reduced cost of an easement when compared to a fee title acquisition, and reduced costs associated with the ongoing management of the property. With the instant nomination, The Nature Conservancy proposes to work cooperatively with the BLM to identify an endowment for annual monitoring costs and a mutually acceptable third party to design and administer a monitoring program. With these in place, the BLM's costs and management efforts are far less than those required for fee title acquisition. Such cost and risk reductions only further the public interest in these acquisitions.

3. ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Contributes toward preservation of a specially designated species

A. Does the acquisition have a significant contribution toward preservation or recovery of one or more specially designated species present on the property?

Yes. Acquisition of a conservation easement over the riparian corridor of the Quilici property will make a significant contribution toward preservation of one or more specially designated species that are present on the property. The following seven species are known to occur on the property, and are all categorized as *Nevada Species of Conservation Priority* in the *Nevada Wildlife Action Plan* (<http://www.ndow.org/wild/conservation/cwcs/index.shtm>): white-faced ibis (*Plagadis chihi*), northern pintail (*Anas acuta*), cinnamon teal (*Anas cyanoptera*), canvasback (*Aythya valiseneria*), redhead (*Aythya americana*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*).

The above list of species is from the cumulative knowledge of Quilici family members, annual deer counts by NDOW biologists and the field observations of The Nature Conservancy staff. The annual deer count shows that an excess of 150 mule deer from surrounding BLM land in the Pinenut Mountains and Virginia Range winter on the Quilici property. A smaller herd of mule deer make the ranch their permanent residence because of the outstanding habitat. Other than the annual deer count, formal surveys have not been conducted on the Quilici property for plants, birds, wildlife, or any other biological attribute. We predict that the outstanding cottonwood riparian, wet meadow, and wetland habitat on the Quilici property will be shown to provide habitat for eight or more additional species from the list of *Nevada Species of Conservation Priority* including:

- Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)
- ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*)
- willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii adastus*) (migratory, not breeding)
- black phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*)
- black-necked stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*)
- American avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*)
- willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*)
- long-billed curlew (*Numenius americanus*)

In addition, the pristine cottonwood forest habitat on the Quilici Ranch property may provide suitable habitat for the Western yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*). The Quilici property provides a large and undisturbed expanse of habitat that may also contribute to the recovery of species with reduced population size, such as the bald eagle and redhead duck. Acquisition of a conservation easement on the Quilici property will ensure the protection of these species.

B. Does the acquisition contain habitat which supports one or more special status species?

Yes. The Quilici property contains habitat which supports two special status species: bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), a “Threatened” species (USFWS) and “Special Status Species” (BLM); and white-faced ibis (*Plagadis chihi*), a “Species of Concern” (USFWS) and “proposed Sensitive” species (BLM).

The lack of field surveys of the Quilici property leaves open the possibility that other special status species may occur on the property as well. The outstanding cottonwood riparian forest on the property may provide suitable habitat to the Western yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*), a species that is a “Candidate” for listing by the USFWS.

C. Are there one or more species present on the property that are listed as threatened and endangered?

Yes. The Quilici property supports one species that is listed as federally “Threatened”: the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*).

D. Does the acquisition contribute to creation, conservation, and/or preservation of biodiversity, wetland/riparian area or watershed?

Yes. Acquisition of a conservation easement over the Quilici property makes a significant contribution to the conservation and preservation of biodiversity, wetlands, riparian habitat, and the watershed of the Carson River.

The Nature Conservancy identified the following three ecological systems on the Quilici property: freshwater marsh, desert riparian shrubland and woodland, and wet meadow. The freshwater marsh can be found within the riparian corridor in backwaters, old sloughs and oxbows. The freshwater marsh is recognized by cattail (*Typha* spp), sedges (*Carex* spp.) and other aquatic plants. The desert riparian shrubland and woodland consists of a dense and vibrant corridor of cottonwood trees (*Populus fremontii*) and willow shrubs (*Salix* spp.) several hundred yards wide, along the mainstem of the Carson River. The riparian corridor is tall, dense, and in many places composed of multiple age-classes of cottonwood trees, revealing successful recruitment. The wet meadow habitat consists of rushes (*Juncus* spp.), wildrye (*Leymus* spp.) and other herbaceous plants, and occurs on the property adjacent to wetland areas. Wet meadow habitat is utilized by birds in the Dayton and Carson Valleys, such as the white-faced ibis, willet, long-billed curlew, sandhill crane, western meadowlark, yellow-headed blackbird, and northern harrier.

The *Great Basin: An Ecoregion-based Conservation Blueprint* (The Nature Conservancy, 2001) identified 188 sites in the Great Basin that are essential for the conservation of wetlands, wet meadows and riparian habitats. Of these 188 sites, only 6 were identified as highly significant, and one of these is the Carson River corridor. The Quilici property captures some of the best examples of freshwater habitats within the Carson River site. As noted in Section 1. (t) herein, there is a high recurrence interval of overbank flows (2-

5 years) enhancing cottonwood and willow riparian habitat, and over 800 acres of riparian habitat exists in this reach. These 800 acres of high quality riparian habitat in the Dayton Valley represent some of the best examples of cottonwood riparian forest on the Carson River. The high quality of the riparian forest in this reach is due to the presence of alluvial soils whose composition is desirable to cottonwood trees, a high groundwater table, and the high recurrence interval of overbank flows mentioned above. The other reach of the Carson River with extensive cottonwood forest is the Lahontan Reservoir delta upstream to Ft. Churchill, but as reported in the *Assessment of the Middle Carson River*, supra, the Ft. Churchill to Lahontan Reservoir reach is highly entrenched, and the recurrence interval of overbank flows ranges from 5 to 50 years. The frequency of overbank flow reveals important geomorphic and hydrologic conditions of a river, such as the height of the water table, which in turn determines the quality and extent of adjacent riparian, wetland and wet meadow habitats. The frequency of overbank flow is also a strong determinant of the distribution of riparian seeds, deposition of nutrient-rich sediments, and the rate of water level decline in early summer. As a result, the cottonwood riparian forest on the Quilici Ranch riparian parcel provides a higher quality habitat for wildlife than the cottonwood riparian forests further downstream.

The biological richness and productivity is unusually high on the Quilici property due to the fact that three major freshwater systems co-occur, and the high quality of the cottonwood riparian forest. The Nature Conservancy is not familiar with any other private parcels on the Carson River that has this combination of attributes.

2. Preserves a significant natural, aesthetic or scientific feature.

A. Does the property contain one or more natural, aesthetic, or scientific features?

Yes. The Quilici property contains an important expanse of riparian, wetland, and wet meadow habitat on the Carson River, a scenic view shed, and opportunities for education and scientific research.

Development in the Carson River watershed has decreased the function of the natural floodplain and caused natural flooding routes to begin changing. Traditional flood control measures include channel widening and armoring with hard material such as rock or concrete, removing critical habitat and triggering impacts to the riparian corridor downstream. A conservation easement on the Quilici reach of the Carson River will ensure the preservation of an important stream corridor within which the Carson River can behave as a “living river,” allowing the channel to migrate within its corridor in response to flood events.:

The Quilici family has opened their property to school children for educational field trips for many years, and the family is willing to consider public access as part of the conservation easement. This property provides the growing community of Dayton with an area that offers scenic views of meadows, wetlands, and a dense band of cottonwood forest along the river. If the property stays in a natural state, it can provide important opportunities for education and scientific research in ecology, hydrology, and

geomorphology. The *Assessment of the Middle Carson River and Recommendations for the Purpose of Recovering and Sustaining the Riverine Ecosystem* (Otis Bay Ecological Consultants, 2005) is an example of the type of research into riverine dynamics that this property can provide. The Carson River corridor is an important resource, and further research will help all Carson River communities make wise decisions about management of this riverine resource. Of the three outstanding freshwater habitat areas on broad alluvial plains in the Carson River corridor, the Quilici property is a critical piece of the Dayton Valley habitat area.

B. Is one or more of the features in A. above eligible for special designation?

No, or unknown.

