

WEEKLY ReCAP**March 26, 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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***Get a glimpse into what CPC membership is like by attending a meeting.
There is no committment, just show up and listen in!***

NEXT CALAVERAS PLANNING COALITION MEETING:

April 5, 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!

**Board of Supervisors Meeting March 30, 2021
Agenda upcoming!**

**Planning Commission – April 8 2021
Agenda upcoming!**

You can find current agendas and agenda packets, as well as previous agendas, meeting videos, and minutes on the County page here

Interested in learning more about the General Plan Update? Click Here

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Approval of mass zoning change harms Burson landowner

By Nick Baptista / The Valley Springs News / March 12, 2021

Changes to Calaveras County's zoning map were unanimously approved Tuesday by the Board of Supervisors with only one concern surfacing during the public hearing.

Approximately 6,900 parcels would be affected by the changes, Planning Director Peter Maurer told the board.

The only feedback from the public during the hearing came from a Burson landowner.

What was once a commercially zoned property near the intersection of State Route 12 and Burson Road was being switched to rural residential under the new zoning map.

The landowner, Rick Ponti, told the board he became aware of the proposed zoning change when he was approached to sell his property for construction of a store.

District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli asked why the board couldn't make the change back to commercial at this time and Maurer said such an action required proper public notice.

"It doesn't seem right," Tofanelli said.

With any large project, such as the zoning map changes, errors will be discovered, Maurer said, and they can be fixed in the future.

Tofanelli suggested Maurer and Ponti meet and discuss how to address this particular zoning issue.

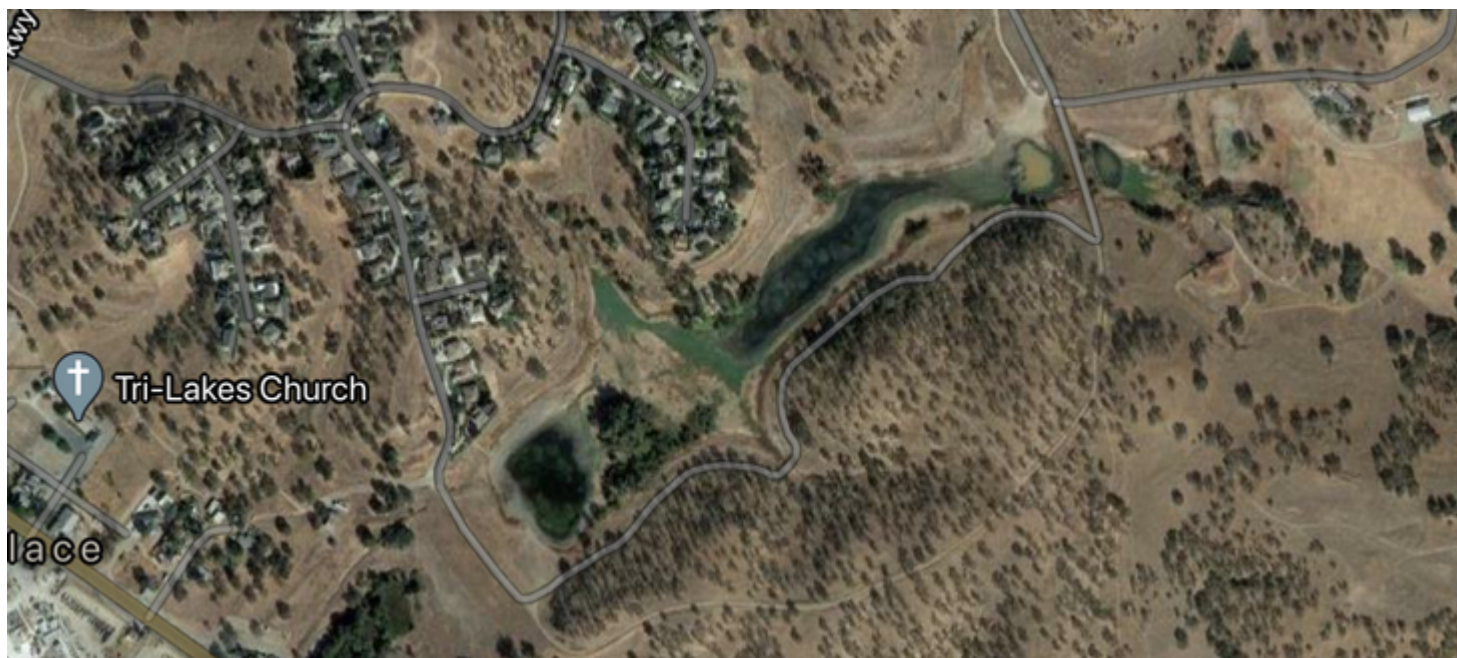
Ponti said his property has lost nearly two-thirds of its value by being rezoned from commercial to residential.

