



BASS LAKE BULLETIN

Vol. XIII No. 3

The Voice of the Bass Lake Community

March 2015

www.basslakeaction.org



NO CHANGE IN EL DORADO COUNTY COMMUNITY REGION LINES

Proponents of last year's ballot Measure O made a final, unsuccessful run at getting the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors to redraw Community Region Boundaries at the board's Feb. 24 meeting. Those boundaries, also referred to as Community Region Lines or CRLs, establish the limits of future development within their area.

Created by the county's General Plan, the Community Regions represent the more urban areas that generally have public water, sewer, transportation infrastructure and more access to health and public safety services. As such they are the areas identified by the General Plan as the most appropriate for higher-density residential and commercial development between now and 2035. Planners also refer to the CRLs as "urban services areas."

The Shingle Springs Community Alliance and Save Our County groups have been the most vocal residents pushing for a reduction of Community Region Lines over the past two years. Their mantra, "Keep Us Rural," describes their demand that county planners and leaders not take actions (or, in this case to reverse prior actions) that would allow large developments in and around neighborhoods that currently are characterized by five-acre or larger properties.

Measure O was defeated approximately two-to-one by voters in November in a bare-

knuckle campaign that featured charges and counter-charges of deception, misleading ads, big money from special interests and nefarious backroom deals by politicians and organizations such as the El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce.

That campaign resurfaced during Tuesday's meeting as residents continued to demand that supervisors, in effect, overturn the November vote and use their authority to change the CRLs administratively. District 1 Supervisor Ron Mikulaco recused himself before the vote because he owns property that could be affected by a change in the CRL. The other four supervisors eventually opted to push the issue at least a year down the road. According to established practice, the matter will be taken up as part of the General Plan 5-year Review which the county's Long Range Planning Division expects to present to the board in mid-2016.

In an e-mail to the Mountain Democrat, Long Range Planner Shawna Purvines advised interested residents that, "The General Plan's Introduction section beginning on page 6 does a good job of explaining this and the objectives these areas are intended to achieve." Purvines also stated, "Following the review the board will determine if they want to take further action on amending the CRLs or not." The General Plan is available at the Community Development Agency's Website.

The audience was divided in several different ways and some overlapping ways. A number of speakers suggested that the November vote was not an accurate reflection of the wishes of El Dorado County's residents and voters. They said the election was "bought" by the development community with more than \$1 million, some of which was from out-of-county interests.

Carol Louis described it as "the 1 percent buying our county" and said the vote "was not a huge mandate on Measure O." Louis is in the real estate business.

Others in the same industry, however, took the opposite position. Steve Ferry reiterated that "Measure O lost 70 to 30," and Ken Calhoun said, "At some point the Board of Supervisors has to say, 'We've had these

discussions and we have to implement the General Plan.'" The reference is that implementing the General Plan follows a process established by county voters that should be adhered to.

On the other hand, Sue Taylor, a founding member of Save Our County, challenged that "the boundary line doesn't reflect what's on the ground . . . The community is begging you to retract the CRLs (which act as) a continuous bullseye for development. It's been misconstrued, and it's so politicized it's pathetic."

Long-time area rancher Bill Bacchi quipped, "Welcome to the world of land ownership." Bacchi also said he "objects to lies and [character assassination]. The General Plan is the way to go."

Some speakers and supervisors agreed that "There's a lot of confusion in the General Plan," as District 4 Supervisor Michael Ranalli admitted. Land use and General Plan maven Art Marinaccio advised, "These issues are complex and you need local experts." ~

Credit: Chris Daley, Mt. Democrat



GAINES BILL OFFERS SOME FIRE FEE RELIEF

In his continued efforts to fight against what many voters call the illegal fire tax, Senator Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, today introduced legislation that would lengthen the time homeowners have to pay or protest the annual \$150 fee. Senator Ted Gaines represents the 1st Senate District, which includes all or parts of Alpine, El Dorado, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, Shasta, Sierra and Siskiyou counties.