C. Does the acquisition make a significant contribution to preserving these values?

Yes. Acquisition of a conservation easement on the Quilici property makes a significant contribution to preserving and protecting the riparian habitat and preventing development within the river corridor. Protective measures include fencing the most sensitive riparian areas and restricted or rotational grazing in wet meadows. Restoration measures that allow mitigation of negative impacts include willow and cottonwood planting, bioengineering, and other restorative management techniques that protect and enhance habitat.

Conservation of the biological diversity of the Carson River corridor should include representative examples of wetland, wet meadow and riparian habitat in each of the three alluvial valley reaches of the Carson River, including Dayton Valley. Basic principles of conservation biology from the study of reserve design, meta-population dynamics, endangered species management, and other sub-disciplines, recognize the value of a distributed array of protected areas. By conserving and protecting lands in Carson Valley, Dayton Valley, and the Lahontan Reservoir delta, we will help ensure that the biological richness of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and plants persists long into the future along the Carson River.

D. Does a specific management plan(s) exist for these resource values?

N/A. Management of the Quilici property will remain the responsibility of the owners, who intend to maintain the property under a conservation easement.

3. Preserves significant historic, paleontological, or cultural site.

A. Does the property contain one or more historic, paleontological, or cultural sites?

Unknown. Archeological surveys are required to determine if there are one or more historic, paleontological or cultural sites on the property.

B. Is one or more sites on the property eligible for a special designation?

No. However, although the 67.1 acre riparian corridor by itself would not be eligible, the greater Quilici Ranch property is eligible for Nevada Centennial Ranch designation. The designation requires that the ranch has belonged to the family for at least 100 years, is currently a working ranch or farm with a minimum of 160 acres or have gross yearly sales of at least \$1,000.

C. Does the acquisition make a significant contribution to preserving these resource values?

Yes. The acquisition of a conservation easement on the property does make a significant contribution to preserving this historic ranch. The owners of the Quilici Ranch are reaching a point where they are ready to retire from the day-to-day ranching operations and their children have pursued other careers. The sale of a conservation easement to the BLM will allow the family to continue ranching by leasing out the grazing and management of the adjacent property, without having to worry about making ends meet. If they cannot sell a conservation easement on the property, the family will likely sell the entire ranch for development as soon as possible. Should the remaining ranchlands be sold in the future, a conservation easement over the riparian corridor becomes even more vital.

D. Does a specific management plan(s) exist for these resource values?

N/A. The Quilici property will remain the responsibility of the owners, under a conservation easement.

4. Enhances recreational opportunities or improves public access to recreational opportunities

A. Does acquisition of the property provide recreational opportunities on the site?

Yes. The Quilici family has a long history of permitting limited public access on the site by groups such as local schools, the Boy Scouts of America, the Nevada Division of Wildlife and The Nature Conservancy for educational, interpretive research and monitoring purposes. In addition, fishermen, hunters and kayakers often recreate along the river corridor. In contrast, it is likely that residential development of the property would preclude continuation of these public activities.

B. Does the acquisition provide improved access to recreational areas?

Yes. Dayton Nevada State Park is less than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile upstream of the Quilici property. The Nature Conservancy and other stakeholders are actively engaged in discussions exploring linking the Quilici Ranch and adjacent properties with the state park. Loss of the property to residential development would likely prevent hunters and fishermen from recreating along this stretch of the Carson River corridor.

C. Does the acquisition address a public demand for recreational opportunity or access to recreational areas?

Yes. The acquisition addresses a public demand for recreational opportunity by preserving the river corridor for canoeing, kayaking, fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing and supporting bird and wildlife populations for viewing. Bird watching in particular is an important recreational activity in the United States. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, bird watching is one of America's most popular hobbies, with 65 million participants. Bird watchers also spend more than \$5 billion a year on everything from birdseed to birding trips, according to a 1995 study commissioned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (<http://www.fws.gov/southeast/news/1996/bull-imb.html>).

D. Does a specific management plan(s) exist for these resource values?

N/A. Management of the Quilici property will remain the responsibility of the owners, under a conservation easement.

5. Provides the opportunity to achieve better management of public land through consolidation of Federal ownership.

A. Does the acquisition provide for better management of public lands?

Yes. The acquisition of a conservation easement on the Quilici Ranch does not constitute consolidation of federal ownership in the traditional sense of blocking up and connecting checkered-board lands; however, it does provide for better management of public lands in the form of conserving wetland, wet meadow, and riparian habitat.

It is well known that freshwater habitat areas are poorly represented in the public landownership of the BLM and Forest Service in the Western states. The wildlife refuges of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, such as the Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, capture only a small percentage of the freshwater habitat areas in the Great Basin. To conserve the full spectrum of biological diversity in the Great Basin Ecoregion, from terrestrial upland habitats to freshwater lowland habitats, we must conserve properties that are rich in wetland, wet meadow, and riparian habitat. The conservation of this biological diversity has a significant positive impact on the neighboring public lands.

Consolidation, as a strategy for managing the resources associated with river systems, can be implemented differently than its traditional application to achieve conservation success. Conservation of the biological diversity of the Carson River corridor should include representative examples of wetland, wet meadow and riparian habitat in each of the three alluvial valley reaches of the Carson River, including Dayton Valley. Basic principles of conservation biology from the study of reserve design, meta-population dynamics, endangered species management, and other sub-disciplines, recognize the value of a distributed array of protected areas. Thus, by conserving and protecting riparian lands in Carson Valley, Dayton Valley, and the Lahontan Reservoir delta, we

protect the biological attributes of the Carson River and, at the same time, convey a tremendous benefit to the surrounding public lands.

B. Is the property an in holding in a specially designated area?

No.

6. Estimated post-acquisition management costs.

B. There are added management costs but costs are offset by contributions from other entities. There will be minimal post-acquisition management costs. Day-to-day management of the property will continue to be the responsibility of the Quilici family, who will remain fee-title owners of the land. The terms of the conservation easement will need to be monitored on an annual basis and that monitoring will need to be documented in an annual monitoring report. The Nature Conservancy proposes to work cooperatively with the BLM to identify an endowment for annual monitoring costs and a mutually acceptable third party to design and administer a monitoring program. With these in place, the BLM's costs and management efforts are far less than those required for fee title acquisition.

7. Has the support of the State, local governments, other agencies, and/or other interested parties.

A. Is the acquisition supported by the County/local government in which the property is located?

Yes. On August 3, 2006 the Lyon County Commissioners unanimously voted to support the acquisition of a conservation easement over the Quilici Ranch. A letter of support was sent directly to the Bureau of Land Management. Lyon County has verbally confirmed to The Nature Conservancy their continuing support of this acquisition despite the reduction in size of the proposed easement. In addition, the Carson Water Subconservancy District, a unique multi-county, bi-state agency dedicated to establishing a balance between the needs of the communities within the Carson River Watershed and the function of the river system, has written a letter of support for the acquisition of a conservation easement on the Quilici Ranch. The Carson Water Subconservancy District's Board of Directors consists of representatives from each of the five counties within the watershed plus two representatives from the agricultural community. A letter of support for this acquisition has been received as well from the Dayton Valley Conservation District.

B. Is the acquisition supported by environmental, recreational, and/or scientific groups?

Yes. This acquisition is supported by The Nature Conservancy, who has submitted the nomination package for the landowners. The Science Director for the Great Basin Bird Observatory has expressed support for this acquisition with a letter of support to the Bureau of Land Management. The Water Resources Specialist for the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension supports this acquisition as well, and has written a letter of support.

C. Is the acquisition supported by Fish & Wildlife Service Ecological Services, State Historic Preservation Office, or other federal, state or tribal governmental entities?

Yes. The Washoe Tribe of California and Nevada supports this acquisition and will be sending a letter of support directly to the Bureau of Land Management. In addition, the acquisition is supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Resource Conservation Service, who will also be sending a letter of support directly to the Bureau of Land Management. A letter of support for this acquisition has been received from the Nevada Department of Wildlife, and the Nevada Division of State Parks.

D. Does the acquisition further the goals and objectives of the County/local government land use plan or goals/objectives contained in some official County/local government document?

