

Mountain Ranch Community Plan

**Presented to the Board of Supervisors, Calaveras County
For consideration of and inclusion into the General Plan of Calaveras
County**

**Adopted By a Unanimous Vote of the Mountain Ranch Community
March 11, 2009**



Historic Dughi Building Circa 1860

HISTORY

Modern Mountain Ranch is a result of good fortune, vision and much work on the part of the citizens that came before us.

Miwuk, the indigenous people of the foothills, who relied on natural resources for food, water and shelter, originally populated the area. They had minimal impact on the environment.

As the California Gold Rush came, Argonauts came in search of placer gold, the easy to collect surface gold, nuggets and dust. This gold was found in or near rivers and over eroded surfaces of ancient riverbed. Here in Mountain Ranch we have a branch of an ancient river which was the source of much of the gold found locally. Millions of years ago this river ran north to south through the center of the valley along Whiskey Slide road to Cave City where it joined Fort Mountain Ranch.

Originally named El Dorado, "the golden one," the area was also home of the first steam powered saw mill in the county, located at Whiskey Slide and Mountain Ranch Roads. The sawdust burner of a later sawmill still stands there today.

Located at a crossroads, stagecoaches from Mokelumne Hill to Murphys came via Whiskey Slide to El Dorado then to Cave City and up to Murphys. The stage from San Andreas to Rail Road Flat and West Point also stopped in El Dorado. El Dorado became formal in 1873 by being designated a Townsite and attracted enterprising Swiss Italians that came here to farm. Among them was Mr. Cuneo who was a personal friend of Mr. Garibaldi, the founder of modern Italy, hence the name of our main street.

This Swiss-Italian colony left us some of the best examples of Gold Rush architecture: the Raggio-Dughi Adobe of 1863 and the Paginni-Dominghini Adobe of 1862. Mtn. Ranch Hotel built by Dan Filippini in 1904. These buildings are some of the best examples of appropriate architecture for these foothills and still are used as homes 140 years later. Around 1930 people began calling El Dorado "Mountain Ranch" (it should be noted here that the community never voted on the name change nor was there a Board of Supervisors motion to change the name).

During the depression of 1930, the original Old Timers were mostly gone. The new generation left for the Bay Area, Stockton and Hollywood, but the newcomers came with a vision to revitalize the place. Augustus Sender came from Oakland and bought the old Rodesino store in 1942. Phil and Florence Alberts came from Concord and bought the Dominghini estate in 1965. At that time there were only 75 people getting mail at the Mountain Ranch Post Office. The road to San Andreas was last improved in 1955 and it only took 3 hours to drive to Stockton!

The community has grown. Close to 2,000 people get their mail at the Mountain. Ranch Post Office. We have a beautiful park, grocery and hardware store, Community Club and a thriving retirement community that needs updated roads and services.

LAND USE

DEFINITION OF AREA:

The Mountain Ranch Community Plan area is roughly bounded by Esperanza Creek on the North, O'Neil Creek on the South, a North/South line roughly halfway between the townsites of San Andreas and Mountain Ranch on the West and a North/South line roughly halfway between Rail Road Flat Rd. and Summit Level Rd. along Swiss Ranch Road. The APN's to be included in the Mountain Ranch Town Center are:

036-001-011, 036-001-050, 036-001-069, 036-003-008, 036-004-003, 036-004-004, 036-004-005, 036-004-006, 036-004-007, 036-004-010, 036-004-011, 036-004-012, 036-004-013, All of the parcels in Map Book 36 page 5 (the parcels in downtown Mountain Ranch Townsite), 036-006-009, 036-006-011, 036-006-012, -036-006-013, 036-006-015, 036-006-018, 036-006-019, 036-006-020, 036-006-021, 036-007-003, 036-007-004, 036-007-005

GOALS:

The primary goal is to preserve the look and feel of the community while permitting controlled growth in certain parts of the Mountain Ranch Community Plan area.

POLICIES:

1. Development of the Town Center area shall be consistent with the historical nature of the existing building inventory and future building shall retain the look and feel of the old west.

2. Development in the Town Center area should encourage residential density, Single Family Residential lots no smaller than 1/8 acre, mixed-use and commercial uses.

3. Public buildings should be located in the Town Center area. An architectural review committee of local citizens should be appointed by the Board of Supervisors to review plans for compliance with development of the Town Center area.

4. Development of a municipal water supply and sewage treatment shall either precede or be concurrent with any development in the Town Center area. The cost of such development shall be borne by those benefited by the improvements. A determination should be made by LAFCO as soon as possible to determine which agency should be responsible for developing suitable infrastructure.

5. The existing park shall remain at least as big as it is at the current time and the public buildings in the park area should remain for public use.

6a. AP zoning, including parcels under Williamson Act contracts, shall remain in place and consistent with General Plan their current density.

