

Excerpted from Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center  
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Re: The Ridge at Trinitas 2004-114 Zoning Amendment, Tentative Subdivision Tract Map,  
Conditional Use Permit, and draft EIR  
August 25, 2007

**“ • The range of project alternatives in the EIR does not provide the full, appropriate range of feasible alternatives**

*Out of the existing project alternatives now provided in the draft EIR, Alternative 1 (No Project Alternative) is the best alternative when considering the interests of County residents, compliance with existing laws and regulations, and the overall harm or benefit for the environment. Under no circumstance should the recalcitrant applicant be rewarded for so much illegal, unauthorized, and non-permitted alteration of the environment.*

*CSERC requests that the following alternative be considered in the final EIR:*

*Alternative 4 – Regulatory Compliance Alternative*

*Under this alternative, the applicant would not gain any approval for developing the clubhouse, lodge, associated parking lots, or any accessory structures. The applicant would not be authorized to open up the golf course for any commercial use by members of the public. The applicant would not receive approval for 13 new residences, nor for the drilling of any new wells. The applicant would not be given approval for any commercial operation or any related enterprise that would benefit from the unauthorized, non-permitted, illegal construction of the golf course that was initiated during the time period when the property was under Williamson Act contract.*

*Rather, under Alternative 4, the applicant would be directed by Calaveras County to bring his property into compliance with its General Plan designation and existing zoning and to also move to correct unapproved actions.*

*Despite the conflict with allowable legal uses, the County would not require the applicant to remove or naturalize the entire unauthorized private golf course or to tear up the 90,000 feet of irrigation piping, or to remove the gunnite and rockwork along the ephemeral drainages, or replace the half a billion gallons of golf course irrigation water that may have been pumped out of the groundwater supplies on which neighbors depend for a water supply.*

*Instead of requiring the active removal of all the inconsistent non-agriculture features on the property, the County would require the applicant to naturalize and restore habitat value approximately 20 acres composing the entire complex of three/four long fairways/tee box/golf areas located at the central eastern portion of the project property (directly west/southwest of the large pond bisected by the eastern boundary of the property). The applicant would be required to enhance those @20 acres of the site with replanted native oaks, restored native brush species, and a diversity of other native plants, including the restoration of riparian plants along any swale or drainage within the area.*

*Next, under this alternative, the County would require the applicant to select at least 20 additional acres of the existing golf course on the site and, within three years, convert that acreage back into active agricultural use for either irrigated agricultural or dryland grazing.*

*Under this alternative, the County would allow the applicant – in the spirit of compromise by the County -- to retain at least nine holes of the existing golf course for private use. Reducing the irrigated golf course acreage by at least 40 acres would significantly reduce the amount of overall irrigation required and the amount of water pulled out of the depleted groundwater basin. It would reduce fertilizer and pesticide use, reduce impacts on wildlife, and reduce visual impacts. As part of this compromise alternative, once the applicant completed the restoration of the 20-acre natural area and the conversion of the 20-acre area back to agriculture, the County would agree to consider without prejudice a new application by the applicant for approval of a development agreement allowing approval of no more than 13 single family residences on the subject property. Any such future application would be required to ensure that agricultural use would accompany any residential development.*

*CSERC urges that this Alternative be described and considered in the final EIR. It would move the project site towards compliance with the existing General Plan designation and current zoning requirements. It would reduce impacts to neighbors and to county services, as well as impacts to traffic/roads, wildlife, water, air quality, and plant resources.*

*If the County does not choose to include this compromise alternative in the final EIR, CSERC asks that the County craft a similar alternative that would not only bring the property back into legal compliance with its existing General Plan and zoning requirements, but which could provide mitigating conditions that could reduce the negative impacts of unauthorized actions taken by the applicant on the project site.”*