Yes. Lyon County is in the first stage of a master planning process which will last through 2008. The resulting Comprehensive Master Plan will address Natural Resources and Environment issues that are highly relevant to this nomination. Acquisition of the riparian corridor on the Quilici property is in alignment with Lyon County's planning process goals as stated on the official website (www.lyoncounty.org) in the areas of:

- Floodplain and riparian area conservation. "Conserving these waterways and the surrounding floodplains is key for the County and its communities to protect its residents and property from flood hazards, as well as retaining the valuable wildlife habitat and natural water filtration associated with riparian areas."
- Wildlife habitat protection. "Residents and visitors alike value the wildlife resources found throughout the County whether simply for viewing and enjoyment or for hunting . . . Recognizing that important wildlife resources and areas have not been identified, the Plan will need to address (a) how to identify important resources, (b) how growth might affect these resources in the County, and (c) how they might be protected in the future."

A conservation easement on the Quilici property will demonstrate the importance of natural resource and wildlife habitat protection, and provide an important venue for identifying those resources, documenting the effects of growth, and developing methods of protection.

8. Other Considerations.

A. Would the acquisition prevent planned development or other incompatible uses?

Yes. Acquisition of a conservation easement over the Quilici property will prevent development within the 67.1 acre riparian corridor and adjacent wet meadow floodplain and will delay or possibly prevent planned development or other incompatible uses on the larger Quilici Ranch. The Quilici family has stated very clearly that they are considering

offers from real estate development interests, and that if they do not carry out a conservation easement, which will give them the financial leverage to continue ranching, they will need to sell the entire Quilici Ranch property to the highest bidder. Nearly all of the surrounding lands in Dayton Valley have been or are in the process of being developed. Large subdivisions exist immediately adjacent to the Quilici Ranch on the southern boundary, with a subdivision planned for the western boundary. If, or when, portions of the Quilici Ranch property to the south of the riparian corridor are developed, the preservation of the conservation values of the riparian corridor will be even more critical.

B. Is the acquisition the Acquiring Federal Agency's number one priority? This question will be answered by the acquiring agency at a later date.

9. Is proposed Federal acquisition is in Clark County, Nevada? No.

4. SOCIOECONOMIC INFORMATION

1. Number of employees, spouses, and immediate family members that will be impacted by the acquisition due to employment associated with the land.

No employees, spouses, or immediate family members would be impacted by the acquisition of the conservation easement over the property. In fact, the acquisition of the conservation easement will allow the family to stay on the adjacent ranch land and continue ranching.

2. Annual Property Taxes:

The taxes for the entire 530 acre Quilici Ranch are currently \$4,500 per year. Under a conservation easement, the Quilici Ranch Corporation would continue being responsible for paying property taxes on the 67.1 acre portion under the conservation easement. The proportion of taxes attributable to the conservation easement cannot be determined at this time.

3. Existing Use(s) of the Property:

The land is currently being utilized for ranching including grazing of cattle in the wet meadow area adjacent to the riparian corridor.

4. Amount of Annual Revenue Generated from Enterprises Associated with the Land:

The gross income of the Quilici Ranch is estimated to be \$125,000. The proportion of income attributable to the conservation easement parcel cannot be determined at this time.

5. Local Public Services Being Utilized on and Provided to the Property:

No public services are currently being provided to or utilized on the property.

6. Local Contractors Being Utilized on the Property:

No local contractors are being utilized.

7. Current County Land Use Plan Designations:

The zoning on the Quilici Ranch is as follows:

- Parcel 2D, which comprises 67.10 acres, allows for rural residential development on 5-acre home sites. This Parcel adjoins the river and is located primarily in the 100-year floodplain. The 67.1 acres of Parcel 2D is the land being proposed for a conservation easement under this nomination.

Other parcels on the Quilici Ranch, which may be developed in the future, include:

- Parcel 2A, which comprises 113.14 acres, allows for 12,000 square ft building sites. This parcel adjoins current development on the southeastern portion of the property.
- Parcel 2B, which comprises 252.12 acres, allows for 6,000 square ft building sites. This parcel adjoining Parcel 2A. A significant portion of this parcel (approximately one-third) is located within the 100-year floodplain.
- Parcel 2C, which comprises 97.78 acres, allows for 12,000 square ft building sites. This parcel adjoins Parcel 2C. A significant portion of this parcel (approximately one-fourth) is located within the 100-year floodplain.

8. Water Rights Appurtenant to the Land:

The Quilici Ranch has both surface water and groundwater rights that are used for ranching operations. The Quilici family owns surface water rights for 238 acres. They also have groundwater rights to water 172 acres, of which 158.1 acres are supplemental rights. None of the water rights are being offered for sale as part of this nomination.

Based on observations of the site, The Nature Conservancy does not anticipate that the reservation of these water rights from the conservation easement will adversely impact the resource values of the property. The Nature Conservancy believes that due to its proximity to the river, the portion of the ranch proposed for the conservation easement will maintain wet meadow, riparian wetland and cottonwood riparian habitats.

9. Known Mineral Rights:

Title research is needed to determine if the Quilici family owns the mineral rights of if they were withheld by the United States government. If it is determined that the Quilici family owns the mineral rights, they are willing, as part of the conservation easement, to prohibit resource development of these rights on the property.

Pen J

**SUBSEQUENT OWNER STATEMENT
INDICATING WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER SALE TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

TO: Don Hicks, Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Carson City Field Office
5665 Morgan Mill Rd.
Carson City, NV 89701

2008 MAR 11 P 4:41 PM
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CARSON CITY
FIELD OFFICE

Dear Mr. Hicks:

We, the Quilici Ranch Corporation, are the legal owners of the approximately 67.1 acres of real property known as the Quilici Ranch property located at 140 Quilici Road, Dayton, Nevada; APN 16-341-04 Parcel 2D; excepting there from all that portion lying below the natural ordinary high water line of the Carson River. I understand that the property is being nominated for acquisition by a Federal agency under Round 9 of the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) which is also Round 5 of the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA).

The subject property is not located in a Federally Designated Area as defined in FLTFA. At the request of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the USDI Appraisal Services Directorate (ASD) has conducted a Preliminary Estimate of Value (PEV) for this property since its initial nomination. I understand that the PEV found data of sufficient quantity and quality for use in a sales comparison approach analysis to form an opinion as to the reasonable range of market value for the subject property. Based on the scope of appraisal work performed, the market data evaluated, and the appraiser's knowledge of the market, a credible range of value for the conservation easement of the subject property as of January 14, 2008 is \$300,000 to \$1,000,000. I am willing to have the nomination move forward with a revised asking price of \$1,000,000.

I have read the document entitled "Federal Acquisition Process" and understand the basic process that the Federal government will follow if the above property is selected for acquisition under the SNPLMA or FLTFA. I am willing to consider sale of the above property to the Federal government according to the process described in that document and the information provided herein, if acceptable terms and conditions can be mutually agreed upon.

I understand that the purchase price would be the value determined by a federally obtained and agency-approved professional appraisal, meeting industry-wide and Federal appraisal standards. I also understand that I have the right to accept or reject the value established by that appraisal.

My signature below indicates a willingness to consider sale of the subject property, but in no way creates an obligation to sell. I understand that I have the right to remove the property from consideration for purchase by the Federal government at any time, and agree to notify the appropriate Federal agency in a timely manner if I decide to do so.

Salvatore Quilici, legal representative of the Quilici Ranch Corporation
P.O. Box 642
Dayton, NV 89403
Phone: (775)-246-3365

Sal Quilici
Signature

3/11/08
Date

5. OWNER STATEMENT

Duane Petite
Carson River Project Director
The Nature Conservancy
One East First Street
Suite 1007
Reno, NV 89501

VOID as of 3/1/08-- SEE
SUBSEQUENT OWNER STATEMENT
WITH REVISED ASKING PRICE.

Dear Mr. Petite:

I, Salvatore Quilici am a legal representative of the Quilici Ranch Corporation, which is the legal owner of the approximately 530.04 acres of real property identified as the Quilici Ranch; APN 16-341-04; excepting therefrom all that portion thereof, lying below the natural ordinary high water line of the Carson River. I understand that approximately 67.1 acres of this property is being nominated for acquisition of a conservation easement by a Federal agency under Round 9 of the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) and I authorize you to act as my representative in that nomination.

