

# Exhibit 1

Another View: Local Benefits to Public Trail Acquisitions

By Alan Ehr Gott

I want to thank the El Dorado Taxpayers Association, Ms. Melody Lane and Mr. Jack Sweeney for submitting their concerns regarding the El Dorado Ranch acquisition before the Board of Supervisors this past Tuesday, August 28<sup>th</sup>. Happily, I can report there is no basis for your concerns.

The American River Conservancy ("ARC") has proposed the use of \$63,250 in Oak Woodland Protection funding for the purchase of 1,018 acres of the El Dorado Ranch which fronts the North Fork and Main Stem of the Cosumnes River. Please note that these funds come from the collection of oak woodland impact mitigation fees and not the general fund. The subject El Dorado Ranch has been identified by El Dorado County as a Priority Conservation Area (PCA). Consequently, ARC would be using these funds for the specific purpose they were set aside for. I should also note that for each \$1 El Dorado County provides to this acquisition, ARC will provide \$73 from competitive grants and private donations towards the State approved purchase price of the El Dorado Ranch.

You addressed the Board about a second concern, namely that the American River Conservancy will purchase the property and then sell the property at a profit to a public agency. There is simply no basis for this concern. When ARC transfers land to a public agency we do so through a donation or gift and there is no cost to the public agency.

There is also the concern that purchasing the property would result in a net loss of property tax revenue to El Dorado County. There is no basis for this allegation. When ARC purchases undeveloped ranchland with a relatively low tax assessment and then builds a public trail, as it has done on the 20 mile South Fork American River Trail system, this new recreational resource adds market value to the 1,000's of homes in the region. Simply put, equestrians are more likely to buy homes near public trails upon which they can ride their horses. The same is true with hikers, anglers, hunters and mountain bikers who also use these trails. When residential homes near popular, river-front recreational trails are sold for a higher value, then property tax revenue for El Dorado County increases and substantially exceeds the smaller loss in property tax from the purchase of the undeveloped public trails park. With the purchase of the El Dorado Ranch, ARC and its partners will build the first public trail system in the upper Cosumnes River drainage. The El Dorado Ranch will be very similar to the Cronan Ranch as a regional trails park and will increase market value to homes within the general region.

Another concern was expressed regarding a fire management plan for these acquired ranch lands. The American River Conservancy has consulted with CalFire on the management of the El Dorado Ranch and has a letter of support from CalFire for the project. The El Dorado Ranch is a working landscape. We lease El Dorado Ranch lands to the Howard Neilsen family for the express purpose of sustainable, grass-fed beef production and fire management. I think you will find that the Neilsen family is very happy to have ARC as a partner.

Lastly, I want to make clear that 100% of all grant funds and private donations raised for this acquisition will be applied towards the purchase price. ARC pays for fundraising and administrative support from other private donation revenue. While ARC raises millions of dollars for public land acquisition, its organizational overhead (fundraising and administrative support) rate is a very economical 6% of total budget. This in part, is why Guide Star which monitors non-profit tax returns and financial statements has awarded ARC with the 2018 Gold Seal of Transparency.