"Please help me with that," Ponti said.

Since adoption of the new General Plan in November, 2019, the planning department has been working to update the zoning for consistency. Draft maps were provided on the county's website in December, 2020 for review.

The portal to the maps was "not as user friendly as we would have liked," Maurer told the board.

However, "for the most part, people who questioned the zoning changes to their benefit have been able to work with staff and with me to identify the changes and for the most part have been satisfied."



Oak woodlands South of Wallace Lake are vulnerable to a proposed zone change that would allow construction of a new subdivision

Open Space Zoning Without an Open Space Plan

Proper open space planning in Calaveras County is critical to preserving our oak woodlands, and is necessary for the county to fully comply with General Plan law in California. CPC Member Muriel Zeller has been diligent in communicating these deficiencies to county staff. At a recent Board of Supervisors meeting, Planning Director Peter Maurer acknowledged Muriel's concerns. [Read the full article and watch the short video clip on the CAP website here.](#)

RCRC – The Barbed Wire - March 19, 2021

The following articles are sourced from the RCRC newsletter "The Barbed Wire"

RCRC Working with NACo to Ensure California's Public Lands Counties Receive Aid Via A Special Provision in the American Rescue Plan Act

This week, RCRC's national advocacy partner, the National Association of Counties (NACo), [sent a letter](#) to U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen requesting that "Treasury

consult with NACo and state associations of counties in the development of [the] formula” to distribute the \$1.5 billion of aid provided to public lands counties as part of the American Rescue Plan Act signed into law by President Biden last week. A key section of the Act, championed by Senator Ron Wyden (D-Oregon), tasks the U.S. Treasury with developing the distribution formula that would provide public lands counties additional monies beyond what is provided to each and every county in the U.S. under the Act. In the [Congressional Record](#), Senator Wyden explicitly stated, “I fully expect Treasury to consult with others in government who have history in this arena on the creation of this new formula such as the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior, as well as the National Association of Counties, state county associations, including the Association of O&C Counties Oregon, and many other groups with a deep understanding of these impacts across the United States.” The \$1.5 billion provided in this key section - Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund – should further assist most RCRC member counties that contain large amounts of federally-owned public lands. RCRC looks forward to working with NACo and other state associations of counties to ensure that the final distribution formula properly compensates California’s counties that contain public lands.

Bill of the Week: Senate Bill 11 (Rubio) - The California FAIR Plan Association: Basic Property Insurance: Exclusions

RCRC has expressed support for Senate Bill 11, authored by Senator Susan Rubio (D-Los Angeles), which would remove certain barriers to enable homes and structures used to conduct business on farmland to obtain fire insurance through the California Fair Access to Insurance Requirements (FAIR) Plan. Current law does not technically allow for farm properties to be insured under the FAIR Plan because of how the statute is written; the FAIR plan was originally crafted in the mid-1960’s to be an insurer of last resort for those having difficulty obtaining homeowner’s coverage. SB 11 would make a change to the statute which would allow for the structures on farmlands to be covered under the FAIR Plan, while clarifying that the coverage does not extend to any agricultural crop risks. This change will allow farmers to obtain coverage for their homes and other structures on their farms in the event that their traditional insurance policies are non-renewed. RCRC’s letter of support is [available here](#). For more information, contact Staci Heaton, RCRC Senior Regulatory Affairs Advocate, by email or call (916) 447-4806.

