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TEHIPITE CHAPTER

SIERRA CLUB 

P. O. Box 5396

Fresno, California 93755

July 23, 1992

Unto the breach once more, dear friends!

Yes, the Ball Ranch issue is back with us again.

A proposal to subdivide the Ball Ranch property in the San Joaquin River bottom lands near Friant has been stopped twice in hearings before the Fresno County Board of Supervisors. This has been achieved through a massive show of public protest. Literally hundreds of people showed up each time.

If you were one of them, you can be proud of your part in helping to stop the domination of county government by land developers. A revolution is in the making, and the Ball Ranch will probably end up having been the turning point in the war.

One more time, dear friends, and we might have this one put to rest for good. Please make every effort to attend the hearing:

2:00 p.m. (It is well to arrive an hour early, before the room fills.)
August 4, Tuesday
Wine Room (in the Exhibit Hall)
Fresno Convention Center (Ventura and M Streets)

It is also helpful to write the Supervisors, or to phone them (see enclosed information sheet and post card).

Because this issue has been delayed repeatedly in the past, it would be well to confirm that the hearing is actually going to be held as scheduled. For confirmation, call Sylvia Robbins (Fresno 227-4194) from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday July 31, Monday August 3, or Tuesday morning on the 4th. For other information call Sylvia at any time Monday through Friday, 7 to 4, or evenings.

Thanks for your help in protecting the San Joaquin River bottom lands from development, and making a real Parkway possible.

With gratitude,

George W. Whitmore

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Chair, San Joaquin River Subcommittee

March 2, 1994

Fresno Bee, Letters to the Editor

Who's the extremist, the developer who builds a subdivision in the floodway of an unpredictable river, partially under high tension power lines that might cause cancer, in a wildlife corridor where a parkway should be to preserve rapidly dwindling open-space values, or the citizen who points out the problems?

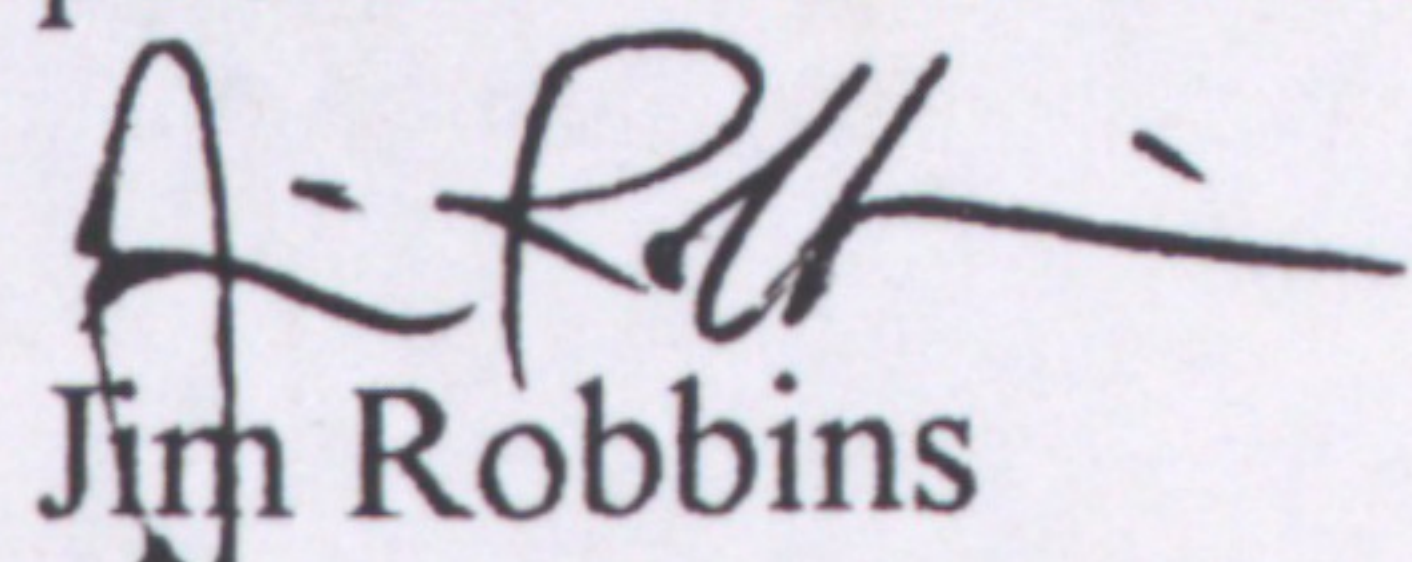
Bee reporter Charles McCarthy, in his February 23 article entitled "Madera OKs homes north of San Joaquin," grossly misrepresents the facts of the Madera County hearing on the Subdivision Tract Map for River Ridge Estates, making citizens with environmental concerns appear extreme and the developer appear reasonable, which only lulls the public into a false sense of security, benefiting vested interests rather than the public interest.

During the Madera County Board of Supervisors hearing, citizens' groups pointed out that Madera County has set precedent for urban development in the San Joaquin riverbottom, inducing growth in the area, by approving a general plan amendment for the River Ridge Estates project. The citizens' groups urged Madera County to provide added protection to the wildlife corridor and to avoid liability to county taxpayers by locating the project away from the floodway of the San Joaquin River and farther away from the easement for high tension power lines.

