

Weekly ReCAP for November 8, 2016

Next CPC meeting December 2, 2019 - Note time - 4:00 to 6:00 P.M., at the Volunteer Center, Lewis Street, San Andreas.

This is it- the final vote before the BOS for the General Plan update!

Regular BOS Meeting -Tuesday, November 12, 2019, 9:00 a.m.

10.PLANNING(ID # 4879) Conduct a public hearing and adopt a Resolution certifying the Environmental Impact Report, adopting CEQA Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations, adopting the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan, and adopting the Calaveras County General Plan

PC meeting, November 14, 2019 – 9:00 a.m.

AGENDA

- [2019-017, 2019-018, 2019-019, 2019-020, 2019-021, 2019-022 California Land Conservation Contracts & Agriculture Preserves No. 367, 368, 369, 370, 371 and 372 and Zoning Amendment for the Garamendi Family Trust](#)
 - [2019-068 Variance for Narducci](#)
 - [2016-063 Extension of Time for Tentative Parcel Map 2006-007 Calaveras River Estates](#)
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The inconvenient truth of man-caused climate change can no longer be denied.

Letter to the Editor / Calaveras Enterprise / Oct 29, 2019

Editor

People can write anything they want. It's a free country. It is up to your readers to filter through the claims from earnest promoters of one story or another. The truth behind our saying "It takes one to know one" tells me that the man who decries one-sided bias and lack of checks and balances at climatefeedback.org is as likely to be biased as his target. He is protecting the order in his comfort zone, which is threatened by the chaos of changing systems. Your readers will have to decide who to believe.

Climatefeedback.org is an association of earth scientists who review media stories about climate change. Their list of reviewers includes PhD-level scholars. As trained scientists (continuously peer-reviewed in their research and publications), they have high standards for factual claims, fallacies, misleading comparisons and false conclusions. If they seem one-sided to a layman, it is not because they are part of a vast conspiracy of the know-it-alls to ruin your life. It is because the factual evidence of human-caused climate change compels them to shine light on misleading rhetoric. Readers can choose to believe the best minds in the world, who have devoted their lives to understanding the earth's biosphere (at low pay I must add), or promoters of more convenient stories. I trust the scientists.

The inconvenient truth of man-caused climate change can no longer be denied. Greta is right. The planet is in a mass extinction, losing species diversity at accelerating rates. Scientists have recognized the greenhouse effect will heat the earth for over 100 years. The isotopic age of the CO₂ in samples of our atmosphere came from fossil carbon of burned coal and gas. Methane, (an even more potent greenhouse gas), started building up as man developed rice cultivation, and accelerated with the domestication of cattle. We know this from samples of ice cores in 10,000-year-old glaciers, which we also know are melting at accelerating rates. Scientists can measure world surface temperatures, which plot along with CO₂ and thousands of other parameters as mundane as concrete production and McDonalds franchises. The "Great Acceleration" beginning in the early 1950s continues unabated. For decades scientists have projected trends and made predictions from models, which are the only way to see into the future. Their accuracy improves as we accumulate more data and refine the techniques. How inconvenient that they are so often correct! How sad that some people, who can't trouble themselves to learn it, can't bring themselves to trust it.

Humankind, tangled in tribal loyalties, hasn't developed a species-centered value system to protect our planet in the long term. Today we sit on the cusp between order and chaos, (Lemmings massing at the cliff edge). In this time of great peril and great promise, the inevitable changes required to confront the truth and turn the corner seem too "costly" to the individuals currently in power (e.g. McClintock). Comfortable old folks stick their heads in the sand so they won't have to see the world they will leave their grandchildren.

John H. Kramer, PhD

Vallecito

PG&E Power Shutdown Credits Coming To Customers

By [Tracey Petersen](#) / MML / Nov 1, 2019

Sonora, CA — PG&E this week agreed to a one-time credit for both residential and businesses impacted by one of its power shutoffs this month.

The outage to be credited is the Oct. 9th PSPS. Although not attributing the bill reduction to political pressure, the utility has agreed to Governor Gavin Newsom's request to credit residential customers \$100 and business customers \$250, as reported [here](#).

