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Planning Department <planning@edcgov.us>

South Fork River Management

1 message

Sara SK <skpriority@earthlink.net>

Mon, Aug 7, 2017 at 9:28 AM

To: planning@edcgov.us

Cc: Noah Triplett <noah.triplett@edcgov.us>, James Williams <James.Williams@edcgov.us>

Hello to the Planning Commission from New England. I regret my father's recent stroke prevents my attending your meeting on the River Management Plan and Advisory Committee. Please consider my comments attached. They are slightly revised from the ones I presented to RMAC at their last meeting.

Thank you,
Sara Schwartz Kendall

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Microsoft Word - River Management - Planning Commission.docx.pdf

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**Sara Schwartz Kendall
PO Box 172
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August 7, 2017

Re: South Fork River Corridor Management (RMP, RMAC)

To the members of the Planning Commission, El Dorado County:

I have lived along the South Fork American River for over 14 years. I have worked, volunteered, recreated, and written a Master's Thesis on this river for 17 years. I am concerned that there are issues in protecting this vital, beautiful, natural, and highly used corridor that a citizen's advisory committee is essential in addressing. I know that there is thought that the RMAC format has done good work but is now outdated, but after attending last week's meeting, I disagree. There is plenty of ongoing work to do to make sure traffic on the river and issues around river use are managed well. In addition the work of advisory committees is more important than ever since the press of development is closing in. Instead of tossing the advisory committee into the garbage, we need to either expand its functions or create a second advisory committee to be of more service to the overall area. I advocate for the evolution of RMAC to a River CORRIDOR Advisory Management Committee, or the creation of a River Corridor Advisory Committee to work in tandem with RMAC. The corridor is the land and water on the South Fork, and its boundry would need to be determined by consensus. The need for this expanded or second advisory committee is demonstrated in the reasons below that have come to me in the past several days. I am sure others can add to the reasons that we need a robust advisory committee to preserve the quality of the river corridor.

1. Viewscape

Hundreds of thousands of people come from around the world to enjoy this river every year, on foot, horse, boat, and at the historic park in Coloma. It is essential to their enjoyment, and for the economic benefits they bring our County, that the natural beauty of the river corridor be maintained. We need an advisory committee to make sure the viewscape is preserved – how would it be to raft down a river and see glaring billboards? We also need to make sure that light pollution is regulated, and other visual blights are avoided.

2. Sound

We need an advisory committee to make sure there is no undue sound pollution in the corridor, for visitors and residents. Here are two examples. Most businesses keep a handle on the noise, but some do not, and the bouncing acoustics of the river corridor multiplies this nuisance. Also, because of our acoustics, we can hear for miles sounds along the river such as responding vehicles' sirens on Hwy 49 in the middle of the night

and early morning hours. An advisory committee could propose to the hard-working sheriffs and other law enforcement and fire response a sound regulation along the river corridor that would take acoustics into account, public safety circumstances allowing. I am sure there are other sound mitigation situations.

3. Air quality

I like many others was harmed by the poor air quality during the time of the King's Fire and even the recent Mariposa Fire. Visitors, however, come to campgrounds and burn campfires in the midst of these events. An advisory committee could work with campgrounds to set regulations for smoke creation based on air quality levels, and fire safety concerns in dry and hot weather spells.

4. Traffic and Safety

There is increasing development in the County, and river corridor traffic congestion is bound to increase. We need an advisory committee to review any plans that would put more cars on the narrow roads in the river corridor, both to prevent gridlock and to maintain public safety in case of emergency and large events.

5. Plant and Wildlife

We need to preserve the precious ecosystem of the river corridor. For example, I and many Coloma-Lotus residents are deeply distressed that recently people moved onto a plot of land in the heart of Coloma and cut down almost all the oak trees on their property, including very old ones even 134 years of age. They bulldozed the land so that the water run-off negatively harms their neighbors. Then they put up a strong fence all around their entire parcel so the deer cannot access the land as they used to. All of this is apparently legal because they have planted grapes and are part of an agricultural exemption.

The River Corridor's increasingly rare ecosystem is of increasing importance to wildlife and the human spirit, as surrounding areas are paved and built on. An advisory committee could work on protecting this rare and beautiful ecological resource from rampant destruction, while allowing harmonious human co-existence with it.

6. Funding

The County is in economic hardship. An advisory committee can work on getting new funding for river corridor projects. I have heard possibilities such as TOT, SMUD, tribal, and other funding sources. We need all the help we can get at this time.

I am sure there are many other reasons to support a River CORRIDOR Management Advisory Committee. Some people have other area concerns that are also valid and need to have a body to address them. Mine come out of lived experience and a deep love of this river corridor which needs protection now more than ever.

Sincerely,
Sara Schwartz Kendall