I have read and signed the document entitled "Federal Acquisition Process" to confirm that I understand the basic process that the Federal government will follow if the above property is selected for acquisition under the SNPLMA. I am willing to consider sale of a conservation easement over the above property to the Federal government according to the process described in that document if acceptable terms and conditions can be mutually agreed upon.

I understand that the purchase price would be based on an agency-approved professional appraisal meeting industry-wide and Federal appraisal standards. I also understand that have the right to accept or reject the value established by that appraisal.

My signature below indicates a willingness to consider sale of a conservation easement over the subject property, but in no way creates an obligation to sell. I understand that I have the right to remove the property from consideration for purchase of a conservation easement by the Federal government at any time, and agree to notify the appropriate Federal agency in a timely manner if I decide to do so.

Salvatore Quilici, legal representative of the Quilici Ranch Corporation

P.O. Box 642

Dayton, NV 89403

Phone: (775)-246-3365

Signature: Salvatore Quilici Date: 11/20/07

FEDERAL ACQUISITION PROCESS

Following is a brief outline of the Federal real property acquisition process. This process is consistent with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act). The Uniform Act provides for fair and equitable treatment of persons whose property will be acquired or who will be displaced because of programs or projects financed with Federal funds. If a land nomination is forwarded to and approved by the Secretary of the Interior for acquisition under the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act or the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA), the acquisition would follow these steps:

1. Evaluation of Real Property. The Acquiring Agency will perform various studies of your property such as an initial and final site inspection and an environmental assessment to identify potential for hazardous materials or substances. The Agency will also review your ownership documents and obtain a preliminary title opinion from a Federal attorney/solicitor after review of a title report and title commitment from a qualified title company. Resolution of unacceptable encumbrances that are identified and clean up of hazardous materials or other trash and debris on the property will be the responsibility of the owner at the owner's expense and must be completed prior to acquisition of the property by the United States. These and other possible steps that the Agency must take during this process (e.g., boundary survey, correction of errors in the legal description, possible relocation issues, etc.) may affect your compensation and the completion date of the acquisition. The Agency will stay in contact with you throughout the process and will be available to answer any questions that you may have.

2. Appraisal. The agency will obtain and review an appraisal which must meet Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions (UASFLA). The Agency will generally contact you to invite you to attend a pre-appraisal work conference with the appraiser to review the scope of work for the appraisal. The appraiser will make an appointment to inspect your property. You or any representative that you desire will be invited to accompany the appraiser when the property is inspected. The pre-work conference and inspection provide you an opportunity to point out any unusual or hidden features of the property that the appraiser could overlook.

3. Appraisal Review and Approval. Once the appraisal has been completed, a federal review appraiser will review the report to ensure that all applicable appraisal standards and requirements were met. The review and appraisal are provided to the Agency for approval. The approved appraisal will then be used to determine the amount to be offered for your property. This amount will never be less than the market value established through the appraisal process.

4. Offer. The Agency will deliver a written offer for the sale/purchase of the real property. The Agency's offer will generally consist of a written summary statement that includes the amount of compensation (i.e., purchase price), the description of the property and any buildings or improvements that are considered to be part of the real property, and the property rights to be acquired. The Agency will give you a reasonable amount of time

to consider the written offer and to ask questions or to request clarification of anything that is not understood. If you believe that all relevant material was not considered during the appraisal, you may present such information at this time.

5. Purchase Agreement. When you reach an agreement with the Agency on the offer, you will be asked to sign an option or a purchase agreement prepared by the Agency. Your signature will affirm that you and the Agency are in agreement concerning the acquisition of the property, including the terms and conditions of the acquisition. If, within a reasonable time, you and the Agency are unable to reach an agreement on the acquisition of the real property, the Agency's offer will be withdrawn and your property will be removed from the acquisition list.

6. Payment. The final step in the acquisition process is closing escrow and payment for your property. Upon completion of a final inspection of your property and confirmation that an approved policy of title insurance will be issued, the Agency will deposit the appropriate amount of compensation into a previously established escrow account. At this time you will execute a General Warranty Deed prepared by the Agency and receive payment for your property when escrow closes.

By Signature below I confirm that I have read and understand the basics of the Federal land acquisition process.

Salvatore Quilici, legal representative of the Quilici Ranch Corporation

P.O. Box 642

Dayton, NV 89403

Phone: (775)-246-3365

Signature: Salvatore Quilici Date: 11/20/07

SEE SUBSEQUENT AGENCY STATEMENT RELATIVE TO ITEM #11, OWNER'S ASKING PRICE.

I, Donald T. Hicks, Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Carson City Field Office, hereby certify that where the Quilici Ranch conservation easement property is concerned:

- 1) A representative of the BLM Carson City Field Office has conducted an initial inspection on January 16, 2008. Based on that inspection, the location and general description of the property presented in this nomination package has been verified and is accurate.
- 2) The property is not located within or adjacent to a "federally designated area" as that term is defined in the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act of 2000.
- 3) Acquisition of an easement on this property would not affect federal land management efficiency.
- 4) Acquisition of an easement on the property is consistent with the 2001 BLM Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan in force for the area within which the property is located.
- 5) Not Applicable.
- 6) The planned use for the property is to protect wildlife habitat and floodplain of the Carson River as well as the continuation of agricultural uses.
- 7) The initial assessment of the information in this nomination package indicates the property interests to be acquired are sufficient to satisfy the Federal acquisition objectives and, to the best of my knowledge, there are no known legal, physical, or financial issues that would prevent or unnecessarily delay Federal acquisition and management of the property.
- 8) Based on the initial site inspection and interview with the owner,
 - a) the initial assessment of potential liabilities presented in this nomination package is accurate to the best of my knowledge;
 - b) I concur that the method employed by the nominating entity to initially assess those liabilities is appropriate; and
 - c) No remediation was described nor is any anticipated since no liabilities were identified.BLM is aware of concerns associated with mercury levels in the Carson River in the vicinity of the Quilici property. Additional discussions with BLM specialists and DOI solicitors would occur as part of an easement acquisition to ensure that the United States does not take on new liabilities or responsibilities associated with mercury contamination in the vicinity of the Carson River.
- 9) Based on the agency's initial site inspection, the resource values as described in this nomination package appear accurate. The nominating entity has compiled the information in conjunction with the current property owners. BLM has no specific information associated with this property but has no reason to dispute the information provided.
- 10) In the opinion of the agency, acquisition of the property is needed for the following reasons: to protect wildlife habitat and important flood plain functions of the Carson

River, along with continued agricultural use. These reasons are consistent with those stated in the nomination package response to assessment question number 9.

- 11) The agency has reviewed the owner's anticipated (asking) price and compared that to a Preliminary Estimate of Value prepared by the USDI Appraisal Services Directorate and has determined that the values differ substantially. The agency has contacted the owner regarding the difference in value. At this time, the owner, in consideration of the lower PEV value, is willing to proceed with the nomination process. The agency will continue discussions with the owner which may result in a revised asking price.
- 12) The agency has attached a cost estimate sheet which estimates the acquisition cost, including necessary expenses as \$3,163,000.00.
(See Attachment 5 for the cost estimate sheet).
- 13) The agency has completed an initial assessment of the on-the-ground management requirements associated with the property and, either on its own or in combination with significant non-federal contributions, has the resources to so manage this property if acquired. The Nature Conservancy has stated their intent to work collaboratively with BLM to conduct annual monitoring of the conservation easement and a willingness to consider holding third party enforcement rights associated with this acquisition.
- 14) The agency is prepared to accept management responsibility for the Quilici Ranch Conservation Easement on the date purchase is completed.
- 15) The agency has the resources to acquire the property in a timely manner if approved by the Secretary of the Interior for acquisition under the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act or by the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Agriculture for acquisition under the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act.
- 16) The agency certifies that it will submit, prior to the beginning of the public comment period, a copy of the complete nomination package to the local government jurisdiction with a cover letter requesting the local government's review and comments, if any, by the date the final comment period closes, and offering to meet with the appropriate local government official(s) regarding the nomination if desired.
- 17) No additional land use planning is necessary for short or long-term management of a conservation easement on the Quilici Ranch property.