6b. Preservation of current A1 and other agricultural designations shall be encouraged.

6c. Parcels that are currently unclassified shall be classified Residential Agricultural except within the Town Center

7. Agricultural Preserves shall be protected from extinguishment by county government

action or development.

IMPLEMENTATION:

1. Upon adoption of the Mountain Ranch Community Plan by the Board of Supervisors, the County shall initiate action to zone the Mountain Ranch Community Plan area in a manner consistent with the Community Plan land use designations.
2. The County shall enact specific ordinances, actions and rules necessary to enforce the intent of the Mountain Ranch Community Plan.

OPEN SPACE

GOALS:

1. Maintain the nature of the Mountain Ranch area as an open, rural, country community.
2. Maintain the existing large parcels in the Mountain Ranch Community Plan area outside of the Town Center.
3. Maintain open space throughout the Mountain Ranch Community Plan area by means of zoning regulation and agricultural land preservation.
4. Protect the Mountain Ranch Community Plan area from incompatible land uses.

POLICIES:

1. The use of agricultural preserves, Williamson Act contracts, land trusts, etc, are strongly encouraged
2. Livestock, orchards, vineyards, and other compatible uses add to the desired feel that the Mountain Ranch Community Plan seeks to achieve, and are strongly encouraged.

IMPLEMENTATION:

1. Upon adoption of the Mountain Ranch Community Plan, the County shall design and implement the legal framework necessary to enforce these goals and policies.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOALS:

1. Economic development shall be encouraged within the Mountain Ranch Town Center.
2. Home based businesses are appropriate within the Mountain Ranch Community Plan area.

POLICIES:

1. Environmental impacts such as, but not limited to, noise, smell, light and air quality standards are to be considered in deciding appropriate economic development.

IMPLEMENTATION:

1. Uses that are not defined under current zoning classifications within the Mountain Ranch Town Center may be considered, subject to public review.

LIGHTING AND NOISE

GOALS:

1. Preservation of the quiet environment and dark night sky
2. The Mountain Ranch Community recognizes that part of the enjoyment of rural living is the perception of less infringement on the environment by human development than in a suburban or urban setting.

POLICIES:

1. Activities on developed and undeveloped lands that create excessive noise shall be limited so as not to impede the peace and quiet of the immediate neighbors or the community at large.
2. Outdoor lighting shall be kept to a minimum and shall not be a nuisance to one's neighbors or the community at large.

IMPLEMENTATION:

1. Whenever possible, noise-generating activities shall be limited to daylight hours.
2. Research into how other rural communities have effectively reconciled the noise control of un-muffled cars, trucks and recreational vehicles, and 2-cycle engine usage.
3. Every citizen's enjoyment of the Community shall be encouraged, and the appropriate regulations shall be put in place.
4. All residences, commercial buildings and professional offices that must utilize outdoor lighting are encouraged to have night shields be installed. As an alternative, motion detector lighting may be used.
5. Community mediation of noise abatement or lighting usage conflicts shall be made available when necessary.

SAFETY

GOALS:

1. Protect Mountain Ranch and its sphere of influence from natural and manmade hazards and emergencies.

POLICIES:

1. Appropriate fire protection measures, established by Central Calaveras Fire

Protection District, Cal Fire, and local citizenry shall be utilized.

2. A disaster plan network shall be encouraged stressing community involvement in the plan and its implementation.
3. Citizens will be encouraged to take personal responsibility for, and be prepared for, any hazardous event that occurs, be it manmade or natural.

IMPLEMENTATION:

1. The ability to protect new projects, both single and multiple family housing and commercial development will be addressed prior to construction by both Central Calaveras Fire and Cal Fire.
1. 2. The County shall provide a safety measures policy that should include an emergency notification network and evacuation plan, to be reviewed by Mountain Ranch residents, that would be implemented in conjunction with any state or local plans already in place.
2. Mountain Ranch residents should avail themselves of the Family Disaster Planning and Emergency Preparedness plans of the Red Cross, and be encouraged to familiarize themselves with our local medical services, including ambulance services. This will include co-operation with organizations such as The American Red Cross, PG&E, and local fire and law enforcement agencies.
3. Mountain Ranch residents will be encouraged to prepare a Personal Disaster Plan. Used during times of emergency or hazard, the key to this plan will be the practice and maintenance of said plan.
4. A Mountain Ranch Emergency Planning Committee should be organized by the County Office of Emergency Services. Citizen Preparedness, emergency supply kits, communications during time of emergency and/ or hazard, and an evacuation plan for livestock and companion animals shall be emphasized.
5. The key to the safety element and its plans will be the creation and Implementation of said plans, cooperation between local citizens and government agencies, and the involvement of local citizens in any decision making process.