Board of Forestry Releases Updated Fire Safe Regulations Proposal Ahead of Next Week’s Special

Meeting

Next Monday, the Board of Forestry (BOF) will hold a special meeting to discuss and possibly approve its Fire Safe Regulations proposal for submission to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL). Once the proposed rulemaking is published in the Regulatory Notice Register, the formal 45-day public comment period will begin.

The current proposal, released Monday evening, makes substantial changes to the February 8th draft that was just discussed at the March 3rd Board meeting. This revised language continues to condition the rebuilding of homes destroyed by wildfire and appears to expand the number of roads subject to the pre-development upgrade requirements. Several portions of the draft language are unclear and create questions on applicability. RCRC is asking that the BOF delay submission of the proposal to OAL until a robust, inclusive process of collaboration with local government representatives with expertise in land use planning and fire safety has been completed.

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.

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

House, Senate Democrats Unveil \$94 Billion Bill to Improve Internet Access

Last week, House Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-South Carolina) and Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-Minnesota) reintroduced the Accessible, Affordable Internet for All Act which would invest \$94 billion into expanding broadband infrastructure and connecting Americans. Such an investment marks one of the most expensive and ambitious broadband packages proposed in recent years and gives preference to projects that help rural and tribal areas or those that provide better, cheaper Internet to lower-income communities. The legislation would also add an extra \$2 billion to the \$7 billion in funding for the E-Rate program that was included in the American Rescue Plan which President Biden signed into law on Thursday. The E-Rate program helps schools and libraries buy Wi-Fi hot spots and routers, devices that have only become more essential during the pandemic.

RCRC Comments on Additional CPUC De-Energization Guidelines

This week, RCRC submitted comments to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) responding to a proposal to update guidelines that govern Public Safety Power Shut-off (PSPS) events. PSPS events allow electrical utilities to proactively de-energize powerlines during extreme weather events to potentially ward off wildfire risk caused by electric infrastructure. RCRC acknowledges the need for strategic and thoughtful implementation of PSPS events as a last resort, but because of the far-reaching downstream consequences of electrical outages and unreliable power, PSPS events should be consistently executed and examined with robust oversight.

While RCRC originally anticipated that Phase 3 would focus on consolidating all of the existing rules into a single, standalone document, the CPUC instead decided that they need to make some significant adjustments to those rules first. RCRC supports many of the proposed changes and notes that they incorporate many of the suggestions offered by RCRC over the last year, including:

- Placement, operation, and services offered by Community Resource Centers
- Designation of food banks, local elections operations, and community centers
- Mitigation of impacts to sensitive populations
- Notification and reporting requirements

RCRC suggested the CPUC consider consolidating all the existing PSPS guidelines into one single general for simplicity and transparency. RCRC also suggested that the CPUC focus on pushing utilities to undertake actions to reduce the size, scope, duration, and frequency of PSPS events. RCRC's comments can be accessed [here](#).

House Republicans Lift Ban on Appropriations “Earmarks”

On Wednesday, the House Republican caucus voted to participate in House Democrats’ plans to allow each Member of Congress to submit up to ten “community project funding” requests (also known as ‘earmarks’) for fiscal year 2022 funding bills. Many Republicans believe they would be at a huge disadvantage if they decided not to participate in earmarks while Democrats reaped the rewards of the spending practice. Such proposed spending practices have specified limits and transparency requirements. Congress banned earmarks ten years ago, and the Senate has not said yet whether it will participate this year or not. However, earmark proponents have argued that allowing lawmakers to ensure money for specific projects would restore power to the legislative branch and shift it away from the executive branch.

Secure and Fair Enforcement Banking Act Reintroduced

On Thursday, Representative Ed Perlmutter (D-Colorado) reintroduced the Secure and Fair Enforcement (SAFE) Banking Act of 2021. The bill was authored by Representative Perlmutter and co-sponsored by more than 100 members, including RCRC Delegation members: Jimmy Panetta (D-Carmel); Juan Vargas (D-San Diego); Salud Carbajal (D-Santa Barbara); Jared Huffman (D-Marina); John Garamendi (D-Walnut Grove); and, Tom McClintock (R-Elk Grove). Crucially, the bill would allow cannabis-related businesses in states with robust regulatory structures to access the banking system. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-New York) and other Congressional Democrat leaders have expressed their desire to address cannabis legislation in this Congress; however it remains to be seen if and when the Senate would take up such a measure. RCRC sent a letter of support for the bill’s reintroduction, which was shared by Representative Perlmutter’s office (the press release can be accessed [here](#); RCRC’s letter of support can be accessed [here](#)).

