

## PLACER LEGACY

CONSERVING OUR LAND  
PROTECTING OUR HERITAGE

FALL 2005

### GOVERNOR SIGNS LANDMARK SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY BILL IN PLACER COUNTY!

ALONG THE BANKS OF THE BEAR RIVER NEAR COLFAX, GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER RECENTLY SIGNED THE LAIRD/LESLIE SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY BILL.

"THE 25 MILLION ACRES WITHIN THIS CONSERVANCY ARE A GIFT TO THE PEOPLE OF CALIFORNIA," SAID GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER. "WITH THIS BILL, WE ISSUE OUR DECLARATION THAT OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN WILL SEE AND ENJOY THE SAME SIERRA NEVADA THAT WE VALUE SO MUCH TODAY. AB 2600 IS COMMON SENSE LEGISLATION TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT AND ALLOW EVERYONE TO ENJOY OUR SIERRA NEVADA MOUNTAINS FOR YEARS TO COME."

PLACER COUNTY SUPERVISORS, THE PLACER COUNTY WATER AGENCY, PLACER LAND TRUST AND MANY COUNTY RESIDENTS HAVE BEEN STRONG SUPPORTERS OF THE CREATION OF A STATE CONSERVANCY FOR THE SIERRA NEVADA WHICH IS EXPECTED TO ACT AS A PARTNER WITH PLACER LEGACY IN THE FUTURE.



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## Placer Legacy Creates New Regional Park at Spears Ranch

Close your eyes and imagine a huge regional park in western Placer County, accessible to hikers, bicyclists, equestrians, and families. Now open your eyes and behold: one of the largest regional parks in the Sierra Nevada, right here in Placer County, courtesy of an open space program called Placer Legacy.

Earlier this year, Placer Legacy (see next story) sealed a landmark deal to purchase the 960-acre Spears Ranch, located in the Garden Bar area between the cities of Lincoln and Auburn. According to the Sierra Business Council, there's only one locally owned park bigger than Spears in the entire Sierra Nevada (the 1,100 acre Susanville Ranch County Park in Lassen County). For a sense of scale, Spears Ranch is nearly as big as the 1,000-acre Golden Gate Park in San Francisco!

The Spears Ranch acquisition is important for many reasons. It protects an important slice of Placer County's beautiful foothill area that is studded with oak trees. It protects the Coon Creek watershed water and provides enormous recreational opportunities for everyone from disciplined athletes to people out for a stroll. It will also provide important environmental education opportunities for local youngsters.

Placer Legacy is a collaborative effort that seeks to balance Placer County's growth with natural area preservation in a sensible way. The Spears acquisition, part of the broader Placer Legacy effort, was made possible through careful planning and partnering with the Spears family, the Trust for Public Land (TPL), and the Sierra Business Council (SBC).

In fact, by partnering with these groups, Placer County matched local dollars (\$2.2 million from the Placer Legacy Open Space Trust Fund) with \$1.3 million from the Trust for Public Land, the Sierra Business Council,

California state agencies and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

One of the unique features of the property is that it will combine recreation with habitat restoration. Coon Creek, the focus of restoration efforts, remains as one of the last salmon-supporting streams in the Sierra foothills. Reed Holderman, Executive Director of TPL-California, noted that, "The protection of Spears Ranch is key to protecting critical wildlife habitat and adding to public open space in the Sierra Nevada foothills." TPL has protected more 1.5 million acres of open space nationwide and more than 50,000 acres in the Sierra.

**BEHOLD:  
ONE OF THE LARGEST REGIONAL PARKS  
IN THE SIERRA NEVADA, RIGHT HERE  
IN PLACER COUNTY**

The Spears Ranch effort also earned the support of Sierra business leaders. "This is a landmark purchase, not just for Placer County, but also for the Sierra Nevada," said, Jim Sayer of the Sierra Business Council. "Our business members strongly believe that a successful economy depends upon a healthy environment." The Sierra Business Council is a Truckee-based nonprofit organization that has been the leading private sector supporter of Placer Legacy since the program's beginning.

Work is now under way to transform Spears Ranch into a regional park. Placer County is completing a park plan, which will soon be followed with capital improvements. Spears will open as a public park as early as next year.

For more information about Spears Ranch, contact the Placer County Planning Department at 530-886-3000

**PLACER LEGACY EARNED THE 2002 CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR'S ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP AWARD...**

THE GOVERNOR'S ANNUAL AWARDS ARE REGARDED AS THE STATE'S HIGHEST AND MOST PRESTIGIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL HONORS. THEY RECOGNIZE INDIVIDUALS, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES THAT HAVE DEMONSTRATED EXCEPTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MADE NOTABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONSERVING THE STATE'S PRECIOUS RESOURCES, PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT AND BUILDING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.



