

## **Grand jury would like county to pursue alternate route for Gillam**

**By Nick Baptista/ The Valley Springs News/ June 26, 2013**

Lack of recent repair work on Gillam Road was one of the areas studied by the 2012-13 Calaveras County grand jury.

The jury's findings and recommendations on the road and other items were released Friday as the jury concluded its term. Nancy Barton was the foreperson of the 19-member panel.

Gillam Road residents for years have been complaining about the lack of maintenance on the road and it was a citizen's complaint that sparked the grand jury investigation.

The problem has been the road is protected habitat for several species include the California red-legged frog, the California tiger salamander, vernal pool fairy shrimp, the northwestern pond turtle and the western spadefoot toad.

Permits or approvals need to be obtained from at least half-dozen state and federal entities before any work can be done on Gillam Road.

The road is so bad, back in 2008, then-Foothill Fire Chief Mike Siligo wrote a letter to the county saying his department's larger structural firefighting equipment was unable to negotiate the route.

The grand jury recommended the county should consider all options including an alternative route for the road that avoids the streambed.

A feasibility study to find an alternative route avoiding the wetlands and protected habitat was conducted by Stantec Consulting Inc. The firm identified two alternative routes that would avoid some of the permitting process.

The grand jury added the county could consider applying for federal and state funding to do the work and correct the situation.