



Photo by Guy Bruyea

DELHI SANDS FLOWER LOVING FLY

Myths and Facts

- 🌐 Center for Biological Diversity 🌐 Defenders of Wildlife
- 🌐 Earthjustice 🌐 Endangered Species Coalition
- 🌐 National Wildlife Federation 🌐 Natural Resources Defense Council
- 🌐 Sierra Club 🌐 Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

The Delhi Sands flower-loving fly, once called the Colton giant flower loving fly, is native to the Inland Empire and an irreplaceable ecosystem called the Delhi sands. Researchers estimate only about 2-3% of this unique habitat remains. Scientists tell us that the best way to protect species on the brink of extinction is to protect the special places they call home.

The fly has been blamed for halting development projects in the Inland Empire. However, the facts show that few developments have been stopped. Furthermore, protecting the fly's habitat preserves important open space that also hosts a variety of California's native birds and other wildlife habitat in this fast-growing region – the open space that so many people moved to this area to enjoy. The Inland Empire still has a chance to save its natural treasures and the unusual landscape of the Delhi Sands from vanishing forever.

Myth: The Empire Center in Fontana has languished undeveloped for years because of the fly.

Fact: The Empire Center faced numerous financial and legal problems that have nothing to do with the fly. The lagging economy made it difficult to find tenants and shoppers. The property accumulated about \$45 million in bond and tax delinquencies. The city and developers were involved in a series of lawsuits over the property. Earlier this year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service approved a development proposal in exchange for habitat protection for the endangered species in another part of the city. Developers hope to start construction soon, and have started to grade some lots in the residential tract.

Myth: Construction of the \$600 million Arrowhead Medical Center in Colton was stopped because of the fly, and the hospital could not use 40 percent of the site for any construction.

Fact: Hospital construction was never halted. An agreement was reached with the developer regarding the fly before construction began, to set aside some habitat for the species. Approximately 8 to 10 acres was set aside out of an approximately 70 acre site.

Myth: The Inland Empire will lose 1,600 jobs because of the fly due to a recent decision by Stater Bros. Markets to move its headquarters out of Colton.

Fact: Stater Bros. is moving to the former Norton Air Force Base in San Bernardino, CA, which is very close to its previous location and still in the Inland Empire region. The company has pledged to work with the city of Colton to find new tenants. In its press release on the new distribution center, Stater Bros. said the development is “the biggest economic impact announcement in the history of the Inland Empire.” The press release did not mention that the fly was cause for the move, nor that staff were to be laid off.

Myth: The fly is the cause of urban blight around the Inland Empire.

Fact: People who dump trash illegally on private land are the cause of urban blight around the Inland Empire. The city of Colton wants to bulldoze sites to clean up trash and has refused to employ more species-sensitive methods of cleaning up fly habitat where dumping has occurred.

Myth: Federal officials dropped the ball on completing a multi-species regional Habitat Conservation Plan that would have solved issues surrounding the fly and other Inland Empire endangered plants and animals.

Fact: The Fish and Wildlife Service finished a draft Habitat Conservation Plan, but it was immediately rejected by the city of Colton. Instead of working on collaborative solutions, the city spent taxpayer money lobbying Congress for delisting of the fly.

Myth: Congress can delist the fly.

Fact: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, not Congress, is charged with overseeing the endangered species list. Species are removed if they have gone extinct or are recovered. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to be good stewards of the environment and leave behind a legacy of protecting endangered species and their habitats in the Inland Empire. We have a responsibility to protect species on the brink of extinction and work towards recovering them so that they can be removed from the endangered species list.

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