

The

BASS LAKE BULLETIN

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The Voice of the Bass Lake Community

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Map showing the approximate location of EID's Bass Lake parcel, which is the subject of ongoing negotiations between EID and the Rescue School District

EID CLOSE TO SELLING BASS LAKE TO RESCUE SCHOOL DISTRICT?

The Bulletin has learned that Bass Lake and much of the land surrounding it, long held as an asset of the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID), is on track to be sold to the Rescue Union School District (RUSD) for a school site. The Bulletin understands that the parties may be close to inking a deal.

The lake itself and the surrounding property, amounting to about 141 acres, was declared surplus by the EID Board last year. EID officials explained then that Bass Lake, formerly used to store recycled water, was no longer viable for doing so. EID then solicited bids for the property.

It is generally known that El Dorado County considered purchasing the EID property last year, led by efforts of then-District 1 Supervisor John Knight. At that time, the idea of a number of public entities banding together to buy the property was considered.

Among the alternatives discussed was a proposal that RUSD might later purchase a portion of the property for a school site from the county, if the the county were to first purchase the property.

RUSD at that time expressed a desire to use the northern part of the Bass Lake property and part of the adjacent county-owned parcel for a school site. Access for the school site would be from Bass Lake Road, and to satisfy the fire department, the site would have a secondary access road that would connect the school property with Serrano Parkway.

According to EID documents, negotiations with RUSD to buy the Bass Lake property began in March of this year, and have continued to date. As a part of the deal, EID would retain a parcel of about 30 acres that currently holds the EID maintenance yard at the southwest corner of the property.

According to an examination of the school board agendas to date, RUSD has not yet disclosed that they are negotiating to buy or sell property to anyone. ~

NEW BLAC WEBSITE

Please visit our new user-friendly website. We are very proud of our modern look. Both the navigation and file organization have been much improved. See us at basslakeaction.org.



FIRE FEE CONTINUES TO RILE FOOTHILL PROPERTY OWNERS

Foothill residents in the Sacramento region are bracing for the second year of "fire prevention fees," a \$150 charge that a class-action lawsuit alleges is an illegal tax.

The state Board of Equalization began sending out bills two weeks ago to more than 700,000 Californians who own land in the 31 million-acre "state responsibility area" where the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection is responsible for fire protection.

In October, El Dorado County joined the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association's lawsuit seeking to block the state's fire fees on rural properties, but hearings have barely begun.

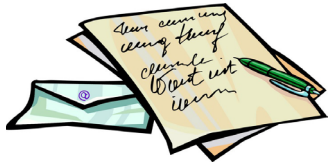
Until the lawsuit is resolved, advocates for rural residents are encouraging them to play by the rules, pay the fee, then appeal it.

Runner, who opposes the fee and has conducted conference calls about it with 2,400 constituents, noted that many residents who were billed simply didn't pay the fee last year.

According to the Board of Equalization, 101,000 people – or 13 percent of those billed – still haven't paid the fee for last year.

Placer County Supervisor Jim Holmes understands why. While he paid his fee last year, he said the appeal process was overly

(continued on page 2)



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Hello All,

Growth is coming again to El Dorado County, and with it comes the growing pains inherent in growth.

The fact is, El Dorado County is a really nice place to live. Unfortunately, that is its biggest problem. It is a problem because many people want to live in a nice place, too.

The folks who moved here in 1850 came because of the Gold Rush and the prosperity that it brought to merchants and drovers and those who supplied the miners. The miners generally got little for their efforts.

Today those who seek to come to El Dorado County are those looking for a home in a nice place to live. They follow many who are already here. But an influx of new people is always upsetting, much like what happened to sleepy 1849 California when it was overrun by the gold miners and their camp followers.

Most people react to newcomers by feeling threatened. Many also feel that there are only two sensible ways to live; in an urban neighborhood reminiscent of a Dickens-style nineteenth-century city, or in a remote, leafy glade that recalls Thoreau's nineteenth-century Walden Pond.

It is my hope that we can reach compromises that will allow current county residents the peace and tranquillity that drew them here, and leave room for those who also want a home in our beautiful county.

Sincerely,

John Thomson
President

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FIRE FEE (continued)

confusing, and he wasn't able to complete it.