Corporation CEO and President Bill Johnson acknowledged, "This is not an industry-standard practice, nor approved as part of a tariff, but we believe it is the right thing to do for our customers in this case, given the challenges with our website and call center communications."

Customers are not required to do anything to claim the credit. Instead, they will find it listed as a customer satisfaction adjustment on their next bill. The company also notes that the ultimate funding for this singular event will come from shareholders and not customers.

Johnson went on to state, "We recognize the hardship caused by Public Safety Power Shutoffs in general and how those hardships were exacerbated by our website and call center communications issues related to the Oct. 9 PPS event that impacted 738,000 customers." Johnson continued, "We are constantly working to execute these safety shutoffs more effectively while prioritizing public safety. It's important to remember that the sole purpose of these power shutoffs is to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire in the communities that we serve."

Regarding whether credits will be offered for future power cut-offs, Johnson did not rule it out advising that the company is open to having a policy discussion with state regulators and others on how it can further help customers manage during these types of safety shutoffs.

RCRC - The Barbed Wire for November 1, 2019

[RCRC Requests More Public Scrutiny with Investor-Owned Utility PSPS Post-Event Report Filings](#)

On October 30th, RCRC filed a response in support of motions made by the California Community Choice Association (CalCCA) and the California Municipal Utilities Association (CMUA) to require formal filings of Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) and Southern California Edison (SCE) Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) post-event reports.

RCRC agrees with California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) President Marybel Batjer's statement in an October 14th letter to PG&E where she states that the execution of the October 9th large-scale PSPS event was a failure. Furthermore, RCRC members' experiences with the most recent PSPS events have not shown much improvement from the October 9th protocols for either IOU. RCRC believes the CPUC and parties would benefit from receiving timely post-PSPS event action reports, and from being given the opportunity to comment on lessons learned, and real-time progress or potential improvements made by IOUs per the CPUC's instructions, such as improved coordination with county governments and local emergency management, sharing medical baseline customer information without a nondisclosure agreement, advance planning, and embedding empowered local liaisons on county Emergency Operations Centers.

Earlier this year, the CPUC initiated two proceedings to tackle the complex issues surrounding Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs) and their role in wildfire prevention. RCRC was granted party status on March 18, 2019.

RCRC's official response before the CPUC can be accessed [here](#). Please contact Staci Heaton, RCRC Regulatory Affairs Advocate at (916) 447-4806 with questions..

Rural Broadband Update

Last weekend, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved performance testing procedures for carriers receiving Connect America Fund. This would apply carriers to deploy fixed broadband networks to unserved Americans living in rural areas, helping to ensure that rural Americans have access to the same high-quality networks as Americans in urban areas.

The Connect America Fund provides support for broadband and voice service in rural areas where service would not be available or affordable without such support. This approval by the FCC also ensures that carriers remain accountable to consumers, taxpayers, and the commission, while also delivering the network performance they have committed to provide. The flexibility in these new testing procedures will enable carriers of all sizes and technical capabilities to meet testing requirements without unnecessary costs, while maintaining proper accountability.

The Economic Impact of Tourism on California's Rural Counties

After nine consecutive years of growth, California's travel and tourism economy continues to surge. Visitors pumped more than \$140 billion in travel spending in the last year, stimulating business development and providing Californians with more than one million jobs. Increased travel spending is leading to record-setting hotel construction and more than \$4 billion in annual investments in theme park, restaurant and other tourism-related infrastructure. These projects are creating secondary employment effects, generating high-quality jobs in building and construction.

Not only does tourism support the state, the industry is a boon for city and county budgets. Last year, visitor spending generated \$11.8 billion in tax revenue for state and local jurisdictions and was among the top three sources of funding for many counties. This revenue helps fund vital programs and infrastructure projects and saves California households an additional \$890 in taxes

each year to maintain state and local services. That's enough money to resurface 17,000 miles of two-lane roads or employ 107,000 police officers.

It takes more than having the perfect destination to attract visitor dollars. For more than 25 years, Visit California's marketing programs have delivered billions of dollars of new visitor spending and helped establish California as the number one travel destination in the U.S. Over the next five years, Visit California will be building on this success by investing \$500 million in global marketing campaigns to ensure that the state remains a top consideration when travelers around the world are planning a trip.

