

DOBBINS/OREGON HOUSE

COMMUNITY ACTION

PLAN

August 13, 2001

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Although geographically separated, the two neighboring rural communities of Dobbins and Oregon House came together to create this Community Action Plan. They share many values, services and civic groups. Reference to a 'community' in this document applies to both Dobbins and Oregon House communities.

Climate and Topography

The community is located in the heart of California's Gold Country in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains of Central California. It is spread along both sides of Marysville Road, which runs North by Northeast between Highway 20 to Highway 49. The geography is hilly and heavily-forested, and is bordered by Collins Lake and Bullards Bar Reservoir. The lower elevations are primarily forested with oak trees, some ponderosa and digger pines, and manzanita. The higher elevations are primarily forested with ponderosa pines, cedar trees, madrones, manzanita and a wide variety of oak trees.

The area's climate is typical of California's Gold Country, with the elevation ranging between 1,200' to 2,500'. Summers are hot and arid with highs in the upper 90's & lows in the low 60's. Winters are wet, with most of the year's rain falling from late October through early April and with highs in the mid 50's and lows in the upper 20's. We are usually below the winter snow and above the valley fog.

How the Process Started

This Community Action Plan was created through the combined efforts of the communities of Dobbins and Oregon House, the Yuba-Sutter Economic Development Corporation, Yuba County, and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) . In August 2000, the USFS awarded a grant to assist the Dobbins/Oregon House community to identify its goals for the future. Two public meetings were held and a planning committee of residents was formed. Therefore, this Community Action Plan represents a unified voice of the Dobbins/Oregon House citizens. It was created through a grass roots organization, which included a wide spectrum of the diverse people living there and intended to exclude no one.

VISION STATEMENT

As the residents of Dobbins/Oregon House, we have agreed that we share the following core values and goals for the future of our community:

1. *We are a friendly community which values and preserves the natural beauty and lifestyle of a rural environment;*
2. *We promote the health, welfare, and safety of our community members;*
3. *We appreciate our rich history, traditions, and recreational opportunities; and*
4. *We plan for balanced growth to meet the needs and facilities required for all residents and visitors.*

These four points of this Vision Statement guided the committee through the planning process.

Vision Point #1 - We are a friendly community which values and preserves the natural beauty and lifestyle of a rural environment.

One of the main reasons people live in the Dobbins/Oregon House area is its beauty and rural atmosphere. The area is heavily forested, and there are four lakes and a number of streams. Yuba County's General Plan calls for parcels to be at least five acres in size, giving residents the option of interacting with neighbors or protecting their privacy as they desire. This option is very important to the community.

A **Maintain Rural Environment** subcommittee was formed with the challenge of describing clearly what aspects of our rural community we have grown to cherish and want to preserve in the future. The following statements paint an image of what we want to preserve:

- Our community represents a traditional rural environment.
- We live in a foothill area of scenic beauty. We value this and want to preserve it.
- We have chosen to live in an area relatively untouched by urban sprawl, and desire to see it remain that way.
- We value low density housing and population, where one notices few people and where there is relatively little traffic on the roads.
- We value having our homes secluded and separated, part of the environment, such as low-density single family dwellings that blend well with the surroundings.
- We prefer structures and utilities which blend into the environment, not dominate it.
- Our people are diverse, but represent a frontier attitude of freedom and individuality.
- Our people value the serenity and slower pace of the area, which encourages the development of strength of character and freedom of the individual.
- We love our land and know our relationship with the land is vital to living a wholesome, uncluttered way of life.
- We value being able to own our own land and use it in individualistic ways.
- We value our forests and prefer they not be removed to plant food crops or to support commercial development.
- We value the recreational aspects of the area, where people can live or visit to get away from the din of urban development.
- We recognize that certain governmental regulations are necessary to protect basic health, safety and cleanliness, and to prevent landowner abuses which might damage our rural environment, but desire a minimum of regulation consistent with basic protections.

