

WEEKLY ReCAP**JANUARY 29, 2021****A Sampling of News and Views****P.O. Box 935, San Andreas, CA, 95249 • (209) 772-1463*****Protecting our rural environment by promoting citizen participation in sustainable land use planning since 2006***

The Community Action Project (CAP) administers the Calaveras Planning Coalition (CPC), which is comprised of regional and local organizations, community groups, and concerned individuals who promote public participation in land use and resource planning to ensure a healthy human, natural, and economic environment now and in the future. Learn more at www.calaverascap.com.

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NEXT CALAVERAS PLANNING COALITION MEETING:

February 1, 2021, 3:00 P.M. TO 5:00 P.M. VIA ZOOM**NEW MEMBERS WELCOME AT CPC MEETINGS**

Organizations, groups, and individuals may join the CPC. Prospective members may attend two consecutive meetings before making a final decision on membership in the Coalition. The membership form is a pledge to support and advocate for the Coalition's eleven Land Use and Development Principles, which you will find on our website: www.calaverascap.com. There is no membership fee. However, members are encouraged to donate to the CAP/CPC. Visitors and prospective members will, by necessity, be excluded from attorney/client privileged discussions.

If you are interested in CPC membership, please email CPC Facilitator Tom Infusino, tomi@volcano.net, to receive a membership form, agenda, and the Zoom meeting connection.

To help prevent the spread of Covid-19 in our county, all CAP/CPC meetings will be held online via Zoom until restrictions are lifted by the Public Health Department.

Learn about more ways to get involved with CAP/CPC here!

IMPORTANT MEETING!**Planning Commission – February 11, 2021**

The agenda and staff report for the Planning Commission meeting of February, 11, 2021 have been posted to the website.

<https://calaverasgov.us/Meeting-Calendar/ModuleID/3891/ItemID/944/mctl/EventDetails>

REGULAR AGENDA 1. Project 2020-065 ZONING MAP AMENDMENT:

Calaveras County is proposing to amend the Zoning Map to bring the zoning into conformance with the General Plan. ***The zoning amendment proposes to change the zoning for 5780 parcels*** that are currently zoned U, Unclassified and HS, Highway Service, identified as interim zones, to one of the following zones: RR, Rural Residential, RA, Residential Agriculture, A1, General Agriculture, GF, General Forest, or REC, Recreation, based on the land use designation of the General Plan as identified in Table LU-2 of the General Plan.. Additionally, 1150 parcels with zones that are inconsistent with the land use designations are proposed to be changed to a compatible zone pursuant to Table LU-2.

The proposed zoning may be viewed on the County's website

at: <https://gisportal.co.calaveras.ca.us/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ebdd24eb70db4b5494fbdce6427454bc>

The map amendment has been determined to be a later activity within the scope of the General Plan, and the program Environmental Impact Report, certified in 32019, SCH# 2017012043 adequately describes the zoning necessary to bring the zoning into conformance with the land use designations of the General Plan. (Peter Maurer, Planning Director)

[Click Here to Read the Comments Submitted by the CPC](#)

[Interested in learning more about the General Plan Update? Click Here](#)

In other General Plan news...

"Stay the Course": BOS Sets Implementation Priorities for the GPU

BOS Sets Priorities for the Year - misses opportunity to take advantage of grant money available to help implement other parts of the General Plan intended to provide residents with "traffic safety, water security, emergency response, and resource conservation benefits." *Click the link to read the full article on the CAP website.*

RCRC – The Barbed Wire – January 22, 2021

RCRC and County Partners Send Urgent Local Vaccine Recommendations to Governor Newsom

This week, RCRC along with our county partners the California State Association of Counties, the Urban Counties of California, County Health Executives Association of California, and the Health Officers Association of California sent a letter to Governor Newsom which outlined the challenges local health jurisdictions are facing in the administration of vaccines. The letter also provided urgent recommendations that will aid in a more efficient and coordinated effort – and thus result in vaccinating as many Californians as quickly as possible.