By:

DS Donald T. Hicks
Donald T. Hicks
Manager
Bureau of Land Management, Carson City Field Office

Date 1/30/2008

ACQUIRING AGENCY'S SUBSEQUENT AUTHORIZED OFFICER CERTIFICATION

I Donald T. Hicks of the Bureau of Land Management, Carson City Field Office, hereby certify that where the Quilici property is concerned:

All statements and responses provided in the Acquiring Agency Authorized Officer Certification dated January 30, 2008 provided as part of the nomination package remain true and in effect except for the following items:

11. The agency reviewed the owner's asking price and in January 2008 obtained a preliminary estimate of value (PEV) in accordance with Policy NBCM-AS-6800-001, Establishing consistency in the Development of Preliminary Estimates of Value for the Department of Interior Land Management Agencies, dated July 18, 2007. The PEV was performed by the Department of the Interior Appraisal Services Directorate (ASD).

ASD found data of sufficient quantity and quality that could be used in a sales comparison approach analysis to form a credible opinion as to a reasonable range of market value for the subject property. Based on the scope of appraisal work performed, the market data evaluated, and the appraiser's knowledge of the market, a range of value of the conservation easement for the property, as of January 14, 2008, was \$300,000 to \$1,000,000.

The landowner reviewed the PEV and signed an owner's subsequent statement confirming their understanding that the purchase price would be the value determined by a federal agency-approved real property appraisal that meets industry-wide and Federal appraisal standards and agreeing to move forward with the nomination at a revised asking price of \$1,000,000. The agency finds the revised asking price to be reasonable as compared to the PEV range.

12. The agency has attached a revised cost estimate sheet based on the revised asking price and an estimate of other necessary expenses to complete the acquisition.

By:

Donald T. Hicks

Donald T. Hicks
Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management, Carson City Field Office

Date 3/12/2008

Jo Hufnagle/ Dan Jacquet
Local agency contact person for this nomination

**SNPLMA LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT
REVISED ESTIMATED NECESSARY EXPENSES**

Property Name: Quilici Ranch Conservation Easement Agency: CCFO-BLM Date: 3/12/2008
 Project #: _____ Priority #: _____
 Prepared by: J. Hufnagle CCFO-BLM Phone #: _____

Amount Approved by the Secretary: \$ -

Bureaus agree to furnish the necessary equipment, materials, facilities, services, personnel, and other costs except as

1. Land Purchase Price (Not to exceed fair market value)	\$ 1,000,000.00	_____
2. Appraisal	\$ 30,000.00	_____
3. Land/Boundary Survey	\$ 20,000.00	_____
4. Environmental Site Assessment and NEPA	\$ 15,000.00	_____
5. FWS Consultation—Endangered Species Act	\$ -	_____
6. Water Rights or Mineral Analysis (for Title Purposes)	\$ 2,000.00	_____
7. Mineral Potential Report (Prior approval required)	\$ -	_____
8. Title Report, Escrow Fees, Misc. Closing Costs	\$ 10,000.00	_____
9. Recording Fees	\$ 5,000.00	_____
10. Pro-rata Share of Any Pre-Paid Property Taxes or Assessments		_____
11. Penalty Costs and Other Charges for prepayment of pre-existing recorded mortgage, deeds of trust or other security instrument that encumbers the real property.	\$ 5,000.00	_____
12. Relocation Payments to Eligible Tenants	\$ -	_____
13. Direct Labor or Contracted Labor Costs: For activities necessary to complete the acquisition and/or to reach a decision as to whether or not the acquisition can be completed such as title records management; review of title documents (land, water, mineral, etc.), legal description verification; preparation and review of technical reports such as appraisals, ESA, water rights, mineral rights analyses for title purposes, surveys; preparation of requests for preliminary and final title opinion, preparation of conveyance documents, and escrow closing instructions; negotiating/resolution of rights to be acquired.	\$ 45,000.00	_____
14. Travel including per diem, when official travel status is required for agency personnel to perform case management (e.g., experts to review contracted appraisals, etc.)	\$ 10,000.00	_____
15. Official Vehicle Use (pro rata cost for use of Official Vehicles when required to carry out case management)	\$ 1,000.00	_____
16. Other Necessary Expenses (See Appendix B-9)	\$ 20,000.00	_____
17. Balance of Contingency Funds (This line is not used during the nomination process; use only following Secretarial approval when requesting an IGO/task order or 1151 transfer. FOR NOMINATION COST ESTIMATES NO ENTER HERE)		_____
TOTAL*:	\$ 1,163,000.00	_____

*Total dollar percentage may be 100% of amount approved by the Secretary plus any contingency percentage approved by the Secretary for projects in a given round.

COMMENTS: _____

VOID as of 3/12/08.

Appendix B-1

See Revised Cost Estimate Sheet.

SNPLMA LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT ESTIMATED NECESSARY EXPENSES

Property Name: Quilici Ranch Conservation Easement Agency: CCFO-BLM Date: 1/23/2008
Project #: Priority #:
Prepared by: J. Hufnagle CCFO-BLM Phone #:

Amount Approved by the Secretary: \$ -

Bureaus agree to furnish the necessary equipment, materials, facilities, services, personnel, and other costs except as specified below:

Table with 3 columns: Item Description, Amount, and Blank Column. Rows include: 1. Land Purchase Price (3,000,000.00), 2. Appraisal (30,000.00), 3. Land/Boundary Survey (20,000.00), 4. Environmental Site Assessment and NEPA (15,000.00), 5. FWS Consultation—Endangered Species Act (-), 6. Water Rights or Mineral Analysis (2,000.00), 7. Mineral Potential Report (-), 8. Title Report, Escrow Fees, Misc. Closing Costs (10,000.00), 9. Recording Fees (5,000.00), 10. Pro-rata Share of Any Pre-Paid Property Taxes or Assessments, 11. Penalty Costs and Other Charges (5,000.00), 12. Relocation Payments to Eligible Tenants (-), 13. Direct Labor or Contracted Labor Costs (45,000.00), 14. Travel (10,000.00), 15. Official Vehicle Use (1,000.00), 16. Other Necessary Expenses (20,000.00), 17. Balance of Contingency Funds ((3,163,000.00)), TOTAL*: \$ -

*Total dollar percentage may be 100% of amount approved by the Secretary plus any contingency percentage approved by the Secretary for projects in a given round.

COMMENTS: [Blank lines for text entry]

6. AGENCY STATEMENT AND COST ESTIMATE SHEET

SNPLMA Land Acquisition Program Manager will insert a .jpg of the Agency Statement and Cost Estimate Sheet here.

7. COOPERATING ENTITY STATEMENT

The Nature Conservancy strongly supports BLM in the acquisition of a conservation easement over the Quilici Ranch property. The Nature Conservancy considers protection of the riparian corridor of the Quilici Ranch by a conservation easement to be our highest priority for funding under the SNPLMA within the Carson River project area.

If it is agreeable to both the BLM and the landowner, The Nature Conservancy is interested in working collaboratively with the BLM to conduct annual monitoring of the conservation easement. The Nature Conservancy is also willing to consider holding third party enforcement rights if desired by the BLM and the landowner.

8. NOTIFICATION TO COUNTY GOVERNMENT



Northern Nevada Office
One East First Street, Suite 1007
Reno, Nevada 89501

Southern Nevada Office
3380 West Sahara Avenue, Suite 120
Las Vegas, Nevada 89102

tel [775] 322-4990

fax [775] 322-5132

tel [702] 737-8744

fax [702] 737-5787

nature.org

11-19-07

Ms. Phyllis Hunewill
Chairperson, Lyon County Board of Commissioners
27 S. Main Street
Yerington, NV 89447

Dear Ms. Hunewill:

This letter is to inform you of my intention to nominate a portion of the following real property in Lyon County known as the Quilici Ranch for acquisition of a conservation easement under Round 9 of the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998. I am taking this action as the duly authorized representative of the property owners, with their full knowledge and consent.