"As soon as Placer County starts getting those bills, I'll be getting some phone calls," said Holmes.

Because many residents don't know where the funds go, Holmes fears they may be reluctant to support their cash-strapped local fire districts, which haven't actually benefited from the fee.

The region's foothill residents aren't just confused, though. They're angry, and like most people subject to the fire prevention fee, say they don't see the benefit.

"Our government has forgotten that they work for us," said William Ames of Rescue. While he can afford to pay the \$150 fee, Ames said the officials responsible for it should be voted out.

"We're talking about \$150 here. It's not a lot of money. It's the principle," he said.

To others, though, the fee feels quite costly. Joy Durner is a disabled widow who has lived in Rescue since 1970. She said that last year's tax "hurt."

"When you get old like I am, you can't just pick the money off a tree," Durner said. Like many residents, she said she thinks the fee is an illegal tax, but added that living on a fixed income made the idea of fighting the fee in court impractical.

Many residents are also angry because they said they felt the fee didn't assist their local fire districts or provide them with any special services. Durner, who keeps horses, said her property is "nothing but dirt" that doesn't pose a fire hazard.

"We have a 100-foot defensible space around the house," said Don Anderson, who lives in an unincorporated part of Placer County. He complained that the fee is levied only on homeowners, while large landowners whose unmaintained property poses a greater fire hazard are exempt.

But Janet Upton, a Cal Fire spokeswoman, said the effects of fire prevention efforts are necessarily hard to observe.

"What the fee is not for is fire engines, that sort of thing," she said. Instead, fire prevention includes a wide variety of activities, Upton said, including power line regulation and civil cost recovery, or suing those responsible for costly wildfires.

She added that while the fee did not fund any new positions last year, it provided a stable source of funding that wouldn't be cut in a down budget year.

This year, she said, the fee will help Cal Fire increase the number of boots on the ground for fire prevention.

"In this budget year, they added \$11 mil-

lion to our budget for fire severity treatment, education, planning and prevention," said Upton. Some 70 personnel will be added during the fire season, she said, including foresters for surplus vegetation and defensible-space inspectors to make sure houses are far enough away from fire hazards.

Still, rural Californians aren't happy about it.

"I don't know anyone other than the Legislature and the governor who think this is a good idea," said Runner. "It's just not fair." ~

Credit: Jack Newsham, Sacramento Bee



EID BOARD RACE OFF TO A GOOD START

Candidates will be vying for two open seats on the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) board of directors in the upcoming November midterm election. The seats in contention are Division Two, which covers Shingle Springs, and Division Four, which includes Cameron Park and southeastern El Dorado Hills. Board member districts are called divisions by EID.

Incumbents George Wheeldon, Division 4, and John Frazer, Division 2, have declined to run, leaving the race to the newcomers. Wheeldon, a geologist and professor, was first elected to the EID board in 2001, and was reelected to second and third terms in 2005 and 2009. He served as EID board vice president in 2003 and 2008 and as president in 2004 and 2009. He is currently serving as vice president. Fraser, an attorney, has been a member of the EID board since 2001 and was reelected in 2005 and 2009 for second and third terms. He served as vice president in 2004 and 2009, and as president in 2005 and 2010.

The official deadline for candidates to file for office was Friday, August 9th, but as no incumbents are running for the seats, the Bulletin understands that the filing deadline was extended to Wednesday, August 14th.

So far, retired chief executive Greg Prada and retired facilities manager Richard

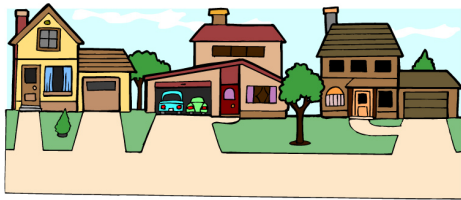
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EID RACE *(continued)*

Englefield have qualified for the ballot for the Division 2 seat formerly held by Frazer Prada, who has frequently questioned past board actions, has already kicked off his campaign with an email to his supporters, hoping to garner both voter support and campaign financing.

Retired physician Dale Coco, and attorney and retired business owner Jake Flesher have qualified for the ballot for Division 4.

