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Humboldt County Supervisors
Humboldt County General Plan Commissioners

August 28, 2015

RE: Volume 2, Communities Carlotta/ Hydesville

As a key planning document for the future development of Humboldt County, the General Plan must strike a strategic balance between residential development and the protection of natural resources for industry and wildlife. According to the Major Policies of the Framework Plan section 9 emphasizes: "Identification of areas of special consideration (i.e., sensitive habitats, cultural resources, landslides, flood, etc.).

Major plan proposals and underlying principles of the Carlotta/Hydesville Area Community Plan section 3: Precludes and/or limit the extent of additional residential development in high hazard areas (flooding and geologic fault rupture corridors).

In Carlotta on Riverside Park Road, there are several areas known to flood. There are also numerous sections that have erosive banks. The field that was formerly 20 + acres that abuts the Van Duzen River is now divided into three parcels. Parcel # 206-411-025-000, #206-411-020-000, and #2006-411-021-000. Past history shows that this field has been known to flood, with river water going up to 6 feet in height on the south facing bluff. Flood events are great for agricultural land, as we know flooding is helpful for bringing fresh nutrient rich soil to fields for growing crops and enhancing grazing animals. However this is a not a very good place for more homes, more septic systems and more wells.

Also accessed by Riverside Park Road, the East and South areas now known as Riverside Acres and Runeberg Park also abut the Van Duzen River with some properties including the public waterway in the old deeds. The Riverside Acres area adjacent to the river is a known spawning area for the steelhead and chinook salmon. Runeberg Park, owner Humboldt Redwood Co., borders the Van Duzen with a natural, but seriously eroding bluff face. Its deep holes house chinook salmon in its annual migration.

In the respected Kelsey Report, a sediment budget and analysis of geomorphic process in the Van Duzen River basin 1941-1975 Summary, he quotes the study by Judson and Ritter 1964; Brown and Ritter, 1971: "The Coast Range of Northern California are the most rapidly eroding section of comparable size in the United States." This includes the Van Duzen River basin.

In conclusion, the General Plan does not adequately address the impact of building in flood plains and close to the main stem Van Duzen and her tributaries. In addition the effects of climate change, the California drought, and the dramatic impact of current landowners in Carlotta diverting precious water from the river for cultivation, has left the Van Duzen Watershed significantly impaired in the summer of 2015. Adding an additional 170 residential sites and 426 people to Carlotta may further jeopardize the recovery of the watershed; increased water usage in the summers may escalate the dangerous blue algae proliferation; and may cause a reversal of the recent recovery over the past three years of the precious salmon run. Biological resources need to be protected as an extremely high priority.

Friends of the Van Duzen has been studying the main stem and tributaries of the Van Duzen for the past 20 years and is dedicated to the preservation and survival of aquatic species. In this updated report from the Planning Department, studies regarding Wolverton Gulch in Hydesville are cited but no studies over the rest of the Hydesville/Carlotta basin are mentioned.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters.

Sal Steinberg, Community Coordinator Friends of the Van Duzen and resident of Riverside Park Road, Carlotta.

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