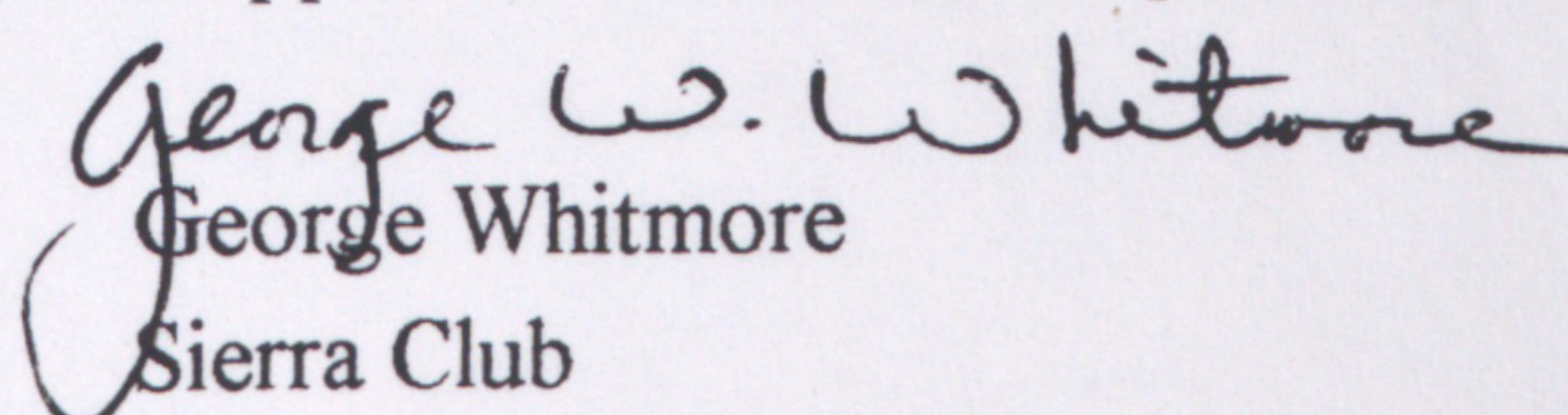
A lengthy discussion occurred about whether or not the developer should pull over twenty lots out of the floodway, an area designated specifically for channeling floodwaters. The Madera Supervisors finally decided not to require any reconfiguration of the lots, yet McCarthy states, "The developers also agreed to locate all subdivision lots outside the designated river floodway." With whom did they agree to do so--with Mr. McCarthy? Certainly not with the Madera County Board of Supervisors.

Supervisor Lopez did *not* make the statement attributed to him by McCarthy regarding power lines being "just above nearby open fields." Where did the phrase come from? Apparently Mr. McCarthy devised it to belittle environmental concerns. In actuality two lots extend into the easement for the power lines, four lots immediately abutt the easement, and one lot extends under the power line itself. That's more than "a little close," a statement erroneously attributed to Mr. Whitmore by McCarthy, apparently again with the intent of belittling citizen concerns.

The most important aspect of this development is that it constitutes a major breach of Madera County's policy of not allowing subdivisions in the San Joaquin riverbottom. The Bee's article clearly misleads the reader into believing that the development would be on the "blufftop," out of the floodway and away from the river. A brief look at the subdivision map would enlighten the public. Mr. McCarthy's article had exactly the opposite effect, and the public is the loser.



Jim Robbins
San Joaquin River Committee
Fresno



George Whitmore
Sierra Club

Fresno

19 September, 1997

Dr. Robert Kelly
San Joaquin River Conservancy
P.O. Box 205
Friant, CA 93626

FAX (209) 822-2710

Dear Dr. Kelly:

These are the Sierra Club comments on the DEIR for the Parkway Interim Master Plan.

We note that the "environmentally superior alternative" has been identified as being a parkway bluff-to-bluff. Unfortunately, this connection was not made until publication of the draft EIR--relatively late in the process. Particularly for a program EIR it would have made more sense to use a broad-brush approach. We highly recommend that the final EIR devote at least as much attention to the "superior alternative" as it does to the "interim" plan.

We find one specific flaw on page 2-24, mitigation measure 5.6-3 (b) regarding bald eagles. The measure specifies that motorized vessels (motor boats, jet boats, jet skis) shall not use the river above Rank Island from November through March. This could be interpreted to mean that motor craft would be permitted at other places and times, which is clearly contrary to the history of planning for the parkway. Improved wording might be, "The Conservancy shall use its authority to prohibit motorized vessels (motor boats, jet boats, jet skis) from accessing the area."

We cannot find any reference to the East-West Transportation Corridor Study currently underway by the counties, CALTRANS, et. al. Any of the scenarios being reviewed in that process would have a massive impact on the parkway, and the parkway plan should take that potential into account.

It is possible that the draft EIR contains other problems, but time constraints

preclude further comment. Thank you for your consideration.

San Joaquin River Subcommittee
Tehipite Chapter

George Whitmore

Sylvia Robbins

Jim Robbins