

## **Review of Community Planning Activities in Rail Road Flat and Glencoe**

Steve Wilensky was elected to the Board of Supervisors in Nov., 2004. He had activated a large number of supporters, who began to organize their communities as soon as he took office in Jan., 2005.

In April of 2005 more than 125 residents of RRF, Glencoe, Wilseyville and West Point gathered at the Rail Road Flat Elementary School to begin planning for improvements to their communities. We unanimously agreed to begin a major clean up effort in our communities and a campaign to educate residents about the community planning process. Eight months later in November of 2005, a citizens committee implemented a Community Survey to residents of RRF and Glencoe to determine their views regarding future development. The overwhelming majority of the 125 respondents wanted to retain the small town, rural atmosphere of the area. Then, in January, 2006, 100 residents at a community meeting approved by a nearly unanimous vote the Land Use Principles that later became part of our local Community Plan.

During 2005, communities began to study the General Plan, the Zoning Ordinance and other county documents. We learned that the Future Land Use Map from the 1996 General Plan, which showed a huge area (about 25 square miles) including West Point, Wilseyville, Rail Road Flat and Glencoe, was slated for ½ to 1 acre residential development. We also discovered that a General Plan Amendment had been passed during 1997 that required a change to the above referenced map and its accompanying small size limits. This passed but ignored Amendment would reduce Residential Center lands in D2 so they would be proportional with other existing Residential Centers in the County. However, the planning department never completed the revisions to the map. We first presented our concerns to the Board of Supervisors on Jan. 23, 2006. The Board finally agreed on textual and map changes to the General Plan on Dec. 11, 2006. At about the same time, the Board agreed to undertake a complete revision of the county General Plan.

During 2007, residents met first in small committees, then in large groups to agree on the boundaries for the Rail Road Flat – Glencoe Planning Area as part of the creation of their Community Plan. The attached map shows the results of that effort. During 2007, Mintier and Associates held two meetings in District 2, one in June to identify community assets and problems and another in December to establish a vision for the planning process. The June meeting was attended by 225 D2 residents. The December meeting drew about one hundred.

Community meetings during 2008 continued the process of establishing boundaries for both the larger area and for Town Centers in Rail Road Flat and Glencoe. During 2008 a Steering Committee, consisting of representatives from each of the towns in D2 helped guide the planning process, which was defined by the General Plan consultants as the preparation of a Vision Statement, a set of Policies and Programs and a Land Use Map showing land use both within and outside the Town Centers. A meeting was held in February of 2009 to approve the Policies and Programs for the RRF-Glencoe area. About 50 people attended. The document received overwhelming approval. Two months later in April, another meeting was held to approve land uses for the attached map. While the votes were less overwhelming, both communities approved maps for their Town Centers as well as the combined planning area. Attached is a 6 page document that expresses the desires of both communities and a map showing the entire planning area as well as the Town Centers.

We hope the policies outlined in our plans will be incorporated into the General Plan so that they clearly express our uniqueness and desires for the future of our communities.

# Glencoe-Rail Road Flat Vision Statement

Revised 4/21/09

The vision for The Glencoe-Rail Road Flat communities is to maintain the historic and rural atmosphere of the area. The heavily wooded landscape has high slopes with differences of elevation from the river valleys to the main roads, in some cases approaching three thousand feet. Each of the streams and valleys has stories to tell of Native Americans and miners that lived in and modified this landscape that we now cherish. There are substantial areas of public land that provide refuge for the local wildlife and recreational opportunities. Farms and ranches provide economic benefit and a rural contrast in landscape. There are areas where rural subdivisions provide for individually designed homes. Some are elegant and some are simple. It is this mix that should be maintained.

Rail Road Flat and Glencoe are unincorporated towns. Both have small village areas with limited commercial and community facilities. Compatible new commercial uses should complement the *Gold Rush* style. Generally speaking, nearby larger communities will continue to provide needed facilities and services for the Glencoe-Rail Road Flat community.

Residents live in scattered rural neighborhoods within agricultural areas. A modest number of additional home sites can be accommodated provided adequate infrastructure is available. No public sewer service facilities exist or are proposed within the area, which is also consistent with the rural atmosphere.

