

**COUNTY OF EL DORADO PLANNING AND BUILDING
DEPARTMENT
PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**



Agenda of: June 13, 2019

Staff: Melanie Shasha

REZONE

FILE NUMBER: Z18-0006/Farnham

APPLICANT: Delbert Farnham

OWNER: Farnham Revocable Trust

REQUEST: Rezone two properties from Rural Lands 160-Acres (RL-160) to Timber Production Zone (TPZ)

LOCATION: South and North side of Farnham Ridge Road, approximately 47 miles east of Plymouth, in the South County area, Supervisorial District 2 (Exhibit A)

APNs: 040-050-01 and 095-070-09 (Exhibit B)

ACREAGE: 254.51 acres total

GENERAL PLAN: Natural Resource (NR) (Exhibit C)

ZONING: Rural Lands 160-Acres (RL-160) (Exhibit D)

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT: Exempt pursuant to Section 15264 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Timberland Preserves)

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to take the following actions:

1. Find that the project is Exempt pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15264 (Timberland Preserves); and
2. Approve Rezone Z18-0006 based on the Findings presented.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Approval of this rezone would change the zoning of two parcels from Rural Lands 160-Acres to Timber Production Zone (TPZ) (Exhibit E) as a combined project with a total of 254.51 acres. The project applicant acquired and began to commercially harvest these properties during the 1860's. The project sites have a historic cutting cycle of about 20 to 30 years, with the last harvest occurring in 2017. A choose-and-cut Christmas tree operation started in the 1960's and is still in operation today. This cycle of cutting is anticipated to continue into the foreseeable future so as to secure adequate regeneration, prevent over stocking and encourage growth rates. The project applicant is requesting this rezone to preserve the long term commercial timber management of the subject parcels. The El Dorado County Agricultural Commission at its regularly scheduled September 13, 2018 meeting reviewed the request from Planning to rezone these properties. The Agricultural Commission voted to recommend approval of staff's request for the proposed rezone changing the parcels from Rural Lands 160-Acres (RL-160) to Timber Production Zone (TPZ).

BACKGROUND:

The Forest Taxation Reform Act of 1976 was established to provide property owners an incentive to grow and maintain naturally occurring and/or cultivated timber products on their property. The incentive is similar to that provided under the Williamson Act Contract, where the property owner receives a beneficial property assessment for a long-term commitment to agricultural uses. Under a TPZ rezone, the applicant will receive a reduced property tax assessment by maintaining State-mandated timber stocking standards on the property.

Activities on this property began in the 1860's and consisted of logging, homesteading, mining and ranching. The family ownership has not changed during this time but the original homes built during the initial development of the property were removed in the 1940's. Remaining structures include outbuildings associated with logging and property maintenance activities. Existing roads in the project area are gated and in good condition. They are maintained regularly to provide access to the choose-and-cut Christmas tree sales operation or to harvest operations in compliance with the California Forest Practice Rules. Modification to waterways and the creation of ponds were completed during the, now historical, gold mine operation. That operation has ended and the ponds, springs, and dams created are still in existence. Where roads cross over waterways the existing culverts have been able to provide drainage and prevent erosion.

EXISTING SITE DESCRIPTION:

Neither of the parcel sites are located within a Rural Center, Specific Plan or Community Region (Exhibit A). All sites are located in the Rural Region and are undeveloped, with an overstory of pine and cedar trees (Exhibit F). The parcel identified as APN 040-050-01 (Site 1) contains 174.51 acres and is traversed by Farnham Ridge Road and Farnham Creek and includes two ponds and a historic mine site. The parcel identified by APN 095-070-09 (Site 2) is 80 acres in size, is located to the west of Site 1 and is also traversed by Farnham Ridge Road and Farnham Creek. (Exhibit D).

ANALYSIS:

Project Description

The proposed rezone would change current zoning of the properties from Rural Lands 160-Acres (RL-160) to Timber Production Zone (TPZ), which is consistent with the Natural Resource General Plan Land Use Designation. No physical change or impacts would be associated with the rezone, the project sites are undeveloped and are used for commercial timber harvesting. The Timber Harvest Plan (Exhibit G) and Agricultural Commission meeting minutes (Exhibit H) includes additional details on wildlife and soil surveys and are consistent with the proposed zone change.

Consistency Determination

Staff has determined that the proposed project is consistent with the TPZ zone, as well as other applicable El Dorado County Zoning Ordinance requirements and General Plan policies, as discussed in the Findings.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

Staff has determined that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment and the project is Exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15264 Timberland Preserves, local adoption of timberland preserve zones. No mitigation is required and no conditions of approval are proposed.

SUPPORT INFORMATION

Attachments to Staff Report

Findings

Exhibit A.....	Location Map
Exhibit B.....	Assessor's Parcel Maps
Exhibit C.....	General Plan Land Use Map
Exhibit D.....	Current Zoning Map
Exhibit E.....	Proposed Zoning Map
Exhibit F.....	Aerial Map
Exhibit G.....	Timber Harvest Plan
Exhibit H.....	Agricultural Commission Minutes; September 13, 2018