

Sierra Club files suit against Cristallago developers

Katy Sweeny, Lake County Record-Bee, 4-16-10

LAKE COUNTY -- The Sierra Club Lake Group filed a suit April 2 in the Lake County Superior Court against the county and Cristallago developers.

Victoria Brandon of the Sierra Club said the suit claims the environmental impact report is inadequate, the findings of overriding considerations of assumed economic benefits are weak and the project is inconsistent with the Lake County General Plan.

The Lake County Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 to approve the Cristallago development project on March 2. The project would build an 18-hole golf course, 325 resort units and 650 houses on Scotts Valley and Hill roads. The project also includes a clubhouse, community center, spa, restaurant, conference facility and nature preserve.

Brandon said the Sierra Club has been involved with this project since it started about four years ago.

Matt Boeger, president of the Cristallago Development Corporation, said he thinks the suit shows the Sierra Club is not happy with the voice of the elected officials who spent hundreds of hours reviewing the project.

"I am obviously very disappointed with the Sierra Club's lawsuit," Boeger said. "We feel like they were given every opportunity to participate in the planning process throughout a number of public hearings."

"It's a shame, this project is going to bring nearly 700 new jobs to the county at a time when we have record unemployment," Boeger said.

Boeger said he doesn't think the case is substantial. Claimants and defendants would present evidence to an administrative law judge who makes a decision in the case, Brandon said.

"Naturally, we expect to win," Brandon said.

Brandon said the Sierra Club Lake Group got approval for the case from the Redwood Chapter and the national committee to file the case.

"What I hope would happen is that approval be rescinded until they redo parts of the EIR that are inadequate," Brandon said.

"The Sierra Club is determined to protect the General Plan and the Community Growth Boundaries which are our primary defense against the sprawl that has defaced so much of the rest of California, and has therefore instigated legal action against the county and developers," the club said in a position paper.