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September 10, 2010

Ms. Betty Petersen
Vice President and Chair, Blake Fund Committee
Nuttall Ornithological Club
Chair, Blake Fund Committee
Box 686, 378 County Road
Hanson, MA 02341

RE: Community Interaction Initiative: Creating Balance for People and Birds
Final Report for 2009 Grant Request –Rio Bravo Wildlife Institute

Dear Ms. Petersen:

The Rio Bravo Wildlife Institute requested funds for this initiative to empower children in Latin America with the knowledge of what happens to people and wildlife, especially migratory birds, when seemingly harmless trash is improperly disposed of.

The project would seek to engage children in grammar school, junior and senior high to become environmental stewards. The project would then be used to collaborate with other stakeholders in the community. Focusing on trash collection, the project would build awareness and promote responsibility to protect the natural resources essential to the health and well-being of people and nature. The intended focus was Puerto Madryn, Argentina to serve as a model community to launch the program.

A bilingual booklet would be developed that would teach proper waste disposal and recycling and be available in print and via the RBWI website.

Program Evaluation Summary

Although we were successful in the development of a bilingual booklet, it took a slightly different approach than the original concept proposed. As a new organization, existing for just over a year, funding has been our greatest challenge. We were not able to garner the \$25,000 required for the project as proposed, but felt it was an important endeavor and could still make an impact with the funding we did receive.

The Rio Bravo Wildlife Institute is situated in a large Hispanic population area, with several of the poorest schools in the nation in the Brownsville Independent School District. The area serves as an important migratory flyway twice a year, and is home to an endangered cat with a population believed to be less than one hundred.

Both birds and the endangered ocelot are losing habitat at an alarming rate, and there are many areas that are used as dumping ground for trash. We decided to use a female ocelot that enlightens

a young Latino as to the impact of trash on her home as well as those of her friends. The booklet is simple but powerful in its presentation, and has been well received by the age group it was intended to influence. *Aya's Home* can be viewed at

<http://www.rbwi.org/sites/default/files/Aya%27s%20Home.pdf> Focusing on trash, the booklet has built awareness and has led to several recycling projects at the local schools. Plastic bottles are being collected for art sculptures at one school. A recycling club has also been formed.

Aya is a popular figure, and we are planning to develop a series of books addressing other issues. She has a friend Oscar the Black-bellied Whistling duck who is taking on issues that deal directly with his feathered, winged friends. Aya and Oscar have fans and several school classes have adopted them and started a fan club, an unexpected but significant happening toward raising awareness.

We are now ready to take this program to the next level and work toward implementing it in the schools in Puerto Madryn, Argentina as originally intended.

The Rio Bravo Wildlife Institute appreciates the support of the Nuttall Ornithological Club in our efforts to raise awareness of the effects of trash on birds and the environment.

Respectfully submitted
Carol Sebastian, Executive Director