

U.S. Removes Million Acres From Farming

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior, yesterday announced reclassification of a million acres of Southern California land from agricultural to non-agricultural.

According to Nolan F. Keil, assistant to the state supervisor of the bureau, the action is aimed at saving areas for proper development as well as helping protect the public from unscrupulous land promoters.

Land affected by the new ruling is in San Bernardino, Riverside, Imperial, Inyo and Kern Counties, Keil said.

Applications Rejected

Homestead and desert entry application appeals totaling 586 and involving 180,000 acres of land in the Mojave Desert and Salton Sea areas had been rejected by the local office for a variety of reasons, including lack of water. The reclassification will not modify the rejections.

The rejections led to the revision of the bureau's land program and will result, it was said, in preventing buyers from being misled by representations that the land can be used for agricultural purposes.

"Southern California's rapid economic growth has created great demand for these public lands," the bureau's statement said.

Cites Deceptions

"Thousands of citizens have been deceived by certain land promoters into believing the lands are available for agricultural entry. The promoters collect a fee for preparing the papers for applications they should know are certain to be rejected.

"In many documented cases the speculators have been shown to have filed one application after another on behalf of different applicants for the same parcel of land," the bureau's statement continued.

Water Insufficient

According to the bureau, 50,000 acres of private land in Antelope Valley are being irrigated, with the result that demand exceeds supply and the water table is falling.

Keil said reclassification opens the land to recreational use and for urban and suburban development.

Maps of the areas involved can be obtained at the Los Angeles Land Office, 215 W. 7th St., Keil added.

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