**PLACER LEGACY IS:**

A LONG-RANGE, COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR BALANCING PROJECTED GROWTH WITH THE PROTECTION OF DRINKING WATER RESOURCES, NATURAL AREAS, FISH AND WILDLIFE, AND AGRICULTURAL LANDS WHILE MAINTAINING THE AFFORDABLE, HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE THAT CURRENTLY EXISTS IN PLACER COUNTY.

COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY, AND INVOLVES ONLY THE PARTICIPATION OF WILLING PROPERTY OWNERS.

FOR EVERY DOLLAR THE COUNTY SPENDS ON THE PROGRAM, IT LEVERAGES AN ADDITIONAL THREE DOLLARS IN OUTSIDE FUNDS.

IN MOST CASES, THE PROGRAM PROTECTS LAND THROUGH AGREEMENTS WITH LANDOWNERS WHO, IN EXCHANGE FOR A PAYMENT OR A TAX CREDIT, AGREE NOT TO DEVELOP THEIR LAND.

THE COUNTY IS PARTNERING WITH CITIZENS, LANDOWNERS, NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND FOUNDATIONS TO CARRY OUT THE PROGRAM.

# Dissecting the Placer County Conservation Plan

A VISIONARY MODEL OF WIN-WIN DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION SOLUTIONS

Rising from the valley floor to the majestic shores of Lake Tahoe, Placer County is one of the most beautiful places in California to live, work, raise a family, do business and visit. It's no wonder we are also one of the fastest growing counties in the country. In 1970 our population was 77,000, in 2000 we reached 246,000 and by 2020 we are projected to reach over 409,000. Though it is easy to see why such growth is occurring, for current Placer residents, it is hard to digest what such growth will look like: visions of sprawling residential areas, never-ending traffic jams, and other woes of urban life come to mind. It is hard to imagine the Placer County we know and love supporting half a million people.

Fortunately, our local elected officials had the foresight to recognize the need for balancing this growth with conservation of the qualities that make Placer County unique. In 1998, the Placer County Board of Supervisors formed community partnerships and reached out to the county's citizens to develop such a vision—Placer Legacy. As a result, fast-growing Placer County was highlighted as one of America's 19 most nature-friendly communities. In their new book published this summer, "Nature-Friendly Communities," Chris Duerksen and Cara Snyder selected Placer County (the only area in the entire state of California to be awarded the nature-friendly designation) because of

Placer Legacy's unique approach to conservation of natural areas and development.

As the Placer Legacy vision began to take shape, the Board of Supervisors established the Scientific Working Group (SWG), which includes local biologists familiar with the habitats and species of Placer County as well as experts in the fields of conservation biology, ecology and geography. The SWG provides expertise on how to meet the habitat, biological and species conservation objectives of Placer Legacy.

The County also formed the Interagency Working Group (IAWG) to ensure that federal, state, and local governments have the ability to participate during the development of Placer Legacy. This involvement is important to ensure that Placer Legacy be consistent with the regulations and needs of the agencies.

To help defray the costs of developing Placer Legacy, the County entered into an innovative public-private partnership with a local county non-profit, Sierra Business Council (SBC), to help develop Placer Legacy. SBC committed staff and organizational resources to assist with the public participation, outreach and fundraising efforts. Sierra Business Council started this effort by securing a \$400,000 grant from the Packard Family Foundation and \$75,000 from the National

**THE PLACER COUNTY CONSERVATION PLAN (PCCP) MAKES THE COUNTY THE SINGLE PERMITTING AGENCY AND INCREASES REGULATORY CERTAINTY AND PREDICTABILITY FOR DEVELOPERS AND ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS.**



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**BICYCLING  
IN PLACER COUNTY**

RECREATION, TRANSPORTATION,  
LESS TRAFFIC AND CLEAN AIR

A growing number of residents are choosing to drop the keys and grab the handlebars as a way to get to work or run a few errands. For many in Placer County, bicycling is not only fun and good exercise, but also a viable alternative to driving. Bicyclists are enjoying this economical and healthy means of transportation while helping to improve our air quality and reducing the number of cars on our roads.

The Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA) has formed the PCTPA Bicycle Advisory Committee and both have been working with our towns, cities and

local bike groups to develop a bikeway network for Placer County. The Bicycle Advisory Committee works to expand the system of safe biking routes and trails in Placer County.

