

Park Cattle divides property on west side of Valley

by Susie Vasquez
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Planning commissioners unanimously approved the division of 1,520 acres just west of Highway 395 between Muller and Genoa lanes into 36 parcels Tuesday. The smallest parcel is 40 acres.

There are no plans at this time to further subdivide or develop the property, which is owned by Park Cattle Co., according to engineering consultant R.O. Anderson.

"Park is keenly interested in protecting their rights," he said. "Some planning decisions have been disconcerting, with respect to agricultural properties."

Deputy District Attorney Tom Perkins said this is one of the last large parcels remaining in Carson Valley, but state and county law provide minimal government authority.

"It's a matter of rights," he said.

The East Fork of the Carson River that runs through the western portion of the property is a concern, said John Cobourn, a Minden resident and University of Nevada hydrologist.

Homes could be washed downstream if located near the river channel, which is subject to natural migration. According to Cobourn, cement channels hurt habitat and restrict the river's natural movement.

"Agriculture is a wonderful use for riverfront land," he said. "If homes are built there and the channel is flooded, there will be a call to strengthen the bank."

Ideally, homes built 2,000 feet from the river corridor should be relatively safe, allowing room for the channel to migrate, Cobourn said.

Richard Morrisette, president of the Carson Valley Trails Association, urged commissioners to consider conservation along the river for recreational opportunities, like walking and biking paths.

"This is a big change," he said. "Fifteen-hundred acres of open space will be residential, not ranching. It's time to start thinking about the future and recreational opportunities.

"I encourage county and park officials to start thinking about what they can do for the future of this valley, the recreational opportunities that would be made by having access to the river," he said.

The planning commission approval is advisory. The issue will be readdressed by county commissioners at a later date.