- We want to keep low-density land zoning.
- We do not want to see increased traffic, urban types of business and “development”.
- We prefer unhurried simplicity, privacy and quiet over having a nearby mini-mall, service station, rushing autos or service trucks.
- We value our clean, fresh air. We wonder at vast starry nights without night lights obscuring their brilliance.
- We value our clean surface and ground water sources and want to see our water resources protected.
- We value quiet, except for the sound of birds during the day, crickets at night, frogs croaking, and the occasional winds and rain of a storm.
- We like seldom hearing the sound of a siren or of noisy neighbors.
- We prefer the landscapes of nature and unfettered open space; and value the silhouette of oaks against winter sunsets, rather than rooftops.
- We value leaves beneath our feet, not pavement.
- We prefer varied agricultural uses such as farming, cattle, orchards and vineyards.
- We value seeing wild animals roam our lands.
- We value our rich diversity of plant, insect, and animal life and want to see a balance achieved between fire mitigation and the preservation of wildlife.
- We wish to retain buildings in our community which remind us of our ancestors, history, and times gone by.
- We like being able to exchange ideas and advertise our needs and services at a community bulletin board.
- Preserving our precious rural environment encompasses a keen, conscious awareness of what we do in our daily lives that may affect our very private, quiet and simple traditions.
- We prefer that all development in our community is done in a manner which sustains and improves this rural environment.
- We know more is not always better.

FURTHER ACTION planned by the Maintain Rural Environment subcommittee: None at this time.

The ***Signs*** subcommittee was formed to promote both a sense of place and a friendly, welcoming image for the two communities. In keeping with this mission, the subcommittee members developed a list of signs to erect and decided on the locations for them. The committee worked to develop a design for the signs, and also asked for permission to erect signs on both private and public property. Currently, the subcommittee is finalizing locations & design, and expects to have signs up within a year.

FURTHER ACTION planned by the Signs subcommittee: Erect pleasant, welcoming signs entering our community.

Vision Point #2 - We promote the health, welfare, and safety of our community members.

The residents of Dobbins/Oregon House care about their neighbors and support the construction of a new community center for the area. We also want to ensure that everyone has access to sufficient transportation and health care. We want to make our community more fire-resistant and promote fire-safety awareness. These considerations have guided the *Community Center*, *Medical Center*, *Beautification/Tree Removal*, and *Transportation* subcommittees efforts.

NEED FOR A NEW COMMUNITY CENTER

There is strong support within the community to build a new community center as a central location for public gatherings. Our Committee feels that a community center is an important component to the well being of our rural community. It will serve as a center for dissemination of information and recreation which does not currently exist. Quality of life would be improved as a result of an investment in developing such community resources. A non profit organization has been formed to build this project. It is called the Dobbins Oregon House Improvement Foundation, Inc. (DOHIF), which is sponsored by the local Lion's Club. This group has begun the groundwork for this project. The **Community Center** subcommittee

was formed to assist the DOHIF with their ongoing efforts to finance and construct a community center.

There are only two small community meeting halls: the Agnes Deen Community Center in Oregon House and the Grange Hall in Dobbins, both of which are over 100 years old. These aging buildings are inadequate, their size is too small to support the population and they don't meet current and future needs.

POSSIBLE EXPANDED USES FOR A NEW COMMUNITY CENTER:

1. A library operated by volunteers, assisted by the Yuba County Library.
2. A Sheriff's Sub-station.
3. A tourist information center.
4. An emergency evacuation center and fire staging area.
5. Multiple meeting areas that can be used by several different groups simultaneously.
Organizations currently needing a place to meet include Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, 4-H Club, Yuba Feather School, Home School network, Yuba County polling location, Dobbins/Oregon House Volunteer Fire Department and Auxiliary, Dobbins Elementary School, Church Youth Groups, Maidu Indian meetings, community planning meetings, fund raisers, craft shows, private weddings and funerals.
6. Community dances, social gatherings and public forums.
7. Community plays.
8. A place for activities such as an educational or cultural center could be provided. This could include continued education classes, home schooling meeting place for special programs, group times, arts and crafts.
9. A location for exercise programs.
10. A community park & baseball field.

THE COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECT HAS ALREADY BEGUN:

As of summer 2001, the following has already been accomplished by the DOHIF to pave the way for this project:

1. 20.15 acres of land has been purchased, which is centrally located between Oregon House & Dobbins, directly off Marysville Road.
2. Engineered plans have been prepared for a 10,000 square foot, metal framed stucco building with interior rooms.
3. The zoning has been changed and building permits have been paid.
4. Mitigation of negative declaration has been approved with zoning.
5. Rough grading has been started on the road and building site.
6. A water well has been installed.
7. The septic system is being installed.
8. PG&E service has been installed.
9. A 33,000 gallon water storage tank has been installed.
10. Miscellaneous outside lighting and kitchen equipment has been obtained.