Lyon County APN: 16-341-04
Legal: A parcel of land located within a portion of Sections 12 and 13, Township 16 North, Range 21 East, and within a portion of Sections 7 and 18, Township 16 North, Range 22 East, Mount Diablo Meridian, Lyon County, Nevada
Acres: Approximately 67.1
Water Rights: No water rights are being offered as part of this nomination.

The owner of the property is the Quilici Ranch Corporation of Dayton, Nevada. The Quilici Ranch is located along the Carson River. The property is being nominated in order to protect important wildlife habitat, open space, quality scenic resources, and to protect the 100-year floodplain from development. Placing the Quilici Ranch in a Conservation Easement will protect an historic working ranch in the Dayton Valley.

Sincerely,

Duane R. Petite
Carson River Project Director
The Nature Conservancy

Cc: Donald Hicks, Field Manager, BLM Carson City Field Office

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Return Receipt Fee (Endorsement Required)	\$2.15	Postmark Here
Restricted Delivery Fee (Endorsement Required)	\$0.00	
Total Postage & Fees	\$ 5.21	11/19/2007

Sent To PHYLLIS HEWELL
 Street, Apt. No.,
 or PO Box No. 27 S MAIN STREET
 City, State, ZIP+4 YERINGTON NV 89447

August 9, 2006

Bureau of Land Management
Division of Lands and Acquisitions
4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89130

Re: Quilici Ranch

Dear Executive Committee:

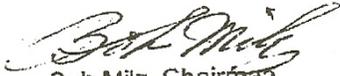
The Lyon County Board of Commissioners supports the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) nomination for acquisition of a conservation easement on the Quilici Ranch in the town of Dayton. We understand that the conservation easement would tie 765 acre feet of surface water and 632.4 acre feet of supplemental well rights to the property for irrigation of agricultural lands.

The Quilici Ranch is a prime example of the rural agricultural resources that make up the heart of the Dayton Valley. In addition, the Quilici Ranch encompasses significant natural resources that are important for wildlife, such as wet meadow, riparian wetland and cottonwood forest habitats. The ponds on the property, created from irrigation drainage, serve a recharge function to the groundwater table in the Dayton Valley and provide habitat for birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles.

The ranch property provides a buffer between residential development in the Dayton Valley and along the Carson River. The property provides some of the best soil for ranching in the Dayton Valley and is an important part of the county's irrigation and drainage systems. A portion of the property also falls in the 100-year flood plain of the Carson River.

Placing the Quilici Ranch in a Conservation easement will protect a historic ranch in the Dayton Valley, as well as the preservation of the natural lands and wildlife habitat along the Carson River.

Sincerely,



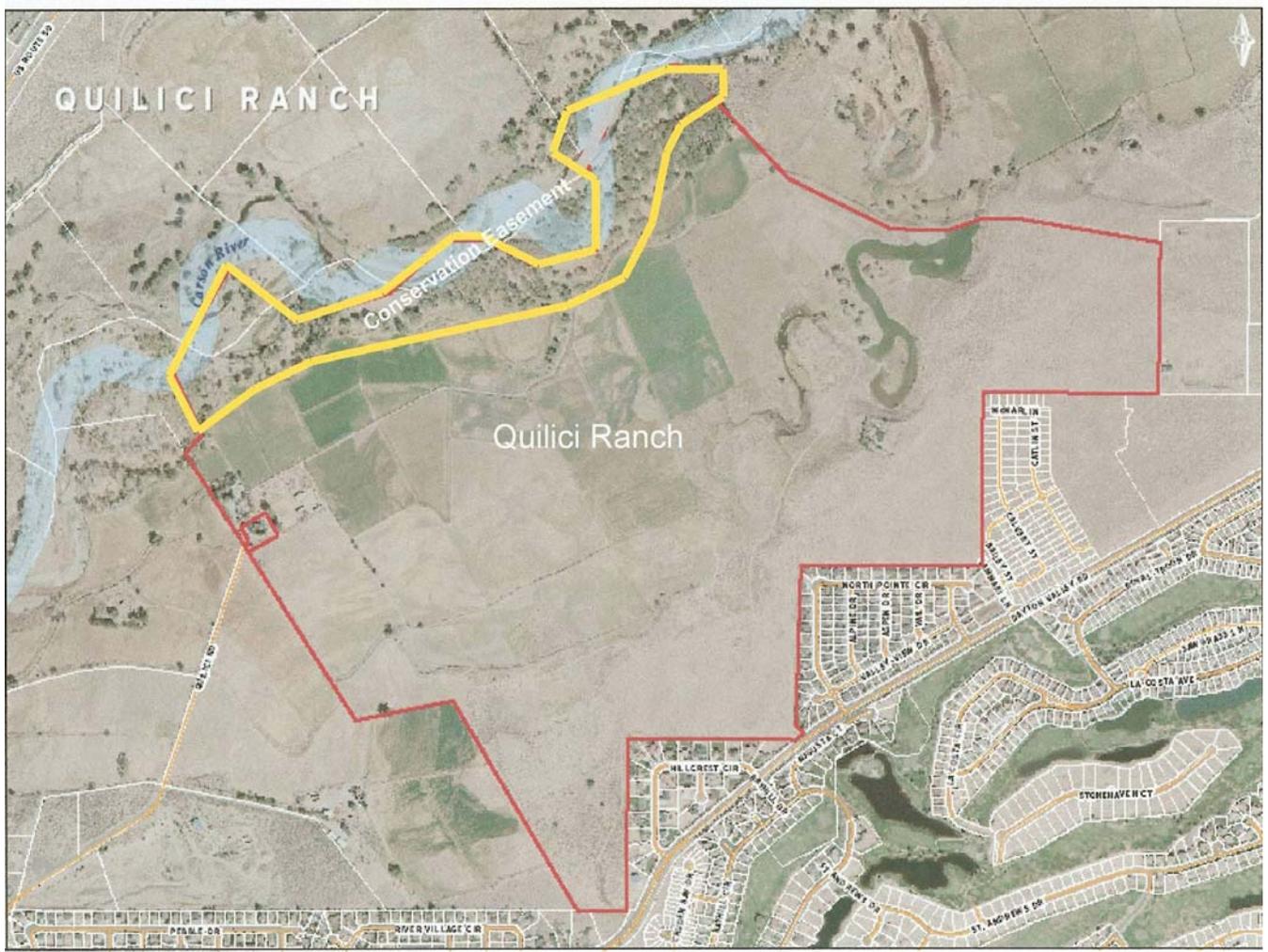
Bob Milz, Chairman
Lyon County Board of Commissioners

c: Congressman Jim Gibbons, 400 S. Virginia Street, Suite 502, Reno, NV 89501
Senator John Ensign, 400 S. Virginia Street, Suite 738, Reno, NV 89501
Senator Harry Reid, 400 S. Virginia Street, Suite 902, Reno, NV 89501