The five member board of directors is currently dominated by four directors elected either in 2001 or 2003. The election of two new directors will result in a majority of the board being elected since 2011, when Alan Day was elected to the Division 5 seat formerly held by Harry Norris. Persons familiar with EID say that the election of two new board members may change the direction of the board, which has been criticized for their past actions, mainly for raising water and sewer rates. ~



HOME PRICES UP, FORCLOSURES DOWN

Home prices rise steeply in West, across Sunbelt

Conor Dougherty, economics reporter at *The Wall Street Journal*, recently reported that cities in the West and the Sunbelt, among the hardest hit during the real-estate downturn, continue to lead the nation's housing recovery—posting double-digit gains in home prices that have outpaced even the most optimistic projections from a year ago.

Some of the biggest standouts were in California. The Sacramento area led the nation with a 39.2% increase in year-over-year prices. The San Francisco and Los Angeles metropolitan areas also were in the top 10 in terms of home-price gains.

From quarter to quarter, the survey can be unreliable because it measures median prices and can result in overstated gains and losses as the mix of homes shifts between the higher and lower ends of the market. That likely is happening now, as there are fewer lower-end homes, such as foreclosure sales.

But there's no question the housing market is profoundly better than a year ago. Economists and housing analysts expect prices to

continue rising. Many of the driving factors, such as tight supply, fewer foreclosures and pent-up demand from buyers who sat out the market during the past few years, are unlikely to turn around soon.

In the supply-starved West, the heady competition among buyers is prompting prospective buyers to put off vacations so they can continue house-hunting in the summer months when traffic typically tails off.

Sacramento home market normalizing, with fewer distressed sales

A report on home sales from June from PropertyRadar, a Truckee company that tracks distressed property, points to continued "normalization" of the Sacramento market, with distressed sales and foreclosures both continuing to shrink, according to Ben van der Meer, staff writer for the *Sacramento Business Journal*.

Across the four-county Sacramento region that month, distressed sales accounted for 33.1 percent of all homes sales, down from 56.2 percent of such sales a year earlier. In every county, the number of distressed sales fell by nearly half or more, as in Sacramento County, where 638 distressed sales last month were down from 1,179 a year earlier.

There also appear to be fewer potential distressed sales in the pipeline. The actual number of foreclosures in the region, 62, was the fewest since PropertyRadar began tracking trends in early 2007, and was also the first time since then both Yolo and El Dorado Counties had numbers in the single digits, with five and nine foreclosures, respectively. Though Sacramento County still had by far the most, with 43, that number, too, was far below the year-earlier number of 229, and marked the fourth time in five months the figure was only in double digits. ~



FIGHT OVER GROWTH GRIPS COUNTY

In the county that started the Gold Rush, surging with newcomers and rough-hewn mining camps, prospects of another boom are unnerving the modern-day populace. Amid an improving real estate economy, developers are proposing nearly 7,000 new houses for the western slope of El Dorado

County. The new wave of potential major projects is emerging after a 2004 county general plan that promised to preserve the county's rural character while anticipating up to 21,000 additional houses.

In a region renowned for perhaps the most bitter growth battles in the lower Sierra Nevada, current residents are pushing back. Where miners once ravaged land for gold, determined homeowners are digging in for a protracted political fight to protect rustic lifestyles from new people, more houses and increased traffic. Slow-growth advocates are now threatening a 2014 vote to limit new construction.

The last time the county pondered such a development surge—approving ongoing projects that are bringing 11,000 new houses to El Dorado Hills—voters passed Measure Y in 1998. Measure Y, "The Control Traffic Congestion Initiative" added five policies to the El Dorado County General Plan related to: (i) the maintenance of specified levels of service on roads in unincorporated areas of the County; (ii) a requirement that new development fully fund roadway capacity improvements needed to offset the traffic impacts of new development projects; and, (iii) the establishment of a requirement of voter approval prior to the expenditure of County tax revenues to pay for road capacity improvements to mitigate impacts of new development. It prohibited any residential project of five or more units that caused or worsened traffic gridlock during peak commuting hours. Voters reaffirmed a follow-up measure 10 years later.

Wary of a repeat of this resistance, major investors, including the developer of the upscale Serrano community in El Dorado Hills, are now promising nature-friendly "agri-suburbia" residential projects. They pledge to respect oak woodlands, wildlife passageways and local traditions of wine-making and apple growing while paying for new roads and building the future of El Dorado County.

