

Open space eyed for timber production

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A La Honda property owner is seeking to rezone 40 acres of land he owns from open space to timber production.

The Jeffrey Hunt Stoddard Trust received Planning Commission approval to rezone the land off of Highway 9 in January and the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors is set to vote on it Tuesday. In 2014, the board excluded timber harvesting from the county's Williamson Act Program as an agricultural use, according to a report by Senior Planner Melissa Ross.

As a result, at least two parcels in the county used for timber harvesting became ineligible to remain under Williamson Act contracts since no other qualifying agricultural use is present on the properties, according to Ross' report.

The parcels are now technically zoned resource management, which has increased the property tax assessment for the properties, according to the report.

Tree species on Stoddard's land include a mix of redwood, Douglas fir, tan oak and other conifers and hardwoods.

The property has a average slope of 31 percent.

The Stoddard property had a timber harvesting permit in 1972 and timber production on the property dates back to before the 1930s, according to the report.

Stoddard has already signed a contract for future timber harvesting with a local timber operator in anticipation of future timber harvest plan submittal, according to the report.

The property is located at 24707 Highway 9 and has one home on it constructed in 1935. Stoddard first submitted the application to rezone the land in December 2014.

With board approval, the property owner would still be required to secure a Timber Harvest Permit from the state Department of Forestry and Fire.

The board will hold a public hearing and consider three actions including:

- A General Plan Map Amendment changing the land use designation of one parcel from Open Space to Timber Production;
- A Zoning Map Amendment to rezone same parcel from Resource Management to Timberland Preserve Zone; and
- Williamson Act contract non-renewal.

The Williamson Act is a state law that provides relief of property tax to owners of farmland and open space land in exchange for a 10-year agreement that the land will not be developed or otherwise converted to another use.