June 22, 1998

Senator Conrad Burns
SH 511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-2602

Dear Senator Burns:

I am writing you today to request your assistance in obtaining Land and Water Conservation Funds to allow purchase of conservation easements for the Mission Valley Wildlife Management Project. It is critical that 3 million dollars be obtained in the FY-99 budget so that the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service can secure conservation easements agreed to by land owners in the Mission Valley Wildlife Management Area.

The Mission Valley supports an excellent diversity of wildlife due to the high density of wetlands surrounded by grasslands that provides superb nesting habitat for ground-nesting waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds. The area is one of the only places on the continent that provides both nesting habitat in the spring and foraging habitat in the winter for migratory waterfowl. The valley provides excellent riparian corridor habitat for grizzly bears that frequent the riparian zones for feeding and cover.

Subdivision of agricultural land to housing development is increasing at an alarming rate. This is decreasing wildlife habitat and subsequently opportunities to view and enjoy wildlife as well. Conservation groups and local citizens have expressed a desire to maintain open space and compatible uses such as hiking, birding, photography, hunting and fishing. The groups also believe that the community will benefit from eco-tourism and outdoor recreation. However, the pressures of land development are expected to substantially reduce these recreational opportunities.

The goal of the Mission Valley WMA program is to conserve the diversity and abundance of plants and animals in a 13,000 acre core area. We urgently request your help in making this possible.

Sincerely,

James K. Brown
President