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DONALD BREN SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT

SANTA BARBARA, CA 93106
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December 4, 2000

Carol Tomlinson-Keasey, Chancellor
University of California
1170 W. Olive Avenue, Suite I
Merced, CA 95348

Dear Carol:

I have enclosed six copies of the report entitled "A knowledge base to assess site suitability for ecological field stations," which summarizes our research into potential sites for a UC Merced field station associated with the UC Natural Reserve System. The report is also available online as a pdf document at http://www.biogeog.ucsb.edu/projects/snner/nrs_renort.pdf.

We developed a 3-stage procedure for siting new NRS reserves that considers evidence at statewide, regional, and local scales, and applied the procedure to evaluate candidate sites for a grassland/vernal pool reserve near Merced. Our assessment does not pinpoint a specific parcel, rather it reveals the relative merits of each of a set of parcels including and surrounding the proposed campus site. The advantages of the approach are its explicitness, formal logic, and use of available geographic data. Although the analysis is weakened by errors and uncertainties in the GIS data and scale-dependencies, the results indicate the ecological significance of the Smith Trust Lands and adjacent areas and suggest that there are excellent opportunities there for a new NRS reserve.

I am grateful for your funding and intellectual support of this research and related activities of the Sierra Nevada Network for Education and Research. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like additional copies.

Sincerely,

Frank W. Davis
Professor of Environmental Science and Management

Cc: Karen Merritt
Alex Glazer