GO-Biz Awards Cannabis Equity Grant Recipients to Multiple Rural Jurisdictions

The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) has announced the award winners of Cannabis Equity Grants for local programs, of which \$15 million was available in the form of low/no-interest loans or grants. Cannabis Equity Grants seek to eliminate barriers for populations that were disproportionately harmed by cannabis prohibition by providing funding to local jurisdictions for programs to assist cannabis applicants and licensees gain entry into the state's regulated marketplace. The counties of Humboldt, Lake and Mendocino received funding for their programs, while Sonoma and Trinity counties received grants to develop a local equity program. To date, the state has invested \$40 million in cannabis equity funding. For more information, see [here](#).

51st county resident dies with virus

By Nick Baptista / The Valley Springs News / March 24, 2021

A 64 year-old woman is the latest Calaveras County resident to die with COVID-19.

The fatality brings the county's total to 51 since the virus reached the nation a little more than a year ago.

Health and Human Services Agency Interim Director Sam Leach informed the county Board of Supervisors of the fatality during Tuesday's meeting.

In his report to the board, Leach said the county has had 1,972 confirmed COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the outbreak. There were 10 active cases in the county as of Tuesday morning and 1,911 people have recovered. No one with COVID-19 was in the hospital and 17,638 doses of the COVID-19 vaccines have been given.

Over the past week, vaccinations reached "a really good pace," Leach said, with 3,000 shots given.

However, that pace was expected to slow down this week since the state's <https://myturn.ca.gov> vaccination sign up system went down over the weekend, he added.

Due to the breakdown, "plenty of slots" are available for this Thursday's vaccination clinic at the Calaveras County Fairgrounds, Leach reported. He encouraged the public to go to the MyTurn website now and sign up for Thursday's clinic. The fairgrounds are located at 2465 Gun Club Road, south of Angels Camp off State Route 49.

The county is "pretty well stocked up on supply now," Leach told the board, with a large shipment the past week of 3,610 vaccine doses.

In addition, he said a “traveling” COVID-19 vaccination clinic has been scheduled from 1 to 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 31, at the Jenny Lind Veterans Memorial District Hall in Valley Springs.

Diverse communities deserve their own plans

Megan Fiske / Calaveras Enterprise / March 25 2021

An early February snowstorm overwhelmed the upcountry of Calaveras County. Roads in major neighborhoods remained unplowed for days while people were stuck at home without power or heat. Concerns about the elderly and access to emergency services rose each day. District 3 Supervisor Merita Callaway posted her personal phone number on social media offering to arrange help for individuals who did not know where else to turn.

It has always snowed in the high country of Calaveras County. Heavy winter storms have always been a part of life in the mountains. So why haven't we done better? Why don't we have community plans for the Highway 4 corridor included in the updated General Plan particularly to address a population that has increased and gotten older?

From the oak woodlands and savannahs of Valley Springs to the mixed conifer forests of Dorrington, Calaveras County encompasses diverse and unique communities with their own special considerations. When the County passed the General Plan in 2019, it was unfortunate to see that the community plans that had been protecting places like Arnold, Murphys and others since as early as the 1980s were missing.

Community plans address specific community issues that the General Plan does not. They may be even more restrictive than the General Plan but not less. Adequate snowplow services in any upcountry community could have been supported by a well-written community plan that identified the need for enough staffing, equipment and funds to ensure roads are plowed.

Communities in the Butte fire footprint also have special considerations as brush grows back thick and dense, unrepaired roads continue to crumble, and residents are left feeling vulnerable to another wildfire during the ever-lengthening fire season. Designating money for prescribed burning, fuel breaks, safe evacuation routes and more could be part of a community plan. If you have ever been on evacuation notice, you understand the fear of losing everything. You understand why you must plan to protect your community from fire!