THE REMAINING CHALLENGES FOR COMPLETION OF THE COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECT ARE AS FOLLOWS:

As of summer 2001, the remaining steps needing funding are as follows:

1. Cost of the metal framed, stucco building.
2. Foundation and erection of the building.
3. Finishing the kitchen and meeting areas.
4. HVAC system installed.
5. Insulation installed.
6. Final grading and paving the access road and parking areas.
7. Future projects such as a park, Little League baseball field, jogging trails and sports courts need to be built as funding becomes available.

The projected budget for this project is \$750,000, of which approximately 62% remains unfunded. To date, the DOHIF has continued with the project, step by step, as they have obtained funds without incurring any debt. This marks a substantial commitment on behalf of

our community. We are currently seeking available grants or donations to aid in the completion of this project.

FURTHER ACTION planned by the Community Center subcommittee: Continue raising funds for the completion of this project through grants & donations. As funds become available, support DOHIF in organizing volunteer labor for it's construction.

In addition to the Community Center, three remaining subcommittees which worked on issues related to Vision Point #2 were the *Medical Center*, *Beautification/Tree Removal*, and *Transportation* subcommittees.

The **Medical Center** subcommittee was formed to investigate unmet medical needs existing for our residents and the feasibility of desired changes. The area is served by a small medical clinic in Oregon House, medical centers 12 miles North in Brownsville and 20 miles East in North San Juan. The nearest hospitals are about 30 miles away in Marysville, Oroville & Grass Valley. The subcommittee canvassed the existing medical community to look at the feasibility of a new medical center in Dobbins/Oregon House community.

Our area needs a clinic with a family practitioner who can handle routine office visits, minor emergencies such as stitches & X-Rays, dispense routine prescriptions and can also accept Medi-Cal or Medi-Care patients. Although the nearest clinics in Oregon House, Brownsville & North San Juan meet many of these needs, there are still unmet needs:

- Oregon House currently has a doctor only on a part time status.
- Brownsville doesn't currently accept new Medi-Cal or Medi-Care patients.
- The area doesn't currently have a facility to dispense routine prescriptions.

The Committee is not recommending that the community pro-actively pursue building a medical center at this time, nor has any site been considered for such a project. In the future, however, if a private interest is proposing a medical clinic, they should be encouraged to meet the needs specified above.

FURTHER ACTION planned by the Medical Center subcommittee: Meet with the management of the existing health care providers in our area (Rideout-Fremont Medical Group & Sutter North Medical Foundation) to present our need and discuss the feasibility of a local family practitioner's clinic in our community which serves the unmet needs shown above.

The **Beautification/Tree Removal** subcommittee focused its efforts on the urgent need for removal of trees killed by two recent major forest fires our community experienced over the past 4 years. These dead trees represent more than a blemish on the scenery; they represent a severe fire risk. Removal of the remaining dead trees is a high priority for the safety of our community. The subcommittee found federal and state grants that subsidized property owners who wished to remove fuels from their property. Seven contracts in 2001 were approved for a total of \$55,000 for this purpose. Substantial work remains to be done.

FURTHER ACTION planned by the Beautification/Tree Removal subcommittee: Continue searching funding sources and remove the dead trees in our community to reduce the existing fire hazards. Once funding sources become available, communicate these sources to our community.

A **Transportation** subcommittee was formed to investigate our transportation needs. They focused on ways to increase the ability of Dobbins/Oregon House residents without a vehicle to get to Marysville and Yuba City. It especially focused on people trying to get to Yuba College, go shopping, and get to the valley's medical facilities. Currently there is a limited bus schedule from Yuba Sutter Transit. The subcommittee concluded there was not enough of a market at this time to expand public transportation. Presently, transportation of the elderly are limited to volunteer organization, such as the Hilltop Gang. Although the population can't sustain expanded public transportation at this time, commuters are encouraged to car pool and we recommend they utilize public billboards to find suitable matches.

