

Letter to the Editor

The Valley Springs News, August 25, 2023

Evacuation plan comments sought

Dear Editor,

It has been eight years since the Butte fire destroyed over 500 homes and left five dead. Survivors of the fire can attest to the importance of the routes they used to evacuate the fire. The Calaveras County 1996 General Plan failed to address emergency evacuation routes. The continuing failure of the 2019 General Plan Update to comprehensively address this subject is one of the reasons the Calaveras Planning Coalition filed a legal challenge to that plan. For more information about this and other issues neglected in the 2019 General Plan and what you can do personally to improve the situation, go to calaverascap.com/list/.

The good news is that Calaveras Ready recently completed the Draft Calaveras County Evacuation and Access Needs Assessment and Preparedness Plan. The consultants asked people to identify locations on their most likely evacuation routes where road capacity bottlenecks, landslides, flooding, or other conditions could impede their evacuation. Over 200 people responded, identifying over 750 such impediments to their evacuation. These were consolidated into over 375 projects primarily along Highways 4, 49, 12, and 26 but also on some County roads.

We hope that Caltrans, Calaveras County Public Works, the Calaveras Council of Governments and others will work together to secure the State and Federal funds available to complete these projects. Someday the life of you, your family, or your friends may depend upon a safe and effective emergency evacuation route.

You can review the draft plan and send your gratitude and other comments to Calaveras Ready through August 31 at <https://calaverasready.com/>.

Megan Fiske

Outreach Coordinator, Community Action Project & Calaveras Planning Coalition, San Andreas