9. PHOTOGRAPHS



10. AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH



11. STATE MAP



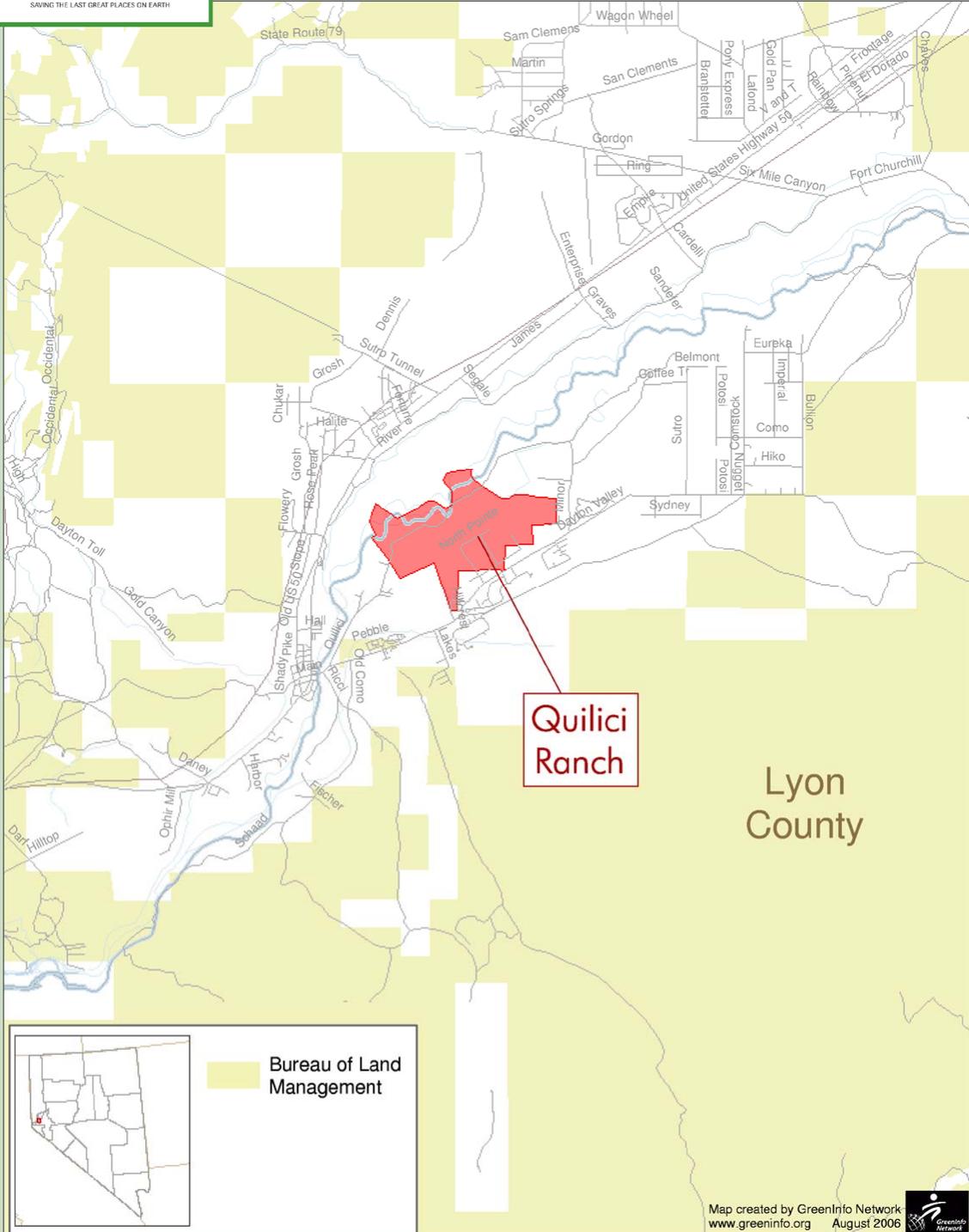
Quilici Ranch - Locator



12. LOCATION MAP



Quilici Ranch



14. SUPPORT LETTERS



NEVADA IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS PROGRAM

A joint program between Nevada Audubon Chapters &

The National Audubon Society

P.O. Box 5046 Sparks, NV 89432

(775) 247-2798 (775) 359-9676 Fax

December 14, 2007

Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act
Round 9 Land Acquisitions
4701 Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89130

To Whom It May Concern:

As the manager of the Audubon's Important Areas Program of Nevada, I have had the great pleasure of working with The Nature Conservancy and their Quilici Ranch Land Acquisition Project. The proposal for acquiring the Ranch for the purpose of establishing a conservation easement is a perfect opportunity for wildlife and habitat conservation efforts along the Lower Carson River that will produce many long term outcomes.

The Lower Carson River Area has been designated as an Important Bird Area due to the extensive use of aquatic birds such as Great Blue Heron and Snowy Egrets. Raptors such as Bald Eagle and Cooper's Hawk also nest along the riparian corridor. In addition, the rare Yellow-billed Cuckoo requires the unique riparian habitat found along the Carson River corridor for breeding. Other bird complexes such as migrant waterfowl and shorebirds also utilize the area. The Important Bird Area (IBA) designation is the recognition of a site for providing key habitat for specific avian species of concern, providing the best riparian habitat for birds in Nevada, and providing breeding habitat for Bald Eagles which the area meets all of the criteria.

Due to the unique riparian cottonwood forest along the Carson River in Dayton, Nevada, any loss of that habitat would be deleterious to the avian species. Protecting and maintaining the cottonwood forest galleries is vital for the health of the ecosystem and the sustainability of the avian species dependent on the riparian ecosystem. In addition, limiting anthropogenic disturbances, such as development and land use conversion, will significantly benefit the sensitive bird species as well.

The conversion of the private lands into a conservation easement for resource protection is extremely vital in the long term protection of the ecosystem and biota. Preventing further habitat degradation, minimizing human disturbance impacts, preventing invasive plant establishment, and proper natural resource planning will ensure the sustainability of the landscape for wildlife and the public.

Therefore, the Nevada Important Bird Area Program is in full support of the acquisition of the 67.1 acres of the Quilici Ranch as a conservation easement. The development of the partnerships between the Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, and other stakeholders, will allow for many opportunities for habitat stewardship and wildlife conservation in these key resource areas in northwestern Nevada.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin Powell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "R".

Robin Powell
Nevada Director of Bird Conservation

Cc: File

CARSON WATER SUBCONSERVANCY DISTRICT

777 East William Street, Suite 110A
Carson City, NV 89701
775/887-7450, fax 775/887-7457

December 11, 2007

Bureau of Land Management
Division of Lands and Acquisitions
4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas NV 89130

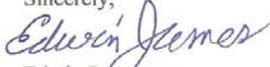
Dear Executive Committee:

The Carson Water Subconservancy District (CWSD) strongly supports the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) nomination of a conservation easement on the riparian corridor portion of the Quilici Ranch in Dayton. In the Dayton Valley, where development pressures are tremendous and agricultural lands are quickly being replaced by subdivisions, the Carson River reach on the Quilici Ranch is a valuable resource with biological richness and productivity that are unusually high due to the three major freshwater systems occurring on the property: wetland, wet meadow, and riverine riparian.

The riverine riparian habitat is particularly significant in that it supports an exceptionally high-quality multi-aged cottonwood riparian forest. The habitat on the riparian portion of the Quilici Ranch is home to seven specially designated species including the white-faced ibis, northern pintail, cinnamon teal, canvasback, redhead, bald eagle, and mule deer. Protecting the riparian area will ensure that these outstanding natural resources are preserved and that the river's natural meander belt is protected from development. The conservation easement will preserve open space, floodplain, a scenic viewshed, and opportunities for scientific research.

The CWSD is the watershed management organization for the Carson River Watershed with members from Alpine County, California, Douglas, Carson City, Lyon and Churchill counties in Nevada. The CWSD is also the host organization for the Carson River Coalition (CRC), an organization comprised of resource managers, educators, agriculturalists, county commissioners, scientists, and community members. This project is compatible with the vision of the CRC and with the Carson River Watershed Stewardship Plan. In 2006, CRC members developed the following main message to define the one, most important message related to the Carson River watershed: *"Protect the floodplain from future development. Once the floodplain and especially the river's meander belt width corridor are impacted by development, the river loses the ability to reestablish its natural functions. Agricultural fields near the channel are critical to floodwater attenuation, ground water recharge, non-point source pollution buffering, and providing habitat for wildlife."* The acquisition of a conservation easement on the river corridor portion of the Quilici Ranch works directly toward implementing the main message of the CRC.

Sincerely,



Edwin James
General Manager



GREAT BASIN BIRD OBSERVATORY

1755 E. Plumb Lane, Suite 256
Reno, NV 89502
ph/fx (775) 323-4226
www.gbbo.org

Tax Exempt Number: 86-0852927

27 April, 2007

Bureau of Land Management
Division of Lands and Acquisitions
4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89130

Dear Executive Committee:

The Great Basin Bird Observatory (GBBO) strongly supports the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) nomination for acquisition of a conservation easement on the Quilici Ranch, located in Dayton along the Carson River. Our support is based on the tremendous avian biodiversity that exists in the Carson River riparian corridors, and their associated wetlands and wet meadows. This pattern has been clearly demonstrated along the Carson River, where GBBO has conducted bird surveys since 2002 as part of the ongoing Nevada Bird Count program. In just 7 riparian survey locations, over 100 species of birds have been recorded – nearly half the number of species known to breed in the state. The importance of Quilici Ranch is amplified to an even greater extent given the Carson Valley's rapid pace of development and its ongoing conversion of prime bird habitat into subdivisions.