Learn more about the economic impact of tourism upon your [county](#), and the [benefits of travel and tourism to California's economy](#).

Tuolumne County Receives \$364,083 Following PG&E Shutoffs

By [B.J. Hansen](#) / MML / Nov 5, 2019

Sonora, CA — The California Office of Emergency Services has allocated \$364,083 to Tuolumne County following PG&E's planned power shutoffs, and the supervisors must now decide how to spend it.

The board voted 5-0 to accept the state revenue at today's meeting. The money was part of \$75-million in one-time money the state legislature and governor approved to offset impacts of planned power shutoffs. \$26-million of that is going specifically to counties. Tuolumne County's allocation was based on factors such as number of outages occurring and its population.

The supervisors noted that there could be additional money coming available in the near future, and supervisor Sherri Brennan argued that the county needs to put together a prepared statement articulating its impacts and financial needs. The letter would then go to groups like the California State Association of Counties.

The \$364,083 in immediate funding could go to help add back power generators at additional sites in the county. Areas identified in need include the AN Francisco Building, Sonora Main Library, Animal Control, Probation, District Attorney, Historic Courthouse and Groveland Community Hall. Also, additional generators are desired by special districts, such as TUD, the Twain Harte Community Services District and the Groveland Community Services District.

Staff was directed to develop various recommendations for spending the money and to come back to the supervisors at a later date for approval.

\$9 Million ‘Wellness Mecca’ Open For Business

By [Tori James](#) / MML / Nov 5, 2019 09:28

Valley Springs, CA – Health care resources in Calaveras County are exponentially improving with the recent opening of the \$9 million Valley Springs Health & Wellness Center (VSHWC).

Now in the third week of operations, the high-tech facility is independently owned and operated by the Mark Twain Health Care District (MTHCD).

District CEO Dr. Randy Smart confides the building and operations design was inspired by a Sacramento-based “clinic of the future,” dryly boasting that the new building probably contains more state-of-the-art technology than any other in the county.

VSHWC provides in-house lab services, such as blood tests and has a digital radiology suite that provides images in minutes to care providers onsite.

A three-chair dental suite with full support capacities, including digital x-rays, is slated to open Dec. 1.

A 1,500-square foot pharmacy, still under construction, is scheduled to initiate operations Jan. 1, 2020, providing prescriptions and offering some over-the-counter items.

According to Dr. Smart, an app will sooner be ready for patients, once they sign at the front counter for the first time, to be able to subsequently sign in using their mobile phone or tablet.

State-of-the-Art With A ‘Homey’ Feel

Despite the high-tech amenities, visitors are greeted by a pleasant lobby space with abundant seating, a beverage station and fine art prints by nationally acclaimed artist Kathleen Dunphy.

Dunphy, who also happens to be Smart’s spouse, donated the artwork, selecting warm reflective images of Calaveras County scenes. She says she wanted to complement the interior design colors and help make patients and staff feel more at home in all areas throughout the center.

Once past the lobby, patients will find a central hub area for nurses and assistants who support doctors and medical practitioners in the adjacent medical corridors. These “pods” are individually designated for pediatrics, primary care, internal medicine and specialty care such as behavioral and cardio health.

As they initially enter the area, patients will make a pitstop into Bluetooth connected room where the equipment, including an exam chair, reads and directly records their weight and vital signs into their medical files. The process virtually eliminates the use of clipboards. Nearby is a private conference room for private medical discussions with patients and their families.

The treatment room is equipped to handle a variety of procedures such as skin laceration care, casting, bracing, excisions, and minor surgery. There is also a state-of-the art “crash cart,” which Smart says can help staff carry out just about anything one can do in an emergency room. “Hopefully, we will never have to use it but if we do, we’re ready,” he says.

Smart points out a series of screens depicting a lighting system that notifies the doctors where the patients are and in what order they need to be seen.

A Focus On Caring, Quality Care

Smart describes the four full-time and six part-time doctors along with the two nurse practitioners and support staff as a highly capable group of caring professionals that are excited to be working together at the new center. General Manager Tina Terradista, a registered nurse who formerly served as a clinic manager for Tuolumne Me-Wuk Indian Health, readily concurs, “I could not be happier with the staff hiring to date.”

