

## Butte Creek Canyon to be protected

By ROGER H. AYLWORTH-Staff Writer

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OROVILLE — Many Butte Creek Canyon residents are passionate about their rural home, and now they have official assurance the place they love will receive special protection.

On Tuesday, the Board of Supervisors approved an "action item" that requires the panel to create a "planning strategy" aimed at finding ways to protect and preserve the ecology and historic aspects of the canyon.

The action item will be part of the Butte County General Plan 2030, which is currently being written.

Since April the canyon residents have been working closely with the county planning staff on the issue of protecting the area.

During the afternoon session of Tuesday's meeting, the county reviewed a range of changes and adjustments — mostly housekeeping measures — to the proposed General Plan.

When the canyon element came up, several speakers asked for the inclusion of a "conservation overlay" into the action item.

Bob James, who identified himself as a canyon resident, said the action item called for the county to conduct additional meetings within the canyon community to prepare a strategy, but he said what the people want is a "conservation overlay."

Allen Harthorn, with Friends of Butte Creek, said he was happy with the fact migratory deer herd, salmon and steelhead protection will be part of the plan. He also urged the county to include steelhead protection in Little Chico Creek and Dry Creek to the lists of in those areas.

An initial draft of the

action item had referred to a "conservation overlay" as the goal of further community discussions and county planning efforts, but later that phrase was deleted.

Chico Supervisor Jane Dolan read the whole text of the action plan including the stated goal to protect and preserve the canyon and its wildlife.

Both she and Paradise Supervisor Kim Yamaguchi called that a powerful guarantee.

Dolan then suggested the words "conservation overlay" be added to the action item.

"We have used that term for areas that we have considered, for want to a better word, special," said Dolan.

Tim Snellings, director of the Department of Development Services, who has led the General Plan rewrite effort, said the staff could certainly include the phrase.

The supervisors then unanimously approved the action item.

Oroville Supervisor Bill Connelly, who chairs the board, then said to the relatively small crowd in the hall, "Butte Creek you ought to be happy!" The audience responded with light applause.

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After the vote was taken, Snellings said there is no specific definition of "conservation overlay" among planners. "You define it as you create it. It will come out of a community discussion and debate," he said.

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