

## Copper shooting range has compliance issues

By James DeHaven

The Calaveras Enterprise, Tuesday, January 29, 2013

Calaveras County may look to shut down an unpermitted Copperopolis shooting range this month, the first to see such action since gunfire was broadly exempted under a county noise ordinance passed by supervisors in September.

Calaveras Tactical, which has operated since last May on land zoned for agricultural use, remains subject to county public nuisance code, explained county Planner Gina Kathan.

She said non-firearm target shooting and archery ranges are administratively permitted for \$2,033 under that zoning, while firearms can be conditionally permitted for \$4,764 after a public hearing.

“It’s relative to the use of the land,” Kathan said last week. “We have defined uses: hunting clubs, gun clubs, target shooting ranges. ... It depends on what the owner is doing as to whether it’s conditionally permitted or not permitted at all.”

The range first caught Code Compliance’s eye early this month, when owner Steve Nelson received a notice of violation warning “all shooting must cease” at the range until he had filed for a \$4,764 conditional use permit.

Nelson, a former fire captain and Copperopolis local, said he was not told he had to file for a permit when he licensed Calaveras Tactical within the county. He faces fines of \$50 per day and a criminal court appearance should he fail to outline a plan to obtain the permit by the end of this week. Meanwhile, Nelson said he’s not teaching classes and has found an attorney to look over the county’s notice of violation.

“The attorney I talked to said he didn’t think I’d have to apply for a (conditional use permit) because we don’t have a range, it’s basically a cow pasture that we’re shooting on,” he explained.

The notice, Nelson said, was prompted by a single complaint from one of Calaveras Tactical’s distant residential neighbors.

“There’s a lot of (concealed carry permit-holders) around here and it’s important to the community to have some place to train and learn how to use those weapons,” he concluded. “So I just think it’s unfortunate that one person can become a fly in the ointment just because they don’t like guns.”

Courtney Minehart, the county Code Compliance officer assigned to the complaint, could not be reached as of press time Monday.