As for how many folks VSHWC might see and treat in its first year, Smart confides that for financial modeling purposes, the district estimated about 24,000 patients. “The number is kind of a stab in the dark. I think we will be busy, and I think we will see a lot — and to me it’s not really about those numbers. It’s about the quality. I want people to get good care...respect...and to feel good when they walk out.”

Smart emphatically shakes his head when asked if the new facility will compete with Mark Twain Medical Center (MTMC) for patients. “We are all here to provide health care in this county and there is no reason to compete...we are partners, want this to work and we are really committed to that.”

While motioning that for now his “lips are sealed,” he alludes to what he is calling more exciting plans to collaborate and partner with Dignity Health-MTMC in the coming months towards bringing further improvements to local health care.

The facility is open weekdays 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., VSHWC is a federally designated rural health clinic, accepting Medi-Cal, Medicare-Medi-Cal and managed Medi-Cal along with private insurances. To view images of the new center, click into the image box slideshow. For more information online, [click here](#).

Calaveras Supes Call Special Session Over Grid Shutdown Impacts

[By **Tori James**](#) / MML / Nov 4, 2019

San Andreas, CA – The Calaveras supes are considering a local disaster declaration in the wake of the most recent PG&E public safety power shutoffs.

According to the documents for Tuesday's special meeting, County OES Director John Osbourn is recommending the action due to local impacts from two shutdowns the utility conducted due to increased wildfire risk weather events, which spanned from Oct. 23-31.

Osbourn surmises that the shutoff events, which lasted up to nine days for thousands of residents, affected substantial portions of county community operations, including critical public infrastructure and services.

He points out that the power-downs required the provision of additional public safety and emergency services, notwithstanding impaired response capability caused by the de-energization itself. The OES head maintains the shutdowns caused emergency conditions beyond the immediate capabilities of local resources, services, personnel, equipment, and facilities, causing ongoing financial and other implications for the county.

The initial de-energization affected most residents Oct. 23 with many not getting power restored until Oct. 31. The subsequent one affected fewer county areas but still a significant number, including some that remained without power from the first incident.

Tuesday's special session begins at 1:30 p.m. in the supervisors' chambers at the county government center (891 Mountain Ranch Rd.) in San Andreas.

Angels Camp Voters Approve Increasing Transient Occupancy Tax

[By **B.J. Hansen**](#) / MML / Nov 6, 2019

Angels Camp, CA — In a special election held yesterday, a strong majority of Angels Camp voters were in favor of increasing the tax paid for hotel and lodging.

83-percent voted to increase the Transient Occupancy Tax from the current 10-percent to 12-percent. A total of 753 ballots were cast with 625 in favor and 128 opposed.

The only other item on the ballot was whether to change the city clerk and treasurer positions from elected to appointed. 68-percent were in favor and 31-percent were opposed (512-238).

Angels Camp has 2,433 registered voters so the [unofficial results](#) indicate that around 31-percent took part in the election.

Angels Camp votes to raise TOT to 12%

[By Noah Berner](#) / Calaveras Enterprise / Nov 6, 2019

In a special election held on Tuesday, residents of Angels Camp voted by a wide margin to approve both items on the ballot, Measure C and Measure D.

Measure C raises the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) from 10% to 12%, and Measure D makes the city clerk and treasurer positions appointive rather than elective.

According to the unofficial results, 760 of the city's 2,433 registered voters participated in the election, about 31% of total registered voters.

Measure C was approved with 83% of the vote, while Measure D passed with 68.27%.

The TOT increase puts the City of Angels in line with unincorporated Calaveras County, which voted to increase the TOT from 6% to 12% last year.

Measure C is expected to generate an annual \$200,000 increase in revenue from hotel and vacation rental guests in Angels Camp.

Angels Camp Mayor Amanda Folendorf said that the TOT funds were much needed to sustain basic services like police, fire and city streets.

“The successful passage of Measures C and D sends a message that the community supports our efforts. With many projects in the pipeline, designed to advance the economic health of our city, stay tuned,” Folendorf said.

