

'Jewel' in peril

The Spenceville Wildlife Area is a beautiful, natural and historical site where horseback riders, bikers, hikers, hunters and nature lovers can enjoy the stunning 250-year-old oaks and nature at its best. Unfortunately, a new development in Yuba County, Yuba Highlands, is going to place this "jewel" in peril.

This development will place 5,100 new homes, which will house about 16,000 people. The original plan was to let these citizens, many of whom will be commuters, drive through Beale Air Force Base and into Wheatland. Since 9/11, this has become an impossibility.

Now the plan is to let commuters drive through the Spenceville Wildlife Area on a four-lane road. Not only would thousands of oaks need to be removed, but also the windy road would need to be straightened for this type of traffic. With thousands of cars commuting every day through this area, the impact on wildlife would be devastating.

Traffic will also have a great effect on the small town of Sheridan and the rural portion of Lincoln. The Yuba Highlands Environmental Impact Report predicts the development will cause gridlock conditions in Wheatland. Any smart commuter will learn to avoid that problem. A more direct route, once they get through the wildlife area, will be the two-lane roads that lead to Highway 65 through Sheridan and Lincoln.

It's quite obvious that the developers have given little thought to how they are going to provide easy access to Highlands residents who will work within the development. The devel-

oper, Gary Gallelli, has made some ignorant comments about the Spenceville area, and it's obvious he doesn't see this place as anything but a way to line his pockets. This wildlife area belongs to all Californians, not just Yuba County. Gallelli will be the only beneficiary of this development, and it's going to cost all Californians this beautiful wildlife area. That would be a travesty!

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APPEAL-DEMOCRAT