



Humboldt County Farm Bureau

5601 So. Broadway, Eureka, CA 95503
Serving Agriculture Since 1913

July 3, 2007

Martha Spencer, Senior Planner
Community Development Service
County of Humboldt
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95503

Dear Ms. Spencer:

The Humboldt County Farm Bureau has reviewed the information on the General Plan and has the following comments of the sections regarding Cultural Resources, Biological Resources, and Mineral Resources/Noise:

Cultural Resources: *Land use changes caused by development and timber harvesting.*

Part of the County's cultural heritage is the active and sustained harvesting of timber. Timber management activities, to include the harvesting of timber, are an integral part of the rural landscape of the County as large part of the managed production of resources under the Open Space Element and Plan of the County. While this is a change when compared to the pre-European occupation of the County, present timber harvesting activities do not represent land use changes in and of themselves. Timber harvesting is not a land use change; in fact it is an integral part of Humboldt County's way of life.

For most of the lands designated Timber, Agriculture Grazing (and within Williamson Contract areas), and Agriculture Exclusive, the uses of the lands have generally remained in agriculture, while the ownership patterns have

changed. For example, in the Eel River Delta Region and behind the diked former tidelands of Humboldt Bay, many of the family owned ownerships of the smaller dairies have shifted to larger dairy and livestock operations.

Several of the owners of the lands no longer live on the smaller land holdings as they once did. Some of the residential units become farm dwellings or rental units. Others are left to deteriorate through benign neglect.

Many of these residential units appear to be worthy of historic designation owing to their age, architecture or contribution to the settlement of the County. These potentially historic structures are in need of inventory and evaluation with restoration/preservation plans for those that are worthy of protection. This needs to be done as a part of the General Plan Update process and not put off to some future activity or effort.

The General Plan Update for the non coastal areas should include the exception to the base zone parcel size in those circumstances where the preservation or protection of the historic structures is involved. This is already allowed within the Coastal Zone and is recommended to be carried over into the non coastal areas. It is our suggestion that it should be on a “Voluntary Basis” from the individual landowner.”

In addition, there has been historical use of the rural lands in the form of recreation and related visitor serving activities under the control of the owner. Such activities would include but are not limited to: Farm Stays, Hunting Clubs, and Campgrounds – any activity which does not require any type of permanent structure. With the shifting in ownerships and increased emphasis in the use of the working lands and landscapes, the General Plan should address these visitor serving uses.

We do not agree with the need to create another governmental bureaucracy in the form of a new Historical Resources/Cultural Commission. There appears to be, however, the need to adopt regulations (now lacking) that address the preparation and processing of Historical Resources reports. This need not, nor should not, be as text within the General Plan. Rather it seems like it should be in the form of a zone ordinance or another mechanism to establish the requirements.

So too as it concerns energy facilities. The rural lands are seen to be the possible/probable source/location of various types of energy production, transmission and related facilities. These facilities could be for electrical generation or natural gas extraction or similar activities. The balancing of the availability of these sources of energy (locally and regionally) and the effects of their installation and operation are needed when viewed in the context of the level of the preservation of rural landscapes and working ranches.

Biological Resources:

There is a need to closely evaluate the effects of the current regulatory scheme as it concerns the maintenance and use of road side ditches.

Our verve to protect water quality in all things has resulted in some of the unintended consequences of: loss of ditch/drainage facility capacity and the possible result of localized flooding; the reduction in the ability to control the vegetation in the ditches with the result of overgrowth, many times and in numerous locations by invasive exotics like Himalaya berries, pampas grass, etc.; and the creation of ‘tunnels of trees’ along the roadways (owing to the proclivities of alders, cottonwoods, etc.) thus reducing or eliminating the pastoral and other open landscape views, as well possibly increasing localized pollens along the roadways subjecting the allergic driver to an increase of exposure and possible effects.

Mineral Resources/Noise:

The permitted and other known locations of the numerous surface mines and their operations need to be identified through mapping on the Noise Map and Haul Route Maps of stationary sources. Although most are intermittent or seasonal in their noise effects, the effects can be significant when the mining and related activities are taking place and their identification on the Noise Map would be beneficial to the property buying public.

Sincerely,

Jim Regli
President