Until public transportation becomes more feasible, the primary mode of transportation remains the automobile. The road system consists of Marysville Road carrying the primary flow of traffic to and from the Sacramento Valley, being fed by numerous smaller county roads. Recent Federal construction projects have improved Marysville road to a condition which is adequate

for the volume of traffic; however the condition of most of the smaller county roads are in poor shape and in urgent need of substantial maintenance. Our county is poor and claims they are doing the best they can to maintain these roads with their limited budget. Since these smaller roads aren't thoroughfares, State or Federal funding isn't likely. Therefore, we must continue to communicate which roads are in the most urgent need of maintenance to Yuba County's Public Works and to the Yuba County Board of Supervisors. Our area continues to grow in population and these roads need more appropriate levels of maintenance.

FURTHER ACTION planned by the Transportation subcommittee: Continue lobbying for better road maintenance of our county roads.

Vision Point #3 - We appreciate our rich history, traditions, and recreational opportunities.

Beginning as gold rush communities in the 1850's, Dobbins and Oregon House both have rich histories and a mix of old and new residents. Much of the land is dotted with old mining claims and the occasional old mine. It is important for us to recognize and cherish our history, as well as the traditions of our native peoples and pioneer families. Further, its physical setting provides a wealth of outdoor recreational opportunities such as hiking, biking, fishing, boating, hunting, horseback riding, and even panning for gold. These considerations guided the *Historical*, and *Recreation* subcommittees.

The Dobbins/Oregon House area has been inhabited for thousands of years, first by the Native American people (primarily the Maidu), and more recently by participants in the Gold Rush, their descendants, and others who wanted to enjoy life in the area. Many of the area's residents wish to preserve the record of this history, so the planning committee formed the **Historical** subcommittee to address the issue. The members of the subcommittee researched historical documents and worked with some historical societies, namely the Yuba-Feather historical society, to ensure that the Dobbins/Oregon House area's history is being documented and preserved. In addition, the subcommittee plans to offer occasional historical tours to help raise community awareness of the rich historical context in which they live. In addition, a historical map is being considered as a leisurely way to visit some little known historical sites, mines &

memorabilia in our community as long as permission to access these sites can be obtained from the various property owners. Once the new community center project is completed, it is the desire of the committee to restore the Agnes Deen Community Center. Originally established as a two room schoolhouse in 1870, this building should become a museum.

FURTHER ACTION planned by the Historical subcommittee: Prepare a historical map of our local historical sites after obtaining permission from the various landowners to allow the public on their property to view these sites. Continue preserving our historical records & sites whenever feasible to do so.

The Dobbins/Oregon House area is a nature-lover's wonderland, and the **Recreation** subcommittee was formed to identify the recreational needs and opportunities for the community's residents and visitors.

We acknowledge the need for additional recreational facilities in our community. Many of these needs will be met with the planned Community Center, which will include a park, Little League baseball field, jogging trails, sports courts, in addition to the meeting hall and library.

We currently have four lakes which provide excellent facilities for outdoor recreation: Collins Lake, Lake Francis, Lake of the Springs and Bullards Bar Reservoir. Each lake offers unique facilities, but cumulatively offer camping, RV hookups, fishing, water skiing, rental boats (including houseboats), cabins, rental trailers, meeting halls, swimming, dining and hiking. These lakes currently provide excellent facilities for our local residents and tourists. It should be noted that the community appreciates and supports these tourism-based businesses. They represent a substantial source of local employment, based on income from outside our community, which has a positive effect on many residents and local businesses.

Hiking, biking, skateboarding, horseback riding and off-road motorcycling are some of the activities in our community; however, there are currently no public areas set aside for these activities except for some trails at Bullards Bar. To increase recreational opportunities, the subcommittee focused on the possibility of opening more hiking, mountain biking & horseback trails in our surrounding areas. The following are some locations:

