

July 28, 2008

Calaveras County
Board of Supervisors
891 Mountain Ranch Road
San Andreas, CA 95249-9709

Re: Oak Resources

Honorable Supervisors:

The California Oak Foundation (COF) writes to advise the Board of Supervisors that COF has begun monitoring all Calaveras County mitigated negative declarations and environmental impact reports for compliance with California Environmental Quality Act oak resource standards.

This review is prompted by Calaveras County's failure over the past two years to adopt consequential local oak resource conservation measures.

During this time period Placer, El Dorado and Tuolumne Counties have approved comprehensive oak conservation policies and programs. Like Calaveras County, Amador County lacks meaningful oak conservation measures but it has learned to properly apply proportional oak mitigation standards. For example, the Jackson Hills (Jackson) project FEIR requires the applicant to preserve off-site *"an equal number [127 acres] of existing oak woodland/savanna habitat for each acre of oak woodland/savanna habitat converted by the project."* The Wicklow (County) project DEIR preferred mitigation alternative proposes mitigating impacts to 172 acres of oak resources with 172 acres permanently conserved off-site. COF is confident that the Gold Rush Ranch (Sutter Creek) project will mitigate its 400 acres of oak resource impacts in a similar manner.

The Sierra Business Council (2008) reports that, *"Oak woodlands comprise nearly one-quarter of the California's Sierra Nevada acreage, concentrated in the private lands of the western foothills between 450-4,500 feet. Between 1945 and 1985 roughly 800,000 acres of the 4.7 million total were lost due to changes in land use or vegetation types...Tuolumne County experienced a 42%*

decline. Other counties with high loss rates during that time period include Calaveras (29%) and Amador (28%)."

Since 1985 Calaveras County has converted many thousands of oak woodland acres to non-forest use and thousands more are at risk of development by 2040.

Conservation of oak woodlands is a wise and cost-effective means of ensuring sustainable business in communities dependent on scenic values, clean air and safe drinking water. COF urges the Board of Supervisors to consider these benefits in its future oak resource deliberations.

Respectfully,

Janet S. Cobb, President
California Oak Foundation

attachment

cc: Planning Department