

REPORT TO THE SHASTA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

<u>PROJECT IDENTIFICATION:</u>	<u>REGULAR AGENDA</u>	<u>MEETING DATE</u>	<u>AGENDA ITEM #</u>
ZONE AMENDMENT 16-004 (CASEY) BIG BEND AREA		09/08/16	R2

RECOMMENDATION: That the Planning Commission adopt a resolution recommending that the Board of Supervisors conduct a public hearing and;

1. Find the project Statutorily Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15264 "Timberland Preserves"; and
2. Make the rezoning findings, and introduce, waive the reading of, and adopt the ordinance to amend the Zoning Plan of the County of Shasta identified in Zone Amendment 16-004.

PROJECT SUMMARY: The project site is a 183.9-acre parcel in the Big Bend area located on the east side of Kosk Creek Road (U.S. Forest Service Road 37N79) approximately 1.25 miles northwest of the intersection of Hawkins Creek Road and Summit Lake Road (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 021-100-031 and 021-120-040). The request is for a rezone from the Timberland (TL) zone district to the Timber Production (TP) zone district for the purpose of promoting the conservation, management, and utilization of the property for commercial forest management by changing the way the property is valued for tax purposes and also making it eligible to receive State funding for forest improvement and management activities.

BACKGROUND: General Plan & Zoning - The property is located within the County's "Eastern Forest" planning area, Timber (T) General Plan land use designation, and the TL zone district. Lands devoted to and used for the growing and harvesting of timber that meet the requirements of the Forest Taxation Reform Act of 1976 (FTRA) may be rezoned to the TP zone district subject to the California Timberland Productivity Act of 1982 (CTPA) and the minimum standards of the County's TP zone district. The proposal is consistent with the objectives and policies of the T land use designation and standards of the TP zone district.

Access & Services - The project site is accessed from Kosk Creek Road and Hawkins Creek Road. The Shasta County Fire Department provides fire suppression and emergency services to the area. The project does not require other services.

Summary of FTRA, CTPA, & TP: Prior to adoption of the FTRA timberlands were valued for tax purposes based on both the "highest and best use of the land" (land value) and the value of standing timber. This method of taxation was seen as promoting poor timber management practices and incentivizing timberland conversion because landowners sought to minimize their tax burden by reducing the volume and age of standing timber on their land or, if timber production did not generate enough revenue to offset increasing taxes, sought to convert the land to the highest and best use identified for the property.

The FTRA required the County to place qualifying commercial timberland into Timber Production Zones (TPZ) and to restrict the use of TPZ land to timber production and compatible uses for a minimum of ten years with the ten year restriction period being renewed annually. In exchange the land would be valued for tax purposes based on both its suitability for growing timber and the timber species growing on the property. Valuing timberland property in this way resulted in a reduction of the applicant's property tax thereby promoting sound forest management practices and dis-incentivizing conversion. The reduction in property tax is offset by a timber yield tax assessed on the value of the timber at the time it is harvested.

The CTPA was adopted to promote conservation, management, and commercial utilization of those forestlands that were not initially designated as TPZ by the FTRA. The CTPA provides a process to rezone these lands to TPZ if they meet the requirements of FTRA. The TP zone district was established to implement the FTRA and CTPA on timberlands in Shasta County.

In order to qualify for rezoning to TP the land must: 1) be in the ownership of one person; 2) meet the minimum parcel size established for the TP zone district based on the Dunning's site classification; 3) be subject to a Forest Management Plan (FMP) that has been prepared by a California Registered Professional Forester (RPF) that provides for the eventual harvest of timber within a reasonable amount of time; and 4) meets the State standards for the amount of timber present on the property (stocking standards).

Project Analysis – The project site is undeveloped timberland. Adjacent properties are primarily undeveloped commercial timberland except for a ranch located adjacent to the western property line. Timberland within the property is composed of a mixed conifer stand interspersed with a few small oak-pine woodland stands. The parcel is moderately sloped with some steeper ground present within the southwestern portion of property. Seasonal drainages located throughout the property flow west/southwest to Kosk Creek. Wildlife is common to the mixed conifer forest and exist within the property and vicinity.

The Dunning's site classification is used to determine the suitability of land for growing timber and the required minimum parcel size for rezoning to TP. Within this classification system the age and height of the dominant species present, or "site trees," are used as an indicator of growing conditions within the property (site quality). These factors are used for assigning a suitability (site) class to the parcel or timber stands within the parcel on a scale from the least productive (Site Class V) to the most productive (Site Class I). The site class is then used to determine the minimum parcel size of 80, 60, or 40 acres. A Forest Management Plan prepared for the property shows that the Dunning's Site Classification for the mixed conifer stand is Site Class II. The smaller oak-pine woodland stands are classified as Site Class III.

The applicant has demonstrated that property is: 1) in the ownership of one person; 2) meets the minimum parcel size of not less than 60 acres of Class II timberland; 3) will be subject to the attached FMP prepared by RPF #915, which provides for the eventual harvest of timber within a reasonable amount of time; and 4) meets the minimum stocking standard of 75 square-feet of basal area per acre for mixed conifer forest stands.

Environmental Determination - This project has been determined to be Categorical Exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Section 15264 (title), which includes Timberland Preserves.

ISSUES: No unusual issues have been identified with respect to this project. To date, no public comments have been received.

ALTERNATIVES: The following alternatives are available:

1. Recommend a modification of the zone district boundaries or recommend placement of the property within a different zone district.
2. Continue the public hearing to request additional specific information.
3. Deny the Zone Amendment. The Commission would need to make specific findings that the Zone Amendment is inconsistent with the General Plan or surrounding uses.

CONCLUSION: Based on the information supplied by the applicant, data available to Planning staff, and the recommended development conditions, staff is of the opinion that the project is consistent with the General Plan policies and zoning standards for the area.



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LS/bg/District 3

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CalFire, Deputy Director, Resource Management, P.O. Box 944246, Sacramento, CA 94244-2460
Shasta County Assessor/Recorder
William Casey, 10880 New Avenue, Gilroy, CA 95020
James Chapin, RPF#915, Shasta Land Management, P.O. Box 994543, Redding, CA 96099
Project File

Attach:

1. Vicinity Map
2. General Plan Map
3. Zone District Map
4. Proposed Zone District Map (Exhibit "A")
5. Draft Planning Commission Resolution
6. Draft Zoning Ordinance
7. Timber Management Plan
8. Stocking Statement