

AF/SE

SEP 14 1984

Dr. Ronald Skoog, Director  
Department of Natural Resources  
Attention: Dr. Sylvia M. Taylor  
Endangered Species Coordinator  
Box 30028  
Stevens T. Mason Building  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Dr. Skoog:

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has acquired (or is in the final stage of acquiring) approximately 3,020 acres, to be managed specifically for the Kirtland's warbler. While we anticipate \$750,000 next year for additional acquisition, there are only a few small parcels remaining on the February 1983 acquisition priority list.

Attachment 1 shows the status of all tracts that appeared on the priority list. Actions on tracts appearing above the red line are essentially completed; the tracts have either been acquired or the owner is not interested in selling. Acquisition of the 31 parcels below the red line has been deferred until recently because of the difficulty of acquiring complete ownership of all of these small subdivisions. Note that for 16 of these parcels FWS is ready to make an offer.

Acquiring all 31 small parcels would still not obligate the entire FY 85 funding, so we examined the list contained within the Management Plan for Kirtland's Warbler entitled "Desirable Habitat for Acquisition - State List." This list contains a number of tracts which were not included on the 1983 priority list. These unprioritized tracts are listed as attachment 2, and shown in green on the attachment 3 maps.

We suggest these two lists be combined into one and any other desirable tracts be added. The resulting list should then be reprioritized by your staff to ensure that the warbler receives maximum benefit from this acquisition effort. As your staff is currently revising the warbler management plan, we also suggest consideration be given to establishing one or more additional warbler management units and concentrating FY 85 acquisition efforts there.

So that this reprioritization can occur as quickly as possible, we recommend no effort be made to identify ownership at this time. A check on the legal description and a priority ranking are all that is needed. Our realty staff will investigate tract ownership in the order of priority. We would appreciate receiving the revised priority list as soon as possible so we can complete the field work necessary for the appraisals before winter makes travel hazardous.

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Note that attachment 2 identifies those tracts which plat books show as being subdivided. You may want to consider assigning such tracts a lower priority due to the low probability of acquiring the entire acreage in the next few years.

The previous priority list (1983) contained several tracts with substantial improvements consisting of homes or cabins and outbuildings. We discussed several of these tracts with your field personnel and the decision was made not to pursue acquisition due to the relatively high value of the improvements. On the new priority list, we will assume you have taken the value of the improvements into consideration and we will therefore proceed with our acquisition efforts according to the list.

Please refer questions to Ron Refsnider, of our endangered species office (612-725-3276) or Ross Grimwood, of our realty office (612-725-3564).

Sincerely yours,

**James C. Gritman**  
**Acting Regional Director**

3 Attachments

bcc: Realty-RO

SE:RRefsnider:sv:10-11-84

SE Reading

RO Reading