- The Ponderosa Way. This was built in the 1930's by the federal government as a fire break and extends the length of California, North & South. The road is disappearing in certain areas as right-of-way questions raised are not resolved. Maintenance of the Ponderosa Way seems to have been abandoned, but holds potential to be reclaimed for recreational trails.
- California Hiking Trail. This trail is used to link Fountain House & Merriam Roads in Dobbins, but the signage was destroyed in the 1997 Williams fire. The signage should be restored to preserve this trail as the forest is reclaimed.
- Bullards Bar Reservoir Trails. There are several trails at Bullards Bar Reservoir open to hiking, mountain bike riding & horseback riding; however, few people know about them. Multi-use trails can work with cooperation of clubs. An example is the Stillman Horse Trail which shares motorcycle, mountain bike & horseback riding through a cooperative alliance between clubs that respects each others' use of this area.
- Possible new trail locations. The goal of any new trails would be to link two sites, such as two communities, lakes, historical places, etc.. New trails should be multi-use trails and it would be best to consider locations on public land vs. private land. Our community has public land managed by Bureau of Land Management (BLM), USDF, CDF & Yuba County Water Agency. The following are possible locations:
 1. A trail linking Bullards Bar Reservoir to Colgate Powerhouse, and then to Lake Francis.
 2. A trail linking Dobbins to Oregon House.
 3. A trail linking Dobbins to Bullards Bar Reservoir.

FURTHER ACTION planned by the Recreation subcommittee: Continue pursuing the possibility of converting existing trails & abandoned roads into hiking, mountain bike & horseback riding trails for public use. And to continue with possible new trail locations. If feasible, obtain an easement from the land agency or owner, then coordinate volunteers to restore these trails to a usable state, and to maintain them. Once the trails are complete, maps should be prepared showing these trails for our community & visiting tourists.

Vision Point #4 - We plan for balanced growth to meet the needs and facilities required for all residents and visitors.

While we recognize that growth will inevitably occur in our area, we wish to influence and direct that growth in order to retain our community's rural atmosphere. Our community should provide for the social and economic needs of its residents without excessive and undesirable effects.

The **Town Center** subcommittee was formed to review the concept of a town center.

As our area grows, there will be a need for some service & sales businesses to accommodate the population. The concept of a town center was reviewed since it promotes an attractive, pedestrian environment where the visual impact of parking areas and buildings would blend into the surroundings.

After investigation, the committee agreed that such a concept is possible and could be complimentary to our goals of retaining a rural environment. However, the Committee is not interested in advocating the creation of a town center at this time, nor has any site been considered for such a project.

FURTHER ACTION planned by the Town Center subcommittee: None at this time.

Because of our rural nature, some citizens prefer to live and work within this community. This work may include earning a living from our homes instead of traditional workplaces. Recognizing that many of the area's residents have talents that could be used to earn a livelihood from their homes, the committee formed the **Support Cottage Industries** subcommittee to investigate barriers to such businesses. Anyone interested in conducting a business out of their home is encouraged to educate themselves regarding Yuba County's Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 12.95 on the issue.

FURTHER ACTION planned by the Support Cottage Industries subcommittee: None at this time.

FINAL NOTE ABOUT BALANCED GROWTH: Although balanced growth is desirable, the goals of the Maintain Rural Environment subcommittee shown in Vision Point #1 are more desirable to our community than growth.

A **Public Relations** subcommittee focused on keeping the entire Dobbins/Oregon House community abreast of the Planning Committee's activities. They did this by creating a newsletter which was distributed to area stores, post offices and bulletin boards. A website was also created to serve as an information center for the entire community. The subcommittee focused their initial efforts on increasing communication and understanding in the Dobbins/Oregon House area. After the Community Action Plan is completed, the PR subcommittee could be a resource presenting the contents of this plan to potential grant sponsors. The committee will continue to operate the website, www.dobbins-oregonhouse.org over the long term.

FURTHER ACTION planned by the Public Relations subcommittee: Complete and update newsletters and the website. Prepare a visual presentation of this Community Action Plan for any needed presentations. A bulletin board should be located the new Community Center.

HOW THE GROUP WILL SUSTAIN ITSELF

The Dobbins/Oregon House Community Planning Committee does not intend to continue to meet monthly after this Community Action Plan is completed. However, the subcommittees will continue to work on the actions planned throughout this document. The Committee will meet on a quarterly basis to review each subcommittee's progress. This Community Action

Plan will be reviewed and updated as necessary at these quarterly meetings.

HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

Each subcommittee will work on their "Further Action Plan" which appears at the end of each subcommittee report shown above. The Committee will hold quarterly meetings to review their progress and to layout future goals. These quarterly meetings may also include a review of the Community Action Plan and revise as needed to ensure that it continues to remain relevant. The public relations subcommittee will be responsible to maintain the Dobbins/Oregon House website for at least five years.