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Merkel, Karynn



From: Nancy Correll <duning@humboldt1.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2014 10:27 AM
To: Planning Clerk
Subject: Letter to Planning Commissioners

Please distribute this email as a public comment to the members of the Planning commission for their meeting tonight. Thank you!!

Open space, particularly open natural areas, accessible to the public, and near communities, are shown to be beneficial to people of all ages, but particularly children. The benefits include physical exercise, fresh air, and the relaxation of being in a natural environment. These benefits have actually been shown to improve school performance. Although it looks as though there are natural, forested, open areas in our Humboldt Bay area, the fact is that many of these are privately owned and could become vulnerable to various kinds of development, making them unavailable for these community values.

The benefits of protecting natural areas large enough to allow our native species to survive include providing clean water and air to our surroundings, protecting natural resources such as agriculture, timber and fisheries. These benefits will only happen if the natural areas are large enough, and connected enough to provide viable habitat, and allow species to move to appropriate areas, have large enough space to roam, and procreate.

Salmon and other anadromous fish are the iconic species of our north coast, and they are already severely threatened. They are completely dependent on having clean cold water, natural, large riparian areas, and unimpeded access to and from the ocean.

Our forests, in spite of overcutting and loss of old growth, still include large areas that are capable of growing trees and providing lumber while protecting these natural areas and preserving clean water, air and species such as salmon. But dotted with inholdings, houses, the net of infrastructure (roads, etc.), these areas are less available to provide these resources. Increased development includes runoff (sedimentation and flooding), pollution from wastewater and sewage, introduction of non-native species which often become invasive, and of course the simple reduction of area in which to grow trees. The same is true for agriculture, which also needs open space to provide food and fiber products.

All these reasons are why the general public supports open space, appreciates the natural environment, and realizes that if these areas are not protected from development soon, they are vulnerable to division, and loss.

Conservation easements are one of the cheapest and best ways to protect these open spaces for future generations. Conservation easements are created by willing landowners, who want to protect the natural and resource values of their own property. The County should, in the General Plan, encourage these efforts of landowners to do right by the land. As we have seen, government safeguards for open space are vulnerable to political changes; Conservation Easements are private, individual acts to keep land available for habitat and natural resources.

As environmentalists have learned, natural habitat and resource land that has been lost to development is lost forever. It's time to encourage conservation of land for the future.

Sincerely,
Nancy Correll
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McKinleyville