Ranching, timber production, family farms and cottage industries will continue to be important components of the economy and are to be encouraged. Any funds acquired from government agencies shall only be used in a way that encourages self-sustaining, self-sufficient economic opportunities and businesses. The provision of local parks, recreational trails for hikers, cyclists and equestrians and commercial outdoor recreation facilities are needed in the Glencoe-Rail Road Flat area.

Public safety must focus on appropriate forest and watershed stewardship on public lands at the residential-wild land interface to mitigate against catastrophic fire events. Plans must be developed to assure emergency access to structures with defensible space and nearby water points. This safety plan will serve as the foundation for close collaboration between community and government to reduce fire fuel and establish fire breaks. It is imperative that the removal of fire fuel be followed by a long-term management plan that fosters forest and watershed health. Forest stewardship should form a central element in promoting a sustainable local economy.

Public infrastructure such as road improvements, paths and trails shall be designed in a rural style. The Glencoe-Rail Road flat rural and historic atmosphere will provide a balance with the more developed and urban communities, which are growing along the State Route 49 corridor and areas further to the west.

## **LAND USE PRINCIPLES**

*Adopted on Jan. 12, 2006*

1. Land uses should be consistent with stated community visions or goals.
2. New development should be concentrated in existing community centers.
3. A range of housing types should be available for people of all income levels.
4. Development should not outpace the ability of local governments to provide adequate services and infrastructure, reduce the level of services provided to, or place economic hardship on existing community residents.
5. Communities should have clearly identified boundaries with separation between them provided by agricultural land, wildlife corridors, greenbelts or parks.
6. Infrastructure such as water lines, sewer lines and roads should not be extended outside existing developed areas unless those areas are contiguous to existing communities and scheduled for development in the near future as part of the community plan.
7. Land uses should not put land-use conversion pressure on agricultural lands or threaten the continued operation of existing industrial and commercial businesses.
8. Projects should be approved only if there is adequate water to supply them without risking water quality and current water supplies to existing users.
9. Project design should work with the contour of the land, preserve physical features such as rock outcroppings, trees, watercourses, and wetlands, and protect important habitat.
10. This plan should protect valuable wildlife habitat, visual quality, agricultural areas, archaeological sites, and other open space resources.
11. Environmental and community mitigation measures should adequately address all impacts to community centers and outlying areas.
12. All projects should promote sustainable technologies including support for energy and water efficient practices utilizing principles of conservation.

## **Policies & Programs for the Glencoe - Rail Road Flat Area**

1. Ensure that any development within the Glencoe-Rail Road Flat Area be consistent with the Land Use Principles adopted by our communities on January 12, 2006.
2. Allow parcel splits that are compatible with the rural nature of the area.
3. Preserve significant and visible ridgelines.
4. Develop walking paths throughout the village areas which maintain the rural, village atmosphere. However, walking paths must be buffered along roadsides. Paths close to public services should be handicap accessible.
5. Develop hiking, bicycling and equestrian trails throughout the Glencoe-Rail Road Flat area for low intensity recreational use consistent with private property rights.
6. Strongly discourage the sale of BLM, Stanislaus National Forest lands and other public or semi public lands to the private sector; support the transfer of these public lands to local agencies for public purposes.
7. All new commercial construction in town centers shall be in the *Gold Rush* style and conform to the historic nature of the communities.
8. Support the expansion of Williamson Act contracts and Timber Preserve Contracts in the area.
9. Designate and allow for the voluntary preservation of historic structures as well as historic roads, ditches, meadows, vistas and wetlands to maintain the historic and rural nature of the area.
10. Encourage the maintenance and preservation of privately owned ponds as important to wildlife within the area and as a water supply for fire fighting.
11. Encourage the California Department of Fish and Game to update studies on the migratory deer herd and to become involved in planning proposals which could affect this important wildlife and hunting resource.
12. Discourage the use of perimeter fencing of properties which limits the movement of wildlife throughout the area consistent with private property rights.
13. Support and seek funding for public access to private roads which lead to the Mokelumne River within the Rail Road Flat-Glencoe area.
14. Prepare an inventory and history of mining and milling sites as well as associated water ditches in the area. Seek funding for a signage program similar to that of state landmarks to acknowledge their history.
15. Encourage private landowners to protect and preserve mining artifacts on their property.
16. Document the location of cemetery and burial sites that require protection pursuant to state law. Encourage private landowners to care for such sites.
17. Ensure that roadside historic landmarks are accessible to the public.
18. Protect source water and watershed lands.