Judge denies request for USFS to halt logging in Rim Fire scar

[By Davis Harper](#) / Calaveras Enterprise / Nov 6, 2019

In an ongoing legal battle over forest restoration efforts in the 2013 Rim Fire footprint in Tuolumne County, a federal judge on Oct. 7 denied a request to issue a temporary restraining order on the United States Forest Service (USFS) that would have halted a logging project for the time being.

National conservation groups Earth Island Institute (“EII”), Sequoia Forestkeeper and Greenpeace Inc., along with James Hansen, a climate change scientist, brought litigation against USFS, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) in September of 2019.

The Rim Fire scorched more than 257,000 acres of Stanislaus National Forest land east of Sonora in 2013.

The following year, the Forest Service spearheaded the Rim Fire Recovery Project to “improve the land and local economies most affected by the Rim Fire.” That included the salvage of dead trees. EII and other environmental groups unsuccessfully challenged this project in court, alleging that the Forest Service should’ve prepared a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to assess impacts on spotted owl habitat, and that it should’ve taken a “hard look” at comments and evidence submitted during the review period of the project, according to court records.

In 2018, HUD allocated \$28 million in disaster recovery grants to be administered by the state HCD to the Forest Service for removal of dead trees in areas of the Rim Fire scar that burned at a high intensity, according to the court filing. The grant also covers the construction costs of a biomass plant to incinerate the wood for power generation, the filing states.

In the current litigation, plaintiffs are alleging that the proposed logging activities on approximately 4,400 acres of forestland fall outside of a “disaster relief grant’s” scope, and that the three agencies broke environmental laws by accepting “outdated” Environmental Impact Statements from 2014 and 2016, which asserted that most of the forest proposed for logging would not regenerate naturally for several decades.

Dr. Chad Hanson of the John Muir Project, a project of EII, has been researching conifer regrowth in the Rim Fire footprint in recent years.

He claims that logging burned forests increases fire risk and destroys “postfire snag forest habitat, one of the most biodiverse and ecologically important forest habitat types.”

Commenting on the latest developments in the litigation, Hanson said, “The bar is very high to get a (temporary restraining order), so they are rarely granted. We disagree with the district court judge in the Northern District, who denied our request, but that’s water under the bridge at this point, as the case was transferred to the Eastern District, to Judge Drozd in Fresno.”

The lawsuit highlights a larger discussion over how and whether wildfire-ravaged public lands in the Sierra Nevada should be managed to protect watersheds, wildlife and communities from future fires. Both sides say the end goal is a healthy forest, but disagree on how to get there.

The Forest Service advocates for “fuels reduction” (logging), prescribed fire and reforestation treatments to reduce buildup of flammable trees that compete for water and nutrients.

By contrast, Hanson argues the forest should be left to regenerate on its own (with the exception of felling hazard trees around main roads and campgrounds), based, in part, on his documentation of trees sprouting up in the Rim Fire scar.

When asked for comment, a Forest Service representative told the Enterprise, “We cannot comment on ongoing litigation.”

John Buckley, executive director of the Twain Harte-based Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center (CSERC), has vocally opposed the litigation since it was filed.

Formed in 2010 with the goal of ramping up restoration efforts in the southern portion of the Stanislaus National Forest and adjacent landholdings, the Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions (YSS) collaborative stakeholder group includes representatives of the timber industry, grazing interests, local government, environmental organizations (including CSERC), business interests, motorized recreation groups, and state and federal agencies.

According to Buckley, YSS “unanimously supports moving forward to lower fuel levels in the Rim Fire area so as to reduce the risk of yet another devastating high severity wildfire in the future ... Those who filed the suit are extreme environmental organizations actively working to block a wide range of forest restoration treatments that mainstream and local environmental groups believe are not only reasonable but highly needed.”

With the temporary restraining order denied, Buckley said there may only be approximately 1,000 acres – less than a quarter of the project area – left to be logged that could be affected by a court decision later this year.

The next court date is scheduled for Dec. 3 in Fresno. At that time, the court will determine whether or not the biomass removal of dead trees and fallen logs should be allowed to continue, whether pile burning in the forest is consistent with the Forest Service-approved plan, and whether the HUD grant is an appropriate funding source for the fuel reduction work, according to Buckley

Greenhorn Creek residents weather 'changing times' with Neighborhood Watch

[by Dakota Morlan](#) / Calaveras Enterprise / Nov 7, 2019

If you drive into Greenhorn Creek in Angels Camp and creep slowly past the stately homes that line Smith Flat Road (as one lost reporter did on a recent Monday morning), you can bet that Allan McIlree will take notice.