Support of alternative transportation methods is one of the goals for PCTPA. The PCTPA recently set up a Regional Bikeway Network as

a product of the Regional Bikeway Plan and the Placer County Bikeway Master Plan. The network will develop continuous and connected routes between cities, towns and communities in Placer County.

Placer Legacy is also working to develop and expand trail biking opportunities. Future development of the Spears Ranch regional park will include the construction of bike trails and provide for mountain biking use; yet another unique opportunity to enjoy the beauty of this great natural area.

Want more information, a copy of the new Placer County Bike Map, or just interested in the benefits of bike transportation? Need help commuting by bike in or near Placer County? Call the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency at (530) 823-4030 or visit their website at [www.pctpa.org](http://www.pctpa.org)

**WHY BIKE?**

- STAY FIT
- FIGHT POLLUTION
- ENJOY THE OUTDOORS
- SAVE TIME AND AVOID TRAFFIC DELAYS
- ENJOY YOUR COMMUTE

Fish and Wildlife Foundation to help Placer County cover the cost of the initial planning of Placer Legacy.

Now, developers, farmers and environmental groups are working together to show that the county's unique natural and agricultural areas and scenic qualities can be maintained even as urban development accommodates tens of thousands of new residents. The Placer Legacy program is a long-term county-wide approach to ensure we will not lose the very qualities that distinguish us from other rapidly developing areas. Turning the vision into action, the County built a coalition of groups to negotiate a conservation plan that satisfies all of the seemingly competing goals and objectives of growth and conservation. This coalition includes representatives of state and federal regulatory agencies, local city and county planners, developers, farmers, and environmental groups.

The innovation and persistence of this coalition demonstrates a whole new approach to regional planning, one that addresses development, conservation, and overall quality-of-life in a complementary manner. The Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP) lays out the most important framework for making the Placer Legacy vision a reality. Placer County, through Placer Legacy and the PCCP is becoming a model community, proving that innovation and collaboration can produce win-win strategies for approaching the future. Who is winning and how are these win-win solutions achieved?

First, existing federal and state agencies like the US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, US Army Corps of Engineers, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, California Environmental Protection Agency, and others have different requirements and regulations for development projects. These requirements can be difficult to anticipate and decipher.

For developers, navigating the multi-agency permitting process is tedious, time-consuming, expensive, and worst of all, uncertain. In this existing bureaucratic nightmare, no one wins. Developers seek more predictability, and environmental groups seek better protection. Environmental regulatory agencies would like to be more effective, and planners seek a more regional approach so that we end up with distinct urban areas, while protecting the natural assets distinctive to Placer County. Placer residents want to see a streamlined process that uses our tax dollars efficiently for a greater gain.

The solution is to develop a plan that complies with federal and state regulations for protecting endangered species, habitats, and wetlands in Placer County but gives the local government control and predictability within the permitting processes. The Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP) makes the county the single permitting agency and increases regulatory certainty and predictability for developers and environmental groups. It empowers local government to strategize the best regional development plan and prioritize conservation areas on a county-wide landscape scale, and it ensures that taxpayers will get the most "bang for their buck" by eliminating excessive bureaucracy. Additionally, through increased efficiency and coordination, the PCCP will improve protection for sensitive species and natural areas and ensure no net loss to endangered populations.

The PCCP is based on realistic, conservative estimates of growth. Rather than allowing urban sprawl to eat up the scenic, historical, agricultural, and natural assets of Placer County, the PCCP directs this growth to the most appropriate areas, along efficient transportation corridors, making urban areas more livable and keeping rural areas more natural. This ensures that Placer County will continue to be a state and national leader in quality living for its residents. The PCCP provides for economic development that is locally-suitable and desirable, while ensuring preservation of the very diverse and unique historical and natural qualities that make Placer County such a healthy and beautiful place to live.

As Placer Legacy continues to develop as a program, it is important for the Placer community to understand, share, and own the vision. We can create the future that we want. We can decide the fate of our beautiful county. We can support and encourage decisions that will provide benefits to our families and communities now, while also ensuring that Placer County will continue to be a desirable place to live and work for the next generation. Placer County can remain not just one of the most nature-friendly communities in America; it can also be farm-friendly, people-friendly, and best of all, solution-friendly.



legacy



## PLACERGROWN

PlacerGROWN is the Placer County agriculture-marketing program, supported by the Placer County Board of Supervisors, the Agriculture Commission, Placer Legacy, the UC Cooperative Extension Service and High Sierra Resource Conservation & Development.