From the local perspective, counties believe the most critical issues for the state to address are data transparency and timely reporting. Local health departments believe there are significant data lags and reporting challenges that result in a significant underreporting of California's progress. California's vaccination efforts are coordinated between multiple vaccination partners, including the Federal Pharmacy Partnership, multi-county entities, and local health departments. Some of California's challenges arise from the lack of transparency between these various entities. With all of this in mind, the recommendations provided by RCRC and our county partners focus on addressing issues of:

- timely and accurate reporting by providing staff to support the California Immunization Registry (CAIR2) system; auditing the system to address issues causing increased workload for providers; providing additional system training to vaccinating entities; and instituting state level enforcement strategies to help ensure data is entered within 24 hours.
- data transparency by providing local health jurisdictions with access to additional data from the CAIR2 system so they can see the doses being allocated, received, and administered throughout the state, in order to assess whether they are being provided enough vaccine.

- dependable vaccine allocation by making the supply predictable, providing allocation amounts one month in advance, and increasing allocations to keep up with local health department plans to ramp up vaccination efforts.
- accountability for all vaccination partners by holding CVS/Walgreens and multi-county entities accountable for timely reporting at the local jurisdiction level, and by supporting the redirection of vaccines from the Federal Pharmacy Partnership to local health departments, where feasible, if implementation is otherwise delayed.

The full list of recommendations can be viewed in the [letter here](#). For more information, contact Sarah Dukett, Legislative Advocate at (916) 447-4806 or sdukett@rcrcnet.org.

Bill of the Week: SB 29 (Umberg) – Elections: Vote by Mail Ballots

RCRC has expressed support for Senate Bill 29, authored by Senator Tom Umberg (D-Santa Ana). Last year, in response to the health and safety concerns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the State enacted Assembly Bill 860 (Berman) which required county election officials to mail a ballot to every registered voter and to operate an acceptable vote-by-mail tracking system for the November 2020 General Election. SB 29 would simply extend these requirements to all elections proclaimed or conducted prior to January 1, 2022.

For many rural areas, voting by mail has been the predominant method of voting for several years and RCRC has long supported expanding the ability of counties to conduct all of their elections via vote-by-mail balloting. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to present significant health and safety risks to voters and to those tasked with conducting the election. SB 29 would ensure that every Californian has the option to vote from the safety of their home.

RCRC's letter of support is available [here](#). For more information, contact Sarah Dukett, RCRC Legislative Advocate, at (916) 447-4806 or sdukett@rcrcnet.org.

State Auditor Finds Smaller Counties Did Not Receive Their Fair Share of Coronavirus Relief Funds

The State Auditor released a report on Tuesday noting that a funding formula proposed by the Newsom Administration disadvantaged smaller counties out of receiving their fair share of federal Coronavirus Relief Funds. This resulted in providing California's 16 largest counties nearly double the economic relief per person than lower population counties to respond to the global public health emergency brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the California Department of Public Health, COVID-19 case rates were just as high, and in some cases higher, in smaller counties than in the state's largest counties.

In March 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act passed Congress, providing \$9.3 billion in Coronavirus Relief Funds to California, plus \$4.5 billion in direct assistance to counties with populations greater than 500,000. While the Legislature approved \$1.3 billion to counties, a formula devised by the Department of Finance allocated only half of this earmarked money for the remaining 42 lower population counties. Overall, urban counties received \$190 per resident while rural and suburban counties were left with \$102 per person from the Department of Finance to address public health and safety needs associated with the pandemic.

RCRC has advocated, and will continue to advocate, that Congress provide direct and equitable local assistance payments to all counties. See RCRC's related advocacy letters below. To view the complete findings by the State Auditor, see here.

RCRC Letters

- April 1, 2020- Letter to Speaker Pelosi
- April 9, 2020- Letter to Representative Joe Neguse
- April 17, 2020- Letter to Senator Feinstein
- April 17, 2020- Letter to Governor Newsom
- May 22, 2020- Letter to Congressional Leaders
- June 5, 2020- Letter to Congressman Cook- HR 7090
- July 30, 2020- Phase 2 Letter to Congressional Leaders

Board of Forestry Fire Safe Regulations Update

This week at the California Board of Forestry (BOF) joint committee meeting, staff provided a brief update on the State Fire Safe regulations process, including a commitment to hold additional stakeholder discussions before submitting the rulemaking package to the Office of Administrative Law. The joint committee did not take any further formal action on the proposal. RCRC staff testified during public comment, expressing appreciation to the BOF for accepting RCRC's recommendation to hold additional, multidisciplinary stakeholder meetings.