(continued on page 2)



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Hello All,

The other day as I was looking at the blossoms on the trees and remarking on the early arrival of spring, I was reminded of the story of the young man and the swallow. It is one of Aesop's fables. It is reminiscent of the ancient proverb "One swallow does not make a spring" which is recorded in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics

The fable is about a young man who spends all his money on gambling and luxurious living until he has only a cloak to keep off the weather. Seeing an unusually early swallow fly by, he concludes that spring has come and sells his cloak so as to use the proceeds to mend his fortune with a last bet. Not only does he lose his money, but cold weather closes in again. Finding the swallow frozen to death, the young man blames it for deceiving him. In later versions this takes place on the bank of a frozen brook and the young man also dies of cold.

This story has always made me skeptical about the arrival of warm weather in February or March. Is it really spring, or is this what one might call a false spring?

The rest of the country is still quite cold, with a new winter storm predicted for the East coast.

I think I will wait a while before I break out the patio furniture and put up the summer umbrellas. Perhaps we may get some rain and cold weather after all. I hope so.

Meanwhile, I hope everyone has a very happy St. Patrick's Day.

Sincerely,

John E. Thomson

President

GAINES BILL *(continued)*

"Problems with timely mail delivery can be an issue in mountain and rural areas of my Senate District," said Gaines. "The current deadline does not allow residents in these communities nearly enough time to pay or protest their fire fee bills before they start accruing penalties. I hope my bill will provide some much-needed relief to these homeowners."

Senate Bill 250 would give anyone who owns a property within a State Responsibility Area 60 days to pay or dispute the yearly fire-prevention fee, rather than the 30 days the existing law provides.

If a taxpayer misses the 30-day cutoff date to appeal the fee they must first pay the fee and then file a claim for its refund, should a judge ever order the state to refund the payments. SB 250 would add California to the list of 20 other states that give homeowners at least 60 days to file such petitions.

The fire tax is an annual levy imposed on the owners of more than 800,000 properties in the state that are within the boundaries of SRA. According to census and Cal Fire data, Senator Gaines' largely rural district includes roughly 20-percent or approximately 160,000 of the properties whose owners are subject to the fee.

This bill is sponsored by Board of Equalization Vice Chair George Runner. "The confusing and controversial fire fee is tax policy at its worst," said Runner. "It should be eliminated entirely, but until then SB 250 is a step in the right direction. Increasing the payment due date will help lessen the burden of this illegal tax on rural homeowners."

Gaines has been a leading critic of the tax and has introduced numerous pieces of legislation in previous years that attempted to provide relief for rural Californians. He also strongly supports the lawsuit filed against the state by the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association challenging the fee on constitutional grounds. ~



Happy St. Patrick's Day



TRIBE PLANS GUN RANGE ON RANCHERIA

On February 24, Jackie Neau, a representative of the Friends of El Dorado Trail, shared her concerns with El Dorado County Supervisors regarding a proposed outdoor shooting range on tribal land just off Shingle Springs Drive in Shingle Springs. She was one of more than 200 in attendance when the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians presented its proposal to the board and community. Jackie said she didn't mind the noise so much. She's more concerned with getting shot.

The tribe has decided to move forward with a 29-lane shooting range on its land immediately south of the interchange with Highway 50. Because of its status as a sovereign nation, the tribe is not bound by law to get the county's permission for anything it does on land held in trust. Speaking for the tribe, Kim Stoll said it wants to be a good neighbor and good community partner by making its intention public, open and transparent. While emphasizing that the plans are "very preliminary," she said the facility could be open by mid to late-summer.

County Counsel Robyn Drivon told the board the "county has no direct control" over the tribe's activities other than "diplomacy and human relations;" however, she added, the county does have control over access to the site from Shingle Springs Drive.

District 4 supervisor Michael Ranalli opened the session noting that there are "a lot of homes" near the proposed range and the "noise (factor is) unknown but significant." He also expressed concern about the possibility of stray bullets as a hazard to nearby El Dorado Trail users, the railroad and animals.