PlacerGROWN helps market and promote the availability and sale of locally grown farm products. PlacerGROWN promotes our local fine vegetables, fruits, and meats as well as additional unique products available at festivals, markets, fairs, restaurants and area grocery stores. As a result, growers can earn a reasonable profit and consumers can eat a delicious local tomato, peach or melon from a grower they know.

In addition to marketing, PlacerGROWN sponsors the annual Farm Conference. The Farm Conference provides a forum for producers to learn, meet, network and share their successes and challenges.

The success of PlacerGROWN is due to the cooperative effort of the individual farmers and local consumers who share the commitment to continue agriculture in Placer County. All those who wish to delight in our wonderful local products are invited to join PlacerGROWN.

Please visit PlacerGROWN at their website ([www.PlacerGrown.org](http://www.PlacerGrown.org)) to learn more and find out how you can help support Placer County farms and ranches by enjoying the healthy benefits of locally grown products. The PlacerGROWN website lists growers and their products, seasonal produce, and area events that assist the consumer with connections to the bounty of our local farms and ranches.



VISIT PLACERGROWN AT  
[WWW.PLACERGROWN.ORG](http://WWW.PLACERGROWN.ORG)



## Placer Agriculture Sustaining our Working Family Farms and Ranches

Placer County has a long and rich agricultural history. Farming and ranching have been a part of our economic, cultural, and environmental fabric since the discovery of gold near Auburn in 1848. Our climate, water resources and proximity to transcontinental rail routes made us one of the leading tree fruit growing regions in the United States for over a century. It's no wonder Placer County was called, "the fruit basket of the world".

Times have changed and agriculture in Placer County is now dominated by large-scale rice production and field crop farms in the western portion of the county; fruit orchards, small-scale and specialty growers in the foothills; and livestock operations interspersed throughout. We are also growing timber in our higher elevations, nursery products for land-



scaping, and a growing number of specialty crops. We are becoming world renowned for our wonderful Mandarin oranges and our high quality rice that is exported to the discerning Japanese markets.

Placer County's agricultural land base supports the "quality of life" that is so often cited as the reason people enjoy living here. Our farms and ranches provide us far more than food and fiber. They maintain our heritage of agriculture, are an important part of our local economy, and provide beautiful scenery for all to enjoy. Ninety percent of Placer County farms and ranches are family-owned and operated and in 2003, Placer farmers and ranchers produced more than \$73 million in agricultural products with rice, nursery products, beef and timber production leading the way

Placer County's agricultural lands are not only economically important, they also help maintain excellent water and soil quality, provide increased flood protection, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, and aid in growth management as open space buffers between our growing communities. It is vital that as our county grows, we protect the economic productivity, local heritage and ecological welfare of these working lands.

While Placer County farmers and ranchers produce a tremendous variety of agricultural commodities, they are challenged by global economic factors, low commodity prices and increasing costs that seriously threaten the continued economic viability of agriculture in Placer County. Making a living on the farm or the ranch is becoming more difficult to accomplish.

Placer County is one of the fastest growing counties in California. Population growth increases the demand for land, which in-turn increases land values. Fast-paced residential and commercial development fragments land ownership, squeezes our working lands and intensifies conflicts between agriculture and adjoining uses. Even with Placer County's Right to Farm Ordinance, these conflicts will likely increase as the County continues to grow.

On the positive side, the combination of increased population and higher disposable income provide opportunities for niche and direct marketing for local farmers and ranchers. A growing number of restaurants in western Placer County now feature locally produced foods. Farmers markets and other direct marketing opportunities are increasing, as are retail produce outlets with a local focus.

Help support Placer County agriculture by purchasing our high quality, locally grown, and produced products. The future success of agriculture in our great county depends on your public support. Shop at your local farmers market, go out for a country drive and enjoy the beauty of Placer County's rural landscape, stop at a local farm for produce and a chat with the farming family that grew it.

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# Family Fun with Placer Legacy

COOL ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS AND THEIR PARENTS TO DO OUTDOORS.

Placer County is an expansive world of natural wonders, beautiful scenery, and lasting landscapes. One of the responsibilities we have as citizens, parents, and grandparents is to educate and demonstrate our county's natural features to the next generation. We all want our kids to have the same, if not better, opportunities than we had. Children love the outdoors and usually make up all kinds of excuses to play outside. Placer Legacy provides fun, educational opportunities for parents to teach their children about the surrounding environment and necessity of conservation.

## ACTIVITIES FOR ENGAGING CHILDREN IN THE OUTDOORS:

Take a walk at many of the publicly accessible Placer Legacy sites and try to identify the leaves and plants that grow in the County. Identify 3 types of trees that grow in the County.

