

ProtectRuralPlacer.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Judy Isaman
(916) 698-1055 • jgisaman@aol.com

Save Our Farms. Save Our Ranches. Save Our Rural Community.

Auburn, CALIF. (February 1, 2019) – Introducing Protect Rural Placer. We are a grassroots organization dedicated to protecting and preserving rural Placer County – our farms, ranches, wetlands, open spaces – our community based lifestyle.

Our current project is to reverse Placer County's intended \$1.12M purchase of the Twilight Ride property at 5345 Bell Road in Auburn which is intended to create an additional public access to Hidden Falls Regional Park (HFRP). The current public access and parking lot for 75 vehicles is off of Mears Road in Auburn. The 1,200-acre HFRP is located between the communities of Auburn and Lincoln, north of the Ophir/Newcastle area. The park is situated along the Coon Creek and Deadman Creek watersheds, located south of the Bear River.

Development plans for the Twilight Ride Property include mitigating wetlands, paving open space to create parking for 100 autos and 40 truck and trailer rigs, restrooms, horse boarding facilities, bike rentals, and other retail concessions in the middle of a rural neighborhood that is zoned for agricultural.

Placer County continues to pave over and urbanize rich agricultural land. Once it is gone we can't get it back. The HFRP expansion calls for 30 miles of new trails and will repurpose agricultural land that has been used for cattle grazing since the 1860s. Local ranching families will be impacted by the loss of grazing leases. This project undermines the sustainability of agriculture for farming families and future generations of farmers and ranchers. In a community that advocates the farm to fork movement let's remember the American Farmland Trust adage "No Farms. No Food" (www.farmland.org).

The rural roads that will lead to this parking lot are narrow and hilly with multiple blind curves, and never meant for the addition of hundreds of visitors' vehicle trips daily. This action will impact road safety for residents, cyclists, horse enthusiasts and visitors of the park, not to mention a rise in emissions polluting the air quality. Think of these rural roads as long driveway extensions to private homes – would you like the additional increase of hundreds of vehicles traveling through your neighborhood on a daily basis?

The proposed trail expansion covers extremely combustible dry oak woodlands and heavily wooded and brushy hills. This expansion will increase the danger for wildland fires to thousands of residents and acres within and surrounding the 3,700 acre expansion of HFRP. The likelihood of illegal day and overnight camping by hikers and homeless will increase the potential for wildland fires from campfires, as well as from combustible trash, bottles and cigarettes. In case of fire many residents will have only one escape route. Did you know that wildfires can travel up to 14 miles in one hour?

In addition to the environmental and safety concerns, PRP also wants to make Placer County residents aware of the projected costs the HFRP project will place on all Placer County taxpayers. Today, the HFRP expansion is a projected tax burden of \$18 million for Placer County residents to be spent on the construction of the parking lot, paths, bridges, buildings, restrooms, etc. Also let's consider the ongoing costs for maintenance, staffing, law enforcement and fire mitigation which have not been budgeted.

ProtectRuralPlacer.com

Were you aware that on weekends and holidays two-thirds of the Hidden Falls visitors are from outside Placer County? Although the days of Placer County residents dropping by to enjoy HFRP are long gone we continue to pay dearly for our “gem in the foothills.”

Before we begin to expand HFRP from 1,200 acres to 3,700 – half the size of the city of Auburn – first let us repair the unintended consequences experienced by the Mears Road neighborhood by collaborating to develop a community friendly solution for these residents and park guests. Secondly, let us ask our County officials to create a fiscally responsible budget for current and future staff, resources, safety, maintenance, and other required expenditures. Lastly, we ask you to visit our website, ProtectRuralPlacer.com to sign our petition, to take our 1-minute survey, then like us on Facebook, and join us at County meetings to protect rural Placer.

#

**Parking data provided by Placer County Parks Division*

***Meeting details posted on our website*