Different economies deserve different plans as well. Communities that rely on resource production and working lands are sometimes different than communities that rely upon tourism, public lands access, and hospitality to fuel their economies. Yet, a community plan can also help protect the symbiotic relationship between open space and tourism. It can help prevent working lands from being turned into housing subdivisions or help ensure the rural, historical character that attracts tourism is protected through guidelines for new developments. If you love where you live, if you love where you work, you probably want to protect it!

Those communities that had community plans before the updated General Plan was adopted in November 2019 benefitted from local policies maintaining visual appeal, improving roads, enhancing fire safety, and

securing water supplies. People will wish they still had those policies in place the next time a proposed development threatens to diminish these community assets.

Many communities have already invested time, energy and resources to address issues relevant to their communities. The people of Valley Springs spent more than a decade and over a quarter of a million dollars in grant funds collaborating with government officials to craft a community plan. Two updated community plans were submitted to the county in 2010, but neither plan was adopted, and the Valley Springs Community Plan was eliminated entirely from the 2019 General Plan Update. In September 2020, a Valley Springs Community Plan was adopted as an amended section of the Community Planning Element of the General Plan. It is not a comprehensive, standalone community plan created by the citizens.

The Board of Supervisors has designated Copperopolis as their next community plan priority, but the lack of a community plan in Copperopolis isn't slowing plans for development. While reducing development capacity in many areas of the county, the 2019 General Plan Update retained substantial new development capacity in the Copperopolis area. The people of Copperopolis have completed two draft community plans since 1992, but much like Valley Springs, the Board of Supervisors is doing things in their own time and in their own way.

Calaveras County is home to such a great diversity of communities. Let's preserve and honor that diversity by allowing communities to plan for their own unique futures. Restore the Community Plans we had, and adopt the Community Plans we need!

Megan Fiske is the Outreach Coordinator for the Community Action Project/Calaveras Planning Coalition. CAP and the Coalition value the inherent wisdom of local residents in determining the design and development of their communities. For more information: calaverascap.com.

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**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Funding Opportunities Newsletter
for March/April 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.

Loose Blooming

by CATHERINE WEBSTER

Out across low swales west of Four Corners sun becomes sweetgrass.

As concealed sweat its loosening blooming red hair.
I cut the Jeep through smooth soft chess, slender miner's lettuce,

Off-road, coast into rock- white glare.

~~~

To me the red in tailing piles is indwelt sun  
aroused, naked,  
dredge-rock in mounds for thirty miles

North of Milton South of Jenny Lind—

I hold a spent rock in each palm. I cup it.

~~~

1850s hydraulic mining is residual, blasting water breaks down silt.
Cuts rock open and cracks minerals. Flushes delicate ore.

March 27, 1850, William Ives Morgan: *Started for Diggins through flowers
plenty and grass and timber oak; passed a deserted Spanish doby house.
Walked in stocking feet. Very sore. Slept on ground.*

~~~

The sun, three half-centuries since  
that glut, that hunger,  
still works its other Calaveras claim, teases soil, now the richer vein.

And Morgan is on his knees  
for what he cannot find  
washed-out of rockheads  
pockets full of stones.

~~~

Whenever I call up his blue knees enough to make the image mine,
I'm stooped to splintering hair-thin bristles
caught under ankle skin—

I spit in the open sore, loosening the wound.

April 1, 1858: *Was very tired, slept where I fell.*

~~~

Dusk. Zigzagging down Hunt Road.  
Across the valley floor raw and unminted as twenty dollar gold,  
its backward gaze spilling through blooming yarrow, yellowing it,  
loosening sugar levels in field corn, apricots...

I take the curves in low.  
Roadside buttercups curl up.  
Work for warmth.

from *The Thicket Daybreak*, "Winner of the 1997 Colorado Prize for Poetry," © 1997 Catherine Webster



Sunset Oaks Megan Fiske Copyright 2016 [yosemitenorthphotography.com](http://yosemitenorthphotography.com)

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