A slide presentation shared by Stoll detailed a number of features the range would have to reduce noise and the possibility of stray bullets. The tribe's website shows various models and perspectives of the

(continued on page 3)

GUN RANGE *(continued)*

project. She said tribe members conducted tests with decibel meters at just less than a mile away from the location by firing a large caliber handgun and rifle. The noise did not register at that distance, she said. The test locations included Blue Oak Elementary School, Blue Oak Montessori School and a local church. The schools share a campus approximately two-thirds of a mile from the proposed project.

There are currently no plans for the range to be open and in use during school hours, Stoll said.

Despite the assurances, several residents shared their concerns.

James Williams described the current quality of life in the neighborhood as likely to be “substantially degraded” by the shooting range. Williams was representing the South Buckeye Rancheros Homeowners Association. He said the facility would be “inconsistent with the county’s general plan” and would have “ingress and egress issues.”

Ken Greenwood, a firearms instructor and former county planner, told the board that given the small size of the property, the noise would be “non-mitigable.” He also enlightened the audience noting that the industry term for stray bullets is “projectile escapement.”

Land use policy and general plan veteran activist Art Marinaccio told supervisors that over the years three other projects have been proposed on the property and were denied as being not suitable. Citing its proximity to the Highway 50-Shingle Springs Drive interchange, he complained that the county has no comprehensive policy regarding interchanges.

Stoll’s presentation noted that the tribe had communicated its plans to area residents and schools; however, several residents challenged that statement saying they had not been contacted individually or as groups.

Sue Taylor with the Save Our County organization said, “We called around to see who has jurisdiction, and they all said, ‘Go talk to the tribe.’” Taylor further accused the tribe of “terrorizing the neighborhood” and demanded that supervisors “represent us to make sure of the health and safety (of the community.)”

Several speakers described possible psychological effects such as Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome from the noise or fear of stray bullets.

District 2 Supervisor Shiva Frentzen shared a generally private detail of her own life as a teenager and young adult growing up in Iran during the long Iran-Iraq war in

the 1980s. And she acknowledged still being frightened by the sound of gunfire. “Take the high road and do something the neighbors will like,” Frentzen urged. Earlier she asked Stoll and tribal attorney Amy Ann Taylor what prompted the tribe to build a gun range.

“Is this for the revenue or a hobby?” Frentzen asked.

Attorney Taylor said it’s a response to interest expressed by some tribe members, but not all, she added. Those in favor want it for “gun safety” and for gun-related training. She noted that the tribe already has “a really intensive safety plan” in place.

Not all the comments were negative. Doug Erickson from Rescue and Gerald Hayden both said the tribe had done a good job with its plans and preparations. No one spoke from a gun-control or “anti-gun” perspective, and several noted their own National Rifle Association membership but did not feel the location was right for a shooting facility.

Supervisor Ranalli challenged the tribe, saying, “Suppose we demand they submit a project application” and “Please follow the normal process the county uses (for development projects).”

County Counsel Drivon, responding to Ranalli’s challenge, advised that dealing with a federal land trust case, “at federal court would be very expensive and (the county) unlikely to prevail.”

Ranalli then offered a motion to direct county staff “to do what they can do and look at issues in our jurisdiction.” District 1’s Ron Mikulaco eventually supported the motion, as did the whole board, but said he did not want to “encumber our staff with no jurisdiction.”

Frentzen also questioned the action, asking prior to the vote, “Is this just a ‘pretty please’ motion?” ~

Credit: Chris Daley, Mt. Democrat



WHAT IS AN OVERLAY?

The county has announced that the northern portion of Bass Lake Road between Serrano Parkway and Green Valley Road will receive an asphalt overlay sometime in 2015 or early 2016. The cost of the overlay will be covered by a federal road maintenance grant. An asphalt overlay is the process of putting a layer of asphalt over existing asphalt.

An overlay can be done when the existing pavement is in overall good condition but has some problem areas. Depending on the degree of cracking, crumbling or sunken areas, those bad areas are cut out, patched, and then the new layer of asphalt is applied. Prior to applying the overlay, an asphalt “tack coat” primer is applied to the old pavement to promote the adhesion of the new pavement.

