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Draft
OWMP



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bcc
Subject Oak Woodlands Management Plan

2007 SEP 17 AM 8:36

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
EL DORADO COUNTY

Dear Members of the County Board of Supervisors –

The Ridgeview Conservation Society, a concerned agency, was invited to participate in the Oak Woodlands Management Plan ("OWMP") Stakeholders' meetings. We participated in meetings on September 5, and 12, 2007.

The OWMP is inadequate, and its central premise is flawed and insufficient to protect any oak woodlands El Dorado County's urban areas. The OWMP protects only "priority conservation areas." The priority conservation areas consist only those oak woodlands that are 500 contiguous acres or greater in size. Other than land owned by the federal government or State, **there are no 500 acre contiguous oak woodland areas in El Dorado Hills, Cameron Park, or Placerville.** Thus, the OWMP protects only those "large expanses" in rural, remote, and undeveloped El Dorado County, which will likely never be developed because there is no adjoining infrastructure such as roads or schools.

Because the OWMP provides no protection for any oak woodlands that are less than 500 contiguous acres, all oak woodlands surrounding and within El Dorado Hills, Cameron Park, and Placerville remain unprotected. Those of us who reside and vote within El Dorado Hills, Cameron Park, and Placerville were drawn by the oak woodlands as valuable aesthetic and environmental resources. To call the OWMP a "management plan" is intellectually dishonest and misleading because it does nothing to manage the scarce oak woodlands in El Dorado County's urban areas.

The OWMP also establishes an Option B plan for "mitigation fees." Under the OWMP, a developer can effectively pave over any oak woodland in El Dorado County that is less than 500 acres, and pay a "mitigation fee." The mitigation fees are then used to acquire or restore the very same rural, large expanses of 500 acre woodlands that are extremely unlikely to be developed in the first instance. This is simply a transparent scheme to enable developers to build over urban oak woodlands under the auspices they are engaging in some type of meaningful conservation effort.

If the County were legitimately concerned about protecting oak woodlands in a meaningful manner, the Board of Supervisors should flatly reject the OWMP. Alternatively, the Board of Supervisors should develop a second plan which focuses upon preserving oak woodlands under 500 acres which legitimately need management. Specifically, the Board of Supervisors should require a second plan to protect oak woodlands in urban areas.

We ask that this letter be read into the record when the Board of Supervisors considers this flawed, developer-driven scheme which purports to "manage" El Dorado County's oak woodlands.

Respectfully submitted

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Ridgeview Conservation Society
<http://www.ridgeviewconservation.org/>