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***Protecting our rural environment by promoting citizen participation
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Planning Coalition Receives Grant to Advance Litigation Against 2019 General Plan

San Andreas, CA. The Calaveras Planning Coalition (CPC), which is administered by the Community Action Project (CAP), has received a \$20,000 grant from the California Wildlands and Smart Growth Rapid Response Fund to advance litigation initiated by the CPC in December 2019 challenging the updated Calaveras County General Plan adopted by the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors in November 2019.

The CPC advocates balance in the General Plan between resource conservation and development in order to protect our rural environment. The CPC is one of the few organizations that participated in the entire 13-year General Plan process and is still participating by holding the Board of Supervisors accountable in court, getting the word out to the public, and advocating for planning and environmental policies and implementation measures that recognize the public's interests.

"We are extremely pleased to have been selected to receive these funds, as they will help us to complete the digital administrative record and cover the costs of the lawsuit," said Joyce Techel, CAP Co-Chair. "The Rapid Response Fund accepts applications by invitation only, so we know every organization invited to apply was certainly deserving of help. We were thrilled just to receive the invitation. We are honored to have been selected for funding."

The Fund is administered by the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment, which explains, "This is an invitation-only donor-advised fund intended to provide immediate grants of up to \$35,000 for urgent, near-term opportunities to enhance, increase, protect, and defend California's public wildlands, support pivotal smart growth policies and funding measures, and stop land use policies that will result in the loss of California's wildlands and open spaces."

The Rose Foundation understands that like most rural counties, Calaveras is faced with a wealth of challenges and a paucity of opportunities for its roughly 46,000 people. Rural residents, particularly in the Sierra, are

charged with protecting the state's watersheds and other natural resources, even though every one of California's nearly 40 million residents benefits from the water flowing in our rivers, the carbon sequestration our grasslands and woodlands provide, as well as our recreational opportunities, our history, our culture, our diverse plant and animal habitat, and our scenic beauty.

CAP Governing Committee member Muriel Zeller offered some background on the invitation to apply to the Rapid Response Fund, "The Rose Foundation administers two small grassroots funds, the California Wildlands Grassroots Fund and the California Environmental Grassroots Fund. CAP was formed in 2005 and the CPC followed in 2006. Almost from the beginning, CAP and the CPC have been supported by small grants from those two funds, rarely exceeding \$5,000. What impressed the Rapid Response Fund advisers was the tremendous amount of local financial support we have always had, mostly from small donors, and the extreme dedication of our volunteers. They were happy to supplement that support."

Having exhausted their administrative remedies to get a legally compliant General Plan, reluctantly, on December 9, 2019, the CPC filed a case in Calaveras County Superior Court that convincingly asserts the updated General Plan is incomplete and in violation of state planning law as well as the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The case also calls for the county to release the 2011 Mintier-Harnish draft General Plan, which, to date, the County has withheld from the taxpayers who paid nearly \$1 million for it.

As CPC Facilitator and land use attorney Tom Infusino explained, "Not everything in the General Plan is bad. While advancing the litigation, we will continue to advocate for the General Plan's more promising measures such as oak woodland impact mitigation, greenhouse gas emission reduction, carbon sequestration, environmental protection zoning, streamside setbacks, and dark night sky protection."

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