Did you know that Placer County used to be nicknamed "The fruit basket of the world"? In your yard, you can plant a fruit tree with your children gauge the growth rate of the tree while enjoying its bountiful harvest.

Go outside at night, away from the bright streetlights. Look up at the stars and together with your children; pick out a couple of constellations that you can revisit on other starry nights. Try and find Orion, Taurus, and Scorpio. Then, encourage your kids to research and tell you the stories behind the names of the constellations.

Together, parents and kids can learn to identify and recognize many of the birds native to our area. The birds are all over the oak woodlands and the parks that make up part of Placer Legacy. Start by hanging bird feeders with various types of birdseed at your house. You can also build a simple birdbath to attract the native birds. Then, go out into the field and see what you can find.

Take a walk outside and collect items to use for a nature mobile! Use a small bag and look for little things like leaves, small sticks, acorns, tiny stones, bits of grass, wildflowers, or a feather. Look for a twig to use as a holder for the mobile. After the items have been col-



lected, have someone help with hanging strips of wide masking tape from the twig. The strips can be different lengths. Once the strips are in place, cover the sticky side with the items, as long as they are not too heavy.

Take a trip to a local stream. Walk along the stream noticing all the different currents and sandy formations. Encourage your children to look under the rocks, behind the branches, and even get wet (safely, or course!). Try to point out any animal life such as crayfish or insects. Start a collection of rocks, one from every stream they visit during their childhood.

Encourage your children to start a nature journal. Kids can document their time outside - the shape of the clouds, the song of the birds, the hum of the river, or the smell of a flower or tree. They will start to really notice their surroundings and feel a true connection to them.

Take your children fishing, canoeing, hiking or bird watching. This can show them the appreciation you have for the outdoors and then they are bound to follow.

Take your children on a "photo safari" of the Placer Legacy sites. Document what you see in an album for your children to look at and show their friends.

Collect and press wildflowers. Teach your kids numerous lessons with this one activity.

Placer Legacy provides abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation and enjoyment. By including kids of all ages in the fun, Placer County citizens can pass on their heritage and love of the land to the next generations. Being excellent stewards of the common spaces we all enjoy will help preserve them for our lasting enjoyment. To find out more about Placer Legacy—check out [www.placer.ca.gov/legacy/](http://www.placer.ca.gov/legacy/).



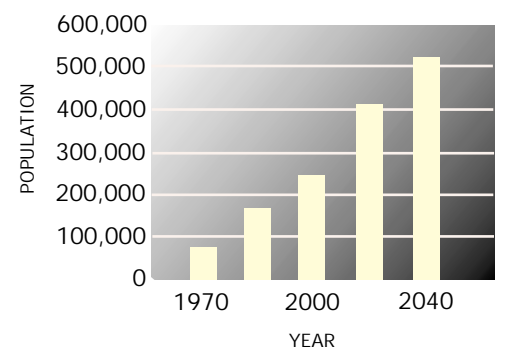
## DID YOU KNOW?

PLACER COUNTY WAS ONCE CALLED "THE FRUIT BASKET OF THE WORLD" AND STILL PRODUCES SOME OF THE FINEST FRUIT GROWN ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD?



## DID YOU KNOW?

PLACER COUNTY AGRICULTURE IS A VITAL INDUSTRY AND ACCOUNTS FOR OVER \$70 MILLION IN GROSS ANNUAL SALES.



# legacy



**PLACER LEGACY**

CONSERVING OUR LAND  
PROTECTING OUR HERITAGE

## SIX EASY WAYS TO HELP

WE INVITE YOU TO PLAY A PART IN PROTECTING OUR BEAUTIFUL AND VIBRANT COUNTRY LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES:

- ADD YOUR NAME TO OUR MAILING LIST
- INVITE ONE OF OUR SPEAKERS TO YOUR ORGANIZATION'S NEXT MEETING
- VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME
- MAKE A DONATION, SET UP A PAYROLL DEDUCTION OR INCLUDING A "LEGACY" GIFT IN YOUR WILL
- PROVIDE ACCESS FOR HABITAT ENHANCEMENTS AND MONITORING
- CONSIDER A LIND PLEDGE

TO FIND OUT ABOUT ANY OF THESE, PLEASE CONTACT THE PLACER COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT AT (530) 886-3000.

YOU CAN ALSO LEARN MORE ONLINE BY VISITING US AT [WWW.PLACER.CA.GOV/LEGACY/](http://WWW.PLACER.CA.GOV/LEGACY/)

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