

## **CAMP PARKS: Conservation Strategy for Endangered Species Protection**

In 2006, the U.S. Army Reserves at Camp Parks proposed transferring two parcels totaling 180 acres to the City of Dublin with the selection of a developer in exchange for the upgrading and building of military reserve facilities. The project is named Dublin Crossing ([www.DublinCrossing.com](http://www.DublinCrossing.com)).

The acreage scheduled for transfer is the last of federal public lands in eastern Alameda County. We all should have a say in how this land should be managed as it contains:

- a) Bird Species of Special Concern: Western burrowing owl, Loggerhead shrike
- b) Endangered Species: San Joaquin kit fox, California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander
- c) Rare Plants

The City of Dublin has already released 5 specific development plans for the site, all of substantial size. None address on-site mitigation to maintain viable habitat for special concern species. Dublin has earned the reputation of being an aggressive developer for introducing urban blight to the Livermore Valley, sacrificing rolling green hills in favor of a Los Angeles landscape. Left alone with its track record, Dublin may not produce a land use plan fitting for conservation goals and objectives.

The conservation community is proposing an approach that ensures sustainability for endangered and sensitive species. This would encompass ecological integrity onsite with funding in perpetuity for maintaining a preserve as an integral part of the development. The goal is for a set aside of at least 50 acres for onsite mitigation from the U.S. Army and the developer before the conclusion of any land transfer to the City of Dublin. To achieve this goal, conservationists need to begin submitting questions via e-mail to [Dublin.Crossing@Staubach.com](mailto:Dublin.Crossing@Staubach.com), the marketing firm hired by the U.S. Army to vet the public process.

The conservation community needs to set the pace and the direction of ecological conservation early in this process. We have to stay informed, monitor and respond to every move of Dublin and the developer until there are onsite species and habitat mitigations incorporated into the plan of Dublin Crossing, not offsite as presently planned. Involved groups include: The Alameda Creek Alliance, California Native Plant Society, Center for Biological Diversity, Ohlone Audubon Chapter, and the Sierra Club. Individuals are welcome.

A grassroots movement could improve the short term thinking leading to the fragmentation of the Livermore Valley ecosystem, the ugliness of big box development plans, mounting traffic congestion, and urban noise pollution. Over time, the conservation community can help to re-integrate Dublin's position in the Tri-Valley vision of conserving what remains of the natural landscape.

### The Project Time Line:

December 2006 - A biological opinion was produced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Alameda Creek Alliance has reviewed this opinion and found it to be deeply flawed and inadequate in terms of long term land management for sensitive species survival and maintaining habitat. Furthermore, there had been no public input.

January 2008 - Camp Parks held a Developer's Open House.

February 2008 - Conservationists began a dialogue with the wildlife agencies.

June 2008 - Selection of a developer will be announced who will then begin consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Endangered Species Act issues and environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act.

September 2008 - Compliance with environmental reviews and construction particulars.

May 2009 - Transfer of the property title to the City of Dublin with the granting of rights to the developer for commercial development. Ground breaking kicks off the official start of the Dublin Crossing project. The City of Dublin then assumes all zoning, land use and CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) authority over the transferred land.

**How you can help:** Watch for our next alert in the Sierra Club Yodeler and the new Friends of Camp Parks Web site projected for July 2008.