

OPEN SPACE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT AT CAMP PARKS THREATENED BY DEVELOPMENT

City of Dublin Plans to Develop Important Habitat for Endangered Species



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 6, 2008

CONTACT: Jeff Miller (510) 499-9185
Alameda Creek Alliance

Dublin, CA – A proposed land exchange between the federal government and the City of Dublin threatens to destroy prime habitat for wildlife in the Livermore-Amador Valley. The U.S. Army and NASA are attempting to transfer 180 acres of land at the southern end of Camp Parks Reserve Forces Training Area to the City of Dublin for urban development. This military training facility is home to a breeding colony of rare western burrowing owls and habitat for the threatened California red-legged frog and California tiger salamander.

In January the Army held an open house for 50 developers to view the property. At this meeting, the Mayor of Dublin declared the goal of transferring the land by April 2008 and breaking ground on development by January 2009. She presented alternatives for five massive commercial and residential developments. None of these development proposals have been subject to public review, nor do any of the proposals have natural habitat considerations included for threatened and endangered species.

Camp Parks is one of the relatively undeveloped portions of the Amador-Livermore Valley, and is home to several endangered, threatened and rare wildlife species that would be displaced by development. One of the few remaining colonies of breeding western burrowing owls in the East Bay lives here. Burrowing owls have declined dramatically in the Bay Area – breeding owls have been evicted and disappeared from over half of their known locations in the Bay Area since the 1980s. Development at Camp Parks without consideration of the owls would likely evict them from the site. The proposed project site also supports golden eagles, has potential foraging habitat for the endangered San Joaquin kit fox, has 21 acres of known and suitable breeding habitat for the threatened California red-legged frog, and known breeding habitat for the threatened California tiger salamander.

The Alameda Creek Alliance is requesting that the Army delay the land transfer until public hearings are held regarding environmental concerns under the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, and California Environmental Quality Act. Conservation groups want input on the on terms and conditions regarding on-site mitigation to sustain long term populations of special-status species, a signed commitment from the City of Dublin to include the citizens' review findings in the U.S. Army and NASA Deed of Sale/Transfer; and a commitment by Dublin to protect burrowing owls and endangered species on the site.

A similar land exchange proposed for the former Concord Naval Weapons Station ran into problems with environmental impacts. In Concord the U.S. Navy attempted to award 5,000 acres of land to a developer in exchange for building of residential housing in other states for the Navy. Protests by citizens groups and intervention by elected U.S. Representatives slowed down the transfer and forced a multi-year study with the conservation community.

The Alameda Creek Alliance (www.alamedacreek.org) is a community watershed group with over 1,500 members, dedicated to protection and restoration of the natural ecosystems of the Alameda Creek watershed.