The 78-year-old resident has been watching over the golf-oriented neighborhood since shortly after he and his wife, Judy, built their home there in 2007. Called to the task by a collection of concerned residents, McIlree agreed to take the lead in forming a neighborhood watch program, becoming what he refers to as “The Chief Snoop.”

Following the National Neighborhood Watch Program (NNW) guidelines created by a coalition of federal justice entities in the wake of Sept. 11, 2001, McIlree coordinated with a liaison from the Angels Camp Police Department. He knocked on neighbors’ doors to obtain contact information and purchased the trademark warning signs out of his own pocket, which he then installed on lampposts throughout the community.

The retired nuclear power contract researcher who was formerly based in Palo Alto now oversees a band of “observers” who span almost the entirety of Greenhorn Creek. Each observer is charged with keeping an eye on a designated section of the neighborhood and staying in touch with those who live there.

Residents know that they can contact their local observer if they see something suspicious or call the police directly in urgent cases.

“I think the times are changing, and it’s becoming more and more important to have some kind of action plan for each neighborhood,” McIlree told the Enterprise while sitting in his home office with a wide window overlooking the street. “The attitude toward lawlessness has increased. It’s sad, but it is happening.”

Within the past year, McIlree is aware of two break-ins within the subdivision and its surrounding neighborhoods. He says he has seen criminal activity increase in his community and the wider region since moving to the area, witnessing incidents that have proven the necessity of a neighborhood watch.

One example occurred several years ago when law enforcement apprehended a man who had broken into McIlree’s neighbor’s home while he was away on a fishing trip in Seattle. McIlree was immediately able to aid investigators by calling the neighbor, who then provided an inventory of valuables over the phone to identify any stolen items.

“Just having that organization at some point is extremely important for addressing issues that arise,” McIlree said.

Beyond getting to know one’s neighbors and collecting a comprehensive list of contacts, McIlree said that a good relationship with local law enforcement is integral to maintaining a solid watch program.

“We aren’t the law keepers. We’re just the observers – the eyes and ears to report anything suspicious,” he said.

McIlree recommends that those who want to start their own watch program organize a meeting with neighbors and reach out to their local law enforcement agency to facilitate. Both the Angels Camp Police Department and the Calaveras County Sheriff’s Office provide support to neighborhood watch groups.

“We have active Neighborhood Watch Programs,” Sgt. Greg Stark with the Sheriff’s Office confirmed. “We assist homeowners in hosting meetings, setting up new groups and managing existing one(s).”

Residents can also go to the official Neighborhood Watch website at nnw.org for information and resources including the signature signs.

For Greenhorn Creek resident Dr. Eldo Frezza, moving into a community that looks out for one another has made him feel “welcome and safe.”

“We sleep better at night, and we are more relaxed when we are out of town,” Frezza said.

County’s General Plan update approaching the finish line

By Nick Baptista / The Valley Springs News / November 8, 2019

It took 10 years to complete the Panama Canal. It only took eight years from the time President John F. Kennedy announced the national goal of putting a man on the moon to accomplish that feat and half-dozen years to build the Transcontinental Railroad.

On Tuesday, the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors will consider adopting an update of the county’s General Plan and all of the accompanying documents.

That task has taken Calaveras County 13 years to complete.

Numerous board members, planning directors and county administrative officers have come and gone in the meantime.

Tuesday's board meeting begins at 8 a.m. in the Board Chambers at 891 Mountain Ranch Road in San Andreas. The board will go into a closed session and reconvene in public at approximately 9 a.m.

California law requires that each county and city in the state develop and adopt a General Plan.

The General Plan addresses important community issues such as new growth, housing needs and environmental protection.

Update of Calaveras County General Plan has not been without controversy.

Approval of the General Plan update is moving forward without inclusion of some community plans. That move has drawn criticism and the board has said completion of those plans will be a high priority.

In addition, members of the Calaveras Planning Coalition have suggested numerous changes to the document, which could face a legal challenge,