The next stakeholder workshop will occur on January 27th, focusing on revisions to Articles 4 and 5 of the proposed regulations. Registration for the meeting can be found here. Staff stated during the joint committee meeting that the BOF intends to hold an additional meeting, tentatively scheduled for February 9th. All public comment received by the BOF since the first workshop in November is now available for viewing on the BOF website, and will be updated weekly.

The State Fire Safe regulations set forth basic wildfire protection standards for development in the State Responsibility Area and, beginning July 1, 2021, the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones of the Local Responsibility Area. The changes made in the [draft rulemaking](#), will have extraordinary impacts on housing production, not only in rural areas of the state, but also in more urbanized regions of California. For instance, the draft regulations would prohibit any future building construction on property served by a road that has not been upgraded, or that cannot be upgraded to meet current standards, such as dead-end roads. These upgrade requirements include road widening, re-surfacing, leveling grades and curves, and bridge improvements, from the property line to the nearest fire station, and apply to the building of a single residential unit or any business increasing its "service capacity." All required upgrades would be at the expense of the property owner.

RCRC staff has been in discussions with the BOF since April, 2020 on proposed revisions to the State Fire Safe regulations and have offered both written and oral comments on the preceding emergency rulemaking that ultimately made more minor changes to the regulations.

For updates from the BOF on the Fire Safe Regulations and other activities of the BOF Resource Protection Committee, subscribe to email updates [here](#). For more information, please contact Tracy Rhine at trhine@rcrcnet.org.

Governor Newsom Lays Out California Wish List For Incoming Biden Administration

On Tuesday, Governor Gavin Newsom sent a [letter to President-elect Joe Biden](#), outlining his wish list of California-specific policy priorities for the incoming Biden Administration.

Specifically, the Governor asked for additional support on housing vouchers to combat homelessness, forest management to reduce wildfire risk, and restoring California's ability to set greenhouse gas standards for cars, which the Trump Administration revoked. On infrastructure, Governor Newsom mentioned water, broadband, housing, renewable energy, schools, and "restoring the federal commitment" to the state's high-speed rail project, which lost nearly \$1 billion in federal funding last year.

USDA Issues Final Rule on Hemp Production, CDFA Finalizes State Regulations

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) released the Final Rule for industrial hemp production, which will go into effect on March 22, 2021. The USDA made many notable changes to their Interim Final Rule based on public comments, including extending the harvest period up to 30 days from the time of sampling to measure the acceptable tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) limit (the main psychoactive constituent of cannabis), and removed burdens on law enforcement to dispose of non-compliant hemp that tests above acceptable THC limits. While the USDA subsequently delayed interim requirements to test hemp through laboratories registered with the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Final Rule maintains this requirement.

As it stands, there are an insufficient amount of these DEA-registered laboratories to process hemp samples not only in the state, but also nationwide. However, the DEA will delay enforcement of this requirement until January 1, 2022 while they attempt to process laboratory registration applications and attempt to prevent significant testing backlogs from occurring.

On Wednesday, the Office of Administrative Law approved California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) industrial hemp cultivation regulations, which went into effect immediately.

These new requirements will, among other things, require County Agricultural Commissioners to conduct random, annual inspections of hemp registrants to verify information, confirm crop destruction and ensure proper recordkeeping. CDFA will open a new rulemaking in the future to ensure California's regulatory plan complies with the USDA's Final Rule. More information on USDA's Final Rule can be viewed [here](#). RCRC's letter to USDA can be viewed [here](#).



Looking towards the Sierra Crest Image Megan Fiske Copyright 2020 yosemitenorthphotography.com

Permits Required for Hiking the Pacific Crest Trail in 2021

RCRC's partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA), will be issuing permits for hiking the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) in 2021. The Pacific Crest Trail Association had discussions with State Parks and the USDA Forest Service before deciding to issue permits. As such, the [PCTA announcement](#) was released several days ago.

The PCTA decision to issue permits is in concert with a multi-faceted public education campaign about the risks and dangers of COVID-19. Of particular note to counties, those planning a trip on the Pacific Crest Trail must follow all local, state, and federal regulations related to COVID-19.

Individuals may apply for a permit online, starting on January 19, 2021 at 10:30 a.m. Pacific Time. Learn how to apply for a permit [here](#).

The PCTA has the highest expectation that the PCT community will carefully consider the many risks and will make smart decisions that minimize risks to themselves, other hikers, and communities along the trail. The PCTA is recommending that trail users seriously consider postponing long-distance travel on the PCT until 2022.

