



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

Public Notice

Public Notice Number: SPK-200400290

Date: November 5, 2008

Comments Due: December 5, 2008

In reply, please refer to the Public Notice Number

SUBJECT: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, (Corps) is evaluating a permit application to construct the Valley Oaks Planned Development project, which would result in impacts to approximately 1.17 acres of waters of the United States, including wetlands, in or adjacent to Coyote Creek. This notice is to inform interested parties of the proposed activity and to solicit comments. This notice may also be viewed at the Corps web site at <http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/regulatory.html>.

AUTHORITY: This application is being evaluated under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 for structures or work in or affecting navigable waters of the United States and/or Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States.

APPLICANT: Cobblestone Homes, Inc.
1400 N. Dutton Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95401-4643
Attn: Matt Watson 707 528-8703

LOCATION: The project site is located in the vicinity of Middletown, Section 7, Township 11N, Range 6W, Lake County, California, and can be seen on the Middletown USGS Topographic Quadrangle.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant is proposing to construct a mixed-use residential and commercial project. Based on the available information, the overall project purpose is to construct a large-scale, mixed-use, master-planned development consisting of residential, commercial and public recreation/open space uses to serve the Middletown/Coyote Valley area of Lake County, California. The applicant believes there is a need in this area for a mixed-use residential/commercial development of this size and scope, as stated in the *Lake County Strategic Economic Plan* and *Middletown Area Plan*. The attached drawings provide additional project details.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Environmental Setting. The site consists primarily of an abandoned horse ranch with associated residential structures, barns, corrals and grazing pastures. Adjacent land uses include the existing Hidden Valley Lake residential subdivision, Hidden Valley Golf Course, an elementary school and undeveloped pasture land. The project site is generally flat, non-native grasslands. Coyote Creek bisects the northern portion of the site, consisting of an ephemeral channel corridor with steep to vertically cut banks, 5 to 6 feet high in most locations. There are approximately 1.45 acres of jurisdictional ephemeral stream and seasonal wetlands within the project site. A 0.18-acre non-jurisdictional stock pond also occurs on the site. The site also supports small stands of mature valley oak trees as well as elderberry shrubs and trees that grow almost entirely along pasture fence lines.

Alternatives. The applicant has provided information concerning project alternatives. Additional information concerning project alternatives may be available from the applicant or their agent. Other alternatives may develop during the review process for this permit application. All reasonable project alternatives, in particular those which may be less damaging to the aquatic environment, will be considered.

Mitigation. The Corps requires that applicants consider and use all reasonable and practical measures to avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources. If the applicant is unable to avoid or minimize all impacts, the Corps may require compensatory mitigation. The applicant has submitted a Mitigation and Monitoring Plan to mitigate on-site for all unavoidable impacts to wetlands and other waters. Under the plan, all direct and indirect impacts will be compensated for by the following mitigation actions: (1) Preservation and enhancement of approximately 905 linear feet of Coyote Creek, which will include a preserved stands of mature valley oaks; (2) Floodplain enhancement and associated creation of 0.54 acres of new seasonal wetland and pond habitat; (3) Establishment of a new 4,855-linear foot meandering creek corridor that will feature channel bio-technical stabilization features; (4) Re-establishment of a 1,500-linear foot section of the historic, abandoned Coyote Creek corridor where a second stand of mature valley oaks will be preserved; (5) Establishment of more than 11.1 acres of new woody riparian habitat along the interconnected stream corridors through the planting of more than 800 native trees and shrubs; (5) Establishment of two valley elderberry longhorn beetle conservation areas within the stream corridors with planted/transplanted elderberry trees and shrubs.

OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORIZATIONS: Water quality certification or a waiver, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act from the Regional Water Quality Control Board is required for this project. A Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Permit will also be required from the California Department of Fish and Game. The applicant has not yet applied for the certification and permit.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES: The Corps will initiate consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as appropriate.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The proposed activity may affect Federally-listed endangered or threatened species or their critical habitat. The Corps has initiated consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: The proposed project will not adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) as defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

The above determinations are based on information provided by the applicant and our preliminary review.

EVALUATION FACTORS: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the described activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the described activity, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the described activity will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber

production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. The activity's impact on the public interest will include application of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency (40 CFR Part 230).

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, State, and local agencies and officials, Indian tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

SUBMITTING COMMENTS: Written comments, referencing Public Notice SPK-200400290 must be submitted to the office listed below on or before **December 5, 2008**.

Peck Ha, Project Manager
US Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
Sacramento Office
1325 J Street, Room 1480
Sacramento, California 95814 2922
Email: peck.ha@usace.army.mil

The Corps is particularly interested in receiving comments related to the proposal's probable impacts on the affected aquatic environment and the secondary and cumulative effects. Anyone may request, in writing, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests shall specifically state, with particularity, the reason(s) for holding a public hearing. If the Corps determines that the information received in response to this notice is inadequate for thorough evaluation, a public hearing may be warranted. If a public hearing is warranted, interested parties will be notified of the time, date, and location. Please note that all comment letters received are subject to release to the public through the Freedom of Information Act. If you have questions or need additional information please contact the applicant or the Corps' project manager Peck Ha, 916 557 6617, peck.ha@usace.army.mil.

Attachments: 7 drawings