

Butte County Planning Commission, Study Meeting input, 30 May 2008  
Jim and Catie Bishop, 1144 Mount Ida Road, Oroville, CA 95966

Regarding: Butte County General Plan Study Area 23—Designation of Agricultural Lands

Many letters and several public presentations have emphasized the valuable agricultural lands in Area 23, and that they deserve protection. They are long-established, viable, and economically important.

The immediate point here is just how those agricultural lands should be treated (a question raised at the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting by Planning Commissioner Nelson).

The appropriate land-use designation for those lands "Agricultural"...just as it would be for classic Valley farmlands. ("Agricultural-Residential" is not adequate.) Designation as "Agricultural" will best protect and enhance the agricultural potential of those areas by:

- Retaining minimum parcel sizes conducive to agricultural production
- Retaining the supply of irrigation water, because the recognized agricultural designation will strengthen the position of the land owners with the water agencies
- Acceptance, support and continuance of the agricultural productivity by buyers of those lands

The overlying zoning should set minimum parcel sizes of a few acres to preserve the viability of the small-scale farming operations—a proven viable minimum parcel size is 3 acres.

The surrounding areas should be compatible with agriculture. An appropriate land use in those surrounding areas is "Rural Residential", as recommended for that overall area by the Citizen Advisory Committee.

We respectfully request that the Planning Commission recommend

1. The Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and the Grazing Land be designated "Agricultural" and remain embedded in the "Rural Residential" lands suggested by the CAC, a simple refinement of the current proposed land use (see map).
2. Whatever form the final land-use and accompanying zoning take, that it meets the goals outlined above and ensures that these valuable agricultural lands are "protected, maintained, promoted and enhanced" as called for by Guideline #8 of the General Plan.

*Sincerely*

*Jim Bishop*