## **Policies & Programs Specific to the Rail Road Flat Area**

1. Actively support the re-establishment of Taylor Park as a public access facility.
2. Work with the Calaveras Public Utility District (CPUD) and adjacent landowners to provide trail access to Jefferson Davis Reservoir and to a public trail around the reservoir.
3. Use the California Department of Fish and Game program and the Mother Lode Land Trust to acquire conservation easements on ranches and other resource rich lands to protect open space and the migratory deer herd.
4. Work to develop an outdoor kiosk with benches and a community information board within the town center at (or near) the post office or the community hall as a gathering place for members of the community.
5. Actively work with the Calaveras Unified School District (CUSD) to keep the current Rail Road Flat School open as an elementary school. Consider the establishment of a charter school if CUSD decides to close the school. School structures and grounds should remain for public use.
6. The flat lands within the Glencoe-Rail Road Flat Planning Area have a rich Native American history. Require thorough archaeological studies to be completed for all subdivisions and parcel maps submitted in this area.
7. Enhance the Silver Mountain area, which is largely on BLM and SPI property, and maintain it for low intensity, non-motorized recreational use.
8. Prohibit the conversion of Timber harvest lands to residential land use as part of the state mandated program for reducing carbon emissions.
9. Support the development of hiking-bicycling trails along Summit Level Road with the long term goal of connecting this road with the Highway 4 trail and bicycling system.
10. Document the location of cemetery and burial sites that require protection pursuant to state law.

# THE GLENCOE AREA

## Policies Specific to the Glencoe Area

1. Work toward the creation of a local park to serve the Glencoe area. Suitable park land is limited because it must be relatively flat, accessible from major roads and, preferably, public land. A single parcel satisfies these criteria which is the BLM property north-east of the Community center, APN 12006021.
2. Support commercial recreation in the area such as stables, outfitters, etc.
3. Prepare an analysis of historic roads and water systems (ditches and canals) to determine the extent of public ownership and their potential use for trails. This shall be accomplished by local historians and the Department of Public Works.
4. Reopen public access across BLM land and other public lands to provide routes to the South Fork and Main Stem of the Mokelumne River and the North Fork of the Calaveras River.

## Land Uses Specific to the Glencoe Community Center

The community center is defined in the attached map entitled "G-RRF Community Area- Future Land Use". We wish to permit the following land uses within the Glencoe Town Center.

1. Public Use
  - a. Fire Station
  - b. Post Office
  - c. Town Hall
  - d. Neighborhood Park for recreation, public events, trail head, community garden and farmer's market
  - e. Bus stop/transit station
  - f. School/education center
2. Housing/Building Structures
  - a. Single family dwellings only, no apartments or duplexes
  - b. mixed use commercial and residential
  - c. mixed use light industrial and residential
  - d. mixed use church/religious place of worship and residential
  - e. Bed & Breakfast- five or fewer rooms
3. Other Permitted Uses
  - a. Agriculture as permitted under RA zoning
  - b. Commercial/retail
  - c. Open space/recreation