In 2013 the El Dorado County Department of Transportation completed an asphalt overlay on key sections of Ponderosa Road. The work covered approximately three miles between Jackpine Road and Green Valley Road. You can watch a video of the Ponderosa Road overlay process on the El Dorado County website at <http://www.edc.gov.us/pressreleasedetail.aspx?id=21489>. ~



CALIFORNIA SURVEY: SNOWPACK FAR BELOW NORMAL

California received a double dose of bad drought news early this month, with state officials saying the snowpack in the Sierra Nevada is far below normal and that California residents again aren’t coming close to meeting Gov. Jerry Brown’s call for a 20 percent cut in water use. However, as of February 11, El Dorado Irrigation District

(continued on page 4)

SNOWPACK *(continued)*

reported that their customers' cumulative year-to-date conservation (from January 1) is at 16 percent below the 2013 level.

Snow supplies about a third of the state's water and a higher winter snowpack translates to more water in California reservoirs to meet demand in summer and fall. Last weekend's Sierra snowfall pleased skiers and snowboarders but wasn't nearly enough to offset weeks of dry weather.

The latest survey makes it likely California's drought will run through a fourth year. Brown declared a drought emergency on Jan. 17, 2014, and his office continues to underline the need for sustained water conservation.

Frank Gehrke, chief of the California Cooperative Snow Surveys Program, said there were 6.7 inches of snow on the ground at the survey spot near Echo Summit, about 90 miles east of Sacramento.

"It's very meager and it is clearly flirting with being the lowest on record," he said.

The survey found a snowpack water equivalent of just 0.9 inches. During the last snow survey on Jan. 29 there was a water equivalent of 2.3 inches in the same spot.

Unless this month approximates the 1991 "Miracle March" with significantly more precipitation than normal, the traditional wet

season will end on April 1 with an alarmingly low total.

"There is no reason to think we will have such a good March again this year," Gehrke said.

Meanwhile, a new report showed state water conservation slipping from December when Californians cut water use by 22 percent. Urban water use in January declined by only 9 percent compared to the same month in 2013, according to the State Water Resources Control Board.

January was unseasonably dry and brought no measurable rainfall in downtown San Francisco for the first time in history. Overall water use stayed flat compared to the rainy December.

The water board report showed conservation varied widely across the state, with communities in the South Coast area scaling back 9 percent and the San Francisco Bay Area by just 4 percent.

The monthly data helps officials monitor the effectiveness of the state's emergency conservation regulations, which include a ban on washing cars using hoses that do not have a shut-off valve and restrictions on watering lawns. Later this month the board will consider extending and expanding these regulations.

"It's hard to sustain a sense of urgency and emergency for a longer period of time, but unfortunately we don't have a choice," water board scientist Max Gomberg said at an agency meeting Tuesday. "We have to redouble the (conservation) effort." ~

Credit: Kristin Bender, Associated Press



"St. Patrick's Day is here, you see.
We'll pick some shamrocks, one, two, three.
We'll count the leaves and look them over,
And maybe find a four-leafed clover.
I'll sew green buttons on my vest,
Green for St. Patrick is the best.
I'll wear a green hat, very high,
And dance a jig--at least I'll try!"
- Author Unknown



BLAC BOARD MEETING SET FOR MAY

The next regular board of directors meeting of the Bass Lake Action Committee will be held on May 4 at 7:00 PM at the home of John and Fran Thomson, 501 Kirkwood Court in Woodridge, El Dorado Hills, 530-677-3039.

As always, all BLAC members are cordially invited to attend all meetings. For further information about BLAC meetings and membership, please contact Vice President Kathy Prevost at 530-672-6836. ~



The Bass Lake Bulletin is published monthly by the Bass Lake Action Committee, El Dorado Hills, California.

Copyright © 2015. Permission to reproduce unabridged articles is granted if appropriate attribution is given to the Bass Lake Bulletin.

John E. Thomson, Ph.D.
President and Editor
doctorjet@aol.com
530-677-3039

For additional information see our website, basslakeaction.org or contact

Vice President Kathy Prevost
blacinfo@aol.com
530-672-6836

Notice to Readers

The monthly propane report will not appear in the Bulletin until the advent of the fall and winter heating seasons.

Bass Lake Action Committee
501 Kirkwood Court
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762