

Dear Editor,

I am writing about the proposed development at the Sierra Valley Hot Springs. Some of the letters that have been published in the two local papers appear to be supportive of the project. My guess is that these authors had not read the "Study & Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration", available on the county's website (referred to as "Study" hereafter). The document is 117 pages with the Hot Springs' Master Plan as an attachment. I can understand why people may not have read it. It is very long and for this reader, an incredible document.

A simple place to start is that the Planning Dept. appears to be signing off on a recommendation to go forward with the project without doing an Environmental Impact Report. They estimate that there are currently 9990 sq. feet of structures. Under the proposal, this would increase to 99,570 sq. feet. The "Study" outlines numerous potential problems, including air, noise and light pollution; traffic, water resources, waste water and solid waste management, a wide range of environmental and cultural concerns to name just a portion of the issues they identify as "potentially" significant.

Some are incredulous that the county would even consider granting approval of a plan of this size when modest individual and small business projects have been closely scrutinized and/or rejected. Applying a different set of standards for a project of this scope is more than puzzling and unacceptable.

One of my biggest concerns is the inaccurate estimate of how many people would be visiting the resort at maximum capacity. This figure is critical for assessing the validity of most of the other claims and planning decisions. The Study says that the current maximum capacity is 394 people and that new maximum capacity after the full build out would be 529. A simple review of the proposed number of new campsites, lodge rooms, guest cabins, residential housing for staff, capacity of the restaurants, meeting rooms and dormitories, PLUS day use at the facilities including guests at their sister properties at the Globe Hotel and Calpine Lodge would put the number at at least 700 and much more likely at 1000+. The estimates they use for traffic are based on studies allegedly done in 2015. These two examples are significant and appear to be indicative of the quality other aspects of the Study, raising the question of the accuracy of the entire document.

Some have put forward enthusiastic estimates of what revenues the county *might* receive from the proposed development. I have not seen any corresponding summary of what the additional costs to the county would be. For example, there would be significant expenses in overseeing the project during building stages and compliance

reviews as well as the cost of providing ongoing basic services such as waste management, road maintenance, and emergency services.

To those who feel that there is no cause for alarm because the existing management and owners do not have the financial or organizational wherewithal to complete the proposed development, I would urge that they speak out now and ask for a realistic proposal. What would stop an outside developer that does have resources to pay for and oversee this scale project from taking advantage of a project that was agreed to because people thought it would never happen? A smaller scale project, with the appropriate studies and permits granted IN ADVANCE of any approval, certainly could be beneficial to the community.

Some have said the General Plan anticipates the kind of development proposed at the Hot Springs. While it appears that indeed some kind of development was anticipated, it also appears that the General Plan does not allow for this scale of development and/or some important aspects of the proposal. The first "Fundamental Goal of the County's General Plan" is:

"It is the County's most fundamental goal to maintain its culture, heritage, and rural character and preserve its rural quality of life."

In my opinion, this is a lofty and wonderful goal for the county to keep in mind, and the proposed development is absolutely inconsistent with this most basic goal. I have been coming to Sierra Valley for over 40 years, and moved to Sierraville about 7 years ago. This is a special place. I am active in the Sierraville Fire & Rescue Dept., have served on the Hospital District board, and volunteered for the Art/Ag Trail. I feel fortunate to live in this incredible place and am passionate about the community and the unique beauty of Sierra Valley. Aside from all of the significant environmental concerns about the proposal, this town of 200 people will be irrevocably changed if a development of this size were to be allowed. Hard to imagine that the county and Sierra Valley would not also be significantly impacted.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jill Slocum, Sierraville