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To oaks@edcgov.us
cc
bcc

Subject comment on revised OWMP

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Draft
owmp

December 13, 2007

Jennifer and Michael Quirk
8521 Riverwood Drive
Placerville CA

Re: Oak Woodlands Management Plan

Dear Board of Supervisors,

We live in one of the most beautiful counties in California. We are most fortunate to live here. I grew up in the Bay Area, but have called this our home since 1995. I work as a nurse at Marshall hospital. My husband has taught high school in this county since 1989. We love the oak woodland habitat in this foothill community. We live on 9 acres near Coloma. There are mostly blue oak and buckeye trees on our property. We helped design and have had a beautiful home built on this property three years ago. Everyday we pinch ourselves that we live where we do. When we drive up highway 50 on our way home from a trip to Sacramento or the Bay Area, we always feel a big sense of awe... as we look out at the open space and oak woodland habitat. We feel a sense of relief and contentment as we leave the congestion of the lower communities behind.

We feel very strongly that a plan to help protect oak woodlands habitat should be just that... one that endeavors and succeeds in protecting our oak woodlands habitat. You need to be very careful not to mitigate away the magnificent habitat that makes this community so beautiful. While it is very important to support agriculture and while it is necessary and even beneficial to allow some development, everyone in the community...agriculturalists and developers included, need to participate in the protection of our oak woodlands habitat. When we read the revised Oak woodlands management plan, and when we read the Ag commissions feedback, we get more of a sense of...economic interests at heart...then a sense of...interest in preserving the natural wonders of this community. We urge you to be very thoughtful with your planning. We need to look ahead to the future and ask...what do we want this community to look like in 25 and 50 years from now? Anyone can develop, but it takes a great deal of thought and planning to conserve the habitat that makes a region so worthwhile.

The following are specific requests related to the Oak woodland management plan.

- Maintain large connected corridors of Oak woodlands habitat. This includes corridors that connect the north and south counties.
- Please be certain that significant conservation areas along highway 50 are conserved in the plan. This will help to maintain connected corridors north to south. It will also maintain an aesthetic value to this community.
- Do not provide more exemptions for agriculture interests at this time. This includes exemptions for structures and other cultivation

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interests such as timber. While we are eternally thankful for people like the Bacchi family who have maintained open space and oak woodlands habitat, and while we want to support local farmers and vintners, clearing a land for vineyards or orchards, does not protect habitat, it protects the land from houses. There is not restriction on someone clearing their land of all of the trees if they want to cultivate. We could clear our 9 acres of beautiful oaks and plant a vineyard. If everyone decided to do this, we would loose much of our oak woodlands habitat. So, no further exemptions please.

- In fact, are there ways to encourage agricultural interests to maintain habitat buffers on their land? Please include these in the plan. One way to do this is to promote conservation easements that support cultivation interests yet also support the protection of oak woodlands habitat buffers and protected corridors on the cultivated land.
- Please emphasize that it is not simply oaks we are protecting it is the flora and fauna that exist in the oak woodlands habitat that we want to continue to thrive into future generations. Everyday we watch the deer pass on the same trail on our property. The coyotes travel the same route. The oaks are filled with a multitude of bird species, and various hawks (red-tailed, coopers, red shouldered) soar overhead. We are also fortunate to hear sandhill cranes fly overhead on their migration routes. We have beautiful grasses and wildflowers.

Over the years as I have worked at Marshall hospital, I have had many patients tell me that they love living here. Some have lived here all their lives. Many have moved here from the Bay Area and L.A. areas. They have come here because of the land, the habitat, the lack of congestion and smog. I know for a fact, that if you really work to conserve our oak woodlands habitat that over the years that follow, you will have so many people thanking you in their hearts. We have had many visitors come and stay with us. They love visiting. Some love participating in Christmas in Coloma and Harvest Days. Some visit wineries, pick up peaches at Marchini's or visit Apple Hill. Some enjoy the trails at Cronin Ranch. Some have rafted down the river. All comment on the beautiful oaks and wildlife observed and many say how lucky we are to live here. They go away refreshed and happy. The tendency of supervisors in all communities is to promote development. There is a tendency to chip away at open space and yet, in the end, it is the open space that is cherished by the multitudes.

Thank -you,

Most sincerely,
Jennifer and Michael Quirk.