

Sierra Club Lake Group

15995 Lucy Circle, Lower Lake, CA 95457

March 30, 2006

Penelope Shibley
Community Development Department
Planning Division
255 N. Forbes Street
Lakeport, CA 95453

RE: Buckingham Park Estates (SD 06-11)

Dear Ms. Shibley:

The Sierra Club Lake Group appreciates the opportunity to comment on this proposal, which seriously troubles us for several reasons.

Traffic. Existing roads in Buckingham can barely handle the present traffic load, especially when cars are parked along the street. Limited lines of sight in many places create dangerous conditions that would be greatly exacerbated by the addition of an additional 91 houses. Since the obvious solution -- requiring the developer to widen and improve Westlake and Orchard Drives -- could impair the rural character that gives this neighborhood so much of its charm and is so greatly cherished by its present residents, any necessary roadway improvements must be designed in a particularly sensitive and innovative manner.

Sanitation. We do not believe that any new residential parcels should be created in this area (or anywhere else in close juxtaposition to Clear Lake) until sewer hookups are available. The dangers of allowing septic systems to service densely populated residential areas have been all too well documented in Lake County, and it would be both foolish and foolhardy to continue to repeat the errors of the past. To make the hazards particularly acute, many surrounding houses draw their water supply from domestic wells.

Water supply and Fire Protection. Buckingham Park Water District produces poor quality water at some seasons, and is stretched to capacity by current demand, with a moratorium on new hookups; four-inch water lines don't provide adequate hydrant pressure to protect existing homes, much less 91 new ones. Costs of the extensive upgrades needed to bring this infrastructure up to modern standards should be borne by the developer.

Open space. Aside from a perimeter trail leading nowhere, none is provided, on the specious grounds that as members of a retirement community the residents would have no need for it: an absurd contention in any case, and especially untenable since the development would eliminate the only significant (non-golf) open area on

Buckingham Peninsula. Since the alternative contention that elderly people frequently prefer to avoid extensive yard maintenance does have merit, a much better plan of development for this site would cluster the houses (preferably, fewer houses) on smaller lots, and dedicate substantial portions of the property to common park areas. This parkland should be regarded as a necessary public amenity, open to all members of the community, and not reserved for the exclusive use of subdivision residents.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victoria Brandon". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name and last name clearly legible.

Victoria Brandon

Chair, Sierra Club Lake Group