In the biggest project, Parker Development Co., the Serrano developer, is seeking to build 3,236 homes and townhouses, a shopping center and an outdoor pavilion amid oak trees, a limestone quarry lake and rusted iron remnants of a turn-of-the-century limestone kiln on 2,341 acres.

Another development firm, tied to the Gallo winemaking family, is planning another 800 homes on 740 nearby acres. The two projects pledge to set aside 640 acres for a regional park, more than half the size of San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.

(continued on page 4)

GROWTH *(continued)*

Tom Howard, Parker Development's vice president of construction, describes a future gateway road to a residential community - with wine grapes to be planted on roadsides and the center median - and a winery and bed-and-breakfast cottages to be built in grasslands ahead.

Opponents call the developments a disaster for El Dorado County that would gridlock Highway 50. Residents are creating anti-development Facebook pages, rallying neighbors and giving fits to would-be builders.

Shingle Springs residents Kristine and Greg Killeen are upset over the proposed development of San Stino, a 640 acre, 1,041 home, development off of French Creek Road near Mother Lode Drive. At their nearby "dream house" with a wine cellar and a balcony offering spectacular views of their 10-acre parcel, they look out and fear the future.

Greg Killeen said the subdivision construction would disrupt what the couple felt they were promised eight years ago when they moved to the area from San Jose: a quiet life amid large acreage properties.

El Dorado County, which topped 20,000

residents in 1850, two years after James Marshall discovered gold in Coloma, didn't surpass 30,000 people until after 1960. But since 1980, it has more than doubled in population to over 180,000.

Real estate market forecasts suggest nearly 12,000 homes could be built in El Dorado County over the next two decades. And just across the border with Sacramento County, Folsom is planning to add 10,000 houses south of Highway 50, adding to potential regional congestion.

"We need to have balanced growth," said Supervisor Ron Mikulaco of El Dorado Hills, who says he also worries about development drying up water supplies. "But I'm not hearing people say shut the gate behind us. I hear people say, 'We've got to be smart.'"

"It has conjured up all the warring factions," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Ron Briggs, who was elected in 2006 on a platform of keeping the county rural. Briggs said supervisors are going to have to face major decisions on the county's future over the next two years.

Seeking consensus, Briggs is trying to keep the developers talking with the "no (traffic) gridlock people" who passed Measure Y. He also says he wants to include voices of the "new element" - recent residents who bought homes expecting newfound rural lifestyles to be preserved. "They say they want economic growth and sane development, but just don't do it here," Briggs said. ~

Credit: Based on an article by Peter Hecht in the Sacramento Bee

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Labor Day
 ★★★★★★ ★★★★★★
September 2

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



BLAC BOARD MET IN AUGUST, SETS SEPTEMBER MEETING

The August meeting of the Board of Directors of Bass Lake Action Committee was held on August 5, 2013, at 7:00 PM. at the home of John and Fran Thomson. The guest speaker was EDH CSD General Manager Brent Dennis, who discussed the challenges facing the CSD.

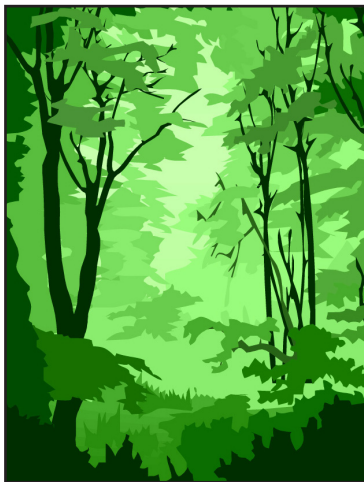
The September meeting of the Board of Directors of Bass Lake Action Committee will be held on September 9, 2013, at 7:00 PM. at the home of Herb and Kathy Prevost. EID board candidates will be the guests.

All BLAC members are cordially invited to attend all BLAC board meetings. For additional information, contact Kathy Prevost at 530-672-6836. ~

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August

Birds fly in formation;
 Tree leaves sway from side to side;
 Clouds gather in small huddles,
 discussing the weather;
 Grass shoots shoot up once more,
 their roots replenished;
 A Phoenix nearby hums his Ode;
 Tranquility is in place,
 after the long bitter wait;
 Alive, now, is the world.

— J. I. Stuart,