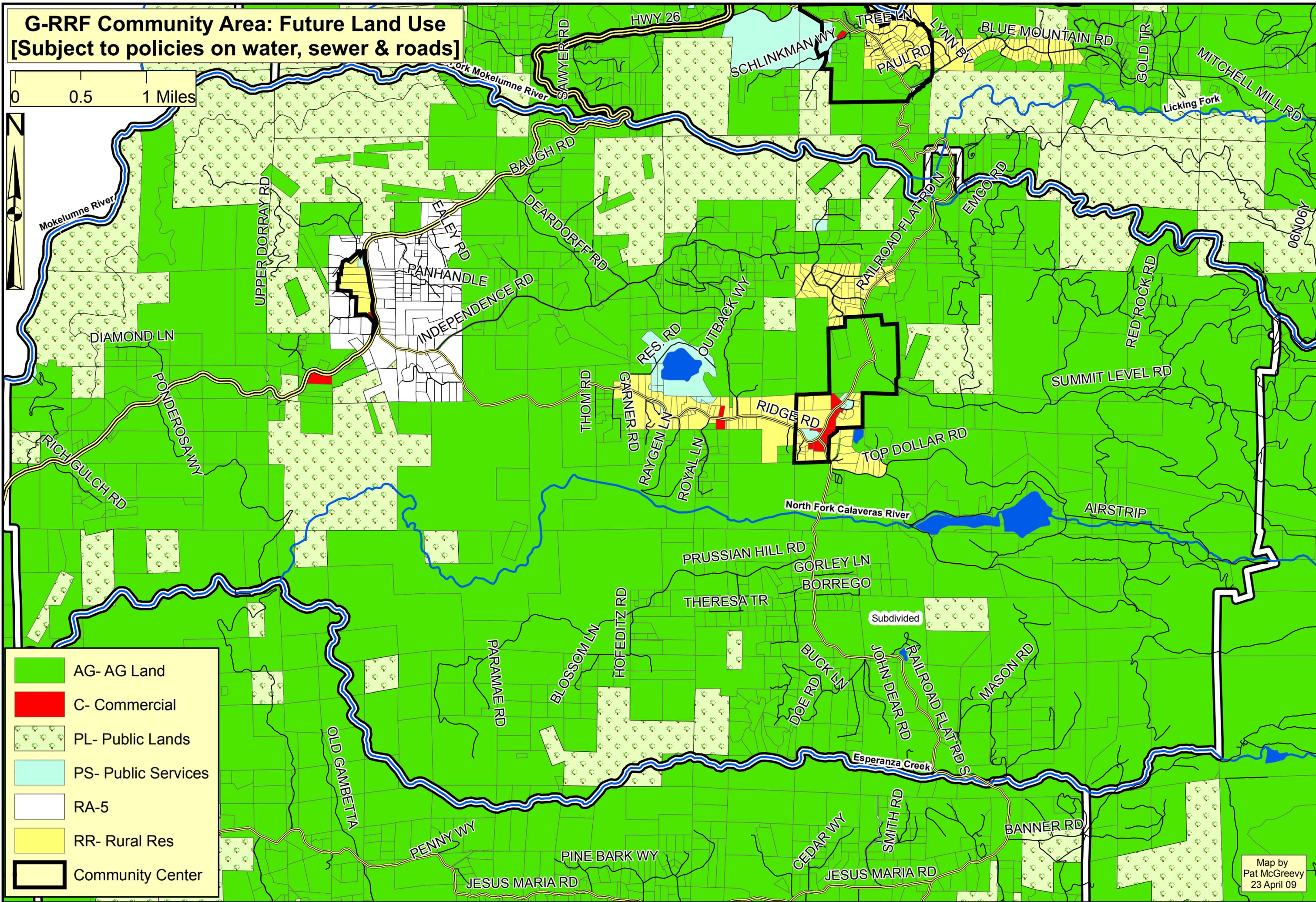
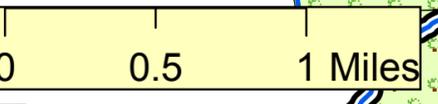
## Land Uses Beyond the Glencoe Community Center

We hope the County will consider our aforementioned Land Use Principles adopted in 2006 when determining land uses surrounding the Glencoe Community Center. In particular, we hope you share our commitments to ranches, mines and other working landscapes, and to open space between Glencoe, Rail Road Flat and West Point. Based on these principles, we recommend that all parcels currently designated as "Unclassified" be placed in RA with the exception of large parcels that qualify as A1 for future land use and zoning.

Regarding the parcels nearest the Community Center in the attached map, we recommend a minimum parcel area of 5 acres. All parcels beyond this core area shall continue in their current land use densities and designations.

# G-RRF Community Area: Future Land Use

[Subject to policies on water, sewer & roads]



- AG- AG Land
- C- Commercial
- PL- Public Lands
- PS- Public Services
- RA-5
- RR- Rural Res
- Community Center