For questions or additional information, please contact:

U.S. Forest Service PCT Administrator Beth Boyst
SM.FS.PCTPermits@usda.gov
707-334-4959

Pacific Crest Trail Association's Director of Trail Operations Jennifer Tripp
jtripp@pcta.org
916-243-9923

Davis responds to report from grand jury

By Nick Baptista / [The Valley Springs News](#) / January 22, 2021

Calaveras County Assessor Leslie Davis was pleased the 2019-20 grand jury of Calaveras County cast some light on the problems her office is facing to address its backlog of property reassessments.

The grand jury last month issued its findings and recommendations on the assessor's office in a 17-page report.

The assessor's office is three years behind on residential and four years on commercial reassessments, according to the grand jury.

"The backlog of all re-appraisable events in Calaveras County is over 6,800," The report said.

"The grand jury clearly put a lot of effort into this report," Davis said. "If it will help – great."

Davis and the grand jury agree on the need for the county to increase the assessor office's salary schedule – especially for appraisers.

"Calaveras County wages for higher-level appraisers are lower than most foothill counties and lower than most foothill counties for entry-level appraiser positions," the report said.

The office is budgeted for eight appraisers, but only three positions were filled at the end of the previous fiscal year and one of those appraisers left to accept a higher-paying position in Nevada County.

Calaveras County due to the disparity in salaries is virtually a farm team for other assessor offices in the state.

"We train them and then they go somewhere else," Davis said. "The salary schedule is a big issue and only the Board (of Supervisors) has the authority over this to make a course correction."

Davis was also frustrated with the board's reluctance to reclassify positions in her office intended to make it more efficient.

The latest example was during final budget talks in September when Davis wanted to reclassify a vacant appraiser analyst position to assessment standards analyst. It would have meant an annual \$17,482 increase in salary, but a majority of the board balked at the proposal.

"I'm a little concerned the board would have problems helping us work toward being more efficient and helping our staff be more proficient with their duties," Davis said at the time.

"The board's unwillingness to consider the organizational changes I need to make does not help the situation," she told The Valley Springs News.

One area of disagreement between Davis and the grand jury is the use of overtime to reduce the backlog.

The grand jury recommended the assessor's office begin authorizing overtime by April 30 of this year using current appraisers and staff.

Davis believes overtime will only exacerbate the problem.

"The staff doesn't want to work overtime," she said, "They're pretty darned stressed right now with the amount of work and also dealing with the pandemic. If we add more hours to their work schedule I believe we'll start seeing physical manifestations.

To address the public's concerns, the grand jury is calling for the assessor's office to develop a plan by April 30, 2021, "to provide outreach using public forums and/or notifications to educate property owners about the effect of the backlog."

Davis said she was open to this suggestion, but from past experience has found that individual supervisors organizing district-wide meetings with access to multiple department heads has been the best approach to attract interest from constituents.

Davis is required to submit her written response to the grand jury findings before the end of February.

Demand for COVID-19 vaccine, low inventory overwhelms local distributors

By Dakota Morlan / The Calaveras Enterprise / Jan 26 2021

Calaveras County Public Health and Dignity Health Mark Twain Medical Center updated the board of supervisors Tuesday morning regarding their ongoing joint efforts to vaccinate an estimated 30,000 residents against COVID-19, a process which will require approximately 60,000 total doses.

Since opening a call center on Jan. 15 to schedule vaccinations for residents age 65 and older, the Mark Twain Medical Center vaccine clinic has been barraged with roughly 15,000 calls, effectively overwhelming staff members' ability to return each call, hospital President and CEO Doug Archer said on Tuesday.

Although the clinic vaccinated 860 individuals last week, averaging 300 doses daily, approximately 5,000 people on the clinic's waiting list have been left disappointed and confused, with many not aware that they are on the waiting list at all, Archer said.

False rumors that the clinic's call system malfunctioned have only intensified public frustration, he said.

To help ease the burden on hospital staff, the clinic will be contracting a vendor to field calls and notify those who left a voicemail that they are on the waiting list, a process which should be up and running by the end of the week.

But Archer reminded the public that those on the waiting list will need to be patient, as inventory will only guarantee 400 additional doses administered at the clinic this week.