Specific characteristics of the Quilici Ranch that reinforce its value for conservation include:

- 1) The property contains functional riparian, wetland, and wet meadow systems,
- 2) In contrast to many agricultural properties, the ranch's cottonwood forest systems are in relatively good condition,
- 3) The ranch property allows for connectivity between the river corridor and surrounding uplands – a characteristic that often helps determine the overall habitat quality of uplands, and
- 4) The ranch supports seven bird species with specific conservation designations, including White-faced Ibis, Northern Pintail, Cinnamon Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Bald Eagle, and Burrowing Owl.

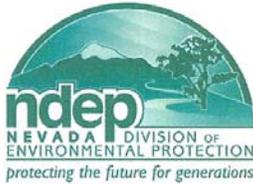


In addition to the value of the ranch to birds, it offers additional conservation benefits for various mammals, amphibians, and reptiles, especially those that depend on aquatic or riparian habitats.

Significant research demonstrates the broad array of conservation benefits that result from preserving river systems that retain some or most of their natural hydrological functions. Chief among these is the presence of a floodplain that allows for water table recharge and recruitment of new patches of riparian forests. Maintaining a floodplain in the face of relentless development pressure is a significant challenge. Securing a conservation easement for Quilici Ranch would significantly improve the prospects for maintaining biodiversity in one of Northern Nevada's most important -- and most threatened -- river systems.

Sincerely,

Elisabeth Ammon, Science Director
Great Basin Bird Observatory
1755 E. Plumb Lane #256
Reno, NV 89502
(775) 323-4226
ammon@gbbo.org



STATE OF NEVADA

Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Jim Gibbons, Governor

Allen Biaggi, Director

Leo M. Drozdoff, P.E., Administrator

Bureau of Land Management
Division of Lands and Acquisitions
4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89130

December 11, 2007

Dear Executive Committee:

The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Water Quality Planning, supports the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) nomination for acquisition of a conservation easement on the 67.1 acre riparian portion of the Quilici Ranch in Dayton Valley.

Rapid urbanization in the Dayton Valley is contributing nonpoint source pollution, flood hazard, and loss of important habitat. Protection of the Carson River reach and associated wetland and wet meadows on the Quilici property, where the river can maintain its natural function and meander, will help provide flood control and preserve the scenic value and the diverse wildlife habitat. The property provides a safe haven for a number of specially-designated species which include the bald eagle and white-faced ibis. Protection of the wetlands, wet meadow, and riparian corridor, with its high quality stand of multi-age cottonwoods, will reduce the threat to water quality.

NDEP and the numerous stakeholders in the Carson River Watershed greatly appreciate your consideration of the Quilici Ranch portion of the Carson River as a conservation easement. This acquisition will significantly advance our ongoing efforts to protect Nevada's natural resources.

Sincerely,

Jeanmarie Stone
Environmental Scientist
Bureau of Water Quality Planning



JIM GIBBONS
Governor

State of Nevada

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

1100 Valley Road
Reno, Nevada 89512

(775) 688-1500 • Fax (775) 688-1595

KENNETH E. MAYER
Director

DOUG HUNT
Deputy Director

Mr. Duane Petite
Carson River Project Director
Nature Conservancy
One East First Street, Suite 1007
Reno, NV 89501

December 12, 2007

Re: Lyon County APN 16-341-04

Dear Mr. Petite,

Thank you for consulting the Nevada Department of Wildlife concerning the conservation easement Round 9 of the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act for the river corridor portion of the Quilici Ranch in Dayton Valley.

Our agency supports the proposed action. Open space and wetland habitats are critically important to resident and migratory species that inhabit this parcel, including mule deer, mountain lions, black bears, bald eagles and several species of waterfowl. Even more so now when urban development and sprawl threaten areas like the Quilici Ranch. We look forward to a successful acquisition of the easement.

If there are any further questions or need for further assistance, please contact Mr. Carl Lackey, Wildlife Biologist, at 775-720-6130.

Sincerely,

Roy Leach
Western Region

ALLEN BIAGGI
Director
Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources

JIM GIBBONS
Governor

Address Reply to:
901 S. Stewart Street, Suite 5005
Carson City, Nevada 89701-5248

Phone: (775) 684-2770
Fax: (775) 684-2777
stparks@parks.nv.gov
<http://parks.nv.gov>

DAVID K. MORROW
Administrator

STATE OF NEVADA

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF STATE PARKS

December 14, 2007

Bureau of Land Management
Division of Lands and Acquisitions
4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas NV 89130

Dear Executive Committee:

The Nevada Division of State Parks supports the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) nomination of a conservation easement on the riparian corridor portion of the Quilici Ranch in Dayton. The division is committed to the long term goal of enhancing the riparian habitat along the lower Carson River and is working with a number of other interested parties to acquire, protect, and enhance the natural habitat along the corridor. The vision of creating a natural riparian river corridor that at some point connects various state and local parks and preserves is something the division shares and is willing to support. As stated by others, the Carson River reach on the Quilici Ranch is a jewel and a true oasis.

The importance of these areas has been recognized by the Nevada Division of State Parks through the purchase of three ranches comprising approximately 8 miles of riparian corridor downstream of the Quilici property. Nevada State Parks also manages a smaller, but similar area immediately upstream of the nominated portion. As the health and stability of these gallery forest ecosystems is directly related to their size, this is an opportunity to maintain an important link in the lower Carson River System. The management goals for this area are similar to those on State Lands and these goals are accomplished in cooperation with state, county and private entities.

This project is compatible with the recently completed master plan for Dayton State Park, as well as, existing plans for the management and restoration of Fort Churchill State Historic Park and Lahontan State Recreation Area. The division believes that with the willing participation of private land owners, Lyon County and a number of support groups, the lower reach of the Carson River can become a significant natural flood plain that protects valuable riparian resources and provides recreational benefits to a very fast growing community.

Sincerely,



David K. Morrow
Administrator

DM/avc
002 Dayton

Cc: Allen Biaggi, Department of Conservations & Natural Resources
Pam Wilcox, State Lands, Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

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Bureau of Land Management
Divisions of Lands and Acquisitions
4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89130

May 4, 2007

Dear Executive Committee:

As the Water Resource Specialist for the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, Western Area, I support the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) nomination for acquisition of a conservation easement on the **Quilici Ranch in Dayton**.

I am one of the founding members of the Carson River Coalition (CRC), an organization comprising resource managers, educators, agriculturalists, county commissioners, and scientists. The Carson Water Subconservancy District participates in, and hosts the CRC. The Quilici Ranch project is compatible with the vision of the CRC to protect floodplains near the river channel from urban development.

In 2003, CRC members developed the following main message to define the most important educational message related to the Carson River watershed: ***"Protect the floodplain from future development. Once the floodplain and especially the river's meander belt width corridor are impacted by development, the river loses the ability to reestablish its natural functions. Agricultural fields near the channel are critical to floodwater attenuation, ground water recharge, non-point source pollution buffering and providing habitat for wildlife."*** The acquisition of a conservation easement on the Quilici Ranch, which lies partially within the 100-year floodplain, works directly toward implementing the main message of the CRC.

In addition, the resource values of the Quilici property, specifically the biological richness and productivity, are unusually high due to three factors:

- 1) Three major freshwater systems co-occur on the property (riverine riparian, wetland and wet meadow)
- 2) The cottonwood riparian forest on the property is of high quality, and
- 3) The ranch preserves connectivity to surrounding sandy bluffs that support upland species such as the burrowing owl.

The habitat on the Quilici Ranch is home to eight specially-designated species including the white-faced ibis, northern pintail, cinnamon teal, canvasback, redhead, bald eagle, Western burrowing owl, and mule deer. The ponds on the property, created from irrigation drainage, serve a recharge function to the groundwater table in the Dayton Valley and provide habitat for birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles.

Please give the Quilici Ranch nomination your highest consideration. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,



John Cobourn, Water Resource Specialist
University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

cc: Duane Petite, Carson River Project Manager