"There isn't clarity," Archer said regarding the vaccine supply chain. "We expect clarity, we want clarity, but we also have to be willing to admit or digest the fact that there just isn't clarity right now at all levels of the nation, in not only how we move forward but what resources we have to do so."

Meanwhile, the Public Health Division of the Calaveras County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) has vaccinated roughly 1,100 additional individuals in Phase 1A of the state's vaccine rollout schedule within the last week. About 250 of those vaccinations were a second dose, which is required for both the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines.

Despite limited supply, county and hospital officials have committed to providing second doses and are prioritizing inventory accordingly, administrators reported.

The county has also begun vaccinating childcare workers and teachers, included in Phase 1B, Tier 1, in partnership with local schools, working its way through the state rollout schedule as supply allows.

Interim HHSA Director Sam Leach said that an automated online scheduling service will be introduced when the vaccine is more broadly available. Currently, the county is directly contacting groups of individuals who are eligible to be vaccinated.

Leach compared the current vaccine situation to attempting to fill a football stadium with people in an orderly fashion, following ever-changing directives from the state, while vaccinating as many people as possible without the promise of weekly shipments.

"I'm feeling a little bit of the pressure, (but) I know what I signed up for," said Leach, who temporarily vacated his job as county probation chief to fill the HHSA position in December. "We need to make sure we're not just clawing at each other, pointing fingers all the time. ... We're in it together."

Both Leach and Archer painted a grim picture of the length of time it might take to vaccinate the population at the current rate of shipments.

Last week, the county received 700 doses and is promised 100 more this week, though the shipment could contain more doses, Leach said. Mark Twain Medical Center is similarly promised 100 additional doses this week through the Dignity Health supply chain, though it is not guaranteed, according to Archer.

"It's going to take a while to get to 60,000 on that trajectory," said Archer, who cited projections at the national level that the vaccination process may not be complete until early next year.

Leach and Archer both stated that they understood the fear and frustration of the public, but that patience is paramount during this "monumental time."

"(Regarding) frustrations from the community, I'm prepared to take that," Archer said. "I'm more than willing to be the target here, and that's OK. The good work right now is getting people scheduled to have vaccines."

Leach additionally warned that Calaveras County is "still in a surge" and at twice the positivity rate needed to enter a lower tier in the state's COVID-19 monitoring system. He advised residents to continue practicing social distancing, wearing masks and washing hands as "the best way" to help the county bring down case numbers.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Funding Opportunities Newsletter for February/March 2021:

[Funding Opportunities Newsletter | Sierra Nevada Conservancy \(ca.gov\).](#)

Click the link above to view this electronic newsletter published every two months containing information on upcoming grant and funding opportunities for the Sierra Nevada region. The newsletter includes federal, state, and private foundation funders as well as additional resources and information related to grant funding. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy provides the Funding Opportunities Newsletter as a free resource under its Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program.

Planting a Sequoia

by Dana Gioia

All afternoon my brothers and I have worked in the orchard,
Digging this hole, laying you into it, carefully packing the soil.
Rain blackened the horizon, but cold winds kept it over the Pacific,
And the sky above us stayed the dull gray
Of an old year coming to an end.

In Sicily a father plants a tree to celebrate his first son's birth—
An olive or a fig tree—a sign that the earth has one more life to bear.
I would have done the same, proudly laying new stock into my father's orchard,
A green sapling rising among the twisted apple boughs,
A promise of new fruit in other autumns.

But today we kneel in the cold planting you, our native giant,
Defying the practical custom of our fathers,
Wrapping in your roots a lock of hair, a piece of an infant's birth cord,
All that remains above earth of a first-born son,
A few stray atoms brought back to the elements.

We will give you what we can—our labor and our soil,
Water drawn from the earth when the skies fail,
Nights scented with the ocean fog, days softened by the circuit of bees.
We plant you in the corner of the grove, bathed in western light,
A slender shoot against the sunset.

And when our family is no more, all of his unborn brothers dead,
Every niece and nephew scattered, the house torn down,

His mother's beauty ashes in the air,
I want you to stand among strangers, all young and ephemeral to you,
Silently keeping the secret of your birth.

from *The Gods of Winter* (1991): [The Gods of Winter – Dana Gioia](#)



Calaveras Big Trees State Park Image Megan Fiske Copyright 2020 yosemitenorthphotography.com

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